

**HARTLEY LACHTER, PH.D.**  
**PHILIP AND MURIEL BERMAN PROFESSOR OF JEWISH STUDIES**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY**  
**LEHIGH UNIVERSITY**  
[lachter@lehigh.edu](mailto:lachter@lehigh.edu)

**EDUCATION**

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- 2004      Ph.D., Medieval Jewish Mysticism  
New York University, New York, NY  
Dissertation title: *Paradox and Mystical Union in the Zohar*
- 1997      M.A., Jewish Studies  
McGill University, Montréal, Quebec  
Thesis Title: *Revelation from Between the Lines: Martin Buber's Biblical Hermeneutics.*
- 1996      B.A., joint honors degree in Jewish Studies and Philosophy  
McGill University, Montréal, Quebec

**ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

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- 2015-2021      Chair, Department of Religion Studies, Lehigh University
- 2014-2023      Berman Professor of Jewish Studies; Associate Professor, Religion Studies; Director,  
Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University
- 2012-14      Associate Professor of Religion Studies; Director of Jewish Studies, Muhlenberg  
College
- 2005-11      Assistant Professor of Religion Studies; Director of Jewish Studies, Muhlenberg  
College
- 2012      Instructor, Summer Graduate Seminar, "Kabbalists vs. Philosophers in the Middle  
Ages," The Jewish Theological Seminary
- 2002-5      Visiting Lecturer, Department of Religion, Vassar College
- 2001      Visiting Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Jewish Studies, Rutgers University (Fall)
- 2000      Teaching Assistant, College of Arts and Sciences, New York University (Fall)
- 1999-2000      Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Jewish Studies, New York University
- 1998      Visiting Adjunct Lecturer, Faculty of Religion, McGill University

**SCHOLARSHIP**

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## Monographs

*Kabbalistic Revolution: Reimagining Judaism in Medieval Spain*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2014.

(Russian translation forthcoming with Academic Studies Press)

*Kabbalah and Catastrophe: Jewish Historical Memory in Premodern Jewish Mysticism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, (forthcoming, October 2024).

## Edited Volume

*To Fix Torah in Their Hearts: Essays on Biblical Interpretation and Jewish Studies in Honor of B. Barry Levy*, edited by Jacqueline Du Toit, Jason Kalman, Hartley Lachter, and Vanessa Sasson. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College and University of Exeter Press: 2018.

## Articles, Book Chapters, and Reviews

“Lives and Afterlives: Reincarnation and the Medieval Jewish Present,” in *The Life of the Soul: Jewish Perspectives on Reincarnation from the Middle Ages to the Modern Period*. Edited by Leore Sachs-Shmueli and Andrea Gondos. SUNY Press, forthcoming, 2024.

“Universal Singularities: Elliot R. Wolfson on Jewish Ethnocentrism,” in, *New Paths: A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Elliot Wolfson*. Purdue University Press, forthcoming, 2024.

“Silkworms of Exile: Jewish History and Collective Memory in the Kabbalistic Works of Meir ibn Gabbai,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 40:3 (2022): 1-37.

“Mysticism: Medieval Judaism,” co-authored with Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, vol. 20. De Gruyter, March, 2022.

“An Anonymous Commentary on the Ten Sefirot: Text and Translation,” in *To Fix Torah in Their Hearts: Essays on Biblical Interpretation and Jewish Studies in honor of B. Barry Levy*, edited by Jacqueline Du Toit, Jason Kalman, Hartley Lachter, and Vanessa Sasson, (Hebrew Union College and University of Exeter Press: 2018), 331-372.

“Introduction,” co-authored with in Jacqueline Du Toit, Jason Kalman, and Vanessa Sasson, in *To Fix Torah in Their Hearts: Essays on Biblical Interpretation and Jewish Studies in honor of B. Barry Levy*, edited by Jacqueline Du Toit, Jason Kalman, Hartley Lachter, and Vanessa Sasson, (Hebrew Union College and University of Exeter Press: 2018), 1-8.

“The Politics of Mysticism: Some Jewish Examples,” *English Language Notes*, 56:1 (2018), 219-222.

“Israel as a Holy People in Medieval Kabbalah,” in *Holiness in Jewish Thought*, edited by Alan Mittleman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 137-158.

“Jewish Bodies in Divine Form: Jewish Difference and Historical Consciousness in Medieval Kabbalah,” *Journal of Jewish Identities*, 11:1 (2018): 123-142.

“People Of The Book / Books Of The People: Illuminating The Canon,” and “Other Worlds: Fantastic Horizons and Unseen Universes,” co-authored with Marc Michael Epstein, in *Skies of Parchment, Seas of Ink: Jewish Manuscript Illumination*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

“Charity and Kabbalah in Medieval Spain: Possible Evidence from Isaac ibn Sahula’s *Meshal ha-Kadmoni*,” *Iberia Judaica* VI (2014): 119-126.

Entry for “Gematria,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, 9, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014 (with Elke Morlok).

“Textuality in Medieval Kabbalah,” review of Morlok, Elke, *Rabbi Joseph Gikatilla's Hermeneutics*. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews. January, 2013.

Entry on “Gershom Scholem” in *The Reader’s Guide to Judaism*, edited by Michael Terry. New York and London: Routledge Press, 2013, 447-548. (Reprint of 2000 edition by Fitzroy Dearborn publishers)

“Medieval Jewish Mysticism,” in *The Blackwell History of Jews and Judaism*, edited by Alan T. Levenson, 2012, 244-256.

“Jews as Masters of Secrets in Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century Castilian Kabbalah,” in *The Jew in Medieval Iberia*, edited by Jonathan Ray. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011, 282-305.

“Esoteric Discourse and the Study of the West: Reorienting the Margins and the Center,” review of Kocku von Stuckrad, *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews. August, 2011.

“The Politics of Secrets: 13<sup>th</sup> Century Kabbalah in Context,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 101:4 (Fall 2011): 502-510.

“Reading Mysteries: Origins of the Field,” in *Jewish Mysticism: New Insights and Scholarship*, edited by Fred Greenspahn. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 1-29.

“Kabbalists and Messiahs in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Italy,” review of Tishby, Isaiah, *Messianic Mysticism: Moses Hayim Luzzatto and the Padua School*. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews. June, 2010.

“Spreading Secrets: Kabbalah and Esotericism in Isaac ibn Sahula’s *Meshal ha-kadmoni*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 100:1 (Winter 2010): 111-138.

“Kabbalah, Philosophy and the Jewish-Christian Debate: Reconsidering the Early Works of Joseph Gikatilla.” *The Journal for Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 16:1 (2008): 1-58.

## **OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

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*Mysticism and Kabbalah: Secret Knowledge in Judaism*, a course reader and faculty guide written for “The Rachel Wasserman Scholars Curriculum of the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem,” 2014.

“Kabbalah for the Masses: Reconsidering the Elitism of Medieval Jewish Mysticism.” *Zeek Magazine*, May 3, 2012.

### **CONFERENCE PAPERS, PANELS AND LECTURES**

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“Terrors of History: Medieval Kabbalah and the Lachrymose Reading of Jewish History.” American Academy of Religion, San Diego, November 23-26, 2024.

“Supernal Archons of the Nations: Christianity and Islam in Medieval Kabbalistic Theosophy.” Delaware Valley Medieval Association, University of Pennsylvania, February 2, 2024.

“Leading from the Margins: Michael Laitman’s Deployment of Kabbalistic Esotericism as a Strategy for Social Influence.” Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism, July 2023.

“Contemplating the End in the Present in Premodern Kabbalah.” Presentation at, "World(s) Ending(s): Jewish Traditions of the End of History and Their Cultural Impact from Antiquity to the Present," joint workshop sponsored by the Berman Center and faculty of Religion and Theology at the University of Groningen, June, 2023.

“‘In-Between Territory’ in the History of Kabbalah: 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries.” Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Boston, December 18-20, 2022.

“*Mikdash* in Exile: Discursive Functions of the Temple in Medieval Kabbalah.” World Congress of Jewish Studies Quadrennial Conference, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, August 8-12, 2022.

“Temporal Spirals: Cosmic Cycles and Jewish History in Medieval Kabbalah.” British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies, University College London, July 11-13, 2022.

“Ritual, Theurgy, and Historical Meaning in Medieval Kabbalah.” Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism. Oxford, July 3-8, 2022.

“Local Strangers: Jewish (Self)Perceptions of Difference in Medieval Kabbalah,” Strangers and Neighbors: Hostility and Hospitality in Late Medieval/Early Modern Contexts, Notre Dame, London Global Gateway, London, UK, May 20-22, 2022.

“Kabbalah and Calamity in the Middle Ages: Accounting for Jewish Historical Misfortune in Medieval Kabbalistic Texts,” British Association for Jewish Studies, Virtual, July 2021.

“Jewish History and Cosmic Time in the Circle of the *Sefer ha-Temunah*,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, December 2020.

“Kabbalah and the Question of Race in the Middle Ages,” American Association for the Study of Religion, December 2020.

Respondent, “Panel #6: Mysticism and Hasidism,” Virtual Oxford Summer Institute for Modern and Contemporary Judaism, Lehigh Berman Center for Jewish Studies and Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, July 5-8, 2020.

Panelist and Co-Organizer, “New Histories of Kabbalah,” Association for Jewish Studies, December 15-19, 2019, San Diego, California.

“Celestial Jews and Terrestrial Realities: Kabbalah and the Search for Meaning in the Middle Ages,” invited lecture, Brigham Young University, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 5, 2019.

“Kabbalah and Joseph Smith,” Maxwell Institute Workshop, Brigham Young University, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 4, 2019.

“Jerusalem in Babylon: Inversions of Center and Periphery in Medieval Kabbalah,” Oxford Summer Institute in Modern and Contemporary Judaism, Oxford University, June 30 – July 5, 2019.

“Enduring Many Evils: Suffering, Despair, and Hope in *Sefer Psekeah 'Ivrin*,” Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, December 17, 2018.

“Enthroned in Yonder Heavens: Kabbalah and Divine Masculinity in Early Mormon Theology,” Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism, Oxford University, July 2-9, 2018.

Respondent to Adam Sutcliffe, “19<sup>th</sup> Cent. Economic History and the Jewish Purpose Question,” CRASSH Mellon Workshop, March 8, 2018, Cambridge University.

“Jews Incarnate: Negotiating the Divine-Human Boundary in Pre-Lurianic Kabbalah,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Washington DC, December 2017.

“Kabbalah in a Surprising Place: Joseph Smith’s Engagement with Jewish Mysticism,” Invited Lecture, University of Arizona, November 9, 2017.

“Messianic Wisdom: Appropriations of Science in Yitzchak Ginsburgh’s Kabbalistic System,” Oxford Summer Institute in the Study of Modern and Contemporary Judaism, Oxford University, July, 2017.

“Jewish Identity and Violence in the Kabbalah of Yitzchak Ginsburgh,” University of Groningen, March, 2017.

Roundtable Panelist, “Historical Context in the Study of Kabbalah,” Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego, December 2016.

“Sealed Books: Kabbalah and the Writing of Jewish History,” Oxford Summer Institute in the Study of Modern and Contemporary Judaism, July, 2016.

“Secrets of History: Kabbalistic Esotericism and the Reading of Jewish Experience,” Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, December 2015.

“Divine Secrets and Jewish Power: Jewish-Christian Polemics and the Development of Medieval Kabbalah,” invited lecture, University of Groningen, May 11, 2015.

“Jewish Bodies in Divine Form: Imagining Jewish Men in Medieval Kabbalah,” invited paper presented at, “Grammars of Coherence and Difference: Jewish Studies and Gender Studies,” conference held at the University of Milwaukee, May 3-5, 2015.

“Revolutions, Ruptures and Revisions: Transformation in Judaism.” Series of seventeen lectures during a month long scholar in residence program, Community Scholar Program, Orange County, CA. December 18, 2014 – January 14, 2015.

“Subverting Rational Knowledge: Shem Tov Ibn Shem Tov’s Kabbalistic Defense of Judaism,” European Association for the Study of Religions Conference, Groningen University, May 2014.

“Beyond the Panopticon: Disciplining Jewish Bodies in Medieval Kabbalah.” Public Lecture in Honor of Elliot Wolfson, New York University, May 2014.

“Kabbalah: Then and Now,” Invited Lecture (Association for Jewish Studies Distinguished Lecture Program), University of South Florida, March 2014.

“Human Bodies in Divine Form: Jewish Engagement with Christianity in Medieval Kabbalah,” Invited Lecture, University of Utah, February 3, 2013.

“Kabbalah and Counter-Theology in the Middle Ages,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Chicago, December, 2012.

Invited Presentation, Ben Gurion University Departmental Seminar, “Kabbalistic Varia: On the Importance of 'Marginal' Kabbalah for Medieval Jewish Intellectual History,” November 12, 2012.

Invited Lecture, Lehigh University Berman Center for Jewish Studies, “Secret Knowledge, Public Power: Kabbalah and Jewish Experience in Medieval Spain,” March 13, 2012.

“Unlocking the Godhead: Kabbalistic Commentaries on the Ten Sefirot and the Spread of Jewish Esotericism in Medieval Spain,” Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington D.C., December, 2011.

“Kabbalah for the Masses: Reconsidering the Elitism of Medieval Jewish Mysticism,” American Academy of Religion conference, San Francisco, November, 2011.

Presentation on manuscript research at, “Text and Image in Religious Cosmography: Reading *Ilanot* and Parallel Artifacts,” Faculty Workshop, University of Haifa, July, 2011.

“Mapping Divine Territory: Kabbalistic Commentaries on the Ten Sefirot in Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century Castile,” European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism Conference, Szeged, Hungary, July, 2011.

“Medieval Kabbalah in Historical Context: New Considerations,” Invited Lecture, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Feb., 2011.

“Beyond Rational Boundaries: Kabbalah, Esotericism and Philosophy in Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century Castile,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, December, 2010.

“Rational Science and Esoteric Discourse in Medieval Spanish Kabbalah,” European Association for Jewish Studies, Ravenna, July 25-29, 2010.

“Secret Battle: Medieval Jewish-Christian Polemics and the Mystical Revision of Judaism,” Yarnton Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Oxford University, July 21, 2010.

“The Politics of Secrets: 13th Century Kabbalah in Context,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Los Angeles, December 2009.

“Brotherhoods of Secrecy: Jewish Mystical Fraternities and Esoteric Discourse in Medieval Spain,” American Academy of Religion Conference, Montreal, November 2009.

Panelist, Professional Development Series in Jewish Studies, sponsored by the Association for Jewish Studies and the Center for Jewish History, October 23, 2009.

“Reading Mysteries: A Brief History of Kabbalah Scholarship.” Invited presentation for Gimmelstob Symposium in Jewish Studies, “Jewish Mysticism: New Insights and Scholarship,” Florida Atlantic University, February 2009.

“The Little Foxes that Ruin the Vineyards: Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov on the Pernicious Influence of Jewish Philosophy,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Washington D.C., December 2008.

“Imagining Kabbalah: Methodological Reflections on Mysticism as an Analytical Category,” American Academy of Religion Conference, Chicago, November 2008.

“Creation, Emanation and the Mystery of the Cosmos in Medieval Kabbalah,” Association for the Study of Esotericism Conference, Charleston, May 2008.

“Mystical Annihilation and Cosmic Renewal in the Zohar.” Mid-Atlantic American Academy of Religion conference, New Brunswick, NJ, March 2008.

Roundtable Respondent and Organizer, “Is Kabbalah Mysticism?” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, San Diego, December 2007.

“Ecstatic Triumph: Kabbalah, Jewish Identity, and Jewish-Christian Polemics in 13<sup>th</sup> Century Castile,” American Comparative Literature Association conference, Puebla, Mexico, April, 2007.

“Spreading the Secrets of the Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism and the Confrontation with Christianity in the Middle Ages,” Public Lecture at Lafayette College, March 13, 2007.

“Jewish Mysticism: A Response to Medieval Jewish-Christian Relations,” First Friday Lecture, Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding, Muhlenberg College, October 12, 2007.

“Kabbalah and Conflict: Thirteenth-Century Spanish Kabbalah and Jewish-Christian Polemics,” Association for Jewish Studies conference, San Diego, December, 2006.

“Philosophy, Mysticism, and the 13th Century Jewish-Christian Debate

in Yoseph Gikatilla's Early Works,” Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington, D.C., December 2005.

“Mystical Aspects of Worship in the Zohar,” Association for Jewish Studies conference, Chicago, December, 2004.

“Panentheism and Mystical Union in the Zohar,” Association for Jewish Studies conference, Boston, December 2003.

Vassar College, Spring 2002, Fishman Faculty Development Seminar on Jewish Studies in the Academy, Panelist, “Trajectories in Jewish Studies.”

### **COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

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Beginning 2024	Vice President for Membership and Outreach, Association for Jewish Studies
2020 – Present	Division Chair for “Jewish Mysticism,” Association for Jewish Studies
2015 – 2021	Chair, Religion Studies Department, Lehigh University
2014 – 2022	Director, Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University
2012 – 2018	Association for Jewish Studies Board of Directors
2005 – 2014	Director, Jewish Studies Program, Muhlenberg College
2010 – 2013	Library Committee, Muhlenberg College
2007 – 2010	Nominating Committee, Muhlenberg College (Chair 2009-10)
2005 – 2012	Faculty Representative, Theta Alpha Kappa Religion Honors Society
2005	Religion Department Planning Committee, Muhlenberg College
2004-2005	Jewish Studies Steering Committee, Vassar College

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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American Academy of Religion  
Association for Jewish Studies  
European Association for Jewish Studies  
English and Irish Association for Jewish Studies

### **LANGUAGES**

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Hebrew (reading and speaking)  
Aramaic (reading)



German (reading)  
French (reading)  
Latin (basic reading)