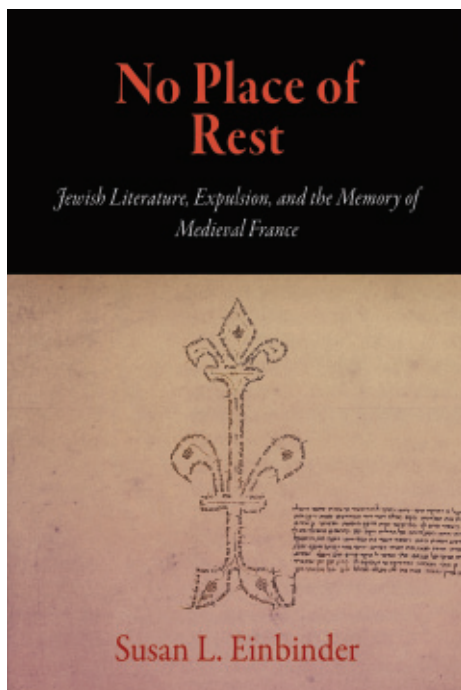


*the female spirit, which has been forced to abandon the treatment of “its sorrows, joys, hopes, and wishes” to others.*

*I know and recognize also the impediments and obstacles that have been placed [before women] both intentionally and unintentionally on the path of literature, in general; and I am aware of the weakness and relative smallness of our literature, in particular. Nevertheless, all of the guiles of the niggardly will not deplete my strength nor distance me from my position.*

*Artistic perfection is my aspiration and my ultimate goal.*

*Now, in publishing this Collection of Sketches I am filled with confidence that it will be received as a bold attempt to tread on new ground. ■*



## No Place of Rest: Jewish Literature, Expulsion, and the Memory of Medieval France

Susan L. Einbinder, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009

**W**hen King Philip VI expelled the Jews in 1306, some 100,000 men, women, and children were driven from royal France into the neighboring lands of Spain, Provence, Italy, and North Africa. The great expulsion of 1306 was

arguably one of the most traumatic moments of medieval Jewish history and would prove to be the harbinger of a series of recalls and expulsions, local and general, culminating in King Charles VI's expulsion decree of 1394. Despite the upheavals of the fourteenth century, the literary productivity of Jews was astonishing. Yet there are few direct references to the catastrophic events of 1306, even in Jewish liturgical and historical texts, where one would expect to find them. In this book, Susan Einbinder coaxes out the literary traces of this traumatic expulsion. Why did the memory of this proud and vibrant Jewish community fade from historical memory? Where do its remnants reside among later communities and readers? From the lyrics of the supposed “Jewish troubadour” Isaac HaGorni to medical texts and astronomical charts, Einbinder studies a range of writings she reveals to be commemorative. Her careful readings uncover the ways in which medieval Jews asserted their identity in exile and, perhaps more important, helped to preserve or efface their history.

**“In order to remember what we lost of them through their sin, let every one pay heed.” Cincinnati HUC MS 2000, fol. 87v**

In the rare book and manuscript collection of the HUC-JIR Library in Cincinnati, a small liturgical codex tells a story of wandering. It is a variation on the story told by all the manuscripts I have cited in this book. Most of HUC MS 2000 is written in a Provençal hand that has been dated to the fourteenth century, but a later writer has come along to fill in missing sections in a French-style script. The liturgy is replete with *piyyutim*, many of them favorites of Provençal Jews and a number, presumably local, unknown. Although the codex itself was

lovingly produced and illuminated, the opening *Haggadah* contains a blistering curse that suggested, according to one paleographer, “a period of severe persecution.” From this end of history, we know how that period ended. Between then and now, this small codex journeyed. By the seventeenth century at the latest, HUC MS 2000 was in Islamic lands, perhaps far to the east; additional prayers with eastern vocalization and an owner's entry in Arabic conclude the volume. From its birthplace, the title page preceding the *Haggadah* still proclaims that it follows the rite of R. Amram and “the French *gaonim*.”

HUC MS 2000 is only one illustration of a neglected source on the medieval Jews of France and Provence. Another, Vat. Heb. MS 553, is found among the vast collection of Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican library; this manuscript consists of two Provençal fast-day liturgies joined together to form a whole. The first section has been bound haphazardly so that some of the folios are upside down and out of order. The scribe, Simon b. Samuel, inserted his colophon on what is now folio 87v, indicating that he copied and finished his work in the imperial principality of Orange in 1389. That was two years before anti-Jewish violence would sweep across Aragon, killing thousands of Jews and leading to the conversion of thousands of others, and five years before the final expulsion from France...

These are just two examples of forgotten clues to the life and literature of medieval Jews who traced their origins to France, and continued to cling to some notion of Frenchness – first in Provence and the Comtat Venaissin, and later in places like Orange, Italy, Spain, North Africa, and farther east... Cincinnati's Klau



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the author of *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom from Medieval France* and *No Place of Rest: Jewish Literature, Expulsion, and the Memory of Medieval France*, and the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study, the American Philosophical Society, the National Humanities Center, the Shelby Collum Davis Center of Princeton University, and the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library.

library alone contains approximately forty Provençal liturgies ranging from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, and each one transmits a history, not always originating in northern France but eventually tumbled together with French Jewish history and traveling with it through the centuries...

The survivors of the great expulsion from France in 1306...did not often surface in the same communities in numbers that would support the use of traditional commemorative laments...even where they did cluster in some strength, fragmentary communities of exiles were rapidly struck by new disasters and dislocations, ranging from famine, violence, and plague to new expulsions. If at the end of the century what remained of earlier commemoratives tended to the generic, this is really no surprise.

Whether the direct victims of expulsion and terror wanted to record their experience in writing – or whether they found the stability and leisure to do so – is a factor to consider as well. It is not accident, I think, that two of the extant prose accounts of the 1306 expulsion were written by physicians; whatever their personal misfortunes, this group possessed unique skills and connections to start life anew and to regain status, renown, and ease they had formerly known at home. From this vantage, writing comes considerably easier, and past terrors can be integrated into a longer narrative of misfortune nobly suffered until patience and virtue find their merited reward. Two notable examples, Qalonymos b. Qalonymos and Estori HaParhim both included autobiographical reminiscences among secular writings dedicated to other themes entirely.

In general, the intellectual French exiles encountered in the Midi preferred different ways of “remembering” from the conventional forms of liturgical verse. Yedaiah Bedersi in Perpignan, a physician, philosopher, and witness to the 1306 expulsion, chose to embed the traces of this event in an allegorical treatment of spiritual disorder and alienation from God. Twenty years later, Crescas Caslari refracted his historical judgments through the prism of

romance narrative in Hebrew and Judeo-Provençal. Even Isaac HaGorni, a Gascon exile writing before the expulsion of 1306, conveys the pervasiveness of rationalist thinking and attitudes in his secular verse...

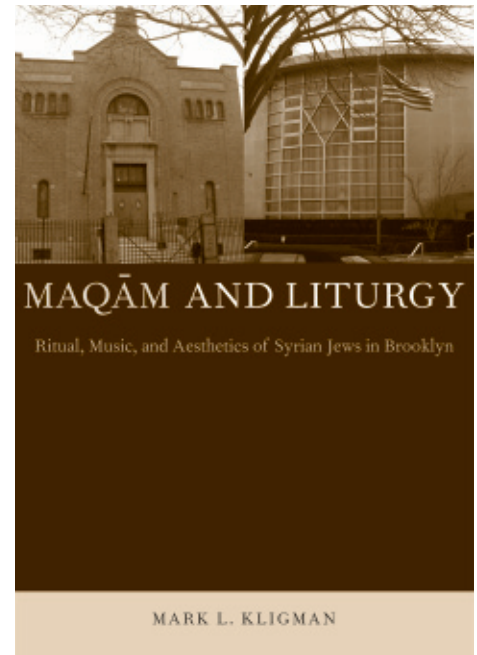
For all these writers, though, expulsion is more often mentioned indirectly than directly. In a sense, it is memory repressed – recalled despite itself and unsummoned, peeking through walls built to bar it from conscious recall...

In modern times, perhaps as early as 1493, the story of French Jews in exile was rapidly overshadowed by the catastrophe of the Spanish expulsion in 1492. From a historiographical perspective, Western scholars since the Enlightenment have privileged a binaristic reading of the European Jewish past, dividing its communities by sweeping them grandly under the umbrellas of “Sepharad” or “Ashkenaz.” This construct, too, clouded and eventually eclipsed the wider variety of community identities around the Mediterranean basin and particularly that of Provençal Jewry, which received so many of the French exiles and integrated their stories into their own...

When I first began this project, I innocently expected the literary remains of the French expulsions to announce themselves obligingly from a conventional series of texts – less than popular texts, certainly, but straightforward and identifiable once sought.... I could not have imagined at that moment that the ensuing journey would take me through astronomical texts, theological texts, medical texts, and papal depositions...

In sum, I have tried to convey in these pages that there is a way to read a series of forgotten texts and detect within them the echoes of expulsion’s trauma. I hope also to have raised some questions about why these echoes were eventually silenced, to ask who is responsible for forgetting, how historical amnesia happens, and how we smooth over the gaps to restore a sense of a continuous past.... ■

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### Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual, Music, and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn

Mark L. Kligman, Wayne State University Press, 2009

Syrian Jews in Brooklyn, NY, number more than 60,000 and constitute the largest single group of Jews from Syria in the world. Their thriving community includes fifteen synagogues in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, where the practice of singing Arab melodies is a cornerstone of their religious services. In *Maqam and Liturgy*, Mark L. Kligman investigates the multi-dimensional interaction of music and text in Sabbath prayers of the Syrian Jews to trace how Arab and Jewish traditions have merged in this particular culture, helping to illuminate a little-known dimension of Jewish identity and Jewish-Arab cultural interaction.

Based on fieldwork conducted in 1990-91, Kligman worked closely with the leading Syrian cantors who maintain the community’s traditional practices and pass them on to the next generation. Kligman’s research demonstrates that Arab culture is manifest in the liturgy of Syrian Jews on many levels. Namely, the *maqam* system, the modal scales of Arab music, organizes Syrian liturgy through the adaptation not only of Arab melodies but the aesthetics of