

ENG 630; meets with JSP/REL 439 Travel, Translation, Pilgrimage

Prof. Ken Frieden

From the Crusades to contemporary tourism, travel has been a prominent motif in religious literature and in popular culture. We will look at accounts of both secular travel and pilgrimage narratives, primarily by Jewish travelers. Most claim authenticity, although the line between fact and fiction is not always easy to determine. In any case, travel narratives have played a central role in literary and religious history. The pilgrim often sees the world in relationship to Scripture.

As many of the narratives we will read were not written in English, for much of the semester we will work with translations. Consequently, the course will also refer to pertinent issues in translation studies. There is a natural connection between exploration and translation, because as George Steiner wrote, “The translator invades, extracts, and brings home.”

Required Textbooks

Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages: 19 Firsthand Accounts. Ed. Elkan Nathan Adler.
New York: Dover, 1987.

Romanelli, Samuel. *Travail in an Arab Land*. Trans. Yedida K. Stillman and Norman A. Stillman. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.

Nahman of Bratslav and Nathan Sternharz [1806-1810/1815]. *The Tales*. Trans. Arnold J. Band.
New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Conrad, Joseph. *Typhoon and Other Tales*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Studies Reader*. 2d ed. London: Routledge, 2000/2004.

[Used copies of most of these books are available on Amazon.com and bn.com]

Other readings are available as scanned PDFs on Blackboard. **Print them out and bring them to class for discussion! It would also be possible to order print-on-demand copies of some texts.**

Schedule

Part One: Pre-Modern Travel Narratives & Pilgrimages

- WEEK 1 Introduction: Travel and Translation
Travel in the Hebrew Bible
The Book of Jonah and Psalm 107.
Any translation is acceptable; in class, we will refer to the Jewish Publication Society *Tanakh* [PDFs on Blackboard].
- WEEK 2 Medieval Travel in the Shadow of Scripture
Eldad the Danite (ca. 880), in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 5-15.
Benjamin of Tudela (1165-73), in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 38-63.
Also Benjamin of Tudela in Jerusalem [PDF on Blackboard, pp. 82-86]
[If time permits, look at the complete text of *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, trans. Marcus Nathan Adler (1907); PDF on Blackboard.]
Petachia of Ratisbon (1170-87), in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 64-91.
Jacob ha-Cohen, in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 92-99.
Isaac Chelo in Jerusalem, in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 130-134.
- WEEK 3 Renaissance Travel: Intertextual, Rationalistic, Naturalistic?
Meshullam ben R. Menahem of Volterra (1481), in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 156-207.
“The Letters of Obadiah Jaré da Bertinoro” (1487-90), in *Jewish Travellers in the Middle Ages*, pp. 209-250.
George Steiner, “The Hermeneutic Motion” [from *After Babel*, 1975], in Venuti’s *Translation Studies Reader* (textbook), pp. 193-198. [Also on Blackboard]

Part Two: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Travels

- WEEK 4 Willem Bontekoe, *Memorable Description of the East Indian Voyage, 1618-25*, trans. C. B. Bodde-Hodgkinson and Pieter Geyl (New York: McBride, 1929).
[Pages 1-70 available on Blackboard, Adobe pages 1-34]
Friedrich Schleiermacher, “On the Different Methods of Translating,” trans. Susan Bernofsky, in Venuti’s *Translation Studies Reader*, pp. 43-63.
First 3-page paper is due

WEEK 5 Samuel Romanelli, *Travail in an Arab Land* [1792], trans. Yedida K. Stillman and Norman A. Stillman (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989).

Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem" (1978/rev. 1990, from *Polysystem Studies*, pp. 45-51), in Venuti's *Translations Studies Reader*, pp. 199-204.

WEEK 6 [Interlude] The Seven Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor. In *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, trans. Edward Forster (Philadelphia: Hazard, 1856), pp. 67-87. [PDF on Blackboard; excerpt starting on p. 67 is Adobe p. 116]
Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Translators of *The Thousand and One Nights* [1935]." Trans. Esther Allen, in Venuti's *Translation Studies Reader*, pp. 94-108.

WEEK 7 George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands in the Western Part of the Pacific Ocean, and the Shipwreck of the Antelope, East-India Packet, There*. Dublin: White, 1788. [Esp. pages 10-97; PDF on Blackboard, Adobe 49-139]
If time permits, also read Background to Keate PDF on Blackboard.
Second 3-page paper is due

Part Three: Fantasy Travels, Allegories, & Pilgrimages

WEEK 8 "The Tale of the Jerusalemite," in *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*, ed. David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1990). [Pp. 121-142 available Blackboard]

Nahman of Bratslav and Nathan Sternharz [1806-1810/1815], *The Tales*, trans. Arnold J. Band (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), Tale 2.

Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" trans. Harry Zohn, in Venuti's *Translation Studies Reader*, pp. 75-85.

WEEK 9 Nahman of Bratslav and Nathan Sternharz [1806-1810/1815], *The Tales*, trans. Arnold J. Band (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), Esp. tales 1, 6, 9, 10, 12.

WEEK 10 Nathan of Nemirov [Nathan Sternharz], "The Pilgrimage" ["Order of His Journey to the Land of Israel," 1815], in *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom*, trans. Aryeh Kaplan (Brooklyn: Breslov Research Institute, 1973). [PDF of Pilgrimage 1, pp. 33-102 on Blackboard]. (Continued on next page.)

Nathan of Breslov [Nathan Sternharz], "Journey to the Holy Land," in *Tzaddik (Chayey Moharan)* (1820s/1874), trans. Avraham Greenbaum (Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1987). [PDF of Journey 2, pp. 45-60 on Blackboard].

Third 3-page paper is due

Part Four: Travels from Eastern Europe & Beyond

WEEK 11 S. Y. Abramovitch, *The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third*, trans. Hillel Halkin from *Tales of Mendele the Book Peddler*, ed. Ken Frieden and Dan Miron (New York: Schocken Books, 1996), pp. 301-391. Book or PDF available.

WEEK 12 Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon* and "Poland Revisited" (1915)

WEEK 13 Travel narratives selected by students.

WEEK 14 Travel narratives selected by students.

WEEK 15 Travel narratives selected by students.
Conclusions and Review
Final paper is due

Students should write and submit, in response to every set of weekly readings, an analysis of at least a paragraph (and up to a page). E-mail your papers—*the night before class, if possible*—to Ken Frieden, kfrieden@syr.edu, and bring hard copy to class for discussion.

First 3 Papers should be 3-page (double-spaced) close analyses, focusing on literary aspects such as narrative techniques or figurative language, in conjunction with ideological issues. The final paper should be about 6-8 pages long (undergraduates) or about 10-15 pages (graduate students). **An alternative written requirement, recommended for undergraduates, is to submit a 2-page paper every week, in response to a suggested topic.**

Requirements: Three 3-page papers (30% of grade); careful preparation of readings, regular attendance, and class participation (30% of grade); final paper (40% of grade).