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FROM PARIS TO IZMIR, ROME, AND JERUSALEM: ARMAND LÉVY AS THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN POLISH ROMANTIC NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

Abstract

This article focuses on Armand Lévy, Adam Mickiewicz's secretary, as the missing link between Romantic Polish nationalism and proto-Zionism. It examines Lévy's interpretation of Adam Mickiewicz's use of Jewish motifs and how Lévy's interpretation provided his friend and neighbour in Paris, Moses Hess, a German-Jewish socialist, colleague and rival of Karl Marx, with a repertoire he had lacked to structure his proto-Zionist ideas.

The article discusses how ideas from one cultural sphere were transferred to others. Mickiewicz, seeking to find ways to strengthen the Polish nation-building process following the partition of his motherland, used his interpretation of the contemporary Jewish Diaspora as a model. His secretary, the Frenchman Armand Lévy, reinterpreted Mickiewicz's interpretation. His convoluted life course eventually led him to think about the Jews in nationalist terms via the discursive tools he acquired from Mickiewicz. Going beyond the latter's views, Lévy regarded the Jews as a diasporic nation aspiring to gain political statehood. He championed Jewish messianism as a concrete step towards the Jews' sovereignty. This, in turn, provided Moses Hess with a repertoire he had lacked until this point: namely, an acquaintance with Jews who were committed to renewing the sovereign Jewish life as of old.

The article shows how Armand Lévy – a person acting in a sociological 'contact zone', i.e. in a social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple – was able to cross the boundaries of Frenchness, Polishness, Jewishness, cosmopolitanism and nationalism, transferring motifs between Jewish and non-Jewish émigrés in complex ways which provoked unexpected results.

Keywords: nationalism, Zionism, romanticism, Adam Mickiewicz, Moses Hess, Armand Lévy

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I
INTRODUCTION

In his book *Sekretarz Adama Mickiewicza: Armand Lévy i jego czasy 1827–1891* [Adam Mickiewicz's Secretary: Armand Lévy and His Times, 1827–1891], Jerzy W. Borejsza summed up Armand Lévy's hyphenated identity as follows:

> Lévy was a Frenchman, a Jew, a Pole, an Italian, a Romanian, and a Bulgarian, depending on the case he defended at the moment. [...]. Unfortunately, Lévy was a very trivial family name. For the anti-Semites, [his name] often reflected his religious or racial roots. [Lévy] worked in different environments and many countries, and it is difficult to place him in a close and definite 'square'. … [He was] a 'mixed multitude', a kaleidoscope too difficult to decipher.[1]

Thus, in his pioneering study, Jerzy W. Borejsza described Armand Lévy as a man who moved between different worlds – different social classes, countries, cultures, nations, and religions. This ability allowed him to transfer ideas and assets from one culture to another, *transposing* discourses to new contexts. This article discusses an aspect not noticed by Borejsza: Armand Lévy as the agent transferring the ideas and assets from Romantic Polish nationalism to proto-Zionism.

Methodologically, this article follows the principles developed in the *histoire croisée* and entangled history, specifically in the field of studies of transfers.[2] It focuses on the mutual transfers between two cultural spheres, the 'Jewish' and the 'Polish' one, shedding light on the convergence between 'Polish ideas' and 'traditional Jewish thought', and between 'Polish Messianism' and 'Jewish Nationalism', in this case on the latter's first step in the development of proto-Zionist ideas. By focusing on this transference, it will follow the methodological suggestion of Itamar Even-Zohar, the theoretician of cultural

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[1] Jerzy W. Borejsza, *Sekretarz Adama Mickiewicza: Armand Lévy i jego czasy, 1827–1891* (Gdańsk, 2005[3]), 9. All the translations are mine, unless stated otherwise.

[2] Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der Histoire croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28 (2002), 607–36; *iid*., 'Penser l'histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité', in *iid*. (eds), *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée* (Paris, 2004), 15–52.

transference.[3] Following the methodological suggestion of focusing on the agents of the transference, the article will focus on the entanglement of three such agents: Adam Mickiewicz, Moses Hess, and Armand Lévy. This story thus begins then with the man whom Lévy served as secretary.

II
ADAM MICKIEWICZ

Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), as is well known, Poland's greatest romantic 'visionary poet', adapted and popularised the Polish messianic metaphor to the Polish nation-building project. In doing so, he drew on mystical ideas from a myriad of sources,[4] including biblical motifs, to foster the restoration of Polish sovereignty. He also developed the idea that the *contemporary* Jewish experience in Poland could serve as a model for Polish nationalism, thinking of Poland as a stateless nation. He did this mostly while exiled in Paris – a city filled with thousands of Polish exiles in the wake of the failed Polish uprising against Russian rule in 1830–1 (the 'Great Emigration').[5] In his famous lectures on

[3] For more on the concept 'transfer and transference', see Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Factors and Dependencies in Culture: A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, xxiv, 1 (1997), 3.

[4] See mainly Wiktor Weintraub, 'Adam Mickiewicz, the Mystic-Politician', *Harvard Slavic Studies*, i (1953), 139–45; Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (New York, 1982), 244; Franz von Baader, *Les enseignements secrets de Martinès de Pasqually, précédés d'une notice sur le martinézisme et le martinisme* (Genève, 2007). Also Frankism played a role: Abraham Duker, *The Polish 'Great Emigration' and the Jews: Studies on Political and Intellectual History*, PhD dissertation (Columbia University, 1956), 443–4; *id.*, 'Some Cabbalistic and Frankist Elements in Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady*', in Damian S. Wandycz (ed.), *Studies in Polish Civilization* (New York, 1971), 220–1; Maria Janion, 'Tematy żydowskie u Mickiewicza', in Marta Zielińska (ed.), *Tajemnice Mickiewicza* (Warszawa, 1998), 98–102; Duker, *The Polish 'Great Emigration'*, 536–43, 657–9. About the polemics on Mickiewicz's Frankist roots see, for example, Jadwiga Maurer, *Z matki obcej... Szkice o powiązaniach Mickiewicza ze światem Żydów* (London, 1990). For the counter-argument, see Andrzej Syrokomla-Bułhak, *Barbara znaczy obca: w odpowiedzi Jadwidze Maurer* (Zielona Góra, 1998); Sergiusz Rybczonek, 'Przodkowie Adama Mickiewicza po kądzieli', *Blok-Notes. Muzeum Literatury im. Adama Mickiewicza*, 12–13 (1999), 177–91.

[5] For more on the Great Emigration's attitude towards Jews, see Duker, *The Polish 'Great Emigration'*; Artur Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja wobec kwestii żydowskiej 1832–1849* (Warszawa, 1976), esp. 216–21, 335–39.

Slavic literature at the Collège de France, he frequently appealed to the contemporary Jewish experience in Poland as a paradigm for shaping the national hopes of a partitioned Poland. Thus, he noted that the contemporary Jewish longing for the Messiah could serve as a prototype for Polish nationalist longings for sovereign nationhood and national liberation. In speaking of 'Polish messianism', on 1 July 1842, he observed that: "It is no accident that the Jews chose Poland as their homeland … they, in particular, who have not ceased to believe in the coming of the Messiah and await him, have no doubt influenced Polish messianism and its character".[6] This adaptation reversed the traditional direction of cause and effect, with Mickiewicz understanding the divine role of the Jews as awakening Polish nationalism rather than working solely towards their national revival.

Mickiewicz's vision of Poles and Jews living side-by-side on the banks of the Vistula and forming part of a divine providence placed the model of a nation without a state before the Polish nation:

> A people who no longer have their kings or their institutions nor even a political entity, who were forcibly torn from their land and every earthly thing, [are a model] in this new era … [for] a Slavic tribe that has almost nothing in the land, whose entire desire and hope lie in their God … A Polish tribe that will forever cry out, who will never surrender, who was torn to pieces, who was erased from the European map, who was cast into a diaspora across the wide world.[7]

The parallel drawn by Mickiewicz is clear: the Poles can learn from the Jews how to preserve their memory for the sake of national redemption – i.e., how to be a nation-in-exile that never ceases bewailing the destruction of its birthright.

In exile in Paris on the Ninth of Av 1845, the Hebrew date for the commemoration of the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem 1775 years before, Mickiewicz wrote a letter to a group of Andrzej Towiański's disciples. He stated, among other things, that "during these very days, actually on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem [12 August 1845], we will go to the Jewish synagogue and unite with

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[6] Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, vi: *Literatura słowiańska* (Lwów, 1911), 347–8.

[7] *Ibid*., viii, 112–13, 118, 122. See also Samuel Scheps, *Adam Mickiewicz: ses affinités juives* (Paris, 1964), 55.

the people's spirit of our brothers, the children of Israel". He thus called on his exiled compatriots in Paris to: "Come, let us bow before the people of Israel, who for one thousand eight hundred years have known how to preserve such a living pain, as though its calamity had overtaken it only yesterday".[8]

This motif proved key to a core group of the Polish intelligentsia that had gone into exile in Western Europe after supporting the heroic but abortive 1831 uprising to liberate Poland from Russian rule.[9] The 'Great Emigration' members – to which Mickiewicz belonged – perceived themselves not just as the prodigal offspring of a 'nation without a state' but also its finest products. Although demographically the majority of the Polish nation had remained on the land now divided amongst empires, leading figures of this group – especially among the 'Hôtel Lambert' circles (around Adam Czartoryski, and after his passing away, his son Władysław), and also members of the Zjednoczenie Emigracji Polskiej [United Polish Emigration] (supported by the celebrated historian Joachim Lelewel) – regarded themselves as the exiled sons of a nation that would eventually repatriate its scattered children.[10]

Mickiewicz and other Polish intellectuals of his era perceived the Jews as a group that had defined itself as a nation in the past and continued to maintain their unique nationhood – despite being exiled from their land – by using commemorative rituals. Believing them to have not given up their claim to their homeland, he projected nationalist claims onto them, claims which they themselves only formulated later. At this point in Jewish history, the traditional demand to 'renew our days as of old' (Lam 5:21) was a purely eschatological notion, lacking any political substance.[11]

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[8] Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, xi, 502; Scheps, *Adam Mickiewicz*, 54; Atille Begey, *André Towiański et Israël: actes et documents (1842–1864)* (Rome, 1912), 90–1; Aaron Zvi Aescoly, *Tenuat Towiański bein ha-yehudim: Epizoda meshihit* (Jerusalem, 1933), 46, 48; Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, Gelber Collection, Nathan M. Gelber, Adam Mickiewicz and His Attitude to the Jewish Problem, G67–G68.

[9] For more on the 'Great Emigration' debates over the Jewish question, see Artur Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja wobec kwestii żydowskiej 1832–1849* (Warszawa, 1976).

[10] Jerzy W. Borejsza wrote about these hopes and actions among different circles in his *Emigracja polska po powstaniu styczniowym* (Warszawa, 1966); see also, Alina Witkowska, *Cześć i skandale. O emigracyjnym doświadczeniu Polaków* (Gdańsk, 1997).

[11] This verse makes part of Jewish prayer, over the generations becoming a utopian ideal of repair, redemption, and the wish for a perfect world attainable with God's

Following the reading of Lamentations at the Paris Great Synagogue, Mickiewicz asked to speak, elaborating on the 'suffering of Israel' in nationalist terms. The synagogue rabbi was perplexed as to their guest's intentions. Mickiewicz spoke in entirely alien paradigms, such as ethnonationalism, attributing to the Jews national concepts utterly alien to the time and place and far removed from the attendees' French patriotic awareness. According to Mickiewicz's description, the synagogue rabbi (Mickiewicz did not mention his name, but Rabbi Marchand Ennery served in that synagogue) interrupted his discourse. Because of the demonstrative interruption, Mickiewicz responded that he was speaking "on behalf of the synagogues of our land, in which we have heard weeping; I speak in the name of the synagogues of East [European Jews] and the whole world".[12]

A Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and the first Parisian rabbi to preach in French, Ennery quite understandably and unsurprisingly protested, even demonstratively seeking to leave the synagogue. Mickiewicz was bewildered by his host's lack of enthusiasm. While sharing a yearning for redemption, Mickiewicz and Ennery adopted utterly different paradigms, proceeding from their very disparate world views and vocabularies.

From the wealth of Jewish motifs at his disposal, Mickiewicz sensitively chose homelessness – of a people without a territory, exiled from its land, mourning the latter's destruction – as a valuable motif to strengthen the stateless Polish nation-building project. He applied these motifs to the Polish predicament, transforming them into practical analogies for Polish nationalism. Reshaping them and transforming their eschatological dimensions into political terms, he turned myths into concrete tools to employ in the nation-building process.

But, why did Mickiewicz search for motifs, metaphors, and tools in the Jewish arsenal of religious motifs? A myriad of answers to this question has been proposed. Whatever the reasons may have been, Mickiewicz and his compatriots 'misread' (à la Harold Bloom) Jewish traditions and practices: filtering them through their national

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help. In the Zionist ethos, the return is to an earthly political sovereignty, see Yosef Salmon, "'Chadesh yameinu ke-kedem": mitos tsioni', in Moshe Idel and Ithamar Gruenwald (eds), *Hamitos ba-yahdut: historia, hagut, safrut* (Jerusalem, 1984), 207–22.

[12] Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, xi, 502–3; Begey, *André Towiański et Israël*, 92; Aescoli, *Tenuat Towiański*, 46–50.

paradigm, they viewed Jewish commemorative practices as valuable tools for 'remembering' the lost Polish motherland and constructing the Polish nation during the 'exile'. They thereby transferred a specific repertoire to forge 'strategies of action' to their domain.

III
ARMAND LÉVY

Just as motifs borrowed from the Jewish tradition became central to the Polish nationalist ethos, the ideas embedded in Polish nationalist ideology decisively shaped the proto-Zionist and subsequent Zionist discourse. A prominent agent for transferring Mickiewicz's interpretations to the proto-Zionist discourse was Armand Lévy, Mickiewicz's secretary during the poet's last days.

As we learn from his biography (penned by Jerzy W. Borejsza), despite his family name Armand Lévy was a Catholic, his grandfather having converted from Judaism in pre-revolutionary France during the late eighteenth century. Like his parents before him, he received a Catholic education. In 1845, he left home to study in Paris, where he was exposed to prominent teachers, like the historians Edgar Quinet and Jules Michelet. In the radical atmosphere that dominated Paris in the late 1840s, Lévy became increasingly involved in the liberation of the oppressed through class struggles and involvement in radical circles; or through national causes, like the Polish struggle for independence, thereby drawing closer to Mickiewicz. Editing *La Tribune des Peuples* – the revolutionary journal founded by Mickiewicz and dedicated to disseminating ideas relating to the liberation of peoples and classes – in 1849, Lévy created an imagined community of French, German, Italian, Polish, and Romanian revolutionaries.

According to Borejsza, no evidence exists that Lévy displayed any interest in the Jews or their fate before the mid-1850s. However, from then onwards and until the end of his life, he participated in the fight for Jewish emancipation, particularly in Romania and Russia.[13]

In the spring of 1855, Lévy began work on an abridged edition of the lectures on Slavic literature that Mickiewicz delivered at the

[13] Borejsza, *Sekretarz Adama Mickiewicza*, 241–8, 287–8, 303; Samuel Scheps, *Armand Lévy: compagnion de Mickiewicz – révolutionnaire romantique* (London, 1977), 36–8, 42–4, 47–50.

Collège de France (alluded to above). Later that summer, he took charge of the preparations for the well-known poet's visit to Turkey in support of France in the Crimean war against Russia (which took place between October 1853 – February 1856). Between September 1855 and Mickiewicz's death in November of that year, Lévy became the poet's right-hand man in promoting his final project.

On their way to Istanbul, the two men arrived in Izmir on 19 September 1855, just as the news of the fall of Sevastopol reached the city. The liberation of Poland thus seemed closer than ever. According to the notes from Lévy's diary (which unfortunately were lost during the Second World War, but Władysław Mickiewicz, Adam's younger son, copied them from the diary),[14] Adam Mickiewicz, Armand Lévy, and Henryk Służalski (Mickiewicz's friend and past member of the Zjednoczenie Emigracji Polskiej mentioned above, who travelled together), attended the Great Synagogue of Smyrna. This marked their first contact with Oriental Jews from the Middle East.[15] Although they were unaware that their arrival coincided with the Jewish High Holiday period – the penitential days between the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement, i.e. the holiest days in the Jewish calendar – the Jewish religious devotion, emotional intensity, and faith in the 'gathering of Israel' deeply moved the visitors.

According to the notes in Lévy's diary, Mickiewicz remarked to him as they left the synagogue: "The wishes of these people, who pray with such strong faith, will come true one day, and God will answer their prayers".[16] In response, Lévy stated to the official (identified in his notes only as the 'local rabbi'): "It seems to me that this time, the return to Jerusalem is approaching". When the rabbi inquired regarding the basis for this claim, Lévy replied: "There are three signs: the imminent fall of papal rule, the current demise of Turkey, and the destruction of Russia".[17]

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[14] Władysław Mickiewicz, *Żywot Adama Mickiewicza podług zebranych przez siebie materyałów oraz z własnych wspomnień*, i–iv (Poznań, 1890–5), iv, *passim*. The diary did not survive the vicissitudes of the twentieth century.

[15] Stanisław Pigoń (ed.), *Adama Mickiewicza, wspomnienia i myśli* (Warszawa, 1958), 263.

[16] Mickiewicz, *Żywot Adama Mickiewicza*, iv, 426.

[17] Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, xvi (Warszawa, 1933), 429; Borejsza, *Sekretarz Adama Mickiewicza*, 131. See also Adam Mickiewicz Museum in Paris (hereinafter: AMMP), Armand Lévy's letter to Marja Górecka (29 Nov. 1862), MS 986, quoted in *ibid*., 351, fn. 22.

Although it has been pointed out that Lévy did not identify the rabbi by name, the figure with whom they spoke would appear to have been Haim Pallachi, Chief Rabbi of Izmir.[18] Surprisingly, during the holiest days, Pallachi took notice of the remarks of two non-Jewish foreign visitors. Why did he so and even go so far as to ask them on what they based the claim? Why did he not – like rabbi Ennery in Paris a few years before – either ignore, reject, or mock their statements?

Pallachi's intellectual career may help us understand why he took these remarks so seriously. It seems that his legal, philosophical, and theological interests pushed him to relate to the observations of the two foreign non-Jewish Europeans. He was a prolific author who extensively dealt with issues related to the Holy Land, publishing books and theological pamphlets on the topic. He paid particular attention to questions of religious law on the Holy Land, the practices of memory, and related religious duties.[19]

Lévy's response about the three signs echoes his internalisation of Mickiewicz's conception of the Jews as a modern diaspora nation. The brief exchange between Mickiewicz, Lévy, and Pallachi reveals Lévy's espousal of Mickiewicz's reading of the contemporary Jewish existence through national lenses – i.e. as a nation-in-exile. Like Mickiewicz, Lévy viewed the messianic Jewish faith through an ethnonational prism. Lévy's statement, as well as many other letters and writings from his visit to Turkey, demonstrate that he, like his mentor, 'misread' (again in a Bloomian sense) Jewish tradition, filtering the messianic Jewish faith through an ethnonational lens and imbuing it with political significance.

Nevertheless, Lévy went even further. While Mickiewicz appropriated motifs of the Jewish Diaspora for his Polish nation-building project, Lévy stripped Mickiewicz's interpretation of its mystical-eschatological dimensions, replacing them with material-political characteristics and returning them to the Jews. As a result, he added a further twist to the process of cultural transference. This is why, according to the available sources, astonished Mickiewicz responded

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[18] Pallachi was elevated to the position of Izmir Chief Rabbi in 1855. See Nechama Grunhaus, *The Taxation System of the Jewish Community of Izmir in the Seventeenth through the Nineteenth Century*, PhD dissertation (New York, 1995), 110, 428.

[19] Shimon Ekshtein, *Sefer toldot ha-chabif: Masekhet chayav u-poalo shel ha-rav Khaim Palagg'i* (Jerusalem, 1999), 335–6, 345–7, 376.

to Armand Lévy's reflections as follows: "I do not want the Jews to leave Poland, because just as the union of Lithuania with Poland [in the past] added political and military power to our republic despite racial and religious differences, so I believe that the union of Poland and Israel will increase our spiritual and material power".[20]

Lévy's encounter with Oriental Jews under Mickiewicz's tutelage led him to interpret the then-contemporary Jewish existence in national terms. In a letter to Mickiewicz's son Władysław, Lévy further observed that he did not consider the Jewish question a purely religious issue. "In France", Lévy wrote, "the Jewish question is perceived to be related to the question of religious tolerance and not a matter of 'race' [i.e., in ethnonational terms]. And it is difficult to contribute to what can elevate [rebuild] again the Israelite [Jewish] nation".[21] While in Turkey, Lévy tied the 'Jewish question' in Western Europe to that of emancipation. Adding a 'racial' – i.e. ethnonational dimension – he stressed that its manifestation in Eastern Europe differed from that in the West because he considered the Jewish population in Eastern Europe (both north and south) as a nationality.

In a letter to Baron Alphonse Rothschild, he further explained the deeply-rooted ethnonational motives that lay behind his plan to establish a Jewish Legion: "Much has been done in this century for the liberation of the Jews as individuals [i.e. their emancipation]. But today it is necessary first of all to work for our [*sic*!] [Jewish collective] freedom".[22] This is a further example of the misreading or mistranslation of Mickiewicz's thought into the progressive world of Western European intellectuals. In Paris, Lévy made a similar comment. After Lévy's audience with Prince Napoleon, he stated that in France, "[t]he Jewish question is looked upon more from the point of view of religious tolerance than through the racial [national] standpoint". "Here", he wrote, "lies the greatest difficulty to overcome by those who want to

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[20] Mickiewicz, *Żywot Adama Mickiewicza*, iv, 426–7.

[21] AMMP (copies held at the Goldstein-Goren Archive of the Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, Artur Eisenbach collection, P24/122), Armand Lévy to Władysław Mickiewicz (11 March 1856?), MS 1035.

[22] AMMP (copies held at the Goldstein-Goren Archive of the Diaspora Research Center, Tel Aviv University, Artur Eisenbach collection, P24/122), Armand Lévy to Alphonse Rothschild (11 March 1856), MS 1035. Polish translation in Roman Brandstaetter, *Legion Żydowski Adama Mickiewicza*: *Dzieje i dokumenty* (Warszawa, 1932), 74.

elevate the Jewish nation".[23] Criticising the hegemonic emancipationist solution to the Jewish question as insufficiently comprehensive, he called for 'our freedom' in an echo of the Polish revolutionary slogan 'for our [national] freedom and yours'. He transferred the motif to Jewish proto-national practices, presenting the Polish legitimisation of the freedom of nations – in general, and the Polish nation in particular – as a movement in which Jewish mobilisation against Russia would advance the national struggle of all. With this in mind, he promoted a collective solution to the Jewish question.

According to Lévy's transposition of Mickiewicz's thought, current geopolitical developments suggested that the Jews would return to their homeland very shortly. Returning to France, Lévy then moved on to Geneva, where he took up the position of editor of the journal *L'Espérance: journal international quotidien* [The Hope: A Daily International Journal], whose slogan was *Patrie et Liberté* – 'Fatherland and Liberty'.

After that, he continued to read Jewish religious practices through a nationalist prism, calling on the Jews to mobilise for their own national liberation. In an editorial article in March 1860, he again echoed Mickiewicz's motif of the Jews as an exiled nation praying for renewal. While Mickiewicz presented the Jews as a model for national aspirations, Lévy (or his correspondent) directly addressed the Jewish nation, appealing to it to re-establish a sovereign Jewish state: "The cause of the peoples [i.e. nations] is your cause. Make sacrifices for your liberation if you want to see the political salvation and blessing for which you are imploring in your prayers".[24]

This statement recalls the meeting in Izmir in September 1855, where he interpreted the High Holidays liturgy as praying for 'political salvation'. In the face of the global political changes, he seems to have been asserting that the Jews needed to mobilise (themselves?) to liberate their nation. Unlike Mickiewicz, Lévy refers to contemporary Jewish existence rather than Polish nationalism. This innovation well reflects how motifs were transferred from Polish nationalists to the Jewish proto-national movement.

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[23] Abraham G. Duker, 'Jewish Volunteers in the Ottoman-Polish Cossack Units during the Crimean War', *Jewish Social Studies*, xvi, 3 (1954), 351–76 (here: 366).

[24] Anon [probably Armand Lévy], 'L'émancipation israélite', *L'Espérance* (5 March 1860), quoted after Edmund Silberner, *Moses Hess. Geschichte seines Lebens* (Leiden, 1966), 397.

IV
MOSES HESS

Amongst those who contributed to *L'Espérance* was Armand Lévy's neighbour and friend, Moses Hess (1812–75).[25] Born into a traditional Jewish family in Bonn, Hess received a traditional education. Although he eventually moved away from Orthodox Judaism, as a young man, he exhibited an interest in the fate of European Jews. Despite his belief in the profound importance of the Jewish past, his principal focus in his early writings was on the future. It was, he argued, a future which belonged to socialism, which would come to dominate nation-states. Motivated by the Jewish messianic enthusiasm around the year 1840, which linked that year (the Hebrew year TaR [5600]) with the beginning of the redemption,[26] he wrote an autobiographical note 'to the closet' as it has never been published in its original German. Hess raises there the idea of renewing Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel. Disappointed by the Jewish messianic movement of 1840, he ultimately rejected this idea, acknowledging that the Jews themselves had shown no interest in renewing their sovereignty:

> I myself was momentarily inclined to return to the hope, long since abandoned by the Jews, of giving the scattered members of the Jewish people room to reunite in a genuine part of this world. In 1840, around the prophecies of redemption, I came to the conclusion that the Jews are even further from the hope of political revival than before. How can the political rebirth of a people be realised without its own free and powerful will? – a will which is totally lacking. [Then] I was cured forever of this error.[27]

In the early 1840s, Hess moved away from Jewish issues entirely, beginning to dismiss all forms of national messianism – including the Polish one.[28] He thus described Mickiewicz's writings and his Paris

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[25] Both were freemasons: see *ibid*., 353, 355–6, 374–5; Borejsza, *Sekretarz Mickiewicza*, 209–10.

[26] Based on the exegesis of the biblical Song of Songs 2:12. Abraham Duker, 'The Tarniks, Believers in the Coming of the Messiah in 1840', in *The Joshua Starr Memorial Volume: Studies in History and Philology* (New York, 1953), 191–201.

[27] Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, A4918, Moses Hess Collection. Michael Gelber's translation into Yiddish and Hebrew: Moyshe Hess, 'Di Poliakn un Yidn/ Ha-Polanim ve-ha-Yehudim', *Yahadut Polin/Poylish yidntum*, i (1962), 26–31.

[28] Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and Russian Jews 1862–1917* (London–New York, 1981), 13–14.

lectures published in 1844 as 'nonsense', 'an expression of madness'.[29] According to the historian Jonathan Frankel, this loss of interest in Jewish issues was bound up with Hess's growing attraction to socialism and the status he gained amongst young Hegelians. After meeting Karl Marx, he founded the socialist daily *Rheinische Zeitung* in Köln, together with a group of young left-wing Hegelians, becoming its first editor and then its correspondent in Paris – to which he moved in December 1852 and where he made the acquaintance of Armand Lévy. In my opinion, his alienation from Jewish questions was also related to the disappointment he experienced surrounding the above-mentioned messianic hopes of 1840.

He returned to Jewish issues only 20 years later, in 1860, in an article published in *L'Espérance*.[30] He then began work on his most well-known volume *Rom und Jerusalem, die letzte Nationalitätsfrage* [Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question], published in 1862. According to Silberner, one of Hess's biographers, Lévy played a vital role in Hess's renewed interest in the Jewish question. We may assume that he learned about Lévy's trip to Turkey with Mickiewicz and his views regarding the Jewish people and their hopes while working with him at *L'Espérance* in Paris. As Shlomo Ne'eman notes in his biography of Hess, this personal knowledge almost certainly led Hess to reassess his attitude towards national messianism.[31]

Hess's proto-Zionist *Rome and Jerusalem* has been the subject of extensive research. The recent mainstream research into the resurgence of visions of recreating a Jewish polity among Jews points to Hess's singular contribution. Earlier Jewish advocates of the return of the Jews to Palestine (like Yehuda Alkalay or Zvi Hirsch Kalischer) used a homiletical discourse, based mainly on Jewish holy sources, motivated by traditional messianic ideas. At the same time, their

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[29] Silberner, *Moses Hess*, 238–9, 242; Moses Hess, *Pisma filozoficzne 1841–1850* (Warszawa, 1963), 455–7.

[30] In April 1860, Hess wrote: "After the liberation of Italy will follow that of the people of the East, including even the ancient people of Israel, the dream of rebirth that excited everyone", Moses Hess, 'Paris, 22 Avril', *L'Espérance* (25 June 1860). See also Silberner, *Moses Hess*, 385; Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 21–4. In the months that followed, he wrote more in this spirit, see Silberner, *Moses Hess*, 386–87; Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 24.

[31] Shlomo Na'aman, *Emanzipation und Messianismus: Leben und Werk des Moses Hess* (Frankfurt–New York, 1982), 279.

references to contemporary nationalism were marginal and circumstantial in nature. Moreover, modernity was regarded as a means to foster messianic redemption.[32] This was not the case with Moses Hess's book. In proto-Zionism, it is considered an "eloquent expression of Jewish nationalist ideology". [33] It deals with contemporary questions, avoiding homiletic discourse, using instead unmistakable nationalist rhetoric.[34] We may conclude that this book embodies Hess's rationalisation of deep personal feelings rooted in his biographical experiences – reflecting an ongoing search for a way for the Jews to integrate into European society and a desire to merge the universal with the particular.[35] While the influence of the Italian *Risorgimento* is evident in the title, Hess also cites the Greek, Polish, and Hungarian nationalist movements.[36] Scholarship maintains that German anti-Jewish attitudes from the mid-nineteenth century pushed him to reassess the question of emancipation. Ernest Laharanne's *La Nouvelle Question d'Orient* in 1860, in which he proposed that the French sponsor Jewish settlement in Palestine; or the proto-Zionist writings of Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874), cited *in extenso*, undoubtedly also played a part.[37]

I wish here to suggest an additional factor – namely, the existence of a group Hess appears to have been unaware of in 1840 and to whom Armand Lévy introduced him: Jews who were committed to the idea

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[32] See Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hannover–London, 1997), 71–81. Jacob Katz sharp and analytical seminar on Jewish nationalism has already shown that much of the research on pre-Hess proto-Zionists (and earlier manifestations of support for the Jewish return to Palestine) tended to be marred by anachronistic readings of nationalism into their writings and deeds. In many cases their presentism and backward-looking makes them more a reflection of their biographers than an historical analysis. Jacob Katz, *Leumiyut yehudit masot u-mekhkarim* (Jerusalem, 1979), 311–12.

[33] Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 55.

[34] *Ibid.*, 60–6.

[35] Michael Graetz, 'On the Return of Moses Hess to Judaism. The Background to *Rome and Jerusalem*', in Joseph Dan (ed.), *Binah: Studies in Jewish History*, i (New York, 1989), 159–71; Na'aman, *Emanzipation und Messianismus*, 34.

[36] Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 25 (p. xv in the 1899 edition), see http://aaargh.vho.org/fran/livres9/Hess.pdf [Accessed: 5 May 2021].

[37] Ernest Laharanne, *La Nouvelle Question d'Orient* (Paris, 1860). Hess cites this extensively in the eleventh letter, see https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Rome_and_Jerusalem/Eleventh_Letter [Accessed: 5 May 2021].

of a return to the land of Israel. This acquaintance appears to have spurred him to revise his attitude towards Jewish messianism after his failed attempt to translate Jewish eschatological ideas of returning to Jerusalem into political terms.

Rome and Jerusalem embodies a turning point in both Hess's personal life and in the process of transference of motifs between Polish and Jewish nationalism. The consequent discourse blends national and messianic elements. On the one hand, the nationalist discourse nationalises religious practices, alleging that it was religion that kept the Jewish nation alive during the exile, while on the other hand appropriating the messianic element and speaking of the national revival of the Jewish nation, its return to the Land of Israel, and its political renewal there (*Restauration des jüdischen Staates*). Hess thus contends that such a state would complete, rather than replace, the emancipation process.

Few contemporary figures feature prominently in *Rome and Jerusalem*. Armand L. (Lévy) is alluded to twice, firstly, in support of Hess's argument that the Jews are a nation as well as a religion. In this context, Lévy serves as an example of a non-Jew according to his religion, but 'Jewish' in terms of nationality:

> Every person of Jewish origin always belongs to Judaism. Today, there is hardly any significant difference between 'enlightened' Jews and those who have converted. My friend Armand L., whose grandparents have already been baptised, is more interested in the welfare and well-being of his racial fellows than many circumcised Jews and has preserved his belief in Jewish nationality more faithfully than our enlightened rabbis.[38]

While Hess acknowledges that his disappointment with messianism diverted him from Jewish nationalism, he also asserts: "The belief in the coming of the Messiah was what I have today: faith in the revival of historic nations by elevating the subordinate to the level of the superior".[39] Hess perceived Jewish nationalism as an expression of Jewish messianism, interpreting the failure of the 1840 messianic outburst as the Western Jewish rejection of the Jewish national life in Palestine. This turned him off Jewish nationalism. It was thus his introduction to the existence of Jews of a kind with which he

[38] http://aaargh.vho.org/fran/livres9/Hess.pdf, 40.
[39] *Ibid.*, 23.

had been unfamiliar in 1840 that changed his mind – a circumstance he credits to Armand Lévy in *Rome and Jerusalem*:

> My friend Armand L. [Lévy] told me that the Jews of those places [Turkey] had tears in their eyes when he came to them talking about the end of their sufferings with the words: *le temps du retour* [*à Zion*] *approche*. [Western] civilised Jews do not know the sense of deep yearning of the masses of Israel who await the final redemption of two thousand years of exile. […] My friend [Lévy] said, "They [Jews in the East] asked me: "What is the sign according to which they will recognise that the end of the exile is approaching"? "The sign will be", was my answer, "that the Turkish and papal powers are collapsing".[40]

This close paraphrase of Lévy's diary illustrates the transfer of ideas from Mickiewicz through Lévy to Hess. Firstly, Hess records almost verbatim the conversation between Armand Lévy, Mickiewicz, and Pallachi in the synagogue at Izmir. This incident appears to have made such a strong impression on Lévy that he repeated it to his friend Moses Hess – or perhaps showed him his diary. Hess then drew far-reaching conclusions from it. Through his contact with Lévy, Hess 'learned' about the 'Jews of the East', whom Lévy had 'known' during his travels in Turkey with Mickiewicz. Lévy may have talked to Hess employing similar paradigms of thought, and Hess accepted Lévy's nationalistic interpretation as 'truth' or 'reality'. This theme was so significant in Hess's eyes that he cited it in his book in the context of his 'return' to his earlier nationalistic reading of Jewish messianism. Aware of Lévy's activity on behalf of the Jews in the Balkans, Hess probably heard Lévy talking about his experiences in the Ottoman Empire as well as the Balkans. What is essential for our present purposes is not the fact that Hess evinces it in the context of Romania rather than Turkey, but that he must have remembered what Lévy told him and adopted it as a newly-accessible motif that was absent (for him) twenty years earlier: a form of Jewish messianism that could be transmuted into political action.

In Izmir, Lévy translated traditional Jewish eschatological hopes into a contemporary national paradigm. This was, of course, a 'misreading' (meaning this interpretation of the Jewish return to Palestine not being shared by the Jews in the city). When Armand Lévy offered Moses Hess

[40] *Ibid.*, 89.

his interpretation as a 'real' experience, Hess gained a new paradigm – a 'real' Jewish public longing for a concrete national homeland rather than a purely mythical Jerusalem. Now, Hess could relate to a Jewish population he was unaware of in 1840 – East European and Turkish Jewry.

I suggest here that Lévy's story allowed Moses Hess to translate Jewish eschatology into concrete political action:

> In those countries between the Occident and the Orient, in Russia, Poland, Prussia, Austria, and Turkey, millions of our people [*Stammesgenossen*] live who pray day and night fervently to the God of their forefathers for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. They have kept the living core of Judaism. Here I mean the Jewish nationality, much more faithfully than our Western brethren who, while they develop a new spirit concerning the religion of our forefathers, do not retain the very hope that created this faith and preserved it alive through all the storms of the generations – the hope for the rebirth and resurrection of our nationality.[41]

Not aware of this in 1840, Hess could re-examine in 1862 the concepts expressed in his 'closet writing'.

This discussion suggests that Lévy served as a catalyst and conduit to translate Mickiewicz's messianic motifs into Hess's proto-Zionism. Lévy was obviously not the sole or even central factor that led Hess to change his attitude towards the Jews and Jewish nationalism. Such a monistic claim would be far too simplistic. Hess's direct contact with Armand Lévy nonetheless introduced him to his understanding of the Jews of the East, presented as a 'reality'. Lévy transferred to Hess an interpretation of a repertoire previously invisible to Hess – the 'existence' of 'authentic' Jews capable of translating eschatology into 'nationalism', and thence into political activity. As a result of Lévy having mediated the transposition of Mickiewicz's ideas into proto-Zionist thought, Hess was able to rework them in re-visiting his earlier opinion.

V
BACK TO ARMAND LÉVY

On 4 November 1880, Lévy's acquaintance, the Roman physician and rabbi Mosè Vita Ascarelli (1826–89) finished his translation into Hebrew of Mickiewicz's *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*

[41] *Ibid.*, 24.

[The Books and the Pilgrimage of the Polish Nation]. Lévy was the person who encouraged Ascarelli to do that, based on Lévy's French translation of Mickiewicz's book. The Hebrew translation was published in late 1881.[42]

Although the *Books* are perfectly suitable for translation into Hebrew, the Bible's language with respect to its biblical narrative and form, its content, however, is not easily digestible food for the Jewish religious reader due to its Christian symbols and interpretations. To prevent the Jewish readers' potential rejection of the work, the Hebrew translator Ascarelli presented himself in the introduction as "fully professing Moses' and Israel's faith".[43] Ascarelli continues,

> If I clothed this book with the pure mantle of our sacred language, [it is because] I intended to honour the magnificent man who, on the battlefields and in the sanctuaries of knowledge, with sword and pen, defended the cause of his people and of all peoples, first and foremost the Italians and Jews … [I did it], even though I found in his book some thoughts and visions that are not in the spirit of our faith. [44]

Following this introduction, to add more weight to his statement, Ascarelli placed a Hebrew imprimatur written by the presiding rabbi of the Rome rabbinical court, rabbi Eliahyu Hazan. The rabbi, who knew the translator for many years, warmly recommended the book. He explained in the imprimatur, dated 18 January 1881,[45] why Mosè Ascarelli translated the book: "And here is Moshe, the beloved man, the well-respected physician, may he live long, when he sees the author's [Mickiewicz] words descending and profoundly penetrating to the heart of the Polish people, resembling somewhat our people, the people of Israel, that also went to the Diaspora and foreigners inherited his land and honour".[46] The book's biblical parallels captivated Ascarelli, as did the use of the Jewish model in the work of the Polish poet.

Both Hebrew texts reached Lévy shortly after an emotional memorial ceremony in Paris a few days before commemorating the

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[42] Adam Mickiewicz, *Sefer am polonim* [sic!] *ve-sefer gerey polonim* [sic!] (Paris, 1881). The Hebrew date in the Hebrew front page is the year 5641 (September 1881 – September 1882).

[43] *Sefer am polonim*, X of the Hebrew introduction.

[44] *Ibid*.

[45] The equivalent to the Hebrew date 18 Shvat 5641.

[46] *Sefer am polonim*, XII (the date on p. XV).

50th anniversary of the November uprising. Lévy participated in it. As Borejsza states, it was one of the first things he did in Paris after returning from a ten-year exile in Rome following the amnesty law of July 1881.[47] Veterans from the uprising and second-, and even third-generation descendants of the 'Great Emigration' took part in the event. National colours, emblems and regalia filled the Parisian church Notre Dame de l'Assomption, where commemorative events began. The Polish periodical *Goniec Wielkopolski* described the moving ceremony that began there: the altar was richly decorated with the image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa. Polish national emblems and colours added splendour to the ceremony: "The view was magnificent, touching, and looking at it, it seemed for a moment that we were not wandering, but in family land, in the Cathedral of St. John in Warsaw".[48]

The event continued in other settings and cultural institutions devoted to upholding the Polish language and culture among the émigrés and their descendants, as well as in other venues known as places of gathering of Polish émigrés, like the salons of Grand Hotel d'Orient.[49]

Towards the end of the events, Lévy took the floor and gave an impromptu speech. His speech reveals the deep impression the events made on him.[50] Moreover, his introduction to the Hebrew version of *The Books and the Pilgrimage of the Polish Nation* reflects his adoption of some of the motifs he perceived in the event as acts of reaffirmation of nation-building in exile.

As published in its French original and Hebrew translation, the date of the introduction is given as "January 1880, Paris". This is, of course, wrong; a simple erratum. In January 1880, Lévy was still in Rome, and the translation was only a dream.[51] Probably he had written it in January 1881, a few weeks after the commemoration.

Lévy introduced Mickiewicz to the Hebrew reader as a Polish Isaiah.[52] He also emphasised the Jews' place in Mickiewicz's interpretation of the Jewish-Polish co-existence, paraphrasing the citations mentioned above from the Slavic lectures that Lévy edited and

[47] Borejsza, *Sekretarz Mickiewicza*, 291–2.
[48] 'Obchód Jubileuszu', *Goniec Wielkopolski* (10 Dec. 1880), 1.
[49] 'Obchód Jubileuszu', *Goniec Wielkopolski* (11 Dec. 1880), 1.
[50] *Ibid.*, 1–2.
[51] *Sefer am polonim*, XIV.
[52] *Ibid.*, VI (Latin pagination).

published.[53] He repeated Mickiewicz's remarks mentioned above regarding the union of Poland and the Jews, which Mickiewicz made to him in Izmir.[54] This seems to confirm Borejsza's statement that Lévy's "language and argumentations in these issues [regarding the Jews] were genuinely Mickiewiczian".[55]

However, more significant are Lévy's re-interpretations of the Polish-Jewish parallels, which he updated basing on his recent experience in France. Lévy now emphasised that the diasporic conditions of the Poles made them sensitive to the Diasporic Jews' needs. He compared the cultural practices of the Great Emigration in Paris to Jewish cultural traditions, stating that the similarities arouse sympathy among the Polish exiles:

> When the Poles, deprived of all public life, take refuge in family life, live together and marry each other, they understand better that the Israelites lived apart and in mistrust. When the Poles speak their language among themselves and also the language of the last country where they stayed and make their children speak it, they better understand the attachment of the Israelites to their old mother tongue and the language of their last adopted country. When the Poles, outside of Poland, wear and have their children wear the *czapka* and the *czamara,* and when they eat and feed their children *barszcz* and *kołduny*, they better understand the Israelites' preference for their traditional food and clothing.[56]

At the declaratory level, Lévy's goal was to present Polish empathy for the Jewish efforts to keep 'Jewish' practices. However, the goal was to kindle interest in the Jewish reader in the Polish situation at a deeper level. Lévy presented one parallel after another: praying for return to the old/mythical homeland;[57] loyalty to the country where they live while keeping their separate identity;[58] the fusion of nation and religion,[59] etc. Finally, Lévy turns to the Jewish reader to explicitly involve him in the struggle for Polish freedom because that "will hasten the freedom and the independence of Israel".[60]

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[53] *Ibid*., IX.
[54] *Ibid*., VIII.
[55] Borejsza, *Sekretarz Mickiewicza*, 139.
[56] *Sefer am polonim*, IX–X.
[57] *Ibid*., X–XI.
[58] *Ibid.*, XI.
[59] *Ibid.*, XI.
[60] *Ibid.*, XIV.

Until that moment, Jewish motifs functioned as a model for the Polish nation-building project, while from that moment on, the Polish nation began to operate as a point of reference for the Jewish nation-building project. Lévy, once again, served as a facilitator. As in the case of his role as Mickiewicz's secretary, memory practices were of pivotal importance. This Polish-Jewish parallel, socially constructed to serve the nation-building project, deepened substantially. From the late nineteenth century on, the constructed similarities served to affirm the affinities in the historical narratives among Jewish integrationists and increasingly among the Jewish youth that turned later on to Zionism.[61]

VI
CONCLUSIONS

Through an unexpected transfer of motifs, we have seen how interpretations of reality, presented as the reality itself, created a new reality. Mickiewicz, seeking to find ways to strengthen the Polish nation-building process following the partition of his motherland, used the Jewish Diaspora as a model. His secretary, the French Armand Lévy, reinterpreted Mickiewicz's interpretation. His convoluted life course led him to think about the Jews in nationalist terms via the discursive tools he acquired from Mickiewicz. Going beyond the latter, who regarded the Jews as a diasporic nation *aspiring* to gain political statehood, Lévy championed Jewish messianism as a concrete step towards the Jews' own sovereignty. This, in turn, provided his friend and neighbour in Paris, Moses Hess, a German-Jewish socialist and colleague and rival of Karl Marx, with a repertoire he had lacked before and enabled him to structure his first proto-Jewish national ideas: namely, his acquaintance with Jews committed to renewing a sovereign Jewish life and state as of old. In this way, Armand Lévy is revealed as the link between Romantic Polish nationalism and proto-Zionism.

Mickiewicz, Lévy, and Hess – so different and yet so similar – were all émigrés: 'in-between' figures willing to engage in an idiosyncratic and

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[61] Marcos Silber, 'Uma netulat medinah: ha'avarah hadadit shel ra'ayonot bein ha-leumiut ha-polanit ve-ha-tsionut', *Zion*, lxxx, 4 (2015), 473–502; *id*., 'Stateless Nation: A Reciprocal Motif Between Polish Nationalism and Zionism', in Kenneth B. Moss, Benjamin Nathans, and Taro Tsurumi (eds), *From Europe's East to the Middle East: Israel's Russian and Polish Lineages* (Philadelphia, 2021), 87–116.

interpretative dialogue with practices coming from different cultures, and welcoming 'foreign' motifs to resolve contemporary socio-political issues. Meeting on a sociological 'frontier', they formulated new ideas and norms, creating a worldview that did not coincide precisely with any other group – neither Poles, Catholics, Jews, French, Germans, nor socialists. The three protagonist of this history – Mickiewicz, Lévy, and Hess – navigated a dizzying array of ethnic, religious, and political affiliations, jointly challenging the boundaries of Polishness and Jewishness; cosmopolitanism and nationalism; interaction between Jewish and non-Jewish émigrés; and modern and traditional cultures in complex and unexpected ways.

proofreading James Hartzell

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