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'ZION, MEMORY AND HOPE OF ALL AGES': NINA DAVIS SALAMAN'S ROMANTIC-ZIONIST POETRY

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Abstract

This article analyses the romantic-Zionist poetry of Nina Davis Salaman, contextualising it alongside other fin-de-siècle Zionist poets to argue that she too similarly adopted bibliocentric, prophetic, and diasporic perspectives, particularly themes associated with the medieval Andalusian poetry of Judah Halevi. In doing so, Salaman, much like other Anglo-Jewish women writers, defined her own subjectivity in the context of nostalgic, romanticising religious and nationalistic discourses. However, uniquely, Salaman's poetry adopts not only the themes of medieval Andalusian verse yearning for Zion-Jerusalem and the land of Israel, but also, as she put it, its diasporic 'clothing of metre and rhyme'. Indeed, Salaman's romantic poetry is populated with intertextual links recalling the biblical Prophets and Halevi's exilic poetry, which offer historical and scriptural substantiation to support contemporaneous Zionist discourses. *Songs of Many Days* draws equally on her underlying belief that 'metre and rhyme', including in her own poetry, are a feature of diasporic existence.

Keywords: Nina Davis Salaman; Romantic Zionism; Hebrew Poetry; Anglo-Jewry.

Nina Davis Salaman (1877–1925) was a respected Hebraist, essayist, and poet. Salaman wrote 'Marching Song of the Judeans', a tribute to the Jewish Legion fighting the Ottoman Empire in Palestine during the First World War. Salaman also translated into English biblical, talmudic, and mystical texts, as well as the future Israeli national anthem, 'Hatikvah'.[1] Salaman was offered the presidency of the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1922 but was forced to turn down the position due to failing health.[2] Consequently, despite being regarded as 'a fine Hebraist', Salaman was neglected by historians for nearly a century.[3] Recent research has rediscovered Salaman's biography.[4] However,

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no analysis exists of Salaman's own poetry, which is often overshadowed by the quality of her Hebrew translations. This article therefore analyses Salaman's romantic-Zionist poetry, contextualising it alongside other fin-de-siècle Zionist poets, including Hayim Nahman Bialik, to argue that she too similarly adopted bibliocentric, prophetic and diasporic perspectives, particularly themes associated with the medieval Andalusian poetry of Judah Halevi. In doing so, Salaman, much like other Anglo-Jewish women writers, defined her own subjectivity in the context of nostalgic, romanticising religious and nationalistic discourses.[5] However, uniquely, Salaman's poetry adopts not only the themes of medieval Andalusian verse yearning for Zion-Jerusalem and the land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*), but also, as she put it, its diasporic 'clothing of metre and rhyme'.[6] Indeed, Salaman's romantic poetry is populated with intertextual links recalling the biblical Prophets and Halevi's exilic poetry, which offer historical and scriptural substantiation to support contemporaneous Zionist discourses[7] Moreover, in utilising these traditional precedents, as this article shows, Salaman's *Songs of Many Days* (1923) draws equally on her underlying belief that 'metre and rhyme', including in her own poetry, are a feature of diasporic existence and say nothing of the 'pure Hebrew' and 'rhymeless music' characteristic of the Hebrew Bible and the land of Israel prior to the Jewish dispersal in the first and second centuries.[8]

Salaman's romantic-Zionist poetry is based on what Dan Miron calls the '*there*', which refers to historical precedents in classical Jewish literature to justify contemporaneous Zionist discourses, and marginalises the '*here*', the complex interplay of ethnicity, language, and religion in Palestine and the then British Mandate.[9] Salaman, much like her peers, identified in the medieval Andalusian poet, Halevi, a precursor to modern Zionism.[10] Salaman revered Halevi as 'the greatest Hebrew poet since biblical times' and claimed to have been inspired ever since she was first introduced to his poetry by her father.[11] Fascinated by Halevi's yearning for the land of Israel, Salaman claimed to be moved by the elegance of his poetry, identifying him as a source of her own romantic-Zionism, and avowing that no one would ever surpass the sublime quality of his lyrics.[12] This was not unique in a period when numerous Anglo-Jewish writers were translating or revisiting Halevi's classic poetry.[13] Nor was Salaman's fascination with Halevi exceptional in the context of romantic-Zionism, a genre which looked to the poets of medieval Al-Andalus, who employed language not dissimilar to Biblical Hebrew, for inspiration.[14] Salaman however was, compared to other Anglo-Jewish women poets in the period, unique in identifying 'metre and rhyme' as signifiers of the Jewish diaspora. Salaman claimed it was preferable to translate classic Hebrew texts into prose rather than risk 'degeneration in the use of language' or compromise the 'superiority of Hebrew poetry'.[15] In her *Selected Poems of Jehudah Halevi* (1924) Salaman even differentiated between close translations and 'rhymed

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translations' given her insistence that 'the metre in a Hebrew poem cannot be reproduced in English verse'.[16] To account for her fascination with Halevi's poetry, which she claimed had been able to 'rise out of the coils laid upon the Hebrew poetry of the diaspora', Salaman distinguished between the 'hand' and the 'instrument', the former benefitting Hebrew verse given it enabled song 'through the force of sorrow', despite its 'adoption of metre', and the latter being reflective of the poet's 'soul'.[17] Most importantly, for Salaman, Halevi was able to adopt the 'style of Arabic poets', the 'rhyme and metre' of which he 'deplored', and simultaneously, given his 'genius', to transcend its 'hampering medium of expression' through his 'religious and national poems', each a romance symbolic of the 'lovers ... God and Israel'.[18] This meant that Salaman understood her own poetry, like Halevi's, as a case in point, a compromise between classic Hebrew poetry and the diasporic context. This explains Salaman's resort to the conventional rhyming format and self-reflective style of popular romantic poetry, the themes of her verse being no less evocative of religious and nationalist discourses.[19]

Salaman's first anthology, *Songs of Exile by Hebrew Poets* (1901), includes several translations of Halevi's poetry, including his classic 'Ode to Zion', which for Salaman epitomised the spirit of Andalusian 12th-century Hebrew lyrics.[20] The translation drew high praise from rabbinics scholar Joshua Abelson, who noted Salaman's ability to 'retain, in high degree, the true fervour of the original'.[21] For Salaman, Halevi was 'model and master' for all subsequent Hebrew poetry given his ability to manipulate the imperfect 'instrument' of the 'foreign pattern' and its 'rhyme and metre'.[22] Salaman frequently pointed to Halevi's belief that 'rhyme and metre' were 'foreign to the Hebrew language', but accepted the apparent 'inconsistency' of his adept employment of 'a mould shaped for other tongues'.[23] Accordingly, in *Selected Poems of Jehudah Halevi* Salaman provided a 'line by line' version of 'Ode to Zion' in 'prose', as well as a 'rhymed version'.[24] Clearly this was problematic for Salaman, who was concerned that Halevi would be 'made to speak with the voice of a modern western writer, while clearly he was neither western nor modern'.[25] The distinction between the prose and the rhymed version means that while the first begins: 'Zion, wilt thou not ask if peace be with thy captives/That seek thy peace—that are remnant of thy flocks,' the second, the rhyming translation, starts with: 'Zion, wilt thou not ask if peace's wing/Shadows the captives that ensue thy peace,/Left lonely from thine ancient shepherding?'[26] Salaman's concern was that the introduction of rhyming into her translations required a level of eisegesis at odds with the 'fruits of our greatest medieval poet'.[27]

Salaman was fascinated by Halevi's spiritual fervour, the biblical and allegorical implications of the ode, and the romantic interplay between God and Zion.[28] Salaman even hoped to 'win for Halevi a new band of admirers'.[29] It was Halevi's *Al Khazari* (c. 1140), *In Defence of the Despised Faith*, that Salaman

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felt justified contemporaneous romantic-Zionist claims about Hebrew 'superiority', even if necessarily delivered through 'foreign metres'.[30] Salaman had begun learning Hebrew as a child, encouraged by her father, the respected Hebraist Arthur Davis, who provided daily Hebrew lessons and weekly study of the synagogue lectionary.[31] In 1889, the young Salaman was given an award at the St John's Wood Synagogue for being 'thoroughly conversant with the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch and Prayer Book',[32] and with her sister, she contributed translations to her father's *The Hebrew Accents of the Twenty-one Books of the Bible* (1900) and *Service of the Synagogue* (1904–09).[33] Salaman's father came to know the Jewish scholars of the Kilburn Wanderers, including Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge, Israel Abrahams,[34] who would become a close friend. It was through Abrahams that many of Salaman's Hebrew translations came to be published in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*.[35] Abrahams shared Salaman's passionate belief in the translation of historical texts inaccessible to non-Hebrew readers, not to mention her love of Halevi.[36] In particular, Salaman felt that like her, Jewish girls must attain 'a fundamental understanding of the form and spirit of the Hebrew language, if Judaism in England is to revive'.[37] Salaman hoped that in turn each girl would grow up and help with the Hebrew and religious education of her own children.[38] These twin passions, her love of Halevi's exilic poetry and Hebrew translation, underscored Salaman's nationalist tendencies.

Initially, however, Salaman rejected the premise of Jewish statehood,[39] believing instead in a universalising possibility that the diaspora could be conflated with a spiritual version of Zion-Jerusalem.[40] For his own part, Salaman's husband, Redcliffe, had been on a Zionist 'Lovers of Zion' (*Hibbat Zion*) committee while at Cambridge,[41] but his fascination with Zionism was more eugenical than it was religious given his interest in long since discredited and morally objectionable notions of 'race' and the potential opportunities for Jewish racial revival in the land of Israel.[42] It was his experience with the Jewish Legion in Palestine and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which was celebrated by the family with the planting of a 'Jerusalem Orchard' in their estate, that probably did most to invigorate the Salamans' commitment to practical Zionism.[43] At the close of the First World War, when it was clear that the aims of political Zionism had become a reality, Redcliffe committed to the establishment of Jerusalem's Hebrew University. Following his attendance at its inauguration, Redcliffe identified renewed belief in the possibilities offered by political Zionism.[44] Nina too became a member of the London Council and Chair of the Literary Committee of the Federation of Women Zionists when it was formed in 1918.[45] It is in the context of the organisation's founding principles, which included aims to promote 'Jewish national consciousness', to teach 'Jewish history', and to establish 'Hebrew as a living language',[46] that Salaman's romantic-Zionism can best be understood. Indeed, the couple's

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Zionism, much like other wealthy Anglo-Jews closely involved in communal politics, was predicated mostly on correspondence, networking, and philanthropy.[47] Redcliffe consistently maintained an interest in the Jewish settlers in Palestine, being particularly impressed by their physical attributes, which he attributed to the workings of 'natural selection'.[48] For Redcliffe, the Palestinian Arabs were 'incapable of developing the country alone'.[49] According to his granddaughter's account, Redcliffe was 'contemptuous' of '"the Arab"' population of Palestine, his Zionist perspective skewed by then popular racist and eugenical assumptions couched in 'contempt for the ... oppressed inhabitants of Palestine'. As Jane Miller notes, Redcliffe later belatedly rejected any prospect of forced displacement, though not very convincingly.[50] Alternatively, Nina contributed money earned from her publications to the FWZ.[51] It was with the support of the FWZ that Salaman published the anthology, *Apples & Honey: A Gift-Book for Jewish Boys and Girls* (1921). The collection includes her introductory aim that Anglo-Jewish children learn to understand what it means to be a 'child of Israel' in order that they might be able to help with the establishment of a 'home of Freedom, Justice and Peace on the mountains of Judea, the beautiful land of our forefathers'.[52]

This goal underpins the romantic-Zionist poetry characteristic of *Songs of Many Days*, the poems of which evoke Halevi's 'model' and its focus on nationalistic and religious themes, albeit presented in the diasporic metre and rhyme that Salaman felt only he had been able to exploit to 'perfection'.[53] Salaman was acutely aware of the 'contradictions', as she called them, of Halevi's assimilation of Arabic 'metre and rhyme', not to mention her own difficulties in advocating Hebrew learning while at the same time resorting to the mediums of a 'modern western writer'.[54] Salaman also had to wrestle with the difficulty of making her own romantic-Zionist poetry accessible. Hebrew lyrics fitted the revivalist agenda of the romantic-Zionist genre but were generally only accessible to male Jews educated in the *yeshivot* (male-only study schools). This precluded children and women without the benefits of traditional education or informal Hebrew lessons.[55] Thus, Salaman looked to 'modern Hebrew poetry' and its 'Renaissance' to liberate itself of 'rhyme and metre', but in the meantime defensively accepted the 'inconsistency' of Halevi's approach, as well as her own, claiming that such 'simplicity is delusive'.[56] Salaman's *Songs of Many Days* includes five poems in particular, to be analysed in this article, that draw on the Hebrew modernist romantic-Zionist genre as well as the contradictions she felt were at the heart of diasporic poetry. The most popular of these poems is Salaman's 'Marching Song of the Judeans', penned in early 1918. The song reflects the family's excitement with the Balfour Declaration and is structured according to what Lital Levy calls 'strategic intertextuality'. This approach evokes classic biblical texts and historical Jewish motifs in the service of romantic-Zionist discourses.[57] Echoing Halevi, the song accordingly

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romanticises Jews in the diaspora as the 'heart amid the nations' that will return to the classical image of mother-Zion. The mother (Zion-Jerusalem) and child (the Jewish people) binary is resonant of biblical Isaiah and later rabbinic texts.[58] This intertextual approach, drawing on historical and biblical precedents, was in fact common to the Andalusian poetry that Salaman was trying to evoke, which was predicated only on what was scripturally verifiable.[59] Salaman's husband recited the poem in an address to Royal Fusiliers at the close of the war:[60]

ZION, our Mother, calling to thy sons,
We are coming, we are coming to thine aid.
Spread among the nations, we thy loving ones,
We are ready, we are coming unafraid. . . .

Zion, our Mother, now thy sons depart;
We are coming while thou watchest there alone.
Heart amid the nations, beating with our heart,
We are ready, we are coming—we, thine own.[61]

The romantic lyrics of the poem are necessarily a far cry from the complexity of Salaman's Hebrew translations˙ Salaman noted that in Hebrew 'long syllables may follow each other without any intervening short syllable'. Therefore, for Hebrew to correspond with an 'English language' metre, 'at least every alternate syllable would have to be either a simple or compound *sheva*' (a vocal or silent vowel sign below a consonant).[62] Salaman applied the same logic to much of her own poetry by focusing only on 'beauty of feeling and language'.[63] The alternate rhyme acts, in the first verse, to signal mother-Zion's call to her 'sons' and 'loving ones', and in the last verse to demonstrate that the 'sons' have begun to 'depart' for the 'heart amid the nations' (the land of Israel). Salaman thus accepted that while the beauty of Hebrew biblical poetry could never be replicated given the limitations of the 'English language' and of conventional rhyme and metre, its essence could at least be maintained through an overplus of scriptural allusions.

Indeed, the 'Marching Song' and its invocation of mother-Zion is characteristic of Isaiah 49:14–26 and particularly 49:22 where her children are addressed in the context of return and restoration essential to chapters 49–55.[64] Mother-Zion's children, exiles in the diaspora, will come home to Jerusalem to begin the process of 'rebuilding' symbolic of the 'servant' who will restore Jacob, the embodiment of the diaspora-Jew (49:5) in romantic-Zionist discourses, to the Promised Land.[65] Salaman employed this trope in a synagogue address in Cambridge in 1919, claiming 'we are still both Israel and Jacob to this day'.[66] Similarly, in a consequent article for *New Palestine* Salaman would

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evoke 'the promise given to Jacob on its very soil [Palestine]: "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed"' (Genesis 28:13).[67] Like the 'Marching Song', the book of Isaiah was originally targeted at an exiled Jewish audience (the Babylonian exiles) and similarly offered redemption in the prospect of return to Zion-Jerusalem.[68] This might explain why the Prophets, particularly Isaiah, are intertext in each of Salaman's romantic-Zionist poems. The teachings of the Prophets, Salaman posited, were characteristic of 'Israel's mission'.[69] Halevi too preferred the biblical Prophets to philosophical and rationalist understandings of Judaism.[70] The 'heart' analogy in Salaman's 'Marching Song' is taken from Halevi, often popularly quoted as: 'Israel is the heart of the nations.' However, in his *Khazari* it is actually: 'Israel is among the nations like the heart is among the organs of the body.'[71] Salaman was inspired by Halevi's conception of Jewish chosenness and by invoking an eschatological vision of return and its implications, she imagined a point in the near future when Israel would be 'the heart of the nations' and the 'greatest race of martyrs, that shall suffer for the unrighteous of all peoples'.[72]

The 'Marching Song' in fact captures everything that Salaman loved most about Halevi's exilic poetry. This included, in her own words, his appropriation of the 'nation' as 'speaker',[73] 'his love for his people and their lost land', and 'his whole heart and soul . . . consumed in the pursuit . . . "of the fount of living waters"'.[74] Salaman, like others interested in Halevi's medieval poetry, associated with the poet's bemoaning of diasporic exile, yearning for the land of Israel, and the romantic image of his voyage to the Promised Land, even if she had no immediate plans to directly retrace his footsteps.[75] In 1920 Salaman wrote: 'we feel for ourselves it is not the time to go out with the children at present, but may consider it in the future', expressing her hopes, like her husband's, about the 'Samuel regime in Palestine', in reference to Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner for Mandatory Palestine, and a family friend.[76] Similarly, Redcliffe, while inspired by his wartime service in Palestine, and the Balfour Declaration, conceded that his age was a factor that made emigration difficult.[77] Accordingly, Nina's writing about return to the land of Israel was predicated more on hopeful longing than it was on immediate emigration.[78] Halevi, who according to legend arrived in Palestine only to be murdered while reciting his 'ode to Zion',[79] became standard for poets making nostalgic romantic-historical claims on the land of Israel. This was not so much in association with his pilgrimage, but rather, aligned to his yearning for Zion.[80] By using Halevi as intertext, Salaman had a historical precedent malleable to contemporary romantic-Zionist discourses. In Halevi's version of messianism, returning to the land of Israel would prefigure eschatological salvation, not the arrival of the Messiah.[81] This premise gave the romantic-Zionist genre a means of infusing the practical and mundane elements of political Zionism with spiritual and romantic discourses.

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Salaman's poetry was thus attuned to a romantic-nationalist genre predicated on what Miron describes as 'mourning for a homeland lost'.[82] This premise also encompassed the FWZ's practical aim for 'a spiritual centre for the world' in the land of Israel, which would encourage renewed interest in Hebrew learning.[83] 'The Requital', like the 'Marching Song', similarly invokes biblical prophecy, in this instance the exile and return binary essential to Isaiah and to Halevi's poetry.[84] In 'The Requital', return is bound up with repair of the entire world, echoing the pledge in Isaiah 49:6 to make Israel 'a light of nations'. This promise to make the Jewish state a 'model' for the rest of the world was core to political as well as romantic-Zionist discourses.[85] In the poem, it is therefore the role of diaspora-Jews, 'the banished of Israel' and 'dispersed of Judah' (Isaiah 11:12), to accomplish this ideal, satisfying Halevi's claim in the *Khazari* that eschatological fulfilment is only possible if diasporic-Jews emigrate to the Holy Land.[86] The idea that return would prefigure imminent messianism was central to romantic-Zionist perspectives. Indeed, the British Mandate's first (Ashkenazi) Chief Rabbi, Abraham Kook, contended that 'joyous song . . . will break out over all the world as it awakens to gaze up at this exalted vision of renewal of the ancient wellspring of divine song, which lies within Israel'.[87] Salaman's poem draws on this popular discourse to point to immediate return as preferable to waiting for God to 'settle them [Israel] on their own soil' (Isaiah 12:1):

JUDAH, O help the world!
Judah, O save the world! . . .
Glad to your land,
Rise now and help the world—
Reach forth a hand.

Look on the suffering world,
Judah, the stricken world! . . .
Cruel in heart to you,
False in her part to you—
Now she lies prone;
Yet you can save the world,
Judah alone.

Long have you walked the world,
Patient to serve the world, . . .
Upright and save the world,
Free on your land. . . .
Yet you must save the world,
Judah, the stricken world! . . .

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Sad from the smart of her
Home to the heart of her—
Zion set free!
Thence you can save the world,
Few though you be.

Judah to help the world!
Judah to save the world! . . .
Saved but to save the world,
Chosen to save![88]

The poem activates biblical themes of chosenness to justify the establishment of a Jewish state not in racial or chauvinistic terms, but through the lens of a nationalist version of exceptionality.[89] Indeed, the opening two lines of each verse serve as a call to diasporic-Jews who have been 'chosen' to 'save the world'. In the process, Salaman adopted the parallelism (where two or more lines are closely linked) classic to biblical poetry, the second line of each more or less reiterating the first: 'Yet you must save the world,/Judah, the stricken world!' The repetition too, 'the world', 'the world', similarly evokes the biblical parallelism that Salaman lamented had 'vanished from the pages of [Hebrew] literature' in the diaspora.[90] Comparably, the closing line of each verse reminds that redemption can only be attained by 'Judah, alone', 'Free on your land', 'Few though you be', 'Chosen to save'. In sum, this can only happen when diaspora-Jews and likewise Zion-Jerusalem are 'set free'. Similarly, the poem's emphasis on 'your land', imitating the biblical prophetic tradition, recalls God's commitment in Jeremiah 29:14 to return all exiled Jews to the Promised Land.[91] This pledge is reflected in Jeremiah 33:7 and 44:22, which are based on the promise that although 'your land', the Holy Land, is 'a desolate ruin and . . . without inhabitant', Judah will be restored. The emphasis on the 'few' also places the poem in the context of Ezekiel 33:24 where the survivors of the tribe of Judah, having endured the ravages inflicted by the Babylonians, are entitled to the 'land' given they are descended from Abraham and his original territorial covenant with God (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:18).[92] The poem, then, draws together all the requisite elements of fin-de-siècle nationalisms, including a direct call to the nation, 'Judah', romanticising emphasis on the Holy Land, a binding national story of eschatological return already discernible in ancient religious texts, synagogue liturgies, and rituals, and the necessary impetus to emigrate driven by anti-Semitism, 'the world' being 'cruel in heart'.[93]

Salaman's poetry, while less polemical and written in vernacular as opposed to Hebrew, belongs to a genre inhabited by her contemporary, the Hebrew poet Bialik, who like her translated Halevi, and who hoped to establish a corpus

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of Hebrew sacred texts in preparation for the establishment of a Hebrew-speaking Israel.[94] Similar to Salaman's critique of 'rhyme and metre' in Hebrew poetry, Bialik too gradually moved away from modernist styles of verse, eventually jettisoning 'rhyme' and returning to the parallelism characteristic of poetry in the Hebrew Bible.[95] For Salaman, biblical poetry generated 'rhythm' through 'parallelism', as is evident in 'The Requital'.[96] *Songs of Many Days* includes Salaman's translation of Bialik's Hebrew poem, 'Surely the People is Grass'.[97] The poem is based, like so much of Salaman's own romantic-Zionist poetry, on Isaiah's prophecies, in this instance 40:7, quoted in the preamble, which identifies the Jewish people as 'grass' likely to 'wither' (the following biblical verse pointing to the permanency and certain fulfilment of God's word).[98] Building on a historical-biblical intertext appealed to Salaman's fascination with the idea that '"far away and long ago" we had a country of our own'.[99]

This is reflected in 'The Daybreak', which suggests only a nationalistic return to Zion can begin the process of redemption and supersede the 'vale of tears', a reference to the hegemony and supersessionist premises of Christian literary tradition. The latter also signals Salaman's lament at the 'loss of the genius of poetical expression', save Halevi, associated with biblical parallelism and 'estrangement' from 'pure Hebrew'.[100] Much like Bialik's invoking of Isaiah, as well as his use of confrontational language, Salaman draws on the themes of Isaiah 52:1 and its call, 'Awake, awake, O Zion', to demand that diaspora-Jews awaken to Zion's call:

> ZION, memory and hope of ages,
> Art thou rising from the vale of tears? . . .
>
> In the east a golden light is breaking—
> Israel, fly to meet the age-long hope!
> But the world—that world thou art forsaking,
> Long, how long will she in darkness grope?
>
> All of you who cannot greet the morning,
> You of Israel amid the lands,
> Even you who meet the hope with scorning,
> Now come forth and work with heart and hands.
>
> Work for Zion, that she rise untainted,
> That she stand a beacon to the world . . .
>
> Help now Zion, that, through her, the sorrow
> Of a hapless wounded world be healed,

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That, through you, the dawn of Zion's morrow
Be a light to all the earth revealed.[101]

The poem's intertext likewise evokes Isaiah 59:20 where God will redeem Zion and 60:1–9 where even amid the 'darkness' God's 'presence ... will shine', the exiles will return, and the rest of the world will follow Zion's lead (similarly echoing Isaiah 30:17). In the context of Isaiah, Zion does not refer merely to Jerusalem, but to the tribe of Judah and the land of Israel.[102] This totalising version of Jewish identity was central to romantic-Zionist discourses of common ancestry and tradition, which on the one hand could point to the universalising aspects of Torah in promoting Jewish statehood,[103] and on the other, differentiated between the legal and ritualistic elements of tradition applicable only to Jews. In the diaspora, spiritual reconnection to the land of Israel was an ideal bound up with eschatological fulfilment to come and central to Israel's future.[104] Salaman here drew on the normalising undercurrent of romantic-Zionism, not only in trying to make claims of continuity with historical-traditional precedents, but to nurture essentialising discourses promoting what Miron labels 'Jewish normalcy'.[105] The poem addresses 'you of Israel amid the lands', again drawing on Halevi's eulogising of Israel's chosenness tied not only to the land itself, but to Hebrew and an all-encompassing version of the nation.[106] In Halevi's emphasis on the 'people and their lost land',[107] similar to Bialik, Salaman identified a precedent for her poetry directly transferable to contemporary romantic-Zionist discourses of Jewish uniqueness and divine right to the land of Israel. The implication of this precedent is that with the return of the Jewish people, Zion-Jerusalem will again flourish as a spiritual site for the renewal of Judaism.[108]

In a similar vein, again using Isaiah as intertext, 'A Vision of the Rocks' identifies Israel as the 'sea' ebbing and flowing while God is the 'rock' that 'stands calm', as in Isaiah 28:16 and 32:2, where Zion will be rebuilt 'stone by stone', providing the foundations for return and eschatological redemption.[109] In the poem, the restoration of Zion is an opportunity to re-engage those 'souls for ever [*sic*] calling God in vain' and to fulfil Israel's spiritual and eschatological destiny:[110]

THE waves this day, against the silent rock,
Are hurling all their host in storm and strain—
Great seas that, gathering strength, again, again
Fall prone, and all their seething hearts unlock.
To-day the waves—a wandering, surging flock
Of passionate forms—are raising wild refrain,
With souls for ever calling God in vain,
And hands that helpless at his portals knock.

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Israel, ye whose sovereign spirit braves
The wrath of ages with triumphant psalm,
How have ye come to seem a desolate sea,
Your hope in tempest while the rock stands calm,
Your godlike singing but incessant waves
Lashing the silence of eternity?[111]

Indeed, the 'silent rock', symbolising 'the God who saves you/... the Rock who shelters you' (Isaiah 17:10), calls to the 'waves', in Isaiah 48:18 the 'waves of the sea' (the Jewish people), to return. Like in so many of Salaman's poems, 'A Vision of the Rocks' adopts simplistic alternate rhyming. However, if the underlying theme is stripped back to its biblical origin, despite its echoes of multiple verses from Isaiah and other biblical texts, the poem is essentially a reflection on Isaiah 48:17–19 and God's promise that if Israel heeds the divine command, it will be not only a prosperous 'river', but 'waves' with children as numerous as 'sand'. 'A Vision of the Rocks' belies the fact that despite its conventional rhyming, Salaman was trying to do exactly what Halevi had done in his extensive use of 'biblical phraseology': to present, as she called it, a 'harmony', a system of 'artistic coping stones', that in its 'simplicity' masks a 'deeper cause'.[112] Again, Salaman's poem, despite its 'clothing in metre and rhyme', is literally a close reading of Isaiah 48:17–19, the parallelism of its lines, and its potentiality for national redemption. The poem activates romantic-nationalist themes of Jewish diasporic survival that has only been possible because of pious devotion in the context of God's impending 'judgement' (Isaiah 28:17). In the process, 'A Vision of the Rocks' is also able to draw on Halevi's identification of the Law as a binding force for diasporic-Jews, both being a means to holiness and restoration of Zion-Jerusalem yet to come. For Salaman, *halakhah* (the Law) and the *mitzvot* (commandments) served to engage and sustain religionists. Like Bialik, Salaman believed the legal tradition could regulate the mundane and the everyday, while it was Torah that embodied the loftier spiritual tenets to which all Jews could aspire.[113] The 'triumphant psalm' potentially alludes to Zechariah 9:9–10 and the prophet's relaying of God's call to 'Rejoice greatly, Fair Zion; Raise a shout, Fair Jerusalem' in the context of messianic redemption, but the poem's overall thrust is the prospect of future redemption. The emphasis of 'A Vision of the Rocks' is on diasporic-Israel, who must bravely return to God, the only one able to calm the 'incessant waves', echoing Isaiah 51:15.

Salaman, like Bialik, linked the Jewish people and nascent statehood to necessary learning of Hebrew.[114] In doing so, Bialik envisioned the preservation of Jewish tradition in cultural and historical terms, with his poetry, no different to Salaman's, frequently including loaded biblical, rabbinic and mystical

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symbology.[115] Bialik also saw in Halevi, as Salaman did, the association between traditional Judaism, Hebrew and 'the nation of Israel'.[116] 'Surely the People is Grass', written in 1897, was one of Bialik's first prophesising sermons critiquing diaspora Jews for their inaction in relation to the prospect of return and restoration:[117] 'Yea, when the trumpet sounds, when the banner at last is uplifted,/Then shall the dead awake?'[118] Salaman described Bialik as a poet 'of the future telling the story of a new and better world'.[119] Bialik would of course go on to be lauded as 'The National Poet' of Israel.[120] However, where the two poets differed is in what Miron calls Bialik's 'poetization of prophecy'.[121] Both invoke the Prophets as intertext, but while Bialik used the Prophets for socio-cultural critique, Salaman merely applied them to identify biblical exilic continuities adaptable to the romantic-Zionist genre.[122]

Alongside Bialik, Salaman's *Songs of Many Days* includes a translation of the Hebrew poet, Naftali Herz Imber's 'Hatikvah', 'The Hope: The Zionist National Anthem'.[123] 'Hatikvah', now the official Israeli national anthem, was actually first translated into English by Salaman's close friend, Israel Zangwill, who for a period was acquainted with Imber.[124] After his time in Palestine the prophesising, idealistic and romanticising elements of Imber's Zionism waned.[125] It is in 'Hatikvah' that: 'Zion's daughter sits and weeps—/So long our hope will never die,/Yea, this our hope through ages felt,/Back to our fathers' land to fly;/Home to the height where David dwelt'.[126] Imber, similar to Salaman, was fascinated by Halevi's journey to the Promised Land and in providing his own take on the pilgrimage had the Andalusian poet demand: 'to Zion, now, and to her cities'.[127] Comparable to Bialik, Imber, and others, Salaman came to hope that diasporic-Jews would contribute to the restoration of Israel as a community of Hebrew speakers, which would consequently become a spiritual guide to the rest of the world.[128] Jews in the diaspora, for Salaman, would not, in the words of Isaiah (51:1), 'forget "the rock whence we were hewn"'.[129] A future Israel, echoing Ahad Ha'am's Zionist vision of a Jewish cultural base, would be for Salaman, again utilising Isaiah's (2:2) words, 'a spiritual centre for the world, "and all nations shall flow to it"'.[130] Hence, Salaman's poetry, particularly after her family's experience of the First World War, came to increasingly parrot the Hebrew revivalist, Prophetic and Halevian discourses core to the romantic-Zionist oeuvre.[131] Having already contributed translations of Bialik's 'Surely the People is Grass' and Imber's 'Hatikvah' to Paul Goodman and Arthur Lewis' volume on *Zionism* in 1916, Salaman included them again, along with Imber's 'Zionist Marching Song', prefiguring her own 'Marching Song of the Judeans', in her *Apples & Honey* collection. Moreover, in her essay, 'The Hebrew Poets as Historians', Salaman identified Bialik as a 'Poet of Present-Day Suffering'.[132] Salaman positioned Bialik in continuity with the Hebrew poets of the diasporic past, identifying that a poet's corpus should be examined for its romantic and idealistic qualities

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as opposed to its historicity; for Salaman, only the 'idealization of the past' could lead to revelation.[133]

Salaman's poetry thus relies on romantic-nationalist discourses that envisage the land of Israel as spiritually attuned to the Jewish 'people',[134] as well as on eschatological symbols of future redemption, including restoration of Zion-Jerusalem.[135] In making these claims, Salaman was drawing on a rich history of exilic experience, in particular Halevi's belief, and indeed his message to the diasporic-Jews of Al-Andalus, that only in the land of Israel would the Jewish people, speaking Hebrew, the language through which the Law was delivered by Moses, and living according to Torah, be redeemed.[136] The context of the First World War and the Balfour Declaration, for Salaman, offered the necessary impetus for diasporic-Jews to 'Lead the nations' (Isaiah 49:6), as emphasised in the poem, 'Wartime'. Similar to Bialik's poetry, the poem again relies on the invocation of biblical tropes and visionary discourses associated with the so called 'truth' of the Prophets central to the romantic-Zionist genre.[137] Indeed, sustained by the legal tradition, the scattering of the Israelites, resonant of Isaiah 18:2, is a necessary preemptive stage to the joining of 'the hands of nations' (Psalm 106:41):

> Where can man abide and find a gleam of daybreak?
> Where is now a land shut out from war?
> Where a people now which shall, with heart of justice,
> Lead the nations like a guiding star?
>
> We of scattered Israel, dumb through all the ages
> Since the Law awaked a dreaming world,
> Had we not a word to reach the ear of nations
> Ere the thunderbolt of war was hurled?
>
> Wherefore else our agelong life, our wandering landless,
> Every land our home for ill or good?
> Ours it was long since to join the hands of nations.
> Through the link of our own brotherhood.[138]

Salaman understood 'the Law' not only as a unifying force able, through Torah, to maintain spiritual engagement, but a call to 'active mission'.[139] The precedent of 'the Law' in the poem has its intertextual basis in Halevi's *Khazari*, in which he argued that the *mitzvot*, as delivered at Sinai, are God's means of guiding religionists in the diaspora, as well as the only route to the divine.[140] The 'dreaming world', similarly, recalls that dreams, as explained in the *Khazari*, are akin to 'religious experience', revelatory, and 'self-validating', much like the awakening initiated by the Law that Salaman's poem points

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to.[141] The *Khazari*, similar to Halevi's poetry, was standard intertext for the romantic-Zionist genre and its quest to normalise Jewish identity as an entity compatible with statehood and a universal Hebrew language.[142] Salaman's frequent allusions to Halevi's *Khazari* reflect her belief in its core premises, which she quoted at length in her *Hebrew Sacred Poetry*: 'the superiority of Hebrew' in 'its original form', the tendency that 'rhymed poems' and 'music' detract from 'something higher and more useful', and the inevitable 'degeneration' of Hebrew language in the diaspora.[143] But in her identification with Halevi and awareness of the contradictions of diasporic poetry, Salaman accepted that like her own verse, Halevi's inevitably veered from biblical parallelism. The Hebrew poetry of the 'greatest medieval poet', nonetheless, despite its 'clothing in metre and rhyme', much like Salaman's own efforts, was no less 'noble, dignified, and passionate', and certainly no less 'beautiful'.[144]

In sum, Salaman's poetry is underscored by its configuration of a singular, essentialising Jewish nation, bound up with a romanticist and teleological understanding of inevitable return to the land of Israel, which says little about the complexities of the new Jewish settlements, the Palestinian Mandate, or indeed its indigenous Arab population.[145] The vague 'Zionist literary consensus', as Miron calls it, that Salaman belonged to, popularly symbolic of Bialik and reliant on particularist romanticising discourses of Jewish history and identity, came to an end in the decades following Salaman's passing.[146] This was because of its inability to understand that Zionism, at least in Salaman's lifetime, was not in vogue for most Anglo-Jews[147] Salaman died prior to British Zionism's popular phase. Indeed, it was not until the late 1920s that most communal institutions began to support the cause.[148] It is unfortunate that Salaman's research was prematurely ended at the age of only 47. One of her last projects had been translating the Italian poet Rachel Morpurgo's Hebrew verse. Fittingly, however, Norman Bentwich, Attorney-General of Britain's Palestinian Mandate, claimed Salaman was 'the greatest Anglo-Jewish poet of Hebrew lore'.[149] Similarly, the Chief Rabbi, Joseph Hertz, even spoke at Salaman's funeral, a privilege normally reserved for male scholars given eulogies are not usually permitted on Rosh Hodesh (the new moon and the beginning of the month).[150] And in numerous obituaries, Salaman was aptly likened to Halevi, her 'favourite' Hebrew poet.[151]

Thus, while Salaman was certainly not the only Anglo-Jewish woman engaging in Hebrew translation and writing romantic poetry couched in exilic discourses, she was, as a 'well regarded Hebraist' and in her commitment to literal translation, uniquely the focus of universal acclaim.[152] However, what makes Salaman's poetry *sui generis* is the very nature of its being couched in the rhyming and metrical conventions to which she was most opposed, a necessary means of identifying the contradictions of diasporic poetry, each one of her poems serving as a signifier of the exilic experience characteristic of Halevi's

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verse, *Khazari*, and eventual pilgrimage. Equally, as Adena Tanenbaum points out, 'Salaman is to this day one of the few women to have undertaken the translation of Andalusian Hebrew poetry' and actually, these translations have yet to be superseded.[153] This accolade is all the more impressive given the difficulty of translating the Hebrew poetry of Al-Andalus and its particularist conventions.[154] In sum, Zionist historiography has not yet responded to Salaman's romantic-nationalist poetics,[155] although her contributions to the *Service of the Synagogue* and the Halevi translations continue to be employed.

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130 *Ibid.*; Allan Arkush, 'Cultural Zionism Today', *Israel Studies* 19.2 (2014) 2; Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. Barbara Galli (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), p. 2. According to Bentwich, the Kilburn Wanderers were 'inspired' by Ha'am and his 'philosophy of Zionism' ('The Wanderers', p. 62).

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147 *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 138.

148 Stephan Wendehorst, *British Jewry, Zionism, and the Jewish State, 1936–19* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 5–6; Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain: 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 216; Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 260.

149 Koren, 'Nina Salaman', p. 8.

150 Endelman, 'Nine Ruth Davis Salaman'.

151 One tribute claims Salaman was in 'harmony' with Halevi and his 'mental and spiritual gifts' (Yehuda, 'Nina Salaman', p. ii). In another obituary, the *Jewish Exponent* (13 Mar. 1925), in MS Add. 8171, no. 67, 'Obituaries and press cuttings re NS', in 'Loose on top of other boxes', Cambridge University Library Archive, p. 9), noted that 'like … Halevi, she could cry to Zion', while *The Times* extolled her 'spiritual kinship with the poet' (Obituary, *The Times*, 28 Feb. 1925), in MS Add. 8171, no. 67, 'Obituaries and press cuttings re NS', in 'Loose on top of other boxes', Cambridge University Library Archive, p. 14). The *Herts. and Cambs. Reporter* lauded Davis' 'talents' (Obituary, *Herts. and Cambs. Reporter* (27 Feb. 1925), in MS Add. 8171, no. 67, 'Obituaries and press cuttings re NS', in 'Loose on top of other boxes', Cambridge University Library Archive, p. 3). Similarly, *Jewish World* claimed 'few, more surely than she, have been able to grasp the true inwardness of the Hebrew tongue' (Obituary, *Jewish World* (26 Feb. 1925), in MS Add. 8171, no. 67, 'Obituaries and press cuttings re NS', in 'Loose on top of other boxes', Cambridge University Library Archive, p. 4).

152 Endelman, 'Nina Ruth Davis Salaman'.

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[154] Halkin, *Yehuda Halevi*, p. 3.

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