

# The Deronda Review

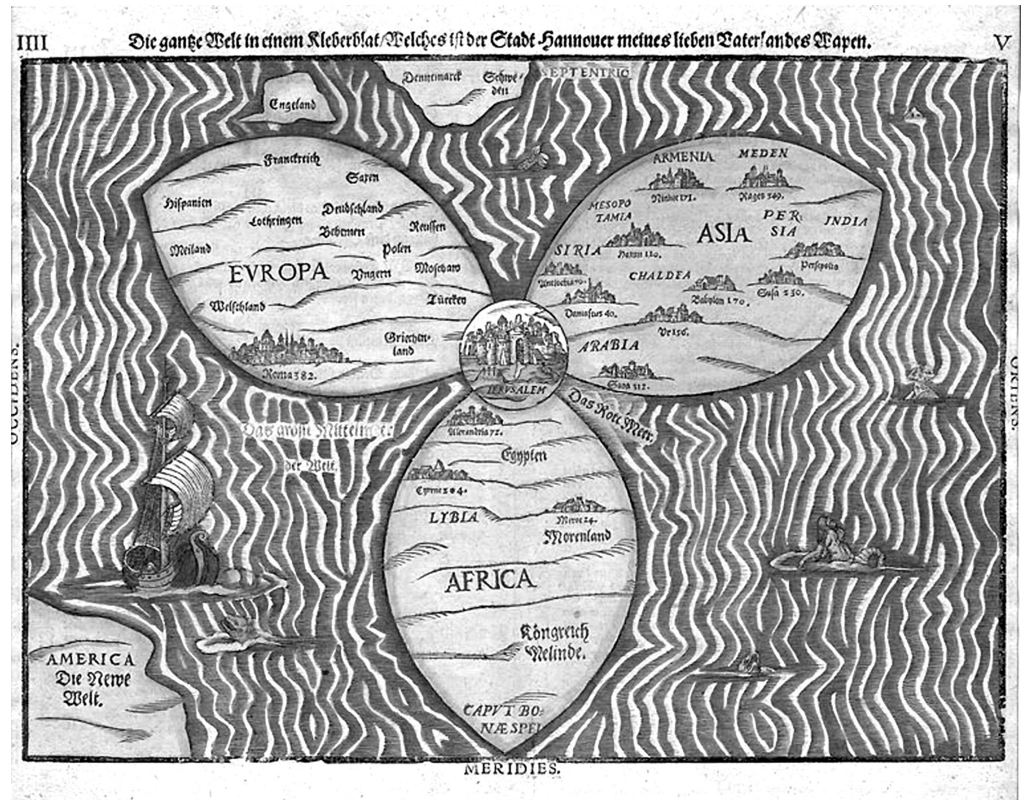
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Jerusalem as the Center of the World (Heinrich Bunting, 1851)

## EPICYCLIC CENTO

Poore soule the center of my sinfull earth  
and I am at the edge of the West  
By center, or eccentric, hard to tell

And though it in the center sit, Yet when  
It marked the edge Of one of many circles  
About the centre of the silent Word

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold  
The horizon's edge, the flying seacrow, the fragrance  
at the center of each flower. Each

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-- Courtney Druz

Sources: William Shakespeare/Sonnet 146; Yehuda HaLevi  
(trans. Peter Cole)/My Heart is in the East; John Milton/Paradise  
Lost; John Donne/A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning; Wallace  
Stevens/Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird; T.S. Eliot/Ash  
Wednesday; William Butler Yeats/The Second Coming; Walt  
Whitman/There Was a Child Went Forth; William Carlos  
Williams/Queen-Anne's Lace

## QUEST

on he'halutz street in be'ersheva  
tall trees with purple blossoms line the way.  
newly arrived, how i wish to know their name.  
in each shop i stop.  
what's the name of the tree on your walk?  
in simple hebrew i say.  
but no one knows.

years go by  
and no one knows.  
could i have asked an expert? perhaps.  
to every thing there is a name.

in a tel aviv taxi today  
purple blossomed trees pass in a blur.  
so i ask,  
and he knows!  
a 20-year quest ends  
on a blue sky day

with a singular word  
that sounds  
like a  
sweet  
song:

*sigalon.*

- I. Batsheva

## GIFTS

Old Yemen, Romania  
Woven together with royal threads -  
Hybrids hung with pride in the market,  
What can I bring you?  
The bulging fruit vies for space with  
Spicy pickled vegetables,  
Is this what you'd like?  
Hand-rolled vine leaves stuffed -  
Will these fit in my suitcase?  
Holy garments for special days -  
Horns of silver and gold -  
To announce Messiah's coming.  
Will such gifts impress?

- Mindy Aber Barad

## HOBBY: ARMAGEDDON

(Megiddo, 2006)

I hear him before I see him  
golden-edged wings printed on the sky,  
unmoving above roofless rooms,  
the broken forts of Armageddon --

A hawk soaring over us all  
eyes a black centipede long as my foot  
crawling from the prehistoric  
oblivious of time atop this tel,

Twenty-six cities beneath my soles,  
Death filed in cabinets of stone,  
arranged by layers of time  
labeled with pink cyclamen.

Sipping water from a plastic bottle,  
I watch sun-burned tourists below  
spilling out of a yellow bus, seeking  
the beginning of their sorrow.

In the gift shop, Roman glass  
green as the sea of Odysseus,  
old as the idea of empire,  
costs more than bloody sand,

I buy a necklace made of shards  
buffed by 2000 years of war.  
The hovering bird, I discover  
in *Birds of Israel* -- "Hobby."

- B.B. Adams

## HISTORY'S WEIGHT

Time compressed  
past and present laminated.

heavy to bear,  
breath burns,  
heart bids burst  
beneath the burden.

the past  
events places  
beget the present  
future's womb.

then is here is now.

- Michael E. Stone