

REBECCA LESSES

Assistant Professor, Jewish Studies	
Ithaca College	902 North Cayuga St.
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EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Harvard University	Study of Religion	1995
Visiting Research Fellow	Hebrew University of Jerusalem		1992-1993
A.M	Harvard University	Study of Religion	1991
Visiting Research Student	Hebrew University of Jerusalem		1987-1989
A.B., <i>summa cum laude</i>	Harvard University	Study of Religion	1985

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, and HONORS

Summer Faculty Research Grant, Ithaca College, 2007 and 2002.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Raymond and Janine Ballag Fund Fellowship, 1998-99.

Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Columbia University, Mellon Fellowship, 1996-98.

Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard, Dissertation Fellowship, 1993-94.

Fulbright-Hays Training Grant (Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad), 1992-93.

Summa Cum Laude for Undergraduate Honors Thesis, "Gnostic Exegesis of the Garden of Eden Story," 1985.

Phi Beta Kappa, 1985.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor, Jewish Studies, Ithaca College, 2001- present; *Interim Coordinator of Jewish Studies*, 2002-2003 and Spring 2006, *Coordinator of Jewish Studies*, Fall 2007- present.

Courses taught: Hebrew Scriptures; Gender and Sexuality in Judaism; Jews in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds; Jews in the Modern World; Judaism; Jewish Mysticism; Jewish Magic and Ritual Power, Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity

Other responsibilities: member of Jewish Studies Steering Committee; supervising administrative assistant and Development Officer for Jewish Studies; member of the Humanities and Sciences Curriculum Committee; member for the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Steering Committee, member of the Ithaca College Hillel Board of Trustees.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence in Jewish Studies, Bucknell University, 2000-2001.

Courses taught: Introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; Jewish Peoples and Civilizations; Gender and Judaism.

Other responsibilities: organized faculty Talmud seminar; gave campus-wide lectures on Jewish studies; organized invited lecture series on Women and Gender Issues in Judaism.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Vassar College, Department of Religion, 1999-2000.

Courses taught: Introduction to Jewish Studies; Western Religious Traditions; Hebrew Bible; Kabbalah.

Other responsibilities: supervised senior theses; member, advisory board, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

Lecturer, Columbia University, Department of Religion, 1996-98.

Course taught: Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Cornell University, Near Eastern Studies Department, 1995-96.

Courses taught: Introduction to Classical Jewish History, Gender and Judaism, Introduction to Modern Jewish History, and Jewish Mysticism.

Lecturer, Bates College, Religion and Philosophy Department, Spring 1995.

Course taught: Judaism in the Modern World: Gender Issues in Judaism.

Lecturer, Boston University, Religious Studies Department, Spring 1992.

Course taught: Themes in Classical Jewish Thought.

Teaching Fellow and Tutor, Harvard University, Committee on the Study of Religion, 1989-1995.

Courses taught: World Religions: Diversity and Dialogue, Scriptures and Classics; The History of Jewish Women in Late Antiquity.

Teaching Fellow, Harvard Divinity School, Fall 1994.

Course taught: Jewish Feminism in Theological Perspective.

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Book Project: *Angels' Tongues and Witches' Curses: Jewish Women and Ritual Power in Late Antiquity*

PUBLICATIONS

BOOK

Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism. Harvard Theological Studies 44. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998.

ARTICLES

“He Shall Not Look at a Woman’: Gender in the Hekhalot Literature,” pp. 351-387, in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourse* (ed. by Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner), Leiden: Brill, 2007.

“Amulets and Angels: Visionary experience in the Testament of Job and the Hekhalot literature,” pp. 49-74 in *Heavenly Tablets: Rewriting Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (ed. by Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber), Leiden: Brill, 2007.

“Eschatological Sorrow, Divine Weeping and God’s Right Arm,” pp. 265-283 in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. by April DeConick), Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

"Exe(o)rcising Power: Women as Sorceresses, Exorcists, and Demonesses in Late Antique Judaism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69 (June 2001), 343-375.

“Jewish Magic and Multiculturalism in the Ancient World,” *Association for Jewish Studies Perspectives*, Fall 2000.

"Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Greco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjurations." *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996) 41-60.

"The Adjunction of the Sar ha-Panim: 'Performative Utterance' in a Jewish Ritual," pp. 185-206. In Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds. *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

"Commentary on The Testament of Job," pp. 139-149. In Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, ed., *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist-Ecumenical Commentary*. New York: Crossroad/Continuum, 1994.

ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

“Image and Word: Performative Ritual and Material Culture in the Aramaic Incantation Bowls,” in *Visual Magic* (ed. by Andrea Lieber and Marla Segol), to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in their New Middle Ages Series.

“‘The most worthy of women is a mistress of magic’: Women as witches and ritual practitioners in 1 Enoch and rabbinic sources,” in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World* (ed. by Kimberly Stratton and Dayna Kalleres), to be published by Oxford University Press.

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

“Lilith.” In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Thomson/Gale, 2005.

"Lilith." In *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. CD-ROM. Jerusalem: Shalvi, 2005.

"Amulets." In *The Encyclopedia of Women in World Religions*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Editorial Assistant, *Harvard Theological Review*, February-August 1995.

Research Assistant for Professor Diana Eck, on the Jews of New England, for her course, "World Religions in New England," Summer 1990.

Research Assistant for Professor Chava Weissler, sources in the history of Ashkenazic Jewish women in early modern Europe, Spring-Summer 1987.

PRESENTATIONS

"'They Revealed Secrets to their Wives': The Transmission of Magical Knowledge in 1 Enoch." Presentation to Medieval-Renaissance Colloquium, Ithaca College, November 27, 2007.

"'They Revealed Secrets to Their Wives': The Transmission of Magical Knowledge in 1 Enoch." Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism and Early Christianity Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November, 2006.

Panel discussion of the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Section which discussed the work of the Section's last ten years and celebrated the publication of the first book of proceedings produced by members of the Section, *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November, 2006.

"Review of Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*," in a book review panel organized by the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Section. Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November, 2005.

"How to Expel Demons with Pictures: Performance Theory and the Aramaic Incantation Bowls." Association of Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, December, 2004.

"'He Shall Not Look at a Woman': Gender in the Hekhalot Literature." Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November, 2004.

"Divine Weeping and God's Right Arm: A vision of eschatological sorrow in Sefer Hekhalot." Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, November, 2003.

"Demons, Characters, and Angelic Alphabets: Pictorial Depictions in Jewish Amulets and Texts of Ritual Power." Association of Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, December 2003.

"Amulets and Angels: Visionary experience in the Testament of Job and the Hekhalot literature," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, November 2002.

"Women and Gender Issues in the Contemporary American Jewish Community," Bucknell University, April, 2001.

"Lilith and Other Demons," Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University, April 2001.

"Women in Early Jewish Magic," Faculty Colloquium, Bucknell University, March 2001.

"Ascetic Piety and Angelic Revelation in Jewish Incantations of Late Antiquity," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Boston, November 1999.

"Sorcery in 1 Enoch," Orion Center for Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, May, 1999.

"Metatron as Messiah in the Hekhalot Literature," 1998-1999 Seminar on Messianism, Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, April, 1999.

"They Revealed Secrets to their Wives: The Fallen Angels as Teachers of Occult Arts to Women," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL, November, 1998

"Women, Liliths, and Other Demonesses: Images of the Demonic Female in Early Jewish Magic," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, December, 1997.

"Magic and Mysticism in Early Judaism," given at "Symposium on Mysticism, Cross-cultural Perspectives," Tulane University, New Orleans, March 1997.

"May the spirit be bound and kept away from her': Jewish women and magic in late antiquity," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New Orleans, November, 1996.

"Adjurations in the Hekhalot Literature: The Role of the Senses in Ritual Performance," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, November 1995.

"Dream-Revelation Adjurations in the Hekhalot Literature," International Conference on Magic and Magic in Judaism, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, October 29-November 2, 1995.

"Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Greco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjurations," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Chicago, November 1994.

"Heavenly Descents: A Speech-Act Analysis of Adjurations from the Heikhalot Literature," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Boston, December 1993.

"The Adjuration of the Sar ha-Panim: 'Performative Utterance' in a Jewish Ritual," Conference on Magic in the Ancient World, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, August 1992.

"Hekhalot Literature and the Babylonian Magical Bowls," American Academy of Religion
Annual Meeting, New Orleans, November 1990.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association for Jewish Studies

Society of Biblical Literature

Member, steering committee, Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group

LANGUAGES

Hebrew (classical and modern), Aramaic, classical Greek, German, French.

REFERENCES

Available on request.