

tation informs chapter 6. Access to both Greek and Ottoman sources places Erol among a still-small group of scholars using a comparative perspective in Ottoman and Greek studies. Given the specific significance of comparative source analysis in this hybrid field, Erol's penetrating study would have benefited even more from an explanation of what the various source materials offer us: their outlooks, but also their possible limitations.

With regard to the organization of the book, the narrative slightly repeats itself in chapters 2, 3, and 4. As intriguing as the discussion is here, the reader somewhat loses track of where one chapter ends and where another begins, since they all refer to social class, tradition, history, and relationship with other musical styles. Further, the book is first presented and reads (until the end of chap. 4) as an examination of discourse on ecclesiastical music, whereas chapters 5 and 6, which deal with other types of Greek music, and more specifically with its practical aspects, seem disconnected from the earlier discussion. These organizational issues notwithstanding, this is a thoroughly researched, erudite, and original examination in Ottoman-Greek studies/history, which is also relevant to broader scholarship through the connections it builds with the history of European, Byzantine, and ancient music, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies.

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LIORA R. HALPERIN. *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. xiv, 313. \$40.00.

On my first trip to London, I was charmed, as many Americans are, by the announcement on the Underground to “mind the gap.” Such a precious expression, I thought; it so perfectly encapsulates the multiple levels of linguistic fantasy and practicality in a simple communication—for me, a fantasy of “Englishness” in its idiomatic usage of the term “mind,” the idiosyncrasy of the term “gap,” all in the service of a pragmatic piece of safety advice.

This phrase kept returning to me as I worked my way through Liora R. Halperin's outstanding monograph, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948*. This groundbreaking work successfully “brings the study of language . . . into the historical field” (18), making good use of the illumination provided by applying historical context to the sociolinguistics of the modern Hebrew language in the crucial years of its crystallization as *the* modern Jewish national language in British Mandate Palestine. But for all its theoretical erudition and prodigious research, what comes through most clearly is fairly straightforward: that as historians of national movements, especially one that has become as charged in late modernity as Zionism, we must always “mind the gap.” As Halperin convincingly illustrates, the variety of gaps in our assumptions about the flow of national development between ideological aspiration and practical necessity, propaganda and the complexities of

human attitudes, and nationalist and critical history must all be attended to carefully. And in exploring these gaps as they are expressed in linguistic conflict, Halperin convincingly illustrates her most important observation: that “language dominance, though real and powerful, was not without its limits and that those limits, when viewed as more than stumbling blocks, illuminate the extent and the impact of a national group's contacts with outside entities: in this case, the Jewish diaspora, the European powers (especially Britain), and the Arab world” (10).

The reemergence of Hebrew as a modern language in the early twentieth century and its entrenchment, a mere half century later, as the vernacular of a new nation-state is astonishing by any measure. Though told many times, the story warrants repeating: Hebrew became a vibrant living language after a millennium of dormancy as a liturgical and devotional tongue against almost impossible odds. Zionists in Mandate Palestine envisioned creating a nation-state replete with its own language among a population composed of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many of them not driven by the same ideological fervor, who had to learn their new mother tongue as a second (or third, fourth, or fifth language). And all were immersed among a majority of Arabic speakers almost uniformly hostile to the national project of Zionism. And to top it off, both Hebrew and Arabic speakers were governed by a British Empire on the wane. Even though the classic narrative of Hebrew's revival has often embraced uncritical triumphalism at the expense of the rough-and-tumble politics and murky ethics of linguistic domination, it is a remarkable story nonetheless.

Clearly, Hebrew's emergence as the national language of the Jewish state was fraught with ideological significance, and has been understood almost entirely in those terms. The ideology that Hebrew was the “true” national language, the only one appropriate for a nascent Jewish state and its revival, is one important building block of the success of the Zionist ideal. In reality, as Halperin uncovers through her meticulous research, the road to Hebrew's viability, let alone success, was tenuous and fraught, not the least due to the ambivalence of would-be Hebrew speakers themselves. It was a question far more of dealing with the challenge of pragmatic or “low” linguistic usage of so-called alien languages among would-be Zionist immigrants during the Mandate, which the founders of the state believed required an aggressive response. And indeed those responses were often reflexively aggressive and, to modern eyes, impossibly short-sighted. Halperin's study recalls Menachem Ussishkin's observation that “regarding a foreign language, I don't think we need it at all. We should learn just one language: Hebrew and specifically Hebrew. The multiplicity of languages is unnatural” (181). A few pages later, she describes the words of Zionist luminary Ahad Ha'am, who “once commented that women had no need for foreign-language skills: ‘French, why do they need it?’” (189).

Halperin's choice of foci for her work is insightful, reflecting the best influences of current trends in social and cultural history. She chooses five distinct areas that function as representative microcosms of language negotia-

tion in Mandate Palestine. She begins with an excursion through the everyday languages of leisure—the lived experience of Hebrew and its competing idioms in “home, coffeehouse and cinema.” Here we encounter conflict that is surprisingly resonant with contemporary Israeli-diaspora relations, for example, the irony surrounding the language of cinema, as the young *yishuv*, entranced with itself as forward-thinking and viewing Hebrew as the modern choice, is confronted by the predominance of Yiddish film and the absence of comparable production in Hebrew. Though more zealous purists advocated excluding “foreign” languages (especially Yiddish, which carried a taint of the diaspora), Yiddish films retained their popularity: “there seemed to be something off about wholly barring the consumption of foreign Jewish culture in the old-new Jewish homeland: though it might be officially unacceptable, surely society could accommodate its presence” (57). Other areas of daily life that Halperin explores, including commerce, bureaucracy, and education, reveal similar complexity and ambivalence about language on the day-to-day level of Jewish Zionists, Palestinian Arabs, and British administrators. Importantly, in her chapter “Zion in Babel: The Yishuv in Its Arab-Speaking Context,” Halperin also turns to the question of Arabic and the implications of Zionism building a linguistic community—and displacing another. This chapter will be of most interest to scholars of Arab-Zionist relations in the pre-state era, and, like the rest of the book, it provides a nuanced portrait. At the same time, this chapter proffers questions that cannot be fully answered given the book’s linguistic parameters, as it is here that the reader feels most pronouncedly the absence of Arabic sources. While Halperin attends to the smattering of Arab voices translated and collected into Hebrew in a few sources, a more immersive engagement with untranslated Arabic sources in this context remains a desideratum, albeit one to which Halperin’s study draws unique attention.

But it is in Halperin’s third chapter, “Languages of Bureaucracy,” that the power of her work comes most to the fore. She uncovers in the unglamorous world of mid-level clerical workers, translators, and other day-to-day contributors to civil society the tensions of tri-lingual Mandate Palestine with great nuance; it is in this chapter that the reader truly begins to appreciate the stakes of the linguistic struggle. Halperin’s attunement to this world is in itself laudable, for instead of the familiar story of grandiose founders and nationalist theorists, she presents the voices of such colorful (and vaguely absurd) figures as Israel Amikam (né Masseoff) and his fellow members of the “Battalion of the Defenders of the Hebrew Language.” Here Halperin’s attentiveness to the “invisible” actors of history exemplifies the strengths of the book as a whole, revealing a background of gritty conflict and, all too seldom, attempts at cooperation and understanding between competing national linguistic projects. Halperin’s description of the linguistic ménage à trois of Hebrew, Arabic, and English evokes a chilling sense of foreshadowing of the divisions that have come to fruition today.

Halperin’s study richly illustrates the many places where the lived experiences of individuals —of Jews set-

ting in Mandate Palestine for reasons far more varied than the idealized motive of “building up the land”—begin to fill in the gap that has marked our understanding of this crucial era of the formation of Israeli national identity.

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CHRIS VAUGHAN. *Darfur: Colonial Violence, Sultanic Legacies and Local Politics, 1916–1956*. (Eastern Africa.) Oxford: James Currey, 2015. Pp. xiv, 231. \$80.00.

Scholars of modern African history are reexamining the nature of the European colonial state. As a result of this reconsideration, historians are gaining a better understanding of the importance of the local peoples in the processes of colonial state formation. In *Darfur: Colonial Violence, Sultanic Legacies and Local Politics, 1916–1956*, Chris Vaughan provides an important case study of British rule in Darfur, in the western Sudan, showing how local populations “actually shape the way the state is manifested at a local level” (6). Using the example of Darfur, Vaughan presents a significant reexamination of colonial states’ operations, which contrasts with older conceptualizations of both the colonial state and local society “as being single monolithic structures,” and emphasizes “the multiple, contingent points of interaction” between them (6).

Vaughan notes that the study of the relationships between the central government and local populations in Darfur is relevant for understanding the brutal conflict in Darfur in the twenty-first century. While a large number of publications have focused on that civil war, Vaughan’s book does not deal specifically with that conflict. However, a strong case is made that recent Darfuri history can be seen as “one phase in a continuing, non-linear process of state formation” (210).

Two themes are important in Vaughan’s analysis: the significant role of local elites in shaping colonial administrative policy, and the crucial role of violence in administration as well as in establishing imperial control. Vaughan identifies the “core argument” of the study as “the interconnection and interdependence of state power and local politics” (18). Local political elites sought to involve the government directly in local politics, and did so successfully. The interactions were important in shaping the nature of what was called, in British imperial terminology, Native Administration, and they laid important foundations for the role of chiefs and local notables in the political arena as it developed by the time of independence.

Some current scholarship emphasizes the brutality of colonial rule, but Vaughan’s analysis, while recognizing that brutality, views violence as an integral part of the processes of colonial state formation. Vaughan concludes that colonial government reshaped the nature of local authority “by the direct use—or alternatively the licensing—of violence at a local level” (198). What this meant, as shown in western Darfur, was that “the use of violence . . . was central to the everyday practice of administration” (89). The active interactions between local elites and colonial administrators in setting local colonial policies was