

The City Square in the Performance of *Taanit*: From Rabbinic Space to Contemporary Jerusalem*

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Whether its roots are in the Athenian *agora*, the medieval marketplace, or the Renaissance *piazza*, the city square has been celebrated in Western imagination as a privileged site of civic participation, exchange, and democratic action.¹ Recent protest movements, worldwide and specifically in the Middle East, have stirred renewed attention to city squares. From Tahrir Square in Cairo and Taksim Square in Istanbul, through Syntagma Square in Athens and Puerta del Sol in Madrid, to the now nonexistent Pearl Roundabout in Bahrain—all these played a vital role in the political action of cities and nations. This was part of a wider reclaiming of urban public spaces (such as Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv and Zuccotti Park in New York) as sites of political and social activism and conflict.² The later global branding of some of the protest movements under the name “Occupy” further exemplifies this spatial concern: it alludes to an assertive (perhaps even aggressive) act of infiltration, of claiming access and use of spaces that were hitherto perceived as removed or taken away from public sociopolitical use. As a whole these modes of protest can be seen as a response to what Setha Low and Neil Smith call “a trenchant reregulation and redaction of public space,” in which a “creeping encroachment in previous years has in the last two decades become an epoch-making shift culminating in multiple closures, erasures, inundations, and transfigurations of public space at the behest of state and corporate strategies.”³

Performance art in recent years has also engaged with this renewed interest in the city and in urban public spaces—an engagement that at times has been directly

connected to protest movements.⁴ Many of these performances were site specific and as such can be seen, in the words of Cathy Turner, as spatial investigations in which practitioners “come to view space as a layered entity, and their occupations of it as a form of interpretive spatial practice.”⁵ That is, by performing in urban public spaces, these endeavors not only reactivate space but also propose a study and reinterpretation of it. This is also maintained by the dialogue with other cultural performances taking place within urban spaces—such as religious rituals, political demonstrations, consumerism, and the codified and stylized behavior of everyday life—and it may be seen as a play with and reflection upon the significance and functions of space within political culture.

The following paper will explore such dynamics through an intertextual analysis of the performance *Taanit* (Civil Fast) by the Israeli group Public Movement (Hebrew: Tnua Tsiiburit), which first took place at Davidka Square in Jerusalem in December 2012, and will propose a reading of this performance as a site-specific interpretation of the city square within the Israeli context.⁶ However, as I will demonstrate, Public Movement engages not only with the specific physical site where the performance takes place but also with traditional Jewish texts that describe and prescribe performances in the city square.

The term *ta'anit* derives from Jewish religious praxis. It means “self-denial” or “self-affliction” and may refer to either a private act (*ta'anit yahid*) or a public one (*ta'anit tsiibur*). According to rabbinic sources the public *ta'anit* is to be conducted in times of drought and in other cases of communal crisis, and it is this kind of *ta'anit* that will be the focus of our attention here. In what follows I will trace the shifts that take place, from rabbinic texts to urban performance, in Public Movement's *Taanit* and consider the piece's dialogue with performative elements in rabbinic texts. These elements are reactivated in Public Movement's performance—a reactivation that is not a full reconstruction but rather involves adjustments, modifications, and manifest deviations. *Taanit* thus rereads and transforms *textual* spaces as much as it does *physical* ones, and it is the convergence of the two in performance that enables the investigation of the city square's multilayeredness.

Public Movement and *Taanit*

Public Movement is a performance research group located in Israel that explores and stages actions in the public sphere. These actions include a wide range of practices—from folk dancing to military parades—that usually take place in open public spaces. According to Daphna Ben-Shaul, Public Movement's “actions offer a radical configuration of social and ritualistic patterns embedded

in power structures, such as national and military ceremonies, as well as in civic behaviour such as demonstrations.”⁷ Ben-Shaul claims that Public Movement’s projects are

cumulative multifaceted investigations of contemporary and future performative models. Within the larger context of performance studies, the group’s actions, being reconstructions and deconstructions of public patterns, may be seen as performances of performances. They are creative variations of restored behaviours, tightly connected to changing circumstances and research about places, such as the Ghetto in Warsaw, University Campuses, or areas of governmental institutions.⁸

Ben-Shaul further identifies two principal strategies employed by Public Movement in its various projects: the “political aestheticization of ceremonial codes and their crucial connection to crisis” and “site-specific civic acts.”⁹ While it is difficult to discern any “explicit articulation of a political position” in Public Movement’s acts, they nevertheless constitute, according to Ben-Shaul, an exploration of “ways to implement a critical overview which includes different perspectives, reversible roles and sides, or interwoven time layers in its actions.”¹⁰ All of these aspects will be central to the understanding of *Taanit* as a site-specific, crisis-centered, politically critical “research about places”—in this case, the city square.

In winter 2012 Public Movement initiated *Taanit* (translated as “Civil Fast” in the group’s English communications), a performance action led by two group members, Hagar Ophir and Saar Székely.¹¹ The action lasted for twenty-four hours and first took place at Liberty Square (also known as Davidka Square) in Jerusalem. *Taanit* was initially established to commemorate Mohamed Bouazizi’s setting himself on fire in Tunisia two years earlier—an event that ignited the set of revolutions and demonstrations that came to be known as the “Arab Spring.” Inspired by the impact of Bouazizi’s action, as well as by the hunger strikes of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, *Taanit* was designed to explore the potential role of the body, and of bodily self-affliction, in social and political protest. In the words of Public Movement’s announcement of the event, *Taanit* was meant to “praise the self-violence hidden in jails and synagogues, and . . . celebrate hunger and solidarity in a choreography of punishment and treatment, self-starvation and ideological passion.”

In creating *Taanit*, Public Movement aimed at establishing a set of actions that could be re-performed by others in different places, times, and circumstances. This aim is also manifested in a booklet printed to serve as a *siddur* (Jewish prayer book), which details the actions and texts to be employed by others during future performances of *Taanit*.

The order of *Taanit*, as prescribed by Public Movement, is as follows: at sunset the participants arrive at the city square. From there they leave to visit, in procession, several nearby political establishments (such as, in the case of the first *Taanit*, the Jerusalem police headquarters, the building of the Israel Medical Association, and city hall), “inviting” them to join the fast. Once back at the square, the participants perform a purification rite and light a fire that is to be kept burning for the whole period of the *Taanit*. Then a feast is held, marking the transition from eating to non-eating (referred to as *se’udah mafseket*, “the ending meal,” a term derived from Jewish religious fasts). The meal, as devised by Public Movement, includes various symbolic foods and is accompanied by songs such as verses from Psalm 102 (“A prayer of an afflicted person who has grown weak”),¹² Britney Spears’s “. . . Baby One More Time,” the suffragette song “Columbia’s Daughters,” and Lebanese writer and composer Ziad Rahbani’s “Ana mush kafer,” which begins with the verses “I am not a heretic / But the hunger is a heretic / I am not a heretic / But the disease is a heretic / I am not a heretic / But poverty is a heretic” and continues later on with “I am not a heretic / But the state is a heretic” (my translation).

This innovative assortment of songs engages in various ways with the key themes of Public Movement’s *Taanit*: liberation from oppression, violence and affliction, and the body as both site of and vehicle for suffering, solidarity, and rebellion. While Psalm 102 posits the suffering body within a clearly religious context of prayer, Rahbani’s words broaden the frame so that it encompasses not only the religious (through the notion of heresy) but also the political and the economic (“poverty is a heretic”; “the state is a heretic”). On the other hand, Spears’s pop megahit, which was sung with irony, devotion, and sheer unabashed delight during the meal, is reread playfully to reveal both how religious discourse permeates contemporary popular culture (“I must confess, I still believe”) and how pop culture inscribes the masochistic pleasures elicited by the yearning for violence from above (“give me a sign, hit me baby one more time”). By compiling such a variety of songs, Public Movement weaves a performative fabric in which the body’s relation to violence and self-affliction in religious and political contexts is explored through protest and pleasure, confrontation and celebration. The focus on the body as a vehicle for collective pain and enjoyment continues after the meal, when the participants and guests move on to dance the hora and the dabke until bodily exhaustion is reached. At night a vigil is kept so that the fire will not be extinguished (the group planned to sleep at the square but was not given permission to do so by local authorities).

At sunrise prayer is conducted, facing the Israeli parliament (unlike the traditional Jewish prayer, which is oriented toward the Temple Mount). Then the participants

walk toward a nearby governmental building and perform a ceremony of pardoning the past sins of the parliament and of the participants themselves, being its subjects. Once back in the square, the participants conduct healing treatments for one another, as well as hold surveys of passersby, questioning them about their attitudes toward their bodies, their willingness to go on a hunger strike, and their acquaintance with various Israelis who set themselves on fire in political protest. The *Taanit* ends with a press conference and a party, and eating is resumed by sunset.

As mentioned above, Public Movement's set of actions in *Taanit* manifests the group's concern with the body and with communal corporeal acts of self-affliction and celebration as vehicles for political action and protest. This is made clear by the opening statement of the *siddur* for *Taanit* (titled *Yizkor*, the Jewish memorial prayer):

We are all bodies. We experience pleasure and pain, heat and cold. We make our way through a sea of scents and tastes and sounds, of dangers and thrills. We touch and are touched, become tired and collapse and reawaken with a burst of desire.

But these bodies, which are us, have a responsibility. And *for* these bodies there is a responsibility. . . .

This is a day of *ta'unit* in which we wish to ask ourselves: to whom do these bodies, which are us, belong? What can we achieve with them? Are we willing to jeopardize them and for what? . . .

We need hunger. We need communal hunger, collective hunger, civic hunger. We need a day of civic fasting.¹³

Thus, Public Movement explicitly links the group's preoccupation with the body's political role to the concern with the body as a religious vehicle that can be found in Jewish fasting practices.¹⁴ I maintain, however, that the specific choice of *Taanit* as a paradigm encapsulates both spatial and corporeal dimensions, which allows Public Movement to also examine the political-theological significance of the city square by evoking traditional, religious layers of meaning given to that place. Following the reclaiming of the city square that characterized recent protests around the globe, Public Movement's civil fast, I argue, reactivates the religious underpinnings of modern urban space by juxtaposing it with rabbinic traditions, illuminating through performance the potential significance that the rabbinic space of public fasting has for modern urban politics.

As recent scholarship has demonstrated, the prism of performance (and at times even theatrical performance) can prove highly valuable for the study of rabbinic constructions of ritual.¹⁵ The following discussion will similarly read the implicit

performance of the rabbinic public *ta'anit* with an emphasis on performance space, in order to juxtapose it in the second part of the paper with the actual, modern performance conducted by Public Movement.¹⁶ Thus, in the words of Ben-Shaul quoted above, Public Movement's *Taanit* is presented as a "performance of a performance," a "creative variation" on the rabbinic *ta'anit* that, while diverging from the rabbinic model in obvious ways, also employs and replays some of its performative potentialities in a contemporary setting.

Rehova Shel Ir: The City Square in Rabbinic Texts

The ritual of the public *ta'anit* is narrated in detail in tractate *Taanit* of the Mishnah (redacted c. 200 CE). It is important to emphasize that I do not necessarily assume that the ceremony described in the Mishnah indeed took place historically as it is described (or even at all), and it could be the case that the Mishnah relates a hypothetical, imagined performance of the ritual.¹⁷ In the current context, however, I am less interested in the historicity of the rabbinic account than in its role as an available textual tradition for contemporary performance.

The Mishnah describes the beginning of the ceremony as follows:

What is the order [of the ceremony] for *ta'anit*? The ark is taken out to the city square [*rehova shel ir*, literally, the open space of the city]. Ashes of burnt substance are placed on the ark, on the head of the *nasi* [=head of the Sanhedrin], and on the head of the *Av-bet-din* [=chief of the court, deputy of the *nasi*]. Everyone else puts ashes on their own heads. The eldest among them speaks captivating words to them: "Our Brethren! It is not said about the people of Nineveh, 'When God saw their sackcloth and fasting,' but rather, 'When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way' (Jonah 3:10). And in the words we received [from Prophets] it is said: 'and rend your hearts and not your garments' (Joel 2:13)."¹⁸

The ceremonial part of the *ta'anit* begins with a movement outside—into *rehova shel ir*—where the rest of the ceremony, which mainly includes prayer, will take place. In modern Hebrew, *rehov* means "street," but in these early texts the word, derived from the root *rhu*, meaning "wide," probably designates a wide open space within the city. According to Shmuel Safrai, Zeev Safrai, and David Levine, the term *rehova shel ir* denotes the main public space of the town, possibly adjacent to the synagogue, which served functions rather similar to the Greek *agora*.¹⁹ *Rehova shel ir*, therefore, would be the rabbinic term closest to "city square."

The movement outside, to *rehova shel ir*, includes taking the ark (*tevah*), a chest containing the Torah scrolls, out of the synagogue. The ark was, in the words

of Lee Levine, “the undisputed religious focal point in the ancient synagogue.”²⁰ Beyond its storage function, the ark held a spatial significance for the performance of prayer within the synagogue, with the person leading the prayer service referred to in rabbinic sources as one “who passes before the ark” or “goes down before the ark.”²¹ Spatially speaking, the movement outside with the ark thus charts a line between the synagogue and the city square, and the relocation of the ark turns the city square into the main site of prayer (the following passages in the Mishnah will detail these prayers). The impact of the ark’s presence as a spatial focal point within the city square is further accentuated by the Tosefta (a compendium of the Mishnah, compiled around the third century CE), which states that rather than having people take shifts watching over it, one person is to sit and guard the ark all day long.²² The ark’s presence in the square thus anchors and shapes human movement around it.

The ark, however, is ritually handled in a startling manner: ashes are spread over it, over the heads of the leaders of the community, and over the heads of all those present—a symbolic act of mourning, humiliation, and possibly repentance.²³ From a performance point of view, one needs to stress the material juxtaposition between the solid ark and the disintegrated ashes, between an existing piece of religious furniture and the burnt remnants of that which no longer exists, and between holiness and bereavement. Furthermore, the spreading of ashes can be seen as a personification of the ark, for the ark is dealt with as if it were a person in mourning. In the shared space of *rehova shel ir*, this act also creates a direct association between the ark and the people performing the *ta’anit* next to it, who also spread ashes over their own heads. In later rabbinic sources, however, the spreading of ashes denotes not a personification of the ark but rather a deification of it, for the ark is considered to be a representation (or perhaps even presence) of God amidst the community. Thus, the reason given in the Palestinian Talmud (assumed to have been compiled around 400 CE) for the spreading of ashes over the ark is expressed through the words of Psalm 91:15: “I will be with him in trouble.”²⁴ The Talmud’s interpretation suggests a performance that signifies God’s being “with” the community in its plight, through the presence of the ark within the community in the city square and the shared act of spreading ashes over both people and ark. To express how shocking this behavior is, the Palestinian Talmud continues by relating a statement by Rabbi Zeira: “Every time I have seen them doing this, my whole body has started shaking.”

The city square therefore turns into a distorted synagogue, in which elements from the liturgical space are used in unnerving ways, reflecting and contributing to the sense of acute crisis. Some scholars, such as Sidney B. Hoenig, claim that

the city square was a forerunner of the synagogue, as the main space in which communal actions were to take place. According to Hoenig, the prayer during *ta'anit* is a remnant of its use in earlier periods.²⁵ Be that as it may, as David Levine points out, later interpretations of the *ta'anit* in the Babylonian Talmud (assumed to have been compiled around the sixth century) in fact construct the movement outside the synagogue as a radical break from communal spatial norms:²⁶

Why do they go out to the open space? R. Hiyya b. Abba said: As if to say, We have prayed in private [*be-tsine'a*] but we have not been answered; therefore, we will humiliate ourselves in public [*be-pharrhesia*]. Resh Lakish said: [As if to say] We have exiled ourselves [from the synagogue to the street], may our exile atone for us.²⁷

The move into the city square is thus interpreted in the Talmud as either an act of exile or one of public humiliation. According to R. Hiyya b. Abba, the city square allows for acts of self-degradation in *parrhesia*. The public, open space is contrasted with the intimate, enclosed synagogue—the Aramaic word, *tsine'a*, suggests modesty and seclusion—and the move outside is the breaking of boundaries, a self-exposure. It is as if the communal crisis cannot be contained any longer within the confines of the synagogue, and its spilling outside to the city square reveals (or performs) how dire the situation actually is. Resh Lakish, on the other hand, sees the movement in terms of exile—an act that should lead to atonement. Less than the openness and exposure that are the qualities of the city square, it is the act of dislocation and a sense of homelessness that stand at the core of this interpretation.

The term *parrhesia* used here by R. Hiyya b. Abba is most pertinent to the current discussion and deserves further elaboration: in classical Athens, as Michel Foucault famously maintained, the term designated an act of free, truthful, critical speech in front of the ruler, which involved risk taking and which emerged from a sense of civic duty and personal engagement.²⁸ Tali Artman-Partock, who traced the evolution of the term's meaning, from Greek culture to rabbinic literature, observes several key changes in it.²⁹ First, the term gradually designates a *space* rather than an *act*. As in modern Hebrew, which inherited the rabbinic usage, *be-pharrhesia* generally simply means “in public”—and in the Babylonian Talmud, as can be seen above, it is often contrasted with *be-tsine'a*, “in private.”³⁰ Furthermore, while in classical Athens *parrhesia* referred to acts of speech alone, rabbinic literature considered a wide array of both physical and speech acts in the context of *parrhesia*.³¹ *Parrhesia*, in other words, is presented in rabbinic literature as a space for public performance, physical as well as verbal. At the same time, Artman-Partock observes in rabbinic literature a growing tendency to detach the term *parrhesia* from its Greek

context of critical, dangerous truth telling to power. While in tannaitic literature (the Mishnah and contemporaneous rabbinic texts) and the Palestinian Talmud, this notion of *parrhesia* is retained to various degrees,³² in the Babylonian Talmud an act taking place in *parrhesia* is no longer judged by its truth-telling content but rather by the way it would be interpreted by the public witnessing it—whether that public is Jewish or non-Jewish. It is considered to be a public act in front of an audience, regardless of how truthful it is.³³

Interestingly, the only place in the Babylonian Talmud where Artman-Partock does find affinity to the classical concept of *parrhesia* is in the passage quoted above from tractate *Taanit*. Only here, according to Artman-Partock, does the term *parrhesia* appear in the context of confronting God—yet the addressee of the *parrhesia* is not directly God but rather the Jewish and non-Jewish audience, in front of whom the act of self-humiliation takes place.³⁴ This shameful act before their gaze is expected to motivate God to action: the community's self-humiliation in front of others is supposed to force God to respond, for "God's ignoring of the people that humiliates itself in front of him and in front of foreigners would be perceived as the action of an unworthy king, just as anger would be perceived as an unworthy response in the case of philosophical or political *parrhesia* in the classical model."³⁵ Artman-Partock thus sees the *ta'anit* as a "pseudo-*parrhesia*" in which the audience and its presuppositions are used to achieve the participants' goals.

In the context of *ta'anit*, therefore, *parrhesia* may be understood both as a public space and a critical performance within that space. In fact, according to Artman-Partock, it is rather a performance-of-a-performance, a "pseudo-*parrhesia*" that consciously uses the dynamics of *parrhesia* as a weapon.³⁶ Yet one should not lose sight of the fact that, at least in the Mishnah quoted above, the *ta'anit* ceremony is also directed toward authentic self-criticism. This is made manifest by the warning that the performance is not sufficient without true repentance, exemplified by the people of Nineveh and the verse from Joel. The movement outside to the city square can therefore be seen as a charged act of self-critique as well as of confrontation and demonstration in dire circumstances, and these various meanings can of course occur simultaneously within the same performative action. Furthermore, owing to the presence of God amidst the community, via the ark—at least in the Talmudic interpretation—it seems that the *parrhesia* performed in the *ta'anit* is of a more entangled kind, rather than purely confrontational: God is "with" the community, a participant in the performance as much as its addressee. *Rehova shel ir* is produced in the *ta'anit* ritual as a space shared not only by Jews and non-Jews but also by humans and God—all of which are implicated in the performance and by their copresence

so that the political and theological lines between performer and spectator are not easily demarcated.

The city square used during the *ta'anit* returns in another rabbinic discussion, regarding *rehova shel ir* as public property belonging to the citizens as a collective. A passage from the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Megillah*, deals with a statement made by the Mishnah, according to which the people of the city may not sell *rehova shel ir* unless they buy something holier in exchange. The Mishnah depicts a hierarchy of sacredness between various possessions of the public—city square, synagogue, ark, cloth covers (for the Torah scroll), scrolls of specific scriptures, and finally the Torah scroll itself—and claims that the citizens are only allowed to sell “up” the scale but not “down” it. (Thus, for example, if the townspeople sell a synagogue, they may buy an ark or a Torah scroll with the proceeds but not a city square.) This hierarchy, we may note, has a spatial quality as well—with the city square being the most exterior, and with the list moving inward from square to synagogue to ark and finally to Torah scroll.³⁷ Yet even if it is located at the bottom of the list, the city square still retains, according to the Mishnah, some holy status that other spaces (that are not on the list at all) do not. This status is further debated in the Talmud:

“The townspeople who sold the public square”—Rabbah bar bar Hana in the name of Rabbi Yohanan said: These are the words of Rabbi Menahem bar Yose the anonymous author. But the sages say: the square holds no holiness. And what is Rabbi Menahem bar Yose’s reasoning? Because people pray in it on days of *ta’anit* and on the gatherings of the *ma’amad*.³⁸ And [what is] the other sage [s’ reasoning]? That happens merely by chance [*akrai*].³⁹

The Mishnah’s statement that the city square is holy to some degree is attributed by Rabbah bar bar Hanna to Rabbi Menahem bar Yose and presented as contested by other sages. The discussion that follows in the Talmud goes on to maintain that according to Rabbi Menahem bar Yose, the square’s holiness derives from its temporary liturgical use, such as in times of *ta’anit*. The explanation given by the Talmud as Rabbi Menahem bar Yose’s reasoning portrays the city square as an extension of the synagogue because it hosts prayers from time to time and therefore retains some of the synagogue’s holiness. The argument given on behalf of the other sages, however, who do not consider the square to be holy at all, is that the prayer is but a random (*akrai*) activity taking place within the square, one that does not define it in any way. In other words, according to the Talmudic explanation of these two stances, Rabbi Menahem bar Yose claims that the ritual performances taking place in the city square charge the space with religious meaning, while the

other sages maintain that since these performances do not occur in the city square on a regular basis (as they do in the synagogue), this urban space is devoid of any holy status.

One could maintain, however, that this very randomness that is hosted by the city square is in itself precisely one of the defining features of the place. Clearly, this is a broader application of the term *akrai* than was intended in the Talmudic passage, but it resonates with the eloquent articulation of the marketplace by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White:

How does one “think” a marketplace? . . . At the market centre of the polis we discover a commingling of categories usually kept separate and opposed: centre and periphery, inside and outside, stranger and local, commerce and festivity, high and low. In the marketplace pure and simple categories of thought find themselves perplexed and one-sided. Only hybrid notions are appropriate for such a hybrid place.⁴⁰

Granted, Stallybrass and White put more emphasis on the commercial aspects of the marketplace, but I suggest that the place’s hybrid quality, its deep openness to a myriad of activities that undermine “pure and simple categories of thought,” is also captured by the rabbinic term *akrai* regarding the city square. The square hosts a wide array of actions, holy and profane, on an ongoing or temporary basis, and a question remains as to whether any of these activities can be seen as defining the square—or perhaps it is the square’s *akrai* quality that serves as its defining feature as a hybrid space open to randomness, which therefore cannot be easily categorized.

While the various appearances of *rehova shel ir* in rabbinic literature do not necessarily portray a unified image of that space and its cultural meaning, they do suggest several elements that are attributed to the city square: a space of self-exposure and humiliation; a *parrhesia* for confrontation and self-criticism; an extension of the synagogue that has some holy status; a subverted synagogue in which the elements of ritual performance are reconfigured in a startling manner; or a space of randomness, *akrai*, that undermines any attempt to grant it a fixed identity. All of these varied connotations are potentially available to Public Movement as intertexts as the group devises its own modern *ta’anit* in the city square.

From *Rehova Shel Ir* to Davidka Square: *Taanit* in Performance

Clearly, in *Taanit* the members of Public Movement have no interest in reconstructing the rabbinic ritual; rather, their interest lies in exploring the performative vocabulary suggested by the texts and reactivating some of it in

a different setting and for very different goals. Like the rabbinic *ta'anit*, Public Movement's action consists of a public display of the body in critical situations, responding to dire communal circumstances. Furthermore, when Public Movement declares that its *Taanit* wishes to "praise the self-violence hidden in jails and synagogues," it follows the movement described in the Mishnah—the relocation of the ark and practices of prayer and fasting from inside the synagogue to *rehova shel ir* outside. Here, however, it is self-violence rather than prayer that is relocated, and jails are conjoined with synagogues. By mentioning jails alongside synagogues, Public Movement creates a correlation between self-inflictions of suffering taking place in religious (fasting) and political (prisoners' hunger strikes) contexts—and more broadly, between religious and political spaces. It is the bodily acts of self-affliction conducted in the interiority of both that are taken outside to the public space of the *Taanit*. But it is not only the violence a body inflicts upon itself that is exposed here—it is also the prior violence that this act responds to: the violence inflicted upon the body by authoritarian power, be that God's denial of rain in the case of the rabbinic *ta'anit* or the state's violence in the case of Palestinian prisoners' hunger strikes. As in the rabbinic sources, the very act of public exposure in itself reveals the extreme political situation that calls for it.

In this sense Public Movement foregrounds R. Hiyya b. Abba's interpretation of the *ta'anit*: while putting less emphasis on self-humiliation as such (although there might be some of that as well in this performance), Public Movement utilizes the city square as a site for drastic action in front of public spectatorship, an act taking place in *parrhesia*. This use of *parrhesia*, however, echoes both Greek and rabbinic usage of the term: it employs verbal and physical acts in a public space, offering a critical truth-telling aimed at the ruler, the participants, and the audience of occasional passersby. The concluding press conference of this modern-day *ta'anit* expresses the realization that in contemporary culture, the publicity of the city square is not enough to create *parrhesia*—and an engagement of the media is needed for these drastic bodily actions to be spread for public spectatorship.

By declaring, in its announcements that its *ta'anit* is to be an event of "24 hours of fasting, feasting, celebrations and abstinence in the city square," Public Movement recalls the traditional space for *ta'anit*—even while using, in the Hebrew version of the announcement, the more colloquial phrase *kikar ha-ir* instead of the rabbinic *rehova shel ir* (which in modern Hebrew, as mentioned above, would rather be understood as "city street"). The modern term *kikar ha-ir* in fact evokes more strongly the Western tradition of the city square, or the *agora*, as a site of civic

engagement. Public Movement's phrasing of the *Taanit* as taking place "in the city square" thus weds Western and Jewish legacies into one space.

Yet this move is hardly simple, for it is worth noting that in the context of *ta'anit*, the term *rehova shel ir* is charged in rabbinic literature chiefly with religious rather than purely political meaning: it is the space of religious fasting and prayer, temporarily hosting the ark, and it is considered holy to some degree, according to several opinions. While the modern Western conception of the civic square sees it as relating symbolically (and often also spatially and architecturally) to the buildings of political government, such as the parliament or city hall, rabbinic texts regarding the *ta'anit* posit *rehova shel ir* vis-à-vis a mainly religious building, the synagogue, producing spatial interrelations between the two and at times presenting the former as an extension of the latter. Consequently, *rehova shel ir* exists at the margins of the political tradition of the civic square: it is not a space of political action in the same way the *agora* is imagined to be.

I, however, maintain that Public Movement's weaving of *rehova shel ir* into the tradition of the civic square is one of the group's most significant contributions in terms of performative spatial investigation. For it is precisely the religious burden carried by *rehova shel ir* that turns it into a productive concept for a postsecular culture in which, as Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan put it, "the apparent triumph of Enlightenment secularization, manifest in the global spread of political and economic structures that pretended to relegate the sacred to a strictly circumscribed private sphere, seems to have foundered on an unexpected realization of its own parochialism and a belated acknowledgment of the continuing presence and force of 'public religions.'"⁴¹ As Lance Gharavi claims, such resurgence has everything to do with performance, for in the public sphere the performative quality of both religion and the battles over it are made manifestly clear and politically volatile.⁴² As a spatial practice, I would add, performance enables us to explore these dynamics not only in the public *sphere* but also in the public *space*.

Arguably, in Israel, and certainly in Jerusalem, religion was never completely relegated to the private sphere to begin with but rather always played a vital role in the shaping of public spaces (such as in the lack of public transportation in most cities during the Sabbath or the prohibition against publicly—*be-pharrhesia*—displaying bread for sale during Passover). In the urban cityscapes of Israel, the political and the religious very often already fluctuate, as they do in Public Movement's *Taanit*. Indeed, in *Taanit* the same kind of oscillation between the religious and the political that Public Movement already delineates by juxtaposing two separate interior spaces (jails and synagogues) also takes place within one exterior space: the city square that

is both *rehova shel ir* and *kikar ha-ir* (or *agora*). This public space now hosts acts that were hitherto contained in the religious synagogue and the political jail, and subsequently it becomes a doubly charged space—both religiously and politically. At the same time, it is the space in which the religious rite of the *ta'anit* is recast and re-performed in political terms.

These fluctuations from the religious to the political echo—indeed, are most probably enabled by—the recent political-theological turn in critical theory, which has been prompted by (among other things) the aforementioned “return” of religion to the public sphere.⁴³ Instrumental to this turn has been the renewed interest in the works of Carl Schmitt and his influential formulation of political theology, according to which “all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts.”⁴⁴ Without entering the debates regarding the analytical usefulness and political implications of Schmitt’s theory, it is worth noting that his impact on the poetics of artworks today has yet to be fully explored. One of the unexpected effects of the recent popularization of Schmitt’s version of political theology has been that it has enabled artists to access religious vocabularies and practices anew in order to translate their structures into paradigms for political power and (possibly of less interest to Schmitt) resistance—that is, to somehow trace or reenact shifts from religious traditions to modern politics of the kind that Schmitt delineates, albeit in other sites and for utterly different political goals. Schmitt’s prominence within current critical discourse surely had such an impact on a theoretically informed group like Public Movement. Indeed, the group seems to pay direct homage to Schmitt in its decision to pray toward the direction of the local parliament and address the sovereign as a secularized version of God.

Yet, as opposed to Schmitt’s famous opening sentence in *Political Theology*—“sovereign is he who decides on the exception”⁴⁵—Public Movement declares a different statement: *We* need a day of civic fasting. The decisive exclamation of a moment of crisis is made here by a collective “we”; although, of course, this collective is hardly presented as fully sovereign in consequence. Indeed, while Schmitt’s model suggests a clear differentiation between sovereign and subject, Public Movement’s performance reads the current political-theological situation not so much as a divide (whether manifested through obedience or confrontation) but rather as a mutual entanglement. This entanglement is bodied forth through a set of performative acts. By inviting (however playfully) political establishments to join in the *Taanit*, by pardoning the sins of parliament but also the participants’ own (being its subjects), and even by relishing Britney Spears’s desire to be given a violent sign from above (that is, by “confessing” that these hierarchical relations

elicit pleasure as well as pain and protest), Public Movement performs the political-theological relations between sovereign and subject not as binary but rather as internalized, with all sides (participants, political authorities, and passersby) implicated in one another. I suggest that a similar entanglement can already be found in the rabbinic *ta'anit*—in the *parrhesia* produced through the presence of the ark “with” the community so that God is implicated in the performance of those who beseech and confront him. In Public Movement’s *Taanit* there is no single physical object that serves as a substitute for the ark. Rather, the notion of entanglement implied by the ark is embodied and performed throughout the event. Consequently, *rehova shel ir* emerges as a space in which the political-theological can be performed as such an entanglement.

To emerge in such a manner through performance, however, the textual construct *rehova shel ir* needs to be physically and spatially situated. In the case of the first performance of *Taanit*, this was done in (or through) Davidka Square. The spatial meaning of *Taanit* cannot be separated from the physical space in which it takes place, and the shift from *rehova shel ir* as a textual space in rabbinic sources to Davidka Square needs to be elucidated in further detail.

Theater theory could prove useful in this, as it deals extensively with the dynamics between texts (written plays) and staged performances.⁴⁶ Performances of written plays, as Marvin Carlson writes, always add material and physical dimensions to the text:

A play on stage will inevitably display material lacking in the written text, quite likely not apparent as lacking until the performance takes place, but then revealed as significant and necessary. At the same time, the performance, by revealing this lack, reveals also a potentially infinite series of future performances providing further supplementation. . . . This is why, as Tyrone Guthrie once observed, characters such as Hamlet could be interpreted in thousands of ways and yet there never has been nor ever will be staged “the ideal performance which completely realizes the intentions of Shakespeare or Molière or Eugene O’Neill or whoever else.”⁴⁷

In other words “Hamlet” is a textual construct that as such necessarily contains “holes”—such as Hamlet’s height, hair color, or gait—that are to be filled in embodied performance. Such a completion is part of an infinite myriad of possible interpretations: Olivier’s Hamlet is not Sarah Bernhardt’s or David Tennant’s. Being a text, no matter how detailed, the written play exhibits a material lack that performances are called upon to body forth, fulfill, and reinterpret time and again.

Granted, the rabbinic sources are not a written play per se, nor is Public Movement's *Taanit* a direct performance of them, yet in the move from the rabbinic texts to contemporary performance, one may discern a similar process. Like a character in a written play, *rehova shel ir* is also, after all, a textual construct that lacks any particular physical-spatial qualities. This lack needs to be "filled" once a specific city square is chosen as a performance space. As in the case of written plays, Public Movement's proposal that the *Taanit* be performed again by others in different circumstances suggests that other city squares can be cast as *rehova shel ir*, thus offering other interpretations to this textual space, and revealing, in the words of Carlson, "a potentially infinite series of future performances providing further supplementation." Yet the shift from the textual idiom *rehova shel ir* to the concrete urban space in which the modern *Taanit* is to be performed is not a simple one. As in any move from text to performance, the material, spatial, and bodily elements that constitute performance not only add further layers to the text that reinterpret it but also have their own claims for meaning—quite independently from that of the text. What takes place, then, in casting specifically Davidka Square as *rehova shel ir*?

If one were to issue a casting call for *rehova shel ir* in contemporary Jerusalem, the turnout would be rather bleak. Jerusalem conspicuously lacks a city square that could host public political demonstrations—one that would be large enough, fairly accessible, and physically and symbolically situated within the cityscape so as to render it politically meaningful. Thus, to use Tali Hatuka and Rachel Kallus's terms, Jerusalem might hold some "urban squares" but no "civic square." According to Hatuka and Kallus, three interconnected factors define a square as civic: symbolic meaning, crowd configuration, and order and surveillance. These emerge from the interplay between the physical, architectural space (its concrete aspects, such as scale and geometry, as well as its symbolic significance) and the performances taking place in it (that is, the ways in which people stand, move, congregate, and march; their spatial configuration vis-à-vis each other and the representatives of state power; and so on).⁴⁸ In the Hebrew version of her book *Violent Acts and Urban Space in Contemporary Tel Aviv: Revisioning Moments*, Hatuka further defines the civic square as a

certain type of public space in which hierarchical relations are maintained between the local government (usually residing in a nearby building) and the citizens of the city or the state. The civic square often allows for the holding of mass events, which function as a reaction mechanism to existing and potential conflicts that are prevented or circumscribed by their symbolization and surfacing.⁴⁹

No square in Jerusalem was designed to fit this definition. The plaza in front of the Knesset, which is both large and symbolically situated, is not open to the public, while the one in front of the Jerusalem city hall is separated from the main road by rows of palm trees. Thus, most public demonstrations in Jerusalem in recent years, including those of the summer of 2011, took place at France Square (more commonly known as Paris Square), the main quality of which is its relative proximity to the private home of the prime minister, thus allowing for a symbolization of the relations between citizens and government. Paris Square, however, is not really a city square that can hold a multitude of people but rather a junction with a small plaza in its middle. Thus, large demonstrations held at Paris Square are not contained by it at all and immediately spill into the streets surrounding it. Shabbat Square—again not really a square but a crossroad—also hosted huge demonstrations in Jerusalem, but these were held entirely by the ultra-Orthodox community (the square is located within an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood), and the square is identified solely with that community’s political struggles. Also dominant in the political landscape of West Jerusalem is Zion Square, on Jaffa Street, which hosted several pivotal demonstrations in the past, primarily right-wing in orientation, but is not located next to any important political building. At any rate, Zion Square’s political significance has diminished since Jaffa Street was turned into the route for the new light rail in 2011, and demonstrations have been forbidden in the square since then, for security reasons.

Thus, Israel’s main civic square is not to be found in Jerusalem at all, but—as Hatuka and Kallus analyze in detail—in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square, next to the city hall.⁵⁰ It is there that the largest and most central demonstrations in Israel take place, resulting in the curious yet telling anomaly in which most prominent political demonstrations in Israel are spatially detached from the city in which the main buildings of government and decision making are located.

Casting *rebova shel ir* for a modern *Taanit* in Jerusalem is therefore not a simple task, for there is no obvious candidate for the role. The choice of Davidka Square is an interesting one, as the place does not explicitly play a major role in the political life of the city—first and foremost because it is much too small to host demonstrations. The square, however, does hold some symbolic political significance, as it displays the Davidka—a makeshift mortar used in the 1948 war and presented in Zionist lore as an inaccurate weapon that nevertheless assisted in deflating Arab morale due to the notoriously loud noise it made. The Davidka, literally “little David,” named after its inventor, David Leibowitch, also evokes the myth of the battle of David against Goliath. It played a central role in Zionist mythology and was embedded

in Israeli memory as the weapon that enabled the victory of “the weak and the few” (Jews) against “the powerful and the many” (Arabs). For the members of Public Movement, the square’s official but less-known name, “Liberty Square,” also held significance and resonated well with the aim of *Taanit*. On a more concrete level, Davidka Square is located at the intersection of several main routes, connecting Jaffa street, which is the main street of Jerusalem (running from the main entrance to the city, past the Central Bus Station, toward city hall and ending at the Old City’s Jaffa Gate), with the marketplace area of Mahane Yehuda (particularly busy on Friday, before the Sabbath, during which the *Taanit* took place) and the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods of Meah Shearim and Geulah. This allows for a very heterogenic traffic of passersby in West Jerusalem to serve as an unwitting audience for Public Movement’s public performance.

As Diana Taylor writes, performance “forces us to situate ourselves in relationship to it; as participants, spectators, or witnesses, we need to ‘be there,’ part of the act of transfer.”⁵¹ Perhaps a personal anecdote is therefore not out of place in order to testify, by way of conclusion, to the kind of *parrhesia* enabled by the *Taanit* in Davidka Square. During the press conference, in which I was present as a member of the audience, spectators from the various streets surrounding the square assembled to hear the statements made by Public Movement. These passersby-spectators used the platform to pose questions to the members of Public Movement as to why they dedicated a civil fast to Palestinian prisoners on a hunger strike and not to other pressing issues, such as the current state of Holocaust survivors in Israel. At one point, a clearly distraught woman from the audience demanded that the members of Public Movement and her fellow Jerusalemites address the matter of a certain pedophile who was threatening the children in nearby neighborhoods (and about whom, of course, the members of Public Movement knew nothing). It seemed as if the *Taanit* had turned into an opportunity for “airing out” a myriad of distresses at the city square—some kind of modern equivalent to the movement outside the synagogue, taking the crises that cannot be contained indoors any longer into the public sphere and there presenting them in an act of communal bereavement and protest.

Next to me stood a young ultra-Orthodox man. He asked me what the word “pedophile” meant, and I had to find the correct, and sufficiently delicate, words to explain it to him. This startling exchange, a peripheral moment in the larger event and of course an unplanned one, was nevertheless enabled by the performance of *Taanit* in a concrete city square within a specific location in Jerusalem. It was made possible because of the random (or *akrai*) quality of the city square, its openness to a wide and unexpected array of happenings. While in rabbinic texts, the notion of *akrai*

is set in opposition to the opinion presenting the city square as a religiously charged space, in *Taanit* the two worked in tandem: the performance charged the square with political-theological meaning while also utilizing its openness and facilitating even more random events that would take place within this charged space. *Taanit* thus allowed for the unique interaction between the various passersby in Jerusalem and for a drastic exposure, in public, of communal crises—a rare opportunity to recreate an urban *parrhesia*. Davidka Square, on regular days hardly a civic square (or barely even an urban square) in any sense of the term, was temporarily made, through performance, into *rehova shel ir*.

Notes

- * As always, Mira Balberg's razor-sharp critique and generous insights have enabled me to take my arguments to a more substantial level. I am also very grateful to Haim Yacobi and the anonymous readers at *JLS* for their comments and suggestions, which have considerably improved this paper. I would like to thank Ophir and Székely for discussing the process of creating *Taanit* with me, as well as for all the useful information and insights they have supplied.
- 1 For a critical review of this tradition, see Steve Basson, "‘Oh Comrade, What Times Those Were!’: History, Capital Punishment and the Urban Square," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 7 (2006): 1148.
 - 2 In the context of the Middle East, see, among others, Marcelo Lopes de Souza and Barbara Lipietz, "The 'Arab Spring' and the City: Hopes, Contradictions and Spatiality," *City* 15, no. 6 (2011): 618–624; İlay Romain Örs, "Genie in the Bottle: Gezi Park, Taksim Square, and the Realignment of Democracy and Space in Turkey," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40, nos. 4–5 (2014): 489–498; Yair Wallach, "The Politics of Non-Iconic Space: Sushi, Shisha, and a Civic Promise in the 2011 Summer Protests in Israel," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 1 (2013): 150–154; Oren Livio and Tamar Katriel, "A Fractured Solidarity: Communitas and Structure in the Israeli 2011 Social Protest," in *The Political Aesthetics of Global Protest: The Arab Spring and Beyond*, ed. Pnina Werbner, Martin Webb, and Kathryn Spellman-Poots (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 149–155.
 - 3 Neil Smith and Setha Low, "Introduction: The Imperative of Public Space," in *The Politics of Public Space*, ed. Setha Low and Neil Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.
 - 4 See Jen Harvie, *Theatre & the City* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 45–69; Nicolas Whybrow, ed., *Performing Cities* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and the collection of essays in the special issue of *TDR* (vol. 58, no. 3) edited by Carol Martin and dedicated to "Performing the City" (Fall 2014). For studies in the contexts of the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement, see Khalid Amine, "Re-enacting Revolution and the New Public Sphere in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco," *Theatre Research International* 38, no. 2 (2013): 87–103; Mohamed Samir

- el-Khatib, "Tahrir Square as Spectacle: Some Exploratory Remarks on Place, Body and Power," *Theatre Research International* 38, no. 2 (2013): 104–115; Arzu Öztürkmen, "The Park, the Penguin, and the Gas: Performance in Progress in Gezi Park," *TDR* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 39–68; Sophie Nield, "Tahrir Square, EC4M: The Occupation Movement and the Dramaturgy of Public Order," in *The Grammar of Politics and Performance*, ed. Shirin M. Rai and Janelle Reinelt (London: Routledge, 2015), 121–133.
- 5 Cathy Turner, "Palimpsest or Potential Space?: Finding a Vocabulary for Site-Specific Performance," *New Theatre Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (2004): 373.
 - 6 For further discussion of Jerusalem from a performance-oriented perspective, see Freddie Rokem, "Performing Jerusalem: Religious, Historical, Ideological, and Political Scenarios—and Some Personal Ones," in Whybrow, *Performing Cities*, 218–232.
 - 7 Daphna Ben-Shaul, "Critically Civic: *Public Movement's* Performative Activism," in *Performance Studies in Motion: International Perspectives and Practices in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Atay Citron, Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, and David Zerbib (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 118. For more on Public Movement, see their website: <http://www.publicmovement.org/> (accessed August 26, 2015).
 - 8 Ben-Shaul, "Critically Civic," 119. The term "restored behavior" is central in performance studies and was coined by Richard Schechner to designate performance as any mode of action that takes place not for the first time—such as theater plays, rituals, and political demonstrations. See Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 35–36.
 - 9 Ben-Shaul, "Critically Civic," 119.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 119, 120.
 - 11 For further information and visual images of Taanit, see: <http://www.publicmovement.org/new/civil-fast/> (accessed August 30, 2015).
 - 12 According to the Mishnah (m.), *m. Taanit* 2:3, this psalm was recited as part of the rabbinic *ta'anit* ritual as well. I have consulted Hanoch Albeck's edition of the Mishnah. All translations from rabbinic sources are my own.
 - 13 Public Movement, "Siddur le-yom taanit" [A siddur for the civil fast day] (unpublished manuscript, December 2012), my translation.
 - 14 For the various meanings of fasting in rabbinic literature, see S. Lowy, "The Motivation for Fasting in Talmudic Literature," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 9, nos. 1-2 (1958): 19–38; Eliezer Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 98–120.
 - 15 Beth Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 95–152; Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *The Mishnaic Sotah Ritual: Temple, Gender and Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 183–224.

- 16 For a broad analysis of the performance of *ta'anit* in the Mishnah, beyond the spatial concerns of this paper, see also David Levine, *Taaniot ha-tsibur u-drashot ha-hakhamim: halakha ve-maaseh bi-tekufat ha-Talmud* [Communal fasts and rabbinic sermons: Theory and practice in the Talmudic period] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2001), 66–96; Hayim Lapin, “Rabbis and Public Prayers for Rain in Later Roman Palestine,” in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Adele Berlin (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 1996), 108–112.
- 17 For a possible dating of the ritual descriptions in the Mishnah, see D. Levine, *Taaniot ha-tsibur*, 66–69. For a broader discussion problematizing the historicity of rituals (primarily Temple rituals) in the Mishnah, see Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “Orality, Narrative, Rhetoric: New Directions in Mishnah Research,” *AJS Review* 32, no. 2 (2008): 242–248.
- 18 *m. Taanit* 2:1.
- 19 Shmuel Safrai and Zeev Safrai, *Mishnat Eretz Yisrael: Masekhtot Taanit u-Megillah* [The Mishnah of Eretz Israel: Tractates *Taanit* and *Megillah*] (Jerusalem: E. M. Lipshitz College, 2010), 48, 55–56; D. Levine, *Taaniot ha-tsibur*, 70.
- 20 Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 351.
- 21 See Zeev Safrai, “*Dukhan, Aron* and *Teva*: How Was the Ancient Synagogue Furnished?,” in *Ancient Synagogues in Israel: Third–Seventh Century C.E.*, ed. Rachel Hachlili (Oxford: B.A.R., 1989), 71; Zeev Weiss, “*Matai hehelu moridin shlich tsibur lifnei ha-tevah*” [When did the habit of having the leader of prayer go down before the ark begin?], *Katedra* 55 (1990): 8–21.
- 22 Tosefta (t.), *t. Taaniot* 1:8. I have consulted Saul Lieberman’s edition of the Tosefta.
- 23 According to Yair Eldan, the *ta'anit* ritual is modeled after the ceremony of excommunicating an individual, which is now applied to the whole community, which sees itself as banished by God. See Yair Eldan, “Mishnat Taanit: Dmuto shel tsibur ha-hai be-tsel ha-nidui” [The Mishnah of *Taanit*: The image of a public living in the shadow of excommunication], *Akdamos* 19 (2007): 165–182.
- 24 Palestinian Talmud (y.), *y. Taanit* 2:1 (65a) (and parallel in the Babylonian Talmud (b.), *b. Taanit* 16a). I refer to the standard Vilna pagination of the Babylonian Talmud and the Venice edition (and its various reprints) of the Palestinian Talmud.
- 25 Sidney B. Hoenig, “Historical Inquiries: I. Heber Ir; II. City-Square,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 48, no. 2 (1957): 123–139; Hoenig, “The Ancient City-Square: Forerunner of the Synagogue,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (ANRW)* 2.19.1, ed. Hildegard Temporini (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 448–476. Hoenig’s thesis has been criticized in Lee I. Levine, “The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 3 (1996): 432n27.
- 26 D. Levine, *Taaniot ha-tsibur*, 71–72.
- 27 *b. Taanit* 16a.
- 28 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 9–20.

- 29 Tali Artman-Partock, “Dialog ve-dialogiut be-sifrut hazal: Parrhesia be-teoria u-ve-maaseh be-sifrut hazal u-va-sifrut ha-Notsrit bat ha-zman” [Dialogue and dialogism in rabbinic literature: *Parrhesia* in theory and in practice in rabbinic literature and in contemporary Christian literature] (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2010), 133–244. For another thorough discussion of the term *parrhesia* in rabbinic literature, see Motti Arad, *Mehalel Shabbat be-pharrhesia: Munah talmudi u-mashmauto ha-historit* [Sabbath desecrator with *parrhesia*: A talmudic legal term and its historic context] (New York: JTS, 2009), 108–212. Both Artman-Partock and Arad offer a much more nuanced analysis of the term in the different layers of rabbinic literature than can be given here.
- 30 Artman-Partock, “Dialog ve-dialogiut be-sifrut hazal,” 152.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 133.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 134–144.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 152.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 243.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 235 (my translation).
- 36 Artman-Partock also refers to the *ta’anit* as a “manipulation of God masquerading as *parrhesia*” (*ibid.*, 234).
- 37 *m. Megillah* 3:1.
- 38 According to rabbinic sources, during the time of the Second Temple, the Judeans were divided into twenty-four sections, each called a *ma’amad* (pl. *ma’amadot*), which represented them in Temple services. The use of the city square by the *ma’amad* is described in *m. Bikkurim* 3:2 as being part of the ceremony of bringing the first fruit to the Temple. Again, as in the case of *ta’anit*, the Mishnaic depiction of the ritual cannot be read uncritically as an authentic historical narrative of its actual performance. See John Mandsager, “To Stake a Claim: The Making of Rabbinic Agricultural Spaces in the Roman Countryside” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2014), 12–13.
- 39 *b. Megillah* 26a.
- 40 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), 27.
- 41 Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, “Preface,” in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), ix.
- 42 Lance Gharavi, “Introduction,” in *Religion, Theatre, and Performance: Acts of Faith*, ed. Lance Gharavi (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2–4.
- 43 For a review of this turn, see, for example, Victoria Kahn, *The Future of Illusion: Political Theology and Early Modern Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 1–10.
- 44 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 36.

- 45 Ibid., 5.
- 46 For a critical discussion of several key models of such dynamics, see Marvin Carlson, "Theatrical Performance: Illustration, Translation, Fulfillment, or Supplement?" *Theatre Journal* 37, no. 1 (1985): 5–11; W. B. Worthen, "Antigone's Bones," *The Drama Review* 52, no. 3 (2008): 10–33.
- 47 Carlson, "Theatrical Performance," 10.
- 48 Tali Hatuka and Rachel Kallus, "The Architecture of Repeated Ritual: Tel Aviv's Rabin Square," *Journal of Architectural Education* 61, no. 4 (2008): 86–88.
- 49 Tali Hatuka, *Rig'ei tikkun: Alimut politit, arkhitektura ve-ha-merhav ha-ironi be-Tel Aviv* [Revisioning moments: Political violence, architecture and urban space in Tel Aviv] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2008), 44 (my translation).
- 50 Hatuka and Kallus, "The Architecture of Repeated Ritual"; Tali Hatuka, *Violent Acts and Urban Space in Contemporary Tel Aviv: Revisioning Moments* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 26–70.
- 51 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 32.

