at research emerging from and based on sources depicting the Holocaust east of the Molotov line. This should be considered the next, natural step in the development of this field.

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NOSTALGIA FOR A FOREIGN LAND: STUDIES
IN RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE LITERATURE IN ISRAEL

By Roman Katsman. Brighton: MA: Academic Studies Press, 2016. 310 pp.

The two waves of immigration from the Former Soviet Union, in the 1970s and 1990s, created one of the largest ethnic groups ever to arrive in the state of Israel. Following this immigration, Jews from the former USSR constituted 12% of the entire population of Israel; though it is a highly heterogeneous group, its members were soon crystallized into a distinct category in Israeli society—"the Russians." The tremendous number of Russian speakers introduced the Russian language into every area of life in the country, and fashioned institutional and cultural infrastructure of the existent Russian community in Israel.

The Russian-speaking immigrants in Israel refused to throw off their former identity in their efforts to assimilate in the local culture, unlike their ancestors, who left Russia and arrived in the Land of Israel roughly 100 years before. While keeping the language and the culture was also desirable among the immigrant of the 1970s, the different circumstances in the 1990s created a real opportunity for living between the two cultures. Under Soviet rule in the 1970s, when the Iron Curtain precluded free communication between those who had left the USSR and those who remained, immigrating to Israel implied a total severance from the Russian space and culture. But by the 1990s, things changed radically: immigrants could foster strong continuing ties with Russia and with other immigrants, many of whom had departed the Soviet Union for other countries such as the United States and Germany. Thus, while the ties to the place of birth were mostly limited in the past, in the last three decades people can live, in practice, between countries, with a free two-way flow of information. In these circumstances, there is no need to pledge loyalty to a single nation or culture; on the contrary, people choose to define themselves as transnational, dividing their self-definition between their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity and their host country.

This phenomenon is extremely interesting when it comes to Israeli literature written in Russian. In the past, Russian literature and culture had a major role in the formation of Israeli culture. The great founders of Hebrew literature in the twentieth century—Shaul Tchernichovsky, Avraham Shlonsky, Lea Goldberg, Natan Alterman, Alexander Penn, and Rachel Bluwstein—spoke Russian, and were raised on the Russian classics and influenced by Russian modernism, but they nonetheless chose to write in Hebrew after immigrating to Palestine. In contrast, many current Russian-Israeli authors choose to write and publish their works in their mother tongue, address their works to the Israeli Russian readers as well as to the global Russian reading audience, and gain success all over the world and even win major prizes in Russia.

Roman Katsman's book, *Nostalgia for a Foreign Land*, offers a pioneering discussion on Israeli authors writing in Russian during the last few decades. While the Israeli Russian literary scene was formulated by the 1970s immigration with figures such as Anna Isakova, Irina Vrubel-Golubkina, Mikhail Grobman, Maya Kaganskaya, and Mikhail Gendelev, to name a few, the 1990s mark a new and distinctive period in the writing of Isareli-Russain authors, as demonstrated by Katsman.

Katsman's book is composed of four chapters, each dedicated to a close reading of the works of one or two authors. Though the authors and the works differ from each other, together they mark what Katsman proposes as the "Russian Israeli literary metaphysics of the 1990s and the 2000s."

The first and most detailed chapter in the book is dedicated to the work of Dina Rubina. Though Rubina began to publish and gain recognition while living in the Soviet Union, most of her distinctive works were written in Israel, among them her most known book, *Here Comes the Messiah* (1996), which was translated into English in 2000. In her writing, Rubina employs autobiographical materials, calling into question the relations between character, narrator, implied authors, and her own persona as a writer. She produces a "carnival fantasies and sets out on the dangerous adventure of authentic historical existence and recognition." Rubina's work is nomadic by nature, referring to different spaces in Russian and Israel, but merges them by blurring dream with reality.

Nekod Singer is the second author discussed in Katsman's book. Unlike Dina Rubina, who is a writer of multiple homelands in one language, Singer is a writer who chose to challenge binaries such as author/translator, source/target language, and domestic/foreign culture and to offer a new venue for a multiplicity of languages. This idea was formulated in the bilingual periodical *Dvoetochie:*

Nekudataim (2001), coedited by Nekod Singer and Gali Dana Singer. *Nekuda-taim* strived to break down the definitions of "Russian" and "Hebrew" literature; both Hebrew and Russian editions contain translated and original writing, with a constant reflection and theorization of the concept of translation. His works of prose display a multiplicity of language as he often uses diglossia (a use of words or sentences from a foreign language in a text), and produces a magical realism which reveals the untranslatable quality of language.

The book's third chapter focuses on the image of Jerusalem in the novels of Elizaveta Mikhailichenko and Yury Nesis. In his reading of their work *I/e_rus. olim* from 2004, Katsman shows how the authors produce a philosophical poetic method of creating a virtual network that reveals the process of myth creation in order to describe the Jerusalem syndrome. Featuring imagined characters, self-projection figures, and a cat, combined with historical memory, myths, and biblical stories, Mikhailichenko and Nesis discuss the question of sacrifice and create a metaphysical antinarrative.

Mikhail Yudson's writing stands at the heart of the fourth chapter of the book. Yudson's novel, *The Ladder and the Cabinet*, has been described as a dystopic novel which is postmodern, deconstructive, and antitotalitarian. Katsman demonstrates how this novel provides its protagonist with hallucinations, dreams, and fantasy in order to follow an alternative history of the wandering Jew while revealing his polylingual position.

Katsman's book presents to the reader a vigorous literary scene within the Israeli Russian community, in which transnationalism and multilingual reality turn into artistic means. By engaging with narrative forms that dismantle realism and are comprised of carnivalesque, postmodern, and metaphysical qualities, these authors challenge the Israeli monolingual outlook. Following Katsman's reading, it is disappointing that this vivid literary scene, praised by Russian readers and reviewers, often remains under the radar for many readers in Israel. In 2003, Yediot Books and the Absorption Ministry published a volume containing a selection of texts written between 1970 and 2000 by Russian Israeli authors and translated into Hebrew. The anthology was titled *Ruhot ha-rafaim shel Israel* (The Ghosts of Israel), a title which ironically reflects the authors' location as migrants, midway between two worlds, not completely "living," but rather hovering over the Israeli cultural space. While the anthology contains highly interesting works, its overarching goal, to bring this prose to Hebrew readers, was not achieved; with very little demand, the publishing house eventually shredded the copies remaining in its warehouse. Following

Roman Katsman's book, one can hope that those authors, and their fascinating works, will gain recognition beyond the borders of language, as a part of global contemporary world literature.

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THE BIBLE IN/AND POPULAR CULTURE: A CREATIVE ENCOUNTER

Edited by Philip Culbertson and Elaine M. Wainwright. Leiden: Brill, 2011. 210 pp.

This collection of essays emerged out of an awareness that biblical scholars have moved beyond exploring the intersection of the Bible and art and film to considerations of a host of other media, including music, literature, graphic novels, comics, and television. The editors note that, despite the growing breadth of scholarship, there is as yet no systematic study of the theoretical engagement of the Bible and popular culture. To that end, the essays in this volume give attention not only to a wide range of media and to a plethora of places (United States, New Zealand, Britain, Jamaica), but also to the ways in which important theorists provide crucial analytical lenses (Michel de Certeau, Pierre Bourdieu, Mikhail Bakhtin, Judith Butler, and James Scott)—though the book does not attempt to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework for the nexus of the Bible and pop culture.

Michael J. Gilmour's opening essay reads in an intertextual mode, drawing on Salman Rushdie's image of all the stories of the world being an ocean or sea of narratives swirling around in countless intersecting currents. He then dips into the waters by examining the way that the figure of Satan changes from Milton's *Paradise Lost* to Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Mark McEntire draws parallels between the withdrawal of God as a character throughout the Hebrew Bible with the increasingly distant and absent God invoked by Emmylou Harris in her album *Red Dirt Girl*. Harris helps her audience learn to cope with God's silence and to embrace the loneliness of human existence. Dan W. Clanton explores a litany of depictions of Jesus in a variety of media, from Henry Ward Beecher through Cecil B. DeMille and Mel Gibson to graphic novels and the animated *South Park*. His reception history analysis concludes that Jesus functions as a malleable mythic figure in American culture, an empty container into which many different meanings can be poured. Philip Culbertson's essay ex-