Conference Home

Session 1

Session 2

Session 3

Session 4

Accepted abstracts for Software for the Past (SfP) 2020 at Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee

Session 1: Photos from the Past

Keynote: Computation and Grass Roots History

Minna Rozen, University of Haifa

For social historians, the importance of grass root history is no longer a debatable question, but a must. By its very nature it involves the use of a huge amount of data which cannot yield a picture of the past without using computation.

The purpose of my introductory presentation is to display and explain a methodological system developed by me for the documentation of large scale cemeteries. From its initial stages, the system was developed while bearing in mind the inevitable creation of a software that will enable the optimal use of the data for historical study.

The methodology was developed in the course of my fieldwork in the Jewish cemeteries of Turkey (1987-1990), followed by ten years of deciphering the data, and finally by turning my vision and work into a software by Mr. Jacob Feigerson.

A survey of the possibilities and limitations of the data, will be followed by a demonstration of the various stages of the methodology development exemplified by illustrations, tables and charts.

Benchmarks that will serve us in the course of the presentation are:

Stage 1.

- Getting acquainted with the history of the city
- Getting acquainted with the history of the neighborhood
- Getting acquainted with the history of the cemetery Mapping the cemetery and environs
- Preparations for documentation

Stage 2.

Planning the search tools

Stage 3.

• The final product; making use of the computerized database

Conclusion: The future of the historian's craft

top

CemoMemo

Michael J. May and Efrat Kantor, Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee

Digitizing cemeteries and gravestones aids cultural preservation, genealogical search, dark tourism, and historical analysis. CemoMemo, an app and associated website, enables bottom-up crowd-sourced digitization of cemeteries, categorizing and indexing of gravestone data and metadata and offering powerful full-text and numerical search. To date, CemoMemo has over 4000 graves from over 130 cemeteries in ten countries with the majority being Jewish graves in Israel and the USA. We detail CemoMemo's deployment and component models, technical attributes, and user models. CemoMemo went through two design iterations and architectures. We detail its initial architecture and the reasons that led to the change in architecture. To show its utility, we use CemoMemo's data for a historical analysis of two Jewish cemeteries from a similar period, eliciting cultural and ethnological difference between them. We present lessons learned from developing and operating CemoMemo for over one year and point to future directions of development.

<u>top</u>

Mapping Ancient Synagogues -The Bornblum Eretz Israel Synagogues Website at Kinneret College

Chaim Ben David and Mechael Osband, Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee

The main goal of the The Bornblum Eretz Israel Synagogues website is to display the world of synagogues from the Land of Israel for the scholar,

student and layperson. Public structures in the Land of Israel dating as early as the beginning of the 1st century BCE have been identified by excavators, surveyors and researchers as synagogues. This region contains the largest concentration of identified ancient synagogues in the world. The number of identified ancient synagogues reaches a peak in the Roman and Byzantine periods, mainly from the 3rd through 7th centuries CE, and decreases during the 7th through 10th centuries with the collapse of the Jewish population. This website provides information such as bibliographical references, geographical location, photos, plans and brief descriptions of over 170 ancient synagogues from the Roman and Byzantine periods in the Land of Israel. Each synagogue has a site card which includes important references, plans and pictures. Since the site is dynamic we are able to constantly update the information from new excavations. The site also includes an interactive map. This site constantly updated including the latest relevant research news and scholarly works.

top

Session 2: Discovering the Past Next Door

Homestead Hebrews

Tammy A. Hepps, HomesteadHebrews.com

Genealogists use the records of defunct communities to trace individuals, but unexplored power lies in looking at multiple, overlapping record sets in their entirety. data.HomesteadHebrews.com, a database supporting multiple web-based research tools, demonstrates techniques for recreating a community and its collective history by digitizing, indexing, and tagging a diverse set of archival records, making this data available for analysis that would otherwise be impossible.

To date, Data.HomesteadHebrews.com incorporates more than 30,000 records covering nearly 6,000 Jewish residents and associates of the former Jewish community in the famous steel town of Homestead, Pennsylvania, USA. These records primarily come from the archival collection donated by the town's synagogue, but also incorporate topically relevant collections like tax records, newspaper articles, city directories, and business directories. An additional dataset of 22,000 genealogical sources, hosted on a commercial website, rounds out the records.

In this talk I will present Data. Homestead Hebrews.com's data model and architecture alongside the suite of CLI tools developed for efficiently importing, processing, and analyzing all this data. To show the power of combining records sets in this way, I will survey examples of historical insights gleaned from the data that far transcend the granularity of the source material, including a historical GIS study of the community (Maps.HomesteadHebrews.com). Finally, I will demonstrate how the web front-end to the database serves as an outreach mechanism to individuals in the database and their descendants.

While I developed these tools to study one particular community, the same techniques are applicable to any community with sufficient surviving records.

Tammy Hepps uses genealogical research techniques to examine less-studied topics within American Jewish history. Creator of Treelines.com and past winner of the RootsTech Developer Challenge, Tammy draws heavily upon her technology expertise to create research approaches that break new ground in data gathering and interpretation. She received her AB in Computer Science from Harvard College.

top

How To Access Burial Data In Israel From Your Couch

Daniel Horowitz, MyHeritage and The Israel Genealogy Research **Association (IGRA)**

Imaging been able to travel in time and space to meet relatives or historical personalities, even after their death. Being able to view and review the final resting place and what inscriptions their loved ones have decided to immortalize in stone for these people, even after the weather or historical events have destroyed the cemeteries were they were buried. Today, thanks to many sources is possible to do all this from the comfort of your home.

Every day, more and more burial places are published on the Internet. Israel has a lot of websites and digital resources that can be searched via the Internet in English and Hebrew. Learn how to find the image of the tombstone of your family or historical individuals you are looking for.

You can choose to browse data related to the death of people from their obituaries, burials and even watch the burial ceremony live or recorded, no matter were in the world it is happening.

Different organizations have put together databases from all over the country, from all cemeteries, all the burial plots, to allow you to locate where your loved one is buried, how to get there, and navigate through the cemetery until you arrive at the grave itself.

Websites and mobile devises are today a resource for searchable GPS cemetery data created by the crowd. Anyone can help by collecting headstone images from local and other cemeteries, or by transcribing the personal information found on the images.

And all this information and the easiness to access it allows us to combine the data to study and preserve the memory of the loved ones that are not with us any more, their stories and history for future generations, even many years after the physical remains like tombstones are not available.

Dedicated to Genealogy since 1986, Daniel was the teacher and the study guide editor of the family history project "Searching for My Roots" in Venezuela for 15 years. He is involved in several crowdsource digitization and transcription projects and holds a board-level position at the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA). Since 2006 Daniel is the working for MyHeritage liaising with genealogy societies, bloggers, and media, as well as lecturing, and attending conferences around the world.

<u>top</u>

Local Story

Dafna Philip, Local Story

Local Story is a web and mobile application, designed to capture the story of the place where we belong!

The app is based on a dynamic timeline, displaying the main events that took place in a location / organization along the years.

The timeline presents documents, photos, videos and memories arranged by chronological events. The events are categorized, so users may filter them according to points of interests.

Local Story is a communal, digital archive, organizing data and information in a friendly and accessible platform.

Users are invited to share their own memories, by adding files and comments, from an authentic point of view. Our aim is to strengthen the local heritage by preserving the past, documenting the present, and future plans.

We are proud to be of service to over 90 establishments and organisations amongst are: Local Municipalities, Kibbutzim, Moshavim, Maccabi World Union, Israeli Olympic Committee, Golani Associaton, Givatavim, Levi Eshkol...

The information gathered in our different platforms is based on the data received by the authority and by the wisdom of the crowd. The Local Story give a thorough insight to local history and culture, filtered by time, geographic location or themes.

Local story platforms contribute to the engagement between people and their communities, their land, their history, by sharing the legacy and creating the sense of local patriotism.

Users of the platform are the community members, students, researchers, nostalgics, journalists, and information seekers.

Local Story was founded by Anat Chachamov & Dafna Philip. We have worked for Israel's major TV broadcasters and digital media channels, as TV Editors and Executive Producers, in prime time TV shows such as The Voice, Hakrishim (Dragon's Den), Baby Boom (One born every minute) and more.

Our motto is "The story lives as long as you tell it"

<u>top</u>

Session 3: Analyzing the Past's Data and Media

Constructing the Modern Jewish "Present": Computational Analysis of Periodical Time Cycles in HaTzfira

Zef Segal and Oren Soffer, Open University of Israel

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of periodicals in the construction of modern social time. Periodicals are all about periodicity, temporality, and change. Their appearance turns artificial time cycles that have economic value into seemingly natural and accepted social rhythms. As part of that, periodicals play an important role in the construction of the "present" as a time frame of occurrences that happen "now". It seems intuitive to assume that different cycles of time—such as those constructed by weeklies versus those constructed by dailies-result in different discursive manifestations of the social "now". But we lack scholarly evidence for this assumption.

Addressing this lacuna, this study intends to characterize the differences resulting from the shift in time cycle of the nineteenth-century Hebrew periodical HaTzfira—a prominent and long-lasting publication. This newspaper changed its publication format in 1886 from weekly to daily. We use this case study to identify the meanings and implications of time cycles in the discourse constructed in each format, and most specifically the different constructions of the "present" in each. Through the use of computational tools, and in particular topic modeling algorithms, which offer a general overview of large-scale textual corpora, we compare discursive patterns before and after this shift. This comparison is based, on the one hand, on a nuanced qualitative analysis of the resultant topics, and on the other hand, on an original mathematical analysis of the resultant vector space. On a theoretical level, this comparison will help characterize the differences between the discursive rhythms of weeklies and dailies. It will also contribute to the introduction of computational tools into the study of Hebrew historical journalism.

Dr. Segal is a historian and digital humanist, who also works as a lecturer in Mathematics. His research concerns the interrelations between movement, space, and society in the 19th century, in particular with regards to cartography and journalism. His recent books include "The Political Fragmentation of Germany: Formation of German States by Infrastructures, Maps, and Movement, 1815-1866", published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2019, and "Motion in Maps, Maps in Motion: Mapping Stories and Movement through the Time", published by Amsterdam University Press in 2020.

top

Towards a Digital Atlas of Greco-Roman Anatomy: **Methods and Challenges**

Orly Lewis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The field of anatomy (Greek: anatome) was a key part of ancient medical theory and practice as well as of philosophical investigations. Greek and Roman anatomical ideas and terminology form the basis of modern (especially Western) anatomical theory and language and they played a decisive role in the history of science from antiquity until well into modern times.

As in the case of other ancient natural sciences, there was no single standardised set of ideas constituting ancient anatomy, no single accepted depiction of the human body and its internal structure. We must speak, in fact, of Greco-Roman anatomies, in the plural. It was a dynamic field and the anatomical picture and terminology differed among periods, authors and even among treatises from the same author.

It is against this backdrop of rich ancient sources, growing scholarly interest and lack of modern studies that project ATLOMY is developing a cutting-edge digital atlas of the diverse ancient anatomies. Our atlas, an interactive computer software, will display 3dimensional (3D) visualizations of the human body as a whole and of particular body parts and systems as depicted in key ancient sources. The interactive interface of the atlas will offer modular viewing and analytical options, allowing students and scholars to observe the body from different angles, as seen and described by ancient authors, and to compare between the different anatomies. It will also offer abundant lexical, bibliographical and philological information, encouraging further research and allowing scholars to move easily between the ancient textual description and its corresponding 3D visualization.

In my talk I will discuss the research questions underlying our work and explain the scholarly, artistic and technological methods in the creation of this atlas. I will lay particular emphasis on the challenges (scientific, methodological, practical) in developing such an atlas.

A Senior Lecturer at the Department of Classics at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded project ATLOMY -"Anatomy in Ancient Greece and Rome: An Interactive Visual and Textual Atlas". Orly completed her PhD at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2014. Her works explores Greco-Roman medicine, natural philosophy, biology and scientific method. She is interested in how pre-modern scientists explored and interpreted nature, in particularly the living body, its structure and its workings. Her monograph, published in 2017, is a philological and historical study of early ideas of pneuma and the vascular system and received the Young Historian Award of the International Academy of the History of Science.

<u>top</u>

Engaging with the Visual History of the Holocaust **Through Digital Curation: The Case of the VHH-Media Management and Search Infrastructure**

Ingo Zechner, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for History and Society and **Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Films often serve as mediated forms of engaging with the past. However, their images have their own history which stretches beyond what they actually depict. This is particularly true for the films by allied cameramen upon the liberation of concentration camps and other atrocity sites. They were intended to serve as evidence of the Nazi crimes and have informed our visual memory of the Holocaust ever since.

The EU-funded project "Visual History of the Holocaust: Rethinking Creation in the Digital Age (VHH)" (www.vhh-project.eu) aims at using film in an analytical, nonimmersive way of engaging with the past. Using the so-called liberation footage and its function to visualize the Holocaust as a challenging test case, this project develops tool kits for advanced digitization, best practice models of digital access, and applications for the exploration of filmic and other archival documents. Based on a new inclusive concept of digital curation, the Media Management and Search Infrastructure (the so called "VHHMMSI") aggregates films which currently are dispersed across archival institutions.

This online platform allows for the combination of digitized film documents with other assets, especially testimonies, historical text documents and photographs, and for the comprehensive annotation, mapping, and analysis of individual events and places, stories, formal and narrative patterns detected in the films. Users of the VHH-MMSI are invited to access a living archive, to use emerging technologies such as automated analysis of images and text based on machine learning, time-based annotation and location-based services to participate in the linking of archival documents with each other and with historic sites, thus enabling closer looks and intensified engagement with the visual history of the Holocaust.

Ingo Zechner and Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann will present key ideas of the VHH project as an innovative example for using digital technologies to study the past in the present.

Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann is a film historian and media scholar who has been serving since 2014 as Lecturer for Visual Culture, Film and German Studies at the Department of Communication and Journalism and in the European Forum at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He holds his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, and was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the International Institute for Holocaust Research Yad Vashem in 2012/13. He has published several books and articles on (digital) media memory of the Holocaust and the use and appropriation of archive footage.



Session 4: Mapping the Past

Daily Photogrammetry-based Documentation in Hippos Excavations – Efficiency vs Quality / Benefits vs Drawbacks

Michael Eisenberg, The Zinman Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa

The last decade brought a game changer to documentation in field archaeology – photogrammetry. Photogrammetry have been adopted and absorbed as a basic tool during excavations and surveys. Although recent years have not brought any prominent technological changes, the software's higher efficiency and the reduced hardware cost made it indispensable for all archaeological projects.



Two major options of conducting field photogrammetry have evolved, each with its own benefits and drawbacks: seasonal on-board personnel or order by demand specialist.

Hippos of the Decapolis Excavations Project has fully adopted photogrammetry as the almost sole documenting tool during excavations and surveys. The use of old and familiar measuring-and-drawing has been reduced to minimum, applied only in specific conditions. Three years of transition from old techniques to hiring external photogrammetry specialist have proven that the optimal solution is for one or two team members to photograph and produce the models themselves. Such a solution necessitates:

- a. A daily total station operation for the three coordinate points marking
- b. Medium-high quality ground photography c. Drone-based photography
- d. Weekly post-processing and model creation via designated photogrammetry software
- e. Incorporating geo-ref file to the local database for daily field input.

Using photogrammetry as an almost sole documentation tool has proven to serve well in the long run, yet it has several drawbacks. In addition to the known benefits during excavation and lab documentation, drone-based photogrammetry has been an efficient tool to access problematic areas, e.g. the Golan Heights minefields. Additional benefit is the possibility of a "seize-the-moment" documentation, e.g. of freshly burned areas. Moreover, the photogrammetry model can be overlaid with a historical photograph to reveal lost traits of archaeological remains.

The above and other examples will be treated in the presentation, together with explanations on method choices applied during fieldwork of the Hippos Excavation Project.

Michael is a Classical-period archaeologist and a senior researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, University of Haifa. He published articles and books on Hellenistic–Umayyad archaeology and military architecture of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. He is directing the on-going excavation project of Hippos-Sussita of the Decapolis.

<u>top</u>

Kol ha-Nekudot/"All the Points"/"Kull al-Nuqat" An Interactive, Online Map of Israel and the Palestine **Territories**

Daniel Stein Kokin, Arizona State University

"It doesn't make a good impression," thought the leading politicians in the government, "there are empty patches on the map and down there a point is still missing." So the big shots issued an order: "Let's build a city here and we'll bring some people, who will fill up the new houses with their lives. It's great—lots of points on the map."

Thus the popular Israeli band Teapacks satirized the rhetoric and practice of Israeli settlement in its 1995 song "Ma'aleh Avak" ("Ascent of Dust"/"Collecting Dust") about a fictional, forlorn town in the desert. In poking fun at the desire for "lots of points on the map," lyricist and bandleader Koby Oz evokes a point (pun intended!) made explicitly by Sharon Rotbard. In his article "Wall and Tower (Homa Umigdal): The Mold of Israeli Architecture," the Israeli architect and scholar argues that his nation's tendency to refer to newly established communities as "settlement points" "hints at the fact that the 'point' on the map was more important than the 'settlement' itself."

Be that as it may, keeping track of these "points" in Israel and the Palestinian Territories-both diachronically and synchronically--is no easy task. (To paraphrase and subvert a common English saying, it's easy to miss the "points" for their "map.") Under the Zionist movement and subsequent State of Israel, nearly one thousand new Jewish communities have been founded since the mid-19th century, some of which--in the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, and West Bank--were later uprooted. On the Arab side, in addition to the more than four hundred villages abandoned or destroyed in the context of the Israeli War of Independence or Palestinian Nakba, scores of new settlements have emerged, both in Israel proper and in the Palestinian Territories. No single map or even a series of maps in print can comprehensively display the dramatic changes in settlement that have taken place in this land in the last century and a half.

Furthermore, a distinguishing feature of Israel/Palestine is the great diversity in the kinds of community that have housed and continue to house its inhabitants: alongside the city, town, and village standard the world over there is the moshava, moshav, kibbutz, development town, unrecognized Bedouin village, refugee camp, and settler outpost, the product of recurrent--ideologically-inflected--waves of settlement and re-settlement. Most maps fail to include all of these communities and, even more significantly, typically do not bother to identify them by type, thus providing little guidance to the uninitiate seeking to understand the nature of settlement in this region.

"Kol ha-Nekudot"/"All the Points"/"Kull al-Nugat" aims to address these two lacunae. It will be a comprehensive, ArcGIS-based online map of Israeli, Palestinian and other (e.g. Druze, Circassian, European Christian) communities documenting both the nature of each settlement (e.g. religious kibbutz, Arab village, development town, unrecognized Bedouin encampment, uprooted Israeli settlement, destroyed Palestinian village, etc.) and the year of its founding (and/or, where relevant, destruction or even refounding) from the mid-nineteenth century down to the present. Visitors to the site will be able, for example, to view which communities existed in any particular year and to track the spread or regression of a particular kind of settlement (e.g. religious kibbutz, development town, Arab communities founded since 1948). No currently existing map, so far as I am aware, enables viewers to explore the history and nature of Israeli and Palestinian settlement in this manner. Allied to no one side, beholden to no specific ideology, and committed to no particular political agenda, "All the Points" aims solely to be a valuable pedagogical tool, enabling laypeople and specialists alike better to understand and engage with the complexities of all forms of settlement in Israel and the Palestinian Territories since the mid-19th century.

In addition to the main, interactive map, I also envision a series of curated maps highlighting particular historical moments or settlement phenomena. These maps will still unfold in time and thus be chronologically interactive, but will include a fixed set of communities. Examples include:

- "In the Land of Jesus': European Christian Colonies in the Holy Land" "Tower and Stockade': The Emergence and Spread of an Iconic Settlement Type (1936-1939)" (This iconic pre-state Jewish community type emerged in the context
- of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt. The map will depict its spread on a month-to-month basis, as opposed to the yearly time frame of the main map.) "From Palestine to Israel: The Disappearance and Reappearance of Arab and Jewish Settlements (Nov. 1947-Nov. 1949)" (This map will display how the Israeli
- War of Independence/Palestinian Nakba affected settlements on a month-to-month basis, as opposed to the yearly time frame of the main map.) "From Nahal Military Outpost to Civilian Settlement"
- "Arab Settlement in the Jewish State': Recognized and Unrecognized Arab Communities Founded in Israel since 1948"
- "'Home on the Hilltop': The Founding of Galilean 'Mitzpim' and West Bank Settlements and Outposts, 1967-2020" (This map will showcase the founding of hilltop Jewish communities across the Galilee and West Bank, presenting as a single phenomenon developments in Israeli settlement typically viewed as completely independent one from the other, given that the Galilee lies in Israel proper and the West Bank across the Green Line.)
- "The Privatization of the Kibbutz" "Jerusalem': Arab, Jewish, and Other Neighborhoods in the Holy City and
- Environs" "Nekudot Shelo Hayu Me-Olam"/"Points That Never Were" (This map will collect
- and indicate the approximate location--and provide information about--fictional communities from treatises, literature, music, and film.)

top

