H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Reviewed by Danielle Drori (New York University)

In *Travels in Translation: Sea Tales at the Source of Jewish Fiction*, Ken Frieden expands, both chronologically and conceptually, previous scholarly attempts to rewrite the history of Hebrew prose fiction and to acknowledge the role translation played in shaping it. Frieden's rich study of Hebrew sea travel narratives from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century combines philology and discourse analysis, focusing on different forms of translation and cultural transfer. The first part of the book dwells mainly on acts of translation across the divide between Yiddish and Hebrew, or between "mundane Yiddish" and "mystical Hebrew," as Frieden defines them in two chapters about the voyages of Rabbi Nahman and Nathan Sternharz to the Land of Israel. A disciple of Rabbi Nahman, Sternharz documented the rabbi's teachings and expeditions, translating Rabbi Nahman's Yiddish into a new type of Hebrew that Frieden describes as "ahead of its time" (p. 77). In the transition from a discussion of Rabbi Nahman's pilgrimage to the Land of the Israel to an exploration of Sternharz's own pilgrimage, Frieden determines that "Sternharz raised Yiddish to the level of Hebrew by writing a Hebrew that lowered itself to Yiddish" (p. 76). Drawing on the terminology of the Hebrew Haskala (the Jewish movement of Enlightenment), Frieden uses these metaphors of height to unfold his overarching argument about the modernization of Hebrew through translation. Already in the first part of *Travels in Translation*, Frieden proposes that contrary to prevalent historiographical descriptions of Hebrew literary history, the modernization of Hebrew started in multiple realms of literary creativity and prior to the time of S. Y. Abramovitsh (pen name of Mendele Mokher Sforim), who is often referred to as "the grandfather of Hebrew literature."

The second part of *Travels in Translation* centers mainly on Hebrew and Yiddish translations and adaptations of J. H. Campe's German travel narratives. Frieden illustrates here how adaptations of Campe's books by writers such as Moses Mendelsohn-Frankfurt and Mendel Lefin impacted the style and themes of Hebrew literature from the early nineteenth century onward. Through a close reading of Lefin's *Mase'ot ha-yam*, a "neglected masterpiece of early-modern Hebrew writing" (p. 203), Frieden reaches the conclusion that Lefin, in particular, revolutionized Hebrew literary norms in the 1820s. Lefin synthesized biblical and postbiblical syntax, Aramaic phrases, and direct translations of German terms, creating a style that was later associated with Abramovitsh's Hebrew work. Comparing Lefin to Sterharz, Frieden maintains that while Sternharz delib-

erately turned to mystically loaded Hebrew terms, Lefin actively avoided the attribution of divine meaning to geographical phenomena. Yet both Sternaharz and Lefin, Frieden suggests, should be considered "the grandfathers" of "the grandfather of Hebrew literature," namely, of Abramovitsh.

In each part of *Travels in Translation*, Frieden quotes original and translated works extensively, explaining how biblical descriptions of sea travel, alongside the transliteration of terms and idioms from various languages, enabled Hebrew writers to produce compelling accounts of nautical voyages prior to Abramovitsh's time. In his conclusion, Frieden discloses that the initial intention of his study was to demonstrate how acts of translation and adaptation—whether of specific words or complete works—served as the main vehicle for stylistic and thematic transformation in modern Hebrew literature. The decision to focus on sea travel narratives resulted, as Frieden implies, from his understanding that no single study could provide a complete, nuanced evaluation of the centrality of translation—as a practice and metaphor—in the evolution of modern Hebrew literature. *Travels in Translation* helps the reader realize that the unique circumstances under which modern Hebrew literature took shape in the nineteenth century call for countless explorations of the reliance of Hebrew writers on non-Hebrew works and of the presence of foreign idioms within modern Hebrew literature as a whole. The very adjective "modern" corroborates this realization, reflecting the dependence of both Hebrew literature and Hebrew literary criticism on European models of intellectual history.

Rethinking Hebrew literary modernity, *Travels in Translation* joins a number of previous studies in the field of modern Hebrew literature that have leaned on the assumption that translation took an active part in transforming Hebrew literature throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yael Feldman's *Modernism and Cultural Transfer* (1986) and Chana Kronfeld's *On the Margins of Modernism* (1996) have both grappled directly with questions of translation and literary modernization. The more recent *Literary Passports* (2010) by Shachar Pinsker and *Prosaic Conditions* (2013) by Na'ama Rokem have examined encounters between Hebrew and non-Hebrew writers to rewrite the narrative of Hebrew literary history after Abramovitsh. *Travels in Translation*

equally contributes to existing formalistic accounts of Hebrew translation history of the kind that can be found in Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory and Gideon Toury's theory of literary norms. Frieden begins his study, however, earlier in history, proposing that processes of modernization in the Hebrew literary realm started decades before Abramovitsh's time.

Finally, Frieden's focus on sea travel narratives attests to the interdisciplinary nature of his study, locating it within the framework of world literature. In the field of comparative literature today, world literature functions as a prism through which one can read literary texts in order to account for the ways whereby they have been circulated across geographical, temporal, and discursive borders. The literary scholars Lital Levy and Allison Schachter have recently tackled the concept of world literature in relation to the study of Jewish literatures, suggesting that Jewish literatures can be seen as "a microcosm of world literature."[1] Without discussing world literature explicitly, Frieden utilizes practices that literary comparatists would immediately identify as belonging to the study of world literature. Frieden includes in his book, for example, a table that details more than ten Hebrew and Yiddish adaptations of Campe's German sea narratives. He also presents maps that show the routes taken by the travelers depicted in some of the works he discusses; and graphs that trace the frequencies in which specific Hebrew terms had been used from 1750 to 1900. The graphic elements in Frieden's book complement the story he recounts: a story of both physical and literary journeys from one place, or language, to another. Critics of world literature have contended that as a subfield of comparative literature, world literature seeks to "colonize" minor literatures by translating and incorporating them into major languages. But Frieden writes about literary journeys from the perspective of what he calls "Jewish fiction." His book does not issue a call, therefore, to globalize or universalize the history of modern Hebrew literature. Rather, it points to the multiplicity of sources that shaped modern Hebrew literature; some are less predictable than others.

Note

[1]. Lital Levy and Allison Schachter, "Jewish Literature/World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational," *PMLA* 130, no. 1 (2015): 92-109; 93.

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Citation: Danielle Drori. Review of Frieden, Ken, *Travels in Translation: Sea Tales at the Source of Jewish Fiction*. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews. April, 2017.

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