Holocaust Archives and Research in the Digital Age

edited by *Laura Brazzo, Reto Speck*

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Holocaust Research and Archives in the Digital Age

Introduction

by *Laura Brazzo, Reto Speck*

In 2003, one of the pioneers of digital history, Roy Rosenzweig, characterized the field's status quo as follows: "one of the most vexing and interesting features of the digital era is the way that it unsettles traditional arrangements and forces us to ask basic questions that have been there all along."[1]

For Rosenzweig, moreover, questions associated with the impact of the digital turn on historiography cannot be answered with reference to historians and their activities only. On the contrary, he has consistently argued that it is important to explore these questions in the context of the changing roles and inter-relationship between historians, archivists, librarians, curators and the wider public in the preservation, curation, interpretation and dissemination of historical knowledge.

What is true in regard to history and archives in general, also applies to the particular case of Holocaust studies and Holocaust archives. In a wide ranging recent lecture on the history and future of Holocaust research, Wendy Lower has singled out the opening up of archives through digitization and transnational integration as well as big data approaches to relevant sources as among the most important trends in contemporary Holocaust research.[2] However, she also notes that while these trends have enriched the field and promise future insights, they have not yet coalesced into new, grand research directions. In her words the growth in Holocaust studies partially attributable to the digital turn is "impressive," but the field remains "fragmentary" and "diffuse": core questions and issues are debated from ever

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[1] Roy Rosenzweig, "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era," in *The American Historical Review* 108/3 (2003): 735–62, 760.

[2] Wendy Lower, "The History and Future of Holocaust Research," in *Tablet Magazine*, April 26, 2018, https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/culture-news/260677/history-future-holocaust-research.

widening perspectives, but there is as yet little evidence that these debates will come to any firm conclusions any time soon.[3]

That the digital turn has injected vitality into Holocaust research and archives by opening up new directions and by reposing old questions in a new light is also the experience of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project.[4] EHRI has initiated this special issue, and the two editors, as well as three contributors (Blanke, Frankl and Kristel), are prominently involved in the project. At its heart, EHRI is an archival integration initiative that takes advantage of recent technological advances to integrate information about Holocaust-related archival sources that are currently dispersed across the world in an online environment. EHRI started its work in 2010 with funding provided by the European Union. It is a joint endeavor of a network of 24 partners, encompassing research institutions, archives, libraries, and memory institutions. Via its Online Portal (https://portal.ehri-project.eu), EHRI currently provides access to information about more than 1,900 Holocaust-related collection holding institutions, and tens of thousands of archival units held by such institutions. While the EHRI Portal and its underlying transnational integration of information is the project's main outcome so far, it is by no means its only contribution to the digital transformation of Holocaust research and archives. As Blanke and Kristel show in their article, EHRI has also undertaken research into fundamental methodological and epistemological questions posed by the digital turn in Holocaust research, and it has explored the application of digital tools and methods on Holocaust data to gain new insights. Frankl, moreover, presents in his contribution the EHRI Document Blog: an experimental platform that allows contributors - historians and archivists alike - to contextualize, interpret and visualize Holocaust sources. As Frankl notes, the Document Blog is a "low-tech," "small data" application, that allows contributors a low entry-point opportunity to explore some of the key affordances of digital methods such as new forms of non-linear narration or visual and interactive representation. In addition, EHRI facilitates a transnational fellowship programme,

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[3] *Ibid.*

[4] For background information on the EHRI project, see Tobias Blanke, Veerle Vanden Daelen, Michal Frankl, Conny Kristel, Kepa Rodriguez and Reto Speck., "The Past and the Future of Holocaust Research: From Disparate Sources to an Integrated European Holocaust Research Infrastructure?," in *Evolution der Informationsinfrastruktur: Forschung und Entwicklung als Kooperation von Bibliothek und Fachwissenschaft*, eds. A. Rapp et al., (Glückstadt: Verlag Werner Hülsbusch, 2013): 157-77 and Tobias Blanke, Michael Bryant, Michal Frankl, Conny Kristel, Reto Speck, Veerle Vanden Daelen, "The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure Portal," in *ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, 10/1 (2017): 1-17.

offers extensive training and networking opportunities, and investigates methodological trends and issues through its programme of workshops and conferences. It is, in other words, an attempt to develop a comprehensive infrastructure that enables Holocaust researchers and archivists to take advantage of new digital tools, methods and opportunities, as well as to critically engage with the transformative effect of the digital turn on Holocaust research and archives.

Central to EHRI's identity is a truly interdisciplinary and transnational orientation. Both are a direct outcome of the project's gestation. As a proudly international consortium, a transnational approach underlies everything EHRI does. It reflects the European nature of the Holocaust and is reinforced by the fact that networked data do not respect geographical borders. Equally important is the project's interdisciplinary character: the consortium brings together Holocaust researchers (broadly defined); archivists, librarians, curators and information specialists; as well as digital humanists and computer scientists. EHRI recognizes that the digital age holds considerable promise for the future of Holocaust research and archives. But these promises can only materialize if expertise and perspectives are widely shared across disciplinary and professional boundaries, and only if all stakeholders come together to cooperatively tackle impediments and challenges.

When we initiated this special issue, we had hoped to receive contributions from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and from across a wide geographic area. In this regard we have undoubtedly succeeded. The present issue features articles from historians, archivists, museum curators, educators, and digital humanists working across Europe, the United States, and Israel. Given this diversity in terms of contributors, it is unsurprising that the articles assembled here address a wide variety of questions, and approach these from markedly diverse perspectives. This is no doubt partially an indication of a field in flux where efforts are "diffuse" and "fragmentary," as indicated by Lower, and, indeed, testifies that the digital turn has "unsettled traditional arrangements" and that we are still awaiting a new consensus regarding fundamental issues as suggested by Rosenzweig. However, the kaleidoscopic nature of this special issue equally attests to the richness of the research undertaken in the field. It demonstrates that the digital transformation of Holocaust archives and research is well underway, and that its implications are extensively explored and vigorously debated.

As the contributions to this special issue cover a wide range of topics and approach these from notably diverse vantage points, it is not possible to draw up an analytically tight synopsis that would elucidate the state of play in the field as a whole. Nevertheless, reading across the special issue, we can detect three themes that weave the individual contributions together, and indicate areas where future research may fruitfully concentrate on.

The first such field is centered around new methodological approaches to analyze Holocaust sources in order to gain knowledge and insights. The opening up of archives, mass digitization, and digital tools have made quantitative approaches for the analysis and interpretation of Holocaust archives a possibility. By turning sources into raw data, and by approaching these data with algorithms rather than the historian's traditional interpretative techniques, quantification poses vital questions about both the ends and means of historical research.[5] It is in this context that Rosenzweig's invocation that the digital age has granted age-old questions a new lease of life is particularly relevant. Indeed, the increasing application of digital methods forces us to reconsider some of the foundational issues in the history and methodology of historiography: What kind of knowledge does history produce? What is the relationship between knowledge, meaning and understanding? What is the role of the historian in the interpretative process? Are the traditional methodological tools used by historians – source criticism, philology, diplomatics, etc. – still adequate to deal with digitally enabled research or do they need to be reconsidered? What is history's focal point – the individual or the general – a question with particular importance to the study of the Holocaust, as it brings to the forefront the issue of how we preserve the individual experiences and memories of victims in the face of our ability to detect patterns, trends and networks by digitally reading large data archives.

Such questions are addressed in Blanke and Kristel's contribution to this special issue, entitled "Historical Research and Evidence in the Digital Age: The Case for New Approaches in Holocaust Research." Taking the experience of EHRI as a starting point, Blanke and Kristel explore in detail some of the fundamental implications of the "digital transformation of sources and evidence in Holocaust research." Their article calls for methodological reflection and innovation in three

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[5] On some of the opportunities and challenges associated with historians adopting "big data" methods, see, for instance, Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially chapter 4.

core areas: first, (digital) historians need to understand how computers "read" documents, and particularly how digitally assisted source identification via search engines impacts upon research; second, they advocate the development of methods to establish the online provenance of information in order to enable new forms of digital source criticism; third, they urge historians to improve their validation practices in regard to research results gained through machine-analysis of large-scale datasets.

Methodological issues are also at the forefront of Papamichos' article "From the Lone Survivor to the Networked Self: Social Networks Meet the Digital Holocaust Archive." Reporting on the results of the research project "Bonds of Survivors" which is based on the analysis of video interviews held by the Fortunoff Archives and Visual History Archives, Papamichos argues that social relationships played an important role in the life of Jewish survivors from the Greek city of Thessaloniki. By focusing on the networked self, Papamichos challenges enduring images of the Holocaust: "isolated individuals" and "lone survivors." These images have shaped the organizational systems of the audio-visual archives which are themselves based on the paradigmatic model of the individual survivor interview. By using social network modelling and analysis, Papamichos eschews the prevalent focus on individual experiences and memories and directs our attention towards the under-explored social dimension of life in the camps. As Papamichos notes, this change of perspective helps "historians [to] better understand how Holocaust survivors managed to reconstruct a social universe in the camps and navigate within it under extremely adverse circumstances."

While Papamichos' point-of-departure is the social network, Schellenbacher's article "Memento Vienna: How an online tool presenting digitized Holocaust-related data and archival material is offering new insights into the Holocaust in Vienna" demonstrates how mapping and usage of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) can sharpen our understanding of the importance of space in the formulation and execution of Nazi policies towards the relocation and eventual deportation of the Jewish populations. Memento Vienna is an online tool that maps the last-known residences of Viennese Holocaust victims and facilitates access to additional archival sources relevant to such victims. Whereas it primarily serves as an educational tool, Schellenbacher shows its research potential by enabling "new insights into the details and motives of the relocation of Jews in a city like Vienna,

[by] highlighting areas of ghettoization as well as areas that have been made "*judenfrei*" ['free of Jews']."

Papamichos' and Schellenbacher's respective discussions of the importance of space and networks as organizational units of Holocaust archives lead us to our second common theme. Indeed, computers do not solely excel at analyzing large amounts of data, they have also fundamentally transformed the ways by which information and knowledge are organized and (re-)presented. As the articles in this special issue attest, questions of digital knowledge organization and representation preoccupy archivists, researchers and museum curators alike, and have significant implications on how information and knowledge about the Holocaust are shared with, and consumed by, the public. Within this large field of concern, two aspects deserve highlighting. First, the question of how crucial contextual information, elucidating the provenance and authenticity of a given archival source or indeed any information object, can be expressed and safeguarded in digital environments. Secondly, digital representations have challenged traditional notions of narrative. Linear narrations in which the author/curator exerts considerable control on how a reader/visitor may proceed through an argument or an exhibition are increasingly supplanted by representations that support non-linear, interactive pathways, allowing multi-faceted, bi-directional and notably indeterminate explorations.[6]

Blanke and Kristel approach the question on how the traditional archival principle of provenance can be adapted to the requirements of digital environments from a theoretical point-of-view. Weber, by contrast, offers a practical approach on how contextual information about digitized archival sources can be made easily accessible to users. Her article "Contextualizing Holocaust Documents of the International Tracing Service (ITS) through an Interactive Online Guide," describes a project by the ITS to develop an online system that provides rich contextual information about digitized documents relating to concentration camp inmates. The ITS guides describe and analyze the 30 most common documents types, and helps users to decode and unlock these documents by answering questions about their provenance, usage and their specific interpretive challenges.

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[6] See, for instance, Daniel J. Cohen, Michael Frisch, Patrick Gallagher et al., "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," in *The Journal of American History*, 95/2 (2008), esp. 467-72.

Both Trebacz and Frankl outline how digital environments enable interactivity and challenge traditional notion of narration. Trebacz's article, "The Ghetto Model as an Alternative form of presenting Holocaust Archives. Chance or Threat?," analyses the design of a model of the Litzmannstadt ghetto that is currently being built at the Radegast Station Museum in Lodz. When developing the model, the curators together with historians, museologists and educators asked themselves questions such as: "Can this story be told at all? And, if it is so, how should we tell it? [...] Can the story be told only with words? Or should it be told with the use of the objects, which would make a visitor to reach for these objects, touch the place and feel it in a truly tangible way?." Underlying these questions is the idea that museums are no longer mere temples of the past but living places full of (hi)stories where, through touchable objects (like the model will be), visitors can get in contact with the past and interact with it. In the case of the model described by Trebacz, this interaction is further facilitated by a dedicated website and mobile application where visitors can not only explore relevant archival materials but also contribute themselves by adding memories, personal data, and photographs of ghetto survivors and their families, thereby participating directly in the narration of the story.

Frankl's article, "Blogging As a Research Method? The EHRI Document Blog," analyses blogging as a serious academic activity. According to Frankl, "the EHRI Document Blog is an open, experimental space that tackles questions related to Holocaust documentation, sources, and digital methodology," and particularly focuses on provenance and history of the Holocaust-related sources. One of the key features of the EHRI Document Blog is that it seamlessly integrates metadata about archival collections, visualizations and text. This integration invites "authors to develop non-linear narratives by weaving their text together with interactive components, thus letting their readers discover the subject in different ways and to 'read' through the article along different trajectories." Frankl firmly locates the EHRI Document Blog in the "scientific blogging" field and, therefore, considers it as much more than a just knowledge dissemination vehicle. On the contrary, he shows that blogging can be a valid research method in itself: grappling with the medium can lead bloggers to new research insights and sharpen their understanding of information lacunas and inherent uncertainties in their posts' underlying evidence bases.

The third common theme relates to the rearrangement of traditional boundaries between archivists, curators, researchers and the general public in the research

process. In the past, this process could be conceptualized as linear with clearly demarcated lines of responsibilities: archivists and curators collect and preserve traces of the past which are then analyzed and interpreted by researchers who, in turn, make their insights available to the interested public. Yet it is clear that the advent of digital technologies has significantly disrupted this arrangement, and formerly clearly defined roles are currently in a state of flux. On the one hand, we can detect a growing rapprochement between archivists and historians after a long period in which their concerns, activities and outlook have been drifting apart.[7] There is a growing recognition that the benefits of the digital transformation of archives and historical research can only be realized if the associated challenges are tackled collaboratively, and if expertise and experiences are shared across professional boundaries. In this sense, EHRI with its collaborative model is but a manifestation of a much more general trend. At the same time, the much advertised potential of the internet to lead a "democratization of knowledge" has not only manifested itself by increased online availability of archival sources and research results, but also by the public taking an increasingly active part in the research process. Be it through blogging, crowd-sourcing or other digitally enabled platforms of active engagement, previously passive consumers of archives and research are increasingly becoming co-producers themselves.

The democratization of knowledge and its implications are addressed in most contributions to this special issue. Schellenbacher, for instance, argues that Memento Vienna is not only a powerful research tool, but, above all, an educational resource that is mainly aimed at a "younger digital born audience, accustomed to social media and the use of GIS in their everyday life." Frankl acknowledges the uses of blogging for public history activities, and Weber notes the suitability of the digital medium for the design of contextual archival research guides that are adaptable to the need of different audiences, including the general public. Trebacz, finally, relates the design of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto model to the participatory museum paradigm, where visitors are no longer seen as passive consumers, but as co-creators and co-authors of exhibitions.

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[7] See Francis X Blouin and William G Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Changing Authorities in History and the Archives*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists and the Changing Archival Landscape," in *American Archivist*, 74/2 (2011): 600-62 and Petra Links, Reto Speck and Veerle Vanden Daelen, "Who Holds the Key to Holocaust-Related Sources: Authorship as Subjectivity in Finding Aids," in *Holocaust Studies*, 22/1 (2016): 21-43.

However, the most sustained discussion of the role of the general public in the creation and dissemination of Holocaust knowledge and memory is provided by Herzl in her article "*Wikishtetl*: Commemorating Jewish Communities the Perished in the Holocaust through the Wikipedia Platform." The Wikishtetl project is driven by a group of volunteer female teachers who accepted the challenge of editing Wikipedia's entries about communities that were annihilated in the Holocaust. The process of collaborative writing typical of Wikipedia and the awareness that the final product will be open to a global audience, greatly contributed to the high emotional involvement of the participants during the research and the writing process and helped them to overcome initial technical difficulties. According to Herzl, the significance of using Wikipedia as a vehicle for Holocaust commemoration, instead of using traditional paper books or even other digital tools, is that memories relating to individuals or small communities "become integrated into the main international database of information." She considers Wikipedia as the best "available means for the private individual to affect the opinions and points of view of the society in which he lives," thereby enabling contributors to become an integral part of an open and shared knowledge infrastructure without borders.

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Historical Research and Evidence in the Digital Age.
The Case for New Approaches in Holocaust Research

by Tobias Blanke, Conny Kristel

Abstract

Digital approaches to Holocaust research have led to a renewed interest in how researchers in the humanities work with material and use it as evidence for their work. Creating evidence by looking for connections and making links between events, people and places is key to all historical research. The most basic methods of generating evidence in history have changed with the digital transformation of archives and the scholarship linked to them. This paper investigates this digital transformation based on the experience of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI).

Introduction

Background: Historical Research

Identification, Provenance and Iteration. The EHRI Experience

Conclusion

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Tobias Blanke, Conny Kristel

Introduction

Digital approaches to Holocaust research have led to a renewed interest in how researchers in the humanities work with material and use it as evidence for their work.[1] While many have welcomed this, for others confusion reigns as to how digital humanities delivers new approaches that can be useful to other researchers in the humanities. This paper discusses this new material and evidence and considers how it can support historical research on the Holocaust. We developed three principles that guide the digital transformation of sources and evidence in Holocaust research. These three principles are the identification of sources, the development of trust and provenance and, finally, the question of the transformation of research processes and questions in an age of ever increasing numbers of sources. We derived these three principles by investigating current historical research outputs in postgraduate theses, which we present in the second section of this paper. The third section then presents these three principles as key to the digital transformation using the EHRI experience. Firstly, EHRI offers new means of critically identifying sources using graph databases. Secondly, EHRI has explored how the principles of source criticism and provenance, which are central to historical and archival theory and methodology in Holocaust research, can be maintained in the digital age. Thirdly, we discuss the logic of ever larger datasets. In our conclusion, we propose concrete steps which can teach and enable historians to work with digital evidence. The digital transformation makes us question again how we deal with evidence in general, which is of the utmost importance in Holocaust research.

In the next section, we will look at the actual practice of qualitative historical research and its interaction with evidence. This will help us develop the three core principles that guide our investigation of the EHRI experience of digital transformations. We will focus on one of the core activities of historians, i.e. searching for information and transforming it into evidence. Especially in a field such as Holocaust studies, working with and justifying evidence continues to challenge research.

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[1] *Digital evidence: selected papers from DRH2000, Digital Resources for the Humanities Conference. University of Sheffield, September 2000*, eds. Marilyn Deegan, Michael Fraser and Nigel Williamson, (London: Office for Humanities Communication, 2001).

Background: Historical Research

Discussing digital evidence in Holocaust research has to start from a general discussion of the state of the work with sources in Holocaust research. In particular, we need to consider the general state of historical methodology and how it is studied and taught. To analyze the practices of historical methodology, we decided to look into recent postgraduate theses. Compared to other monographs in history, they have to follow stricter templates to be accepted for examination. Among the requirements is a discussion of methodology and development of an explicit research question. Using these postgraduate theses as a case study, we investigated the state of evidence and the uptake of different methods and approaches (such as oral history, close reading, discourse analysis etc.) in Holocaust research. Studying theses should give us insight into research practices of master students and junior scholars, and indirectly also in the way they are, or have been, trained at universities. To this end, we have analysed twelve recent theses, six Masters theses and six PhD dissertations in Holocaust research, which shed a light on the status quo of the practice of historical work.

We have looked at the section, usually the introduction, in which the authors are expected to discuss their research methodology and/or research procedure.[2] Most authors began the section with an exposé about their research question in relation to the *status quaestionis*. The research question is presented as guiding the strategy, the sources and the method. The famous French historian Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) phrased the historical working with sources as follows in 1933: "A historian does not simply wander around the past as a buyer looking for old rust but he assumes a precise plan in his mind, a problem to be solved, a working hypothesis to be verified."[3] The authors in the sample stated that their research was guided by the research question, but that this question was also transformed in the process of conducting research. Historical research is an

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[2] Authors A, B, C, H, I, J have written a PhD dissertation; authors D, E, F, G, K, L a Master thesis.

[3] Original quote: "l'Historien, qui ne va pas rôdant au hasard à travers le passé, comme un chiffonnier en quête de trouvailles, mais part avec, en tête, un dessein précis, un problème à résoudre, une hypothèse de travail à vérifier." (Lucien Febvre, "De 1892 à 1933. Examen de conscience d'une histoire et d'un historien. Lecon d'ouverture au Collège de France, 13 décembre 1933," *Combats pour l'histoire*, ed. Lucien Febvre, (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1992, digital ed.,), 3-18; 8. Accessible via:
http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/febvre_lucien/Combats_pour_lhistoire/febvre_combats_pour_histoire.pdf

iterative process. In our case study, Author H explicitly mentioned that she had revised her research question during the process: "I intended to write a concise history of x's wartime operations, but the primary sources I had uncovered told a more complex story." Seeking evidence in history is first and foremost an iterative process through an ever-increasing amount of sources that enable new research questions and lead to ever larger sources to (re-)consider.

The second major component of evidence-based research is the identification of sources. In our case study, the authors noted which sources they had used and, especially in the case of the PhD authors, reflected on the *scope* of the sources.[4] However, it is often more difficult to understand the exact functioning of particular sources. In ten theses we were not able to find an explanation for the use of particular sources that went beyond their sheer identification. Only two PhD authors explain their research strategy with regard to the sources. Author C, who wrote about a family history, made his research strategy explicit. For every generation, he carefully examined a series of the same themes. Author J analyzed an intellectual's thinking about Western culture through the lens of three oppositions. After reading the introduction, the reader knows which question(s) the researcher aims to answer, how the thesis connects to existing research and which source material the researcher has selected and consulted. For sources to be turned into evidence, however, the researcher is required to describe the provenance of these sources, beyond their pure identification.

None of the authors explained in their publications how they found their sources. Author B at least mentioned a "snowball method," but offered no further details, such as which document or resources were the beginning of the snowball; nor did she reflect on the potential problems with this method. In their *History Manifesto* (2014), the American historians Jo Guldi and David Armitage argue that there is a bright future for historians, if they not only investigate "forgotten stories," but also take on the role of "arbiters of data for the public." According to Guldi and Armitage, historians are excellently positioned as teachers of a critical approach which will only become increasingly more necessary in the digital age with an information overload.[5] If historians want to become the future teachers of the critical approach, this lack of transparency in

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[4] Author A, 18; author B, 30, 31, 33; author C, 29, 30; author I, 14; author J , 23; author L, 5.
[5] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 88-116; 113.

terms of the methodological underpinnings of their work is something which needs to be addressed.

Our brief investigation and short case study demonstrate that forming a historical argument, or rather the way in which a historian working with empirical material transforms sources into evidence, is complex and intricate. Even the term "sources," which historians commonly use to refer to their documents, can be a misleading metaphor. It implies "the possibility of an account of the past which is uncontaminated by intermediaries." As historian Peter Burke has suggested, it might be preferable to speak of "traces" instead.[6] The process of selection and interpretation of these traces is based on rules which are inherent to the historical method. The latter is a specification of the generic scientific method. Historians ask different questions and cannot perform tests. This being said, many of the rules that historians are expected to apply in order to find answers that are logical and supported by evidence, are generic for scientific reasoning. Specific for historians is the scholarly principle of source criticism, which aims to critically assess various aspects of a source. Even in generously referenced publications this process is usually not very transparent, nor can it easily be reconstructed, which from a scholarly point of view is problematic. Ideally, historians should allow their colleagues access to the "kitchen" so that they can understand – or even witness – how the publication has been prepared

Analyzing historical statements and claims and tracing them back to the sources on which the author claims they rest is key to any historical research, but especially so for contested and often politically sensitive areas such as the Holocaust. Here, researchers tend to rely on not just on their own but also their colleagues' work, given that the Holocaust provides a vast amount of traces and sources. If historians do not work together, as the British historian and specialist of the history of the Third Reich Richard Evans has argued, "it would be completely impossible for new historical discoveries and insights to be generated."[7]

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[6] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 13. Burke is leaning on a suggestion of the Dutch historian Gustaaf Renier (1892-1962), who opted for the term "traces" in his book *History, its Purpose and Method*, (London 1950).
[7] Richard J. Evans, *Lying about Hitler: History, Holocaust and the David Irving Trial*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 18.

For Holocaust research, it is even more important that researchers work together, as they are continuously challenged by those who seek to deny, or at least diminish, the systematic mass murder that occurred. Sources, traces, and their corresponding evidence on the Holocaust are routinely challenged by those whose agenda it is to reduce its historical importance and uniqueness. One of the most famous incidences relating to this specific challenge occurred in the late 1990s, when David Irving filed a libel suit against the American historian Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin, the publisher of the British edition of her book on Holocaust-denial*, Denying the Holocaust* (1993). In this book, Lipstadt calls Irving "one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial." The lawyers of the defendant commissioned four professional historians to write expert reports on specific elements of the defense. The defense in itself was challenging, for in accordance with the English law of defamation, it was up to the defendant to prove that the defamatory statements (by Lipstadt) were true.[8]

Evans was one of the four experts. He was asked to go through a sample of Irving's work, which until then was considered by some prominent critics as a relatively good work of amateur history, and deliver a report "on whether or not Lipstadt's allegation that he falsified the historical record was justified."[9] Evans subjected Irving's work to a detailed dissection of historical statements and claims, using a series of investigations that exposed how evidence and traces should be treated in Holocaust research.

Irving lost the trial. In *Lying about Hitler*, which is based on Evans' expert report and on his experiences during the trial, Evans demonstrated that Irving's argument failed to withstand the test of source criticism and evidence-based research. *Lying about Hitler* is not so much a theoretical essay, but more a detailed analysis of the methods Irving used in his attempt to turn information into evidence. Evans demonstrated clearly how Irving worked with his sources and where he was blatantly not only ignoring, but also bending, the rules. The judge ruled that Irving had "misrepresented and distorted the evidence which was available to him" to fit his political agenda. The judgment was, as Evans rightly

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[8] *Ibid.*, 28-9. Apart from Evans, the defense commissioned Christopher Browning, Peter Longerich and Robert-Jan van Pelt to prepare expert reports. These can be found via: https://www.hdot.org/trial-materials/witness-statements-and-documents/.
[9] Evans, *Lying about Hitler*, 30.

writes, "a victory for history, for historical truth and historical scholarship."[10] It also demonstrated, however, how painstaking and time-consuming it is to take apart an argument once it has been neatly put together in a publication.

With this particular use case in mind, we will take a closer look at the historical method in practice. The British historian and philosopher Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943) qualified history as "a certain kind of organized or inferential knowledge."[11] Taking this statement as a point of departure, and recognizing that historians one way or the other work with evidence, the rest of this paper reflects on the organizational dimension of the research practices of historians in light of the digital transformation of historical research, with a special focus on research into the Holocaust. In particular, we investigate the key components of iteration through ever-increasing sources, identification and provenance as those elements that define historical work with traces and sources. Our presentation is based on our experience of the digital transformation of historical research in the framework of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project (EHRI).[12] Before we go into the details of iteration, identification and provenance we provide a brief overview of the state of the digital transformation of historical research.

Identification, Provenance and Iteration. The EHRI Experience

Nowadays, historians who want to work with sources and traces in archives generally do not have a choice whether to engage with the digital. From our experience in EHRI, we know very well that only a small part of archival collections in heritage institutions is available in a digital format, but searching for particular files or information is generally done via digital means. We do not want to say that all archives will be fully digital anytime soon, but there are already enough archives which support digital engagement, because it makes sense, not just in order to deal with ever increasing volumes of records, but also because access to even the smallest record is much easier and more flexible by digital means. EHRI is attempting to integrate what has been digitized about the

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[10] *Ibid.*, 265.
[11] Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 252.
[12] http://www.ehri-project.eu

Holocaust and provide access to the rest. How much significant material on the Holocaust will ever be digitally available remains to be seen, but more and more the perception of Holocaust material will be based on what is digitally available. This is a common experience of digital transformation for all archives and research in them with which we have worked.[13]

Identification of sources

Archives are digital organizations and businesses, as the whole world has become digital and the humanities and history are part of it. Realizing this is the real meaning of digital transformations. It is the realization of a digitized world that drives a new understanding of some of the core concepts humanities research engages with. To us, one of these concepts is the idea of evidence-based research on sources. Traditional humanities scholarship does not have to be reduced by the digital transformation, but rather "could raise the critical standard for how we read all kinds of evidence."[14] We argue that even the most basic methods of generating evidence in history by identifying sources have changed, because we are confronted not with human-indexed collections in archives, but with machine-indexed digital ones. Just like in the pre-digital age, critical evidence from collections required an understanding of archival processes and the metadata work of archivists; in the digital age historians need to understand how computers identify sources.

Archival documents are presented to researchers not at the moment of digitization, but at the moment we use any kind of search engine to identify and access them. The digitally transformed understanding of working with sources, therefore, has to start with the most basic ways of integrating them through searching digital archives - taking for granted that these digital archives might not be based on sources from a single repository but may integrate many. How many repositories are integrated only matters to the digital search in so far as it raises the requirements for the infrastructure. The most basic step of the identification of sources is today, therefore, already a complex digital task that

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[13] Sheila Anderson and Tobias Blanke, "Taking the Long View: From e-Science Humanities to Humanities Digital Ecosystems" in *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 37/3 (2012): 147-64.
[14] Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital: Or How Academic History Writing Lost the Plot" in *The Journal of the Social History Society* 10/1 (2013): 9-23; 20.

requires careful consideration of what kind of knowledge is won, but also lost, by approaching sources this way. Furthermore, it could also imply a new kind of publication of research that provides insight into how the search and find process has been undertaken.

In the excitement for more advanced digital history methods, sometimes the importance of simply searching through databases and the new ways of evidence this provides is forgotten. Not so with Bruno Latour et al, for whom the abilities for researchers to work through digital databases offer completely new opportunities of researching the social order: "[W]e wish to consider how digital traces left by actors inside newly available databases might modify the very position of those classical questions of social order."[15] For the sociologist, databases are exciting as they provide completely new networks of actors' traces. The research can move from the individual to her group and back without effort. The situation is not different in archival research. Databases allow researchers to effortlessly move between document and collection levels, and identify both.

Taking the importance of the critical identification of sources seriously motivated EHRI to commit to a graph database, which complements standard access and identification facilities. We added a complex system of navigating the generics and specifics of evidence in collections. We use traditional faceting, but also allow for more complex queries to a specific part of the target records. This leads to a close integration between searching and hierarchical browsing of country, institution and collection metadata in the EHRI portal. At any point in time, a user can choose how to proceed with the identification process. We think this is a good compromise between full search and an expansive and intensive view of the sources.[16]

The relation between full search and an expansive and intensive view is extensively explored in the axiomatic theory of information retrieval.[17] According to this theory, searching through archival collections is progressing by excluding

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[15] Bruno Latour, Pablo Jensen, Tommaso Venturini, Sébastian Grauwin and Dominique Boullier, "'The whole is always smaller than its parts' – a digital test of Gabriel Tardes' monads" in *The British Journal of Sociology* 63/4 (2012): 590-615; 591.

[16] Tobias Blanke, Michael Bryant and Reto Speck, "Developing the collection graph" in *Library Hi Tech* 33/4 (2015): 610-23.

[17] Th.W.Ch. Huibers, *An Axiomatic Theory for Information Retrieval*, (Utrecht: PhD Dissertation, 1996), 58.

evidence that is not about what the researcher is looking for. A typical researcher is rather looking for any evidence before concluding the search. Judges, and other agents of the law, consider digital evidence differently. One needs to be able to rely on it in court: "Digital evidence is information stored or transmitted in binary form that may be relied on in court."[18] The systematic identification of sources and analysis of their evidence is called (digital) forensics.

Dan Edelstein demonstrates an example of digital forensics in literary history. By using the research API of JSTOR, he is able to discover trends in enlightenment scholarship and literature review. Key to his work is the ability to download quality data sources that are trusted on a particular topic.

> Because [research] is ultimately about assessing the quality of other people's arguments, it will and should remain a fundamentally qualitative exercise. The question is, are we always assessing the right works? Are we missing important trends? […] What data mining can offer, I suggest, is a broad yet detailed backdrop that helps guide our analyses of secondary sources.[19]

Only with practiced critical digital forensics can the principle of source criticism be maintained in the digital age. In archival research situations and in critical (digital) historiography in general, establishing the trustworthiness of sources is crucial. As the case of Evans versus Irving has demonstrated, it requires elements of both archival and historical theory and methodology, and has for a long time been the main source of collaboration between historians and archivists. Historians bring the traditional scholarly principle of source criticism to the table, whereas archivists focus on the archival principle of provenance. Both principles draw attention to the importance of providing contextual information for historical records.[20]

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[18] "Digital Evidence and Forensics," in *National Institute of Justice website*, April 14, 2016. Accessible via: https://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/evidence/digital/Pages/welcome.aspx (accessed October 17, 2017).

[19] Dan Edelstein, "Enlightenment Scholarship by the Numbers: dfr.jstor.org, Dirty Quantification, and the Future of the Lit Review" in *Republic of Letters. A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 4/1 (2014): 1-26; 2.

[20] Katharina Hering, "Provenance Meets Source Criticism" in *Journal of Digital Humanities* 3/2 (2014): see http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/3-2/provenance-meets-source-criticism/

Provenance and trust

Source criticism is a rather general critical approach of "sources" which is not exclusively applied by historians, although they are emphatically taught this principle as central to their discipline. The historian is trained to ask his or herself when, where, by whom, and for whom the source was made, and to critically evaluate the content, taking into account the context of the source in the broadest sense. Historians hereby mainly benefit from the archival concept of provenance, as it provides contextual information. The principle of provenance refers traditionally "to the individual, family, or organization that created or received the items in a collection."[21]

Historians seem concerned about the future of the related principles of source context and provenance in the digital age. Should and can they be maintained in a revised sense – and if yes, what are the contours of such a revision - or should we discard them altogether and maybe introduce new principles that suit digital sources and collections? The American information scientist, Katharina Hering, seems unwilling to throw the principles of provenance and context overboard. She argues that "the tradition of source criticism combined with a broadened understanding of provenance can support archivists, historians, librarians, digital humanists, and others with developing a set of questions and a vocabulary that can aid the analysis and description of digital collections."[22]

The archival principle of provenance is not just seen by the above investigated postgraduate researchers to be key to transforming sources into evidence. It produces trust. According to information scientists Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, in archival research situations sources can be trusted because of the "provenance method."[23] "Provenancial properties" are one aspect that defines the process that transforms archival "information into evidence"[24] for researchers. However, it has proven to be surprisingly difficult to maintain

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[21] *Ibid.* The principle of provenance also suggests that records originating from the same source should be kept together, and should not be interfiled with records from other sources, to preserve their context.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] W.M. Duff and C.A. Johnson, "Accidentally found on purpose: Information-seeking behavior of historians in archives," in *Library Quarterly* 72/4 (2002): 472–96.

[24] Joshua Sternfeld, "Archival Theory and Digital Historiography: Selection, Search and Metadata as Archival Processes for Assessing Historical Contextualization" in *The American Archivist* 74/2 (2011): 544-75; 551.

provenance digitally. Provenance is generally lacking online, where most of the digital evidence is found. The absence of "provenancial properties" in digital evidence is problematic for research. Archival practices do not always meet the principles taught to students of archival science. Mark Vajcner has called on archivists and archives to be "more active in ensuring that contextual information is linked to digitized materials."[25]

To keep provenance information in digital works, we have decided in EHRI to take each digital information object as a different one from its canonical item depending on the context it appears in.[26] This is our digital transformation of the "respect des fonds" which emphasizes the importance of maintaining the original structure of a collection. In this sense, the canonical item 'Israel|Yad Vashem|Jan Karski' is different from 'A's Research|Yad Vashem|Jan Karski' or 'C's Research|Monograph B|Yad Vashem|Jan Karski.' In EHRI, the identity of an item in a virtual collection is thus determined by the route to it that forms its context. This is our way of transforming provenance for digital archives and ensuring that archival information can become evidence for researchers.

Provenance remains the determining factor of how evidence is combined from sources in digital archives of the Holocaust. Provenance, however, also speaks to the larger question of trust, which is fundamentally digitally transformed by the unprecedented power of algorithms over our research processes. How can we trust the sources that are presented to us by undecipherable algorithms, which read and decode them for us? There remains an uneasiness in research with the way modern search engines et al. let the archival objects speak to us. At the same time, we have no choice. Historical sources grow quickly and already consist of millions and, likely, billions of documents.[27] What can be done with all these documents? In a perfect world perhaps experts would read the collection and index it for perfect retrieval by others. This is not possible with hundreds of millions of documents. The alternative has become to let very fast computer clusters read them in their particular way and extract all the relevant documents.

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[25] *Ibid.*
[26] Blanke, Bryant and Speck, "Developing the collection graph."
[27] Tobias Blanke and Andrew Prescott, "Dealing with big data" in *Research Methods for Reading Digital Data in the Digital Humanities*, eds. Gabriele Griffin and Matt Hayler, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 184-205.

But there is a growing unease with this alternative of fast but also non-transparent computing power operating in a black box. Frank Pasquale even calls this world the black box society.[28] The unease is also reflected in a very pessimistic and provocative intervention from three Dutch historians, who surveyed almost 300 colleagues in the Netherlands and Belgium about their online search behaviour. The results showed that scholars mainly search for text and images and that general search systems (as Google and JSTOR) are predominant. Most of the surveyed scholars searched with keywords, and they hardly ever used advanced search options to iterate through sources. The authors argued that Google introduced a black box into digital scholarly practices, and voiced concern that scholars will become "increasingly dependent" on such black boxed algorithms. Therefore, they recommend "a reconsideration" of the academic principles of provenance and context.[29]

It is within this context that media historian Andreas Fickers called for a "digital historicism" (instead of a "digital escapism"). According to Fickers, we need new historical practices to confront the danger of black boxes for research:

> [F]uture historians cannot escape the productive confrontation with the new technical, economic and social realities of the digital culture. Instead of digital escapism and methodological conventionalism the discipline of history is rather in need of a new digital historicism. This digital historicism should be characterized by collaboration between archivists, computer scientists, historians and the public, with the aim of developing tools for a new digital source criticism.[30]

Fickers perceives a parallel with the 19th century, which saw the emergence of history as an academic discipline. This led to huge editorial projects which were, more often than not, inspired by political and ideological interests (such as

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[28] Frank Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[29] Max Kemman, Martijn Kleppe and Stef Scagliola, "Just Google It" in *Proceedings of the Digital Humanities Congress 2012. Studies in the Digital Humanities*, eds. Clare Mills, Michael Pidd and Esther Ward (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2012). http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/openbook/chapter/dhc2012-kemman.

[30] Andreas Fickers, "Towards A New Digital Historicism? Doing History in the Age of Abundance" in *Journal of European Television, History and Culture* 1/1 (2012): 19-26.

nation-building).[31] All historians are witnessing today this paradigm shift from a "culture of scarcity to a culture of abundance." This has resulted in a "crisis of historical practice."[32] The next section is dedicated to this culture of abundance and sources at scale.

Sources at scale

Our case study above has identified as a third principle of historical approaches to evidence the iteration of research questions based on new sources, which leads to an ever expanding cycle of questions and sources. Recognizing this need, EHRI is, at its core, an attempt to bring historical data together to create an ever bigger linked-up dataset. It is an integrating infrastructure for researchers to work through other infrastructures containing sources. As such, EHRI is not simply a new instrument for historians, but also changes their work fundamentally. They are pushed into methods that reflect these ever larger and integrated datasets. Critical infrastructure studies have been aware of these effects for a long time.[33] Infrastructures enforce a particular view on the evidence. Traditional relational databases, for instance, sort what they represent into tables – not unlike Excel spread sheets. They also require their data to be combined using joins, which rely on unique identifiers given to each record in the data set. Databases imply a logic of joining and linking to create ever larger datasets.

Once evidence is in a database, there is in principle no limit regarding links to other databases and the integration of new datasets. This expands the sources and the questions that can be asked. Because integrating information is so important for the success of an organization's digital infrastructure, the archive will be involved in a permanent effort of standardization of data and metadata that is in use in this organization. Beyond individual archives, integrating infrastructures such as EHRI bring together evidence from multiple sources using computational reasoning that operates efficiently with sets of evidence. These combined sets then produce even bigger sets, and so on, ad infinitum. We

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[31] *Ibid.*, 26.

[32] Roy Rozenzweig, "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era" in *American Historical Review* 108/3 (2003): 735-62; 737.

[33] Rob Kitchin, *The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and their Consequences*, (London: Sage, 2014).

can merge ever more evidence with different sources: databases, networks of actors, as Latour et al envisioned.[34]

This expansion of evidence by its integration and merging can have two main issues. The most straightforward one is that we get lost in information overload. Because we seem to have everything, nothing matters anymore. The Linked Data vision suffers from this according to our EHRI experience.[35] A few years ago it was the next big thing, but as many semantic web innovations it has never really taken off, apart from niche areas in digital libraries, etc. Linked Data promised a universal standard to connect every digital piece of knowledge, not just in a single organization, but across the web, to every other piece of knowledge. Everything can be linked in a radical open world assumption. An evidence ecosystem develops from a "language of linking."[36] It quickly became clear, since this original vision, that forever expanding linkability limits us too. Neither humans nor machines have shown much appetite for infinite linkability. Smaller, more compact, visions of data integration have survived. EHRI has, therefore, committed itself to graph databases. We have discussed the challenges of 'linkability' in EHRI extensively elsewhere.[37] Here, we are concentrating on the second issue of the logic of ever larger datasets. The research questions that they enable lead to computing methods that can deal with the scale of the data assembled. The problem seems to be that large-scale data-driven methods tend to eliminate the development of specialized research questions in the first place, as they move from traditional statistics to big data techniques. This means that the cycle of iteration of sources to develop new research questions to find new sources, etc. is interrupted and replaced by a collection of sources on everything on which we can get our hands.

Donald E. Knuth is maybe the most famous godfather of computer science. For him,

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[34] Latour, Jensen, Venturini, Grauwin and Boullier, "The whole is always smaller."

[35] Tobias Blanke, *Digital Asset Ecosystems: Rethinking Crowds and Cloud* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2014).

[36] Georgi Kobilarov, Tom Scott, Yves Raimond, Silver Oliver, Chris Sizemore, Michael Smethurst, Christian Bizer and Robert Lee, "Media Meets Semantic Web: How the BBC Uses DBpedia and Linked Data to Make Connections," in *The Semantic Web: Research and Applications. ESWC 2009. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, eds. Lora Aroyo et al., (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), 723-27.

[37] For an extensive discussion of the challenges of "linkability" in EHRI, see: Blanke, Bryant, Reto and Speck, "Developing the collection graph."
 http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/LHT-07-2015-0070

[s]cience is knowledge which we understand so well that we can teach it to a computer; and if we don't fully understand something, it is an art to deal with it. […] [T]he process of going from an art to a science means that we learn how to automate something."[38] Computing science is, therefore, about the tension to automate processes using digital means and not being able to do so, because we fail to fully understand the processes. In this sense, a computational approach to collecting and processing evidence would be a science if we could learn to automate it. Until then, it remains an art. Computational history is such an art.

Traditionally, the art of processing of digital evidence in history computationally took its inspiration from the social sciences, especially fields like sociology or psychology. For computers, processing digital evidence equates to solving an equation of the form $y = f(x)$. If x is the digital trace or source, then solving f leads to a decision y. So, if x would be a new revolutionary trace that Cesar never left Rome, then f could lead us to the conclusion y that he also never crossed the Rubicon. In statistics, there are a limited number of f to choose from, and additional parameters (so-called coefficients) are learned to fit this f to conclude from x that y. In statistics, this process is called forming a parametric model, which is

a learning model that summarizes data with a set of parameters of fixed size (independent of the number of training examples).[39] The model does not change, no matter how much data one throws at it, because the function f is limited from the beginning. This compares to nonparametric models, which are 'good when you have a lot of data and no prior knowledge, and when you don't want to worry too much about choosing just the right features.[40]

Nonparametric models seek to learn f and are able to generate it by themselves.

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[38] Donald E. Knuth, "Computer Programming as an art" in *Communications of the ACM* 17/12 (1974): 667-73; 668.
[39] Stuart J. Russell and Peter Norvig, *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*, 3rd ed., (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2010), 737.
[40] *Ibid.*, 757.

Parametric models of traditional statistics as used in the social sciences have been the first to inspire the analysis of digital sources in history. Martin Frické describes them as curve-fitting, or finding f. Here, the "task for science is to draw a curve (…) which will successfully anticipate the location of future or unknown data points'.[41] Such 'confirmatory data analysis," as is typical in social sciences and statistics, works with a prior hypothesis to examine and evaluate sources and create evidence. It has established theories and methods and the examples in history which take up this approach concentrate often on the domains where exact numerical calculations are possible. Processing digital evidence in history remains a social science here. History has known many examples of such traditional statistics approaches – often in economic history.[42]

Big data has generated enthusiasm for nonparametric models, and more and more data was inspired by a famous 2001 paper by Michele Banko and Eric Brill. It set the agenda for the big data hype and rationale. They demonstrated that calculating through digital evidences digitally gets more accurate by throwing more data at it.[43] Since then, the idea that "It's not who has the best algorithm that wins. It's who has the most data"[44] has been repeated multiple times as the magical unreasonable effectiveness of data. It has created the big data hype also in research and history.

For historical research, we are often limited to a particular kind of effectiveness of data, which are unsupervised methods. History in general, and Holocaust research in particular, lack larger annotated training collections that would allow it to apply supervised machine learning algorithms, which is why most existing large-scale textual methods in history use unsupervised techniques such as the clustering of documents or topic modelling. The problem with unsupervised methods is that they can almost be too easy to draw conclusions on. Representing documents as collections of words remains a brutal oversimplification of human

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[41] Martin Frické, "Big Data and Its Epistemology" in *Journal of the Association for Information Science* 66/4 (2015): 651-61; 653.
[42] Donald N. McCloskey, "Does the Past Have Useful Economics?" in *Journal of Economic Literature* 14/2 (1976): 434-61; D.C. Coleman, "History, Economic History and the Numbers Game" in *The Historical Journal* 38/3 (1995): 635-46.
[43] Michele Banko and Eric Brill, "Scaling to very large corpora for natural language disambiguation" in *ACL '01 Proceedings of the 39th Annual Meeting on Association for Computational Linguistics*, (2001), 26-33.
[44] This quote has been attributed to Andrew Ng, professor in Robotics at Stanford.

language. For political history, the professor of economics at Stanford University Matthew Gentzkow and his colleagues in Finance and Econometrics at the University of Chicago Booth, summarize "[t]hat all automated methods are based on incorrect models […] also implies that the models should be evaluated based on their ability to perform some useful social scientific task."[45]

Unfortunately, the inclusion of validation into an analysis is not often the case in digital history. As an example, consider the popular method of topic modelling. Not one of its digital history examples we found actually validated the results. To this end, the researchers would have needed to first define "gold topics" in the domain they would like to model. Then, the topic modelling results would have had to be evaluated against these "gold topics" to understand how stable the topic model is. This is particularly important to topic models, as they heavily depend on a series (random) initialization steps. A model would be unstable if these would have a significant impact on the model's behavior. Also, topic models, like most machine learning operations, depend on so-called hyperparameters, which are set heuristically before the modelling can start. For topic modelling this is, for instance, the number of topics we would like to investigate. All this would require a number of validation steps, which are completely missing from most examples in digital history we have seen.

An unsupervised model like topic modelling can be tempting, as it suggests results without additional input and human effort. However, these topic models can be too suggestive and require careful intervention by humans. Even "unsupervised" techniques are effectively a human-computer assemblage.[46] For topic modelling to deliver digital evidence this requires a human to define gold topics for at least a part of the documents to be summarized into topics. In EHRI, we completed this exercise with an oral history collection of Holocaust testimonials. We chose 1,880 documents and split them up into further sub-documents or paragraphs of 500 words, as they were fairly unstructured interviews. We ran 20 topics against the whole collection and got topics such as:

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[45] Matthew Gentzkow, Bryan T. Kelly and Matt Taddy, "Text as Data," February 15, 2017, available at http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2934001, 4.
[46] Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke, "Data-security assemblage: Knowledge and critique" in *Big Data & Society* 2/2 (2015): 1-12.

- *Topic 3*: school jewish did went time years remember children didnt yes high really know friends religious little parents kids home father

- *Topic 6*: germans going german train went just came time got saw soldiers didnt like army day russians started days took war

- *Topic 8*: camp people did know auschwitz didnt just work prisoners like time day yes ss got came camps barracks saw concentration

- *Topic 9*: jews people germans war russian poland polish army jewish russians came time did russia knew soviet hungarian started german hungary

- *Topic 10*: mother father went came family brother sister years got war died children did parents married didnt time lived husband left

- *Topic 11*: si nie na ja je tak po byo da bo jak tego eh jest mi ale te bya tym se

- *Topic 16*: people ghetto germans came didnt know went took jews place did going time like away jewish used killed work come

- *Topic 17*: food like little got bread used know water didnt eat day just gave took dont people piece work came big

While useful, the topics clearly require further careful interpretation by Holocaust experts, which demonstrates the additional work unsupervised methods such as topic modelling require. Figure 1 visualizes the 20 topics using the t-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding dimensionality reduction (REF).[47]

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[47] Laurens van der Maaten and Geoffrey Hinton, "Visualizing data using t-SNE" in *Journal of Machine Learning Research,* 9/11 (2008): 2579-2605.
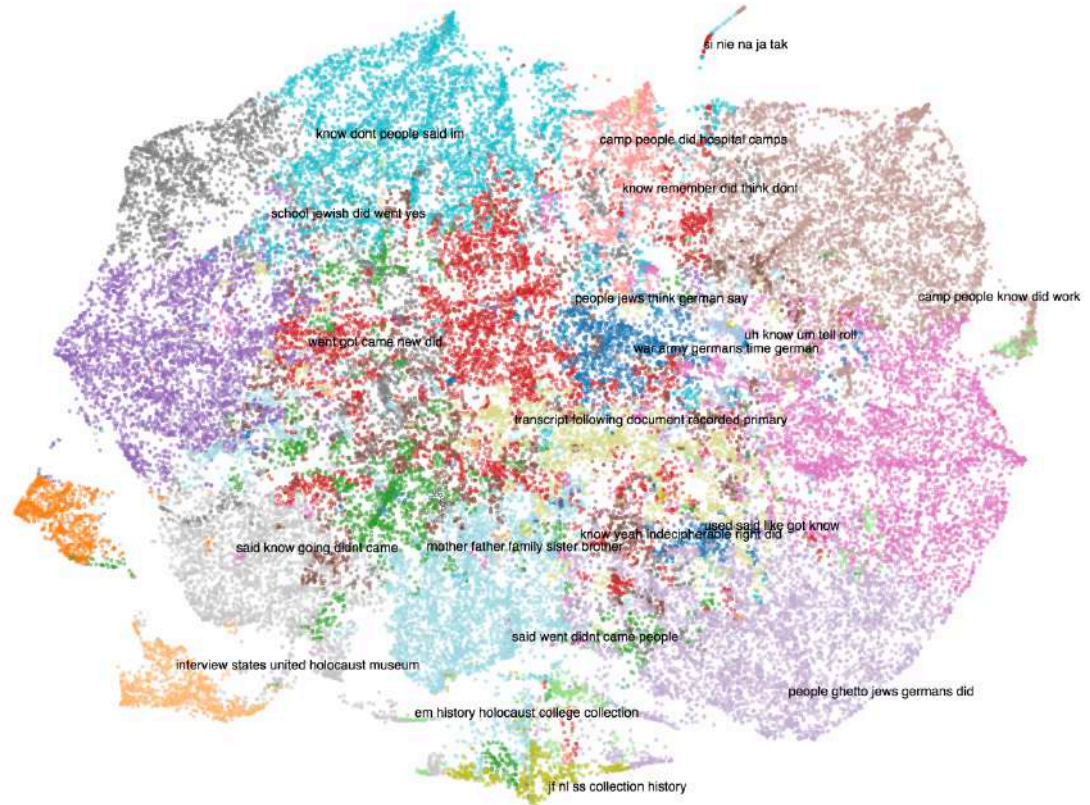
Fig. 1: Topics in the Testimonies

For the evaluation, we chose a small subset of the testimony paragraph and assigned them a (gold) topic. An automated topic modelling approach has to be able to at least partly match these topics if we compare the top automatically created topic with the manually assigned one. Unfortunately, we were not able to achieve a satisfactory performance with an accuracy higher than 70%. We either need to increase our effort to create a better gold standard topic collection or – more likely – the underlying text is especially difficult to datafy, as it is not just a historical collection with interviews going back to the 1970s using varying interview techniques, but also a fairly unsystematic collection of thoughts, typical to oral history collections. This is clearly indicated in Figure 1, where the 20 topics are color-coded and also described by its five top terms. While most topics are fairly distinct, others are clearly overlapping. For instance, we find parts of the archival (dark-brown) memory attached to all other memories. Memories in

non-English languages can also be found attached to all other memories (light-turquoise).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to argue an age-old question in history from a new digital perspective. Creating evidence from sources by looking for connections and making links between events, people and places is key to all historical research. We have argued that even the most basic methods of generating evidence in history have changed because we are confronted with digital transformation of research and archives. This changes the way historians analyze evidence for historical change.

Before the digital transformation, critical evidence from collections required an understanding of physical archival processes and the metadata work of archivists. In the digital age, historians need to understand how computers identify archival documents. For critical scholarship, it is essential to understand at least the basics of computational approaches to integrate results from archival searches into the understanding of historical events. However, as we have seen from the case study, the basic step of evidence gathering - in itself a complex digital task - is not sufficiently reflected even in publications that are formally required to express their methodologies, such as postgraduate theses.

Besides, we suggest that humanities researchers who will work increasingly with digital evidence, focus primarily on developing or learning about the following three methodological items which will enable new historical practices. The first requirement is to address the humanistic critique of how computers identify collections and the tools we can develop to enable new critical historical work. EHRI has addressed this issue by innovating graph databases for historical research on the Holocaust. The graph database has been used successfully by the EHRI consortium for the integration of heterogeneous material from dispersed archives, and it allows for the integration of different types of data (records, thesauri, contextual information, etc.) into the same graph model. It offers us ad hoc search and identification functionalities based on graph traversal, and it scales well with greatly increased quantities of data against user traversals.

The second, and crucial, requirement is the development of online provenance which will enable new digital source criticism. Only if we develop new methods of online provenance, describing the derivation history of digital objects, can historical evidence be accounted for in the digital age. The provenance of something is its history or origins, so that the history of an event that has occurred, or a result that has been produced, can be traced back and explored. This is valuable for historical interpretation and contextualizing events, and is finally developing trust in the sources and their interpretation.

Finally, the typical process of iterations of research questions is challenged by new large-scale datasets that require computational approaches such as machine-learning and other statistical approaches. Here, nonparametric approaches dominate the digital history work. But the validation of these approaches, part of any critical computer reasoning, is problematic. Validation of computational models is, up to now, less integrated into the analysis of the past with computers. To this end, we need to enhance standard computational validation techniques with existing historical or social theories, and compare the results. This will close the circle towards a more traditional analysis of evidence, but it is very difficult to do and can only be executed in actual analyses of historical data. There are some beginnings of this kind of research, but much more work is needed.

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Blogging As a Research Method? The EHRI Document Blog

by Michal Frankl

Abstract

In January 2016, the EHRI project launched a Document Blog, an experimental space for project partners, historians and archivists to discuss and test new digital approaches to Holocaust documentation. As a work in progress, the blog allows not only to develop new methods and share ideas, but also to assess the needs and issues of at least a part of digitally engaged Holocaust scholars and archivists. Building on this experience, the proposed article will, apart from providing general information about the Document Blog and the technology used, discuss the platform from two perspectives.

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Michal Frankl

Introduction

In his *Sources of Holocaust Research*, Raul Hilberg revisited the subject of his magisterial *The Destruction of European Jews*, observing his own research from a different perspective. Having sifted through an immense amount of original documentation on the persecution and murder of German and European Jews, he only later "stopped to ask myself: what is the nature of my sources? […] They have their own history and qualities, which are different from the actions they depict and which require a separate approach."[1] Yet, what seemed like a self-evident and banal scientific enterprise turned out to be as rewarding as it was difficult for the respected historian: "At the halfway mark of my labor I recognized that what I considered an afterthought turned out to be a challenge instead."[2] In his retrospective work, Hilberg developed an overview of the typology of Holocaust sources, based on their material characteristics, as well as origin and function, and explored their specific styles and content.

These and similar questions also informed the creation of the Document Blog of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI), the subject of this article.[3] Even more than 70 years after the end of World War II, the identification of the sources of Holocaust research, and questions of physical or virtual access, interpretation, and dissemination continue to be the subject of a vivid conversation. Over the last several decades, numerous scholarly publications and projects, in fact, have contributed to the exploration of new perspectives and have included a much broader set of sources. EHRI and, consequently, its Document Blog reflect on the significance and specifics of Holocaust documentation and research.[4] The EHRI Portal[5] and other services aim to make it easier for researchers to identify collections, understand their research potential, and expand the scope of the sources of Holocaust research.

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[1] Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research. An Analysis*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 7–8.
[2] *Ibid.*, 8.
[3] For an overview of the aims and activities of the project, see Tobias Blanke et al., "The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure Portal," in *Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage 10/1* (2017), https://doi.org/10.1145/3004457.
[4] The widening of the sources of Holocaust research is well illustrated in the edition *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945*, (R. Oldenbourg: Munich, 2008), http://www.edition-judenverfolgung.de/.
[5] https://portal.ehri-project.eu/.

The EHRI Document Blog[6] is an open, experimental space that tackles questions related to Holocaust documentation, sources, and digital methodology. While allowing discussions on any issues and questions related to Holocaust documentation, the platform is particularly informed by the provenance and history of the Holocaust-related collections and sources, especially considering their destruction during World War II and the often circuitous path of the surviving materials. Like the EHRI project as a whole, the Document Blog discusses the effects of the fragmentation of the archival documentation on the Holocaust and its dispersal around the world. It supports new interpretations of Holocaust sources and highlights novel approaches to known as well as recently discovered documents, while taking into account the international nature of Holocaust research and the archives in which it can be conducted.

Moreover, Holocaust archives, memory, and research institutions are distinguished by a high degree of digitization due to their commitment to document the extent of the Nazi genocide. To answer the growing public interest, many started digitizing their archival collections and building databases of Holocaust victims very early. The vast digital resources of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, but also smaller Holocaust archives and memorial institutions make digital research much more viable than in other areas of modern history. The volume of scanned documents and other forms of digitization and online availability not only make it easier for researchers to identify and exploit digital sources, but also to directly integrate them into their narratives. The EHRI Document Blog offers an opportunity to experiment with new digital technologies to present and visualize digital Holocaust (and other historical) sources and new forms of historical narration. The blog also provides a space for discussions on the digital methodologies that extend our understanding and the accessibility of Holocaust documentation.

The self-categorization of the platform as a "blog," or a form of scientific blogging, signals the intention to create an open and flexible multidisciplinary interface between experts, students, hobby historians, and the wider public. It is characterized by an inclusive approach to the definition of a researcher. Not only

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[6] https://blog.ehri-project.eu/.

do the authors of the articles come from different disciplines, but they are also at very different stages in their careers. MA and PhD students and early career researchers publish there, alongside more senior colleagues already established at universities, research institutes, and in archives. The aim of the blog is to keep a finger on the pulse of Holocaust-related research and to support the presentation and discussion of ongoing projects conducted by historians and researchers in the humanities, digital humanists, archivists, and librarians, or any combination of these specializations. The platform doesn't aspire to become a definitive, comprehensive publication, but rather a part of an ongoing conversation.

The Document Blog is a component of the ongoing support for EHRI to empower its research communities by providing them with access to data and motivating them to adopt new approaches by lowering the threshold for accessing technology, as well as in the form of training. As a dynamic platform, the blog is also a way to foster dialogue with the research community, and it strives to be responsive to their questions and needs. Ideally, the blog also provides EHRI with crucial feedback on how researchers relate to the EHRI Portal and other digital resources and how they search for, view, and process data. The blog also explores the impact of the democratization of access and the changing notion of what constitutes a researcher in the humanities under the impact of digital technologies. Or in other words: it probes how the availability of digital resources and methods changes the way historians and other researchers in the humanities in the field of Holocaust Studies do their job.
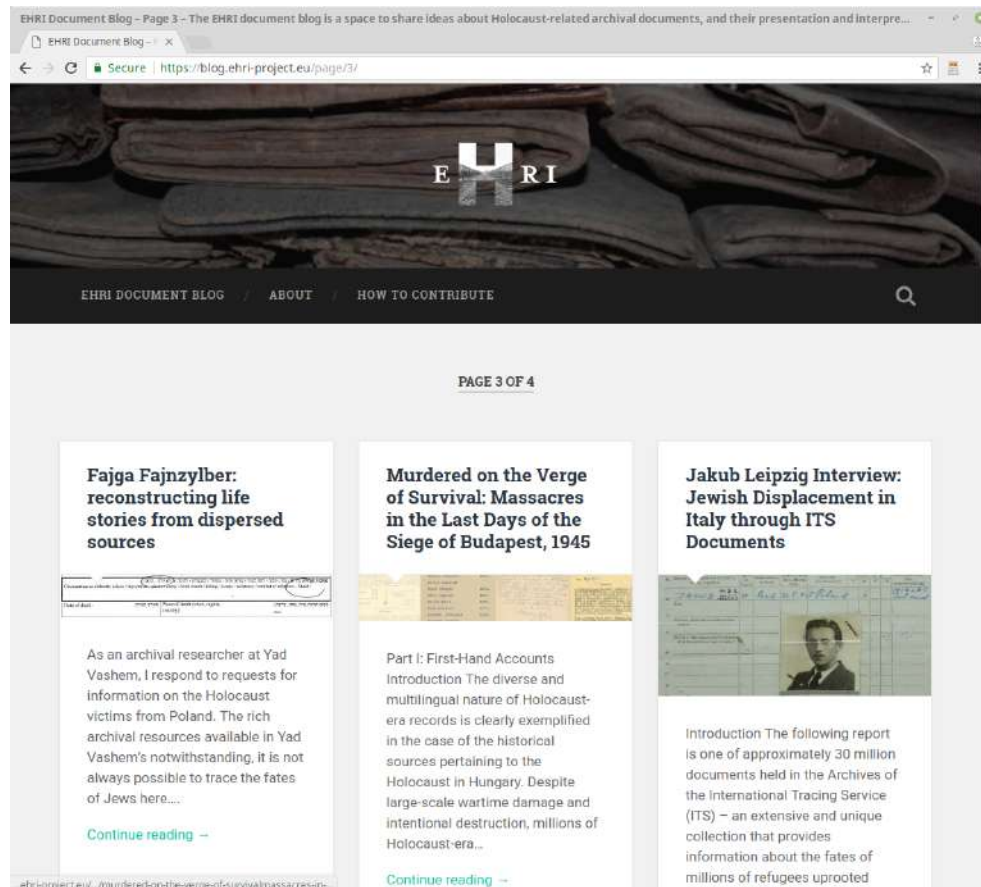
Fig. 1: Homepage of the EHRI Document Blog

Unlike the EHRI Portal, which maps the Holocaust-related documentation from above, focusing mainly on collection-level descriptions with structured, standard-compliant, metadata, the Document Blog explores the same subject from below, both in terms of documents and research practices. Designed with small data approaches in mind, it tests how scholarly digital storytelling helps to better decode and understand Holocaust-related documents and archives. Contributors to the blog are encouraged to start from a document, paying attention to its content, format, and language, and possibly also to its visual character and materiality. Furthermore, they are expected to share an idea, experience, or question related to the document, type of documentation, or method. While they are not obliged to do so, contributors are encouraged to take into consideration how the different types of digitally supported visualizations can enhance their analysis or better communicate their interpretation.

In order to connect the narratives as well as visualizations to structured data describing the documents and the related collections, a standard blogging platform (Word Press) is supported by the Omeka, a web application that makes it easy for cultural institutions to publish their collections based on the Dublin Core metadata standard. Contributors should provide metadata for all documents they discuss to be stored in the background installation of Omeka. Building on the cumulative acquisition of metadata, in the future, the project can use the document-level database to enrich collection-level focused descriptions in the EHRI Portal, or to provide a different mode of access to the articles published in the Document Blog.

The Document Blog doesn't lock users in a specific format or technology—contributors can use any method that can be embedded (or even linked to) into the blog, thereby allowing for flexibility and openness. Out-of-the-box, it offers the functionality of the Omeka Neatline plug-ins which make it possible to visually locate documents in time and space, and to construct compelling interactive presentations. Neatline allows one to import and link to standard Omeka (Dublin Core) records and to add further content of any kind. Contributors can create locations, place arbitrary shapes (for instance an arrow) or image over the map, and include further textual descriptions. They can construct timelines linked to the content visualized over the map. The Neatline Text plug-in makes it possible to read a text document alongside the map, and use links to highlight the mentioned places or other types of data. Neatline was chosen not only for its integration with Omeka, but also due to the decisions embedded into its architecture: it was designed mainly with small data in mind, and optimized for hand-made or at least manually finalized visualizations, therefore making it ideal for experimenting with document-driven scientific digital storytelling.

Full disclosure: the author acts as the leader of this effort within the EHRI project, and this article is an attempt to self-position the blog within the broader context of Holocaust-related publication platforms and in the realm of digital humanities, to critically reflect on its first two years, and share plans for the future. It starts by looking at the trends in the contributions published in the first two years and connecting them to current trends in Holocaust documentation and historiography. Its second part explores the role of digital

scientific storytelling with a focus on interactive visualizations, and closes with a reflection on blogging as a part of the research process.

The Shift to Jewish Sources

Since Hilberg collected the documents for his *The Destruction of European Jews*,[7] the scope of the sources of Holocaust research kept expanding. It still continues to, not only in terms of quantity, but also in nature. While his first book was chiefly based on government-produced documents as well as those produced for the purpose of retribution, historians later started to pay much more attention to documents created by the "victims," whether from individual persecuted Jews, families, or Jewish organizations, making it possible to explore individual agency and reactions to persecutions. Moreover, Holocaust documentation is an active process in which communities and dedicated memorial institutions contribute to extending, organizing, and even creating new types of sources, for instance in the form of tens of thousands of oral history interviews that became available over the past decades. After the fall of the "Iron Curtain," the sources housed in archives in Eastern Europe became more accessible and could be integrated with those in the "West."

The topics and the methods of the contributions to the blog provide some, if limited, insights about current trends in Holocaust documentation and research, and the possible synergies with digital humanities. In its first two years, the Document Blog highlighted a variety of documents and their readings. Characteristically, a disproportional number of articles examined egodocuments or sources created by Jewish organizations. The contributors analyzed testimonies, reports, and documents by Jewish relief organizations and "Jewish Councils," correspondence across the borders of Nazi-occupied Europe, and many others. No longer a neglected research field, this interest is also a testimony to the fact that knowledge of the Holocaust was built outside and often against hegemonic nation(alist) narratives and research structures, with gave egodocuments and the sources of the Jewish organizations a much larger weight.

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[7] Of the early editions, see, for instance, Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

This trend is illustrated, for instance, by a Yiddish play written by the Finnish Jewish author Jac Weinstein in 1948, one of the less typical documents of Jewish provenance. Simo Muir discusses his discovery of this forgotten artwork in the collections of the Jewish community in Helsinki. Rich in references to Jewish traditions and biblical motives, it provided a way to mourn the victims of the Nazi genocide (the oratorio was probably meant to be performed on *Tisha be Av*). Using a translation interactively overlaid over the scan of an example page and referring to the recent performances of the work by the Performing the Jewish Archive project,[8] Muir brings attention to the text itself and the possibilities for its continued readings and interpretations.[9] On the other hand, the less common "official," state-produced documents are the subject of an article by Jörn Kirschlat, which extends the publication of the collection metadata of the ITS concentration camps collection in the EHRI Portal,[10] discusses the specifics and significance of the collection, and provides example documents that give potential researchers a better grasp of the character of its contents.[11]

More than seventy years after the end of the war, the documentation of the names and fates of those persecuted during World War II remains a major agenda. Archives and memorial institutions receive daily inquiries by family members, communities and schools, memorials, and scientists. Due to the diversity of the lives and persecution trajectories and the fragmentation of the surviving documentation, finding out more about the fates of individuals often requires transnational research involving numerous archives. Several articles deal, from different perspectives, with the documentation of the names of Holocaust victims and its international character. Serafima Velkovich, an archival researcher in Yad Vashem, used her EHRI fellowship at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw to combine fragments of information about an ordinary victim, Fajga Fajnzylber from Lublin. Starting from an inquiry by family

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[8] http://ptja.leeds.ac.uk (viewed July 1, 2018).

[9] Simo Muir, "Yiddish Play Manuscript Draws Attention to Early Holocaust Commemoration in Finland," in *EHRI Document Blog*, May 15, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/05/15/yiddish-play-manuscript-draws-attention-to-early-holocaust-commemoration-in-finland/.

[10] https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/de-002409-de_its_0_4

[11] Jörn Kischlat, "Online Finding Aid on Nazi Camp History," in *EHRI Document Blog*, October 2, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/10/02/online-finding-aid-on-nazi-camp-history/.

members, she traced her fate from the Yad Vashem Page of Testimony,[12] through her birth certificate in the Lublin State Archives to her identification card issued by the "Jewish Council" in Lublin in 1940.[13] Daniela Bartáková from the Jewish Museum in Prague took a closer look at the card file of Jews in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in particular the machine-readable cards, and attempted to decode at least part of the symbols used.[14] On the other hand, Ivelina Nikolova from the EHRI partner Ontotext probed the potential of applying big data approaches and machine learning to the records of Holocaust victims. Using a data set provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, she and her colleagues used statistical models as well as input from an expert to cluster together a large number of records with a high probability of representing identical persons.[15]

The history and methodology of the early Holocaust documentation recently attracted historians and other scholars in the humanities, drawing attention to the multi-faceted forms in which the persecution and extermination of Jews was written down and memorialized, bringing back agency to Jewish victims and survivors who, instead of keeping silent, often testified, organized and published.[16] Laura Jockusch re-discovered the work of the post-World War II Jewish historical committees, which—in a massive transnational effort—collected testimonies, original documents, artwork, and other materials.[17] The EHRI project organized two workshops on the Holocaust collections and

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[12] http://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=10601997.

[13] Serafima Velkovich, "Fajga Fajnzylber: Reconstructing Life Stories from Dispersed Sources," *EHRI Document Blog*, March 10, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/03/10/fajga-fajnzylber-reconstructing-life-stories-from-dispersed-sources/.

[14] Daniela Bartáková, "Card File of the Jewish Population in the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia," *EHRI Document Blog*, September 11, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/09/11/card-file-of-the-jewish-population/.

[15] Ivelina Nikolova, "Person Records Linking in the USHMM Survivors and Victims Database," in *EHRI Document Blog*, May 29, 2018, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2018/05/29/person-records-linking-in-the-ushmm-survivors-and-victims-database/.

[16] David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist, *After the Holocaust. Challenging the Myth of Silence* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012); Regina Fritz, Éva Kovács and Béla Rásks, *Als der Holocaust noch keinen Namen hatte. Zur frühen Aufarbeitung des NS-Massenmordes an den Juden = Before the Holocaust Had Its Name. Early Confrontations of the Nazi Mass Murder of the Jews, Beiträge zur Holocaustforschung des Wiener Wiesenthal Instituts für Holocaust-Studien 2*, (Wien: Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien. new academic press, 2016); Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love. American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust*, 1945-1962, (New York: NYU Press, 2010).

[17] Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

testimonies created during or shortly after the war, and an online edition of samples of early testimonies from different archives in several languages is in preparation. The perhaps 18 thousand testimonies from these documentation projects, in Yiddish, Polish, Hungarian, and many other languages—different from later, mostly more narrative, reflective, and emotional accounts and often resembling judicial protocols—remain to be only reluctantly used by researchers to this day.

Testimony, especially its "early" forms, is one of the core focus areas of the Document Blog— working with examples that have caught the interest of researchers and archivists, it attempts to explore characteristics, probe digital approaches, and broaden the typology of "early" testimony. It covers the corpora created by the historical committees, but also expands beyond them to highlight other forms of testimonial documents. Michał Czajka and Magdalena Sedlická focused on a sample testimony from the collections of the postwar documentation committees secured in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and the Jewish Museum in Prague respectively. The testimony of Alter Ogień is one of only twelve surviving documents of the first Polish Jewish historical committee established in August 1944 in Lublin, immediately after the Soviet liberation. Recorded in Yiddish and written down by pencil, without any formalized format, the testimony is the oldest in the Institute's archives and was later integrated into the much larger corpus of seven thousand such documents collected by the Polish Central Jewish Historical Commission.[18] Valerie Straussová's story was recorded as part of a much less known and smaller Czechoslovak Jewish Documentation Campaign.[19]

Characteristically for this kind of early testimony, both related only to wartime persecution, leaving out pre-war life and identities. We learn nothing about their families before the occupation, their religiosity, political affiliation or, for instance, the languages spoken. While Straussová briefly recounts what happened to her family members, Ogień's wife appears in the story for the first time in a sentence mentioning that she joined him in hiding in a village close to Łęczna; we learn only later that she was liberated with him—and no more than

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[18]Michał Czajka, "Alter Ogień Testimony – the Earliest Testimony in the ŻIH Collection," in *EHRI Document Blog*, June 24, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/06/24/alter-ogien/.
[19]Magdalena Sedlická, "Testimony of Valerie Straussová," in *EHRI Document Blog*, March 11, 2016, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/03/11/testimony-of-valerie-straussova/.

this. In the immediate aftermath, both narrators (as well their interviewers) found it essential to refrain from the personal in favor of documenting events such as razzias, deportations, ghettos, and killings. Ogień's narrative starts in November 1939, with the first encounter with Germans in Warsaw; Straussová's only in February 1942 with her deportation to the Theresienstadt ghetto.

In direct and factual language, both survivors reproduce shocking events, and both are focused on encounters with Germans and their brutality. Ogień describes the day-to-day humiliation of Jews in Warsaw against the background of the establishment of the ghetto. Starved and exhausted by hard work, he escaped and traveled illegally via Lublin to Łęczna where no ghetto existed yet. However, we learn nothing about how he knew that and why he made this decision. Without sharing much about his own fate, he testifies about killings in Łęczna and villages nearby and deportations to Treblinka.

Straussová's remarkable testimony focuses on the murder of a group of weak and ill women on a death march from Schlesiersee. Atypically for this type of short testimony from the immediate post-war time, she describes in great detail her feelings during the killings in which she herself was shot in the back. When she found out that instead of a promised evacuation by truck, the entire group would be executed, she felt completely composed and reconciled with her inevitable death. Standing in front of a ditch, waiting to be shot, she recounted—in contrast to the brutality of the moment—how she thought of the beauty of the winter night and the shining moon. Once she realized that she was only lightly wounded, Straussová crawled into the nearby forest from where she witnessed the execution of her fellow prisoners. Only then, in her words, did she become agitated. After painfully wandering through beautiful forests, she survived in a Polish village until being liberated by the Red Army.

The format of this type of testimony, typical for the Czechoslovak Jewish documentation and other similar projects, also merits attention. Resembling a police or judicial protocol, it starts with the phrase "I, the undersigned […] giving my true testimony […] declare and swear that everything stated is true" and closes with the signatures of the survivor and witnesses, as well as the stamp of the Documentation Campaign. Straussová also offers to lead the authorities to the location of the execution: "I know the exact location of the place, where forty women were executed and I am willing to show this place to the

authorities." And indeed, the very selection of the topic as well as her later testimonies indicates that bringing perpetrators to justice was a driving force. Among several testimonies Straussová gave over the years, including an audio testimony for the Jewish Museum in Prague in 1994, one was during the trial of Karl Rahm, the last commander of the Theresienstadt ghetto, another for the Nuremberg Trials, and yet another in 1977 for a trial of perpetrators at the labor camp in Schlesiersee. A comparison of her testimonies, their topics, and languages, would be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Yet another facet of early testimony was analyzed by Christine Schmidt on an example of post-World War II eyewitness reports from the collection of the Wiener Library in London. Focusing on the process of recording, editing, and annotating the testimony of Helen Hirsch, a Christian from a "mixed marriage" in Czechoslovakia, she highlighted the methodology of Eva Reichmann, one of the early Holocaust historians. In contrast to the current focus on the authenticity and subjectivity of testimony, Reichmann emphasized meticulous verification and factual correctness: the annotated typed transcript of an interview shows how she corrected mistakes whenever they contradicted known "objective" facts. Schmidt notes that in this and similar interviews, recorded "in the third-person, authored and arguably, further mediated by the interviewer […] it is sometimes difficult to determine where the voice and intentions of the interviewer has superseded that of the interviewee."[20]

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[20] Christine Schmidt, "Visualising Methodology in The Wiener Library's Early Testimonies' Project," in *EHRI Document Blog*, January 16, 2018, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2018/01/16/visualising-methodology-in-the-wiener-librarys-early-testimonys-project/.

Fig. 2: Annotated page from the <u>testimony of Helen Hirsch</u>

Testimony, indeed, can encompass very different types of documents. Not only those formally taken down to capture a life story or an episode, but also other materials were and are considered to be testimony. Jessica Green from the Wiener Library discussed a testimony *sui generis*, a collection of short letters by children from the first German *Kindertransport* in December 1938, written as they were traveling through the Netherlands. While not created as a testimony about specific events or life trajectories, the transcripts were nevertheless added to the collection of 365 eyewitness testimonies gathered by Alfred Wiener's Central Jewish Information Office in Amsterdam after the November Pogrom of 1938 (the *Kristallnacht*).[21] The "translation" of the letters from a private document into "testimony" on the persecution of Jews, and the Jewish relief,

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[21] Jessica Green, "Letters from Children on the First Kindertransport," in *EHRI Document Blog*, April 20, 2016, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/04/20/letters-from-kindertransport-children/.

is—from the perspective of the documentation of the Holocaust—as interesting as their moving content.

Beyond these large corpora of testimonies collected by Jewish documentation projects, it is important to explore those in other, sometimes less expected, locations. Chiara Renzo discusses the interview with Jakub Leipzig located in the archives of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen. Conducted and written down in the third person by a UN official in 1949 in Milano, the relatively short and emotionless third-person document tracks his path from the Polish town of Mielec, through ghettos and concentration camps, to the post-liberation DP camps. For instance: "In December 1941 the subject together with his relatives was sent by Germans to a GHETTO at DEBICA (POLAND). In that Ghetto the subject remained interned till 1942, and was sent often from there as forced labourer to the different works."[22] Reading the protocol, one of the many documents in his file in the ITS archives, it is essential to keep in mind its purpose—to validate his claim for international support and resettlement.

The variety of testimonial documents discussed in the EHRI Document Blog contribute to a broader conversation about testimony and its role in the further study of the Holocaust. Historians and social scientists explore early documentation projects, ask what establishes a testimony, compare its early forms to the more recent interviews,[23] or, for instance, examine the potential for their presentation in the digital environment.

Visualizing Places and Spaces

Over the past decade, the 'spatial turn' significantly enriched Holocaust Studies. Spatial policies were an essential element of the Nazi persecution and exclusion of Jews, from moving state borders, through the definition of inaccessible spaces, up to the construction of ghettos and camps. Recent studies focus not only on

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[22] Chiara Renzo, "Jakub Leipzig Interview: Jewish Displacement in Italy through ITS Documents," in *EHRI Document Blog*, January 23, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/01/23/jakub-leipzig-interview-jewish-displacement-in-italy-through-its-documents/.

[23] Sharon Kangisser Cohen, *Testimony and Time: Holocaust Survivors Remember*, (Jerusalem: Yad va-shem-International Institute for Holocaust Research, 2014).

physical places and landscapes, but also incorporate insights from cultural geography and the construction of social space. The Holocaust can't be understood without research in how spaces, both physical and social, were created, transformed, and appropriated by perpetrators, victims, and the evasive group of 'bystanders.' For instance, Andrew Charlesworth explored the topographies of the concentration camps, with their landscapes and physical features, often omitted by eyewitnesses and ignored by historians.[24] The Holocaust Geographies Collaborative working group played a pioneering role by experimenting with different sets of data, methodologies, and forms of visualization, and applying them at different scales. "Collaborative" in the title of this working group referred to its interdisciplinary nature. The resulting visualizations and studies, such as the mobility in the Budapest ghetto, arrests of Italian Jews, or the construction of the concentration camps system,[25] were only possible thanks to the enriching collaboration between historians and geographers.[26] Tim Cole, in his recent *Holocaust Landscapes*, discussed different types of spaces (such as ghetto, train, forest, etc.), and explored the Holocaust as a "place-making event," as well as the spatial strategies deployed by Jewish actors.[27]

The EHRI Document Blog makes it easier for authors to engage with the research in Holocaust geographies by constructing spatial or spatiotemporal visualizations. In the first, rather experimental, article, this author used a report by Marie Schmolka, a Czechoslovak Jewish relief activist, to lead the readers through the No Man's Land for refugees in 1938. Locating these places along the shifting borders of Czechoslovakia after the Munich Agreement and the First Vienna Award, the presentation shows the negative impact of the territorial revisions on the refugee policies of the states in East-Central Europe.[28] Or, in a contribution about forced laborers in the water works in the Lublin District,[29] Frank Grelka provides only a brief introduction on the phenomenon of rural

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[24] Andrew Charlesworth, "The Topography of Genocide," in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone, (Basingstoke-Hampshire-New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2004), 216–52.

[25] https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/project.php?id=1015.

[26] Alberto Giordano, Anne Kelly Knowles and Tim Cole, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

[27] Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2016).

[28] Frankl, "Reports from the No Man's Land."

[29] Frank Grelka, "Forced Labourers and the Water Works Camps in the Lublin District," in *EHRI Document Blog*, October 23, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/10/23/water-works-camps/.

forced labor in the General Government and allows for the exploration of the details of the individual places of origin, transport routes, and camps through the interactive map. Clicking, for instance, on the point representing Osowa, the reader finds out, along with the dates of their deployment, that the forced laborers sent to work in melioration came from Warsaw, learns more about their deportation via Deblin, Lublin, Pulawy, and Sobibor, and can follow their 16-kilometers-long march to reach Osowa.[30]

László Csősz used an interactive map to offer an enhanced perspective on the space and to make it easier to grasp the perceptions of the deportees. Exploring the conditions of a march of Hungarian Jewish slave laborers from Budapest towards Austria in November 1944, using a number of documents from Hungarian archives, he not only connects the order of the Ministry of the Interior with the map, but replaces dots typically used to mark places with interactive weather icons. Clicking on the cloud-with-rain icon for Szőny, for instance, the reader finds out that, after four days on the road, prisoners were marching in temperatures of 3° to 5.4° C and in pouring rain.[31]

Nevertheless, the map presentations in the EHRI Document Blog remain far from perfect. The lack of reliable, open and, standard-compliant historical geographic data, or the difficulty of their deployment, make developing GIS applications and other map presentations time consuming and beyond possibility for many. To rely on Google Maps or OpenStreetMap as the background layer in the presentations (currently, the EHRI Document Blog can't combine such map services with the digitized historical maps in its out-of-the-box services) is obviously limiting. While this allows it to present basic topographic features, it can also lead to bizarre visual encounters and confrontations with changed landscapes, street plans, and administrative borders. In the future, it would be desirable to replace these map services with historically more accurate ones, probably by providing a dedicated server for geospatial data. The functionality of Neatline, or any other comparable tool for that matter, doesn't by itself offer the instruments and produce the knowledge of professional cartographers. The EHRI project doesn't have the capacity, at

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[30] https://visualisations.ehri-project.eu/neatline/fullscreen/wasserwirtschaftslager#records/925.

[31] László Csősz, "Death Blows Overhead: The Last Transports from Hungary, November 1944," in *EHRI Document Blog*, November 23, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/11/23/hungary-1944/.

this stage, to support authors—who typically lack this background—by engaging geographers and cartographers in the same way that the Holocaust Geographies Collaborative does.

Perhaps even more limiting was the lack of open and standardized data sets on historical borders, ghettos, and camps. In order to provide at least basic data on the shifting state boundaries that allow one to capture the territorial expansion of Nazi Germany and the effects of the proximity or distance of borders on the events and phenomena discussed in the articles, the EHRI team adopted the data made available by the Holocaust Geographies Collaborative used for visualizing the "Building of the New Order," and published at the project website of the Stanford Spatial History Lab.[32] Capturing month-by-month changes to European borders from the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938 to the liberation in 1945, the data set is based on the evaluation and digitization of about one hundred historical maps of different type, scale and, geographic or administrative focus. For the purposes of the EHRI Document Blog and other EHRI digital publications, the borders were imported into Omeka and a simple Omeka plug-in was developed to help with adding locations with geographic data into the specific format and geographic projection used.[33] In several cases, EHRI corrected mistakes that were typically caused by the lower resolution of the data set: for instance the borders close to Theresienstadt where the ghetto appeared on the wrong side of the border of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

In the near future, the Document Blog will be able to exploit new data sets developed by EHRI for ghettos and camps during the Holocaust. Recently, based on its previous development of controlled vocabularies and on data from partner institutions, especially from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos[34] and from Yad Vashem, EHRI started a Wikidata project to collate, enrich, and collaboratively develop data on ghettos

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[32] Michael De Groot, "Building the New Order: 1938-1945," *Spatial History Project*, Stanford University, August 24, 2010
https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=51&project_id=.

[33] https://github.com/EHRI/NeatlineFeatureImport.

[34] Geoffrey P. Megargee, Martin Dean, and Melvin Hecker, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945, vol. I-II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009). The first two volumes of the encyclopedia are now available for free download at: https://www.ushmm.org/research/publications/encyclopedia-camps-ghettos.

in Nazi-occupied Europe.[35] The data also contain geographic locations, thus making it possible to import it into other applications and build rich map presentations demonstrating the development of the Nazi ghettos.[36] The EHRI project plans to continue with a similar project for concentration and extermination camps.

The from-below experiments with Holocaust geographies in the Document Blog therefore point towards the desirability and potential of building open data sets that can be used by the Document Blog and other applications. In the future, optimally EHRI would help to create and curate such data sets in cooperation with other projects.

The Power of Visualization

Visualizations projecting documents over maps and timelines proved to be, starting with the very first article,[37] a clear attraction for both authors and readers, and developed into the Document Blog's signature feature. This made clear the hunger among historians and archivists to apply such methods to their own data and often, at the same time, exposed their lack of experience and/or skills with doing so. Visualizations, however, are not an end in themselves, but rather means of re-thinking the document as well as the narrative. In deploying these tools, the platform is less focused on technological progress, but rather on researchers' use and interaction with technology. Experimenting with the methods of digital storytelling in the rapidly developing field of digital technology is one way the EHRI Document Blog allows authors to critically think about the sources of Holocaust research. It provides a glimpse into the changing practices of research, writing, and dissemination in the digital age—in other words, it probes how the availability of digital resources (digitized archival documents, databases of Holocaust victims, and other data sets) and tools affects researchers and what challenges and hurdles this presents.

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[35] https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q2583015; list of ghettos in the EHRI Wikidata project (including duplicate records collated from different sources): http://tinyurl.com/ycymunql.

[36] Nancy Cooey, "Using Wikidata to Build an Authority List of Holocaust-Era Ghettos," in *EHRI Document Blog*, February 12, 2018, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2018/02/12/using-wikidata/.

[37] Michal Frankl, "Reports from the No Man's Land," in *EHRI Document Blog*, January 19, 2016, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/01/19/reports-from-the-no-mans-land/.

Through the visualizations and the inclusion of data, the Document Blog experiments with different types of narration. It motivates authors to develop non-linear narratives by weaving their text together with interactive components, thus letting their readers discover the subject in different ways and to "read" through the article along different trajectories. This non-linear approach makes it easier for end users to explore the original sources on which the (hi)story is based, collection descriptions, related taxonomies, and, most importantly interactive presentations visualizing the documents in time and space and enriching them with contextual information. It also makes it possible to build-in source criticism in a novel and more experiential way. On the other hand, not having full control over the reader's path through the material can also be challenging for authors.

For instance, visualizations of Holocaust testimony (placing the text alongside a map which connects the narrative with a map/timeline visualization and allowing one to follow the personal story in space and time) illustrate the possibilities of non-linear narratives. The visualizations are deployed not to lead away from the narrative of the testimony itself, but to enhance its close reading (as opposed to distant reading, which caused a stir in the discussions at the crossroads between literary studies and digital humanities).[38] Hence, while not always with high resolution, these visualizations are no abstract aggregations resulting in simplification and error introduced by the translation from original texts to high-level presentation.[39] In future, in addition to close reading, integration of further, in particular linguistic, tools, allowing for a more distant view of the texts and their aggregation, would be desirable.

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[38] This debate was in particular triggered by Franco Moretti's case for the distant reading of literary sources in *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*, (London; Brooklyn: Verso, 2007).

[39] For the—perhaps artificial—dichotomy between close and distant reading, see the excellent assay: Anne Kelly Knowles, "A More Humane Approach to Digital Scholarship," in *Parameters* (blog), August 3, 2016, http://parameters.ssrc.org/2016/08/a-more-humane-approach-to-digital-scholarship/.
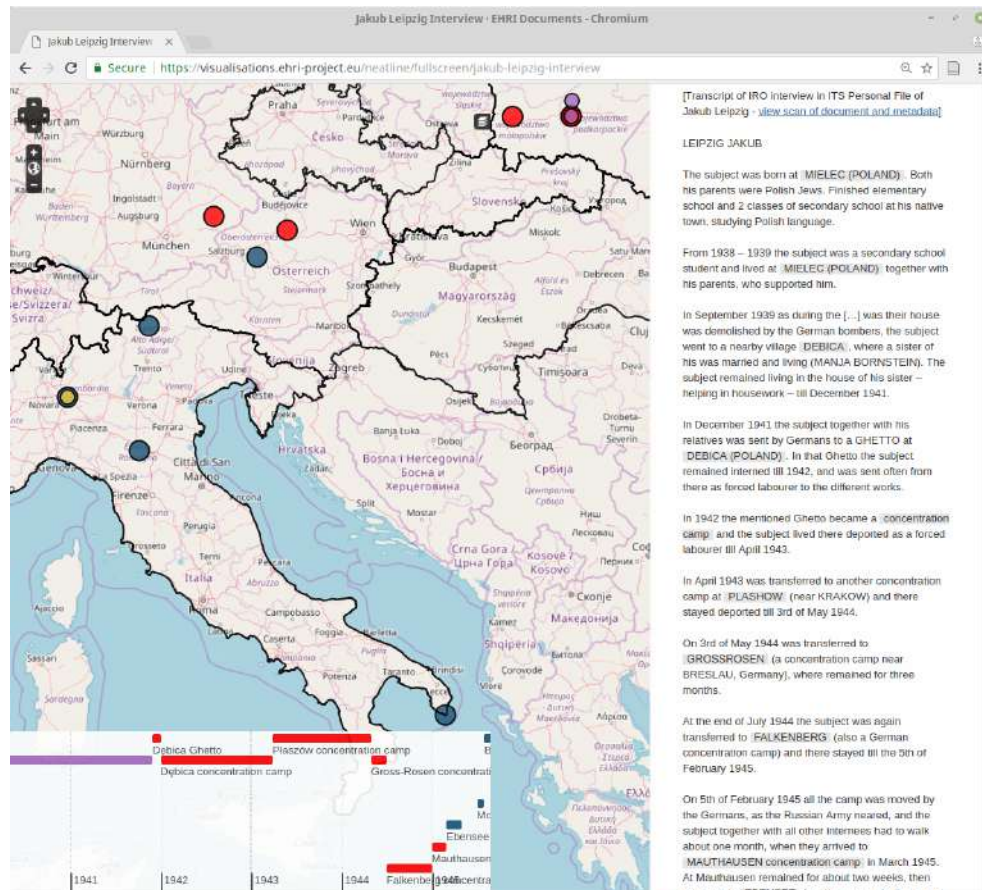
Fig. 3: Visualization connecting map and text of the <u>Jakub Leipzig interview</u>

Interactive elements built on top of these presentations can also help to train future researchers, the specialized and experienced ones as well as hobby researchers and genealogists, to use and understand the document, its structure, the meaning of typical sections as well as language(s). Bartáková, for instance, uses a Neatline presentation to annotate one of the machine-readable cards and to explain the meaning of the individual fields, as much as it could be ascertained. Or, in an article on the death certificates from the Theresienstadt (Terezín) ghetto, Wolfgang Schellenbacher annotates the form of Gabriel Frankl, who died in the ghetto on February 13, 1943.[40] For instance, deciphering the code "E IIIa" as *Geniekaserne* and explaining its function at the time of the death as "an old

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[40] Wolfgang Schellenbacher, "Death Certificate of Gabriel Frankl from the Terezín Ghetto," in *EHRI Document Blog*, February 18, 2016, <u>https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/02/18/death-certificate-of-gabriel-frankl-from-the-terezin-ghetto/</u>.

people's home and a division of the ghetto hospital,"[41] he demonstrates the meaning of the form and its fields even for those who don't understand the original language and lack expert knowledge of the history of the ghetto. Since approximately twenty thousand death certificates (the originals are located in the National Archives in Prague) are available online[42] (for about two-thirds of the inmates who died in Theresienstadt), making their structure, content, and contexts easier to understand has significant research potential.

EHRI plays an important role in facilitating access to such data, and the Document Blog supports the use of EHRI resources as a point of authoritative reference for citations of archival collections and other data, such as archives, personalities, camps and ghettos, and keywords in scholarly texts. An open source shortcode plug-in for Word Press,[43] developed by Michael Bryant from Kings College London for usage in the Blog and beyond, makes it possible to easily embed formatted data provided via the EHRI API.[44] Using the same layout as records from an EHRI Portal listing or result set, it creates a coherent interface and makes it easier to navigate through the information. In this way, it also helps to assess the relevance of the content of the EHRI Portal for Holocaust Studies, or what it lacks. The potential gaps exposed in the Document Blog can become an impetus for the identification of new collections, and adding new descriptions to the EHRI Portal. A version of the shortcode plug-in has also been prepared for Omeka, and other web applications can embed EHRI content in a similar fashion using iframes (with the obvious limitations of this approach). The plug-in can be easily reproduced for other applications and platforms, making it easy to integrate well-formatted and up-to-date references to EHRI data.

Yet, the research process also challenges researchers to deal with uncertainty. No visualization, based on a map, timeline, or in any other form, is indeed a true one-to-one representation of reality or the richer representation in textual sources. In keeping with the critical approach, blog contributors are also expected to explain the sources of their visualizations, their methods and to make clear the

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[41] https://visualisations.ehri-project.eu/neatline/fullscreen/death-certificate#records/81.

[42] Through the www.holocaust.cz portal; see, for instance, the death certificate of Gabriel Frankl, linked to further information about his fate from the database of Holocaust victims: http://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-digitised-documents/document/94712-frankl-gabriel-death-certificate-ghetto-terezin/.

[43] https://github.com/EHRI/ehri-wordpress-plugin.

[44] https://portal.ehri-project.eu/api.

way in which it was constructed. Specifically, they should expose the uncertainty regarding the content or the interpretation of the document. For instance, Chiara Renzo notes that, in many cases, only approximate locations of the wartime camps and post-war DP-camps mentioned in the testimony of Jakub Leipzig were identified, and the locations of the towns and villages with the same name had to be used instead. Extensive additional research would be required to provide a micro-historical, map-driven narrative. Similarly, in constructing his weather indicators, László Csősz had—as he explains in his article—to resort to certain approximations, since for some locations weather reports were unavailable.

Gaps in the contextual information that affects the visualizations as well as interpretation were omnipresent in the blog contributions. For instance, barely anything is known about the narrator, Alter Ogień, beyond what was recorded in the 1944 protocol. Likewise, the further fate of Jakub Leipzig is unclear: the ITS records only make clear that, his request to resettle to the United States notwithstanding, he was still living as a refugee by 1953. How the *Kindertransport* letters were transformed into a testimonial format also remains unclear: the transcriptions were prepared by an anonymous person, possibly from the circle of Jewish relief workers, and were sent to the JCIO by a Mr. Flörsheim, about whom no further information is provided. We know even less about how these transcripts were selected out of a larger set of letters. The ongoing conversation about uncertainty and knowledge gaps are an important element of researching through blogging.

When László Csősz, archivist in the Hungarian National Archives and member of the EHRI team, started to work on his article about the massacres in Budapest shortly before the liberation by the Red Army (which he co-authored together with his colleague Laura Csonka), he thought of creating a presentation to visually communicate what he already knew to the readers of their article. Yet, as he, in cooperation with other EHRI staff, continued building the presentation, locating the last days of the Budapest ghetto on the map, he realized that such a visualization bore fruit for him as well: for the first time, he could grasp the very proximity of events taking place in Budapest. Placing the massacres of Jews perpetrated by the Arrow Cross militias in January 1945, just before the liberation, onto the historical map of Budapest, he realized just how

close these events were to the front line.[45] In other words: the hands-on experience with constructing the map visualization helped him grasp the issues of proximity and distance and the perception of space in a city divided by the advancing front.
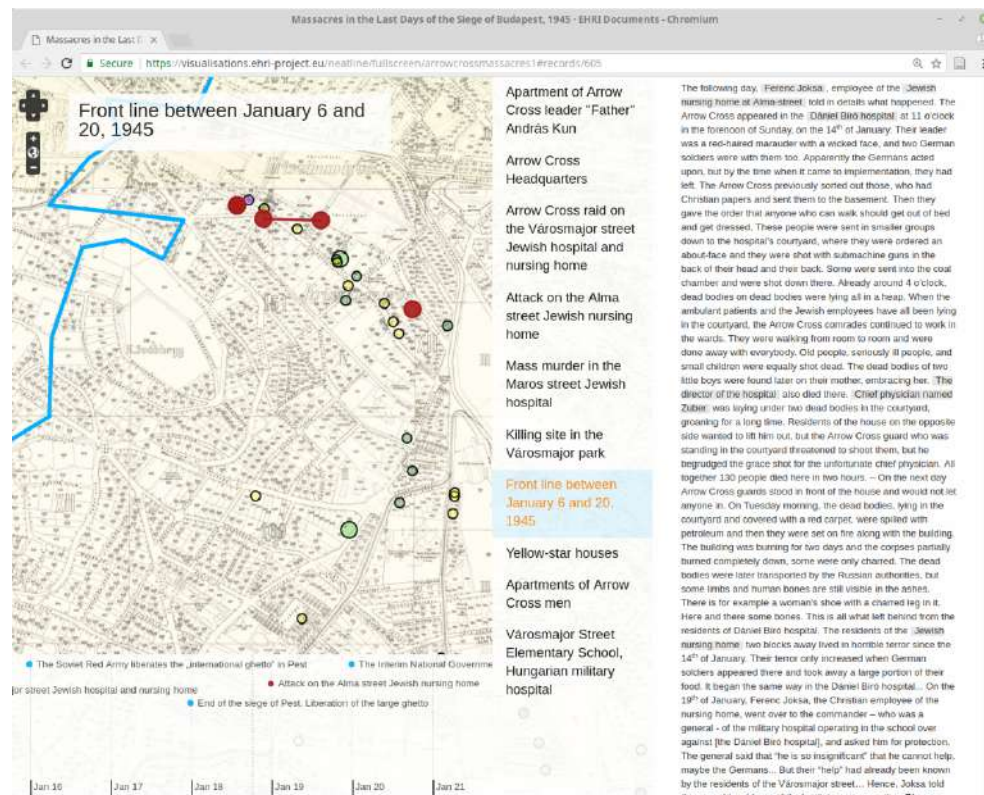
Fig. 4: Map visualization for the article about the massacres during the last days fo the Budapest ghetto

This case illustrates that such interactive content shouldn't only be considered a form of illustration or dissemination, a form of public history, nor is it a hands-on experience limited to training authors in the humanities to use digital methods. More than this, learning by doing, or blogging, is also part of the research process yielding new observations and knowledge, which can feed back into the textual interpretation. Something similar was experienced by the editors of the Geographies of the Holocaust, who conclude: "Visualizing has the potential to uncover things that may otherwise be invisible within textual

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[45] László Csősz and Laura Csonka, "Murdered on the Verge of Survival: Massacres in the Last Days of the Siege of Budapest, 1945," in *EHRI Document Blog*, February 8, 2017, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/02/08/murdered-on-the-verge-of-survivalmassacres-in-the-last-days-of-the-siege-of-budapest-1945/.

sources."[46] The EHRI Document Blog illustrates that science blogging helps to record and understand research processes and to bring forward new ideas.

Research Incubator

The EHRI Document Blog is part of the trend of scientific blogging, such as the fast-growing hypotheses.org, and there is vivid debate about its function and contribution to scholarly work. It is guided by similar principles as other blogging sites: it aims to create a space for more open, easier and faster communication, which fosters creativity and supports early career researchers to share their sources, findings, and ideas, and position themselves in their research field.[47]

However, in its editorial procedure and control over published articles, it does differ from many other comparable platforms and positions itself in the space between a typical blog and a more formal scholarly journal. While the blog starts from the broad definition of a researcher and the initiative of historians, archivists, and others drives it forward, it is not completely self-organized, and the EHRI editorial team keeps a stricter control over thematic coherence and the publication process. The production of contributions, from their proposal through implementation to publication, is conducted under the supervision and assistance of the EHRI staff. Contributors can suggest articles through an online form or in direct communication with the editors. If needed, the editors can make sure that the contributions don't go off-topic, slip into private or political statements, and correspond to basic standards of academic discussion (in the first two years, however, there was no need for such an intervention). The editors also strive to control the publication interval so that blog articles appear at a regular pace.

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[46] Giordano, Kelly Knowles and Cole, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, 8.

[47] Peter Haber, Eva Pfanzelter and Julia Schreiner, *Historyblogosphere. Bloggen in den Geschichtswissenschaften*, (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013); Mareike König, "Blogs als Wissensorte der Forschung," in *Die Zukunft der Wissensspeicher. Forschen, Sammeln und Vermitteln im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Jürgen Mittelstraß and Ulrich Rüdiger, (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2016), 105–22; Anna Mauranen, "Hybridism, Edutainment, and Doubt: Science Blogging Finding Its Feet*,*" in *Nordic Journal of English Studies 12/*1 (2013): 7–36; Cornelius Puschmann and Merja Mahrt, "Scholarly Blogging. A New Form of Publishing or Science Journalism 2.0?" in *Science and the Internet*, ed. Alexander Tokar, (Düsseldorf: Dup, 2012), 171–81.

Yet, this stricter approach is less motivated by the dogma of quality control as applied in scholarly journals, but rather by the specific topics of the field and the editorial process tailored for multidisciplinary approaches, in particular helping historians and archivists deploy digital tools.

Even though the blog articles tend to be shorter and sometimes display a lesser academic ambition, the core difference in comparison to scholarly journals lies in the publication process. The peer review process, accepted as a standard in the realm of academic journals, has been criticized for its possible tendency to impose disciplinary standards, and for a possible suspicion to novel, untested, and unrecognized approaches. Reshaping the peer-review for the purpose of multi or transdisciplinary research is a challenge in its own right.[48]

In the traditional editorial process, authors can typically be expected to possess the competence to prepare a complete submission, perhaps apart from selected illustrations such as maps and graphics. Yet, the preparation of the contributions to the Document Blog made clear the challenges of such an approach when historical writing is combined with digital humanities. For instance, the process of crafting presentations with Neatline, as powerful as this tool might be, is confusing for less experienced users and can prove time-consuming even for those more comfortable with technology. More generally, the editorial process of the Document Blog exposes the learning curve related to the application of technology-supported non-linear narratives. Even authors among EHRI partner institutions often require extensive support to use the available tools. The EHRI staff typically offers constant direction and often assists in building and testing the interactive content. This way, the blog developed into a laboratory of digitally supported writing and publication.

Rather than a formalized procedure, such as the peer-review, experimenting with new approaches and crossing the digital threshold requires cooperation across specializations and a more flexible editorial process. The EHRI Document Blog doesn't aspire to become a scholarly journal with a strict process of submission and evaluation of contributions through the peer-review process. While keeping

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[48] J. Britt Holbrook, "Peer Review," in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, I, ed. Robert Frodeman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 321–32, http://media.obvsg.at/AC08139408-1001; see also Ben Kaden, *Library 2.0 und Wissenschaftskommunikation*, (Berlin: Simon, 2009), 79–101.

an eye on the scientific relevance of the contributions, it deploys what could roughly be described as an agile editorial process in which researchers, archivists, and experts in digital humanities work interactively together, and learn from each other. Instead of a rigid selection and evaluation process, the platform emphasizes communication with authors and provides assistance in different phases of the preparation of the contributions.

The EHRI Document Blog aspires to operate alongside scholarly journals in the field whereby the originally more experimental contributions in the blog could potentially grow into full scholarly articles, perhaps relying on the visualizations developed here. In this and other ways, the blog functions as an incubator in which sources and ideas, narrative methods, and visualizations can be tested and contested, discussed, and curated.

Perspectives and Challenges

Since its launch in January 2016 and through June 2018, 29 contributions discussing a variety of Holocaust sources and approaches by researchers from different disciplines were published in the EHRI Document Blog. Starting from posts prepared by historians and archivists from within the project,[49] its production increasingly draws experts from the broader fields of Holocaust Studies and Digital Humanities, including the recipients of EHRI fellowships who report on their findings during their stay at an EHRI partner institution. In 2018, the blog was regularly updated every three weeks and enjoyed approximately 800 visits per month, and this number is growing.

True to its experimental character, the future development of the EHRI Document Blog is indeed an open-ended process. The platform was built from the bottom and was informed by the interaction between the EHRI staff and the contributing researchers. However, as it grows more representative of current trends in historiography, archival science, and digital humanities, the project team plans to better sort the content into categories, thus enabling an analysis

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[49] EHRI Work package 12, "New views on digital archives," led by the Jewish Museum in Prague, together with the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Hungarian Jewish Archives in Budapest, the Wiener Library in London, the Kings College London, and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

and discussion of the specific types of Holocaust sources. As of the writing of this article, a new layout is in preparation that will be adapted to the visualizations and data returned by the EHRI API, but also provide a better user interface to search and explore the growing number of documents, ideas, and methods. The EHRI team will also re-evaluate the ways to make articles better citable (for instance through shorter URLs, DOIs and an ISSN).

In the future, the blog will also become a testing ground for another challenge: to keep the content, and in particular the visualizations, functional. The Vectors journal,[50] which experiments with the intersections of culture and technology, can serve both as an inspiration and as a warning. Published between 2005 and 2013, the content—mostly consisting of interactive presentations based on now outdated technologies—is today frozen and archived, with a large part of the contributions no longer functional. The EHRI infrastructure is indeed well positioned to sustain the platform over a long period of time and to upgrade the presentations as needed. It is, however, possible that at some later point it will no longer be possible to maintain the technologies used and that the project will have to search for ways to archive the content while documenting as much of the functionality of the interactive elements as possible.

The engagement of the readers' community through commenting, optimally a form of open post review, poses yet another challenge. In practice, contributions in the Document Blog triggered only a few comments from users,[51] mostly on articles that spoke to a broader community, including Holocaust survivors and their families. The publishers will consider changes to the layout to make commenting more attractive, but it is unlikely that this trend will dramatically change in the future. On the other hand, within the EHRI community and the broader circle of Holocaust researchers, the blog has generated more traffic on social media and elsewhere. In at least one case, the articles were used as examples of approaches to Holocaust documents in a university course. The success of the blog, however, can be measured on the interest of potential authors inspired by the style and functionality of the previous blog posts.

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[50] http://vectors.usc.edu

[51] See a similar finding in Mareike König, "Die Entdeckung der Vielfalt: Geschichtsblogs auf der internationalen Plattform hypotheses.org," in *Historyblogosphere. Bloggen in den Geschichtswissenschaften*, eds. Haber, Pfanzelter and Schreiner, 181–97.

Over its first two years, the EHRI Document Blog established itself as an incubator of ideas about Holocaust documentation and digital methodologies, and it has the potential to continue in this role in the future. Looking forward, its authors and editors could also revisit already published articles, and enhance them with new data and visualization methods and links to new resources. Moreover, the editors will consider a more curatorial approach to the published articles. In research blogs, curation typically means selecting the best articles, for instance by promoting them to the front page. In the EHRI Document Blog, the editorial team could experiment with bringing the growing body of research data into more comprehensive presentations, for instance by combining them into a richer presentation on Holocaust sites, landscapes, and interactions in space.

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Michael Frankl is a historian with focus on modern antisemitism, refugees and refugee policies, and the Holocaust. From 2008 until 2016, he was the Head of the Shoah History Department of the Jewish Museum in Prague and later of its Deputy Director and the Head of the Department of Jewish Studies and of the History of Antisemitism. From 2016, he is a senior researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences. He is the leader of the work package "New views on digital archives" in the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure.

From the Lone Survivor to the Networked Self.
Social Networks Meet the Digital Holocaust Archive

by *Paris Papamichos Chronakis*

Abstract

Although concentration camps constituted a densely populated social world, historians still largely approach them as being composed of isolated individuals. This interpretative premise is sustained by the inherent linear organization of most audiovisual archives and the prominence of the individual survivor testimony as their organizing unit. However, taking the social relation rather than the individual and his/her testimony as the organizing principle of a rethought digital Holocaust archive leads to a more historically faithful understanding of the Holocaust survivor as a networked self. A pilot digital reconstruction of social networks of Jewish Holocaust survivors from the Greek city of Salonica/Thessaloniki demonstrates how the linear digital audiovisual archive can support the digital documentation of the multiple forms and structures of relatedness, thus helping historians better understand how Holocaust survivors managed to reconstruct a social universe in the camps and navigate within it under extremely adverse circumstances.

Introduction: Rethinking the Logic of the Holocaust Audiovisual Archive

Digital Social Networks Meet the Audiovisual Archive: The Pilot Project "Bonds of Survival"

Conclusion: Networking the Holocaust Audiovisual Archive

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Introduction: Rethinking the Logic of the Holocaust Audiovisual Archive[1]

Since the early 1980s, the image of a Holocaust survivor bearing witness on camera has been so inextricably linked to the audiovisual archive that it has become near impossible to imagine any other way of capturing, archiving, and conceptualizing the lived experience of the Holocaust in all its vivacity, complexity, and horror. The individual interview has sustained the emergence and consolidation of a powerful conceptual framework organized around the key notions of "witness," "testimony," "survival," "trauma," "truth," and "memory."[2] It has also generated a sustained discussion on questions of representation as numerous studies have challenged the realism of the audiovisual interview, highlighted its performative and dialogic aspects, foregrounded the relation between the verbal and the non-verbal, pointed to the role of the camera in blurring the distinction between form and content as well as in creating secondary and tertiary witnesses, and dissected the manifold narrative arcs the interview follows from the aporetic to the redemptive.[3] Today,

[2] The list is long. Seminal works that shaped the field include Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, (New York: Routledge, 1992); Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, transl. Jared Stark, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). For an innovative study of the multiple receptions of Holocaust testimonies by scholars and artists (though not 'ordinary' viewers) see Thomas Trezise, *Witnessing Witnessing. On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). Jeffrey Shandler incisively notices the concomitant emergence of video testimonies and the consolidation of the term 'survivor' to define those who lived through the Holocaust. Jeffrey Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 46.
[3] Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, 57-74; Caroline Wake, "Regarding the Recording: The Viewer of Video Testimony, the Complexity of Copresence and the Possibility of Tertiary Witnessing," *History and Memory* 25/1 (2013): 111-44; James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Recounting and Life History*, (Westport: Praeger, 1998); Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Beyond Testimony*, (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2010); Amit Pinchevski, "The Audiovisual Unconscious: Media and Trauma in the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies," *Critical Inquiry* 39/1 (Autumn 2012), 142-66; Noah Shenker, "Through the Lens of the Shoah: The Holocaust as a Paradigm for Documenting Genocide Testimonies," *History and Memory* 28/1 (2016), 141-75; Henry Greenspan,

Holocaust-related audiovisual archives continue to fuel a lively discussion on the elusive essence of the digital archive, its relation to past archival regimes, its non-material nature, and its multiple and often contradictory functions as a site and a form of knowledge production and consumption.[4]

Once marginal, audiovisual archives have today established a firm presence in the Holocaust archival landscape. According to Maria Ecker, out of the approximately 40,000 survivor testimonies recorded in the United States, only 13% were collected before 1978, compared to 87% after 1978. These are now organized into no fewer than sixty-nine archival collections.[5] The sheer size of University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive and its continuous aggrandizement through the ongoing addition of audiovisual archives relating to other pre- and post-Holocaust genocides is evidently turning the Holocaust testimony into a canon, even if it is one, as Noah Schenker has shown, that can be turned against its own logic.[6]

Precisely because the Holocaust audiovisual archive nowadays holds the high status of a model to be either explicitly copied or implicitly challenged, it is perhaps not far-fetched to argue that it has created its own regime of truth.[7] In particular, its fundamental organizing premise, the individual interview, has

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"Collaborative Interpretation of 'Survivors' Accounts: A Radical Challenge to Conventional Practice," *Holocaust Studies* 17/1 (2011): 85-100.

[4] Shenker, "Through the Lens of the Shoah;" Noah Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); Shandler, *Holocaust Memory;* Martha Straud, "Digital Approaches to Genocide Studies," https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2017/12/20591-digital-approaches-genocide-studies-summary (accessed 20 December 2017); Minhua Eunice Ma, Sarah Coward, Chris Walker, "Interact: A Mixed Reality Virtual Survivor for Holocaust Testimonies" (paper presented at the 27th Annual Meeting of the Australian Special Interest Group for Computer Human Interaction, Melbourne, Australia, December 2015).

[5] Maria Ecker, "Verbalising the Holocaust: Oral/Audiovisual Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in the United States," in *How the Holocaust Looks Now. International Perspectives*, eds. Martin L. Davies and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 41-49.

[6] Shenker, "Through the Lens of the Shoah."

[7] I here follow the analyses of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida on the archive as a complex site of knowledge production, ideology, power, and control, of erasing as much as of salvaging the "past." Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16/1 (1986): 22-27; Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression*, translated by Eric Prenowitz, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For a recent discussion on the elusive nature and power politics of the digital archive, see Tara McPherson, "Post-Archive: The Humanities, the Archive, and the Database," in *Between Humanities and the Digital*, eds. Patrik Svensson and David Theo Goldberg, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), 483-502.

become as common-place as to pass unnoticed.[8] Indeed, more than a mere technique for extracting information, the individual interview has shaped a large part of our conceptual framework and has determined the analytical categories we broadly apply to the study of the Holocaust and its memory. The format entails casting the interviewee into a "witness," the "interviewer" into a "secondary witness," and the viewer into "humanity." It transforms the interviewee's account into a "testimony," a "representation" of the past, unstable and liminal enough to expose the very limits of "representation" itself.[9]

The individual interview constitutes the nucleus of the audiovisual archive and as such, it also determines its logic. Data collection rests on a series of successive encounters with survivors; data organization always refers back to the individual interview; and finally, data usage for research or teaching entails watching the interview in part or in its entirety.[10] This pattern shows no signs of stopping. Engaging with the recorded testimony of the individual survivor is still the preferred mode of learning about and from the Holocaust as the new, hyper-realistic hologram technologies demonstrate.[11]

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[8] Hence, note how Assmann discusses the genre of Holocaust video and oral testimony with reference to other instances and contexts of individualized testimonial giving such as the courtroom, while completely neglecting more collective forms of bearing witness or narrating the past. Aleida Assmann, "History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony," in *Poetics Today* 27/2 (2006): 265-266.

[9] Laub, "Bearing Witness." Wake, "Regarding the Recording;" Geoffrey Hartman, "The Humanities of Testimony: An Introduction," in *Poetics Today* 27/2 (2006): 249-60; Zoë Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Alessandro Portelli, "Oral Memoir and the Shoah," in *Literature of the Holocaust*, ed. Alan Rosen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 193-210.

[10] See the detailed accounts of the collection strategies the two most important audiovisual archives used (i.e. the Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies and the USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive), in Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, and Shandler, *Holocaust Memory*.

[11] On the "New Dimensions in Testimony" project currently pursued by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute, see "New Dimensions in Testimony" https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/holocaust/ndt (accessed December 4, 2017). Steven Smith, "Oral History Turns Holographic," *Blog: Through Testimony* (March 28, 2014), https://sfi.usc.edu/blog/stephen-smith/oral-history-turns-holographic. (accessed July 19, 2017). Panel on "New Dimensions in Testimony" International Conference Digital Approaches to Genocide Studies, Los Angeles, October 23-24, 2017, https://sfi.usc.edu/cagr/conferences/2017_international/schedule (accessed December 20, 2017).

The format of the individual interview is in fact so ingrained in public history and academic research that we often forget how uncanny it can be. Consider this Yad Vashem video of two identical twins, Iudit Barnea and Lia Huber (nees Csengeri), who survived Auschwitz-Birkenau.[12] Contrary to current practice, the sisters are interviewed not separately but together. And yet, in conformity to the current testimonial format, they morph into one person. By responding in unison, completing each other's sentences, echoing each other's words, and above all, by being dressed in the exact same way, they become one person, testifying to the power of the testimonial format while divesting it of all its ethical content, its humanizing force and its ability to salvage individual subjectivity. Ironically, rather than restoring their humanity, the very format of the interview divests the sisters of their hard-won individuality by following a logic uncannily similar to that which shaped the Nazi doctors' fascination with twins in Auschwitz.[13]

Being the normative mode of approaching the experience of the Holocaust and any other subsequent genocide, we often overlook how recent, let alone western, the individual interview is. In 1913-1914, international committees examining the atrocities committed during the Balkan Wars were among the first to interview persecuted civilians. However, these "interviews" were conducted in a court-like setting: the "witness" would appear in front of the entire committee itself seated behind a table and conducting the examination in plain sight, usually in a village square in the presence of a considerable audience.[14] In the 1950s, researchers from the Centre for Asia Minor Studies roaming over Greece to collect oral testimonies of life in Ottoman Anatolia, followed a similar research protocol, interviewing (male) refugees in the coffeehouses of the refugee settlements rather than in more private venues.[15] These otherwise plainly

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[12] "Twin Holocaust Survivors Describe Arriving at Auschwitz"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWJyjAYyF8E (accessed January 3, 2018).

[13] Notably the two sisters participated as a single torchlighter in the 2009 International Holocaust Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem
https://www.yadvashem.org/remembrance/archive/2009/torchlighters.html (accessed December 28, 2017).

[14] Keith Brown, "How trauma travels: Oral History's Means and Ends" in *Macedonian Matters: From the Partition and Annexation of Macedonia in 1913 to the Present*, eds. Victor Friedman and Jim Hlavac, (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2015), 65-86.

[15] See the telling photo of several Asia Minor refugee informants posing after a group interview session. They all sit together around a table joined by Ermolaos Andreadis, researcher and interviewer of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, and are surrounded by their neighbors and co-

hierarchical settings might have nevertheless also fostered dialogue and incited interaction since the attending "public" of fellow victims of violence or uprooted refugees could and would intervene, thus forcing the individual testimony to confront collective memory. Closer to home, interviews of Greek Jewish Holocaust survivors from the early 1970s recently released by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem not only reveal a much less structured process and a completely non-sanitized aural environment, with the interview integrated into the time, space, and soundscape of the survivor-cum-urban dweller, but a more polyphonic conversation as well since the translator and the interviewer, a married couple, engaged the interviewees and their wives in lively discussions on- and off-tape.[16]

The individuation of the Holocaust audiovisual testimony rests at the convergence of several epistemological and non-epistemological trends. The current prevalence of the personalized audiovisual testimony can be traced back to the prominence of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and literary critics rather than historians, sociologists, or ethnographers, in setting up first the Holocaust Survivors Film Project and then its successor the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies in the late 1970s and 1980s. Coming from disciplines concentrating on the individual rather than the collective these scholars were epistemologically preconditioned to focus on the singular survivor and her testimony.[17] The influence the Fortunoff archive exerted over subsequent projects secured the reproduction of this model, whereas the Shoah Foundation

villagers who were also present during the interview sessions. Georgios A. Yiannakopoulos, *Refugee Greece. Photographs from the Archive of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies*, (Athens: A.G. Levenits Foundation & Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), 174.

[16] Particularly Interview no. (146)9A, "Meir, Haim," Holocaust Oral History Collection, The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk0mPk2Q63g (accessed September 25, 2017).

[17] Located at Yale University, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies currently contains more than 4,400 videotaped Holocaust survivors testimonies conducted in the Americas, Europe, and Israel in the 1980s. Dory Laub, a New Haven psychiatrist, and Geoffrey Hartman, a professor of English and comparative literature at Yale University, were instrumental in spearheading the project and shaping its methodology which sought to foreground the agency of the witness as much as a historical subject as a narrator of her own story. "About the Fortunoff Archive," https://web.library.yale.edu/testimonies/about (accessed May 19, 2018). For a detailed history of the archive, see Joanne Weiner Rudof's, "A Yale University and New Haven Community Project: From Local to Global,"
 http://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/local_to_global.pdf (accessed December 23, 2017). Geoffrey Hartman, "Learning from Survivors: The Yale Testimony Project," in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9/2 (1995): 192-207.

Institute's adherence to a redemptive narrative further reinforced it.[18] Moreover, audiovisual testimonies have primarily been the subject matter of scholars in the fields of literary criticism, cultural studies, social psychology, and more recently, media studies, whereas history and other social sciences have either neglected them or randomly utilized them for anecdotal purposes.[19] The disciplinary politics of archival production and archival consumption were as important as the structural, serial logic of the testimonial archive itself in determining the conceptual and interpretative link between individuality, memory, and the study of the Holocaust.

Memory is however a deeply social process.[20] As we all notice beginning in our childhood (and ethnographers have long made use of), people most often reminisce collectively not in a controlled exchange with an interviewer, but in a spontaneous and often heated dialogue with each other. They evoke the past over a family table, in a local coffee shop, at a wedding banquet, or at a funeral. They, that is, mostly recollect in groups, and it is by sharing or debating their "common" past experiences that they eventually both frame and (re)shape their own individual memories. Consider how different Auschwitz-Birkenau would look if narrated not by isolated individuals but by groups of survivors conversing, interrupting, correcting, or even teasing each other as they participate in representing Auschwitz-Birkenau as a shared, collective experience. Instead of such encounters, the culture of the individual and individualized testimony has seeped into Holocaust commemoration rituals and practices so deeply that even when brought together to share the podium, survivors almost always recount their experiences, not in dialog with each other but one *after* the other.[21]

The serialized Holocaust audiovisual archive might have, therefore, widened our knowledge of individual experiences and their memory; however, it has done so at the expense of attending to the collective as constituted through relations

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[18] Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age*. Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony.*

[19] As notes Zoë Waxman, "Testimonies as Sacred Texts: The Sanctification of Holocaust Writing," *Past and Present*, Supplement 5 (2010): 340. Two notable exceptions in historiography are Christopher Browning, *Remembering Survival. Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*, (New York: Norton & Co, 2010). Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

[20] James J. Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

[21] As an admittedly random survey of YouTube videos would demonstrate. An example: "Edith Adlam and Ruth Abrams: A Survivor's Remembrance,"
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7DrJjcaPGo (accessed December 15, 2017).

between Jewish prisoners in the camps. Such knowledge still remains sketchy. This historiographical lacuna is more the result of methodological and interpretative priorities (and blind spots) than of lack of evidence. In fact, even a cursory look shows how every Holocaust survivor's testimony is full of references to relatives and friends, fellow prisoners and guards, Jewish *kapos* and German officers, people who perished and those who survived. The collective experience of the camp is indeed refracted through the personal narrative as scholarship has repeatedly dissected.[22] Still, the survivor's trajectory is also deeply ingrained within a web of relations he or she has knit together. Consider how often survivor Jack Azous, a Sephardic Jew from the Greek city of Salonica/Thessaloniki, alluded to a widely diverse number of people while talking about himself as he recounted his days in Auschwitz-Birkenau: "All inmates were Greeks when I first came in," Azous mentioned at the beginning of his testimony. "I used to have a friend, another Greek guy who was a barber. … [And] the lagerälteste [camp senior] was a Jew, a Greek also," he continued. And further on he revealed: "I was singing in the nights for the Germans. We used to be three-four Jewish guys from Salonica. We got a guitar. One used to play it, and we sang Greek and Italian songs. The guys were Itzhak Saltiel and Alberto Giledi. They both died in Auschwitz."[23]

Such mentions and the astonishingly diverse sets of social relations they shed light upon most often pass unnoticed as scholars tend to rely on the generic and generalizing binary opposition between the "individual" (witness) and the "collective" (of a people or a community).[24] Historians have so far been reluctant to explore social webs as a means of making sense of life in the camps. Broadly speaking, Holocaust historiography has approached the camp world from two diverging perspectives. On the one hand, it has employed a top-down approach paying attention to the camp as a mechanism of extermination and focusing on its emergence, development, and functions. In the rare cases prisoners entered into the picture, it was either as numbers or as dehumanized entities, to

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[22] On Holocaust testimony as a healing narrative of a traumatic memory and as a means of reconstructing a fragmented self through narration, see the seminal work of Lawrence Langer and the perceptive thoughts of Alessandro Portelli. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*. Portelli, "Oral memoir and the Shoah."

[23] Jack Azous, Interview 36740, USC Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive (hereafter USC SFI VHA (accessed online at Northwestern University January 12, 2015).

[24] Assmann, "History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony," 167; Hartman, "Learning from Survivors," 192, 196. Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 127.

document the extent and innermost workings of Nazi genocidal policies.[25] On the other hand, in the past three decades, historians have increasingly if hesitantly concentrated on prisoners themselves using written and oral testimonies to shed light on their individual and group experiences. In this case, it was not extermination but survival that constituted the fundamental research question, the primary analytical tool, and the dominant narrative trope. How prisoners managed to remain alive and in doing so, reclaim their humanity has been the primary focus of historical study.[26] Thus, when it comes to the history of the concentration camps, existing literature either focuses on the dehumanizing effects of camp life or approaches survivors primarily as individuals and considers

[25] See especially Omer Bartov, "Ordering Horror: Conceptualizations of the Concentrationary Universe," in *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 99-121; Paul R. Bartrop, "Degradation in the Concentration Camp: The Nazi Assault on the Human Condition during the Holocaust," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, 6/1 (1992): 103-30; *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany. The New Histories*, eds. Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann, (London: Routledge, 2009); Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Nikolaus Wachsmann, "Looking into the Abyss: Historians and the Nazi Concentration Camps," *European History Quarterly* 36/2 (April 2006): 247-78.

[26] Judith Tydor Baumel, "Women's Agency and Survival Strategies During the Holocaust," *Women's Studies International Forum* 22/3 (1999): 329-47; Murray Baumgarten, "Primo Levi's Periodic Art: Survival in Auschwitz and the Meaningfulness of Everyday Life," in *Resisting the Holocaust*, ed. Ruby Rohrlich, (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 115-32; Browning, *Remembering Survival*; Nathan Cohen, "Diaries of the 'Sonderkommandos' in Auschwitz. Coping with Fate and Reality2, *Yad Vashem Studies* 20 (1990): 273-312; Shamai Davidson, "Human Reciprocity Among the Jewish Prisoners in the Nazi Concentration Camps," in *The Nazi Concentration Camps. Structure and Aims, the Image of the Prisoner, the Jews in the Camps: Proceedings of the Fourth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference*, eds. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1984), 555-572; Terence Des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Tuvia Friling, *A Jewish Kapo in Auschwitz. History, Memory, and the Politics of Survival*, (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2016); Henry Greenspan, Sara Horowitz, Eva Kovács, Berel Lang, Dori Laub, Kenneth Waltzer, and Annette Wieviorka, "Engaging Survivors: Assessing 'Testimony' and 'Trauma' as Foundational Concepts," *Dapim. Studies on the Holocaust*, 28/3 (2015): 190-226; Gideon Greif, "Between Sanity and Insanity: Sphere of Everyday Life in the Auschwitz-Birkenau 'Sonderkommando,'" in *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, eds. Jonathan Petropoulos and John Roth, (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 37-60; Bella Gutterman, *A Narrow Bridge to Life: Jewish Forced Labor and Survival in the Gross-Rosen Camp System, 1940-1945*, (New York: Berghahn, 2008); Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*. Jürgen Matthäus, *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and its Transformations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Falk Pingel, "Social Life in an Unsocial Environment: The Inmates' Struggle for Survival," in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*, eds. Caplan and Wachsmann, 58-81. Falk Pingel, "The Destruction of Human Identity in Concentration Camps: The Contribution of the Social Sciences to an Analysis of Behavior under Extreme Conditions," in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 6/2 (1991): 167-184.

survival as the incidental result of extraordinary circumstances upon which survivors themselves had no control.

These two otherwise opposite historiographical trends in Holocaust research, together with the linear, serialized logic of the Holocaust testimonial archive discussed earlier may have expanded and diversified the spectrum of our knowledge on individual experiences and their specific memorialization, but they have also diverted our attention from studying the kinds of relations Jewish prisoners established in the camps. Such knowledge remains still sketchy and impressionistic. In the public and scholarly imagination, extermination camps (and Auschwitz-Birkenau in particular) are predominantly represented as laboratories of death, mass graveyards in the making. Still, Auschwitz-Birkenau was a densely populated place, inhabited at any given moment by a transient population ranging in the hundreds of thousands.[27] A complex social world, it is often viewed as composed of isolated individuals, instead of being treated as a city designed by perpetrators but enlivened by the presence of "victims" too.[28] Consequently, what the place of certain Jewish groups was within Auschwitz-Birkenau and how it changed over time remains a largely uncharted territory. We still know relatively little about the size and nature, reach and overlap, uses and purposes of the social networks prisoners forged, the factors that facilitated communication, imposed boundaries, or promoted social trust. Much is also unknown about the gender dimension of these social networks, whether men and women developed different patterns of social interaction, or how the vocabularies of gender and sexuality informed the cultural meanings of relatedness.[29] This historiographical lacuna is at odds with the importance

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[27] At its peak, in January 1945, Auschwitz-Birkenau accommodated a population of 715,000 inmates and personnel. Karin Orth, "The Concentration Camp Personnel," in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*, eds. Caplan and Wachsmann, 45. For a highly incisive history of Auschwitz-Birkenau that highlights its constitutive place at the crossroads of human mobility and border making, see Annette Wieviorka, *Auschwitz, 60 ans après*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2005).

[28] See the pioneering rethinking of Auschwitz as a city of perpetrators that a digitally informed and spatially sensitive approach can offer in Paul B. Jaskot, Anne Kelly Knowles and Chester Harvey, "Visualizing the Archive: Building at Auschwitz as a Geographic Problem," in *Geographies of the Holocaust*, eds. Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole, Alberto Giordano, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 159-92.

[29] However, see the incisive analysis of Lawrence Langer on how gender shapes memory. Lawrence Langer, "Gendered Suffering? Women in Holocaust Testimonies," in *Women in the Holocaust*, eds. Dalia Ofer, Lenore J. Weitzman, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 351–63.

prisoners themselves attributed to networking. Not only did they appreciate the emotional relief intimate relations provided or the vital alimentary benefits close connections ensured as studies usually stress, but they proactively sought to maximize collective survival by strategically positioning group members in prominent camp positions as the case of Jacques Stroumsa reveals. Upon arrival to Auschwitz and after selection and tattooing, his "comrades," the surviving male members of his transport, prodded Stroumsa, an experienced electrical engineer by training but an accomplished amateur violinist by hobby, to join the orchestra since this "could be good for everyone."[30] To reconstruct such multi-purpose networks and pin down their cultural significations and practical usages is therefore necessary if we are to understand interpersonal relations and power dynamics in the concentration camps from the point of view of the victims and eventually rethink the relationship between individual survival, collective belonging, and a liminal sense of selfhood.[31]

Such a turn to the social requires new cross-disciplinary epistemologies. Holocaust Studies have emerged as an off-shoot of history, psychology, literary criticism, and memory and trauma studies, but a turn to the study of social relations necessitates a rather sacrilegious engagement with far less noble fields, such as the anthropology of incarceration and the sociology of criminal networks, fields which focus on social relations among clandestine groups and examine

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[30] Jacques Stroumsa, *Violinist in Auschwitz: From Salonica to Jerusalem, 1913-1967*, (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 1996), 45.

[31] Despite their rich insights, the following studies share a fundamentally sociological approach to social relations, rarely consider specific networks and their cultural signification, and finally, fail to take into account changes in time and space during the period of internment. Judith Tydor Baumel, "Social Interaction Among Jewish Women in Crisis During the Holocaust: A Case Study," in *Gender and History* 7/1 (1995): 64-84; Anna Bravo, "Italian Women in the Nazi Camps: Aspects of Identity in Their Accounts," in *Oral History* 13/1 (1985): 20-7; Judith Buber Agassi, "'Camp families' in Ravensbrück and the Social Organization of Jewish Women Prisoners in a Concentration Camp," in *Life, Death and Sacrifice: Women and Family in the Holocaust*, ed. Esther Hertzog, (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2008), 107-19; Shamai Davidson, "Group Formation and its Significance in the Nazi Concentration Camps," in *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences* 22 (1985): 41-50; Mary Esperanza, "Españoles y judíos en el campo de concentración de Gurs (Bearn)," *El Olivo* 31 (1990): 73-97; Felicja Karay, "The Social and Cultural Life of the Prisoners in the Jewish Forced Labor Camp at Skarzysko-Kamienna," in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 8/1 (1994): 1-27; Anna Reading, "Scarlet lips in Belsen: Culture, Gender and Ethnicity in the Policies of the Holocaust," in *Media, Culture & Society* 21/4 (1999): 481-501; Maja Sunderland, *Inside Concentration Camps: Social Life at the Extremes*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); *Interpreting in Nazi Concentration Camps*, ed. Michaela Wolf, (New York: Bloomsbury 2016).

trust in liminal environments and extreme circumstances.[32] Employing the concept of sociality further allows a shift away from the individual, her survival and her subjectivity, to identity construed through social interaction. Sociality denotes the cultural schemes that organize interpersonal relations, invest them with meaning and thus shape the symbolic content of relatedness.[33] These schemes are employed by historical actors themselves. As such, although potent, they are never fixed. Rather, they are subject to negotiation and contestation, or else, prone to change. Sociality emphasizes the symbolic content and cultural significations of relatedness and hence situates the historical production of albeit fragmentary identities, of the "witness" or the "survivor," beyond the individual or the collective, the binary that underwrites most current literature. Sociality is therefore a more theoretically rigorous, historically grounded, and analytically flexible category than the rather descriptive notion of "community," or the inadequately historicized concepts of "solidarity," "survival," or "humanity" currently employed to account for relations between prisoners.

Digital Social Networks Meet the Audiovisual Archive: The Pilot Project "Bonds of Survival"

This conceptual reorientation can benefit digital humanities as well as benefit from them. Note for example how the Visual History Archive does not thoroughly tag all the persons interviewees mention. Its serial logic (at once reflecting and sustaining an individualistic approach to Holocaust experience) seriously constricts our research strategies. Such tagging could however facilitate a move beyond the individual-*and*-the-"group" approach to the audiovisual

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[32] Works that have helped me rethink the intertwined formation of social relations and social identities in the concentration camps include Coretta Phillips, *The Multicultural Prison: Ethnicity, Masculinity, and Social Relations among Prisoners*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Coretta Phillips, "Negotiating Identities: Ethnicity and Social Relations in a Young Offenders' Institution," *Theoretical Criminology* 12/3 (2008): 313-31; Philip Goodman, "'It's Just Black, White, or Hispanic': An Observational Study of Racializing Moves in California's Segregated Prison Reception Centers," in *Law & Society Review* 42/4 (2008): 735-70; Emma Kaufman, "Finding Foreigners: Race and the Politics of Memory in British Prisons," in *Population, Space and Place* 18 (2012): 701-14.

[33] On the concept of relatedness, see *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, ed. Janet Carsten, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On the importance of studying the cultural meanings of sociality and how they determine action, affect, and relatedness, see *Conceptualizing Society*, ed. Adam Kuper, (London: Routledge, 1992).

archive and the widespread institutional and scholarly use of particular audiovisual testimonies as a means of shedding light on collective experience that has primarily informed the interviewing strategies of the Visual History Archive and the curatorial thinking of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.[34] It would enable a multi-directional research itinerary, which by combining interrelated testimonies, would effectively situate the individual within a specific network rather than subsume her in a generic, externally defined collective, be that a deported "community" or a specific camp unit, such as the *Sonderkommando*.

Conversely, social network software can substantially increase the research potential of the Holocaust audiovisual archive and generate new ways of organizing its material. What if the organizing principle was not the individual testimony but a social relationship? Our ongoing digital humanities project "Bonds of Survival" tackles this question by tracking down the types, strength, duration, and extent of social relationships Sephardi Jewish survivors from the Greek city of Salonica (present-day Thessaloniki) forged in Auschwitz-Birkenau.[35]

Among the different groups of prisoners, Salonican Jews might superficially appear to constitute a liminal case. Yet, their distinguishable cultural outlook and distinctive historical experience can actually facilitate wide-ranging research on the extent and nature of social networks in the concentration camps.[36] In the spring and summer of 1943, nearly 46,000 Salonican Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau where their distinctiveness left an indelible memory on no other than Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi.[37] Not belonging to the dominant

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[34] Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*, 90, 127.

[35] The project began at Brown University in the spring semester of 2014. A team consisting of (then) undergraduate students Amelia Armitage and Jennifer Sieber, digital librarian Dr. Jean Bauer, and project coordinator Dr. Paris Papamichos Chronakis designed a pilot database and collected data from a handful of select audiovisual testimonies. Since June 2017, the project is jointly run by Paris Papamichos Chronakis at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Dr. Giorgos Antoniou at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and has been partially funded by the International Institute of Education Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program. Currently, a small research team of students from the two universities is data mining additional audiovisual testimonies of Salonican Jewish Holocaust survivors.

[36] On the history of multiethnic Salonica and its Jewish population, see Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950*, (London: Harper Collins, 2004).

[37] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 85. Elie Wiesel, introduction to *Apo ton Leuko Pyrgo stis Pyles tou Auschwitz* [From the White Tower to the Gates of Auschwitz] by Iakobos Handali, translated from Hebrew by Elia Shabbetai (Thessaloniki: Ets Ahaim Foundation, 1995).

Ashkenazi ethnocultural group, these Ladino-speaking "Greeks," as the other prisoners dubbed them, were treated as misfits. Henry Levy recalled how "we, the Greeks, were more vulnerable than anybody else … because we were a minority, we were from a Mediterranean country. … We could not speak Yiddish, Polish, or German. Even our Hebrew was different than the others. We were treated differently by the Germans and by our inmates, our brothers from Eastern Europe. Until the very end of the war, they thought we were not Jewish because we could not speak Yiddish. There was discrimination."[38] By turning into a symbolic marker of Jewishness, language differentiation led to a double segregation of Salonican Jews dramatically reducing their chances of relating to other inmates. Their multi-layered alienation thus allows us to assess whether distinct cultural traits resulted in the formation of "closed," inward-looking networks, and fragmented the superficially homogenous social world of the camps into a set of disjointed micro-societies.

However, the exceptionally cosmopolitan pre-war Jewish identity also facilitated contact and thus allows for checking the extent and nature of "open," outbound social networks between Jews of different cultural and national backgrounds. Salonican Jews were multilingual, speaking French and occasionally Italian along with Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and Greek. They were also culturally extrovert, having been exposed to French culture from a very early age and those belonging to the middle and upper classes having studied in the many schools the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a Franco-Jewish organization promoting the cultural uplifting of the Jewish communities of the Ottoman and Eastern Mediterranean, had been established in Salonica since the 1870s.[39] Once in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Salonican Jews utilized this rich cultural capital to interact, even bond, with Jews from other, particularly French-speaking, countries. The assistance of a French doctor, "friend of a Salonican friend," proved instrumental in saving Alfred

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[38] Henry Levy, Interview 26580, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on January 17, 2015).

[39] On the multiple layers of late Ottoman Sephardic identities, see Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "The Permeable Boundaries of Ottoman Jewry," in *Boundaries and Belongings. States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel Migdal, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49-70; Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). On a developing sense of Hellenic Judaism in the interwar period, Devin Naar, *Jewish Salonica between Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

Haguel's life.[40] Bonding with "strangers" could, in fact, be as efficient a survival strategy as was sticking with one's own.

The case of Salonican Jews thus makes evident the operation of more complex networks, networks that expand beyond locality, kinship, and nationality on which existing historiography largely insists.[41] Their multiple cultural referents help us understand the poetics of similarity –how familiarity was established between strangers in the first place and how a liminal culture of relatedness was sustained in the camps. Their cultural outlook facilitates assessing the extent and nature of "open," outbound social networks between Jews of different cultural and national backgrounds. Conversely, it can also help determine whether distinct cultural traits resulted in the formation of "closed," inward-looking networks that turned the superficially homogenous camp world into a set of disjoint micro-societies. In short, the perceived "exoticism" of Salonican Jews renders them an exemplary case-study and turns their testimonies into an unusually rich set of context-specific data to evaluate the broader importance of several key identity markers (namely, language, kinship, and locality) as well as place-specific factors (such as proximity) in shaping social relations and survival strategies among Jewish prisoners in the camps.

Admittedly, testimonies constitute an inherently partial and skewed body of evidence, a notoriously "incomplete" dataset to mine. While ostensibly "complete" datasets (such as Jewish communal registers) have been successfully used to trace the links between individuals and families in a top-down manner, the bottom-up, testimony-to-testimony methodological approach our project adopts can only yield invariably fragmentary and partial data. This limits our ability to reconstruct a given group's social network in its entirety, reckon its full complexity, and by consequence give a definitive answer to one of historiography's (and survivors' themselves) most vexing questions, namely, what determined survival in the Nazi death and concentration camps. Audiovisual testimonies, conducted as they were according to very different research protocols, do not follow the same format let alone record a survivor's

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[40] Alfred Hagouel, Interview 1489, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on 21 February 2015).
[41] Browning, *Remembering Survival.* See also note 28 above.

social relations in their entirety.[42] More crucially, it is impossible to retrieve the camp experiences of two massive key groups, those who perished and those who survived but did not testify. Their own degree of inclusion or exclusion from social networks remains forever unknown thus rendering unfeasible the creation of a sufficiently comprehensive dataset to correlate accurately one's chances of survival with participation in a social network.

However, this "incompleteness" of the dataset does not limit the heuristic potential of social networks analysis for Holocaust Studies. Quite the contrary. The project "Bonds of Survival" works through these archival limitations by taking a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to social interaction. Specifically, the primary purpose is not to comprehensively measure (let alone "prove") the overall importance of social networks as effective survival strategies. Given our near-total lack of information about the camp experience and social interaction of those who were eventually murdered, correlating social networks to survival rates is downright impossible. Consequently, the project's objective is to offer a digital tool for determining the kinds of social trust sustaining these very networks. The project thus moves beyond the largely quantitative approach in data collection and offers a corrective to the latent determinism and mono-causality of network-based interpretations. By following an ethnographically-inspired methodology it offers Holocaust historians ways to assess the nature and extent of interpersonal relations at the concentration camps from the point of view of the victims, and, hence, it aspires to help them rethink the relationship between individual identity and group belonging under extreme circumstances.

So far, project members have collected data from twenty audiovisual testimonies. No distant reading approaches to data mining have been used or even tested given the limited and sometimes incorrect tagging of individuals mentioned in testimonies of the Visual History and Fortunoff archives. Instead, project members resorted to a close listening of individual testimonies one at a time. Our aim was to record all physical or imaginary relationships, no matter how trivial, as well as all the individuals mentioned, to then identify those social networks which involved at least three persons and to determine the specific places and periods of time at which these networks operated. Audiovisual

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[42] On the differing formats of audiovisual testimonies and of the testimonial genre more broadly, see Matthäus, *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor*.

testimonies were neither randomly selected nor solely chosen according to "objective," external criteria, such as the gender, place of origin, or the concentration camp where the interviewed survivor was interned. Rather, we sought to follow the leads witnesses themselves provided to create a pool of interconnected testimonies. We therefore sought to locate and analyze accounts of survivors who were specifically referred to in previously evaluated testimonies. This way we expected to reconstruct a network in all its breadth and depth, to get as much of a complete and multiperspective view on a given relationship as possible, and to eventually determine more faithfully the changing position of a survivor in a given social circle.

Overall, project members recorded 230 unique relationships which were then classified according to established criteria. All persons mentioned were catalogued by their first and/or last name. When this was missing, they were labelled by their position in the camp or, in extreme cases, as "anonymous" followed by a unique number. Sustained exposure and growing familiarity with the material allowed project members to even identify key individuals, like interpreters Salvador Kounio and his son Heinz Kounio and prisoners Saul Senor and Daniel Benahmias, who although referred by name in some interviews were not in others.[43] We sought to unveil the forms of communication and the cultural foundations of trust by documenting the languages used as well as the role of friendship, kinship, and locality in forging intra- and inter-group relations. We also attempted to determine the space and time of these relations in order to then consider whether and how certain circles of acquaintances might have emanated from shared spatiotemporal experiences. We thus linked every single relationship to a specific venue in Auschwitz-Birkenau proper (barracks or workspaces), and/or to one or more of the different labor camps after the evacuation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Additionally, we dated the relationship to the period of deportation, transport, internment, death march, and/or post-Auschwitz confinement. Finally, we tagged the imaginary as much as the physical relations.

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[43] Eliezer Sotto, Interview 26397, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on February 4, 2015). Mary Tuvi Oziel, Interview 133, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on February 24, 2015). Albert Jerassy, Interview 47366, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on February 15, 2015). Leon Calderone, Interview 22726, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on January 23, 2015). Dario Gabbai, Interview 142, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on 12 February 2015).

The preliminary, highly provisional results paint a richer, more diversified picture of the camps as seen from the bottom up. Concentration camps are often treated as a homogeneous space, but our comparatively more detailed spatial categories can help researchers nuance their analysis of camp spatialities as well as link network formation and operation to specific spaces. Specifically, in our own data gathering we detected a sizeable concentration of Salonican Jews in the *Sonderkommando* unit and an even larger number in the satellite camp of Warsaw. At the end of summer 1943, after the destruction of its Jewish ghetto, the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp administration sent a sizeable group of prisoners to the Polish capital to clear up the ghetto rubble and establish the Gęsiówka labor camp to be administered for the next year as a sub-camp of Majdanek.[44] The group sent was initially "99% Thessalonicans" as Henry Levy recalled.[45] "In Warsaw we were all Greek Jews. We were together, we stuck together."[46] Levy's words probably idealize a much more complex situation since relations could be tense especially when hierarchies of power were involved.[47] Be that as it may, our notes and collected data indicate that a subtle sense of community seemed to have nonetheless emerged. Testimonies reveal that several factors helped sustain it. To begin with, the concentration of such a large number of Salonican Jews within the same space for the first time since their arrival in Auschwitz-Birkenau nurtured feelings of empowerment. In Birkenau, dispersed among Jews from all over Europe, Salonican Jews felt isolated. Contact, even awareness of the

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[44] "Clearing the Ruins of the Ghetto," http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/gesia_camp.asp (accessed April 16, 2018).

[45] The number of the Greek Jews sent to Warsaw cannot be firmly established. Henry Levy speaks of 3500 "Greek Jews," while Yitzchak Kerem of more than a thousand Thessalonican Jews. Yad Vashem counts them to 1600. Testimony of Henry Levy, VHA USC SFI. Yitzchak Kerem, "The Sephardim Resisted Too!" (paper presented at the conference "Teaching the Holocaust for Future Generations, Yad Vashem's 50th Anniversary Conference," Jerusalem, August 2004), https://www.academia.edu/4595338/_The_Sephardim_Resisted_Too_Yad_Vashem_Jerusalem_2004 (accessed January 10, 2015). "Clearing the Ruins of the Ghetto." French and Polish Jews joined Thessalonican Jews only eight months later. Nissim Almalech, Interview 1258, VHA USC VHI (accessed online at Northwestern University on January 31, 2015; Benyiakar, VHA USC SFI). In May and June 1944, additional groups of mostly Hungarian Jews were brought from Auschwitz-Birkenau. "Clearing the Ruins of the Ghetto."

[46] Levy, VHA USC SFI.

[47] Nissim Almalech recalls with regret that his *blokaltester*, who was also a "Greek from Thessaloniki," "was very bad to the Jews" giving "a hard time to the Greeks." Almalech, VHA USC SFI.

existence of co-nationals, was non-existent to such an extent that a startled Jack Azous realized "that there were nearly five hundred Jewish Greeks in the barracks" only before his transfer to Warsaw when "doctors started examining [us]."[48]

Numerical strength was coupled with easier communication. Long separated, the transferred Salonican Jews now lodged together at Blok 5 of the Gęsiówka labor camp.[49] By classifying the time, space, and in particular kind of relationship, we could further notice that while established relations continued, it was now also easier to forge new ones. Several inmates were transferred to Warsaw together with their closest company in Birkenau (mostly a relative)[50] but others, like Leon Calderone, were reunited with their brothers or other family members for the first time.[51] Our data showed that relatedness was mostly based on kinship, but friendships were also forged.[52] Most importantly, groups that hitherto were minuscule, now expanded.[53] The rise of a widespread black market with Polish civilians and the absence of competition from other nationality-based Jewish groups were crucial in multiplying relations which quickly took the form of expansive exchange networks. In Warsaw, Salonican Jews organized among themselves to trade the precious artifacts they were discovering while clearing the ghetto rubble. They sold them for food to Polish civilian workers and locals with whom they regularly came into contact. Out of these purely utilitarian trade-offs, broader patterns of sociability emerged mostly centering on the collective consumption of food. Azous recalls how "we used to cook on Sunday in front of the post. Not only I, most of the Greeks were cooking food in front of the post." Out of the black market, in the relatively looser atmosphere of the Warsaw camp, a sense of broader community evolved, one that

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[48] Azous, VHA USC SFI.

[49] Testimony of Solomon Haguel in *Proforikes Martyries Evraiōn tēs Thessalonikēs gia to Olokautōma*, [Oral Testimonies of Thessaloniki Jews on the Holocaust], eds. Erika Kounio-Amariglio and Alberto Nar, (Thessaloniki: Etz Hayiim Foundation and Paratiritis Publishers, 1998), 403.

[50] Isaak Kapuano, Interview 1439, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on January 25, 2015. Almalech, VHA USC SFI).

[51] Calderone, VHA USC SFI.

[52] Solomon Haguel talks of his friendship with Pepo Karasso and "two comrades." Haguel in Amariglio and Nar, *Proforikes Martyries*, 400-403.

[53] Henry Levy speaks of a group of four friends as does Solomon Haguel. Levy, VHA USC SFI. Haguel in Amariglio and Nar, *Proforikes Martyries*, 402. On how participation in larger groups increased one's chances of survival, see Baumel, "Social Interaction among Jewish Women."

transcended the small-sized groups of friends and relatives. This community was further strengthened through bonds of solidarity, by assistance given to the needy. "We used to help a lot of other people," Azous concludes, "giving food to [those] who needed it [most]."[54]

Historiography has already acknowledged the large presence of "Greek Jews" amongst the *Sonderkommando* units of Auschwitz-Birkenau. However, their demographic predominance in the Warsaw Gęsiówka labor camp has by contrast so far escaped scholarly notice.[55] Methodological attention to space and movement, and development of classificatory schemes to better index the place- and time-specific development of social networks does therefore provide a corrective to interpretative generalizations about the experience of specific groups in the camps. In the case of Salonican and Greek Jews, a conventional rhetoric of victimhood (albeit one at times complemented with references to their resilience and heroic actions) has for long framed the "Greek Jews" as distinct from all other ethnic groups on the basis of utter sufferance and exceptional heroism.[56] However, as our social networks reconstruction shows, such generic representations disregard the specific temporality of this particular sense of collective self that characterizes the experience of Salonican Jews in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp only. In fact, with any sense of community resting on personal contact and interpersonal communication, in short, on social networks, group identities mainly sprang up in those places where a sufficient number of Salonican Jews gathered together. In a figurative or literal way, identities are always spatially produced.[57] Hence, in the concentration camps, the forging of a collective, "Greek" selfhood actually took place in numerous, distinct places inside and (mostly) outside the camp, chiefly, in the Warsaw-based Gęsiówka labor sub-camp.

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[54] Azous, VHA USC SFI.

[55] On Greek Jews in the *Sonderkommando* units, see Gideon Greif, *We Wept Without Tears. Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[56] Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 147-65; Mary Adamopoulou, "Ellēnes Evraioi pisō apo tē monadikē exegersē sto Auschwitz" [Greek Jews Behind the Only Revolt in Auschwitz], *Ta Nea*, April 25, 2009; Fotini Tomai, *Ellēnes sto Auschwitz-Birkenau*, [Greeks in Auschwitz-Birkenau], (Athens: Papazisi, 2009).

[57] Simon Gunn, "The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of *Space* and Place," in *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, eds. Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 1-14.

While one set of our indexing categories sought to capture the links between space, network formation and group identity, a second set concerned the very nature of social networks per se, in particular their looseness or tightness and their inward or outward orientation. To this end, we identified and classified not only those "close" relationships pertaining to the two primary cultural systems of relatedness, namely kinship and friendship, but also more distant ones that fell within the more fleeting and situational categories of "workmate," "inmate," "colleague," "acquaintance," and "neighbor." Fig. 1 (and Fig. 5) both reaffirm the primacy of kinship (often stressed in the existing historiography) but also relativize it by suggesting a strong presence of other forms of non-hierarchical social interaction in the experience and memory of camp life among Salonican Jewish survivors.
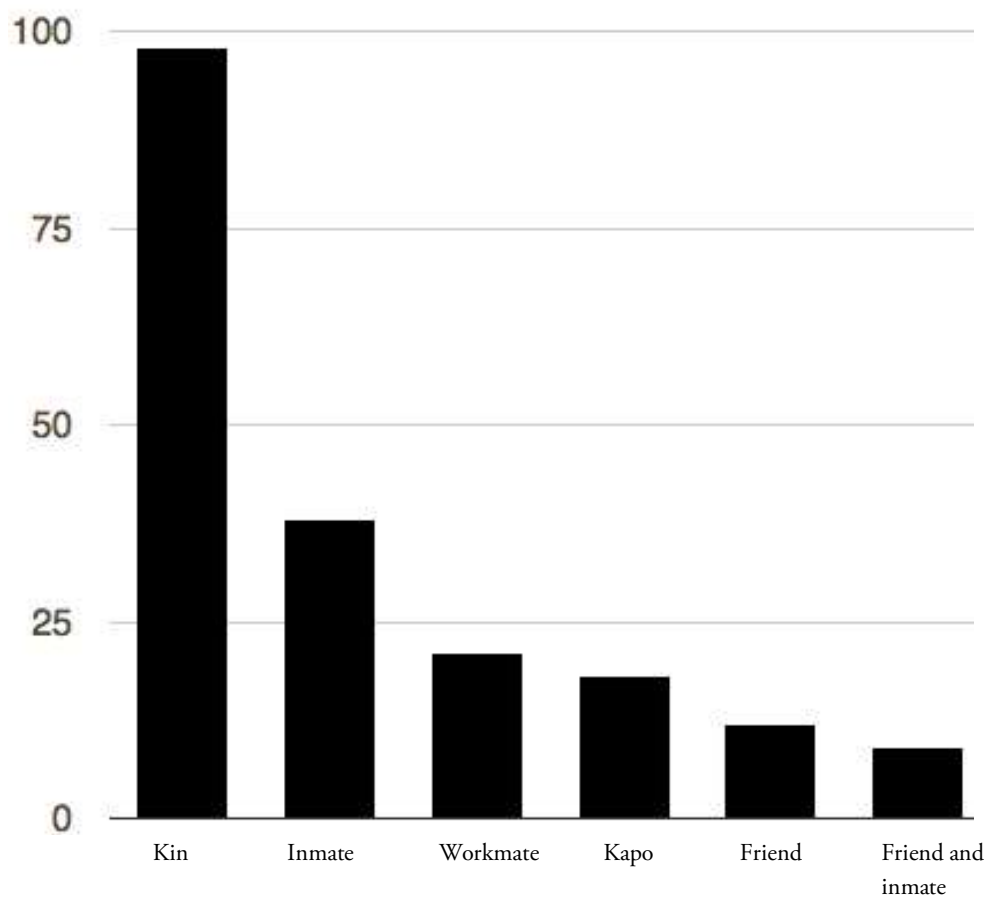
Fig. 1: Main types of relationships

Additionally, we used two interrelated parameters to document and compare the degree of interaction between Salonican Jews on the one hand and between them and other prisoners on the other: origin and language of communication (the variables being "Ladino" (Judeo-Spanish), "Greek," "French," "Italian," "German," and "hand gestures"). Organizing data according to these categories can potentially lead to a better understanding of the camp world by determining at a mass scale how "open" or "closed," isolated or interconnected, social networks were –if they brought together Jews from different cultural and national backgrounds or separated or even pitted them against each other.

Connected to this typology is the periodization of relationships into prewar, wartime (sub-divided into "deportation," "Auschwitz-Birkenau," and "Camps after Auschwitz-Birkenau"), and postwar. To our surprise, the number of prewar relations enduring during wartime and even continuing in Auschwitz-Birkenau was considerable, questioning the notion of the camp as a radical break (see Fig. 2 below and Fig. 4).
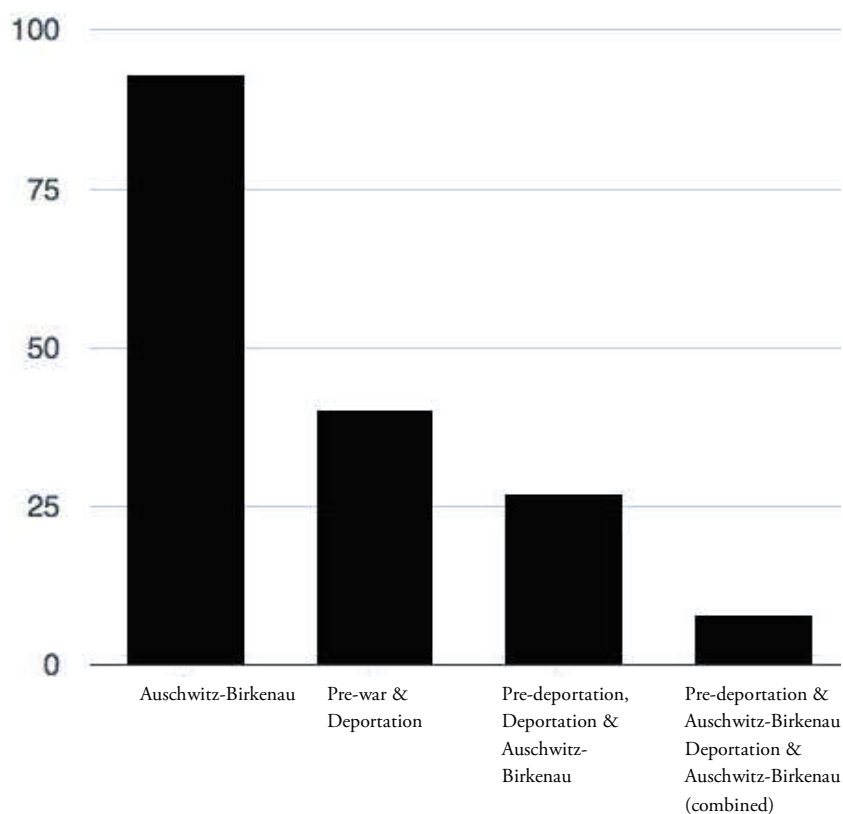
Fig. 2: Periods of relationships

Identifying the duration of a given relation thus helps reinsert the Holocaust into the broader temporal framework of Jewish social life and facilitates a more accurate, quantitative study of the relation between pre-war and wartime sociability, of resilient continuities but also abrupt breaks. Moreover, accounting for the relationships maintained after the war was over provides a retrospective, yet reliable, marker of their strength. As our first findings showed, while kinship-based relations in the camps were already well established before deportation, chance encounters at the workplace and barracks could also lead to strong and enduring bonds.

Arguably, the degree of intimacy constitutes a critical variable when estimating the significance of a given relationship. We thus tentatively attempted to measure the strength of each recorded relationship by correlating it to its duration using a 1 to 5 scale. Long-lasting, pre-war or post-war connections were treated as safe indicators of proximity and heightened intimacy between prisoners and graded the highest. Conversely, short-lived or extremely hierarchical relations received the lowest grade. At first glance negligible, these fleeting encounters nevertheless showcase in their totality the multiple and imaginative ways prisoners interacted with each other and thus merit to be recorded and classified. "Relationship strength" is, obviously, inevitably subjective but project members tried to maintain as much consistency as possible by conducting control tests and listening in turn to the same testimonies.

Project members further tagged the imaginary as much as the physical relations mentioned. Attention to imaginary relations revealed how survivors often referred to individuals they had never physically encountered. Thus, most of the survivors that passed through the Warsaw Gęsiówka labor camp recall the story of Saul Senor, a young, "handsome" Salonican, who fell in love with a Polish civilian girl. With her assistance, and that of Polish partisans, Senor attempted to escape. He failed, was arrested, tried, and eventually publicly executed. The story of Senor surfaces in numerous accounts of survivors who did not know him personally, thus making it perhaps the only recollection not directly related to their individual experiences.[58] Narrativized as a romantic story of love and death, standing for courage and humanity in the most adverse circumstances, it became

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[58] See especially the testimonies of Almalech, Calderone, Jerassy, and Kapuano, VHA USC SFI. Also, Salvator Beressi, Interview 16111, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on January 20, 2015).

a common memory shared by all in a way no other event did. As such, it eventually sustained a sense of community among the Salonican Jews in Warsaw based not solely on common practices but also on common symbols of humanity. Similarly, Doctor Leon Coenka, a physician and member of the Auschwitz orchestra, was head of a network credited with saving several Salonican Jews.[59] Such findings as those of Senor and Coenka not only reassert how a sense of community can be built through affinities both "real" and imagined in even the most abject circumstances; they also reveal an individual's "fame," helping us understand how status was attained among prisoners. They provide valuable information on who were the group leaders and hence how a different set of power relations than those between "perpetrators" and "victims" shaped (this time, positively) social life in the camps. In short, attention to networks of the mind moves analysis beyond the binary opposition of perpetrators and perpetrated and the attending grey zone of "privileged" prisoners.

To evaluate the 230 relationships recorded, create social data connectors, comprehensively map and layer the social networks of Salonican Jews we used the Gephi open graph visualization platform (https://gephi.org/). A different coloring of the edges according to such attributes as "friendship" or "kinship," as well as different combinations of attributes (say languages of friendships, or types of relations in Warsaw), offer a deeper mapping of social networks and the determinants of trust in Auschwitz-Birkenau. When combined with a width differentiation of the edges according to a given relationship's strength, such visuals additionally reveal the determinants of intimacy, be that language, origin, kinship, or friendship. By way of example, the four graphs below visualize the size, endurance, and types of relationships as well as the connection between language and intimacy.

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[59] Handali, *Apo ton Leuko Pyrgo*, 107.
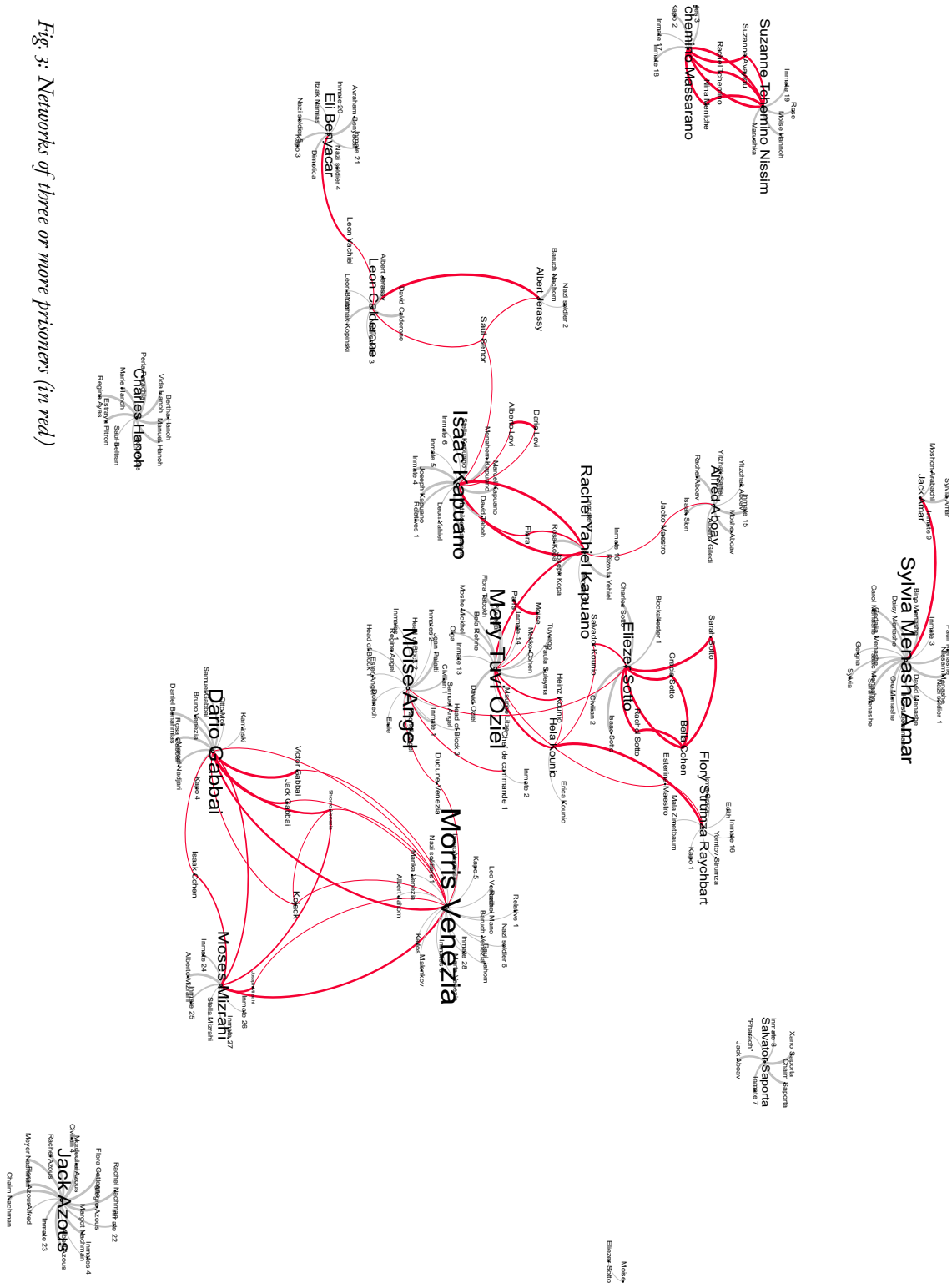
Fig. 3: Networks of three or more prisoners (in red)

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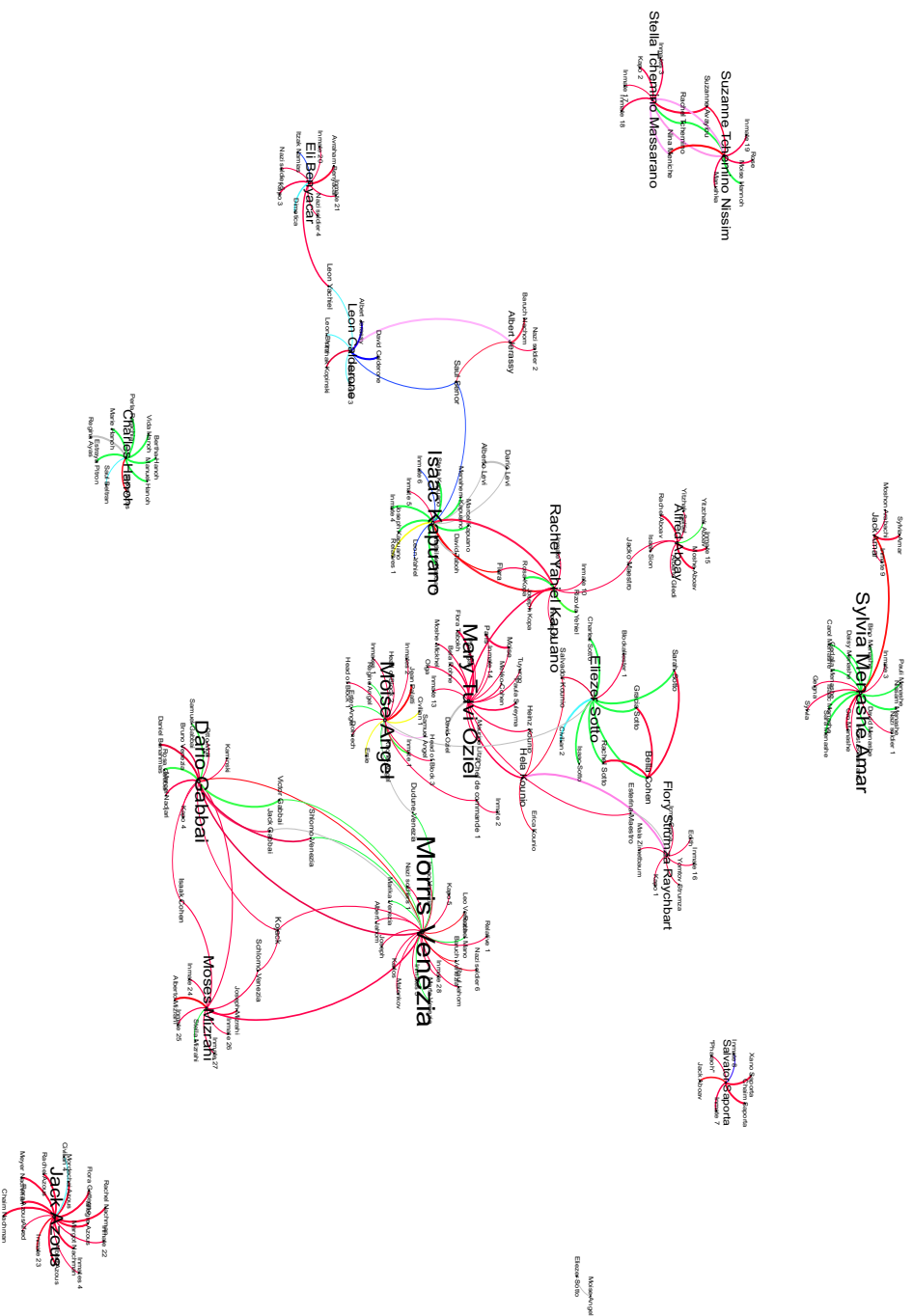
Fig. 4: Periods of relationships (mauve: pre-war, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and post-Auschwitz in any permutation; green: prewar/pre-deportation; orange: deportation; blue: Warsaw and Auschwitz-Birkenau; red: Auschwitz-Birkenau but not Warsaw; teal: camps after Auschwitz-Birkenau)
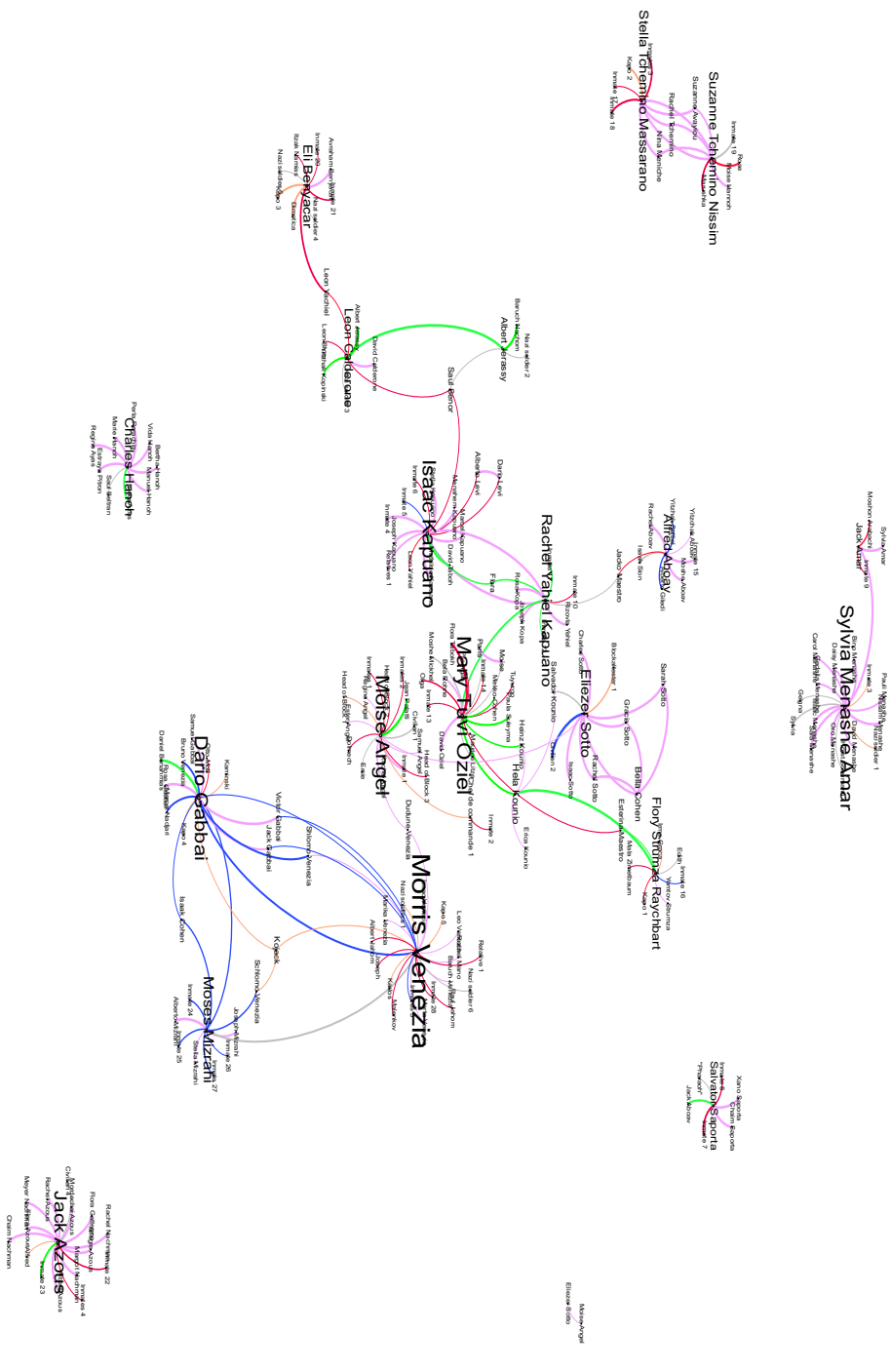
Fig 5: Types of relationships (mauve: kin; blue: workmate; light green: friend or inmate/higher rank inmate; red: inmate/higher rank inmate; orange: Kapo)

Paris Papamichos Chronakis
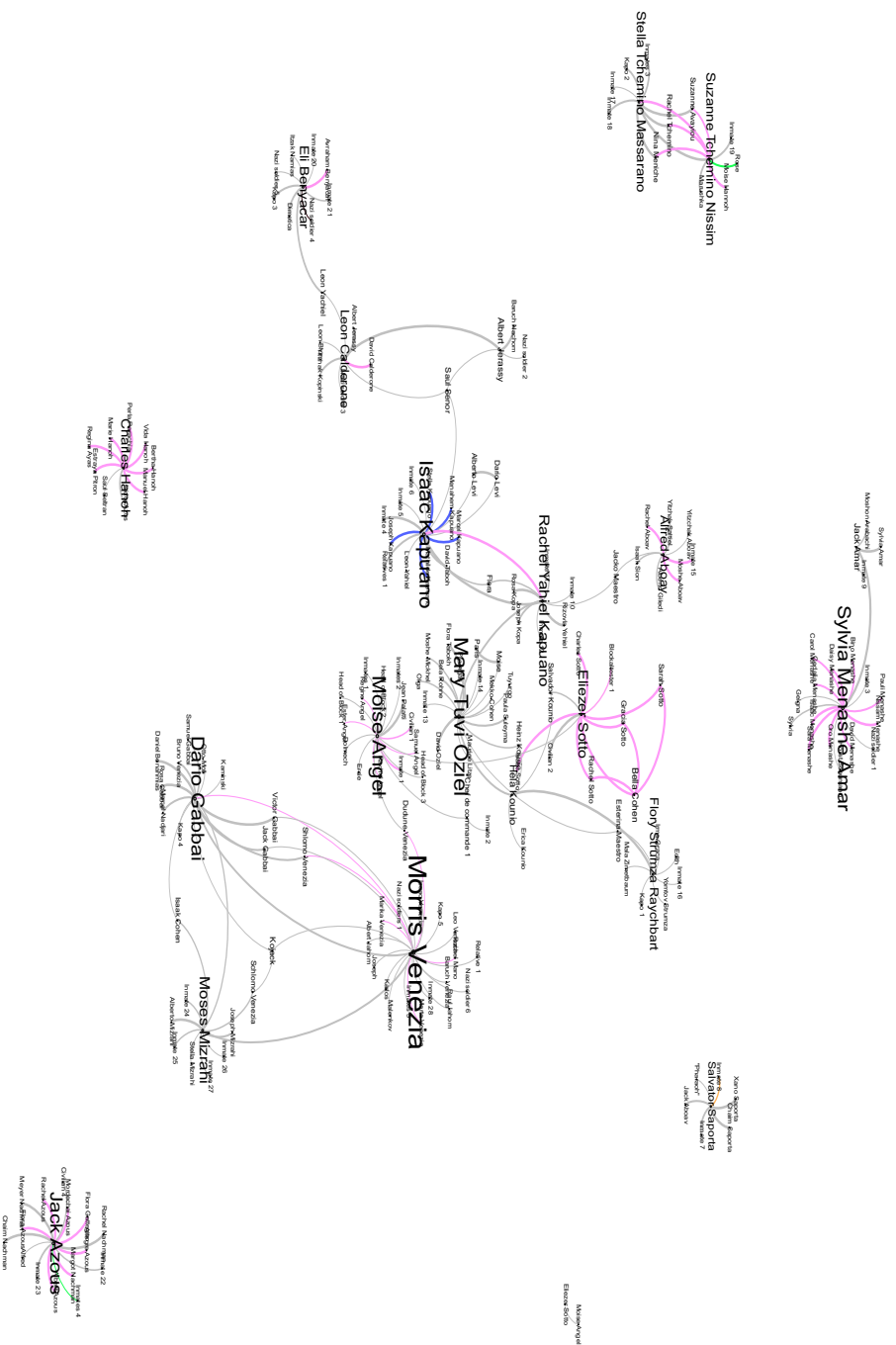
Fig. 6: Languages spoken in strong (intimate) relationships (blue: Greek and Ladino; mauve: Ladino/"Spanish;" orange: Greek; green: French; black: German)

Considering the experimental and intentionally illustrative character of these graphs it is precarious to draw any meaningful conclusions about the social networks of Salonican Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau especially before a much more representative set of relationships is obtained by data mining all interrelated testimonies –at least all those belonging to the clearly delineated group of Salonican Jewish survivors who passed through the Warsaw Gęsiówka labor camp. This is particularly true with regards to Fig. 3 which maps the size and outreach of social networks. We had consciously designed our data collection strategy with the aim of unveiling as large a number of overlapping networks as possible by exclusively mining testimonies of survivors connected by kinship or location. Instead, figure 3 reveals a rather fractured camp world composed of numerous but isolated ego-networks. More data feeding will determine whether this is not, in fact, due to the limited number of testimonies examined. Still, one network stands apart. It consists of brothers Morris and Shlomo Venezia; their distant cousins (but mainly "good friends"), Dario, Victor, and Jack Gabbai; an old friend from Salonica, Daniel Benahmias; and their fellow inmates and eventual friends, Marcel Nadjari and Moses Mizrahi.
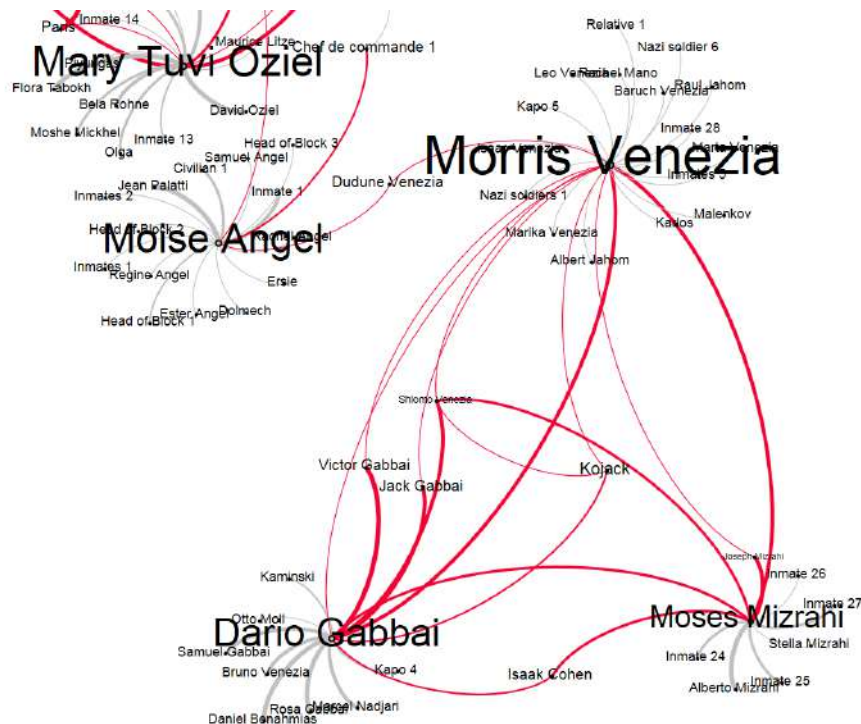
Fig. 7: The network of Morris Venezia, Dario Gabbai, Shlomo Venezia, and Moses Mizrahi

The Venezias and the Gabbais, together with Marcel Nadjari, had entangled pre-deportation trajectories. Of Italian citizenship, born and raised in Salonica, they were part of its last polyglot Jewish generation, fluent in Italian, French, Greek, and Ladino. Once the war erupted, they all fled to Athens, joined the leftist resistance, were arrested, and, after a period of imprisonment, finally deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. There, they all served in the *Sonderkommando* unit managing to stay close and assist each other. In January 1945, during the evacuation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dario Gabbai, the Venezia brothers, and Daniel Benahmias once again stuck together. Transferred to Mauthausen, they all eventually survived.[1] The graph thus powerfully illustrates the existence of a complex "close-type network" built around language, kinship, locality, nationality, and friendship, animated by a combination of pre- and wartime experiences, and eventually solidified through the common ordeal of the *Sonderkommando*.

Given Gephi's potential, we consider our project to be open-ended. The methodology and software developed can be applied to the study of social interaction within and between other groups of camp prisoners, or to other areas of Holocaust research, such as hiding and escape. In fact, our ongoing project will be expanding its scope and re-orient to a digital social network analysis of Holocaust testimonial material in order to map the webs of relations that made hiding or escape from Nazi-occupied Greece possible for Salonican Jews. Reconstructing the composition, nature, size, and mutability of these networks will make possible a systematic assessment of the importance of financial, social, and cultural resources in sustaining networks of hiding, escape and rescue and thus offer fresh insights into the old but persistent question of how social trust was maintained during the Holocaust. Hiding and escape during the war is an unwritten chapter in the history of the Holocaust in Greece as it is very much in the history of European Jewry in general where accounts are surprisingly scant, particularly from a microhistorical and network-theory perspective.[2] As the

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[1] Morris Venezia, Interview 20405, VHA USC SFI (accessed online at Northwestern University on 2 February 2015); Gabbai, VHA USC SFI; Shlomo Venezia, *Inside the Gas Chambers: Eight Months in the Sonderkommando*, (London: Polity Press, 2011); Marcel Nadjari, *Cheirografa, 1944-1947. Apo tē Thessalonikē sto Zonterkomanto tou Aousvits*, [Manuscripts, 1944-1947. From Thessaloniki to the Auschwitz Sonderkommando], (Athens: Alexandreia, 2018).

[2] A few, albeit macroscopic, exceptions to the rule: Pearl M. Oliner, *Saving the Foresaken: Religious Culture and the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Michael L. Gross, "Jewish Rescue in Holland and France during the Second World War:

pioneering, albeit factual, work of Karina Lampsa and Yaakov Schiby indicate, reconstructing the social networks that sustained hiding and exploring the patterns of escape routes in and beyond Greece can have substantial theoretical and methodological ramifications, and, above all, critical interpretative consequences.[3] A focus on Jewish and Jewish-gentile social relations and their mutations over time and space through data mining of Holocaust survivor testimonies would offer a more accurate and infinitely more detailed view of the social world of hiding and escape in wartime Greece (or for that matter, any other occupied European country) and bring together the so far disconnected histories of the Holocaust, the resistance, collaboration and everyday life. It could also help address several key questions that remain unanswered: the logistics of survival and the importance of wealth in survival rates; social capital as measured in levels of education, in the participation of individuals in professional associations and institutions and its importance vis-à-vis wealth in forging enduring relations between Jews and gentiles. Additionally, such an analysis would move historiography beyond the static accounts of individual communities and their destruction and introduce the problematics of mobility studies to the study of the Holocaust. Finally, given the involvement of multiple national and international actors across the Eastern Mediterranean in salvaging Greek and other European Jews (from the British to the exiled Greek government in Cairo to the Jewish National Fund) a digital reconstruction of hiding and escape networks would also de-provincialize the story of Greek Jewry, expand the geographical range of Holocaust Studies beyond their Eastern European core, allow the field to move beyond the still dominant ethnocentric approaches, and ultimately, rewrite the Greek and more broadly the European cases as truly transnational histories.[4]

Moral Cognition and Collective Action," in *Social Forces* 73 (1994): 463-496; Leo Goldberger, *The Rescue of the Danish Jews: Moral Courage under Stress*, (New York: New York University Press, 1987).

[3] Karina Lampsa and Yaakov Schiby, *Ē diasōsē: Ē siōpē tou kosmou, ē antistasē sta gketto kai ta stratopeda, oi Ellēnes Ebraioi sta chronia tēs Katochēs*, [The Survival: The People's Silence, Resistance in the Ghettos and Camps, the Greek Jews in the Years of Occupation], (Athens: Kapon Publishers, 2012).

[4] For the promising gains of a truly transnational history of the Holocaust see the ongoing work of Atina Grossman. Atina Grossman, "Remapping Relief and Rescue: Flight, Displacement, and International Aid for Jewish Refugees during World War II," in *New German Critique* 39/3 (2012): 61-79.

Conclusion: Networking the Holocaust Audiovisual Archive

When properly theorized, the use of digital network visualizations can therefore productively problematize the logic and structure of the audiovisual archive, expand the conceptual spectrum of Holocaust Studies, question the use of such non-historicized categories as "solidarity" and "humanity," and renew the ties between social and Holocaust history by placing emphasis on the constitution and function of the "social" in the camps. Social network analysis and digital network visualizations introduce a new way of thinking about the Holocaust subject by reconceiving the individual survivor as a "networked self." So far, the individual interview has come to determine not only the serial logic of Holocaust audiovisual archives, but given their proliferation and accessibility, the Holocaust's very politics of representation. The "testimony format" recasts the survivor as witness, gives voice to the voiceless, and evidences the importance of the myriad individual accounts over the singular, totalizing narrative of the perpetrator's archive or the historian's monologic text. The linear organization of most Holocaust audiovisual archives implicitly informs a distinct logic of individual-centered representation of the survivor and by default, of survival as well.

Yet, a methodological focus on social relations and the use of digital technologies as a means to visually represent them can redress this imbalance. Attention to the forms and structures of relatedness can lead to a better understanding of how prisoners attempted to reconstruct a social universe in the camps and navigate within it under extremely adverse circumstances. Social network visualizations provide us with an adequately flexible tool to analyze the multiple relations between prisoners themselves, move beyond the perpetrator's gaze, and tackle the impasses of top-bottom approaches to Nazi genocidal ideology and its implementation in the camps. They offer a glimpse to some of the organizing principles shaping incarceration and prisoners' society. Hence, they allow us to more fully understand how identities were not only forcefully imposed by the perpetrators but also liminally crafted by the prisoners themselves, as fragmentary senses of the self, produced through the discourses and practices of relatedness. Complementing the technology of audiovisual testimonies with that of social networks helps us not just restore the "humanity" of the survivor-witness but also contextualize it and thus historicize it. Data connectors may be

dots and lines in a blank screen, but they eventually make us understand what it meant to be human in Auschwitz.

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How to quote this article:

Contextualizing Holocaust Documents of the
International Tracing Service (ITS) through an Interactive Online Guide

by Christiane Weber

Abstract

In 2018, the International Tracing Service (ITS) extends the online accessibility of further parts of its 30 million documents on the fate of Holocaust victims, of forced laborers and Displaced Persons.
To support the understanding of this historical documentation the ITS developed a so-called e-Guide - an interactive tool for describing document types, their origin, the meaning of terms and the possible variations.
This paper introduces the concept thoughts behind the e-Guide and the first results. Using the Malariakartei as a practical example, the article will show how different user groups can benefit from the new digital guide.

Introduction

The e-Guide Concept

The "malaria card" as an Example of an e-Guide Description

Conclusion

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Christiane Weber

Introduction

In 2018/2019 the International Tracing Service (ITS)[1] extends the online accessibility of further parts of its 30 million documents on the fate of Holocaust victims, forced laborers and Displaced Persons. Following the online publication of documents on the Child Search Branch and the death marches, one of the next major digital collections of the ITS will focus on documents from concentration camp inmates. Thus, two questions arise: Will users – especially non-academic ones like family members of survivors or students working on the topics of Holocaust and forced labor – be able to "decode" the documents? Can the average user as well as the academic one answer questions like what exactly can be read on a personal effects cards (*Effektenkarte*) or what a registration office card (*Schreibstubenkarte*) was used for?

Therefore, the ITS decided to develop an online guide – the so-called e-Guide – to describe the most common document types, their origin, the obstacles a user may face working with them and the meaning of terms and variations. This digital interactive tool will support a broad user group's understanding of the historical documents.

The e-Guide concept

General idea

The main idea behind the historical contextualization and explanation of documents in the e-Guide is to enhance the understanding of documents held in the ITS archive. In the first phase the e-Guide focuses on the approximately 30 most common document types of individual concentration camp inmates (see Fig. 1).[2]

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[1] The International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen is one of the world's biggest archives on Nazi persecution. Its collections comprise about 30 million documents from concentration camps and prisons, on forced labour, as well as on survivors and their migration in the aftermath of the Second World War. Additionally, they include records or files produced over the years as results of the tracing service's work, such as the Central Name Index or the three million correspondence files on individual Nazi victims. The collection of the UNRRA/IRO Child Search Branch compiled at the time – comprising more than 64000 individual files on Displaced or Unaccompanied Children – and related records have been integrated into the archive as well.

[2] The ITS e-Guide (https://eguide.its-arolsen.org/en/) contains descriptions of documents that were developed at the ITS during its early search activities (like the so-called individual document

envelopes and the cross reference cards). Nevertheless, most of the explained documents origin from concentration camps, e.g. prisoner registration cards, registration forms, personal effects cards, post control cards, labor cards, cards from the registry offices in Buchenwald, Dachau and Mauthausen, clinic cards, money account cards, medical registration cards, clothing chamber cards and the questionnaire that liberated concentration camp inmates had to fill out for the Military Government of Germany. The documents were compiled by long-term ITS staff who used their experience of what documents triggered questions from archive users, students and relatives most frequently. – As mentioned before, the e-Guide starts with documents regarding concentration camp inmates and will be online in May 2018 via www.eguide.its-arolsen.org. In the winter of 2018 a description of approximately 35 Displaced Persons' documents will follow. And in the summer of 2019 the final annotations of documents regarding forced laborers will conclude the main body of the e-Guide. The guide is designed to grow and therefore the technical side is designed in a way that further annotations can be added anytime.

Fig. 1.1 – 1.3: *Three examples of documents that are included into the e-Guide: prisoner registration card, post control card and personal effects card. (1.1.5.3/5843021, 5407544 and 5403154/ITS Digital Archives, Bad Arolsen)*

Fig. 2: *Transport card from the Polizeiliches Durchgangslager Amersfoort with a "Z" stamped on it. (1.1.1.2/85484/ITS Digital Archives, Bad Arolsen)*

In their daily work, ITS staff often experience that several groups can have difficulties in coping with these documents. The ITS Tracing Branch faces questions of relatives who received copies of documents on their parents, siblings or other family members. The Research and Education Branch uses documents like the prisoner registration card (*Häftlings-Personal-Karte*) in workshops with high school or university students. They experience that participants often tend to focus extensively on small details and thus prolong discussions aside from the historical documents. The positive side of this observation is that people are aware that even the smallest information can be important.

Nevertheless, it shows as well that easily accessible information about the documents is required in order to fully understand them.

An example is the transport card from Amersfoort (see Fig. 2). Here the abbreviation "Z" is the only proof that a person was deported to Zwolle where the inmates had to work on the fortification on the IJssel river. Through the work on and with the cards it became more and more evident that every small stamp or scribble can be of great importance – and therefore should be explained.

Composition of the e-Guide

The e-Guide is designed in a way that it is appealing to several quite different groups working with ITS documents – from (mostly non-German speaking) relatives who receive copies of documents from the ITS to German high school and university students taking part in educational projects or research workshops. The e-Guide faces this challenge of different users with varying levels of knowledge by offering the explanations in a non-intricate language, as low-threshold access and in a bilingual version in English and German.

Regarding the presentation of information, it was most important – from the developers' point of view – that a user should be able to choose what explanation he or she requires. Here the e-Guide follows features like in the representation of historical documents on the EHRI Document Blog[3] or on the website www.mit-stempel-und-unterschrift.de (see Fig. 3)[4].

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[3] See for example the *karta rejestracyjna* from Bejrach Glejberman on the EHRI Document Blog: https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2017/04/18/registration-cards-the-holocaust-survivors-in-poland/ (last accessed: 25 October 2017). The EHRI Document Blog uses the plugin Neatline from Omeka which allows to highlight certain areas and to give explanations on them. It is as well possible to zoom into the document. – A more traditional example of information distribution is the description of World War I index cards presented in the Historical Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): https://grandeguerre.icrc.org/en/File/Details/2723874/6/2 (last accessed: 20 March 2018). The different areas on the cards are structured by numbered squares. The number links the part of the card to further explanations.

[4] See http://www.mit-stempel-und-unterschrift.de/ (last accessed: 25 October 2017). The website was developed for the German Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ).

At this point the advantages of a digital solution become evident: access to the information through a digital guide differs fundamentally from the possibilities that a traditional publication as book or flyer could offer because the e-Guide basically adapts to the level of knowledge of each user by letting him or her decide which information is needed.
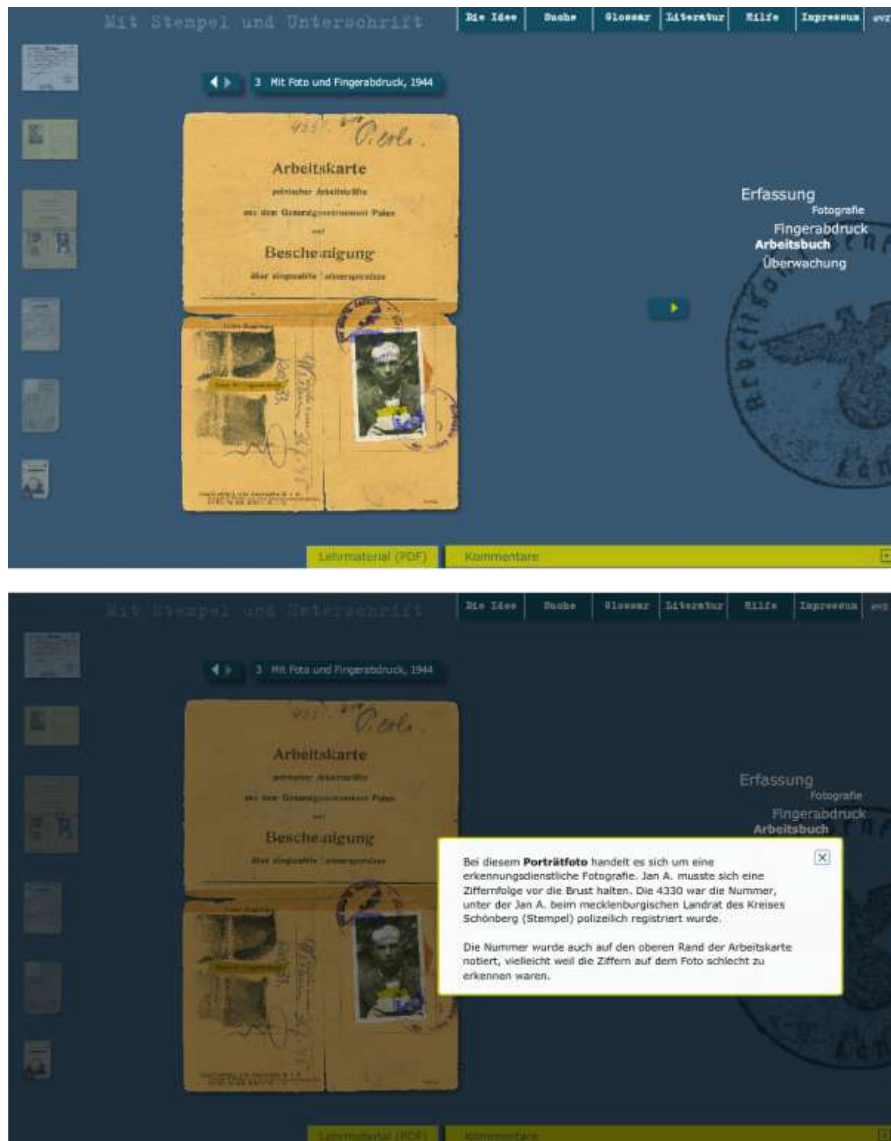
Fig. 3.1 - 3.2: On the website www.mit-stempel-und-unterschrift.de *the explanation is offered as pop-up window, activated by a click on the highlighted areas on the labor card (Arbeitskarte) of a forced laborer.*

For each historical document type, the ITS e-Guide presents a main sample card and additional cards showing variations. On the main card – that allows to enlarge it and to zoom into the document – the parts to which additional explanations are available will be highlighted with overlays. Depending on his or her previous knowledge the user can choose what information is relevant for him or her and which is not. A high school student on the one hand might for example need the explanation of the triangle categories that were assigned to the camp inmates while an experienced academic user on the other hand might not activate the pop-up window connected to the overlay on the triangle symbol.

Next to the main card one will find variations of the card e.g. versions written by hand or with a type writer, with further symbols, with or without pictures or in different colors. The personal registration card (*Häftlings-Personal-Karte*) for example is conveyed in the ITS archive in not less than four different colors including brown, yellow, blue and green cards (see Fig. 4). These variations are supposed to simplify the recognition process if a certain card is in fact this type of document even though it might look different in a few aspects.

Häftlings-Personal-Karte

Fig. 4: The main prisoner registration card (Häftlings-Personal-Karte) with five smaller variations. The variations will be offered as images without further explanations (several cards from the ITS Digital Archives, Bad Arolsen/compilation of the author).

In cooperation with several national and international archives, memorial institutions and individual experts it was possible to answer a fixed set of contextualizing questions for each document. The questions and their answers shed light on the historical situation in which the cards were created:

- Where was the document used and who issued it?
- When was the document used?
- What was the purpose of the document?
- How frequent is this document (in general and at the ITS)?
- What do you have to take into consideration while working with the document?

Links to additional features are included into the answers to those five questions that can be activated if the user wishes to do so. The links present further documents from the ITS archive (e.g. orders of documents addressed to the central printing shop in Auschwitz), quotations from reports by survivors on what the document meant to them during the war and lists of abbreviations or of labor detachments. The latter for example will help to decode the name of an *Arbeitskommando* behind the hand-written number on a registry office card. Two features complete the e-Guide: a general introduction to the ITS documents and a search function that leads the user to the document description even if he or she does not yet know which type of document might be in his or her hand.

Technical aspects of the e-Guide

The e-Guide is an online tool that offers a user-friendly front end. The guide itself is a TYPO 3 solution that is implemented as subdomain into the ITS website. The design implementation works via HTML5/CSS3. As it is expected from current technology, the e-Guide is designed responsively and adapts to different formats as tablets, smartphones etc.

The "malaria card" as an Example of an e-Guide Description

One card that is definitely not the most common document – in contrast to e.g. the prisoner registration form (*Häftlingspersonalbogen*) or the personal effects card (*Effektenkarte*) which were basically issued for almost every concentration camp inmate – but was quite a surprise for the team while working on the e-Guide was the "malaria card" from Dachau concentration camp (see Fig. 5).
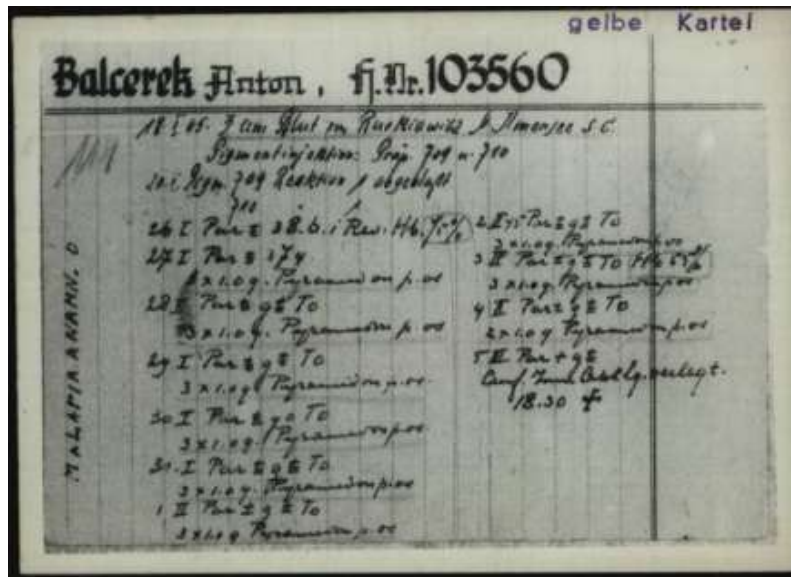
Fig. 5: "Malaria card" for the Dachau concentration camp inmate Anton Balcerek who died as a result of the experiment conducted on him. The ITS is not in possession of the original cards but of the microfilm versions. (1.1.6.9/10793485/ITS Digital Archives, Bad Arolsen)

Starting in February 1942, prof. Claus Schilling chose 1100 camp inmates for his pseudo medical experiments with the malaria virus. The course of the disease was noted on special cards. These were used at the ITS in recent decades to prove that a person was forced to participate in the experiment. As part of a compensation process during the 1960s the ITS compiled material on the various experiments in several concentration camps.[5] Thus, members of the ITS contacted among others Eugène Ost who worked as a writer (*Revierschreiber*) in the malaria station at Dachau concentration camp. On the basis of his letters – which are preserved in the ITS archive – it is possible to explain the card and its function. The information ranges from the place where the card was written to the name of the person writing it. Even the nationality of the inmate who wrote the name and the number on top of the card is given in one of the nine overlays that explain the cards in the e-Guide. More generally it is explained how the card

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[5] The Federal Republic of Germany resolved the reparative payment to Eastern European survivors of the pseudo medical experiments conducted on them in concentration camps on 22 June 1960. The money was given to the International Red Cross Committee which distributed it after the ITS had examined its material. The ITS issued certificates to those survivors whose incarceration could be proved through the archival documents. During this process, the ITS staff did extensive research on the various experiments as sometimes the participation could only be established by certain specifications on regular cards.

worked and how one can make sense of the numbers and abbreviations on it. A description of the processes during the experiment can, for example, explain why there are gaps between the treatments which meant that theinm ate had to return to his regular block and his work in the camp. Surely, the malaria card is a very specific example but it is suitable to show how the e-Guide can help to understand what the historical document can reflect of the lives of the concentration camp inmates.

Conclusion

The e-Guide is available over the ITS website since May 2018.
 Different groups will be able to benefit from it as it offers general information in a digital and interactive way. Thus, the e-Guide will not limit itself to a certain target group but will be a tool that gives answers to everyone – to a relative searching for information about the fate of a former camp inmate, to the student participating in a workshop, as well as to a historian who is using the ITS material for his or her research. As the descriptions relate not only to ITS documents but to general concentration camp cards that can be found in other archives as well, the guide will come in handy for a variety of people.

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url: www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=404

Memento Vienna.

How an Online Tool Presenting Digitized Holocaust-related Data
and Archival Material is Offering New Insights
into the Holocaust in Vienna

by Wolfgang Schellenbacher

Abstract

Holocaust research and archives are undergoing a digital transformation, most obviously seen in the digitization of primary sources. The increased volume of digital Holocaust-related archival content raises the question though of whether online availability of data is enough to ensure accessibility. New digital tools can play an important role in facilitating access to digital data and existing materials in different ways.

This article will give an insight into the ongoing work on Memento Vienna, *an online tool that makes visible the last-known residence of Holocaust victims in Vienna and facilitates access to digital Holocaust-related archival sources such as documents and photographs with person-specific information via a Geographic Information System (GIS). The article argues that while the focus of such a digital tool lies in presenting information in new ways to broader audiences, these tools and the visualization of Holocaust-related archival material they facilitate can also be an important source for historical analysis. The article concludes by showing that Memento Vienna is not only an example of the role of new practical applications aimed at a younger generation in compiling and presenting data about the Holocaust, but also their use in offering historians new ways to interpret and analyze Holocaust-related data. The article in particular shows how the preliminary results of Memento Vienna, visualizing areas of ghettoization of Jews in Vienna, can help deepen the understanding of the policy of relocation for Jews before deportation.*

Introduction
The Online Tool *Memento Vienna*

Digital Data and Archival Collections Used for *Memento Vienna*

Facilitating New Research Perspectives Through Visualizing and Analyzing the Mapped Data Used for *Memento Vienna*
The Jewish Population in Vienna before and after the *Anschluss.* The Resettlement of the Jews

The Jewish Population in Vienna and the Mass Deportation of Jews between February 1941 and October 1942

Conclusion

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Introduction

"Technology is changing the field of history […], the medium changes not only the message but, for historians, it can also change the field of interpretation."[1]

Over the past few decades, historical and archival research in general has seen a massive shift due to a "digital turn": The ubiquitous availability of a huge number of Holocaust-related archival descriptions and archival material online has enabled easier access for new user groups. This had led Max J. Evans to argue that "archivists must shift the way they think about their roles and develop alternative means and methods for doing archival work."[2] This availability often bypasses the 'gatekeepers' of the records and therefore enables easier access for new user groups via the internet. While the physical obstacle of visiting archives might be easily bypassed in this way, other barriers to carrying out archival work using scientifically compiled primary sources often persist, especially for a younger user group – the enhanced availability of data does not necessarily mean increased accessibility.

Online tools can help to address this problem of making archival material both available *and* accessible online by offering new ways of displaying archival information, such as geospatial presentation. By adopting a digital learning approach preferring exploration, the concrete rather than the abstract, and social to individual learning[3], Memento Vienna is an example for a new way of doing archival and educational work by presenting digitized archival material and information via GIS.

To a younger, digital-born audience accustomed to social media and the use of GIS in their everyday life, a map-based presentation is a format with which they are comfortable: "Media in general, and social media in particular, have become increasingly equipped with mapping and location-based features. In other words, media are increasingly becoming like GIS."[4]

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[1] Toni Weller, *History in the Digital Age*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 200.
[2] Max J. Evans, "Archives of the People, by the People, for the People," in *The American Archivist* 2/2 (2007): 387-400, 387.
[3] John S. Brown, "Learning in the Digital Age," in *The Internet & the University: Forum 2001,* eds. Maureen Devlin, Richard Larson, Joel Meyerson, (EDUCAUSE 2002), 65-91, 67.
[4] Daniel Sui and Michael Goodchild, "The convergence of GIS and social media: challenges for GIScience," in *International Journal of Geographical Information Science* 25/11 (2011): 1737-48.

This article begins with an overview of the mobile website *Memento Vienna* which maps Holocaust-related archival material as well as victims and buildings in Vienna via the use of GIS the inner-city center of Vienna.[5] The creation of a GIS for information on Holocaust victims in Vienna via Memento Vienna relies on large amount of quantitative data. The article therefore will give an overview of data collection projects carried out by the DÖW relating to the Holocaust

and on which Memento Vienna is predominantly based. The article looks at the possibilities of such a Holocaust-related online tool not only for users, but also for the archives who create them.

By looking at some preliminary results of the Memento Vienna project, the article will then go on to argue that digital online tools can help re-examine historical theories. Additionally, the mapped data used in such tools can further facilitate research. As pointed out by Bodenhamer, Corrigan and Harris (2010), in terms of using GIS in the humanities, the focus has to be less on a quantitative representation of space, but more on facilitating an understanding of place and the role the place occupies.[6] In particular, the claim is that the data
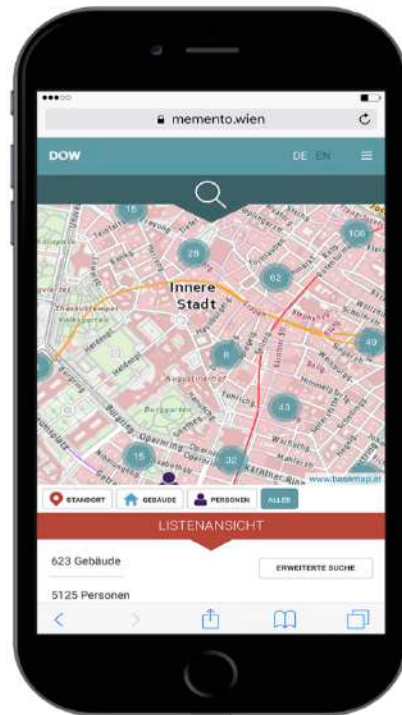
Fig. 1: Memento Vienna

made visible on Memento Vienna can improve existing research on the Nazi policy of relocating the Jewish population before their eventual deportation and lead to new insights into the details and motives of the relocation of Jews in a city like Vienna, highlighting areas of ghettoization as well as areas that have

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[5] The project is currently being expanded to several other districts in Vienna and will include information for roughly 86% of Holocaust victims in the city of Vienna by the end of 2018. Vienna is divided into 23 administrative districts, known both by their number and their name, and varying in size. The first district – also known as the inner-city – is surrounded by a ring of other districts (2-9), which in turn are surrounded by districts (10-23). In the attempt to create "Groß-Wien" – *Greater Vienna* – by suburbanizing larger parts of the surrounding of the city, Vienna was divided into 26 districts until 1954.

[6] David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, Trevor M. Harris, introduction to *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, Trevor M. Harris, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), X.

been made "*judenfrei*" [free of Jews]. The article will therefore utilize data mapped in *Memento Vienna* to exemplify the practical application of digital tools in analyzing and interpreting Holocaust sources.

The Online Tool *Memento Vienna*

Memento Vienna is a digital tool optimized for mobile devices, presenting information and archival material about the victims of the Nazi regime in the center of Vienna. Using a map of the city, the mobile website makes visible the last-known addresses of those murdered in the Holocaust. Additionally, the GIS-enabled online tool links and displays archival material such as documents and photographs with person-specific information to these georeferenced addresses. Based on their current location within the city, users can interact with the history of their vicinity and explore the fate of those who were persecuted and murdered as well as the history of important Holocaust-related historical places as they move through the city.

In recent years Vienna has seen the implementation of important memory projects in most of its districts.[7] For the remembrance of individual victims of the Nazi regime in public space, the most notable is the *Steine der Erinnerung*, a project that has worked since 2005 to create small plaques in memory of individuals and working closely with the local community in the districts.[8]

Even though several German cities including Hamburg and Munich have created apps to map the *Stolpersteine* (the German equivalent of *Steine der Erinnerung*) and added archival information, *Memento Vienna* differs in scope and aim; *Memento Vienna* includes all known Holocaust victims, rather than a symbolic selection and makes no intervention in the public space.

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[7] Examples of such projects commemorating victims in Vienna's public space include: the project *Verein "Steine der Erinnerung"* who place memorial stones in the sidewalks throughout Vienna; the group "*Servitengasse 1938*" in the 9th district, founded in 2004; the project "*Erinnern für die Zukunft*" in the 6th district or the project "*Steine des Gedenkens: Wien-Landstraße*" in the 3rd district.

[8] Elisabeth Ben David-Hindler et al., *10 Jahre Steine, die bewegen*, (Wien: Verein Steine der Erinnerung: 2015), 36.

To do so, the tool works to combine different datasets on Holocaust victims and digital archival material from the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance (DÖW) as well as material scattered throughout archives in Austria and abroad. Where available, individuals are linked to this archival material as well as pictures and descriptive texts.

All of the information is available via search options for names and addresses and a map of the city [see Fig. 1]. Two different icons are displayed on the map: Person-related information for an address (on the victims) including the number of victims in this building or information about the building (related to Nazi organizations or Jewish institutions based there).

Detailed information can be accessed by tapping the overlay leading to a list of people whose last address was there prior to deportation and murder as well as photographs, documents and other archival material. Person-specific information pages present data from the DÖW's victims' database. This is – in most cases – the first and second name, place and date of birth, place and date of death and the transport on which they were deported as well as the deportation date.

Similarly, location-specific information pages feature the names, addresses and further information about organizations and institutions, both those established to persecute through systematic theft, exclusion and deportation, but also those that aimed to help and assist the victims of such persecution. Wherever possible, photographs of the buildings from the 1930s and 1940s have been included as well as related documents.

The main target groups are pupils and visitors of the DÖW exhibition. Nevertheless, the tool is also aimed at the interested public and family members of the Holocaust victims.[9] To make the web application as intuitive as possible for such a broad user group, the navigation is based on current usability concepts and principles for mobile applications (for example, context-specific detail options, drop-down menus for the main navigation and a 'back' button). A sustainable open-source map was used for the tool, *basemap.at,* a project that was

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[9] For a more detailed description of the user group and the educational aims of *Memento Vienna* see Wolfgang Schellenbacher, "*Memento Vienna*: A Case Study in Digital Archives, Georeferenced Data and Holocaust Education," in *GI_forum Journal* 2/2 (2017): 13-22. (DOI: 10.1553/giscience2017_02_s13).

a cooperation between all nine Austrian provinces and based on administrative data. The map covers a scale of 1:1000 and allows users to see not just the location of an address, but also the shape of the buildings and their courtyards. It was created as the first digital basemap covering all of Austria and went online in 2014.[10] When using *Memento Vienna*, the map of Vienna is centered on the location of the user (shown on the map using a red location symbol), but the focal point can be manipulated using zoom or by scrolling to view different areas of the city.

Another fundamental element of the project was the inclusion of explanatory descriptions for the archival sources used. The texts were kept as short and succinct as possible to make them easily understandable for the anticipated target audiences.

All aspects of *Memento Vienna* are available in both German and English in order to make it more readily accessible to the descendants of victims and visitors to Vienna from abroad. Users can switch between the languages at any time.

Digital Data and Archival Collections Used for *Memento Vienna*

As David J. Bodenhamer pointed out: "GIS fundamentally is about what happens in geographic space. It relies heavily on quantitative information for its representations and analyses and views its results as geographical maps."[11] Mapping the Holocaust in a city like Vienna therefore relies on access to a large and reliable dataset of Holocaust victims which can then be supplemented with further historical contextual information and digital versions of related documents. Looking at the scale of the Holocaust in Vienna, this becomes especially important for a tool trying to comprehensively include as many victims as possible: of the approximately 206000 Austrians Jews – of whom around 185000 lived in Vienna – 66500 were murdered during the Holocaust. A further

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[10] Jörg W.,"basemap.at – DIE administrative Grundkarte von Österreich," in *18. Internationale Geodätische Woche Obergurgl 2015*, eds. Klaus Hanke and Thomas Weinhold, (Berlin: Wichmann Verlag, 2015), 37-43.
[11] David J. Bodenhamer, "The spatial humanities: space, time and place in the new digital age," in *History in the Digital Age*, ed. Toni Weller, 30.

8000 Austrian political victims and 9500 Austrian Romani and Sinti were murdered in the Holocaust.

The deportation of Jews started earlier in Vienna than other areas of the German Reich. The first transports left Austria in October 1939 and continued in February and March 1941. The systematic mass deportation of the Jewish population from Vienna however began in autumn 1941. Between October 1941 and October 1942, mass transports saw the deportation of around 48.000 Austrian Jews to areas occupied by Nazi Germany in Central and Eastern Europe.[12] Only a very small part of the Jewish population remained in Vienna; many of the approximately 8000 people who remained were those living in so-called "mixed marriages" with a non-Jewish, "Aryan" partner. This number fell further following a number of smaller transports.

An important aim of *Memento Vienna* was to utilize large, comprehensive datasets to personalize victims by including biographical information and archival documents in the online tool. The project was therefore based predominantly on personal information in the database(s) of victims created by the DÖW over the last 25 years. Through the project "Registration by Name: Austrian Victims of the Holocaust" and other work that followed, 64000 names of Austrian victims of the Shoah have been identified. Initiated in 1987 by Yitzhak Arad, then head of Yad Vashem and commissioned by the Austrian Ministry for Sciences in 1992,[13] the project began by evaluating the transport lists compiled for the mass transportations of Jews to the East-Central European areas occupied by the Nazis. Later, sources such as the holdings of the *Opferfürsorge Wien* (Vienna Victim's Welfare) and other memorial sites were added. In this way, several databases on victims of the Holocaust were collated, resulting in the compilation of 64000 names of the 66500 Austrian Jewish victims of the Holocaust. These results have been fully searchable online since the early 2000s, along with 4.600 photographs taken by the Vienna Gestapo of individuals who had been arrested or interrogated. Since the project is located at

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[12] Florian Freund, Hans Safrian, *Vertreibung und Ermordung. Zum Schicksal der österreichischen Juden 1938-1945. Das Projekt Namentliche Erfassung der österreichischen Holocaustopfer*, (Wien: DÖW, 1993).

[13] Brigitte Bailer and Gerhard Ungar, "Die Zahl der Todesopfer politischer Verfolgung – Ergebnisse des Projekts," in *Opferschicksale: Widerstand und Verfolgung im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. DÖW, (Wien: DÖW, 2013), 111-24.

the DÖW, *Memento Vienna* could simply use the NS-generated documents made available online by the DÖW and map them. This made the research process that other projects using NS-generated documents have to go through and avoiding and assessment of whether the information can be made publicly available in this way.

Concentrating less on egodocuments – such as letters or diaries – of the victims, *Memento Vienna* instead utilizes the much larger and more comprehensive collections of documents from the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance and other archives. This approach was chosen to reflect the aim of the project to be as comprehensive as possible in naming Holocaust victims from Vienna. Digital copies of transport lists were linked to the individual victims in 2015, making 47000 records about the individuals available via the institute's homepage. Based on this important work, it was possible to produce a list of Shoah victims from Vienna's first district (inner-city center) with over 5000 people whose last address was located there prior to deportation.

Fig. 2: *Memento Vienna, K. Fischer*

Key archival sources included the deportation lists from the large-scale transports, the "mugshots" taken by the Vienna Gestapo of people under investigation and the Daily Reports published by the Gestapo, all of which helped to add further biographical information on the people included. Additionally, further archival material on the individual victims from archives in Czechia and Israel are included.

It is these documents especially that help to personalize victims by telling their story and showing an image of their persecution. *Memento Vienna* makes visible the stories of Holocaust victims like Katharina Fischer of Rembrandtstraße 28

in the second district of Vienna, who was arrested by the Gestapo for not adhering to the law that required Jews to wear a Star of David [*Unterlassung der Jüdischen Kennzeichnungspflicht*] and was transported on April 14th, 1943 to Auschwitz, where she was murdered on December 11th, 1943 [see Fig. 2].

Beginning in 1942, roughly 15000 Austrians were deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto in modern-day Czechia. Given that this ghetto received the largest number of deported Austrian Jews, the *Memento Vienna* cooperated with the *Institut Terezínské iniciativy* [Terezín Initiative Institute – ITI] in Prague to incorporate the digitized Theresienstadt *Todesfallanzeigen* [death records] into the *Memento Vienna* data set. The records were made viewable through *Memento Vienna*, linked to other information about the people they pertain to.

Photographs from the DÖW's collections have been used to supplement written documents and photographs of victims of the Nazi regime were also used on the welcome page of the mobile website. The photographs of buildings included in the tool are from the Vienna Municipal and Provincial Archives and the Bildarchiv Austria of the Austrian National Library. For roughly 45% of the addresses in the city center of Vienna, it was possible to find photographs and include them along with the person-specific and institutional data.

In the first stage of the project, information and archival material for the city center (Vienna's first district) was put online and made publicly available on November 9, 2016. This original launch included documents and photographs for many of the 5125 victims and 650 identified street addresses. *Memento Vienna* links the existing data to georeferenced information, with each of the 650 inner-city addresses in Vienna being assigned a geo-coordinate. The fact that some addresses or whole streets no longer exist, (due to bombing during the war, for example) meant that this work was done manually as these addresses are only possible to locate using geo-referencing with the help of historical maps.

The project is now being expanded in a second stage. Over 2018, the aim is to include the Holocaust victims for most of the city of Vienna. In a next step, *Memento Vienna* not only aims to include more information tailored towards a younger generation, but to be able to involve users and students as digital content creators by extending the scope of *Memento Vienna* to allow further information and suggestions on how to interact with the content (for example, self-guided

tours).

Facilitating New Research Perspectives Through Visualizing and Analyzing the Mapped Data Used for *Memento Vienna*

By using GIS to map large amount of Holocaust-related archival material and databases, digital tools such as *Memento Vienna*, facilitate new and innovative ways for historians interpret and analyze Holocaust-related data. Toni Weller speaks generally of the role that digital technologies may play in further broadening how history is presented:

> In other words, digital history is directly engaged with the role new digital technologies can play in presenting and representing the past, both in terms of the utilization of such technologies in scholarship and teaching, but also in considering new methodologies resulting from them. Implicit in this definition is that digital history can frame new types of research question [sic] thanks to the unprecedented connectivity and interactivity of digital age.[14]

The thriving spatial studies of the Holocaust in recent years[15] have shown how the usage of space and place while not eschewing chronology provides a framework for exploring new views on the Holocaust.

One example of this is how the newly mapped data underpinning *Memento Vienna* has allowed for the detailed visualization of the "ghettoization" of Jews into ever tighter living areas prior to their deportation and murder. A spatial analysis of this visualization can offer additional information for research on specific research questions relating to the Holocaust in Vienna. In particular, the preliminary results of *Memento Vienna* and the information that will be included in the next project phase about the places of residence in 1938 has led to new ways of looking at the increasing ghettoization. This will facilitate new avenues of investigation for research into relatively under-investigated areas, such as the Nazi policy of relocating the Jewish population prior to their deportation and the social environment of the Jewish quarters in the city after 1938. Despite

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[14] Toni Weller, *History in the Digital Age*, 3.

[15] See especially: Anne K. Knowles, Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014); Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*, (London – Oxford – New York – New Delhi – Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2016).

Gerhard Botz discussing the interrelation between the Nazi housing policy in Vienna and the deportation of Jews as early as the 1970s,[16] further research in this area took off only very recently.[17] Therefore, the relocation of Jews in Vienna and the use of certain areas of the city as an area of "ghettoization" of Jews before deportation has been under-investigated until recently. *Memento Vienna* can add further nuance to these new studies by visualizing the resettlement of Jews into ever smaller areas and buildings over time. The rapid eviction of Jews from their homes and their resettlement led to increasingly worse living conditions in small and often run-down accommodation. Additionally, it expedited the segregation of Jews as well as their deportation. A closer look at the preliminary outcomes of *Memento Vienna* confirms this and adds new insights into the (spatial) isolation and ghettoization of Jews in Vienna.

The Jewish population in Vienna before and after the *Anschluss*. The Resettlement of the Jews

Prior to the *Anschluss* of Austria to the German Reich in March 1938, Vienna had a large Jewish minority. In 1934, 176034 people of Jewish religion lived in Vienna, representing 9.4% of the whole population of Vienna.[18] The Jewish population was spread throughout Vienna but with a disproportionately high concentration in certain districts in the city center: In 1910, around 56800 Jews lived in the Leopoldstadt (34% of the district's population), 21600 in Alsergrund (20.5% of the district's population) and 11.000 in Innere Stadt (20.35% of the district's population).[19]

At the time of the *Anschluss*, around 185000 people living in Vienna were considered Jewish according to the definition set forward in the "Nuremberg Laws." The process of excluding, disenfranchising and expelling the Austrian

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[16] Gerhard Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation. Zur Funktion des Antisemitismus als Ersatz nationalsozialistischer Sozialpolitik*, (Wien & Salzburg: Geyer Edition, 1975).

[17] Michaela Raggam-Blesch, "'Sammelwohnungen' für Jüdinnen und Juden als Zwischenstation vor der Deportation, Wien 1938-1942," in *Forschungen zu Vertreibung und Holocaust, (DÖW Jahrbuch 2018)*, ed. DÖW, (Wien: DÖW, 2018), 81-100. See also, Dieter J. Hecht, Eleonore Lappin-Eppel and Michaela Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah, Gedächtnisorte des zerstörten jüdischen Wien*, (Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2015).

[18] *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien*, (Vienna: Magistrat Wien: 1937), 11.

[19] Leo Goldhammer, *Die Juden Wiens: eine statistische Studie*, (Vienna: Löwit Verlag, 1927), 10.

Jews and expropriating their property, began swiftly with increasing severity.
Having been excluded from almost all professions, large segments of the Jewish population became impoverished. The expulsion policy of the Nazis saw the number of Austrian Jews living in Vienna fall rapidly to around 65500 people by September 1939.[20]

Fig. 3: Memento Vienna, K. Ekler

The resettlement of Jews in Vienna after the *Anschluss* played an important part in the policy of excluding and expelling Jews: in summer 1938, Jewish tenants were no longer allowed to live in municipal and welfare housing projects in Vienna[21] and were usually relocated to buildings that had already been occupied by Jews.

Memento Vienna makes these resettlements visible by including eviction documents connected to victims and mapping them in the city. Katharina Ekler, born 1881, and her husband Heinrich Ekler, born 1876, lived in a municipal and welfare housing project (*Schuhmeierhof*) in Ottakring, in the outskirts of the city. Katharina Ekler worked as a caretaker in the municipal house she lived in, Heinrich Ekler was a war invalid. On July 7, 1938 the couple was evicted by the city of Vienna. By 1942 Katharina and Heinrich Ekler lived in a "group apartment"(*Sammelwohnungen)* in Schmelzgasse 10/14 in the 2nd district – an apartment that was used as a last address before deportation for 33 Jews over the years.

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[20] Jonny Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs – 1938-1945*, (Vienna: Schriftenreihe des DÖW zur Geschichte der NS-Gewaltverbrechen 5, 1999), 38.

[21] For further information see Herbert Exenberger, Johann Koss and Brigitta Ungar-Klein Kündigungsgrund Nichtarier, *Die Vertreibung jüdischer Mieter aus den Wiener Gemeindebauten in den Jahren 1938-1939*, (Wien: Picus, 1996).

On August 20, 1942, Katharina and Heinrich Ekler were transported to Theresienstadt Ghetto. On May 16, 1944 they were both deported to Auschwitz where they were murdered.

As well as evictions from welfare housing projects, the *Wiener Wohnungsamt* [Viennese Department of Housing] urged 13600 "Aryan" house owners to terminate the leases of their Jewish tenants,[22] leading to more and more cancellations of rental agreements with Jews. Already in March 1939, the Viennese Department of Housing started to relocate thousands of Jews to houses and apartments already occupied by Jews, leading to a further concentration of the Jewish population in the Innere Stadt (1st), Leopoldstadt (2nd) and Alsergrund (9th) districts.

On May 10, 1939, the *Verordnung zur Einführung des Gesetzes über Mietverhältnisse mit Juden in der Ostmark* [Order to Introduce the Law Relating to the Tenancy of Jews in the Ostmark] came into force, now officially allowing "Aryan" landlords to terminate tenancy agreements with Jewish tenants without any notice period. Several Nazi functionaries in charge of Viennese districts, such as Emil Rothleitner in Alserbach (a part of the 9th district), complained about the high percentage of Jews in their areas:

> The people leaving the area will be easily balanced by new people moving in from other areas of Vienna. Happily, 150 apartments have become available for Aryans, which just makes the fact that the number of Jews hasn't reduced all the move unfortunate, as that was the whole point of the thing.[23]

Ephraim Lahav, born Erich Feier in Vienna in 1923, described his family's eviction from their flat in early 1939 and the relocation of his family into the second district in an interview:

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[22] Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation*, 78.

[23] Yad Vashem Archives, O 30/88. Bericht des NSDAP-Ortsgruppenleiters Wien-Alserbach, gez. Rothleitner, an die Kreisleitung I in Wien, vom 2.10.1939. As quoted in Andrea Löw, *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933 – 1945. Bd. 3: Deutsches Reich und Protektorat. September 1939 – September 1941*, (München: Oldenburg Verlag, 2012), 42. (translated by the author)

Soon we also had to vacate our flat in Sonnenfelsgasse. Though the flat was under rent control and the house belonged to the city of Vienna, our appeal only got us a two months delay [...] The public authorities assigned us one room for five people – my parents, grandmother, brother and I – with a shared kitchen in an apartment in Krummbaumgasse in the 2nd district.[24]

The increase in large-scale, forced relocations saw the development of so-called *Judenhäuser* [Jewish houses] in mostly lower-quality and smaller quarters in poorer areas of the city, where the Jewish population was concentrated prior to their eventual deportation. In September 1940, protections were also removed for those tenants whose apartments were located in *Judenhäuser*.[25] This changed the distribution of Jews in Vienna after the *Anschluss* dramatically, with Jews being relocated to houses in a very specific area of the city. This is also shown by comparing the known addresses of Jews in Vienna in May and June 1938 with the last known addresses before deportation between February 1941 and October 1942. In almost every district, the concentration of Jews in Vienna decreased. For example, in Brigittenau (20th district) the Jewish population fell from 11.1% in early summer 1938 to 2.9% in 1942 and in Neubau (7th district) the Jewish population reduced from 4.7% in early summer 1938 to 1.3% in 1942.

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[24] *Erzählte Geschichte (vol. 3): Jüdische Schicksale*, ed. DOW, (Vienna: DÖW, 1993), 121.
[25] Botz, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation*, 78.
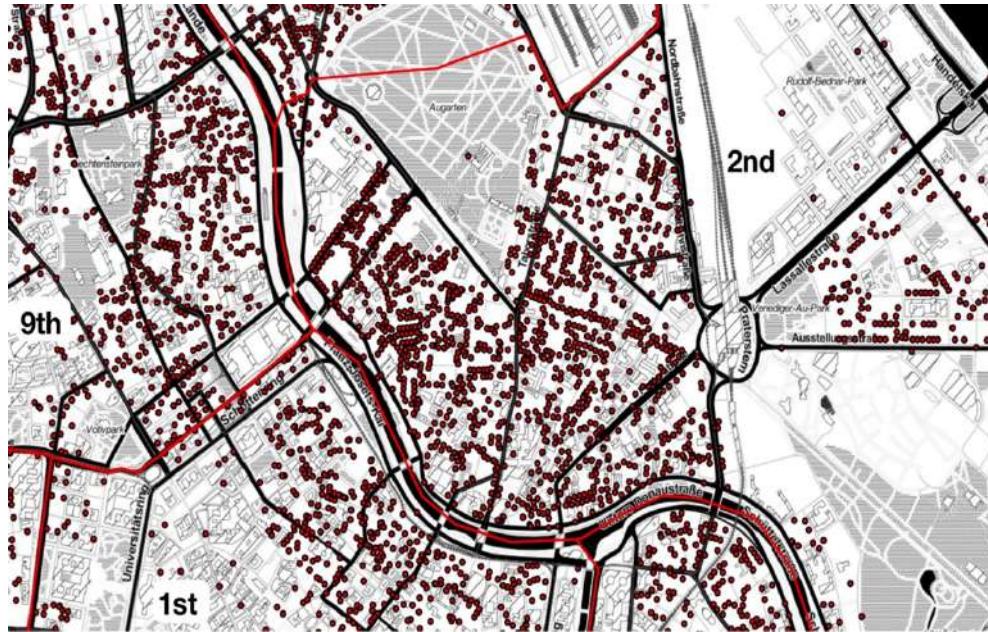
Fig. 4: Density of Jewish residences in the 1st, 2nd and 9th district along the Danube Canal. (February 1941 – October 1942)

Significant exceptions are the Inner District, Leopoldstadt and Alsergrund (1st, 2nd and 9th district), districts that already had a higher Jewish population prior to March 1938. While in early summer 1938, 4.2% of Jews with a recorded place of residence in the database of victims lived in the Inner District, that percentage increases to 9.7% when considering the last-known address before deportation between February 1941 and October 1942. In Alsergrund, this increases from 10% to 14.2%. The most obvious change can be seen in Leopoldstadt where 33.6% of the people included in the database of victims for 1938 resided. This percentage rose significantly to 60.6% in 1942.[26] This density of last places of residence in these districts can be geovisualized via the data mapped for *Memento Vienna* [see Fig. 4].

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[26] Many thanks to Dr. Gerhard Ungar for his invaluable insight and making the data for this project available to the author.

The Jewish population in Vienna and the Mass Deportation of Jews between February 1941 and October 1942

The relocation of Jews into a small area along the Danube Canal not only served as a housing policy to separate the Jews from the "Aryan" population (even though the Jewish population was never fully separated and "Aryan" tenants continued to live in the neighborhood of the Danube Canal), but also aimed to facilitate the rapid confiscation of Jewish property and assets before the deportations. The ghettoized area in the second district also allowed quick access to the Jewish population before deportations. For this reason, collection camps [*Sammellager*] – in which Jews were kept for several days before deportation – were set up for the first time prior the mass deportations in February 1941,[27] situated in Kleine Sperlgasse 2a, Castellezgasse 35, Malzgasse 7 and 16, and Miesbachgasse 8).[28] In the second district alone, more than 31000 Austrian Jews with their last place of residence were murdered in the Holocaust.

Fig. 5: Last-known place of residence for Holocaust victims before their deportation in the inner districts of Vienna showing a concentration in specific areas of those districts along the Danube canal (February 1941 – October 1942).

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[27] Jonny Moser, "Die Anhalte- und Sammellager für österreichische Juden," in *DÖW Jahrbuch 1/1* (1992): 71-75, 74.

[28] Hecht, Lappin-Eppel and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 412.

Early mass deportations from Vienna to the Lublin and Radom district in February and March 1941 and the transports from February 1941 onwards – especially between November 1941 and October 1942 when Jews were deported to Łódź (Litzmannstadt) and the Reichskommissariat Ostland, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Treblinka – led to a high fluctuation of people in *Judenhäuser* which is why some apartments are often the last known address for a large number of people and in Vienna also led to the name *Sammelwohnungen* [group apartments].

By focusing on places as gateways for visualizing data and documents, *Memento Vienna* draws attention to the number of victims in these "Jewish houses."

Fig. 6: Memento Vienna, Address Stoß im Himmel 3, the last place of residence for 93 victims of the Holocaust.

In the first project phase, dozens of these "Jewish houses" and "group apartments" were identified in the first district [see Fig. 6]. Due to the current expansion of the project, dozens of additional heavily used "Jewish houses" have been located in other districts and can be visualized (for reasons of simplification, in this visualisation, "Jewish houses" are set as homes that over the course of the war held 25 or more residents who died in the Holocaust). The data also reveals how some homes were occupied by more than 100 Holocaust victims at different times over the course of the war. Some of these houses held up to as many as 250 victims. In special cases this number could be even higher: The building at Seegasse 9 in the Alsergrund district was used as an old people's home run by the Jewish Community of Vienna until 1943[29] and was therefore the last place of residence for about 950 Holocaust victims.

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[29] Shoshana Duizend-Jensen, "Jüdische Gemeinden, Vereine, Stiftungen und Fonds: 'Arisierung' und Restitution," in *Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Historikerkommission. Vermögensentzug während der NS-Zeit sowie Rückstellungen und Entschädigungen seit 1945 in*

While the relocation of Jews into certain districts has already been noted by historians[30], the interim results from the expansion of *Memento Vienna* not only supports this, but shows that the places to which Jews were relocated in the 1st, 2nd and 9th district extends beyond the administrative boundaries along the Danube Canal, effectively forming one large area of concentration. Additionally, the mapped data produced for *Memento Vienna* offers a more nuanced picture than is afforded by looking only at the data according to the administrative district; it shows that the majority of the addresses are focused in particular segments of each district [see Fig. 5]. In the second district, it shows "Jewish houses" concentrated along the Danube Canal in the historically less well-off areas and almost no "Jewish houses" in the more affluent areas of Prater Cottage and Stuwer Quarter, previously areas that had had a high Jewish population [see Fig. 5 and 7]. At least 287 of these "Jewish houses" can be found in the 2nd district (several of which with more than 100 victims, one house even holding as many as 247) in one small area along the Danube Canal. This demonstrates visually the Nazi policy of the relocating Jews into poorer and ever more densely populated quarters while making better living areas "*judenfrei,*" even within one and the same district of the city.

The Stuwer Quarter was a rather newly developed residential area with buildings from the last quarter of the 19th century and early 20th century.[31] The Nazi policy of resettlement can be seen most clearly in the area between Prater and Danube Canal, the so-called "Prater Cottage," a mostly upper-class residential area from the end of the 19th century with many villas and several municipal buildings, built after WWI. The Prater Cottage therefore is an example of the "Aryanization policy" applied to upper-class areas, but also shows the mass eviction of Jews from municipal buildings.

Österreich, 21/2, eds. Clemens Jabloner, Brigitte Bailer-Galanda, et al., (Wien, München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2004), 81.
[30] An example for a more recent book that offers a very good overview of the situation in Vienna: Hecht, Lappin-Eppel and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah,* 397.
[31] See Erwin Chvojka, "Der Mexikoplatz, sein Umfeld und seine Geschichte," in *Zwischenwelt* 2/4 (2002): 28-34, 29.
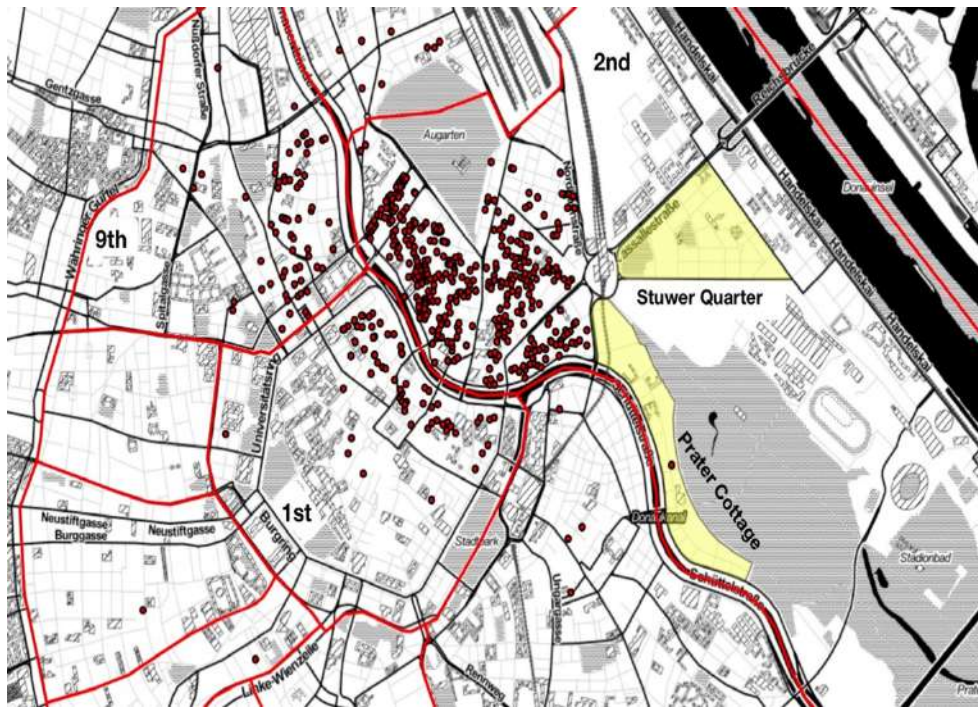
Fig.7: "Jewish houses," which held more than 25 Holocaust victims over the course of the war, in the 1st, 2nd and 9th district showing the further concentration of Jews in one area – in stark contrast to the Stuwer Quarter and Prater Cottage areas (February 1941 – October 1942).

The data included in *Memento Vienna* also indicate that the place to which someone was relocated had an impact on when – and therefore also where – those people were subsequently transported. A high percentage of those who remained in their home districts until 1941/42 were transported in the earlier deportations to make their homes and apartments available for the "Aryan" population. These early transports included the approximately 5000 Jews who were transported from Vienna to the "General Government" into the towns Opole, Kielce, Modliborzyce, Lagów and Opatów in February and March 1941 as well as the deportations to Łódź (Litzmannstadt) and the Reichskommissariat Ostland (Kaunas, Riga, Minsk and Maly Trostinets) in autumn 1941. Almost a third of the Jews deported from Vienna were transported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. The last-known place of residence for Jews in districts that were not used for ghettoization seems to paint a different picture: In more central districts – like the 6th, 7th or 8th districts – less than three percent of the Jews were transported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto, as opposed to 22-29% of the people

deported from an address in the 1ˢᵗ, 2ⁿᵈ or 9ᵗʰ districts – the districts of Jewish "ghettoization."

Therefore, the preliminary analysis of the data mapped in *Memento Vienna* offers a more nuanced understanding of the Nazi's policy of forced resettlement and separation from the "Aryan" population. Its implication for the further persecution of Jews in Austria could provide an impulse for further research.

Conclusion

Working with Holocaust-related archival material that has already been painstakingly digitized, described and made available online, tools like *Memento Vienna* can help make large datasets and archival material more accessible in new and interesting ways. Additionally, by mapping large Holocaust-related data in space, GIS facilitates research into the history of the persecution of Jews.

Digital tools like *Memento Vienna* could therefore – next to their main goal of serving as location-based educational tools that offer personal Holocaust-related archival material in the vicinity of the user – also be used to offer historians new ways to interpret and analyze archival sources. The data included in the tool shows that a resettlement of Jews in Vienna not only led to a "ghettoization" in certain districts, but also shows a focus in particular segments of these districts, "aryanizing" flats in better neighborhoods even within the areas of "ghettoization." Additionally, the tool shows the correlation between place of residence in time and place of deportation of Jews in Vienna.

The increase in spatial studies of the Holocaust in recent years[32] has shown how the use of space and place – while not eschewing chronology – provides a framework for exploring new insights into the Holocaust. As shown by Knowles, Cole and Giordano[33] it can explore "shifting motivations" and point to the differences between intended and executed policies. In the context of the Holocaust in Vienna, geovisualizations via mapped Holocaust-related data of the online tool *Memento Vienna* could facilitate and deepen the understanding of

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[32] See especially: Knowles, Cole and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*; Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*.
[33] Knowles, Cole and Giordano, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, 5.

studies into the resettlement policy of Jews in Vienna following the *Anschluss* of Austria to the German Reich in March 1938.

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The Ghetto Model as an Alternative Form of Presenting Holocaust Archives.
Chance or Threat?

by Zofia Trębacz

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present a historical mock-up (here based on Lodz ghetto model from Radegast Station) as one of the means currently used in museums to transmit knowledge in a modern way. Its purpose is to preserve memories about past events and places associated with them. A historical mock-up is not a museum artifact, but a modern object that tells a particular story. It captures topographical realities of a non-existing or transformed urban space and requires the use of maps, plans and archival photographs etc. This is an attempt to present the way in which a historical mock-up demonstrates how to combine elements of traditional exhibit, document repository and documentation center in Holocaust museum. At the same time, one has to consider whether a reconstruction of the ghetto model does not bring with it moral dilemmas. Do we have the right to recreate a ghetto? Are there any ways and means protecting us from "misreading" the model?

Introduction

A New Way to Tell a Story in a Museum

A Historical Model as a Bridge between Past and Present

Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto

The Lodz Ghetto. A Brief History

Technological Innovations in the Service of the Museums

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Introduction

"How will future generations remember the Holocaust? Which sources will they use to gain knowledge that will let them create images and formulate concepts related to the tragic past?"[1] – asks Janina Bauman, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto. By addressing these important questions, she brings up two main problems faced by the researchers, educators and museologists that deal with Holocaust issues – how to talk about this tragic past and how to preserve its memory? In this article, I will use a concrete example to show how this purpose could be achieved with the use of museum exhibition – how to document the past, tell the story and cultivate memory about it. This issue seems particularly relevant in a local Polish context.

Historical museums are important places when it comes to the development of our knowledge about the past.[2] It is impossible not to notice that nowadays they are one of the objects of historical debates, even more important in the face of decline in readership in Poland.[3] There are continuing disputes about the character and the place of museums in the modern world. They usually focus on exhibition ideas and activities, and alternative forms of education. The purpose of museums becomes the creation of exhibitions that will hold the dialogue with the visitors. While confronting the past with the present, they will affect all of

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[1] Janina Bauman, "Zagłada – źródła pamięci," in *Zagłada. Współczesne problemy rozumienia i przedstawiania*, eds. Przemysław Czapliński and Ewa Domańska, (Poznań: Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, 2009), 241

[2] Among others, a historian Rosemarie Beier-de Haan tried to answer questions about the reason for popularity of historical exhibitions and museums: "First of all, museum has become a place for individual interpretations. It does not present a general canon or a general point of view, but it increasingly cultivates an individual access to history and memory. Firstly, it happens through exhibitions themselves as they offer different interpretations, but they do not claim the right to present the only truth. Secondly, since 1980s museums have been primarily established in local areas to present a region or a city, a movement or a territory, and thus not following national ideas, but a regional memory. This involves the second aspect, that it, considering a museum as a place of knowledge […]. This is not about well-established canon or science, but appreciation of irrational, unscientific forms of learning […]. Museums in their diversity and with appropriate methods of its presentation, offer the possibility of multiple access to things and adoption of different perspectives. And because museums, unlike other institutions that transfer knowledge, do not do so solely through explanatory text, but also through visual tools – "the exhibit" and its staging – a space itself gains particular importance as a scientific place. This intersection of interpretation and experience has made museums and exhibitions one of the most attractive social institutions in recent years." Anke Te Heesen, *Teorie muzeum* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2016), 164.

[3] http://www.bn.org.pl/download/document/1492689764.pdf .

their senses and will not leave them indifferent to the substantive message, becoming an important auxiliary tool in education at the same time.[4]

This is due to the challenges that museums face in the 21st century and revision of traditional model of museums related to those challenges – the transition from the first-generation museums that only offered a static, organized exhibition and artifacts most often housed in glass display cases (the so-called glass display cabinets museums) to the second-generation museums offering interactive multimedia exhibitions, standing in some opposition to their antecedents.[5] In turn, along with the evolution of modern museums, one can speak about the third-generation museums that "stand out by introduction of new exhibition techniques on a large scale, making full use of multimedia and other IT tools and creating an attitude of active participation when it comes to reception of the content offered by the exhibition and study collections in museums."[6]

A New Way to Tell a Story in a Museum

The most expressive manifestations of these transformations are changes of forms and methods of operation, especially the forms and contents of exhibitions. Traditional exhibitions have been replaced by a new model of public exhibitions, characterized by the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to the problem and introduction of multimedia and interactive solutions. As noted by Krzysztof J. Jakubowski: "The achievements in communication revolution pose entirely new challenges to museums. Sophisticated tools of digital technologies, the

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[4] "A problematic issue and important challenge is the subject matter of presented exhibitions […] resulting from a historical profile of a museum. The question is how to make the great number of dates and names attractive and accessible for young people, how to encourage them to search for information, facilitate memorization and help them make connections between facts. Unfortunately, in the case of historical exhibition, something that is interesting in terms of scientific research, might not meet the criteria of "visual attractiveness" in the exhibition space. Hence, the common problem of exhibitions in historical museums where textual materials often dominate an exhibition and make it difficult to read the most essential, substantive message. It allows us to enhance current knowledge, but often discourages less prepared visitors, especially young people expecting different form of message than a school lecture. That leaves museologists with a challenge of creating a new exhibition form that will be an attractive alternative for a 'traditional' science and a more accessible source of historical knowledge" (Mirosław Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka? Nowa muzeologia w europejskich definicjach muzeum* (Kraków: Universitas, 2012), 172).
[5] Mark Walhimer, *Museum 101*, (New York–London: Rowman&Littlefield, 2011).
[6] See more about this: Bruce Durie, "Palaces of memory," in *New Scientist* 20/27, (1999): 30–1.

Internet and mobile communication networks create previously unattainable possibilities, but also enforce the change of model of operation perpetuated by tradition."[7] This unprecedented development of museums often raises doubts, and even anxiety about these transformations.

What fundamentally distinguishes modern museums from traditional ones is the approach to the recipient that is the reformulation of a previously existing arrangement between the museum and its visitor. Formerly, the visitors remained more or less passive. Nowadays, there has been created a new type of institutions that try to activate them, opening up to involvement of a wide range of recipients in the processes previously unavailable to them. In this regard, the concept of participatory museum by Nina Simon is extremely interesting – museum as the place where the visitors can create, share and connect with each other around content. According to the model of institution proposed by Simon, a passive spectator turns into an active participant – co-creator or co-author. In her opinion, the dynamic development of new technologies caused that the position of passive recipient ceased to satisfy the contemporary visitors, whereas the participatory museum makes the old-type institution a more dynamic and essential place.[8] Museums ceased to only store artifacts and tell their story, but became keepers of the historical memory, guarding and speaking about the heritage of the past.

We can distinguish two fundamental types of museums: a traditional narrative museum and an object-centered museum, where the story has been built around available, previously gathered collections and artifacts. There are also so-called mixed museums that combine elements of both these types. When it comes to a narrative museum, a visitor follows a path or paths designated by a museologist. The process of getting to know the past is sort of "programmed" and the possibilities of one's own interpretation are limited. The second type of museum gives a visitor more freedom. A narrative is no longer linear and brings one to construct a coherent story of the past.

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[7] Krzysztof J. Jakubowski, "Muzea wobec dylematów rozwojowych społeczeństwa wiedzy," in *Muzeum XXI wieku – teoria i* praxis, (Gniezno: Muzeum Początków Państwa Polskiego, 2010), 40.

[8] Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, (Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010).

As Anna Ziębińska-Witek observes, nowadays the largest Polish and international museums have adopted narrative forms. Modern institutions provide not only the story based on dry facts, but above all, they create their own vision of the past – just to mention Warsaw Uprising Museum or Silesian Museum. Museums

> can no longer be temples, where the visitors are supposed to contemplate art in silence. Today, they must turn into living, interactive and attractive cultural institutions. That indicates their openness to diverse needs and expectations of the visitors, and evaluation of all the initiatives undertaken from their point of view.[9]

Importantly, they often attract visitors that are not interested in layers of information within exhibitions, but in their attractive forms. The high attendance is a sign of a very positive social perception of this type of exhibitions.[10] As noted by Roman Batko and Robert Kotowski: "Out of all the cultural institutions in Poland, museums attract the largest number of visitors."[11] In turn, Jean Clair points out that nowadays there is at least a new museum being opened each month.[12] What makes this form of presentation, different from a classic story and told only by museum objects themselves, so interesting for today's visitor? What is its attractiveness about? Does it pose any risks?

Modern multimedia technology is, no doubt, a fundamental factor when it comes to presenting history. Thanks to this technology, it is possible to create an interesting museum even in a small center or in a small space. Why? Using multimedia lets one overcome the problem of too few exhibits and a small exhibition space. Moreover, a proper use of digital technologies significantly

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[9] Agnieszka Piórkowska, "Muzeum interaktywne," in No*woczesne zarządzanie muzeum, współpraca polsko-holenderska w ramach projektu MATRA 1999–2007*, (Warszawa: Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji, 2007), 178. See also Te Heesen, *Teorie muzeum*, 155.

[10] The number of the visitors at the Radegast Station – a branch of the Museum of the Independence Traditions in Lodz – varies annually between 50000–60000.

[11] Roman Batko and Robert Kotowski, *Nowoczesne muzeum. Dziedzictwo i współczesność* (Kielce: Muzeum Narodowe w Kielcach, 2010), 11. The main reasons to visit a museum are: "curiosity for novelty, a desire to complement the knowledge or to verify theoretical knowledge acquired elsewhere, and the search for valuable and intellectually rewarding high level entertainment." Mirosław Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka? Nowa muzeologia w europejskich definicjach museum*, (Kraków: Universitas, 2012), 145.

[12] Jean Clair, *Kryzys muzeów: globalizacja kultury*, (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2009).

enhances the educational process, enriches the exhibition and makes it more attractive. Since the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century, scientists and museologists have been searching for a new, non-textbook form of a museum education, which would allow the visitors to understand presented issues in a more accessible way than a typical lecture or a school lesson. All the time, researchers are wondering "how to present the relics of the past in a modern way, but to talk about the history in a competent and effective way at the same time."[13]

Films, interactive whiteboards, dioramas and historical models (e.g. imitation of a pre-war street in Poland, full of shops and small craft enterprises at the main exhibition in the Museum of the Second World War), belong to the modern means currently used in museums. Small-scale models that faithfully reproduce specific objects (e.g. buildings, factories, bridges) and people figures have become increasingly popular in recent years.
Examples include:
- a model of the so-called 'lost quarter' in the Museum of the City of Lodz presented for the first time in 2015 – reconstruction of pre-war buildings, some of them no longer exist, many others were heavily damaged and changed their forms;

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[13] Barbara Kubis, "Dotknąć żywej historii – działalność edukacyjna Centralnego Muzeum Jeńców Wojennych w Łambinowicach-Opolu," in *Muzea w kulturze współczesnej*, eds. Anna Ziębińska-Witek and Grzegorz Żuk, (Lublin: UMCS, 2015), 205.

Fig. 1: Model of the "lost quarter" of the city of Lodz, detail. Photograph by Bożena Szafrańska (Museum of the City of Lodz)[14]

- a model of 18th century Praga district in the Museum of Praga in Warsaw that presents the system of roads and urban layout of the right-bank Warsaw districts;
- a model of a baroque city in the Museum of History, a branch of Podlachia Museum in Białystok that presents the city in the times of Jan Klemens Branicki.

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[14] The author would like thank you the Museum of the City of Lodz for providing photographs of the 'lost quarter' model for the purposes of this article.

Fig. 2: Model of the city of Białystok, detail. Photograph by Anna Sierko (Museum of History in Białystok)

A Historical Model as a Bridge between Past and Present

The popularity of this modern educational tool should come as no surprise. The models of historical objects tell the story in a very interesting and readable way. Every visitor can easily notice the smallest architectural details – little windows, narrow streets, trees hidden behind the houses and even tiny figures of people long gone. However, not only the models' attractiveness, but also mainly their effectiveness is well worth considering.

These precise and detailed replicas of the past reality become a valuable source of knowledge and an important tool in the hands of museologists, educators and historians. They can be a part of a larger exhibition or, on the contrary, they can be presented as standalone exhibitions. Of course, it is best if there are complementary elements such as multimedia tools or boards containing additional information. Audio materials can also be helpful. So, one may wonder whether a historical model is an artifact or a narrative of the past. This can be interpreted differently.

On the one hand, scale model is a miniature replica of the specific object – particular building or a group of buildings, but on the other hand, it is also a miniature replica of urban space, where whole building complexes have been reconstructed on the basis of archival sources, mostly photographs, city maps and blueprints, and to a lesser extent on the basis of eyewitness accounts (out of necessity fragmentary and biased).[15] This is the case of a previously mentioned model of the 'lost quarter' and the case of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto model also located in Lodz, in Radegast Station Museum – a branch of the Museum of the Independence Traditions in Lodz, which was created in the historic station building, serving as the departure place for the Jewish and Gypsy population taken to extermination and concentration camps from January 1942. Today, Radegast Station building is an element of the Annihilation Monument of the Litzmannstadt-Ghetto and a place of remembrance of those tragic events.

Fig. 3: Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, detail. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

There are also models such as those from Białystok or Warsaw's Praga that present former times and historical buildings that no longer exist, their full

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[15] About problems connected with using eyewitness accounts in museological narrations see Anna Ziębińska-Witek, "Problemy reprezentacji Holokaustu," in *Zagłada*, eds. Czapliński and Domańska, 147–50. See also Jacek Leociak, *Tekst wobec Zagłady, (o relacjach z getta warszawskieg*o), (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1997).

reconstruction was simply impossible. There are, of course, no eyewitnesses alive. Therefore, due to the poor iconographic material, these buildings could only be hypothetically reconstructed. In this case, one deals with a kind of story that appears along with a physical presentation.

Obviously, the way of presenting history through a historical model is not free from defects and limitations. Using such models is particularly problematic in former concentration camps and extermination centers. The need to commemorate these places and to create museums documenting crimes that were committed there was evident since the very first years after the end of the war. In 1958, there was launched the International Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Competition for a monument that would commemorate the suffering of the death camp prisoners. Oskar Hansen, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz and Julian Pałka were announced as its winners. However, their project of 'The Road' Monument was never realized. It turned out to be too radical for the community of survivors, and perhaps for the authorities, too. The authors of the projects proposed that there would be built a wide tarmac road cutting through the former death camp territory.

> That road was supposed to be the only involvement of the artist in the structure of Nazi design and the only place available for people. The camp would be closed and become inaccessible – it would fall into ruin, become overgrown with plants and trees and it would slowly perish over time. The visitors to the site of a death camp could see the object only from that road, without the possibility of entering the area. While walking across the tarmac road, they would cross it along an artificially aligned axis, without ever stepping on its area.[16]

Years later Hansen said that the monument was to be "an expression of silence."'[17] Surely, such different idea of presenting the Holocaust must have shocked its recipients, especially those who still remembered the time of war. A

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[16] Piotr Piotrowski, "Artysta w Auschwitz. O (nie)banalności sztuki," in *Zagłada,* eds. Czapliński and Domańska, 292.

[17] *Ibid.*, 292–4, 300–1; Zofia Wóycicka, *Przerwana żałoba. Polskie spory wokół pamięci nazistowskich obozów koncentracyjnych i zagłady, 1944–1950*, (Warszawa: TRIO, 2009), 346; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meanings*, (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1993), 132–41. See also Filip Springer, *Zaczyn. O Zofii i Oskarze Hansenach*, (Kraków–Warszawa: Karakter, 2013), 21–9.

decisive objection to such a modernistic presentation of the Holocaust does not seem surprising nowadays, all the more so because works that deal with this subject in a more courageous manner arouse disapproval or even protest also in our times, largely shaped by consumer culture.

So there is nothing strange about similar reactions of people living in the postwar era. Emerging martyrdom museums were lacking prototypes – until then, the purpose of a historical museum was to commemorate positive events in the history of a particular community. In this case the situation was different. Moreover, it was soon realized that a post-camp reality did not speak for itself and its authenticity did not only make things easier, but also caused problems in the transmission of historical knowledge. Nowadays, this problem is becoming more and more clear as the last witnesses of the past events are passing away. For those who have not experienced the tragedy of war, orderly buildings and squares become simply unreadable. On the other hand, the first literal and dramatic exhibits that presented, for example, the tools of torture or striped prison uniforms, however illustrating true horror and being an evidence of the crime, did not have the intended educational effect. There were disbelief and even defensive reactions among the visitors, leading to the relativization of crime or simply its rejection.[18] Therefore, the creators of exhibitions in martyrdom museums changed the displays' character in the following years. They try not to scare the visitors with cruelty anymore. The reality of facts speaks for itself and does not need to be strengthened with additional elements.

Of course, this solution poses risks as well. Clean and renovated building interiors or clean prison uniforms hung on clothes hangers are often unable to reflect the tragic truth about the past events. They usually speak to former prisoners, but they become incomprehensible to the contemporary visitors, thus failing to fulfill an intended educational function.

Yet another problem is the small number of available, pre-existing collections and artifacts. There are not many of them in small museums: deportation lists, fragments of objects found in the former concentration camps, etc. In object-centered museums that often are martyrdom museums, individual stories are hidden behind a piece of broken porcelain, a button excavated from the pits of

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[18] Wóycicka, *Przerwana żałoba*, 275–92.

doom in extermination center or a name on a transport list. One should answer the question whether the first solution does not hide the multitude of killings, and if the second one does not anonymize the victims, showing the enormity of loss with no story behind. It seems that a character of the historical model allows combining both of these issues – it presents a personal fate of an individual on the background of the horrible tragedy that affected millions of people.

Therefore, there is a continuing search to find the best way of teaching the truth about the Holocaust. The basic question is: can this story be told at all? And, if it is so, how should we tell it? What can be shown where there is a very limited space, as is so often the case? What can be presented to the visitors in these places, which were once affected by the most tragic events? Can the story be told only with words? Or should it be told with the use of the objects, which would make a visitor to reach for these objects, touch the place and feel it in a truly tangible way? The number of questions increases all the time. A preparation of the exhibition that speaks to the visitors of all ages and varying degrees of historical awareness is an equally challenging task. Moreover, the Holocaust museums are places of education and they have to be adapted in a way that will let museologists conduct activities with children and youth that expect a historical message to be given in a less traditional and more modern manner, certainly different than a method used at schools.

Additional problems are related to commemoration of the ghettos and not death camps that were most often located outside the cities. After the war, ghettos areas very often became ordinary residential areas – just to mention Muranów district of Warsaw or Bałuty district of Lodz. In today's urban space, remains of the Second World War such as the remains of the former ghetto are still visible, however the buildings are changed and heavily damaged, and their history is still unknown to many residents, not to mention the visitors. Moreover, survivors and their descendants also look for traces of their ancestors. They search for family stories, but very often are unable to find a location where these stories happened. Hence the idea of restoring the memory of these places by giving them a physical shape. This is the case of Lodz, where the Germans created the ghetto during the Nazi occupation of Poland. It was established in Bałuty – a very poor and neglected district, inhabited mainly by the Jewish community.

An obscure observer – *flaneur* – will easily notice that the way a district looks like 'outside' does not really reflect its essence. He will see that diverse forms of buildings and their sometimes chaotic locations create a special multilayered tale of the city. Post-war buildings exist next to the 19th century reminiscences, creating a network of cracks that reveal traces of tragic events that happened at this place in the years 1939–1945.[19]

After the end of the World War II, a history of these tragic events did not become a part of a collective memory either of the city inhabitants – mostly Poles – or the inhabitants of postwar Bałuty. Nowadays, even the people living in a former ghetto area are not always aware of the tragedies that took place in their houses and their streets, just a few decades ago. As Błażej Ciarkowski observes:

The memory of the Litzmannstadt-Ghetto is located on the periphery of the communicative memory of a local community. A long-term removal policy has made postwar Bałuty inhabitants build their own identity and a new symbolic space in separation from the history of the place.[20]

At the same time, however, Radegast Station Museum – a branch of the Museum of the Independence Traditions – is the city's second most popular destination after the Lodz Jewish Cemetery for people interested in the history of Jewish Lodz. The activities and events aimed at popularizing knowledge about the history of the Jewish population in Lodz have been taking place since 2005, i.e. since the branch of the Museum was established in a historic warehouse building and a former railway station of the ghetto. Due to the wartime and post-war devastations, there have been changes in this area. Some of them were also related to the necessity of adaption of preserved infrastructure to the museum's needs (e.g. a given building had only a few original windows). Moreover, the city's development resulted in the transformation of a landscape around the institution. However, regardless of these modifications, the existing relics give testimony about the history of the Holocaust and continue to play an extremely

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[19] Błażej Ciarkowski, "Polityka niepamiętania – ślady Litzmannstadt Getto w powojennej historii łódzkich Bałut," in *Znaki (nie)pamięci. Teoria i praktyka upamiętniania w Polsce*, eds. Małgorzata Fabiszak, Anna Weronika Brzezińska and Marcin Owsiński, (Kraków: Universitas, 2016), 191.
[20] *Ibid.*, 198.

important role as a medium of the historical message, enabling contemporary recipients to get in touch with events from the past.

Fig. 4: Radegast Station. Independence Traditions Museum in Lodz. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto

Ten years after, in 2015, the establishment of the branch, the Museum of the Independence Traditions in Lodz undertook implementation of the interdisciplinary project *Litzmannstadt-Ghetto Model.*[21] A static model of the Lodz ghetto, a detailed historical model, is one of its most important elements. It is planned as a new permanent exhibition and an important offer from the Museum for the next years to come.

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[21] All the people involved in this project are listed here:
http://radegast.pl/en/information/authors-and-partners,12.html.

The project involves the use of modern technology in order to commemorate Jews from Lodz, bring back memories about their fate during World War II. It targets the largest group of people interested in the history of Jewish Lodz, not only in Poland, but also all over the world. The idea was supported by many national and foreign organizations: Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, ARGE grenzen erzählen, Centrum Dialogu im. Marka Edelmana w Łodzi, Gedenken-Gestelten, Instytut Tolerancji, Jewish Holocaust Centre, Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich POLIN, NS-Dokumentationscezentrum, South African Holocaust&Genocide Foundation, Stiftung des Dokumentationsarchivs des Österreichischen Widerstands, Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce, Związek Byłych Łodzian w Izraelu.[22] Moreover, its value has been appreciated by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which has given it a grant three times,[23] including Yehuda Bauer Grant in 2017.

The main aim of the project is to popularize that history in the context of the multicultural and multinational heritage of Lodz. The project is based on interconnected and mutually complementary elements. Within its framework, there is being created a repository of documents and photographs,[24] and a static model mentioned above (there are already two fragments of a model and the next one shall be presented in May 2018).

There also exists a website www.radegast.pl, available in four languages (English, Hebrew, German and Polish). The archival materials, mostly photographs, but

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[22] Some of them provided the project with the material on the history of the ghetto (such as deportations from Vienna or Cologne), archival documents and photographs or the exhibition catalogues. Others shared its experience and knowledge of similar initiatives. They were also extremely important for finding new partners of the project. Some of these organizations distributed the project's promotional materials in their institutions and almost all of them promoted it on their websites and on Facebook. Additionally, a few of them took part in the meetings related to the project and even co-organized some of them (for example the anniversaries of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt-Ghetto or the so-called Gypsy Camp).

[23] The project was co-financed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (2015–2018) as a part of the grant program "Raise awareness and promote research into the causes of Holocaust" and the City of Lodz Office, as well as from own resources of the Museum of the Independence Traditions in Lodz.

[24] The archival photographs used in the project and made available to view on the website and other materials, e.g. leaflets, come from the collections of: National Archives of Lodz, Art Gallery of Ontario, the Museum of the Independence Traditions in Lodz, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

also documents (e.g. German identity cards – ger. *die Ausweise*, checkout cards, extracts from registration books, postcards, medical certificates) related to particular individuals are published on the website that consists of several parts – tabs. Particularly noteworthy are those describing the history of the Lodz ghetto. Under the tab titled 'My stories' one can find short information about a few people (we shall hope that there will be more of them in the future) and in the section 'Educational paths' – posts on issues concerning selected aspects of functioning of the so-called closed district (such as Deportations, Documentation or Childhood). However, it should be emphasized that, despite several years of website's existence, it still lacks many important subjects that have not yet been presented (e.g. cultural life, religious life in the ghetto, Polish-Jewish relations) or are only briefly mentioned (such as healthcare, education or forced labor). First of all, a small number of biographies on the website can be a surprise. For it seems that the project aims at collecting individual stories that later can be linked to the specific places on the model. A special tab allowing users to add memories, personal data and photographs of ghetto survivors and their families, has been recently launched on the website. Soon, people visiting the Museum will be informed about the possibility of using the mobile version of the website, to which "The Quick Response" codes will immediately redirect users.

Another step aiming at popularization of knowledge about the Litzmannstadt-Ghetto is the creation of a mobile application available for Android and iOS. The application will become a tool that will give users an opportunity to complement knowledge in an effective and interesting way, deviating from the classical methods used to obtain it. What is more important, it allows, in a practical way, access to archival materials and contents at any time, also when museums are closed. Work on the application has just been finished – it is currently available in two languages (Polish and English, though the lack of a German and Hebrew version raises some concerns about the compatibility of the website and a mobile application) and ready for download on the website.

As Piotr Chruścielski writes about the similar project (the application that allows users to learn about the history of Stutthof concentration camp with the use of a tablet):

With the help of the latest technological solutions and a mobile application that has been created within the framework of the project, he wants to get the stories hidden in a museum space out of the camp relics – the stories about people, events and experiences that redefined the local landscapes not only topographically, but also psychologically and culturally in the years 1939 –1945.[25]

A small-scale static model mentioned above recreates an image of the ghetto in May 1942. It does so in the most accurate possible way as the starting point for its creation was a German aerial photograph of the ghetto area. The street network and buildings have been recreated based on this picture. A model is a complete replica of urban infrastructure of that period – streets, squares, residential and commercial buildings, tenements, footbridges, tram lines, wagons, people figures and all the important locations in the ghetto such as departments and offices. The precise appearance of particular buildings (number of floors, colors etc.) has been reconstructed thanks to numerous photographs, urban development plans, city maps as well as the documentation of existing buildings, which have often been preserved in almost unspoiled condition.

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[25] Piotr Chruścielski, "Niewidzialne uczynić widzialnym. Projekt 'Stutthof. Nowy wymiar,'" in *Znaki (nie)pamięci*, eds. Fabiszak, Brzezińska and Owsiński, 150.

Fig. 5: Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, detail. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

The innovation of the project lies in the complementation of a model with three types of multimedia tools – sound, image and light. The subject matter of the exhibition is introduced to users in an interactive way through touch screens. They contain information about the history of the Lodz ghetto and the people who lived there – Jews and Roma communities. The illustration website consists of maps, plans and photographs. A special desktop will allow users to navigate within the site and select available content on their own. They will have at their disposal audio and video recordings attached to especially specified objects and supplemented with a verbal commentary of a historian, as well as archival photographs, fragments of memories or films. There will also be educational paths available, touching upon the most important topics of the ghetto history

such as health care, childhood, deportations, and allowing a virtual walk in the ghetto. Users will be able to 'walk' down the streets, getting to know the history of the particular places and people who lived there.

Fig. 6: Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, detail. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

Additionally, an introduction of modern storytelling techniques seems an interesting idea that can be offered to the families of the victims. In this way, they will be able to send their own reports, memoirs and family documents, and gain the opportunity to share these materials with other ghetto survivors, which is no less important. The materials will be added to the already existing historical source database linked with a model. This will offer the relatives a unique opportunity to find unknown information or a picture of their loved ones. Perhaps some photographs or documents, so far stored in human memory, will see the daylight for the first time in many years. Leaving aside the opportunities that are now open for the researchers, this is an exceptional chance to find yet undiscovered traces of a person's family history. On the one hand, each particular report and individual experience creates a complete image of past times. On the other hand, it makes it possible to get actual people out of the anonymous crowd and show their faces and stories.

It is possible that the relatives will find a mention of their fathers, grandfathers or great-grandfathers, while listening or reading memoirs and reports from the ghetto on a multimedia screen. For the first time, they will also receive a full and comprehensive image of the ghetto – they will see a photograph of a house where their family lived, they will follow their relatives' road to work on a detailed map, look inside the factory and read a short story of a given place, which later on they will be able to locate on a static model. They will get acquainted with the neighborhood as well as buildings and institutions that were being passed by their mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers every day. They will see the places where the important events (e.g. Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski's – the head of the Council of Elders in the Lodz ghetto – famous speech on September, 1942)[26] happened and they will see how these places look right now, after 70 years. The area of a former ghetto and non-existing buildings will be confronted with the contemporary appearance of the district and a postwar urban setting, prompting questions about the content of this space – not only today, but above all, in the past.

A multifaceted narrative, multimedia and nonclassical spatial form are supposed to make the exhibition attractive for everybody – from the youngest spectators that will not be scared with a brutality of exhibits to the oldest visitors. This is "the way to shorten the distance between the past and the present. This is an attempt to understand the history with the use of the latest technologies. It is another dimension of reflection and emotions that accompany the process of getting to know the past. The materialization of the Lost and the Forgotten."[27]

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[26] Buildings at the so-called Plac Strażacki (Firefighters Square) no longer exist. New apartment blocks were built in their place – only one of them had survived until now. In front of this building Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski called upon the adult ghetto prisoners to give up their children: "Brothers and sisters! Hand them over to me! Fathers and mothers – give me your children!" on September 1942. This event marked the beginning of the so-called Great Szpera (Germ., *Allgemeine Gehsperre* – absolute ban on leaving houses). More than 15 000 people, mostly children under 10 and elderly people over 65, were deported from the ghetto between September 4 and September 12, 1942.

[27] Chruścielski, "Niewidzialne uczynić widzialnym," 149.

The Lodz Ghetto. A Brief History

The Lodz ghetto, where the Jewish people were relocated and ordered into forced labor, became the longest functioning and the second largest ghetto in Polish lands. It was strictly separated from the rest of the city, surrounded by a wall and guarded by officers of the German Order Police and Jewish Ghetto Police. It even had its own currency – marks, which were called *rumkies*.[28] More than 200 000 people passed through the ghetto during its four years of existence. They were not only Jews from Lodz, but also from provincial ghettos of the Warta Land (including Brzeziny, Łask, Pabianice, Sieradz, Stryków, Wieluń, Włocławek, Zduńska Wola and others) and from abroad (Austria, the Third Reich, Luxembourg or the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia). There also functioned the so-called Gypsy Camp[29] (Germ., *Zigenuerlager*) and the preventive camp for Polish children[30] (Germ., *Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt*) within the borders of the Lodz ghetto. Both of them were strictly separated from the rest of the ghetto.

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[28] This ghetto money was popularly called *rumkies* or *chaimkies* after the name of the head of the Council of Elders in the Lodz ghetto, Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski.

[29] The so-called Gypsy Camp, the first of its kind and the largest at the time, functioned within the borders of the Lodz ghetto. The decision about its establishment was made in autumn 1941. About 5 000 Austrian Roma and Sinti were relocated from the camps in Burgenland and Styria to that camp. There were four streets – Brzezińska (now Wojska Polskiego), Towiańskiego (now Obrońców Westerplatte), Sikawska (now Starosikawska) and Głowackiego – within its boundaries. It covered an area of 19117 square meters. No basic equipment was provided, kitchen facilities or toilets were not set up until the arrival of the first prisoners. The Austrian Roma were brought to the Radegast Station from November 5 to 9, 1941. Living and sanitary conditions were extremely difficult. A small-enclosed area and inability to maintain basic levels of hygiene quickly led to the outbreak of typhus – as early as mid-November 1941. About 700 people died at the time, including children. The number of patients was even higher. As a consequence, a decision was made to liquidate the camp. Between 5 and 12 January 1942 the Roma prisoners were transported by trucks to the extermination center in Chełmno on Ner (Kulmhof ab Ner). More than 4000 were murdered there.

[30] The preventive camp for Polish children and youth, located at Przemysłowa Street, began functioning on December 1942. The prisoners were children from orphanages, educational institutions, homeless (arrested for loitering) and children, whose parents were forced to work in Nazi Germany or sent to concentration camps or prisons, also children of the resistance members and political prisoners. There were also those accused of co-operation with the resistance movement, illegal trade, refusal of work and petty thefts. Children were mostly from Silesia, Dąbrowa Basin, Greater Poland, Pomerania, Mazovia, Lodz with surrounding areas and Zamość region. The conditions in the camp were very poor – work too heavy for children, hunger, typhus and other diseases, severe corporal punishment and beatings. All this resulted in deterioration of health of small prisoners and, in individual cases, even death. The camp existed until January 1945.

The ghetto existed from 1940 until 1944. Over 40000 people died of hunger and disease during that time. The others were murdered in extermination centers in Chełmno on Ner and Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is estimated that only 5000 to 7000 Jews were still alive at the end of the war, about 800–900 of whom were survivors of the ghetto.[31]

The distinguishing feature of the Lodz ghetto was not only the fact of its four-year long-term existence, but also extremely well developed administrative and production apparatus. There were many departments in the ghetto such as the Department of Food and Supplies, the Department of Archives, the Department of Building and Construction, the Department of Housing, the Department of Social Welfare, Postal Division, Public Works Division, Coal Division, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Statistics, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Health Care Services. There also functioned hospitals, pharmacies, schools, even summer camps for children and the community center, where various concerts and music shows were organized – of course, only until a certain point in time.

The whole activity was documented in thousands of photographs taken by employees of the Department of Archives of the Jewish ghetto administration and, to a lesser extent, by Austrian employee of the Nazi ghetto administration – Walter Genewein – to whom we owe colorful pictures of the occupied Lodz, including ghetto. Additionally, there have been preserved numerous documents of both Jewish and German ghetto administrations, including registration cards, work cards, deportation letters, as well as diaries and personal journals. A primary source material is particularly rich, varied and relatively easy to access. But one must ask the question – how to transfer this knowledge? How to create interest

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[31] On February 1940, *Lodscher Zeitung* published an order by Johann Schafer, the police president, on establishing a separate housing district in Lodz, where Jews would be relocated. A few months later, the ghetto was finally closed and isolated from the city on April 30, 1940. Wooden barriers and barbed wire entanglements were placed around the ghetto and along its two main isolated arterial roads (Nowomiejska, Zgierska and Limanowskiego). Mass deportations from Lodz to Kulmhof extermination center in Chełmno on Ner began on January 1942. There the Germans had murdered more than 70 000 people by September 1942. After a short intermission, transports were resumed on June 1942 – initially to Chełmno and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau. On August 29, 1942 the last transport of Jews from the Lodz ghetto left the Radegast Station and headed to the extermination center. This date is assumed to mark the end of the ghetto liquidation.

in history? And last but not least, how to preserve the memory of the victims of Nazi policies – the Lodz ghetto prisoners?

Technological Innovations in the Service of the Museums

Hermetic, unchangeable organization is not able to meet these expectations. Only an institution oriented to changes that focus on its visitors has a chance to adequately respond to social needs and expectations. However, there are required openness and the provision of high quality services. […] The concern for the audience's satisfaction is a prerequisite for the success of museum's activities, which should strive not only for the visitors accustomed to viewing art, but also educate the new ones, including the youngest ones. If a museum wants to attract the audience and shape its attitudes, it must focus on uniqueness, innovation and quality, bearing in mind that a human being is the most important element of these activities.[32]

Until recently, education in museums had most often focused on dissemination of knowledge and providing a complement to history lessons at schools. Educational activities were carried out through lectures, publications, exhibition visits, competitions, film screenings or celebrations.

Pedagogical offers of the museums were directed at transfer and popularization of knowledge, and did not create opportunities for active and critical interaction with history. Although educational activities of Polish museums in the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a large variety of forms of presentation and popularization, it barely focused on authentic, historical reflection and independent assimilation of historical knowledge. […] The situation did not fundamentally change in the 1990s'[33]

as emphasized by Tomasz Kranz, director of the Majdanek State Museum.

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[32] Batko and Kotowski, *Nowoczesne muzeum*, 53.

[33] Tomasz Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci. Zarys problematyki*, (Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2009), 47–8.

At present, technological innovations – oral history, artistic installations and historical models – are important instruments of information and education in the museum space. "New media have become the tools that bring changes to the contact between a researcher-creator and a recipient. They require the latter to be more active."[34] The last form of presentation is already very popular among the museum visitors. Moreover, it is often the only reason that people decide to visit a museum. Then, it is worth asking again: why is this happening? And, above all, why is a historical scale model such an important form of presentation in a historical museum? It is worth taking a look at this particular example – a model of the Lodz ghetto that is being built at Radegast Station Museum.

Fig. 7 : Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, detail. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

There is still relatively little knowledge about the history of the Lodz ghetto, although it is slowly starting to change. When it comes to studies, historical narratives, popular science and journalistic discourse, one can observe the

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[34] Maciej Drewniak, Marta Połańska and Marta Stasiak-Cyran, "Nowoczesne formy prezentacji dziedzictwa archeologicznego na przykładzie stałej wystawy w Muzeum Lubelskim," in *Muzea w kulturze współczesnej*, eds. Ziębińska-Witek and Żuk, 30.

dominance of the Warsaw ghetto – a heroic ghetto, whose inhabitants resisted their oppressors. The project that is being carried out at Radegast Station provides an opportunity to broaden the circle of people that are interested in the history of the Lodz ghetto and its inhabitants, the history of Jews in general, as well as the history of the city or World War II. A multimedia form is definitely more attractive than a classic description or a typical exhibition, especially for young people. It captures the attention of the visitors, arouses their curiosity and gives museologists an opportunity to reach out to new audiences.

Of course, its primary purpose is to preserve the memory of past events and places associated with them. At the same time, however, a model provides a unique opportunity to visualize a history, thus creating excellent educational and popularization possibilities. Lessons and lectures conducted with the use of specific tools will certainly allow the transfer of knowledge in a more flexible and more complete way. It is not a museum artifact, but a modern object that tells a coherent story. It is supposed to reflect the topographical reality of non-existing or transformed urban space, which would make the visitors realize the enormity of the ghetto and let them clearly define its borders. A model's creators should use maps, blueprints, area development plans and archival photographs, which subsequently make up the documentation accompanying the model. It also provides excellent opportunities to work with different age groups. Furthermore, a historical model makes it possible to locate a given place in present urban space and tell a story of the place in general, as well as individual stories hidden behind facades of the buildings. With the help of multimedia materials such as photographs, videos and written accounts, a model brings back the memories of places and people. The decreasing number of witnesses of past events makes it especially important to receive their reports and memories, to share them with others and to present them to a wider circle. A chance to take a look at unique photographs owned by survivors and their families, the photographs that are to see the light of day for the first time since the war, is equally important and simply invaluable. Thanks to these personal testimonials, there is a chance to reach out to people who are potentially not interested in history.
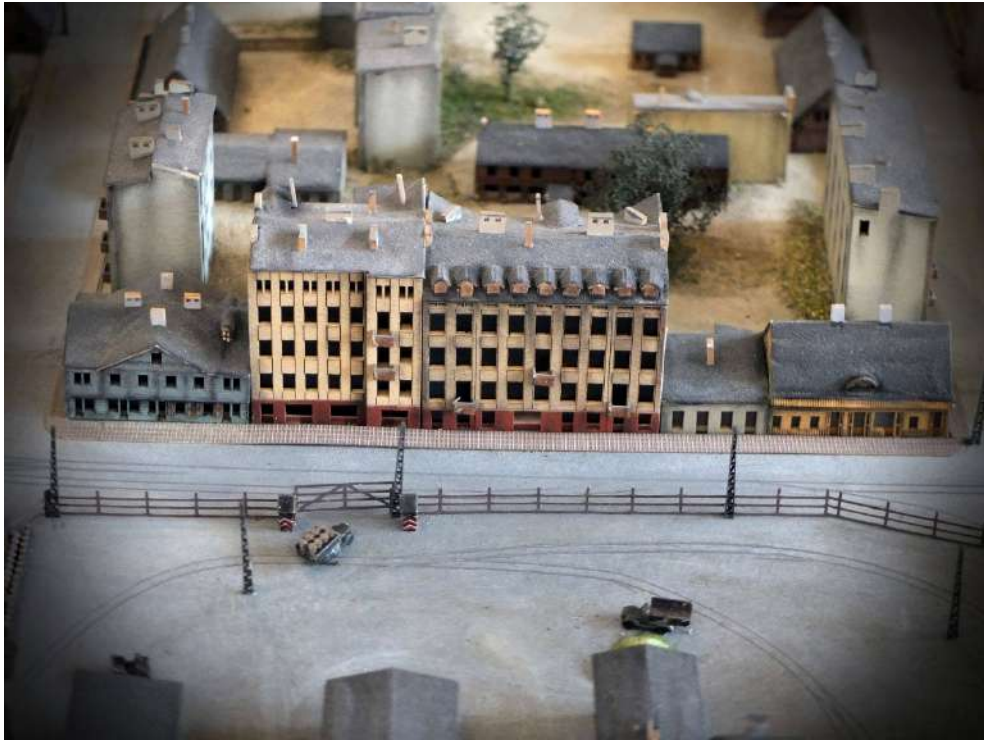
Fig. 8: Model of Litzmannstadt-Ghetto, detail. Photograph by Zofia Trębacz (Radegast Station Museum)

Besides, a historical model is a great tool for overcoming the reluctance of the residents of a former ghetto area and showing them that there are possible other forms of commemoration, rather than erecting new monuments and placing new commemorative plaques on buildings, which often do not fulfill their function. As Frank Ankersmit notices:

> We often see monuments in busy downtown areas, where few things remind us about the person or event commemorated by a monument. As a result of this lack of context, passerby, even if they are aware of the existence of a monument, they probably recognize it as a part of their everyday life, without ever asking questions about a historical figure or an event that a monument commemorates.[35]

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[35] Frank Ankersmit, *Narracja, reprezentacja, doświadczenie. Studia z teorii historiografii*, (Kraków: Universitas, 2004), 390–1. Also Natalia Krzyżanowska has recently paid attention to a similar aspect: "Monuments – due to the evolution of their functions – can be reduced to a spatial incident (*landmark*) whose content becomes unreadable to the audience. R. Musil pointed out that there is nothing more invisible to the city inhabitants than monuments." Natalia

It is also a good opportunity to engage the local community in the events and activities organized by museums and to deepen understanding of one's own place and past. Their house or street, in a form of 'miniature replica' on the scale model, is easily recognizable. At the same time, however, it is distant and abstract. Nobody tries to turn their house into an open-air museum. It is not their house, but a miniature replica on a model that becomes a reference point in that story of history.

Moreover, anti-Semitism and hostility towards others are becoming more of a problem. It is worth to reflect on what "science and education can tell us about the current growth of extremism, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia that pose a threat to democracy, through the history of mankind and genocide."[36] It is obvious that education conducted at a memorial site should put particular emphasis on fighting against any manifestations of racism and xenophobia and concentrate on educating in the spirit of tolerance and democracy. A model as a less invasive form of commemoration can better present the difficult past and encourage reflection on the present. It may start the conversation about the past and the present. It also can become

> an attempt to answer the question how experiences of the others (in this case, dramatic experiences of the victims and the survivors, their resistance and their willingness to survive) can be integrated into educational processes, which in turn should lead to the achievement of the specific didactic and educational purposes.[37]

This open form of historical education is still new and thus attractive, especially in Poland. It seems that it is easier to conduct a discussion with its help rather than a help of a textbook or a scientific monograph. Thanks to a well-conducted narrative accompanying a model, the visitors also have the opportunity to learn how to counteract mechanisms leading to the authoritarian regime and as a consequence, to mass murders. In my opinion, putting emphasis on didactic and

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Krzyżanowska, "(Anty)pomniki jako przedstawienia (nie)pamięci w mieście," in *Znaki (nie)*pamięci, eds. Fabiszak, Brzezińska and Owsiński, 61.

[36] Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka?*, 193.

[37] Wiesława Wysok, "Nowa tożsamość edukacyjna muzeów założonych w miejscach byłych obozów niemieckich," in *Muzea w kulturze współczesnej*, eds. Ziębińska-Witek and Żuk, 193.

educational significance of knowledge about crimes of Nazism and shaping attitudes acceptable in democracy is particularly important nowadays.

And last but not least, a model supplemented with aforementioned multimedia tools makes it possible to pass on much more knowledge than a typical exhibition. For new technologies allow providing the visitors with much richer material when it comes to photographs and films, while the access to it is not limited by the physical space of a building or exhibition hall. Moreover, the novelty of both visual and narrative forms of a historical message surprises and arouses curiosity, thus contributing to the awakening and deepening a visitor's interest in the subjects related to the World War II and the history of the Jewish community. It is extremely important to create the opportunity of making independent choice of information (educational path, a biography of a particular person, a memory of the ghetto survivor) and its presentation on a static model or a multimedia screen. Thanks to that, the visitors can become active participants of the exhibition.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, building a historical model of a concentration camp or ghetto may also raise doubts or even serious ethical questions – after all, it recreates a particular space established by the totalitarian regime for extermination purposes. Additionally, it can be criticized because of a non-serious approach towards the history of the Holocaust and the history of Jews during the World War II, or even a superficial interpretation of historical events. The image presented with its help may seem to be poorly informative and simply unclear. There is no place for verification of information or a scientific debate during the visit to the museum. "You may be able to tell interesting, enlightening and plausible historical stories […], but you cannot provide the all-important critical elements of historical discourse – you cannot evaluate sources, make logical arguments, or systematically weigh evidence."[38] And in such situation, there often appear inaccuracies and simplifications. The old reality, precisely reproduced in the museum space, can create a misleading impression that will make the visitors feel that they enter the presented epoch and experience its

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[38] Anna Ziębińska-Witek, *Holocaust. Problemy przedstawiania*, (Lublin: UMCS, 2005), 118.

everyday life. It is undoubtedly attractive, all the more so because learning history comes effortlessly. On the contrary, some visitors may find the image presented through this precise reconstruction unnatural and artificial. That is why it is so important to make such model an element of historical education, to explain its purpose and to develop teaching and learning methods, remembering at the same time that this is a fragmentary and non-subjective image. It is equally important to bear in mind at all times that the purpose of a model is not only to tell the history of the Jewish community and its popularization, but also to preserve the memory about the victims of Nazi crimes.

This is especially significant in the context of the younger visitors, whose attention is drawn by an attractive form that does not require them to have any historical knowledge. The problem is that the subject matter of the exhibition at a memorial site is often abstract, incomprehensible and impossible to imagine for them. While visiting the Radegast Station, one can easily notice that especially children watching the ghetto model, frequently try to touch it. One can even get the impression that they would like to "play" with it. However, it is protected with a special cover and there is no direct access to a model, at least in theory. As noted by Zbigniew Libera: "Having fun and learning are two different things, but of course fun can be educational and education can be provided through fun. However, there can be only one purpose in the case of "game of Holocaust" – prevention."[39] And although this remark refers to the author's own work – the famous "Lego. The concentration camp" – it seems adequate in the context of the historical model that has become increasingly popular in recent years. The way of conducting a narrative about the Holocaust and, above all, education about it, cannot lead to infantilization and banalization of that story.

In my opinion, a historical model can be an important complement to the museum's permanent exhibition, and in some cases it can be presented as its central part as well. It is indeed a great educational tool. It allows a visualization

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[39] Zbigniew Libera, "Lego. Obóz koncentracyjny," in *Zagłada,* eds. Czapliński and Domańska, 316. In turn, Mirosław Borusiewicz warns that "entertainment function of a museum must be kept within specific boundaries, otherwise there appears the threat of commercialization and abasement of its social rank […] A museum should be attractive for a visitor, it should be popular. But the ways that are being used to achieve this popularity are nonetheless important." Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka?,* 192.

of the past in an attractive way, while it remains *de facto* only its projection (better or worse based on given sources). At the same time, the functioning of the model as a separate museum object raises serious doubts. Every exhibition, narrative or artifact, tries to tell the story. On the contrary, a historical model only shows how the things were or how they could have been. That is why it requires a wider context (e.g. a context of the World War II at European, national and regional level) – it presents no story without the historical background. Therefore, it needs to be complemented by other sources and narratives. It is extremely important that a static model is accompanied by careful textual interpretation on board or tablet screen, as well as the additional catalogue and other materials (leaflets, posters, press releases). The context created by a museum or adjoining exhibitions is no less significant – a historical model cannot be placed among other exhibits that do not correspond to its character or purpose.[40] Not to mention the fact that this type of message can be very quickly outdated, because technological progress still creates new possibilities of presentation. One can even indicate example of exhibitions in the Illinois Holocaust Museum, where stories of the Holocaust survivors are presented not only in the form of audio or video recordings, but as interactive holograms.

A previously mentioned model of the so-called 'lost quarter' of Lodz, that is, its northern district, presents a fragment of the city from the late 1930s. Why, however, is that area so different from the current one?[41] Why did a street layout change? What happened to some of the houses? A static model cannot answer these questions. It is necessary to provide an additional narrative. Only then it will be possible to show how both Nazi and socialist realist planners influenced the presented area, why there is a park on the site of the former congested area and what happened to the pre-war residents of these houses.

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[40] Borusiewicz, *Nauka czy rozrywka?*, 113–17.

[41] A demolition of buildings located at the border of two districts – Bałuty and Śródmieście – and creation of a "buffer space." After 1945, 'this area was not fulfilled with architectural substance,' but Park Staromiejski (Old Town Park) was established there – "a green wedge separating Bałuty from the rest of Lodz, just like before." Błażej Ciarkowski, "Polityka niepamiętania," 194–5. See also Aleksandra Sumorok, *Architektura i urbanistyka Łodzi okresu realizmu so*cjalistycznego, (Warszawa: Neriton, 2010), 179.
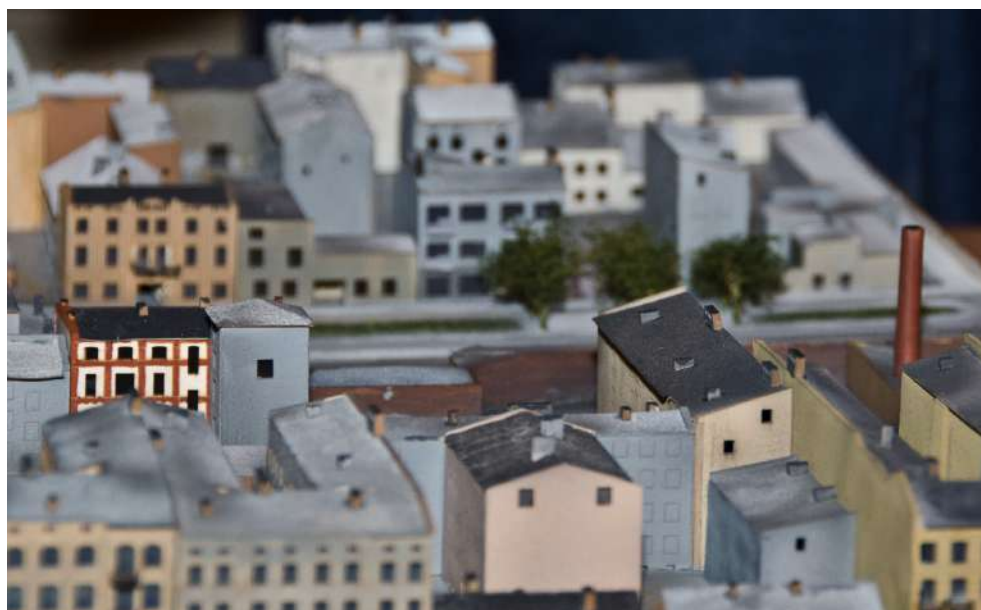
Fig. 9: Model of the "lost quarter" of the city of Lodz, detail.Photograph by Bożena Szafrańska (Museum of the City of Lodz)

In Poland museological debates focus almost exclusively on a vision of the past that museologists try to present to visitors. I am deeply convinced that the ways of presenting and telling the past are equally worth discussing. The need of using modern means in museums definitely deserves considering. After all, the purpose is not only to tell the story, but also to tell it in an understandable way. "Leaving behind monuments, focusing attention on individual fates of the witnesses of history and using new media open new opportunities to create cultural memory in 21st century,"[42] notices Piotr Chruścielski. Certainly, a historical model does not offer ideal solution, especially since we are not accustomed to the way it presents the Holocaust. It seems, however, that adding multimedia components to a model significantly enhances the content provided through that model. Then it becomes something much more than just a static model, responding to the need for multithreaded museum story. It also contains two narratives about the Holocaust – a discourse focused on explaining history and a discourse focused on commemorating history. Perhaps, in today's world that strongly appreciates attractiveness and accessibility, one has to agree for a more practical approach in presenting history in a modern museum, and as a consequence, for "the acceptance of historical representations as tools […] that work best when

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[42] Chruścielski, "Niewidzialne uczynić widzialnym," 156.

one wants to achieve specific goals. They serve our understanding of identity, community and culture better than any other means."[43]

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[43] Anna Ziębińska-Witek, "Problemy reprezentacji Holokaustu," 154.

Wiki*shtetl*: Commemorating Jewish Communities that Perished in the Holocaust through the Wikipedia Platform

by Tehila Hertz

Abstract

This article presents a new and developing direction in teaching Holocaust remembrance and commemoration through online means, which was developed as part of a course for voluntary professional development for educators at the Center for Holocaust Studies (in collaboration with the Professional Development Unit) at the Jerusalem College ('Michlalah Jerusalem').

The program provides participants with tools in the field of history, genealogy, and writing and editing tools for Wikipedia. The program participants open a user account on Wikipedia, and create an entry on a community that was annihilated in the Holocaust, with an emphasis on combining the participants' personal and family knowledge with the general history of the community. Through this means, a communal mosaic of life, hope, and dreams, as well as of individuals within a community, is brought to public memory.

This article presents the conclusions of the program as it was applied to educators, as well as ideas for how to apply it with high school students.

Introduction

Methodology

Results and Unique Aspects of the Project

Conclusions

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Introduction

Wikipedia and its Place in the Education System[1]

Wikipedia, the biggest compilation of open information in the world, is considered today no less reliable than classic encyclopedias,[2] and is widely used by the general population as a source of information that is accessible, relevant, and up to the date.[3] For students and scholars, Wikipedia is used extensively as an initial reference source to locate pertinent information for scholastics, as well as for personal use.[4] Though denounced initially by many teachers and academics as unreliable, in recent years academics have partnered with Wikipedia, and have even made a joint effort to examine how to best incorporate Wikipedia use in high schools and in higher academics.[5] That these two bodies seek cooperation is due to the fact that, contrary to popular belief, there is much that they stand to gain from partnership. Academia is the designated body used for exploring, assembling, and distributing knowledge gained by thorough examination by individual experts; Wikipedia sources wisdom from among the masses, with a goal to make it as accessible as possible for everyone, without cost.

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[2] Jim Giles, "Internet Encyclopedias Go Head to Head: Jimmy Wales' Wikipedia Comes Close to Britannica in Terms of the Accuracy of its Science Entries," in *Nature* 438 (2005): 900-1.
[3] Ericka Menchen–Trevino and Eszter Hargittai, "Young Adults' Credibility Assessment of Wikipedia," in *Information, Communication & Society* 14/1 (2011): 24–51.
[4] Piotr Konieczny, "Wikis and Wikipedia as a Teaching Tool: Five Years Later," in *First Monday* 17/9 (2012): 3.
[5] Paula Patch, "Meeting Student Writers Where They Are: Using Wikipedia to Teach Responsible Scholarship," in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 37/3 (2010): 278-85; Piotr Konieczny, "Rethinking Wikipedia for the Classroom," in *Contexts* 13/1 (2014); Sonya Lipczynska, "The Role of Wikipedia in Higher Education," in *SCONUL Focus* Summer–Autumn 35 (2005): 21-2.

Teachers are also among Wikipedia's loyal users, but that being said, they are mostly passive users, consuming from the wealth of information rather than contributing to it.[6] The education system tends to perceive Wikipedia as an adversary to meaningful learning, and tries to prevent students from using it. What results is an absurd situation whereby students and teachers alike make [7] extensive use of Wikipedia, but because of the opposition to it, it is not used in an informed manner that supports learning by being an integral tool for developing research, composition, editing, and collaborative learning abilities for various educational systems. In Israel as well – where the number of contributors to the Hebrew Wikipedia website is relatively high compared to the number of Hebrew speakersalthough many attempts have been made towards –[8] inculcating Wikipedia into the educational toolbox, a significant contrast remains throughout the entire educational system between the intensive usage of Wikipedia by teachers and students, and the legitimacy it is granted, as well as the role it plays in education.[9]

Holocaust Remembrance in the Israeli Education System

The relationship between the Israeli identity, the collective consciousness of the Jewish people's past, and the memory of the Holocaust – is one that is complex and emotionally, and a wide range of social, political, educational, and public debates that take place in Israel tend to bring up this topic relatively early on in their discussions [10] Over the years, the way in which the memory of the Holocaust has been handled has changed, and a readiness to deal with it has also

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[6] Henk Eijkman, "Academics and Wikipedia: Reframing Web 2.0+ as a Disruptor of Traditional Academic Power-Knowledge Arrangements," in *Campus-Wide Information Systems* 27/3 (2010): 173-85.

[7] *Ibid*; Gadi Alon and Judit Bar-Ilan, "Open-Minded to Open Content? An Examination of Israeli Teachers' Attitudes to Using Wikipedia for Educational Purposes," in *The Chase Conference Journal on Innovation and Learning Technology* 2 (2012): 1-7.

[8] *Wikipedia Statistics*, September 30, 2017.

[9] Alon and Bar-Ilan, "Open-Minded to Open Content?"; Hagit Meishar-Tal, "The Voice of the People is the Voice of G-d: Teachers' use of Wikipedia with their Students" in *Dapim: Journal for Study and Research in Education* 64 (2017): 111-140.

[10] Dina Porat, *The Smoke-Scented Coffee*, (Tel-Aviv: 2011); Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, *The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Jewish-Arab Partnership*, (Tel-Aviv: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2015); Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: the Israelis and the Holocaust*, (Jerusalem: 1991).

begun to take hold.[11] The Holocaust remains a historical trauma that resides within the consciousness of a vast portion of the Israeli population, as individuals, as families, and as communities. This trauma affects the collective state of emotion, and tends to surface and intensify during moments of crises. [12] Many studies have been done on how trauma experienced during the Holocaust is passed on to second-generation survivors, and even on to third-generation survivors.generation survivors generally inherit their parents' trait of -Second [13] repressing the feelings and the memories of the traumatic event that regularly hovered in the background of daily life.generation survivors carry a -Third [14] certain characteristic of dealing with the Holocaust that is unique to them: It is typically expressed by an attempt to try and confront their family's history, from which their parents had tried to distance themselves, calling it taboo. This desire sometimes even manifests itself as an intense obsession to find out what had happened to their family, and to attempt to comprehend it. [15]

So too did education in Israel about the events of the Holocaust go from being marginalized to becoming a point of focus, with a stress on students developing a meaningful connection to its outcomes. There is also a stress put on understanding the depth of the Jewish people's history, and the stories of individuals who underwent the trauma. Holocaust education in Israel is the only school subject that is explicitly mentioned in the law books as a required subject

[11] Liat Steir Livny, *Two Faces in the Mirror: Representation of Holocaust Survivors in Israeli Cinema,* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2009); David Ohana and Robert Wistrich, *Myth and Memory – The Transfigurations of Israeli Consciousness,* (Tel-Aviv: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1997).

[12] Moshe Zuckerman, *Holocaust in the Sealed Room,* (Tel-Aviv: Mosher Zuckerman Publications, 1993).

[13] Iris Milner, *Past Present: Biography, Identity and Memory in Second Generation Literature*, (Tel-Aviv: Hotza'at Im Oved, 2003).

[14] Dan Bar-On, et. al., "Multigenerational Perspectives on Coping with the Holocaust Experience: An Attachment Perspective for Understanding the Developmental Sequelae of Trauma across Generations," in *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 22/2 (1998); Dan Bar-On, *Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Israeli Families of Holocaust Survivors*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Milton Jucovy, "Telling the Holocaust Story: A Link between the Generations," in *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 5/1 (1985).

[15] Esther Jilovsky, Jordana Silverstein and David Slucki, *In the Shadows of Memory: The Holocaust and the Third Generation,* (Hertfordshire: Vallentine Mitchell, 2016); Irit Felsen, "Transgenerational Transmission of Effects of the Holocaust: the North American Research Experience," in *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma,* ed. Yael Danieli, (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 43-69; Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

to be taught.[16] Holocaust education personalizes and enriches the way in which the individual connects to the national memory – through learning. It raises perpetual deliberation about the dynamic role the Holocaust plays in the Israeli consciousness – between being individualistic and being universal; between being factual and being subjective; between being a private memory and being a collective one; between being historical and being actual. [17]

The Memory of the Holocaust in the Digital Age

Recently there has been a proliferation of studies dealing with the change in the way the memory of the Holocaust is being presented in the digital age, and the effect it has on how we remember the Holocaust, preserve its memory, and present it; whether it be regarding the way historical research is done, by using digital archives rather than examining the physical evidence;[18] or the way the memory of the Holocaust and its commemoration is presented in museums and on the internet;[19] or the way in which the memory of the Holocaust is passed on to the next generation through education.[20] In the field of education – which is already dealing with the gap between the older and younger generations regarding technology – there is a significant challenge in converting Holocaust

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[16] The Amendment to the Law of State Education in Israel of 1953.

[17] Yair Auron, *The Pain of Knowledge, Holocaust and Genocide Issues in Education*, (Routledge, 2005); Nitza Davidovitz and Dan Soen, *To the Valley of the Shadow of Death: The Experience of the Holocaust from a Multidisciplinary Perspective*, (Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2015); Zacharia Dov-Shav, "The Impact of Teaching the Subject of the Holocaust in Literature on the Students' Empathy for the Jewish People of their Suffering and of Holocaust Survivors," in *Eiyunim Bechinuch* 43/44 (1986): 219-28; Nili Keren, "Learning and Textbooks - Changes in Teaching the Holocaust (1980-2001)," in *Bishvil Hazikaron* 44 (2002): 18-24; Nili Keren, *Holocaust: a Journey to Memory,* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Maariv, 1999); Nili Keren, "Preserving Memory in Forgetfulness: the Struggle for Holocaust Studies in Israel," in *Zemanim* 64 (1998): 54-64; Mordechai Shalem, "For the Question of Educational Goals in Teaching the Holocaust," in *Bishvil Hazikaron* 44 (2001): 10-17; Chaim Shatzker, "Teaching the Holocaust: a Continuum of Dilemmas," in *Memory and Awareness of the Holocaust in Israel,* ed. Yoel Rappel, (Tel-Aviv: 1998), 87-92; Michael Yaaron, "Teaching the Holocaust as Part of History Lessons," in *Bishvil Hazikaron* 44 (2002): 4-9.

[18] Jeffrey Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and new Media Practices*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 3-4, 167-74.

[19] Eva Pfanzelter, "At the Crossroads with History: Mediating the Holocaust on the Internet" in *Holocaust Studies: A Culture of Journal and History* 21/4 (2015): 250-71.

[20] Hanna Yaoz, "Teaching the Holocaust in the 21st Century – Conveying Holocaust Consciousness and Heritage," in *The Holocaust Ethos in the 21st Century: Dilemmas and Challenges,* eds. Nitza Davidovitz, Dan Soen, (Krakow: Austeria Publishing House, 2012), 512-14.

commemoration into a digital medium, which so rapidly reaches youths, and even older people as well.[21]

When considering the vast number of forums that spread Holocaust denial, it is of great importance that the internet is becoming a host for Holocaust commemoration – so much so that recently the internet has actually become the battle arena between those who deny the facts of the Holocaust and the 'gatekeepers of history'.[22] Initiatives to decrease the intensity of Holocaust denial on the web are moving forward by circulating information that is reliable, available, and actual.[23]

About the Project: 'Wiki' and 'Shtetl'

'Wiki*shtetl*' is a project that utilizes an innovative directive in education for commemorating the memory of the Holocaust through an online, collaborative medium. The project, developed through a course designed to provide voluntary professional development for educators, took place in The Center for Holocaust Studies (in participation with the Vocational Development Unit) located in The Jerusalem College of Israel, from 2016 to 2017.[24] In the framework of the course, participants wrote an entry on Wikipedia about a community from their family background, or any other community that was annihilated in the Holocaust. The project, which sprouted from this localized course, is in the process of being fitted for a wider audience of academic and high school students. Today, additional editors have already joined the project on the Hebrew Wikipedia website, and it has been made open to the public on Wikipedia.

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[21] *Ibid.*; Nili Keren, "The Holocaust - its Place in Education towards the Twenty-First Century," *Moreshet* 69 (2000): 59-67.

[22] Stephen Atkins, *Holocaust Denial as an International Movement*, (Westport: Praeger, 2009), 233-6.

[23] Example: Alon Lazar and Tal Litvak-Hirsch, "Online Gatekeepers of History: Yahoo! Answers Community Discussing Holocaust Denial," in *Current Psychology: Research & Reviews* 32/3 (2013): 281-96.

[24] The project is in the process of expanding, and this year (2018) it's also being applied to a group of students obtaining a BED in history at the Efrata College in Jerusalem. Being that this trial year is still in progress and there are not as of yet any new findings, I only referred to this application of the project when it was relevant to make a comparison.

The uniqueness of the Wiki*shtetl* project comes from the blend of traditional methods of preserving and transmitting family and community history with modern ways of digitally preserving and sharing knowledge – making it accessible and globalized. The link the project made between the 'Wiki' and the 'Shtetl' (Yiddish for 'town') – between history and its preservation by use of contemporary information-sharing tools; between the private domain (both familial and communal) and the publicly available one – was unique and thrilling. It provided a unique experience for the course participants, and aroused an exceptional dialogue amongst them.

Wikipedia was chosen as the project's platform due to the fact that it is the world's biggest encyclopedia, and acts as the most available and accessible source of information for the general population. That being the case, there is great significance to making commemorations using Wikipedia – much more so than using printed books or other digital sources – because they become integrated into the main international database of information.[25] Practically speaking, it seems that Wikipedia is the most available means for the private individual to affect the opinions and points of view of the society in which he lives. More so, Wikipedia is continually gaining validity in the eyes of the public as a source of reliable information due to its strive for accepted and reliable sources to be the basis for the information written there, as well as its process of constant peer-review.[26] Therefore, being that there is widespread Holocaust denial throughout the internet – especially on social networks –[27] it could very well be that in the future Wikipedia will have made the most significant contribution to the preservation of the historical facts surrounding the Holocaust.

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[25] Alison Head and Michael Eisenberg, "How Today's College Students use Wikipedia for Course-Related Research," in *First Monday* 15/3 (2010), http://firstmonday.org/article/view/2830/2476 ; Menchen–Trevino and Hargittai, "Young Adults.'"

[26] Jean Goodwin, "The Authority of Wikipedia" (paper presented at the 8th conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation, Windsor, Canada, June 3-6, 2009).

[27] Lazar and Litvak-Hirsch, "Online Gatekeepers of History."

The course was developed to offer its participants tools in the field of historical research and genealogy, and to provide writing and editing skills for Wikipedia as well. Participants were required to open a personal account on the Wikipedia website, and to create an entry pertaining to a community that had perished during the Holocaust. The participants generally chose to work on communities that had a connection to their families, that is to say, the community from which their family had originated. The focal point of the course was on processing personal and familial information in order to create a public commemoration. To this end, participants were given tools for processing the memoirs of their family members, and to prepare emotionally for hearing them; tools for identifying relevant information from the participants' own surroundings, such as objects with sentimental or historical value, photos, and documents or orally transmitted testimonies in the possession of their family or of those living near them. Various tools for genealogical research were also provided.

Additionally, participants were provided with a host of tools in the field of historical research in order to prepare them to work with an array of historical sources; tools that aided in: critical reading of historical documents; knowing what information can – and cannot – be drawn from photographs and audio-visual documentation; analyzing artistic objects and literature as a source of understanding the thoughts and beliefs of individuals from that time period; the analysis of musical compositions as a source of historical documentation of communal heritage; the evaluation of the strengths and the flaws of oral testimonies and memoirs that at some point had been written down on paper; and more.

A significant portion of the program was given in the format of a workshop, which guided the participants through the process of collaborative writing on Wikipedia. A special emphasis was put on providing a profound familiarization with the technology in use and with the potential benefits it offers to mankind in the field of education, especially with regard to teaching.[28] In addition to being given active assistance for successful writing and editing in the Wikipedia format,

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[28] Darren Crovitz and Scott Smoot, "Wikipedia: Friend, not Foe," in *English Journal*, 98/3 (2009): 91-7; Houman Harouni, "High School Research and Critical Literacy: Social Studies with and despite Wikipedia, in *Harvard Educational Review*, 79/3, (2009): 473-93; Mark Kissling, "A Call for Wikipedia in the Classroom," in *Social Education* 75/2 (2011): 60-4.

the participants were equipped with tools for critically evaluating the information found on Wikipedia. Moreover, they were given insight into the Wikimedia project, its joint formation, and its various activities.[29]

Methodology

This article presents a first look into a program that is still in development. Therefore, an analysis of statistical results and the likes will not appear here. Instead, the article will present a primary examination of the program and the initial impressions of its results and implications.

Research Method

The research was mainly based upon three questionnaires that were distributed during the course, in addition to correspondences with the participants through e-mail, and an analysis of the conversations that took place on the Wikipedia 'talk page'. The questionnaires were constructed on a qualitative basis, in the form of a written interview, and analyzed in the accepted way for the study of texts and printed or online discourses in qualitative research.[30]

The first questionnaire examined the amount of familiarity each participant had with Wikipedia, and her general disposition towards it. The questions dealt with evaluating the participants' amount of personal use of Wikipedia, both active and passive; their usage of Wikipedia for pedagogical needs, and the way in which they provide guidelines for its use to students; and so too their reaction to having Wikipedia included as a central tool for completing the course. The subsequent questionnaires examined the participants' feelings throughout the process of the program and at its conclusion, with a focus on examining their feelings about the hands-on learning and collaborative learning that took place, as well as regarding the intensive use of Wikipedia throughout the course, and the various tools that the participants were provided in each class. The course's

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[29] Andrea Forte and Amy Bruckman, "Constructing Text: Wiki as a Toolkit for (Collaborative?) Learning" (paper presented at the proceedings of the 2007 international symposium on Wikis, Montreal, Canada, October 21-23, 2007).

[30] Liav Sade-Beck, "Internet Ethnography: Online and Offline," in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 3/2 (2004), 45-51.

feedback-form summarizing the entire process also gave the participants an opportunity to relate their feelings about the process they underwent during the learning using a visual illustration accompanied by a written description, which provides a general picture about the feelings that were felt regarding the process.[31] The participants who chose to add an illustration essentially came up with a metaphor and its interpretation, enhancing their feedback and helping to surface subconscious understandings that do not necessarily come up during regular discourse.[32]

Participants

The participants were made up of some twenty-five educators (all female) in the advanced stages of their careers, from a variety of different age groups. Their social backgrounds were varied, and so was their level of familiarity with the world of information technology and media literacy. The program was not designated for a specific social sector, nor was it designed for educators in a specific field. Consequently, the participants consisted of educators from a variety of fields who taught a wide range of ages: from preschool through elementary, up until high school, including some who taught special-education. The participants' family history with the Holocaust was also varied, with some of them being second-generation survivors, while others were third-generation, and even some without any connection whatsoever.

All of the participants were female. That being said, the group's homogeneity was not due to research considerations, but rather purely circumstantial; the program at the Jerusalem College was only being offered to women in order to cater to the religious population who participates exclusively in gender-separated programs. It does not seem that this had any significant effect on the results of the study; though there does exist a clear imbalance between the amount of male

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[31] Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell, "Drawing ourselves into Teaching: Studying the Images that Shape and Distort Teacher Education," in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 12/3 (1996): 303-13; Lily Orland-Barak and Suzana Klein, "The Expressed and the Realized: Mentors' Conversation and its Realization in Practice," in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21/4 (2005): 379-402.

[32] Rinat Halabi, "The Metaphor as a Tool to Obtain Feedback on Instruction and Learning in Courses for Training Teachers," in *Education in an Era of Uncertainty*, ed. Yehudith Weinberger, (Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2016), 137-74.

and female contributors to Wikipedia (males being the majority),[33] it does not seem that this had any recognizable effect, except perhaps for contributing to the participants' doubt about being able to successfully use Wikipedia.[34]

Ethics

There is a certain ethical complexity that exists in a study taking place in an educational environment,35 and therefore throughout the study steps were taken to refrain from creating an atmosphere that would compromise the learning taking place. In order to preserve a feeling of open learning, as well as a sense of trust and respect between teacher and student, at no point was anything being recorded throughout the course or during the conversations that took place in person or over the phone.36 That being said, there were three questionnaires distributed during the course (as mentioned above) and participants were informed that their answers could be used for study purposes, however they were given the option of answering anonymously.

Throughout the study's writing and publishing process, all of the participants' personal details were kept absolutely anonymous. The participant's input was sought in instances where she had provided information that she might have been uncomfortable having published, and when necessary details were altered or removed completely from the text.[37]

Limitations

During the program, certain methodological difficulties arose that were unique to this pilot. Some of them were specifically related to the types of individuals

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[33] Julia Bear and Benjamin Collier, "Where are the Women in Wikipedia? Understanding the Different Psychological Experiences of Men and Women in Wikipedia," in *Sex Roles*, 74/5-6 (2016): 254-65.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Magdalena Kubanyiova, "Rethinking Research Ethics in Contemporary Applied Linguistics: The Tension between Macroethical and Microethical Perspectives in Situated Research," in *Modern Language Journal* 92/4 (2008): 518-603.

[36] Ruthellen Josselson, "The Ethical Attitude in Narrative Research" in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*, ed. Jean Clandinin, (London: Sage, 2007), 537-66; Kelly Wester, "Publishing Ethical Research: A Step-by-Step Overview," in *Journal of Counseling and Development* 89/3 (2001): 301-7.

[37] *Ibid.*

who participated in the program, while others pertained to the prospect of applying the program on a larger scale.

A significant challenge that the program faced was the lack of technical knowledge on the part of the participants. Most of the group did not have prior experience with online media in general, and more specifically, with using the Wikipedia interface. Their main experience with Wikipedia was generally from passively reading existing information available on the website. When starting the Wiki*shtetl* course, many of the participants – all of them already employed many years as teachers in the Israeli education system – expressed a feeling of unreliability concerning Wikipedia as a source of trustworthy and certified information. They related how even though they themselves use Wikipedia extensively, they demand of their students "a more serious source," because in their eyes it "isn't a reliable source of information."

Their inexperience did not enable them to properly utilize the Wikipedia platform, and even hindered them from finding creative solutions to the challenges they faced when using it. One of the frustrated participants had wondered: "Why isn't there a normal toolbar to use, like there is in Microsoft Word?" and related a feeling of exasperation from the technical aspect of the program, as well as a feeling of despair and a lack of self-confidence in her ability to deal with the online platform.

The difficulties of simply dealing with an online interface in general were compounded by some of the issues of actually using the Wikipedia platform, whose terms-of-use are not only unique, but surprisingly also somewhat strict. It should be noted firstly that, contrary to common belief that the discussions taking place behind the scenes about Wikipedia materials are stormy, derisive, and based on ego,[38] the discussions that took place relating to this project's entries were for the most part relevant, respectful, and supportive. That being said, the participants reported having difficulties dealing with the system's terms-of-use, as well as with fellow Wikipedia editors. One of the participants claimed that "Wikipedia doesn't like me (!)" because the pictures she had repeatedly attempted to upload to the site were taken down as a result of an apparent violation of copyright laws. The lack of familiarization with the platform led to noticeable frustration among the participants, despite the personal guidance they

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[38] Mat Hardy, "Wiki Goes to War," in *Australian Quarterly* 79/4 (2007): 17-22.

had received and the efforts that were made to facilitate their use of the unfamiliar system.

Their struggle was made even harder by the fact that the stories and testimonies the participants had gathered needed to be arranged into an encyclopedic format – the format used by Wikipedia. The participants had often included descriptions of the family and communal pictures that they had uploaded, using terms like: '…the aunt of…,' '…the sister-in-law of…'. Incorporating community stories and family materials into an encyclopedic format proved to be especially challenging and required that close and intensive guidance be given to the program participants throughout the entire process.

Results and Unique Aspects of the Project

Writing on Wikipedia Serves as a Meaningful Documentation of the Communities That Were Destroyed

One of the unique and meaningful novelties of the project was the way in which each participant's personal, ancestral, and communal knowledge became woven into the overall story of her community, to become an integral description of it – by presenting one of the many facets of life inside that community. By this means, a communal mosaic of the life, hopes, and dreams of the individuals from within a community becomes part of public memory. Moreover, documentation and commemoration are made of locations that without this project would in all likelihood never merit them.

Despite the challenge of becoming familiar with a method that is significantly different from those generally in use by educators, using the Wikipedia platform – as described by one of the courses graduates – was "exhilarating and consuming." In her own words, she "enjoyed the investigative work," and is happy she had the opportunity to engage in it professionally and educationally, even describing it as "a dream come true."

It seems that specifically because the participants' final product is open to the public and is also less customary in the educational system, there is a higher emotional involvement during the research and writing process. One of the

graduates observed that "when we see what is being produced, it is extremely exciting." Another graduate confessed to "the privilege to be part of the virtual immortalization process" offered by the course. One of the students' statement that "the product doesn't just sit on the shelf at home" gives significance to the efforts invested in the research and writing process.

Fig. 3: Picture of Malvina Dax

As part of the project, one of the participants depicted the history of the Jewish community in the commune of Nagyfalu, Transylvania – a small community of some fifty families – that disappeared completely in the Holocaust. This commune had almost no information written about it, even in Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum website. Through the Wiki*shtetl* project, one of the participants was able to eternalize this community's story, and along with pictures from personal archives, succeeded in immortalizing the memory of the inhabitants who were, but are no longer.

Fig. 2: Chana, Gitel, and Rivka Horowitz, from the commune of Nagyfalu, who were taken during the Holocaust and commemorated through the project

Another of the program's participants used the project as an opportunity to execute the will of one of her family's close friends whose only daughter, Malvina (Malka) Dax from Wiesbaden, Germany, was murdered in the Holocaust along with her husband and toddler. A single tiny picture (Fig. 3), about two centimeters in length and width, remained in her father's possession, a lonely reminder of his only daughter. Before his passing, he gave the

picture to the participant's mother, asking her that she do something with the picture and his daughter's memory. For years the picture was tightly preserved by the family, until finally, through the Wiki*shtetl* program the participant was able to "do something" with the picture and immortalize the almost unknown girl.

Wikipedia as a Means of Changing the Social Consciousness

Wikipedia – being a free, open, and collaborative encyclopedia – offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to create changes in public consciousness regarding the perceptions of historical events and processes, which tend to be described from a specific viewpoint (usually from the perspective of the dominant social group that existed at the time the events occurred or were recorded). It is especially suitable as a setting for projects that allow an individual to express his or her viewpoint, as well as provide him or her with an opportunity to tell his or her story.

The story behind the Wiki*shtetl* entry on the [Jewish community of Benghazi](), Libya, particularly illustrates this idea. The participants who created this entry had no family connection to that community, but they chose to undertake it just for the sake of equality; they felt that the focus of Holocaust studies is mainly on Eastern-European Jewry and less on North-African Jewry. Thus, they felt the need to tell the story of the Jews from North-Africa who were affected by the Holocaust. The task was particularly challenging for them, since they had no material available from which to start, but their incredible dedication to their topic inspired them to travel all over Israel to locate material and oral testimonies from the community's descendants.

During an event organized on Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel, the participants presented the fruit of their labor. After they finished their presentation, one of the audience members stood up and informed them that her father was from the Benghazi community, and when he would tell her and her brothers that he was in the Holocaust, they wouldn't take it so seriously. But now, after hearing their presentation, she understood what he and his family had endured at the time. She added excitedly that during the presentation she had sent text messages to all her family members telling them to read the Benghazi

entry on the Wikipedia website so they could finally get a real understanding of their family background.

After finishing her words, another audience member arose and told them that she had shown the Benghazi entry to her father-in-law, who had immigrated to Israel as a child from Benghazi. She described how he had started to cry after reading the entry, understanding for the first time the history of the community from where he came.

These emotional moments exemplify the encyclopedia's influence on social and historical awareness, and its expression of society's suppressed and muted voices.[39]

Fig. 4: Students of the Jewish elementary in Benghazi celebrating the Jewish holiday of Purim with soldiers from the Jewish Brigade (1944)

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[39] Yvonne Kozlovsky-Golan, "The Mystery of the Historical Consciousness and the Lost Appearance of North-African Jews in the Second World War," in *Sfunot* 25 (2017): 125-95.

Using a Creative Means to Document Encourages Creative Ways of Finding Information

Due to their active work duties, participants in professional training courses generally feel a burden from course requirements, and hope to minimize in any way possible the amount of work they must do to complete them. The participants of the Wiki*shtetl* course, however, found the creative and research processes to be an exception to the norm, and their enthusiasm was especially notable (at least in comparison to their counterparts learning in other courses) when attempting to locate relevant materials with unprecedented dedication.[40] The participants invested long hours attempting to locate information, and traveling around the country to collect materials, pictures, hear testimonies, and document oral testimonies from members of the community's families and others with whom they had made contact.

One of the participants, whose family roots are from Bialystok, Poland, documented her experience the first time she visited the memorial hall erected by residents of the neighborhood inhabited by Bialystok descendants, in the city of Yehud. Part of her description (quoted here somewhat at length) expresses a special feeling of intensity that accompanied her group while they located materials for documentation:

> There is an atmosphere of intense excitement, mixed with curiosity and heart palpitations… using the camera I've prepared beforehand, my finger continuously takes pictures so as to document everything. We shouldn't miss a thing! I mean, that's why we're here…
> It was dusk, and the last rays of the sun still shone, enveloping the hall, as if guarding it from all harm. There was a slight blurriness as well, as if to say: the hand of G-d is hovering overhead - protecting it, ensuring that the heritage never be erased.

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[40] In accordance with the study that found voluntary professional development courses that include innovation as a part of their curriculum or employ original teaching methods increase the engagement and the involvement of the participants. Judy Anderson, "Teachers' Motivation to attend Voluntary Professional Development in K-10 Mathematics," in *Navigating Currents and Charting Directions: Proceedings of the 31 Annual Conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australia,* eds. Merrylin Goos, Ray Brown, Katie Makar, (Brisbane: MERGA, 2008), 51-8.

> And inside the hall – the commemoration room… The anticipation intensifies as countless thoughts run through our heads. A spring flowing with reverence fills the body. Our eyes discover a small room packed with books, pictures, objects; some of them on the wall, others lying on the shelves, still others on tables… The pictures are lying in every corner possible, stacked one upon the other. Our eyes struggle to find a point on which to focus; they run from one picture to the next, trying to swallow as much as possible, attempting to find out who are the faces staring at them. The pictures show not only the people of the town – those brave heroes – but also the many sites, streets, alleys, and buildings; each one shaded in grey, white, and black – all of it just intensifying the pain felt in our hearts…

After about two hours of touring the sites, and with backpacks filled with knowledge, stories, sites, and especially pictures, we part from Hava [the curator], thank her for consenting to meet with us and show us the memorial hall, and even just for equipping us with such vast knowledge that will allow us to continue to commemorate the eternal memory of the Jewish community of Bialystok.

This slightly poetic description sheds light on the incredible excitement and feeling of awe that were present during the process of locating information and preserving it as an eternal memory. This emotional involvement brought a sense of extreme responsibility to locate materials efficiently – as is exemplified by the very willingness of the participant to travel such a great distance from her hometown just to document and commemorate this community.

The participants' extreme commitment also led them to develop creative methods for locating information. For example, one of the participants who worked on documenting the [Bialystok community](#) sent a message through social media in an attempt to locate immigrants from that community who have in their possession information or pictures. Her advertisement led her to an immigrant, whose family album contained a large number of pictures from his youth in Bialystok which had never been published before, nor given access to the public. Some of the pictures were put in the online entry, which broadened the understanding of the community mosaic that existed then in Bialystok.

Fig. 5: One of the pictures obtained by the advertisement sent out on social media by one of the course participants: Members of a Jewish youth movement in Bialystok before the war, holding sticks in the shape of the Star of David. The sign reads: Samuel's group

Writing in the Wikipedia Format Encourages Local as well as International Collaboration

The big advantage of working through the Wikipedia platform is its ability to provide a feeling of connectivity and community to those who contribute to the online entries.[41] When using Wikipedia as the primary platform for data processing (as opposed to a Word document saved on a private computer), Wikipedia editors from all over the world can become partners in the creative process. In the case of the Wiki*shtetl* project that documents communities whose survivors are dispersed throughout the globe, an online partnership contributes greatly to efficient and synchronized location of materials.

An account of the material-gathering process vis-à-vis the Jewish community of Dabie, Poland, illustrates how the collaborative aspect of Wikipedia greatly contributes to the Wiki*shtetl* project. Before the Holocaust, the Jews of Dabie – whose numbers topped one thousand – comprised about a third of the town's population. As of today, the town is void of any Jewish residents; in 1941 the

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[41] Forte and Bruckman, "Constructing Text: Wiki as a Toolkit for (Collaborative?) Learning."

town's entire Jewish population was sent to the Chelmno death camp located nearby.

Almost no remnants remain in Dabie to attest to the existence of the Jewish community that had once constituted such a large part of it. The Jewish cemetery's gravestones have been turned into construction material. The synagogue (located on the corner of Konopnickiej and Przemysłowa street), which was the focal point of Jewish community life, was converted into a residential residence in 1961, and its interior was renovated and refurbished at the expense of the Jewish community's history. Its exterior shape however, remains a loyal testimony to its original usage, and remnants of the ancient ark can still be seen in the attic, as well as a sign inscribed with the words: 'How awe-inspiring is this place – the house of G-d'[42] (Fig. 7). Underneath it, remnants of the large exterior windows can still be seen. The entirety of the windows has been sealed off, save for the tops.

The participant who travelled through the locale as part of a visit to Poland desired very much to commemorate the community and preserve the memory of the building's original purpose as a house of worship. However, she did not possess any pictures depicting its original appearance, nor did she know much about the locale. Her partially written entry attempting to preserve the community's memory was viewed by chance by another Wikipedia editor, Eliad Kubicheck, who works under the pseudonym 'Kovetz Al-Yad' (in Hebrew). He subsequently uploaded a number of pictures showing the building's original appearance. The pictures not only enriched the visual knowledge of the building, but also contributed to public records (since the building itself is not being preserved), and even corrected existing information about the

Fig. 6: Exterior of synagogue in Dabie that was converted into a residential building

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[42] Based on the wording of the verse in Genesis 28:17.

synagogue and the community. For example, the year the synagogue had been erected had been estimated to have been in 1890,[43] but after close inspection of the pictures depicting the exterior of the hall, it was discovered that the actual year – 1885 – was inscribed on top of the building's side entrance (Fig. 6).

Fig. 7: Remains of the writing in the attic inside the synagogue

The participants testified to the personal and professional development they gained as a result of the collaborative online experience they underwent. One of the participants remarked on the questionnaire that was distributed towards the end of the program that she found the collaborative learning to be something "very fruitful and fascinating, as a result of working with others." Another said that one of the interesting things about the program was the "voluntary collaboration by other Wikipedians," something that struck her as being very special.

'Getting Closure': Working with Information Pertaining to Family and Community and Publicizing it Provides Closure to the Individual and to the Nation About the Past

The process of editing and publishing the findings was for many of the participants both an intense and emotional experience of coming to terms with their own family's history. When starting the project, one of the participants, a

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[43] That date also appears on the commemoration plaque erected on-site.

third-generation Holocaust survivor, had confessed to her own personal difficulty dealing emotionally with the subject of the Holocaust.[44] After completing the project, she expressed a feeling of closure and coming to terms with the trauma of her family's history, which had been a part of her since childhood – mainly because she was named after one of her family members who had lost all her children during the Holocaust. She described how she had been able to process the memories of her family's past that burdened her all her life and her feeling afterwards of having gained a certain emotional maturity, as well as an ability to overcome emotional barriers she felt existed between her and her children.

At the conclusion of the program, participants were asked to describe anonymously their experience throughout the entire program through writing, as well as through visual depictions. Two of the participants chose to use an illustration of a tree (Fig. 9 and 10) as a metaphor for the process they went through during the program.[45] It is noteworthy that in both of their sketches the tree depicted roots that were noticeably strong and developed, similar to the tree's branches (one of the illustrations (Fig. 10) even had roots that were noticeably bigger than its branches). One of illustrators made a connection between becoming acquainted with the past and her own personal development, revealing that she felt that by "connecting to her roots, she herself had grown." The other participant had written the names of the family members whom she had commemorated around the roots of the tree, while the branches bared the words: 'future generations,' effectively making the advancement of future generations dependent on their connection with the past. "The basis of aspirations is linked to future generations by the faith and stability of the individual" she stated. She concluded with a personal resolution of sorts: "If I remember, my family will remember and my students will remember – the tree of life will forever be growing and evolving…And I *will* always remember."

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[44] Golan Moskowitz, "Grandsons of the Holocaust: Contemporary Maleness and Post-Traumatic Meaning," in *The Shadows of Memory,* eds. Jilovsky, Silverstein and Slucki, 53-76.
[45] Halabi, "The Metaphor as a Tool."
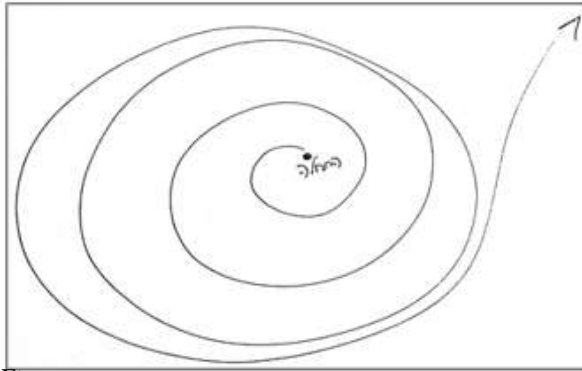
Fig. 8
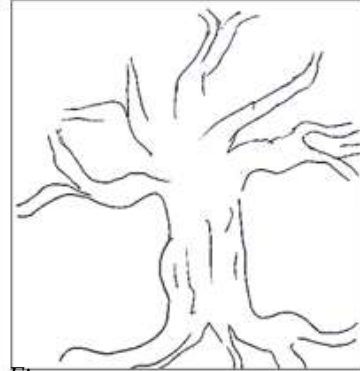
Fig. 9
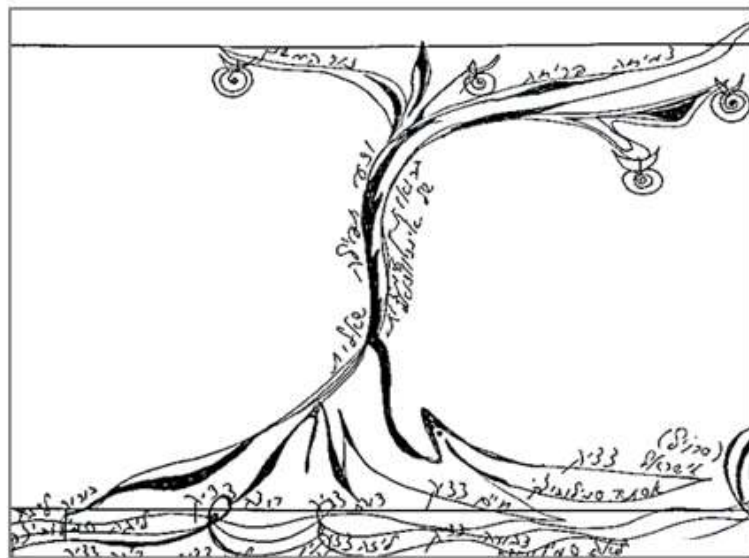
Fig. 10

Another participant, who after internalizing her findings indicated having gone through a process of personal growth, submitted a sketch (Figure 8) of a line spiraling in circles outwards from its center, each circle wider than the last, until finally breaking off to the side. As she herself described it: "We began from a small place deep within ourselves, and succeeded in breaking outwards through ever-widening spirals of knowledge and a capacity to overcome our emotions and believe in our own talents." Here too the impression is that the work originates from within, but is developed from without, with both sides affecting one another. The expression of the self – the private and the communal – through a publicly-shared channel of knowledge brings about a process of progressing towards completeness and self-wholeness.

Wikipedia use Encourages Learning-Skill Development and Online Collaborate Teaching

As mentioned, most of the program's participants did not consider Wikipedia to be a potential work tool, which is still at present the general belief amongst teachers.[46] However, after working with Wikipedia as a tool to create a meaningful project, they suddenly started to feel as though "the information is so reliable and scrutinized[,] I didn't realize it beforehand," and that "this is such a great means to enrich the database of human knowledge." Their personal use of Wikipedia gave them a new perspective on opportunities for learning, as one of the participants remarked that becoming familiar with the learning-model presented in the course gave her "tools for collaborative learning using Wikipedia…for use in classroom learning."[47]

As mentioned, the process of becoming acquainted with the technological tools was complicated and challenging, however despite the difficulties the participants of the program encountered, most of them cited the improvement in their ability to use technology as one of the benefits the program offered. As a result of having undergone the course, they even testified to the change in their outlook on digital learning material and creative tools, going from "something scary and threatening" to something "friendly, enrichening, and appealing." Two of the participants added an illustrative graph to the feedback form as a description of the personal process they underwent. In the middle of the graph was a drop, and only subsequently was there a drastic increase. They explained that the graph was meant to relay their experience with the technological aspect of the program: One of them referred to the uncertainty of having to do the online task, and the other referred to the struggle she had providing proof to Wikipedia that she had received consent to upload the pictures she wanted to use, as well as with dealing with other Wikipedia editors' who intervened in her entry. In the end though, their low led them to a tremendous sense of personal and professional growth, which apparently was partially a result of their success dealing with the unfamiliar tool.

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[46] Meishar-Tal, "The Voice of the People is the Voice of G-d."
[47] Crovitz and Smoot, "Wikipedia: Friend, not Foe;" Forte and Bruckman, "Constructing Text: Wiki as a Toolkit for (Collaborative?) Learning;" Harouni, "High School Research and Critical Literacy;" Kissling, "A Call for Wikipedia in the Classroom."

Working with Wikipedia – the largest encyclopedia in the world – contributed to the participants' sense of personal empowerment as well. As one of them wrote at the end of the course: "Being able to create an entry on Wikipedia surprised me[,] I didn't think I was capable of doing it." Another remarked: "I'm proud that I learned what Wikipedia is all about."

Conclusions

It seems that through the Wiki*shtetl* project, for the first time – at least in the field of education and instruction – Wikipedia was used not just as a tool for sorting existing information and making it more publicly available,[48] but also as a tool to create new information and share it with the public. It seems as though the main causation for the extreme mobilization, enthusiasm, and emotional involvement in the program stemmed from the feeling of obligation felt by the participants to preserve information that was at risk of forever being lost.

It would seem that further thought is required concerning how to facilitate introducing the Wikipedia interface with those unfamiliar with it, and how support must be given to them during their first attempts at using it. This point is critical for programs that integrate Wikipedia use into their curriculum, as many students do not have the availability needed to become gradually familiarized with the Wikipedia format.

To this end, it is recommended that a widespread application of this program should probably be done within younger age groups, such as elementary or high school students; it can be expected that they will have less difficulties dealing with the Wikipedia interface due to their higher level of media literacy.[49] When creating a course directed to senior educators or pensioners, a significant amount of time must be dedicated to familiarizing the participants with Wikipedia and with collaborative work, while receiving close support by the instructor.

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[48] Meishar-Tal, "The Voice of the People is the Voice of G-d."

[49] Beth Beschorner and Amy Hutchison, "iPads as a Literacy Teaching Tool in Early Childhood," in *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology* 1/1 (2013): 24-16.

Being that Israel is a multicultural society, there is a certain social complexity concerning Holocaust education since not all groups living in Israel were affected by this central chapter in the nation's history.[50] The friction between the different denominations also exists because the media does not usually make mention of the Holocaust experiences endured by North-African Jewry.[51]

During the program an attempt was made to bridge this gap by allowing the participants to choose any Jewish community to document, regardless of whether or not it was affected by the Holocaust. Nevertheless, for one reason or another, all of the participants decided in practice to commemorate a community that was obliterated in the Holocaust. It seems that this was partially due to the great significance of choosing to commemorate a community that was so tragically destroyed.

With regard to expanding the program and integrating it into the education system, it seems necessary to dedicate a domain for commemoration on Wikipedia separate from Wiki*shtetl* that will meet the needs of the various groups and communities in Israel who identify with other ethnicities. This will provide a domain to voice the stories of Asian and African ethnicities whose communities disappeared after immigrating to Israel, as well as the unique history and culture of various other groups who settled in Israel, such as the Druze and others.

It should be noted that already this year (2018), as part of the application of this program for students obtaining a BED at the Efrata College in Jerusalem, a new section has been added to the project's website: "Jewish Communities from Around the World," where students are invited to commemorate Jewish communities that no longer exist, regardless of whether or not they had a connection to the events of the Holocaust – such as the communities from the Arab states, who mainly perished as a result of the hostility of local populations.[52] As such, some of the students chose to commemorate the story of communities

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[50] Nitza Dovidovitz and Dan Soan, "In the End: Educational Challenges in Israel as a Multicultural Society and the Ramifications on Holocaust Education," in *To the Valley of the Shadow of Death,* eds. Dovidovitz and Soan, 341-62; Yvonne Kozlovsky-Golan, "The Mystery of the Historical Consciousness."

[51] Yvonne Kozlovsky-Golan, *Site of Amnesia: The Absence of North African Jewry in Visual Depictions of the Experience of World War Two,* (Tel-Aviv: Resling, 2017).

[52] Haim Saadon, "Who Annihilated the Exiles? The Million Dollar Question – The End of Jewish Presence in Islamic States: Testimonials by Numbers," in *Et-Mol: Journal on the Chronicles of the Land of Israel and the Nation of Israel* 237 (2014): 1-3.

from Iran and Morocco, as well as two communities from Ethiopia, which remains a country whose presence is lacking in Israeli history and culture.[53]

Being open and collaborative, the online Wikipedia platform greatly facilitates to document and commemorate communities which no longer exist, emphasizing the human and communal mosaic that once was. By collecting open and collaborative information, the knowledge of certain communities and tribes can be gathered and preserved with greater ease.

On a wider, more global scale: Can we turn Wikipedia into a medium where every individual can write his or her story, connecting it to the story of all mankind? Can we take part in using Wikipedia to successfully preserve the memory of the communities and traditions that are no longer, in order that we may continue to learn from them? Will the largest encyclopedia on earth become the greatest source for creating and preserving collective knowledge? It seems that taking steps in this direction may have far-reaching implications for the future of sharing and documenting the memory of all.

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[53] Uri Ben-Eliezer, "How Does a Jew Turn Black in the Promised Land," in *Racism in Israel*, eds. Yehouda Shenhav and Yossi Yonah, (Tel-Aviv: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2008), 130-57; Sophie Walsh, Rivka Tubal-Mashiach and Eliyahu Shai, "Kushi Bambo, Bili Bili Bambo: The Emerging Adults from Ethiopia's Struggle as New Immigrants to Israel in the Face of Discrimination and Racism," in *Megamot: Quarterly on Behavioral Sciences* 49/1 (2013): 59-81.

Tehila Hertz

Cynthia M. Baker, *Jew*, (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2017), pp. xiii-190

by Michael Berkowitz

Jew hear dat? Nah, *Jew*? Regarding *Jew*

Toward the north end of London's Brick Lane, in the heart of its historic (now ultra-hip) East End, are two bagel ("beigel") bakeries. Every (non-strictly observant) Jewish person I've met, who has lived in London for more than a year, strongly favors one over the other--with gusto. I myself would never cross the threshold of the shop with the yellow sign, which boasts it is London's "oldest and best." I admit to scoffing at the Jewishness of those who insist that the store I choose not to frequent is "the best." (For Jewish-ly inspired baked goods other than bagels, such as challah and cheesecake, Rinkoff's is the best— in all of creation.) Of course the "best" bagelry in Brick Lane is *Beigel Bake*, with the white sign. And of course the proper "Jewish" football club in Britain is Tottenham Hotspur, a brief discussion of which appears in Baker's fine book (p. 53).[1] One can dismiss this anecdote as simply another version of the tired joke about the proverbial Jew marooned on the desert island who erects two synagogues: the first for himself, and the second "he would never step foot in." I relate these stories in the interest of adding a wrinkle to Cynthia Baker's excellent rumination on the term *Jew*. Baker likes to tell stories, a mixture of her own and those of others (p. 1)—including a gem from Naomi Seidman about her father, Hillel, in post-Second World War Paris (54). Professor Baker, if you're listening, and dear readers of this e-journal: a Jew is somebody who cares about this kind of thing. The genuine bagel shop. The *really* Jewish football team. The stories people tell about their mothers, fathers, and children that mark them as a Jew. Here's one from my mother, Gloria, born as Goldie (z'l, 1929-2017). When my daughter, Rachel, mildly complained about not being able to afford a beach vacation, I reminded her what my mother told me about the advantage of being a Jew without means: "you've never got to worry about somebody loving you for your money." My daughter responded: "I'm

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[1] Of the hundreds of important references in Baker's book, few are more enlightening than John Efron, "When is a Yid not a Jew? The Strange Case of Supporter Identity at Tottenham Hotspur, in *Emancipation through muscles: Jews and sports in Europe*, eds. Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 235-56.

supposed to feel good about that?" Those who see themselves as stakeholders, who talk over, and argue about such things, are, well, Jewish. Baker, as will be explained, chooses to exclude the vexing matter of the "ish." Exclusion looms large throughout. A *Jew*, we learn, is in large measure what an idealized Christian is not (p. 4).

Despite these lighthearted opening remarks, and the Woody Allen-ish reference in the title (examined, appropriately, by Baker [pp. 47-8]), it is crucial to state that this is a serious, deeply-learned study embedded in classic languages and literatures, including Aramaic (pp. 19-21) Among its chief well-reasoned contentions is that *Jew* as a descriptive term fluctuated along a spectrum between the ethnic-national and the religious (and back again) beginning in antiquity. (pp. 20, 26, 41-3) Baker is superlative on both the history and historiography of this issue. From an academic perspective, Baker reveals that the ways Jewish Studies scholars have forged their arguments about the historical characteristics and evolution of the term *Jew* is overwhelmingly determined by how Christians have perceived Jews and from non-Jewish frameworks of understanding (pp. 33). Even "recent academic studies of the origins of Jews are historicized narratives of cultural transformation that unselfconsciously replicate Christian supersessionist paradigms" (p. 25). For scholars of Christianity in the wake of the Holocaust, Baker notes "a sense of profound unease attached to the word *Jew*" (p. 22). I suspect that even the most seasoned Jewish Studies scholars stand to learn something from Baker's brief but complicated and wide-ranging scrutiny of Jew (or *Jew*?) (p. xiii).

As a second means of introduction, I wish to apply the "two synagogues" yarn to a problematic interpretation, presented as a truism in *Jew*. Baker claims that the controversial figure of Vladimir Jabotinsky was not "marginal" but integral to the Zionist movement (p. 101). Although his program did became mainstream under Menaham Begin and his Likud successors--and even earlier, in various compromises between the left, center, and right, in the development of the *yishuv*'s politics (as initially illuminated in Mitchell Cohen's *Zion and State*)[2]—Baker underestimates the extent to which Jabotinsky was reviled by

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[2] Mitchell Cohen, *Zion and state: nation, class, and the shaping of modern Israel*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987); edition with new preface (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

the majority in the movement.[3] (She knows a lot about the discussion of its history, but her control over the movement's history *per se* is less grounded). In any event, this is understandable, certainly forgivable, because it's not her field of expertise. To this very day, and since Jabotinsky's time, there are Zionists who define themselves as over and against everything Jabotinsky represented. This is not to say that he was marginal. But he was contested in such a way as to render poisonous his self-proclaimed heirs in the eyes of those whose Zionism was antithetical to right-wing "Revisionism." Where is the spotlight on *'what is a Jew?'* in this plaint? A *Jew* of the Zionist variety is not necessarily a partial Jabotinskian, as Baker claims. A *Jew* is somebody who, again, cares about this kind of distinction.

I already have committed a cardinal sin, in the context of the rules of the game as defined by Baker's *Jew*. *Jewish* is not in the toolkit for this book. She exclusively selects those who use the term *Jew* in their titles. Herein lies a persistent problem: many scholars, artists, and commentators have grappled with the meaning of the term *Jew* but it is not reflected in the title. It seems a particular shame that Milton Steinberg, whose works such as the *Basic Judaism* (1947)[4] and the novel *As a Driven Leaf* (1939)[5] played a leading role in guiding how modern Jews think of themselves, and how they came to be that way, makes no appearance in *Jew*.[6]

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[3] While the Zionist movement in Europe and the United States strove to present itself as unified and in harmony with the *yishuv*, it was, in fact, highly fragmented with bitterly opposed components. The development of politics in the *yishuv* overlaps to some degree with so-called diaspora Zionism, but in important respects they develop as separate entities. The Nazis and other opponents of Zionism, and antisemites generally, always emphasized the solidarity and coordination of all varieties of Zionism, even when they were aware this was not true. See Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 128-31. Only in isolated instances during the Second World War—such as in the united partisan groups of Kovno and Vilna--but largely in the aftermath of the Holocaust, was there a firm consensus between Revisionists and other mainstream factions. Even then, however, Zionists were split along generational lines, with the younger generation taking the lead; see Avinoam Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009).

[4] Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1947).

[5] Milton Steinberg, *As a Driven Leaf*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1939).

[6] Jonathan Steinberg, "Milton Steinberg, American rabbi: thoughts on his centenary," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 95/3 (2005): 570-600.

Perhaps it is ungenerous to quibble in reviewing an exceptionally clever book, especially one that tackles a notoriously challenging subject. *Jew* was, after all, conceived for a very specific purpose: to fulfil one of the preeminent spaces in a series of Rutgers University Press called "Key Words in Jewish Studies." While on the one hand Baker's text is fabulously expansive, revealing familiarity with a huge range of books and articles, it also is somewhat narrow in the privileging the most theoretically oriented and self-consciously politicized work in Jewish Studies. As much as I respect Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, in my opinion they have contributed less, overall, to the evolution of the meaning of "Jew" than has, say, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jonathan Frankel, Marion Kaplan, George L. Mosse, and Steven Aschheim[7] (pp. 47-51, 82-5). For a certain kind of Jewish Studies scholar, though, Butler is far more important. I fear that facility with 'theory' in this case takes precedence over a more sophisticated understanding of modern Jewish history, and how the concept of the *Jew* has been worked out in that history. But even given the limitations of this book, it is indeed a highly worthwhile text, especially for graduate students and early-career scholars who wish to be better-versed in the field of Jewish Studies, and to have some sense of the contours of debates in the field. As Baker herself notes—without boasting—those outside of Jewish Studies and explicitly Jewish fields also would be enriched by this work.

Approaching the author's choice of a laser-beam focus on the *Jew* from a different angle: herein lies a difficulty that she does not consider. Especially for first-time authors, the choice of a title isn't always her or his own. We will never know how many books would have had "Jew" in the title if the publisher had not insisted otherwise. Titles and covers are the kinds of things over which

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[7] Among the numerous highly significant works of these scholars, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars,* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983); Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: the formative years, 1915-1926,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981); Mendelsohn, *On modern Jewish politics,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and politics: socialism, nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Marion Kaplan, *The Jewish feminist movement: the campaigns of the Jüdischer Frauenbund, 1904-1938,* (London: Greenwood Press, 1979); Id., *The making of the Jewish middle class: women, family, and identity in imperial Germany,* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); George L. Mosse, *Germans and Jews: the Right, the Left, and the search for a "Third Force" in pre-Nazi Germany,* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970); Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and strangers: the East European Jew in German and German Jewish consciousness, 1800-1923,* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Id., *Culture and catastrope: German and Jewish confrontations with National Socialism and other crises,* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

new authors are not always able to exercise control. At least two recent books (along with those mentioned previously) would have substantially enhanced her analysis: Sharon Gillerman's *Germans into Jews: remaking the Jewish social body in the Weimar Republic* (2009)[8] and Lisa Silverman's *Becoming Austrians: Jews and culture between the world war* (2014).[9] But because "Jew" is missing from the titles, Baker does not consider them. Although literary critic Judith Butler may have greater impact on the discourse surrounding Jewish Studies, she has not contributed nearly as much as has Gillerman and Silverman to our understanding of Jewish history, and how the concept of "the Jew" evolved, historically, in Central Europe.

Although it certainly was not Baker's intention, the quotes she selects from Butler, Derrida, and other oracles reveal why the endless chatter about "the Jew" often descends into a black hole, or into a loop of repetition and response. Some may find this epigraph of Butler's to be muddy:

> "The expectation of self-determination that self-naming arouses is paradoxically contested by the historicity of the name itself by the history of the usages that one never controlled, but that constrain the very usage that now emblematizes autonomy: by the future efforts to deploy the term against the grain of the current ones, and that we will exceed the control of those who seek to set the course of the terms in the present." (p. 47)

Even more troubling that the murky exposition is Baker's discussion of the trend toward genetic or biological thinking about the *Jew*. A great deal of ink and web pages are devoted to such questions. I hope that this will be seen as passing fad, and an embarrassing one at that. Little of it is surprising, or terribly informative, because (as we well know) Jews tended to marry Jews— therefore hereditary traits have been passed on, to a greater extent for Jews, than for those who don't privilege endogamy. Had Baker availed herself of John Efron's pathbreaking book, *Defenders of the race: Jewish doctors and race*

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[8] Sharon Gillerman, *Germans into Jews: remaking the Jewish social body in the Weimar Republic*, (Stenford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
[9] Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and culture between the world war*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

science in fin-de-siecle Europe,[10] perhaps we would have been spared the verbiage on "genomic Jews" (pp. 104-10), stressing blood (sic!) and genes. A glimpse at the current wave of historiography on Jewish consumer culture, as practiced by scholars such as Paul Lerner, Gideon Reuveni, and Hizky Shoham would have been more fruitful.[11] Relatedly, she does not address the extent to which the *Jew* has been interwoven with things economic, as detailed by Derek Penslar, and most recently—and brilliantly, by Julie Mell.[12] Baker is certainly wise, though, to conclude that "the genomic *Jews*—like all other *Jews*—raise far more questions than they are able to answer" (p. 144). Jews are indeed "a motley crew," in terms of how they are constituted, which influences how they engage in the task of nailing jelly to the wall, that is, attempting to define *Jew*. Jelly--globular, runny stuff--exists. It tastes good, adding flavor. It can be sweet, sour, or in-between. Plain or *fensy-shmensy*. It defies being affixed to a wall so it can be viewed eye-level, or framed for posterity in any kind of elegant way. Despite this, Baker's smart book is well worth the effort.

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[10] John Efron, *Defenders of the race: Jewish doctors and race science in fin-de-siecle Europe* New, (Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

[11] Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, department stores, and the consumer revolution in Germany, 1880-1940*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Gideon Reuveni, *Consumer culture and the making of modern Jewish identity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Hizky Shoham, "'Buy local' or 'buy Jewish'? Separatist consumption in interwar Palestine," International Journal of Middle East Studies 45/3 (2013): 469-89.

[12] Derek Penslar, *Shylock's children: economics and Jewish identity in modern Europe*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Julie Mell, *The myth of the medieval Jewish moneylender*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Id., *The myth of the medieval Jewish moneylender: Volume II*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Cynthia M. Baker, *Jew,* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2017), pp. xiii-190

by Michael L. Satlow

I recently tried an experiment with my undergraduate class. "I know," I told them, "that many of you would identify yourselves as Christian. What if, when I called on you, instead of using your name, I simply said, 'Christian'?" The students looked slightly bemused. They agreed that it would feel a little odd but not offensive, and a few even ventured to say that they might vaguely like it. "Okay," I continued, "I know that many of you would identify yourself as Jewish. What if, when I called on you, instead of using your name, I simply said, 'Jew'?" The students were not at all bemused and shifted uncomfortably in their chairs. This they would not like at all, whether they were Jewish or not.

Why did my students act that way? In *Jew*, Cynthia Baker sets out to answer that question. My students had their own answer: there are negative historical resonances to being called a Jew. Yet further discussion again landed us in confusion: the same person who would take offense at being addressed as "Jew" might have no hesitation in another context declaring, "I am a Jew." What is it about this term that makes it so loaded? Is it really that different from other such "slurs"? Baker does not exactly answer these questions but she lays a strong and important foundation for contemplating them.

There is a simple and powerful idea at the core of Baker's argument. For some two millennia, the way in which we – whether Jewish or not – use and understand the word *Jew* (which Baker almost always writes in italics in order that it remain "provocative" (p. xiii)) those words in other languages that Baker identifies as its cognates (e.g., *Jude, juif, guideo, Zsidó, yid, yehudi*) has been and continues to be overwhelmingly shaped by Christians discourse. While prior to the first century CE the Hebrew term *yehudi* and Greek term *ioudaios* were used rarely and with an ambiguous meaning, from Paul forward Christian writers would use the term *Jew* – not Israel or Hebrews – as a signifier for the Other, often with evil or demonic overtones. As Baker writes,

The Jews, in other words, serves instrumentally to name the key *other* out of which *and* over against which the Christian *self* was and is constituted. *Jew* is

Christian cultures' signifier for the fraught, debased, material primordiality *out of which* spiritual and moral stature most *arise, from which* it may *free itself,* and *back to which* it is always in danger of *falling*… Hence, *Jew*(*s*) becomes a key element in formulations of Christian identity through narratives of origin, aspiration, and liberation, as well as of abjection, rejection, and otherness (p. 4).

There are two elements of this formulation that Baker seizes on and around which she structures her book. First, that *Jew* has been and continues to be regularly understood as one end of a binary. In its origins, the other end of that binary was *Christian.* Over time, particularly with the emergence of the Enlightenment and idea of the secular, *Christian* was sometimes replaced with another term or figure but the important, binary characteristic of *Jew* remains. Even as an ethnic or racial term, then, it is never like "Italian" or "French" (but does more structurally resemble the use of "Black" in some contexts). The second important element is that this binary is never value-neutral; it is always invidious. In most cases, *Jew* the negative operator, the signifier of what is missing or actively bad. Even in the few cases where the values switch, though, the same logic is at work, reacting *against* the traditional value.

Baker's book is short and she makes no claim to comprehensively explore the use of the word of the word *Jew* and its cognates through all languages and time. Her examples are meant to be illustrative, and none better illustrate the sometimes maddening complexity of *Jew*, especially in scholarly discourse, than her discussion of the present scholarly state of the question of the very origin of the term.

The Hebrew term *yehudi* appears rarely in the Hebrew Bible, all in sources that seem to date from the Persian period or later. Instead, the protagonists (or antagonists, depending on the story and one's perspective) of the Hebrew Bible are predominantly known as "the Children of Israel" or, less frequently, "Hebrews." Outside of the Bible there are a few attestations of the Aramaic cognate, mostly in legal documents. Beginning in the third to second century the term appears in Greek as *ioudiaos*. The term and its Latin cognate *iudaeus* are rarely attested through the first century BCE but begin to circulate more widely beginning in the first century CE. Apart from proto-Christian uses of

the term, this seems at least in part due to increasing Roman awareness of *iudaei* both in Rome and Judaea.

The problem is how to translate these terms. Over the past two decades or so scholars have debated, sometimes hotly, over whether the term is best translated as "Judaean" or "Jew." Morton Smith argues that in texts produced prior to the Persian period the term is best translated as "Judean," denoting ethnicity and territorial origin, only afterwards gaining a religious nuance that might best be translated as "Jew." Both Shaye Cohen and Steve Mason argue for similar shifts, although Cohen would place it in the second century BCE and Mason far later, in Late Antiquity (pp. 20-21).

For Baker, what is most significant about this debate is not the actual dating, or even the matter of translation itself, but the very *terms of the debate*. Here is the dichotomy: ethnicity or religion – pick one or the other.[1] Smith, Cohen, and Mason are not explicit about the stakes of this choice, and if asked I suspect that they would say that they were primarily focused on recapturing the ancient resonance of the term and, secondarily, on trying to identify the origin of a religion of the *ioudaioi* as distinct from ethnic origin. Baker, though, points out that the terms of the debate have their own distinct resonance across an invidious binary. Religion is universal and spiritual; ethnicity is particularist and fleshly. There is, Baker, suggests, no way for these scholars to escape the binary which is woven into the very choices that English provides.

The modern political ramifications of this argument are clearer when seen in the context of scholarly debates about the Gospel of John. The term *ioudaioi* appears frequently in the Gospel and almost always in a negative context. In older Bibles the term used to be translated rather unproblematically as "Jew." In light of the shift in the Catholic Church's stance toward the Jews and subsequent scholarship (most notably by Raymond Brown) the accepted translation began to shift to "Judaeans." There was something clearly at stake in this shift. The evil Judaeans, who played a role in crucifying Jesus, are to be blamed. They are not, however, to be associated with contemporary Jews.

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[1] The actual scholarly debate is a bit more nuanced than suggested by Baker. She does not mention my own essay in which I sought to escape this dichotomy: See Michael L. Satlow, "Jew or Judaean?", in *One Who Sows Beautifully: Essays in Honor of Stanley K. Stowers*, eds Saul M. Olyan and Daniel Ullucci, (Atlanta: Brown Judaic Studies, 2013), 165-74.

The well-meaning attempt to re-term John's *ioudaioi* as "Judaeans" and thus reduce the Gospel's possible anti-Semitic use met a predictable backlash that reinforces but also complicates Baker's paradigm. In 2014, Adele Reinhartz, a Jewish scholar of the Gospel of John wrote an essay for *Marginalia* that attracted wide attention.[2] "To be sure," she writes, "translating *ioudaioi* as Jews risks perpetuating the rhetorical hostility of the Gospel itself. But to use Judean instead of Jew whitewashes the Gospel of John and relieves us of the difficult but necessary task of grappling with this gospel in a meaningful way." The dichotomy is in the same general neighborhood as the one discussed by Smith, Cohen, and Mason but the valuation is explicit. For those scholars arguing about the Gospel of John, "Judean" and "Jew" are both negative terms; what is at stake is whether to draw an explicit link between these evil *ioudaioi* and contemporary Jews. Seen in this light, the general debate about how to translate *ioudaioi* can also be seen to be, at least on some unarticulated level, as one about historical continuity. How far back do the "Jews" go? To the biblical period? Hellenistic times? Or did they emerge in Late Antiquity together with Christians?[3] Each one of these options has different stakes to different stakeholders.

For Paul, the new age of Christ brought the existing social order crashing down. There is no Jew or Gentile, slave or free, man or woman, because all are one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28). In place of an existing world that divided people into ethnic groupings, of which *ioudaios* is the primary example ("Gentile" is not really an ethnic designator), all people will live as one. It is a starkly universal vision.

Yet ironically, here and elsewhere (especially Romans) Paul creates and reifies the very dichotomy that he claims has dissolved. *Jew* is deracinated in this discourse and its afterlife; it becomes a signifier for the particularist Other. While it remains to me unclear how this discourse plays out in the Middle

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[2] Adele Reinhartz, "The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity," *Marginalia: LA Review of Books* June 24 (2014), http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/vanishing-jews-antiquity-adele-reinhartz/. *Marginalia*, incidentally, also ran a forum on Baker's book. See: https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/introduction-forum-on-cynthia-baker-jew/.

[3] See especially Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (eds.), *The Ways that Never Parted*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Daniel Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018).

Ages (Baker gives little attention to this period) it comes out with a vengeance among modern thinkers, particularly in continental Europe.

Baker focuses particularly on three French writers, Alain Finkielkraut, Alain Baidou, and Jacques Derrida to illustrate the discursive connection between *Jew* and the particular. Each of these writers, in their own way, constructs *Jew* as archetypes and thus enables each to distinguish between "real" Jews (who fit the archetype) and those who don't. For Finkielkraut, *Jew* "is an identity so fully identified and suffused with 'Auschwitz' that it should no longer be available outside that event, not even to those whose psyches are so intimately shaped by its aftermath" (p. 81). Jews are no longer *Jews*, only those who take on that lost identity. Badiou, on the other hand, joyously explodes *Jew*, seeing it as "'a universalist and egalitarian' signifier *over against* 'the Shoah, the State of Israel and the Talmudic Tradition'" (p. 82). It is difficult to know what to make of this claim since his book *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (1997) Badiou develops the dichotomy between Paul's universalist vision over against Jewish tribalism and exclusivity with such force that it seems almost shockingly medieval. Derrida meditates on the tension between really being a Jew – or maybe better, being a real Jew – and having the identity of a Jew. Of all tensions, this is almost unique in being irresolvable.

This discursive use of *Jew* as typological, pointing to tribalism, and the tension between this use and its use to denote identity seems particularly French, and is echoed in a recent interview with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a leader in the student revolts of 1968 in France, published in the *New York Book Review*. Asked about his relationship to Judaism, Cohn-Bendit responded:

> I have no religious feelings whatsoever... I do feel that I'm rooted in Judaism, but in a cultural, not a religious sense. At the center of it all is my parents' story of escape: as German Jews and political refugees they had to hide from the Nazis and their collaborators. That's something I can't shake off. For a long time I tried, by identifying as a Jew merely in Satre's sense: it's the anti-Semite that "makes" the Jew; once anti-Semitism has been overcome, I cease to be a Jew. But no, it's been a part of my identity since before I was even born… I can be a Jew in Paris, in Frankfurt, in London, in Montreal [but not in Israel]… To put it crassly, to me, Israel represents the end of Judaism. It's a nation-

state and its inhabitants are Israelis, not Jews. Which is their right, of course.[4]

To be a Jew (or an Israeli), for Cohn-Bendit, requires reflection in a way that being "French" or "American" rarely does. It is requires negotiating notions of peoplehood, religion, history, and nationalism. It is enough to make one tired just trying to sort out.

Another manifestation of this tension is the discourse of the "New Jew" in Europe, that is, the discourse that applies *Jew* to persecuted minorities (pp. 110-125). Baker argues that *Jew* has become an icon that stands at the center of a new Europe, constructed out of the ashes of World War II and the Holocaust. New Europe values democracy and inclusivity and abhors differential treatment of minorities; Muslims, for example, become the "new Jews" of Europe. As Baker says,

> In this sense, *Jew*(*s*) belongs to Europe as part of the European Union's very raison d'être, its narrative of origins, its recollection of conscience, its confession of sin, and its promise of redemption…. A major part of what *Jew*/new *Jew* has come to represent in the New Europe of the European Union, then, is a promised dismantling of the ethnic nation-state model that institutionalizes the privileging and disprivileging of citizens and residents according to race/ethnicity/religion (the opposite of what *Jew* represents in Israel)…. The stakes that Europe's *Jews*/new *Jews* have in the European Union's promise are those shared, in theory, by all Europeans (p. 117).

We again see here the deracinated, typological use of *Jew*. Baker proposes that such "new Jews" be seen as standing alongside those who see themselves as historically connected to the people of Israel (p. 117). The latter, however, might watch with concern from the sidelines as their identity is erased. It is, in fact, hard for me to imagine any modern group that bases its identity on ethnic, racial, or gender features not objecting to such an erasure.

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4 Claus Leggewie and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, "1968: Power to the Imagination," *New York Review of Books* 65/8, May 10 (2018), 6.

Jews themselves sometimes themselves accepted versions of this binary that linked Jews to particularism. In a forthcoming book (based on a previously published paper) Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi argue that the rabbis, drawing on Paul, invent the concept and category of the *Goy*, which pretty much accepts the Pauline dichotomy wholesale. The world now is understood as divided between Israel (who become for the rabbis the *us*) and everybody else. *Goy* becomes the antithesis to Israel, which in many contexts from antiquity to the present is conflated with *Jew*. The *Goy* is a type of the "universal," in a sense, but one that is usually marked negatively.[5] Although Baker does not discuss this, the fact that there is a "Pauline" dichotomy (whether Paul really did invent it and whether the rabbis took it from Paul) at the heart of rabbinic Judaism puts Jews and Christians on the same discursive page for centuries. They both, then, agree that the world is divided (at least roughly) into Jews and Gentiles. They disagree about which one is better.

Baker's discussions of how Jews have adopted this rhetoric for themselves are episodic and illustrative. These Jewish responses can be plotted along a spectrum from full-throated adaptation to complete transvaluation. Zionism stands as perhaps her most interesting and prominent example of Jews almost embracing the dichotomy (pp.99-104). Zionism's root are in both the growing wave of state-nationalism and the racialism inherent in the concept of the *Volk*. If Jews are a distinct race (whether better or worse than other races), then they are, by the criteria of the times, a People. It is here, famously, that anti-Semites and Zionists found common ground. For both, *Jew* became a racial category that can be quantified. Max Nordau thus argued for a new, "muscular" Jew connected to reestablishment of Jews in their land. "Zionism's new *Jew*," Baker writes, "is an insurgent, 'regenerate' species that would be developed to supersede the 'degeneration' caused by millennia of 'exile' from a homeland that, as well, needed to be newly reconstituted and regenerated to the standard of its ancient biblical kingdoms." (p. 102). The *Jew* has become pathologized, albeit for what was understood to be a positive cause.

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[5] Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Goy: Israel's Others and the Birth of the Gentile*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). They have a few articles already in press on this topic; see Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, "Paul and the Invention of the Gentiles," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105 (2015): 1-41.

Baker discusses two other contexts in which the *Jew* is pathologized. One, keying off a book by Sandor Gilman, is the Jewish body.[6] Gilman investigates the discourse around the body of Jews. In European discourse in particular, the body of the Jew was the object of some fascination. It was marked as different and usually abnormal. In Mitchell Hart's reading of Gilman's book, modern American Jews continue to exercise a fascination with the Jewish body but it is now (as in some Zionist circles) a place of health.[7] Baker's primary interest in this debate is the way in which scholars discuss the *Jew* today (discussed below), but it is certainly part of the same complex of discursive self-appropriation. The *Jew* is objectified as an object of study by those who don't identify as Jews and soon Jews begin to discuss themselves in precisely the same terms, even if they do not always come to the same conclusions.

The second context in which Baker places the pathologized *Jew* is genomics (104-110, 142-148). There has been an explosion of work on population genetics. Within this work, "Jew" – particularly Ashkenazi Jew – has emerged as a distinct population. While most scientists with whom I have informally talked (including Harry Ostrer and Gil Atzmon, who come under particular critique)[8] believe that the science of population genetics is entirely solid, Baker is suspicious. "Genome biology," she writes, "has been harnessed to creating and sustaining a Jewish genetic-identity discourse…"(p. 105). Elsewhere, however, Baker seems to retreat: "my interest has been in briefly examining some of the ways in which this new *Jew*, this genomic *Jew*, is being constituted both through the measuring, compiling, and comparing of genetic data and through the framing and narrating of the findings thus derived" (p. 109). I am not sure if Baker fully knows what to do with the science of population genetics, but in truth I am not sure if any of us do. It seems to me that while some on the margins have used it to make ideological claims (whether that Jews don't really exist, as in Shlomo Sand's deeply flawed book,[9] or that Jews remain relatively "pure"), it has not had an impact on religious law (or the

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[6] Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, (New York: Routledge, 1991)

[7] Baker, *Jew*, 71-74. See Mitchell B. Hart, *The Healthy Jew: The Symbiosis of Judaism and Modern Medicine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[8] Harry Ostrer, *Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gil Atzmon et al., "Abraham's Children in the Genome Era: Major Jewish Diaspora Populations comprise Distinct Genetic Clusters with Shared Middle Eastern Ancestry," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 86 (June 2010): 850-9.

[9] Shlomo Sands, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, (New York: Verso, 2009).

Israeli Law of Return) and remains something of a novelty item in general discourse: look how Jewish I am, my friends announce on Facebook, giving the number from the results of their mail-order genetic analysis. They mean nothing by it except for a laugh.

If the Max Nordau is at one end of a spectrum in which Jews embrace the very invidious distinctions that pathologize them, then the use of *yid* in Yiddish is at the other. Her discussion of how Jews used the term *yid* is a refreshing break from an almost exclusive focus on the discourse of a rarefied group of academics (pp. 52-65). *Vos Macht a Yid* is the name of this section, a colloquial term that literally means, "What's a Jew doing?" (but which we might translate as "what's up?"). The use of the term *yid* is best understood within the context of an "internal bilingualism." Whereas Hebrew and Aramaic were the languages of prayer and study, Yiddish marked the secular. There was, however, a gendered catch. Yiddish, the language, is gendered as feminine (as opposed to Hebrew, which was gendered as masculine) but the term *yid*, used as a formal address of one Jew to another, is strictly masculine. So while internally women do not have an identity within the term *yid*, externally even the male speakers of Yiddish are gendered as feminine. The internal/external dichotomy, here and elsewhere, destabilizes the usual dichotomies: "But *yid*, a name for a richly imagined self in an explicitly Jewish (Yiddish) linguistic culture, has never granted its owners (even the Zionists among them) the illusion of autonomy, never provided them a pretense of free self-determination, never pretended to name an ideal – universal or particular – as so many other names for self in other linguistic cultures have purported to do" (p. 63).

Baker is especially interested in how scholars of Jewish studies and Yiddish *create* knowledge about the *Jew* (pp. 65-77). Baker suggests that when Jewish scholars of Jewish studies write about the *Jew*, they are on some level engaged in an act of self-formation. Baker writes:

> Scholarship on *the Jew*, as a kind of "cottage industry" within Jewish studies, has served not only as a locus for exploring all of the important subjects and dynamics enumerated in the titles of the books and articles produced under this rubric, but also as a workshop for constructing, deconstructing, examining, and critiquing ideas about *Jew* as self. This

workshop provides space and critical tools by which (primarily) Jewish-identified scholars come to build for themselves (and, perhaps, for others) a "native" discourse about *Jew(s)*. Undoubtedly there is a certain pleasure and satisfaction, as well as a moral and broadly therapeutic dimension, to shaping meaningful discourse around a name whose contours and content have long been set by those who have wielded the name as a weapon (p. 77).

Whether or not this is widely true for the individual scholars she discusses, she does point toward the complicated relationship in that exists in all ethnic studies programs between disinterested academic study and engagement that can easily shade over into advocacy. Aaron Hughes has recently warned about this tendency in Jewish studies but it is by no means limited to it: my own university just began a Native American and Indigenous Studies initiative that privileges partnerships with the Native American communities that it is devoted to studying.[10]

So is there any way out of this fundamentally Pauline discourse? Baker seems to think so. At the end she edges toward sympathy for post-modernist, post-denominational, and post-Zionist visions of the Jewish future (pp. 126-48). Here she traces a trend among some writers not only to describe the changing understanding of the *Jew* in the contemporary world – particularly in the United States – but also to promote it. The thrust of this discussion is to break down a notion of Jewish particularity: Jews look like – indeed should look like – "the peoples of all the lands, nations, and families of the earth" (p. 148).

This discourse, of course, makes sense in modern day America. America is the land of mixed identities, choice, and tolerance. It is a place that rejects (at least among many of its intelligentsia) tribalism and territorialism. Yet there is an irony in the construction of this "New *Jew*." It is at once a product of its time and place while remaining *particular*. The "New *Jew*" does not seem to index a "religion," like a Christian; an "ethnicity," like an Italian; or a "race" or

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[10] Aaron W. Hughes, *The Study of Judaism: Authenticity, Identity, Scholarship*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), and see my review on H-Judaic: https://networks.h-net.org/node/28655/reviews/31103/satlow-hughes-study-judaism-authenticity-identity-scholarship

genomic population, like an "Asian." We are back to the beginning, with *Jew* remaining *sui generis*.

Baker begins her book with an anecdote about an Israeli student who adamantly rejected identity of *Jew* because, he thought, it was demeaning. (It might be relevant that since 2005 Israeli identity cards have not included a field for "ethnicity," which further marginalized the term "Jew" in Israeli discourse.) When it comes to *Jew* there can be no end of anecdotes and I end with one of my own.

I recently filled out the U.S. Census test form. I got to a field asking for "origin," with examples like "Italy" and "Ireland" and was stymied. My family came to the U.S. in the great wave of emigration from the Pale of Settlement. Yet whatever kingdom controlled this area during the time that my ancestors lived there, they were always Jews and *Jews*, defined both internally and externally and marked as Other. Sometimes when asked the question of my origins, I will reply Russian, simply because in context it's easier. But I know it is not true and this time on the census test I put "Jew." When telling this story to a friend she told me she opted for the "genomic Jew" designator and put down "Ashkenazic Jew."

When I called myself a Jew I did not think that I was making a claim of Otherness, whether good or bad. Nor did I think I was mapping myself on a continuum that was any different than my Portuguese neighbors. To be a Jew in this world – in the non-academic world – can be little different than "being" Italian or Portuguese. Yet, probably unlike my neighbors I hesitated before filling in this field, recalling memories of having the word *Jew* spit at me when I was growing up. I suspect that those who call themselves Jews are not unique in juggling these issues and the internal tensions that they cause. As long as we categorize people by "ethnicity," "religion," "sex/gender," and "race" we will always have interstices into which *Jew*, among other terms, fall. The real take-away from Baker's fine book is that these categories, not *Jew*, may well be the problem.

Michael L. Satlow, Brown University

Gerben Zaagsma, *Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 250.

by Fraser Raeburn

There is ambiguity lurking in the title of Gerben Zaagsma's book on Jewish participation in the International Brigades. Are we speaking of individuals who happen to be Jewish, or at least of Jewish descent, or are we speaking of a different category: those whose participation in the Spanish Civil War was (and is) understood as being specifically and inherently Jewish?

Zaagsma acknowledges this dichotomy, and uses it to provide a framework for his study, positing that the former became the latter over time. Yet there is no doubt that while Zaagsma has succeeded admirably in addressing how Jewish participation in the conflict has been framed and understood as specifically Jewish, he has not written what might be considered as the definitive work on Jewish volunteers in the International Brigades, despite claims advanced on the back cover. He may well have written something better and more interesting; he has certainly written something more methodologically rich. Scholars of both Jewish history and the International Brigades will gain a great deal from this text, but the scope of the inquiry is narrower than the title might suggest.

This is an issue that has affected other recent attempts to break the mold when writing about the international dimensions of the Spanish Civil War, particularly when it comes to the International Brigades. Transnational approaches appear to offer a great deal compared to the relatively staid, nationality-based histories that have hitherto been standard. Yet work of truly international scope is extraordinarily difficult, especially when one's remit is groups and organizations rather than individuals. Lisa Kirschenbaum's 2015 book on the Comintern in Spain is one such case: an excellent, insightful book, yet one that is also clearly the product of an American scholar of Soviet history, most familiar with these sources and perspectives. Here, Zaagsma's expertise lies in the Botwin Company (pp. 37-57), the only International Brigade unit composed specifically of Jewish volunteers, and its reception, particularly among the Jewish diaspora in Paris. Zaagsma is able to use these cases to offer useful points about international perceptions of the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades, as well as insight into neglected aspects of the

International Brigades themselves, such as 'nationality' politics, although further exploration of this theme would have been welcome. In all, the book spends relatively little time exploring personal experiences and testimony of the Jewish volunteers. As a result, the first section of the book, dealing with the International Brigades themselves, feels sparse at c. forty pages.

In particular, little space is accorded to Jewish volunteers in other contexts than the Botwin Company. Zaagsma refuses to attempt to even enumerate them – this 'misses the point' (p. 13) – although several figures, generally from secondary texts, are discussed (pp. 22-3). Given Zaagsma's own clever use of statistics in other ways, particularly regarding Jewish Communist Party membership in the Polish context (p. 23), it is not clear why further enumeration could have no worthwhile end. Anglophone Jewish volunteers in particular are accorded relatively little space, despite their prominence in these contingents, although the Americans feature more significantly in the discussion of commemoration. In fact, Jews of non-Eastern European origins rarely receive analytic focus. This is justified by the claim that other groups often had a lower consciousness of being in Spain as Jews (pp. 3, 24-5). While the present reviewer is in no position to argue with this statement, and Zaagsma is certainly correct to note that assuming a monolithic 'Jewish' identity across these very different contexts is immensely problematic, it is difficult to believe that more could not be said on the subject.

In contrast, the second section, a comparative analysis of the reception of Spain and the International Brigades in the Yiddish press in Paris, feels longer than necessary. While Zaagsma makes a strong methodological case for the approach taken, the comparative structure offers diminishing returns. While analysis of the communist-aligned *Naye Prese* is exhaustive (pp. 67-92), the comparisons offered slim pickings. The Labour-Zionist *Parizer Haynt* made few references to the International Brigade volunteers (p. 95), while the Bundist periodical *Undzer Shtime* has been incompletely preserved with only a handful of surviving issues covering the crucial year of 1937 (p. 102). This is hardly the author's fault, yet has limited the insight available beyond the relatively straightforward ideological differences across the publications. This is not to say that the section is bereft of useful material – far from it – but that the framework does less to enhance the approach than it might have.

These are harsher criticisms than the book deserves. The approach taken has much to offer, and succeeds in answering what Zaagsma considered the central question of the book – 'why *Jewish* volunteers?' (p. 160). In particular, the final section, on the evolution of historical memory surrounding 'Jewish' participation in the Spanish Civil War, reads as an intricately constructed micro- historiography. This is likely the best – certainly the most detailed – effort to appreciate how historical understandings of the International Brigades evolved during the Cold War, in any context. So well has Zaagsma reconstructed the twists and turns, especially between Poland, Israel and the United States, it is jarring to come across the rare admission that a particular incident or exchange could not be traced (e.g. p. 126). Zaagsma also does an excellent job of placing ideas about the Jewish volunteers within their intellectual contexts, such as contemporary struggles against perceptions of Jewish cowardice (e.g. pp. 74-5), and later debates about the extent of Jewish resistance to the Holocaust (pp. 121-4). While this is perhaps not the promised definitive history – if such a history could ever be written – it succeeds admirably on other terms.

Fraser Raeburn, University of Edinburgh

Evgeny Finkel, *Ordinary Jews. Choice and Survival during the Holocaust,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 296.

by Dan Zeits

"We know that the Jews were murdered," Yehuda Bauer, the doyen of Israeli Holocaust scholarship, wrote several years ago, "We have a fairly detailed account of who murdered them, where, how and when... But what we want to know, and do not know, is how the Jews lived before they were murdered, what their reactions were in the face of the sudden, unexpected, and, for them, inexplicable assault on their lives by a power whose policies they did not and could not understand."[1]

Evgeny Finkel's *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust* gives one of the possible answers to the issue raised by Bauer. The book shifts the focus from the Holocaust perpetrators to their victims[2] and deals with the variety of "choiceless choices," the Jews were faced with during the most tragic period in their history. "Whether to escape or stay put, enlist in the Jewish police or join the resistance, that was the choice of the Jews. Limited and hopeless as it usually was, it was still their choice" (p. 18). Finkel puts forward two major and closely related questions in this regard: what made individual Jews choose particular behavioral strategies, and why did the distribution of these strategies vary across localities?

As an instrument to answer these questions, the researcher developed his own typology of four main strategies used by the Jews: cooperation and collaboration with the Germans, coping with the danger and trying to survive without leaving, evasion via escape, and resistance. Relying on over five hundred witness testimonies, Finkel applies this typology for the examination of behavioral patterns adopted by Jews in three large Eastern European communities: Minsk, Kraków, and Białystok during the Holocaust. The selection, he explains, was determined by a number of important similarities shared between these communities: the prewar size and the percentage of Jews

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[1] Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 2.
[2] It is not by chance that the book's title alludes to the terms 'ordinary men' and 'ordinary Germans' developed by Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen respectively regarding Holocaust perpetrators.

in the total population, the enclosed ghettos established in each one of the three cities and the similar ghetto institutions, the level of the Nazi security services' control on the ground and the subjection to the Nazis' total extermination policies.

The thorough analysis conducted by Finkel shows, that all four types of strategies could be found in each one of the three cities under discussion. At the same time, both the distribution of these strategies and their content varied significantly from one place to another. In opinion of the researcher, these variations on the individual and community levels were primarily impacted by the factors originating in the pre-Holocaust period: cohesiveness of the community, level of Jewish political activism, integration into the broader society, and the patterns of state repression in each city. All of these factors, in turn, were shaped by one crucial variable: the city's pre-war political regime.

Ordinary Jews has a number of limitations both in the research scope and in the selection of sources. Most of them are deliberate and pointed out by the author. "This book," Finkel writes, "… is first and foremost an attempt to understand the Jews' behavior and therefore, by design, it almost entirely excludes important actors such as the Germans and, to a lesser extent, the local Slavic population…" (p. 18). Consequently, the regional variations in the tenor and tempo of the implementation of the Final Solution are mentioned only in passing; their possible impact on the difference in behavioral patterns of the prisoners between Minsk, Kraków, and Białystok ghettos is not discussed in depth.

This narrow approach also determined the selection of the sources. The main part of the study is based almost entirely on the post-war accounts of the Holocaust survivors. The other types of sources are referred only in very rare cases. "My goal is to understand internal Jewish perspectives and decisions. For that reason I intentionally do not rely on materials produced by the perpetrators," Finkel explains (p. 15). In fact, this exclusion covers all the wartime records of a non-Jewish origin, and not of the Nazis alone. Further triage of sources derives from the language skills of the author. Specifically, the post-war testimonies in Yiddish or German are also omitted from the analysis.

The impact of the limitations on the analysis might be illustrated by several examples, of which I will select only one: the treatment of the evasion strategy adopted by the Minsk ghetto prisoners. According to Finkel, after the large-scale killing action in July 1942, "…the ghetto was spared for just over a year. During that time, realizing that their days were numbered, up to 15,000 Jews tried to escape into the forests, where Soviet partisans had established their bases. [Of those]… thousands, possibly as many as 10,000, managed to reach safety and survive" (p. 30). The author repeatedly refers to this extremely high estimate of 15,000, without specifying its source, as it serves to confirm the more general thesis about the pre-war Jews' integration into non-Jewish society as a major factor in contributing to the decision to evade. In the context of the above quotation, the estimate seems surprising: according to the Nazi records, after the action in July 1942, no more than 10 to 12,000 Jews remained in Minsk, the vast majority of which were killed throughout 1943.[3] Unlike that, the assertion about 10,000 escapees from the Minsk ghetto who joined - or, alternatively, attempted to join - the partisan units appears in several dozens of publications, academic and popular alike,[4] - sometimes referring to the testimony of Hersh Smolar, the head of the ghetto underground (Finkel also relies upon it).

However, the thorough analysis of the archival data on the matter including the muster rolls of the Byelorussian Staff of Partisan Movement (BSPM), yields a very different result. The total number of the Minsk ghetto prisoners in the units (including those who subsequently fell in partisan combat) might be put at not more than 1,500. This estimate is also well confirmed by the early testimonies of mid-1940s. The additional, and no less important, conclusion can be reached after examination of the escapees' distribution among the units: about 70% of the partisans from the Minsk ghetto were in the detachments organized by Jews themselves.

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[3] For details, see Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944*, (Hamburg: Hamburger Ed., 1999), 736, n.1257, 740-2.

[4] For example, as Massimo Arico claims, "Secondo una stima accreditata, furono circa 10.000 gli ebrei di Minsk che riuscirono a fuggire dal ghetto, raggiungendo la foresta ed unendosi ai gruppi partigiani: il che significa – in rapporto ai circa 820 giorni di esistenza del ghetto (dal 20 luglio 1941 al 21 ottobre 1943), una media giornaliera di circa una dozzina di evasioni, attuate grazie ad una diffusa rete di complicità instauratasi tra gli ebrei e i bielorussi." Available at http://www.ordnungspolizei.org/j259/it/articles/4-5-atto-il-polizei-bataillon-322-e-l-eccidio-di-minsk-1-settembre-1941.html.

Concerning Finkel's research, the above data leads to certain conclusions. First, it is a good illustration for the point made by the author: "it is the narrative that emerges from a large number of testimonies that proves a hypothesis, not this or that individual quotation, no matter how colorful" (p. 207). Specifically, the attempt to estimate the number of the Minsk Jews in the partisan units must rely on the whole scope of available materials, rather than on the late statement by Smolar.[5] Second, though the high level of integration into the broad society is an important factor to consider, it is only one side of the coin. The point mentioned in dozens of testimonies, given for the most part by culturally assimilated and well-integrated people, is that despite the general awareness of the Germans' genocidal plans, which arose in Minsk very early, there was no place to escape: the locals at best were not ready to hide their Jewish neighbors, friends, and colleagues, and at worst turned them in to the Germans. For these people the possibility to join the partisan units established by the Jews themselves was the only chance to stay alive. The fact, that 70% of the Jewish partisans from Minsk and, at my estimate, about half of all the ghetto survivors saved that way, allows us to view the entire process - the establishment of the national units and sending the guides from there to get the people out of the ghetto – as the wide scale self-rescue activity, for which the intra-ethnic social networks were, probably, more important, than the inter-ethnic ones.

More generally, it can be assumed, that the research limitations, for the most part, stem from the collision between its primary strength of comparative analysis on one hand, and the relatively small overall size of the study on the other. In that situation, the author must inevitably narrow down his discussion on each one of the three ghettos and the source-base used for that purpose. Thus, some of the important issues are either omitted or mentioned only occasionally.

Despite its limitations, *Ordinary Jews* deserves every appreciation. This is indeed a type of research that the Holocaust literature lacked. The methodology applied by Finkel to reveal the similarities and differences in the behavioral patterns across localities may be helpful for any future study dealing with the Holocaust victims.

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[5] The 10000 estimate appears in Smolar's memories only in 1970s; it is missing in all of his several detailed accounts from mid-1940s to 1960s.

Dan Zeits, Bar Ilan University

Ferenc Laczó, *Hungarian Jews in the Age of Genocide. An Intellectual History, 1929-1948*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 239.

by Catherine Horel

The book presents the results of a doctoral as well as post-doctoral research undertaken by a young Hungarian scholar. Supervised by Viktor Karády at Central European University Budapest, the author already shows great maturity and expertise in his field.

There have been numerous studies about the Holocaust in Hungary, but seldom has the reaction of Hungarian Jews before and after the tragedy been examined.[1] This is of utmost importance considering that Hungary, as opposed to other countries of the soon to be Communist Bloc, has seen a lively debate on the question of the origins and responsibilities of anti-Semitic politics. As a piece of intellectual history, the book focuses on analyses and responses to the endeavor of the Hungarian State to "dissimilate" the Jews (here I use an expression by Viktor Karády to characterize the progressive divorce between the State and the Jewish community after decades of assimilationist policies), without harming them physically. The author is right in considering that neither the Numerus Clausus Law of 1920, or the anti-Jewish laws of 1938, and those promulgated up to 1942, were necessarily leading to the deportations that started after the German invasion of 19 March 1944. Even though the responsibility of Regent Horthy and his governments is crucial, this was no fatality. The author is cautious to avoid teleology and anachronism.

In order to understand fully the context born out of 1918-1919, it would have been more logical to start from the Counter-Revolution, the White Terror and the so-called Szeged ideas developed in the circles surrounding Horthy. The years of the consolidation of the regime instead are the starting point of the study: here the consensus on revisionism (claiming back the territories taken from Hungary with the Trianon Treaty) is an important element of identification of the Jews, because of their well-comprehensible nostalgia for the pre-1918 era. This can be seen also in Austria and other former Habsburg

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[1] On the aftermath, see: Catherine Horel, *La restitution des biens juifs et le renouveau juif en Europe centrale (Hongrie, Slovaquie, République Tchèque)*, (Wiener-Bern: OsteuropaStudien-Peter Lang, 2002).

lands. Perhaps, a more *longue durée* perspective and comparisons would have made it easier for readers non-familiar with Hungarian history to understand all this. The author offers nonetheless a very precise bibliographical survey of studies, mainly in Hungarian and English, that allow the interested reader to get a more complete overview of the subject.

The intellectual history of the period before 1944 is based on three journals published by institutions linked to the Jewish community: the author is conscious of the limited scope offered by these academic publications edited and read by elites from the Budapest community. However, they provide a synthesis of the Jewish responses to the progressive alienation of the Hungarian State and society from their Jewish compatriots. After the Holocaust, critics will be heard reproaching this merely intellectual attitude, at a time when more active self-defense would have been required. Indeed the audience of these periodicals was rather limited and they did not reach the core of the community in the provinces, precisely those who would be the victims of deportations in spring-summer 1944. The debates agitating the neighboring countries (Jewish nationality and Zionism) do not seem to have been raised in these journals. Also the question of Zionism and possible emigration after the war is not mentioned extensively as an alternative: Zionism on the one hand seems to be the justification for the "return" to Judaism of many, on the other hand it represents a solution. Yet, if we compare Hungary to other countries in the region, relatively few Hungarian Jews chose to emigrate to Israel. The author gives a clear and correct picture of the identification options of the Hungarian Jews (p. 31), also pointing at the very relevant argument of the coincidence between Hungarian extreme nationalism and Jewish assimilation.

The study of the journals confirms what some scholars had already noted: Hungarian Jews were not ready to dissociate themselves from a State that had given them the opportunity to realize considerable achievements at all levels. In comparison to other Jewries (mainly the Czechs and certainly the Germans, in the first place), the Jews of Hungary remained attached to the German language and culture, being reluctant to accept that Nazi Germany was rejecting them (p.60). The journals preached for the necessity to be more Jewish or better Jews without becoming less Hungarian, since many intellectuals and artists were already deeply acculturated if not assimilated. There was an undeniable critique of the Neologue movement but, at the same

time, Orthodoxy was not an option. On the contrary, the sometimes very insightful conscience of the upcoming danger, strengthened the support for Hungary – that was seen as a haven for Jews (p.98). In this context, the German occupation of March 1944 was a surprise for everyone: here, a reflection on the consensus for Horthy would have been welcome.

The study gives an excellent overview of the post-war situation, where Hungary again is in some aspects an exception (but a comparison with Czechoslovakia could be instructive). First, there was the interviews' campaign that allowed Holocaust survivors to talk about their experience; second, the "democratic parenthesis" (Miklós Molnár) produced a considerable number of testimonies as well as debates on Hungary's responsibility and on the "Jewish question." For many, the German invasion, the deportations and finally the Arrow Cross rule were subsumed in the notions of catastrophe, national shame and loss of honor for the country (pp.142 and 176). This was combined with the accusation of treason (Church, elites) and more generally with the acknowledgment of Horthy's responsibility and incapacity to preserve the independence of Hungary.[2] At the same time, the author shows that the Jewish leadership also came under attack for not having been able to organize a resistance: at the turn of 1947-48, the Jewish Council was constantly criticized for its passivity (p.172). In fact, even though the deportations were conducted by Hungarian gendarmes and army, some authors are ambiguous in accusing on the one hand the German influence in Hungary – which was a reality in the armed forces, but also because of specific organizations (for example the *Volksbund*) interested in ethnic Germans, like in other countries of Central Europe – and on the other hand putting all the blame on the authorities and society of the Hungarian State (p.184). To some extent, people were confident in Horthy and chose, to begin with political leadership, to bury one's head in the sand and to wait for the end of the storm.

Like in Western countries, after a short period during which Jewish survivors were able to speak, silence, taboos and self-censorship followed: Jewish testimonies were replaced by the narratives of political deportees. In Hungary the repression was particularly sensible after 1948 and the subsequent beginning of Communist rule. It is regrettable that the author does not explain

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[2] Catherine Horel, *L'amiral Horthy. Régent de Hongrie*, (Paris: Perrin, 2014). Hungarian translation, *Horthy*, (Budapest: Kossuth kiadó, 2017).

this more clearly, but only mentions it implicitly: for example, when it comes to the emigration of Samuel Löwinger in 1950 (p.163), at the time when Jewish communities (Neologue and Orthodox) were forced to merge and fell under State control. When the author clearly points at the fact that most of the people who wrote about the war belonged to the Left and delivered an ideologized speech, he could have mentioned István Bibó's study on the Jewish question and the debate that erupted around it (that is indeed famous, but not to readers unfamiliar with Hungarian history). How the Communist version finally prevailed and which its elements were, only are alluded. The many articles József Révai, seen then as one of the main ideologues of the Party, or Erik Molnár wrote, about the "future of the Jewish question" enable to explain how and why independent voices, Jewish or not, were soon silenced, to the benefit of the argument that once Socialism is attained, ethnic and religious categories would become obsolete. Whereas some of the protagonists of this debate adopted the Communist rhetoric, others kept silent or emigrated. In this respect, the conclusion of the book is too superficial. This said, this is a very recommended book by a scholar who dominates the subject. It is to be hoped that his work will stimulate new research on these topics in Hungary and in the neighboring countries. Ferenc Laczó himself will certainly contribute with other studies that will enrich the historiographical debate.

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Jessica M. Marglin, *Across Legal Lines: Jews and Muslims in Modern Morocco*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 336.

by Emanula Trevisan Semi

When reading this fascinating book written by Jessica Marglin, one cannot avoid recognizing the excellent guidance she received during her studies: Jessica Marglin benefited from the support of great scholars such as Susan Gilson Miller, Mark Cohen, Daniel Schroeter, Hossein Modarressi, Abraham Udovich, Lawrence Rosen and François Pouillon, just to mention a few of them. Thanks to that, and of course thanks to her great expertise, Marglin was able to analyse in a very original manner the personal archives of the Moroccan Jewish family of Shalom and Yaakov Assaraf (c. two thousand legal documents dating between 1850 and 1912), as well as a broad range of archival legal documents coming from archives of Muslim and non-Muslim Moroccan legal institutions. Marglin managed to demonstrate the changes occurred in the relations between Jews and Muslims in Morocco before and after the French colonization, an event that did not always result in an improvement of such relations.

The author begins by noting the paradox that the legal status of Jews in Morocco during the late nineteenth century was subordinate but at the same time a very mobile one, since – as *dhimmis* – they were afforded the right to appeal both to Jewish and Islamic courts. The possibility to choose between Jewish and Islamic law offered the Jews great mobility, and the advantages of choosing what seemed best for them according to the circumstances. Before colonization, Jews also acted as intermediaries with foreigners thanks to their status as political outsiders. Their work in consulates and in international trade, put them at least partly under the jurisdiction of consular courts – something that the French colonization made impossible.

Marglin highlights that when Jews were *dhimmis*, or in other words second class citizens, paradoxically they had a greater possibility than the Muslims of moving across legal lines since – as said – they could make use of both Jewish and Islamic courts. The beginning of the French protectorate meant that this legal advantage was reduced and the legal boundaries between the two groups hardened, ending in the prohibition for Jews to appeal to Islamic courts. This

meant that the French "added one more brick to the invisible wall that increasingly divided Jews from Muslims" (p. 9), changing their status for the worse. Ultimately, by reducing the jurisdiction of Jewish and *shari'a* courts, in particular when it came to family law, the French reforms helped in creating new racial and ethnic categories. As Marglin notes: "Law acted as a vector of integration into Moroccan society in the pre-colonial period […] yet law also contributed to driving Jews and Muslims apart under colonial rule and to setting the stage for Jews' exodus from Morocco" (p. 20). Differences between Jews and Muslims, that existed already before colonization, were then transformed and strengthened by colonial legal reforms that introduced more rigid boundaries between the two groups.

While confirming on the one hand what other historians already showed, namely that the *mellah* – the Jewish quarter – was primarily, but not exclusively, a Jewish space, on the other Marglin demonstrated that also Jewish legal institutions were not exclusively oriented towards Jews: Muslims too made use of them. Jews used *shari'a* courts because they participated in the economic life of Morocco and conducted business with Muslims. Surely, appealing to Islamic courts facilitated the commercial relations with Muslims. Anyhow, as the author explains well, the use of these courts may be seen also as an indicator of the trust that existed between the two groups not only when it came to economic integration but also, although perhaps to a lesser degree, the social integration. The use of Jewish courts by Muslims is not a very common, or at least very documented, event: it is, in fact, something that until now almost entirely escaped the attention of scholars. This makes Marglin's research even more valuable. Of great interest is also Marglin's discussion of the use made by Jewish women of Islamic courts for matters concerning family law: for example, the possibility to seek for a divorce, considering that the Islamic law permits women to initiate a divorce while Jewish law recognizes divorce only if initiated by the husband. This was sometimes a way for Moroccan Jewish women to expedite the process leading them to obtain a *get* from their husbands.

The French colonization created a clear legal separation between foreigners and *indigènes*, Jews and Muslims; abolished the System of Capitulations and restricted the competence of *shari'a* and Jewish courts. It also obliged the Jews to use only Hebrew in the *Batey din* and not – as done until then – a

combination of different languages including Judeo-Arabic or Judeo-Spanish. On the whole, the French were concerned with maintaining a specific administrative and judicial system for Jews only, with the consequence of creating a deeper division between them and the Muslims. The new legal framework introduced by the French limited the power of *shari'a* courts and excluded commercial matters from it, forcing the Jews to make use of the *Makhzan* courts.

To conclude, the book offers an original reading of the impact of French colonization on the relations between Jews and Muslims and on the changes it brought about. Thanks to Marglin's reading of documents coming from both Islamic and Jewish milieus, the research allows us to grasp the articulations of a very complex society. This is done in a very fine, synchronic way and not – as one sees too often – with an eye to contemporary events. It is to be hoped that *Across Legal Lines* will stimulate further research on these topics, based on documents produced by both Jewish and Muslim institutions and adopting a critical gaze capable of crossing ethnic and religious borders.

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Tommaso Speccher, *Die Darstellung des Holocausts in Italien und Deutschland. Erinnerungsarchitektur– Politischer Diskurs – Ethik*, (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016), pp. 392.

by Aline Sierp

What do citizens experience when they get into contact with Holocaust memory? How important is the present while making those experiences? Which form of subjectivity is being presented and consumed in Holocaust memorial sites? Which political function do the national sites have on the European level? These are some of the main questions that Tommaso Speccher tries to tackle in his monograph *Die Darstellung des Holocausts in Italien und Deutschland. Erinnerungsarchitektur– Politischer Diskurs – Ethik* published in 2016 by Transcript. Tommaso Speccher's book is based on a PhD thesis defended in 2014 at the Free University in Berlin. Tommaso Speccher himself calls it a 'philosophical investigation of the representation of the Holocaust' (p.11). Indeed, the title would suggest an architectonical study, however, the first pages already indicate clearly that Speccher understands architecture as a symbolic expression of something else. Starting from two concrete case studies (the Museo della Shoa in Rome and the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas in Berlin) he combined extensive historical source analysis with anthropological investigations in order to enter wider reflections on the ethical implications of monumental memory practices.

The first chapter provides the reader with the theoretical framework that draws mainly from works by Hayden White, James L. Young, Dan Diner and Hans Blumberg as well as Theodor W. Adorno, Jacques Derrida, Hans Jonas and Yehuda Bauer. Speccher concentrates particularly on the difference between event and representation and sheds light on the historical, philosophical and political aspects present in the semantics and phenomenology of the Holocaust. The second chapter then dives into the actual case studies and provides a summary of the political and cultural context of the genesis of the two memorial sites in Italy and Germany. He covers the whole timespan from the immediate post-war years until our contemporary times in order to highlight the differences between the German and the Italian national histories. In doing so he sets the ethical-political way of confronting the past in Germany into direct comparison with the universalizing religious approach present in Italy.

The analysis of the German case on the basis of three concepts (namely 'the question of guilt', 'stigma' and 'inscription') is innovative and allows for a different way of structuring the investigation. Unfortunately, the author does not apply the same approach to the Italian case. Here the analysis is considerably shorter and only considers contemporary issues. The third chapter moves into the structural and philosophical relevance of the architectonical discourse. Also here Speccher concentrates on the semantic differences expressed in the two memorial sites and analyses architecture as a sort of symbolic catalyst for the representation of the Holocaust. The chapter suffers from a similar problem to the previous chapter: it tries to compare two cases that are not easily comparable because of the very different availability of sources the author struggled with. It is evident that the author had a lot less material for the Italian case and thus had to resort to the discussion of other memorials instead of following the same structure as in the German case. The fourth chapter returns to the discourses presented in the first chapter and concentrates again on the political and philosophical core of the analysis and highlights the role that identity and subjectivity plays in the two memorial sites at hand. The declared aim of the analysis is to reach the 'cultural core' (p. 18) represented in the two memorial sites. Despite the fact that Speccher concentrates a lot on the political analysis, his real interest is clearly of a philosophical nature. He sees the Holocaust as an expression of the philosophy of the 20th century rooted in Nihilism and argues that the confrontation with its memory can lead to a more ethical dealing with history.

The book is characterized by a rigid structure. Each chapter is divided into sub-chapters with a clear introduction and conclusion. Each chapter is closely interconnected. This helps the reader to follow the at times difficult philosophical reflections expressed in sophisticated – often over-ornate – language that is characterized by a number of omissions (quite a number of sentences are incomplete). Slightly irritating in this context is the introduction of a whole myriad of new questions in each chapter that do not seem to belong to the main analysis and that also remain without an answer. Clearly visible is also the fact that Speccher's book is based on a PhD thesis: a lot of space is given to the justification of certain choices the author made and relatively little to the actual empirical analysis. The chapter where empirical analysis and theoretical reflections are best married is the one on architecture and memory. The clear connections present in the other chapters are missing, instead several

repetitions indicate that this chapter might have been published elsewhere already.

Despite the fact that Speccher's work offers a new take on Holocaust remembrance, his book suffers content-wise from a number of shortcomings. Speccher adopts a slightly problematic conflation of 'Museum' (museum) and *Gedenkstätte* [memorial site]. Even if both of his main case studies would fall into the former category, he refers to several memorial sites to illustrate his arguments without taking into account that the difference between a museum and a memorial site might account for the divergences observed. He furthermore describes the Holocaust as an event that was predominantly relevant for the western European and American world. He purposefully excludes Eastern Europe and the fact that the Holocaust has acquired universal meaning as a symbol for the break with civilization (see Levy and Sznaider 2002). This omission is particularly surprising considering that the author concentrates so much of his writing on the philosophical dimension of Holocaust memorialization. Not very convincing is also the argument that the difference between Germany and Italy can be explained by a difference in character (p. 118) which is mainly socio-political in Germany and theological-cultural in Italy. The focus on religion distracts the attention from some of the other reasons of socio-political nature that have caused the different developments in the two countries after 1945. Completely missing in this context is a discussion of the relationship between Italy and Germany – a topic that should have been a paramount element in a comparative study.

All in all Speccher's book offers a sophisticated philosophical reflection on the representation of the Holocaust that might be of interest to historically inclined philosophers but that suffers from too many empirical deficits to substantially add to the historical and political debate on Holocaust memorialization.

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Elisa Guida, *La strada di casa: Il ritorno in Italia dei sopravvissuti alla Shoah*, (Rome: Viella, 2017), pp. 295.

by Anna Koch

The history of Jews after the Shoah has become a burgeoning field in recent decades. While the Italian case may not be quite as well researched as Germany or France, here, too, historians have begun to tackle the questions of how Jews rebuilt their communities, fought to regain their property and remembered the Holocaust.[1] Elisa Guida's *La strada di casa,* a detailed and meticulously researched study of survivors' repatriation, joins this growing body of work.

Drawing on archival material as well as on extensive oral testimony, this study examines the return of Italian Jewish Holocaust survivors to their home country. The author sets out to tell the story of repatriation from two different viewpoints as she aims to "insert the period of persecution and deportation into a wider chronological and spatial dimension" (p.10). The first part of the book titled *Catture, deportazioni, rimpatri* [Arrests, deportations, repatriations] is an institutional history of repatriation while the second part, titled *Tornare, mangiare, raccontare*, [Returning, eating, telling] focuses on survivors' personal stories of return and recovery.

Guida begins her account with the deportations and arrests of Italian citizens during World War II. Beyond a discussion of racial deportation, she also includes ample information on Italian prisoners of war and people arrested and deported for political reasons. At times the author seems lost in detail, and readers may struggle to link the information on Italian soldiers back to the history of Jewish deportees. Yet drawing such a wide net allows Guida to highlight the difficulty the Italian state faced in repatriating the mass of Italian citizens who longed for a return home. Guida provides a detailed depiction of

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[1] See for instance, *Gli ebrei in Italia tra persecuzione fascista e reintegrazione postbellica*, eds. Ilaria Pavan and Guri Schwarz, (Firenze: Giuntina, 2001); Guri Schwarz, *After Mussolini: Jewish Life and Jewish Memories in Post Fascist Italy,* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012); *Il ritorno alla vita: vicende e diritti degli ebrei in Italia dopo la seconda guerra mondiale*, Michele Sarfatti ed. (Firenze: Giuntina, 1998); Giovanna d'Amico, *Quando l'eccezione diventa norma: la reintegrazione degli ebrei nell'Italia postfascista*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2006); Ilaria Pavan, *Tra indifferenza e oblio: le conseguenze economiche delle leggi razziali in Italia 1938-1970*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2004).

the different political leaders and aid organizations involved in the difficult process of repatriation. The author judges that while governmental and non-governmental institutions invested energy and effort in the repatriation, they failed in providing sufficient assistance to deportees. Transportation and infrastructure across Italy and Europe were destroyed, and the war-torn, impoverished country proved largely unable to effectively organize repatriation.

Jewish deportees constituted merely a small fraction within the large number of Italians trying to get home, and they received no special attention from the Italian state. There was little interest in the particular fate of Jewish survivors in the immediate aftermath of the war, and no sense of responsibility. Guida concludes, "the total war had hit everyone; all had suffered and finally the time of reconstruction and rebirth had come. For the rest there was no space, and the Jewish veterans remained alone to bear the weight of an experience that Italy wanted to leave behind" (p.96). Jewish survivors received support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, from the Italian Delegation for the Assistance of Jewish Emigrants (DELASEM), as well as from the *Comitato ricerche deportati ebrei* (CRDE).

The book's first two chapters are largely descriptive, and provide background for the second part which focuses on experiences of Italian Jewish survivors. While Part 1 ends with the stories of the last returnees, the beginning of Part 2 brings us back to a depiction of the death marches. The following chapter provides a case study of the repatriation from Auschwitz, the camp in which most Italian Jews were held. In her last, and perhaps most original chapter, Guida shows the meanings of the journey home which constituted also the beginning of the long and difficult journey of self-recovery.

Survivors did not experience liberation as a moment of pure joy and happiness, rather most felt confused as well as mentally and physically exhausted. Recovering from inhumane conditions, they struggled to regain their sense of self, their femininity and masculinity. Slowly deportees who previously had focused on surviving began to think about their loved ones and their fate. Plagued by uncertainty, many feared their return home – what would they find there? Disillusionment hit them when they realized that they would not receive much help and assistance, and many recounted their bitter disappointment about the widespread indifference to their fate. Guida shows that most

survivors did not receive a warm welcome. Indeed a number of them remembered being asked to leave a train or tram on the final part of their journey, either because people feared they had a contagious disease or because they did have no ticket and no means to purchase one.

Shifting the perspective, the second part of the book draws heavily from oral history interviews, mainly from the Shoah Foundation but also from interviews conducted by Guida herself between 2008 and 2016. Some may criticize this strong reliance on oral histories, yet these sources allow the author to highlight the emotional and psychological struggles the survivors faced. Guida portrays numerous individual stories of survival and return which together shed light on the varied experiences of survival, liberation and repatriation. One such story which she recounts in detail, depicts the correspondence between the then 16-year-old Piero Terracina who survived Auschwitz and the Italian ambassador in Moscow, Pietro Quaroni. While Quaroni ultimately could do little to speed up Terracina's return home (he was one of the last returnees), the young survivor who was entirely alone felt grateful for the ambassador's attention and encouragement.

The book ends somewhat abruptly, and the lack of a concluding chapter feels particularly amiss since this would have offered an opportunity to bring its two parts together. A major shift in perspective and sources occurs between Parts 1 and 2, and an effort to interlink them more strongly would have been most welcome.

While the author sets the history of Italian Jewish return within the broader Italian history of repatriation, she does not integrate her research within a wider European and transnational context. Non-Italian actors (camp survivors of other nationalities, Eastern European Jewish DPs who came to Italy, non-Italian relief workers) feature little in this study. Guida briefly mentions the Harrison report which would have been an opportunity to examine what distinguished Italian survivors from survivors of most other nationalities. Most Jewish displaced persons did not want to be submerged under their national category not only because they needed additional support but also because they no longer identified as for instance Polish or German. In contrast to Italian Jewish returnees who continued to perceive themselves as Italian, most Holocaust survivors of other nationalities did not opt for repatriation. Guida

does not investigate the question of possible postwar emigration nor does she examine why Italian Jews remained so eager to return.

These remarks, however, do not diminish the accomplishment of this well researched and very readable book which brings to light a crucial phase in Italian Jewish history. A substantial appendix contains information on each returnee, providing a useful tool for further research. *La strada di casa* constitutes a valuable contribution to our understanding of postwar Jewish history and deserves the attention of scholars in Holocaust studies and Italian History.

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