

A Poet and a City in Search of a Myth: On Shlomo Skulsky's Tel-Aviv Poems

ABSTRACT

Poems about cities are among the oldest texts known to humanity. This article deals with a collection of poems dedicated to the city of Tel-Aviv. The collection, called *Ashirah lakh Tel-Aviv* (Let Me Sing to You, Tel-Aviv), was published in 1947 by Shlomo Skulsky (1912–1982), a well-known poet and translator. The book is a small *canzoniere*—a collection of sonnets. The article shows how Skulsky tackled the problem of Tel-Aviv's a-mythical past, trying to endow the city with a myth of her own. This synthetic myth makes Tel-Aviv Jerusalem's younger daughter and heir. Finally, the article shows how Skulsky, who immigrated to Palestine in 1941, just six years prior to the publication of his book, assumed a fictional poetic persona, pretending to be a veteran of Tel-Aviv, with memories pertaining to the early years of the city. This textual move went well with the effort to weave a myth for the a-mythic city.

INTRODUCTION

POEMS ABOUT CITIES ARE AMONG THE OLDEST KNOWN TO US. WE HAVE lines about the city of Erekh in the Babylonian *Gilgamesh* epic, and, what is the *Iliad*, if not (among other things) the story of the fall of a city. One need not mention the poetic passages about Jerusalem in the book of Psalms. Different city-myths are delicately woven into the odes of Pindar, and Ovid has left us a most vivid and dramatic poetic version of the founding of Rome.¹ Major cities, such as Paris or Moscow, have large bodies of poetry incorporated into their literary history.² Poems about cities are not

preface to his collection of poems, and from what can be deduced from the poems themselves, we learn that he fled to the Soviet Union, spent some time in the Gulag as “a prisoner of Zion”, and later joined the anti-Nazi partisans. In 1941 he managed to reach Palestine, where he was arrested by the British police and interned in the infamous camp at Atlit. A fervent supporter of the Revisionists, he soon joined the Tezel underground, and was active in the party’s youth movement Betar. Having earned a BA in humanities from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Skulsky again worked as a schoolteacher in various institutions in Ramat-Gan and Tel-Aviv. Alongside his pedagogic career, he continually worked as a translator, writer, and literary editor (for more than a decade he edited the literary supplement of *Herut*, the organ of the Revisionist movement, until its demise in 1966). His main occupation was in the field of children’s books; according to one source, he published over a hundred, both original and in translation.⁵ Sholomo Skulsky died in Tel-Aviv in 1982.

“ASHIRAH LAKH TEL-AVIV”

During his lifetime, Skulsky published only two collections of original poems, and two other books of poetry in translation. Both translated volumes were from the works of the Polish national poet Adam Mickiewicz: the dramatic poem *Konrad Wallenrod*,⁶ and the epic poem *Grazyna*.⁷ Skulsky’s first collection of original poems, entitled *From Among the Pieces*, an intended allusion to the Covenant of the Pieces of Genesis 15, was published in Tel-Aviv in 1942.⁸

His second book of poems was published five years later. *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* is a collection of sonnets, each of which deals with a different facet of the city, or a theme directly related to it. Skulsky gave his book the sub-title “a sheaf of sonnets”. This generic definition bears affinity to the better-known form of “sonnet-wreath” (or *corona*), a form that was introduced into Hebrew poetry by the poet Shaul Tchernichowsky, who also gave it its Hebrew appellation, “kelil-sonetot”.

In view of Skulsky’s Polish cultural background, and his more than occasional acquaintance with the poetry of Mickiewicz, it is reasonable to assume that the initial idea of casting his poetic thoughts about Tel-Aviv in the form of a collection of sonnets was inspired by the latter’s famous cycle of *Crimean Sonnets* (1826). Mickiewicz’s cycle was probably in the mind of Tchernichowsky, who also wrote a cycle of Crimean sonnets in the 1920s. However, Skulsky’s endeavor was more ambitious: instead of a cycle of 15

sonnets (as in a *corona*, or in Tchernichowsky's cycle), or 18 sonnets (as in Mickiewicz's cycle), *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* consists of 72 sonnets, which makes it in fact, a mini-*canzoniere*,⁹ whose heroine is not some Petrarchan flesh and blood Laura, but the abstract feminine figure of the city of Tel-Aviv.

At the head of his book Skulsky placed a motto from Ezekiel (36:10), which leaves no doubt as to his general concept of Tel-Aviv. The verse in question runs thus: "and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded". This motto directly relates to the motto incorporated into the city's official emblem, "again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built". All 72 sonnets were written in the same pattern: *ababababcdcdcd*. Skulsky divided his book into five sections, each bearing a title: "in your paths", "your dwellings", "your feast-days", "in exultation", and "your future fate".

The opening sonnet (which, like the closing sonnet, stands out of the main collection) is entitled "I love you". The function of this sonnet is clear: apart from being a prologue, it also defines the entire book as a continuous love poem, which is precisely what a *canzoniere* should be. The opening quartet offers a precise definition of the essence of the city:

You are dear to me, Tel-Aviv, my lovely city,/ Hebrew town, you are indeed dear to me!/ My vision, rescued-and-brought to the land of our fathers,/ that was poured in concrete upon the barefootedness of sands.

He combines the words "ha-ir ha-ivrit", "the Hebrew town". It is common knowledge that this appellation was the kernel of the foundational myth of Tel-Aviv.¹⁰ The entire city is described as a materialization of a "vision poured in concrete",¹¹ upon bare sands; this too belongs to the same foundational myth. In the following quatrain, up to the sonnet's end, Skulsky starts weaving a new myth for Tel-Aviv:

City, one forgives you your wandering, in a dance, / the wind blowing in your dress,/ [looking] like a capricious girl, -/ Ah, but I know your soul: - in it, a fire is burning,/ coals, carved from my Holy City [. . .]// for you are the daughter of old-age [bat-zekunim] of your mother, Jerusalem.

Skulsky here reacts to a well-known aspect of Tel-Aviv's reputation, namely, its being a "frivolous", even hedonistic town.

As Maoz Azaryahu has shown, written expressions of this feeling can be traced back to 1915.¹² Skulsky, however, offers his reader an "explanation"

of this frivolity—Tel-Aviv is all jumpy because it is young, burning with the fire implanted in her by her mother, Jerusalem. A possible literary source for this myth involving a mother-daughter relationship between two cities, one old the other newly-founded, can be found in Alexander Pushkin's poem *The Bronze Horseman* (1836). In Pushkin's poem the relationship is indeed somewhat different, but the "deep structure" is the same:

A hundred years have passed, and the young city,
[. . .] splendidly has risen.
[. . .] and before the younger
Capital, ancient Moscow has grown pale,
Like a widow in purple before the new empress¹³

A strong image from Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman* may also be behind the mythical picture depicted in the opening sonnet of the first section, "A Street and a Square". The first quatrain of this sonnet informs the reader he is about to hear a wondrous local legend, "woven on the spindle of [passing] days [. . .] ever since 1909". The city itself tells the story of Meir Dizengoff's wedding. Actual geographic objects (Dizengoff Street and Dizengoff Circle) are turned into mythical material:

My groom extended his arm to his bride, gave her a gift,/ put a sacramental ring [on her finger], and said "you are hereby . . ."/ . . ." and his arm turned into a street/ and the ring turned into a crowning square -/ and the Dizengoff couple was thus married in me forever . . .

This "legend", with its almost primitive element of metamorphosis, is actually an artificial aetiological myth in the best Ovidian tradition. It "explains" why Dizengoff Street is straight, and why the square is round. At the closing line of the sonnet, the straightness of the street is given yet another semiotic value: "and his arm commands: Grow, City, for you are yet small!" The founding father of the city is metamorphosed into the city itself. His "gesture" reminds one of Pushkin's lines concerning the posture of the statue of Peter the Great, *The Bronze Horseman* himself:

What thought
Was on his brow, what strength was hidden in him!
And in that steed what fire! Where do you gallop,
Proud steed, and where will you Plant your hoofs?
O mighty master of fate! Was it not thus,

Towering over the precipice's brink,
 You reared Russian with your iron curb?¹⁴

The only difference is that Pushkin's genius leaves the question of the symbolic steed's course open, while in Skulsky's modest sonnet there is no enticing ambiguity.

POETIC TOPOGRAPHY

In the first two sections of his book, Skulsky turned his attention to concrete sites in Tel-Aviv. Read as a sequence, his sonnets are designed so as to produce a panorama of the city. Many of the sonnets revolve around familiar landmarks: the Rothschild Boulevard, the sea shore, the seven sycamore trees, the Yarkon river, the Mahlul shanty town, London Square, the Tel-Aviv port (these four sonnets form an itinerary along the beach), the Town Hall, Magen David Square, Meir (Dizengoff) Park ("Gan Meir"), the Yemenite quarter, the house where Ahad Ha'am lived, Habimah Theatre, the zoo, the town funeral hall on Maz"eh Street, the maternity ward on Balfour Street (in the same sonnet), and, finally, the Tel-Aviv cemetery on Trumpeldor Street.¹⁵

These two sections are obviously arranged as a tour of the city, and as a kind of a life itinerary, from birth to death. These two itineraries are interwoven, and have different protagonists: the city itself, and its generalized dweller.

Skulsky published his book in 1947, which by that point in time already had a well-established tradition of Tel-Aviv poetry, whose undisputed leader was Natan Alterman.¹⁶ Following one of the most common poetic moves in this tradition, which was also brought to its peak by Alterman, Skulsky depicted his Tel-Aviv as a living organism, whose different parts (or limbs), be it streets or shop windows, are all endowed with a life of their own. The same is true for the actual living entities that populate this organism, the citizens of Tel-Aviv themselves. The organism in question has but one aim: to grow ever larger. This notion is overtly expressed in the last sonnet of the opening section of the book. Its title is an unequivocal imperative: "Grow!"¹⁷ The tercets read:

Harness my city, asphalt reins,/ hands, rush the houses to the race!/ City, drop
 the rein that binds you, the Yarkon [river];/ westward, unto the sea, and let

the water recess!/ push eastwards, southwards and to the north—and may you grow,/ and fill all space as you fill my heart with joy.

Many of the sonnets of *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* read like mere exercises in rhetoric, cast in sonnet form. Many of the themes treated by Skulsky were also quite common in the corpus of Tel-Aviv poetry. The description of the wind as the desert's revenge for the city's domination over the sands, "Hamsin" (p. 48), or the quasi-Futuristic depiction of Allenby Street as a gigantic conveyor belt that revolves between two squares "Allenby my Machine" (p. 14), or the sonnet "Sons of Tel-Aviv" (p. 67), which ends with the trite rhetorical question: "Are there such people in any other town?"

However, in some of Skulsky's sonnets one finds a thought, a formulation, or a point of view that is innovative. Let us briefly examine two such cases. In a sonnet entitled, simply, "Houses" (p. 29), Skulsky offered a symbolic (and also political) interpretation of Tel-Aviv's overall architectural view. The upright new houses, he wrote, all standing apart remind one of those upstanding wealthy Jews who, in traditional synagogues, used to claim a privileged place near the eastern wall. The description ends with a rhetorical question: "Is there any Hebrew house which is that proud?" In the old country, continues the poet, the houses stood in a different manner: clinging together, crowded against each other. The "meaning" of the new architectural order is expounded in the closing tercet:

And even though the brotherhood [of those houses] is not common among you,/ my feelings, [o you] "upstanding ones", burn for you -/ for the brotherhood of slaves—[is the] toy of Fear.

Tel-Aviv's multilingual environment and the "language war" for the exclusive supremacy of Hebrew are well known. The celebrated poet Zalman Shneur (1887–1959) wrote an acid description of the linguistic situation in Tel-Aviv of the 1940s:

In Yiddish, Russian or Polish/ a man greets his friend innocently./ "Who is speaking a foreign language? . . . Hush . . . Shhh!/? Hebrew, and Hebrew only!¹⁸" / shouts the voice of the oppressing "Battalion"./ This is a voice from heaven, and no one can change it, - / in Tel-Aviv.

Skulsky was clearly on the side of Hebrew (and Hebrew only). When describing London Square, "Next to London Square" (p. 21), he did not

forget to “forgive” the city for the sin of giving the square a foreign name. He elaborated on this theme of the good fight against foreign names in an interesting sonnet entitled “Straight and Crooked [Ways]” (p. 84). The streets of Tel-Aviv, he wrote, are like an open book. Each morning stroll is also a reading of the book of Chronicles. The names of heroes, martyrs, and men of genius excite feelings. Each street and square is a lit commemorative candle. However, “Sometimes I stand astounded, and ask:/ What is this foreign name in your midst?/ it clings to the past of the Jewish people like a skin-disease”.

However, in another sonnet, “Melodies of my street” (p. 19), Skulsky turned the multilingual reality of Tel-Aviv into a charming image:

Not the call of the cock, another voice wakens me,/ the call “maransi, maransi!” [Arabic: “oranges, oranges!”], which coughs the Arab;/ the sun just started to shine through the cracks of the shutters, and I hear/ the melody of the greengrocer: “vegetables, grapes!” [. . .] The shouts of your vendors [sc. Tel-Aviv] became my clock, which urges me/ to welcome a new day and leave my bed.

The following shouts, at different hours of the day, are in Yiddish and Hebrew: “old stuff!” at noon, “white clothes!” in the afternoon, and “lots of news!” at dusk.¹⁹

“NO LEGENDS WERE [EVER] CREATED IN YOU”

As one progresses through the last two sections of *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv*, Skulsky’s overall vision of the city becomes clearer. In his excellent paper on the “Eretz-Israel” genre in Hebrew poetry, Shlomo Har’el successfully demonstrated how poets of the first and second *aliyah* were constantly subordinating what they actually saw before their eyes (i.e., concrete details of any seen scenery) to abstract visions charged with historical past.²⁰ Examples of this phenomenon are legion. Shmuel Bass’ (1899–1949) sonnet about his nocturnal pilgrimage to “Gush Halav”,²¹ described the fog-covered Mt. Atsmon in one line: the other 13 lines dealt with what was not actually there—a spiritual vision of the armies of the celebrated first century rebel John of Giskala.

The problem with Tel-Aviv was that it had no glorious historical past or magnificent architecture. The poet Yitzhak Katzenelson (1886–1944) underlined this “non-mythical” quality in the nursery-rhyme like poem he

wrote to honor the city in 1934,²² “[In this city] there are no golden castles, there is no/ royal palace, no king; but who is comparable in beauty?/ Who is comparable in splendor?” What Tel-Aviv lacks in mythical beauty is compensated for in human warmth:

This white city—good people/ live in those whitewashed houses;/ when a man meets a man in the street -/ [it is] a friend who meets a friend.// It is warm [in this city], one feels good, as in a mother’s womb,/ stones laugh out of the walls²³ -/ can you name this city?/ Tel-Aviv is that city’s name.

Skulsky was well aware of this problematic quality of Tel-Aviv. He treated it in a separate sonnet, whose title is self-explanatory: “No Legends were [ever] created in you” (p. 92):

No legends were [ever] created within you, [o] city,/ the mouths of elders did not embroider a veil of secrets for your head;/ there is no grandmother laden with years who tells/ of ghosts, of horrors, of pogroms and blood . . .// No downfall and destruction to spread illness in your foundations,/ the horrors of the past do not lay heavy upon you;/ Daughter of the desert! You grew up in freedom, a poetess,/ you are all legend, you are an undreamt dream . . .// When I hear your voice from under the pier, - / it sounds [to me] not the roar of my ancient heroes,/ as do the rocks of the City of David, when my heart listens [to] her voice . . .// It is not the story of my zealots that had left its mark on you . . ./ But your proud brow tells me:” I shall be courageous,/ I will astound [sc. everybody] with a legend about new mighty men! . . .

The idea that Tel-Aviv was a “freeborn” city, free of the heavy burden of Jewish history was certainly not new. Nor was the notion that this is the main difference between this city and Jerusalem. However, Skulsky did offer an innovative “solution” for the problem of a non-existent mythical past: simply, Tel-Aviv’s mythical aspect is to reside not in its past, but in its future. Tel-Aviv, according to him, is predestined to become a mythical city. The same idea is behind his semiotic interpretation of the city’s emblem (in the sonnet “City Hall” (p. 31):

Every city in the world chooses for its symbol/ the heroic memory which throbs in it in a commendable manner,/ a witness of the splendor of its emblem, a true witness, a crown of [its] past;// you chose a shield for your emblem, fixed a lighthouse in the middle,/ your lit tower shall be the crown of your future.

The first stage in this mythical existence of the future seems to be Tel-Aviv's replacement of Jerusalem. In a sonnet entitled "A Hebrew City" (p. 82), Skulsky depicts Tel-Aviv as a city within which "lies the star of David", where "synagogues pray with their domes Jewish prayers, silent supplications", as opposed to Jerusalem, where the sky is "wounded with the tops of minarets and their crescents". Maybe, wrote Skulsky, a day will come when God will bring to Tel-Aviv, as he will to Jerusalem, the might of David, announcing its coming not with gunfire from mosques, or the din of church-bells, "but with the sound of the Jewish shofar, the shofar of the messiah". The final sonnet in *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* develops this theme in full:

I know that you too, like your mother Jerusalem/ are waiting for your miraculous groom to appear -/ She, your mother, stretches her hands to him from her rocks,/ you, her daughter, are waiting for him, pining —// he shall come, as dawn [comes] on the edge of the horizon,/ you will mount your roofs to welcome him,/ he will come . . . in all your beauty you will cast down your eyes before him,/ lifting your veil for the kiss of your beloved one.// - mounted on a white she-ass, girdled with azure wreaths,/ he will appear, don you with a marital crown,/ consecrate your marriage to him with a sacramental ring.// Then your mother will come closer, feel him, smell [his wreaths?]/ a tear of joy will tremble between her eyelashes:/ yes, my daughter, here he is! Your messiah king has come!"

In view of Skulsky's fervent support of the Revisionist movement, and considering the date of the composition of his book, there can be no doubt as to the interpretation of this sonnet. The coming of the messiah is simply the end of British rule over Palestine. In another sonnet, entitled "An organ with no strings" (p. 76), Skulsky wrote: "the voices of megaphones on top of every antenna/ will break the news of your liberation to the wide world: "Listen to the voice of redeemed Tel-Aviv!". The combination of words "redeemed Tel-Aviv" was usually reserved for "redeemed Jerusalem". There is every reason to believe that in his political poetic vision Skulsky was following the footsteps of Uri-Zvi Greenberg. Greenberg, the undisputed bard of the Revisionists, made ample use of the symbol of the messiah in his lofty political poems of the 1930s and 1940s. As the case may be, Skulsky's poetic "proposal" to substitute Tel-Aviv for Jerusalem in the context of political redemption can certainly be seen as a surprising innovation. What, then, is the overall vision of Tel-Aviv as it emerges from this *canzoniere*? A new Jewish town's destiny will replace both Jaffa, as "queen of the seas",²⁴ and

Jerusalem as well, a city whose destiny is to become mythical, though it has no mythical past.

“I REMEMBER YOUR YOUTH: A TINY NEIGHBORHOOD”

Skulsky came to Palestine in 1941, having lost his family in the Holocaust, and being imprisoned in a Soviet Gulag. This autobiographical aspect of his poetic persona is reflected in a few sonnets of *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv*. Yet at the same time Skulsky deliberately assumes another persona, that of a pioneer, one of the first builders of his beloved city. This is particularly evident in the sonnet “Your First Street” (p. 4), which deserves to be translated in full:

I remember your youth: a tiny neighborhood,/ small as an olive, humble
as the Sabbath;/ yet you have a gate, and a chain -/ no one shall cross your
doorstep—here you alone dominate!// A diligence—your vehicle, squeaking,
barely advancing,/ crawling [through] “Nablus Road” towards Jaffa, slowly
. . . / Devastation hurling sand-storms over you,/ Shmuel Hager’s broom
fights it alone.// The first “boulevard”, the soda shack,/ Dr. Hisin swaying
on his donkey each day,/ the first water-cistern, which filled it [i.e. the city]
with bubbling light of life.// You were still small, yet cast a longing eye/ over
“abed-al-nabu” hill, over the crooked “Sea Path”,/ and commanded the sea
to extend at your feet.²⁵

Skulsky is personalizing memories that could not be his. The scenes and places he depicts go back to the period between 1910 and 1929, decades before he actually came to live in Tel-Aviv. Yet he seems to be suggesting that a true son of this city must have such memories, in the spirit of the Passover Haggadah: “in every generation, let one consider himself as if he came out of Egypt personally”.

There is no point in pretending that *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* is a forgotten masterpiece written by an unduly neglected poet of genius. Rather, it is a mediocre, at times a feeble, collection of sonnets; nevertheless, it is most interesting, both in its unusual form and in its almost unique vision of Tel-Aviv as a mythical city *par excellence*.

NOTES

1. Cf. Ovid, *Fasti*.
2. Pierre Citron's monumental two-volume study *La Poésie de Paris dans la littérature française de Rousseau à Baudelaire* (Paris, 1961). For Moscow, see E. G. Basova and S. G. Kondratenko's anthology *Stikhi o Moskve* (Moscow, 1997) [Russian].
3. Full Russian text, Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1958) 10:128–13.
4. Dan Miron, *Founding Mothers, Step Sisters: The Emergence of the First Hebrew Poetesses and Other Essays* (Tel-Aviv, 1991) 181–245 [Hebrew].
5. Cf. G. Kressel, *Lexicon of Hebrew Literature in Recent Generations* (Tel-Aviv, 1967) 2:537 [Hebrew].
6. Adam Mickiewicz, *Konrad Valenrod*, trans. into Hebrew by Shlomo Skulsky (Jerusalem, 1944) [Hebrew].
7. Adam Mickiewicz, *Grazhina*, trans. into Hebrew by Skulsky, Tversky (Tel-Aviv, 1950).
8. So dated by Kressel; Kressel, *Lexicon of Hebrew Literature in Recent Generations*, 536. The book itself is not dated.
9. *Canzoniere* [Song Book] is the name of Francesco Petrarca's book of poems (also called *Rime sparse* [Scattered Verses]). Of the book's 336 poems, more than 300 are sonnets. In later times it became customary to dub any large collection of sonnets (which are not arranged as a *corona*) a *canzoniere*.
10. Maoz Azaryahu, *Tel-Aviv: Mythography of a City* (Syracuse, 2006).
11. The Hebrew text may have an additional pun to it. Skulsky here uses the verb "mulat": in classical Hebrew this would mean no more than "was rescued". However, it is also possible to read the verb as a derivation of the noun "melet", which in Modern Hebrew signifies "concrete, cement". The verb here would thus mean both "was rescued", and "was [cast in] concrete".
12. Azaryahu, *Tel-Aviv*, 69.
13. D. M. Thomas's translation. See Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman and Other Poems*, trans. by D. M. Thomas (London, 1982) 247–248.
14. *Ibid.*, 256.
15. On Rothschild Boulevard and the Trumpledor cemetery see Barbra Mann, *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel-Aviv, and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* (Stanford, CA, 2006).
16. Dan Miron, *Essays on Literature and Society* (Tel-Aviv, 1991) 264–5.
17. Skulsky, *Let Me Sing unto You, Tel-Aviv* (Tel-Aviv, 1947), 22.
18. Shneur's *pointe* requires an explanation. His poem is written in Ashkenazi Hebrew (trochaic tetrameters). The improbable vocalization of the word "ivrit" [Hebrew language] signals that this exclamation is pronounced in Sephardic Hebrew. This is to be expected, since the members of "The Battalion for the Defence of The Hebrew Language" were opposed to not only Yiddish and all other foreign languages, but also to Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew.

19. The first exclamation, which can still be heard in Tel-Aviv (yet in an abbreviated form—“*alte zachn*” only), belongs to the petty merchants who used to buy used household items of all sorts. I found no explanation for the second exclamation. The last exclamation obviously belongs to vendors of evening newspapers.

20. Shlomo Har’el, “The Eretz-Israeli *Genre* in Poetry,” in *Turning Points in Hebrew Literature in Relation to other Literatures*, eds. Ziva Shamir and Avner Holtzman (Tel-Aviv, 1983) 201–212 [Hebrew].

21. For the text of this sonnet, see *Selected New Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Asher Barash (Jerusalem, 1930) 454 [Hebrew].

22. “Tel-Aviv” was published in the *Bulletin of Tel-Aviv Municipality* (Tel-Aviv, 1933–4) 2.81 [Hebrew]. The editors added an announcement: “The poet Zitshak Kazenelson, whose poem is hereby printed, is currently visiting Eretz-Yisrael.”

23. Obviously an intended reversal of the celebrated verse in *Habakkuk* 2, 11: “for the stone shall cry out of the wall”.

24. See the sonnet “The Sorceress and the Charming one,” 83. The messiah, who appeared at the end of the previous sonnet, will hear the song of Tel-Aviv and will enter the city, turning his back on Jaffa.

25. I was unable to identify Shmuel Hager. “Nablus Road” led from Jaffa to Saronah and Nablus. “The Sea Path” was the road later named after General Allenby (1918). The first soda shack appeared in 1926, at the crossing of Herzl Street and Rothschild Boulevard.