

# The Deronda Review

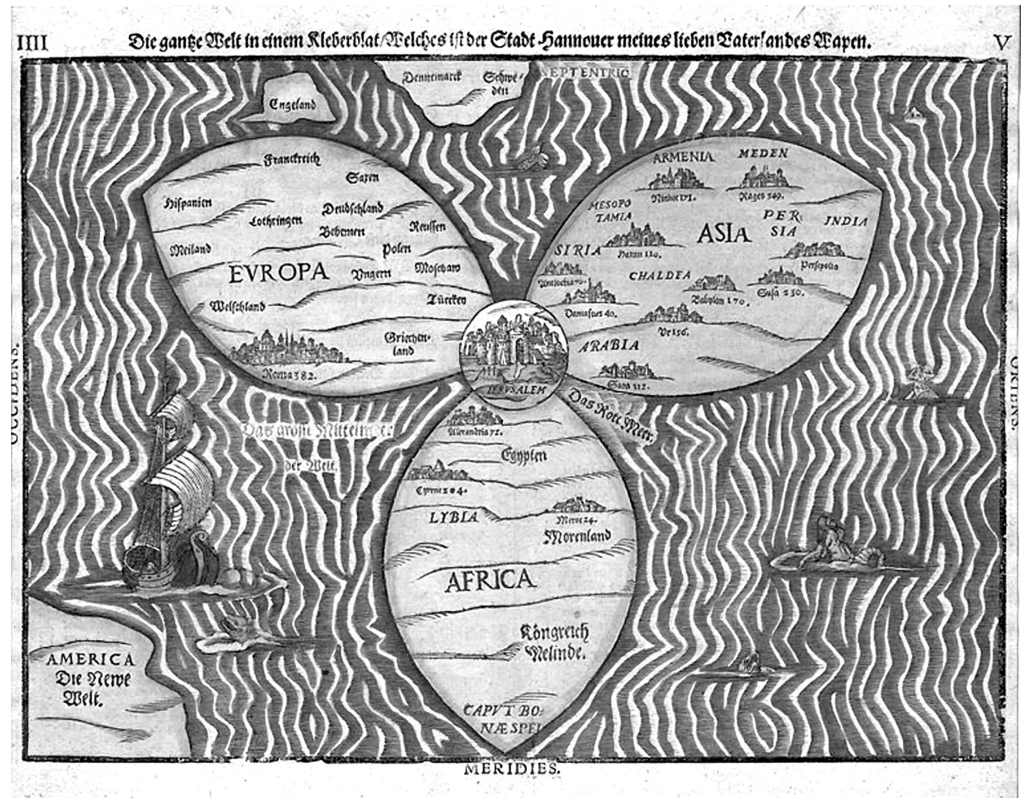
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Jerusalem as the Center of the World (Heinrich Bunting, 1851)

## 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

## VISIONARY

upon a visit to the Zippori National Park

And Jerusalem went into hiding  
in escape from the Roman eagle's claws  
which ripped apart its sanctuary,  
scattered its gems.

Its legal body and soul migrated  
to a perch aloft a Galilean hilltop,  
there, fertile minds etched spoken laws  
to affix the code and mingled with pagans  
their theatre and baths,  
illustrious decors  
while remaining adherent to the faith of the Fathers,  
a vision of rebirth concealed  
-- a pact of silence --  
in a Mona Lisa's mosaic glimpse

and the watchful eyes of a full moon  
that swore me to secrecy  
homeward on the Jordan Valley.

- Leah LJ Gottesman

## CAP OF THE ARCH

seven faceted stone,  
eyes  
head of the building  
cap of the arch  
angled to take the pressure  
and support the rest

so are we here  
eyes see and yet blind  
think and yet obtuse  
but we can take the pressure

we in the land.

Israel's fate

- Michael E. Stone  
Shabbat Hannukah 2009

## HURRICANE

Beyond the eye  
of the approaching storm,  
center of calm,

behind the veil  
of clouds a hundred  
miles wide,

pounding to be let in  
is the master  
come to snare us.

-- Steven Sher

## EXISTENTIAL THREATS

*with apologies to The Beach Boys*

Could we see A-bombs from Iran? Missiles  
launched by Hezbollah? Deadly gas  
shot from Damascus? Hamas rockets in the south?

Someone let the angel of death into the house  
while we were sleeping and none know  
how to show him out.

This is the enemy that conspires all around us,  
the while claiming that his lies are truth--  
and puts a thumb on the scale

when no one's watching so the lies  
carry more weight, the abuse  
then heaped on us will have just cause.

Someone's tossed a burning match  
among the dry brush and young trees  
beside the highway to Jerusalem--

the way the first torch signaled  
to the next, spreading quickly hill to hill,  
the new month's start as far as Babylon.

Bibi, will you bomb Iran?  
Bomb Iran? Bomb Iran?  
*Ba ba ba ba-bomb Iran*

- Steven Sher