

the demise of the Ottoman order. Unfortunately, this rather shrewd diagnosis of Bayar's comes in the middle of the book (p. 101) and one only wishes that she explored it further and turned it into a larger argument.

With regards to the weakness of the book, the second chapter, which provides a general overview of the Ottoman Empire, stands out. While it is commendable that one full chapter is devoted to this "prehistory," the summary is outdated, somewhat caricaturized, includes mistakes, and fails to engage not only with the most recent Ottoman historians, but also with the works of historical sociologists of the empire (such as Karen Barkey and Fatma Müge Göçek), who studied the Ottoman government's management of difference which would become such an important point of reference for early Turkish Republican ruling cadres.

Throughout the book Bayar shows or mentions how Armenians were the ultimate others of the Turkhood in the making. But the book does not pay enough attention to the reasons why this was the case. If one is not already fully familiar with what Bayar refers to as "the massacres of 1915" (p. 30) and the transfer of property from Armenians to the Muslim population and state (a fact gone unnoted by Bayar), one cannot fully understand why, despite their negligible numbers, Armenians remained so central to the construction of modern Turkhood. Bayar does seem to think that "wiping out [of] almost entire Armenian community" (p. 30) does constitute genocide (he quotes Ronald Suny's words about the event where he talks about it as genocide, p. 31) but does not elaborate on the reasons why and how this genocidal legacy influenced Turkish political elites' decisions in the postgenocide era regarding Turkhood and its limits.

Finally, it is unfortunate that Bayar did not engage more directly with the literature on early Turkish Republic. The book would have been even stronger had she made connections with the works of Marc Baer, Başak İnce, Derya Bayır, Alexis Alexandris, Corry Gudstat, and İrini Sarioglu, just to name a few of the significant people in the field whose works are missing in the book.

In the final analysis, however, this is an important work that adds to our understanding of the early Turkish Republic and the Turkish identity as formulated in Ankara in the 1920s and 30s. It will be useful to those studying nation building, nation formation, and nationalism both in the Middle East and outside of it. Each chapter—focusing on language, education, and citizenship—has its own separate literatures to which Bayar's addition of the Turkish case is most effective.

The year 2015 was a heavy year for Ottoman and Turkish studies as we have busied ourselves with intellectually commemorating the centenary of the Armenian genocide. In eight years, when we will mark the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, Yeşim Bayar's voice will be an important one. One hopes that by 2023 our cumulative effort will have paid off, and we will have finally come to more satisfactory answers as to not just the question of who a Turk was (or has been) but also to the question of why s/he had to be a Muslim.

LIORA HALPERIN, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015). Pp. 328. \$40.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780300197488.

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*Babel in Zion* is an exemplary, smoothly written cultural history that situates the resurgence of Hebrew as a national vernacular within the complex and multilingual setting of interwar Palestine.

Histories of modern Jewish settlement in the prestate period generally describe Hebrew's "success" in becoming the language that inspired a cultural and political revolution that in turn produced a state. Zealous efforts of various official and grassroots groups to promote Hebrew, at the expense of the many languages spoken by Jewish immigrants, are held up as evidence of Hebrew's eventual triumph, and with it the emergence of the "new Hebrew," superior in every way to his hapless cousin, the "diaspora Jew." Halperin's book doesn't so much dismantle this argument (if anything, after reading the book, readers may be even more impressed with Hebrew's achievements, given the tremendous competition it faced), as deftly step around it to peer, and at times squint, through the looking glass, peeling back Hebrew's more well-known institutional accomplishments to reveal a fuller and more complex description of what was happening on the ground—in cafes and cinemas, on the street and in markets, in schools and in the workplace—as well as, literally, in peoples' mouths. Indeed, oral history undergirds some of the book's critical claims, as the author makes ample use of oral testimony to elucidate languages spoken in the home, and in other spaces, as well as the array of languages shaping the nascent population's reading and writing habits. The book devotes chapters to different spheres (leisure, commerce, education), and one long chapter to a single, specific language—Arabic. The result is a sense of mandatory Palestine's Jewish population at work and at play, with a spotlight on those "other" languages (English, Yiddish, German, Arabic) that shaped its official and recreational selves; both domains, as Halperin demonstrates, were deeply political, and subject to formal and informal patterns of license, control, and transgression regarding language use.

Constructing a "social history of language" (p. 19) in which "the grand promises and simplistic dichotomies of national revival" are contrasted with "the rough-and-tumble of lived experience" (p. 13), Halperin demonstrates how "the Zionist program to adopt Hebrew was complicated by a range of personal, communal and collective considerations" (p. 23). Her claims persuade through a series of vivid examples drawn from careful archival research and a flexible organizational model grounded in space, but not entirely tethered to it. Hebrew's great antagonists were embedded in specific spatial formations: on the one hand, Europe, its achievements and cultural status as the space of origin for much of Palestine's new Jewish population; on the other hand, the local landscape, with its Arabic speakers and institutions, and its English-language bureaucratic infrastructure.

Language operates at the seam of the public and the private; the connection between these two domains, and how they are shaped and defined by language use, was at the core of Zionist visions of space, an inversion of the enlightenment dictum of acculturation, to be a Jew at home and a *mentsch* in the street. A newly vernacular Hebrew was envisioned as a key marker of this distinctiveness, and a building block of a new national culture; it was not, however, the native language for most of the Jewish population during the years that are the subject of this study. How, then, to describe and analyze the considerable gap between the top-down *vision* of Hebrew, and the *reality*—the "Babel"—that characterized language use in Mandate Palestine?

Halperin adopts the idea of the "informal state" (p. 33) and draws on theorists of leisure to describe Tel Aviv's emergent public sphere and the ways in which attitudes toward language use acquired prescriptive effect in the prestate period (p. 59). Some kind of policing was expected to happen even inside the home, a space where, as Halperin notes, "languages other than Hebrew were most likely to be spoken" (p. 36). Perhaps, even more important, the home was also a site of other "transgressive" linguistic behaviors, including reading and writing in other languages, such as the composition of letters or keeping a personal journal. Halperin's construction of the home as a multilingual site provides a quiet and convincing counterpoint to her vivid depiction of the noisy, but equally multilingual, coffeehouse. Together they offer a vivid sense of how Jewish immigrant society interacted with this particular mandate of Zionist discourse in both public and private settings.

Yet the idea of a social history of language encompasses more than its communicative function and must also account for language's symbolic value. Therefore, beyond the lively sense of how and why people spoke, wrote, and read the way they did, the volume also critically explores how Hebrew became a marker for things other than language—in particular labor: “The orthodox conception of a Hebrew labor sphere marked by exclusive use of the Hebrew language was challenged in practice from two major directions: from the apparently degenerate commerce lurking below, and the well-oiled machinery of foreign import and export, threatening from above with its economic power and leverage” (p. 97). Halperin unpacks this vivid image of Hebrew “sandwiched” between Arabic and Yiddish—from “below”—and English, French, and German—from “above”—and attempts to uncover what has been obscured by contemporaneous voices calling for a “blanket rejection of language mixing” (p. 98).

The method here pays respect to the status of the anecdote as a marker of something that falls between the cracks, potentially challenging official discourse. Paradigmatic is as paradigmatic does: despite a caveat recognizing “the limitations of oral histories,” Halperin’s claim regarding the existence of a gendered “Yiddish-Arabic netherworld” (p. 81), demonstrated through a fluid reading of oral testimony by Jewish housewives who recall buying fresh produce from Arab women street sellers, feels intuitively correct. And though the author seems to want to move beyond scholarship devoted to mixed-language use in more elite cultural forms such as modern Hebrew literature, it is worth noting that this kind of hybrid vernacular is imagined as early as 1909, by the Russian Jewish author Yosef Hayim Brenner, who penned the first work of modern Hebrew fiction set and written in Palestine, including within it the following pointed description: “From a courtyard opposite a voice that could have been either a man’s or a woman’s shouted in a mixture of Arabic and Yiddish into the night air: ‘*Rukh rukh min hon. S’tezikh tsugetsheppet?*’” (Alan Lelchuk and Gershon Shaked, Eds., *Eight Great Hebrew Short Novels* [New Milford, Conn.: Toby Press, 2005], 52). Halperin’s work thus compliments both literary scholarship as well as social and cultural histories of Jewish life in early 20th-century Palestine by Anat Helman and Maoz Azaryahu.

Studded with gems of conceptual and historical insight, *Babel in Zion* produces two broad critical claims regarding the relation of modern Jewish settlement in Palestine to both its European origins and the local landscape. First, Jewish populations have historically been multilingual, negotiating language difference across social, ideological, and economic forces; as Halperin notes in her conclusion, Jewish language diversity in Mandate Palestine is in some sense another iteration of this linguistic dexterity. Her study thus compliments the abovementioned work in literary history, as well as other historical studies of Jewish multilingualism and vernacular culture. Second, though language contacts between Hebrew and Arabic as spoken languages were often “hierarchical, unequal encounters” (p. 146) and despite a “more official discourse of communal separation” (p. 150), the two languages—and the populations that used them—were linked and embedded in the same social, political terrain. Therefore, any depiction of Jewish cultural discourse in early 20th-century Palestine must also account for Hebrew’s relation to its spoken and unspoken local “other.” *Babel in Zion* is thus related to other recent scholarship devoted to this project, such as Lital Levy’s *Poetic Trespass: Writing Between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Halperin’s book succeeds in bringing to noisy life the urban cacophony of interwar Palestine, so poignantly remembered in the well-known opening lines from Leah Goldberg’s retrospective poem, “Tel Aviv 1935”: “The masts on the housetops then, were / like the masts of Columbus’ ships, and / every raven that perched on their tips/announced a different shore” (T. Carmi, ed. and trans., *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* [London: Penguin Classics, 2006], p. 553). Her volume invites readers to imagine a relation between language and nation that extends beyond geographic and institutional boundaries, embedding the critical study of the Zionist project in those mental landscapes in which it was born, as well as those physical realities shaping its formative years.