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### Introduction

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## **Introduction: Jews: migration, movement, location**

From the earliest accounts, travel and migration, movement across space and time have been a defining feature of Jewish history. This is more than a historical fact, it is also a characteristic of the representation of Jewishness: Jews are associated with travel and migration, historically and in cultural production. In this history, no less crucial than the movement of people, we see the movement of texts, objects, and ideas, which travel both physically and intellectually as generations in distant locations engage with them at different times and places. The three articles assembled in this section work within different academic disciplines and offer a spread of approaches to the theme. Together, they are an indication of the breadth of work in this area, while at the same time demonstrating shared ideas and strategies of interrogation, connecting a range of inquiries within Jewish Studies which engage migration. The three articles all originated in 2017 as part of a flurry of activity, particularly in British academia, engaging with migration. The conference of the British Association for Jewish Studies 2017 was entitled *Jews on the Move: Exploring the movement of Jews, objects, texts, and ideas in space and time*. This conference showcased the range of current research activity, and revealed a particularly vibrant, international, postgraduate community engaged in research on migration across all Humanities disciplines. The conference in July 2017 also marked the conclusion of the Astaire Seminar Series in Jewish Studies which hosted events at the universities of Glasgow, Manchester, St Andrews, Durham, and Edinburgh on the theme of *Jews: movement, migration, location*. An international group of scholars presented papers addressing ideas of movement, migration, and location in interwar Hasidism in Poland (Ada Rapoport-Albert), in Jewish mysticism after the Holocaust (Mia Spiro), in the context of cosmopolitanism and Jews as exiles during the 1930s (Sander Gilman and Cathy Gelbin), in early modern movements of Jews and their books (Adam Shear), in relation to the subjects of migration and change in Soviet literature (Emily Finer), through the Talmudic *ger* (Elad Lapidot), in transcultural Jewish cuisine (Ilan Baron), and in the transformation of the voices of Jewish immigrants in American literature (Hana Wirth-Nesher). While the majority of the papers presented could not be included in this section, the

diversity of subjects and approaches to the overarching theme of movement and migration is an indication of the richness of the research currently carried out at European, Israeli, and North American universities. Indeed, the thematic orientation of the events speaks to major currents in Jewish Studies at present. CONTACT Hannah Holtschneider [h.holtschneider@ed.ac.uk](mailto:h.holtschneider@ed.ac.uk) JEWISH CULTURE AND HISTORY 2019, VOL. 20, NO. 1, 1–2 <https://doi.org/10.1080/1462169X.2019.1557459> © 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group Elad Lapidot's reflections on the *ger* in Talmudic thought point to the fact of migration as a consistent topos of Jewish thought. The article makes a connection between the category of stranger as a concept and a reality and its place within Jewish thought, connecting it to wider philosophical currents. As such the *ger* emerges as a central figure for thinking about borders, migration and place, particularly in during and for times of 'deterritorialization'. Research on Jewish migration research is most prominent in relation to 1880 and beyond, which is the context the other two articles speak to, albeit in different academic disciplines. Scott Ury takes to task the dominant interpretive paradigm of the westward mass migration from Eastern Europe and asks pertinent questions about the links between national and communal historiography, suggesting opportunities for broadening and balancing the inquiry. Emily Finer does just that in her article on Lev Lunts. She argues that, contrary to widespread impression, 'a positive and independent attitude to being a Russian Jewish writer was entirely possible in the early 1920s'. Lev Lunts' letters, published writings and wider literary activity see him reflect his complex cultural and linguistic belonging through various migration narratives. And it is at this point that we may see the three disciplines in which the articles are located – philosophy, history, and literature – converge. The literary analysis of migration stories links us back to the Talmud, and we observe reverberations of migration as a consistent theme in Jewish experience, writing, and reflection across academic disciplines and genres of writing.