Interview with Helit Yeshurun about the Archive of her Father, Avot Yeshurun

Omer Waldman, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

In 1987, the poet Avot Yeshurun entrusted his extensive archive to the Gnazim Institute. Following his death in 1992, his daughter, Helit Yeshurun, completed the archival transfer process, contributing most of his documents, many of which had accumulated in his closet for over six decades. However, this valuable collection remained largely uncategorized for a quarter of a century, eluding the attention of researchers interested in Yeshurun's biography and poetic oeuvre.

The research landscape surrounding Yeshurun began to shift when Helit Yeshurun, adopting an unconventional approach, took it upon herself to reorganize her father's archive. Her endeavor followed her comprehensive editing of her father's complete works, solidifying her role as the foremost custodian of his memory. In her conversation with Omer Waldman, they discuss the tension between the mythical persona of the poet and the realities unveiled within his archive. They also explore the poetic developments illuminated by the archive and how it can respond to Avot Yeshurun's iconic question: "How does one become Avot Yeshurun? The answer is: Through breakages." Their dialogue underscores the significance of reevaluating Yeshurun's archive as a source that can reshape our understanding of the poet's life and work.

In Between Manuscripts

Folk Extensions in the Piyyut "She'areḵa be-dofeki ya petaḥa" of Solomon Ibn Gabirol

Shani Pocker, Tel Aviv University

The Piyyutim (liturgical poetry), composed in Muslim Spain, reached us and our time thanks to the editors and copyists of the Jewish prayer books, the Siddurim. For the most part, the manuscripts of the Pyyutim were copied in a much later period than when they were originally written; usually after they were accepted and entered the Siddurim, and, long after the poets themselves have passed. It is a common phenomenon that many of the Piyyutim were used by different audiences over different periods of time, and are therefore found in various versions. For the editors of the Siddur, copying the hand written texts was not only a conservation project – but also an opportunity to update the Siddur so it will meet more suitable the demands and needs of worshipers. These updates included the replacement of certain piyyutim with others and at times even interventions and interferences in the texts themselves.

This article follows the transfigurations of the Piyyut "She'areḵa be-dofeki ya petaḥa" to Solomon ibn Gabirol. It reviews deferent versions attributed to different Jewish communities between the 16th and 18th centuries. Ibn Gabirol's piyyut was a fertile ground to expansions by other anonymous authors. These expansions show how assorted congregations received the Piyyut and changed it, molding it according to their Jewish practice and beliefs. Ultimately, this article shows that the role the copyists played in the establishment and dissemination of various poetic works, was much more influential than it seems and extended beyond the manuscripts themselves. Later adaptations of the Piyyut "She'areḵa be-dofeki ya petaḥa" found their permanent position in print in many of the Jewish prayer books we use today. This fact demonstrates the complex and shifting hierarchies between the author of a poem and its consumers within the world of prayer.

Archived Messages from Ravikovitch for the Dead, the Living, and Other Writings

Navit Barel, PhD from the School of Cultural Sciences, Tel Aviv University

Dahlia Ravikovitch's unpublished poems, which have come to light out of her archive, reveal a complementary corpus to the set of works she published during her lifetime. This corpus sends branches to the published poems, but also sheds light on intertextual relationships between Ravikovitch and the Bible, and between Ravikovitch and canonical Hebrew poets such as Rachel Bluwstein and Leah Goldberg.

The first part of the article discusses two unpublished poems by Ravikovitch, which refer to the biblical characters Moses and Michal. The poems were written when Ravikovitch was a girl of about seventeen, who decided to highlight two values in the stories of the two characters. As for Moshe, Ravikovitch emphasizes his insistence on continuing to serve as a moral authority for the Israelites, despite their self-imposed ways. Thus she preserves his point of view while reminding him of his stubbornness. As for Michal, Ravikovitch shows solidarity with the one who is left in terrible loneliness, because she did not refrain from criticizing.

The second part of the article focuses on Ravikovitch's multifaceted use of Michal's character, not only as she was presented in the Bible, but as she was represented in Rachel Bluwstein's poetry and was perceived as her own mother, who bore this name.

The third part of the article deals with three archived poems by Ravikovitch, written in the early fifties, which maintain thematic and formal connections between themselves and between three poems by Leah Goldberg. One of the poems is actually Ravikovitch's first publication as a poet. Ravikovitch converses with Goldberg through her poems, and takes the opposite point of view from her. She presents Goldberg with the dangers of the every-day existence and the dangers of lust.

On the Archive Footprints
Documenting Dance Through the Feet

Omri Ganchrow, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This essay resides in a gray area that straddles the boundaries between art and research. It challenges the standard methodologies employed in empirical experiments by incorporating a blend of personal musings, queries, and scientific writing. The notion of an archive becomes a catalyst for the confluence of artistic and empirical elements, two realms often perceived as mutually exclusive. The present work endeavors to explore the creation of an archive from a structuralist standpoint, breaking it down into thematic operations. As a complementary component to this dismantling process, a mini-archive was experimentally created. The primary objective of this work was to scrutinize the limits of the archive concept and to evaluate the nuances between creation, experimentation, and research. Consequently, this work has the potential to serve as an exemplar for evaluating the effectiveness of the dismantling process through a reconstructive approach. The ability to reconstruct a concept presents many new prospects for reassembling it in uncharted ways: This process introduces fresh methodologies, questions established forms of research, and re-evaluates what is essential, non-essential, and optional in the archive.

Turning Visible

Iconoclastic Counter-Archive of Asylum Seekers in Israel

Dori Ben Alon, Tel Aviv University

Practices of resistance among human rights organizations change frequently, and often include the re-appropriation of governmental practices. One of those practices, which has been gaining popularity in the last decades, is the archive. Many organizations are working to establish archives that will collect and preserve information in a systematic and regulated manner. Archives work to preserve knowledge about violations of human rights, alongside knowledge about the actions taken to protect those rights. Sometimes information of forensic-evidential value is saved, and sometimes the value of the documents is not as significant as the act of gathering them as a mean of resistance.

This article seeks to outline the operation of an archive created in Israel in 2018, on the eve of the deportation of asylum seekers from Israel to a third country. The article will present the archive as an acceptable tool among human rights organizations, which serves the struggle of those whose rights have been violated for visibility - the visibility of the violation, but also visibility of the subjects as individuals deserving human rights. The article will seek to present the tension between the archive that protects the items kept in it and the need to reveal the harm and open the space of visibility of those whose rights have been violated

As part of the article, the concept of "anti-iconoclastic archive" coined by the thinker Ariella Azoulay will be discussed as a mean for understanding the movement of the asylum seekers' archive in Israel 2018, an archive born out of the need to leave evidence of the existence of people who may soon lose their traces and be deprived of their identity.

Where Will We Be When They Come

Community Archives, Police, and Queer Visibility Politics in Israel

Dotan Brom, Tel Aviv University

Amidst an escalating assault from the populist right, including a prominent settler faction, on the core tenets of Israeli liberalism and the judiciary, a broader agenda emerges. While the primary objective of this attack is to establish Jewish supremacy across the nation, it is evident that a secondary goal involves the imposition of a conservative, right-wing ideology concerning sexuality and gender within the public sphere. In tandem, legislative maneuvers by the government and a surge in daily acts of violence converge to undermine the hard-won gains of feminism and the LGBTQ+ community in Israel.

In the past decade, Israel has aligned itself with the global trend of community-driven queer archiving, resulting in the emergence of such archives in cities like Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Be'er Sheva. This essay explores the imperative faced by community queer archives in response to the prevailing political context, operating under the assumption that the onslaught against the LGBTQ+ community will only intensify. To achieve this understanding, the author delves into history, examining the phenomenon of homosexual cruising sites, particularly in Haifa, during the latter half of the 20th century. These sites not only exposed men to the specter of homophobic violence but also to police persecution, exemplified by the creation of "pink lists"—police-maintained databases documenting information about the gay community in the 1990s. This essay interprets the pink lists as instruments of police control. It illustrates how their underlying organizational principles can be adapted to guide the operation of a queer community archive within a hostile, anti-LGBTQ+ regime.

Ultimately, the essay offers a blueprint outlining the operational framework for queer archives, a structure that could potentially find utility beyond its immediate context. These principles might be extended to other community-driven archives handling sensitive information and standing in opposition to repressive regimes—from women's archives to civil society-operated repositories and archives engaged in anti-occupation advocacy.

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