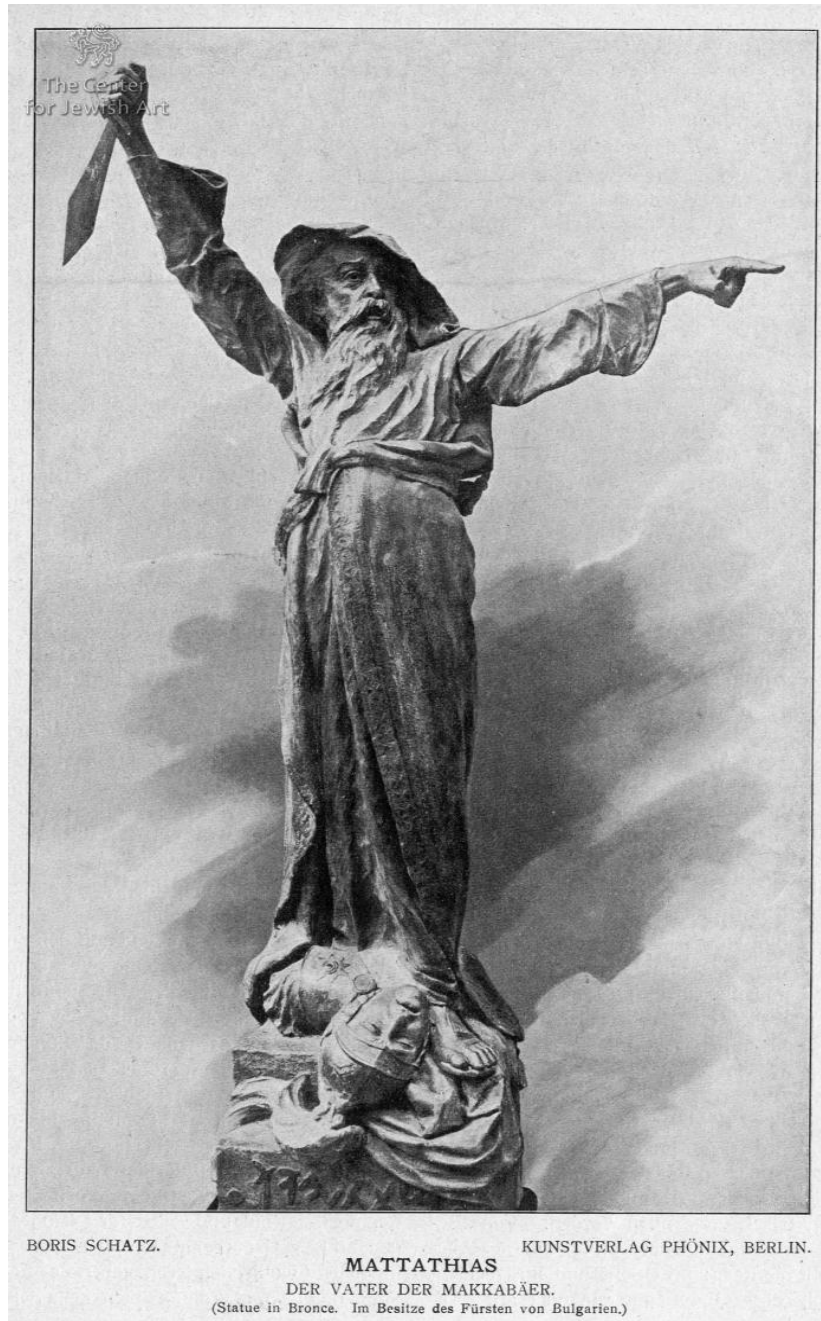


THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

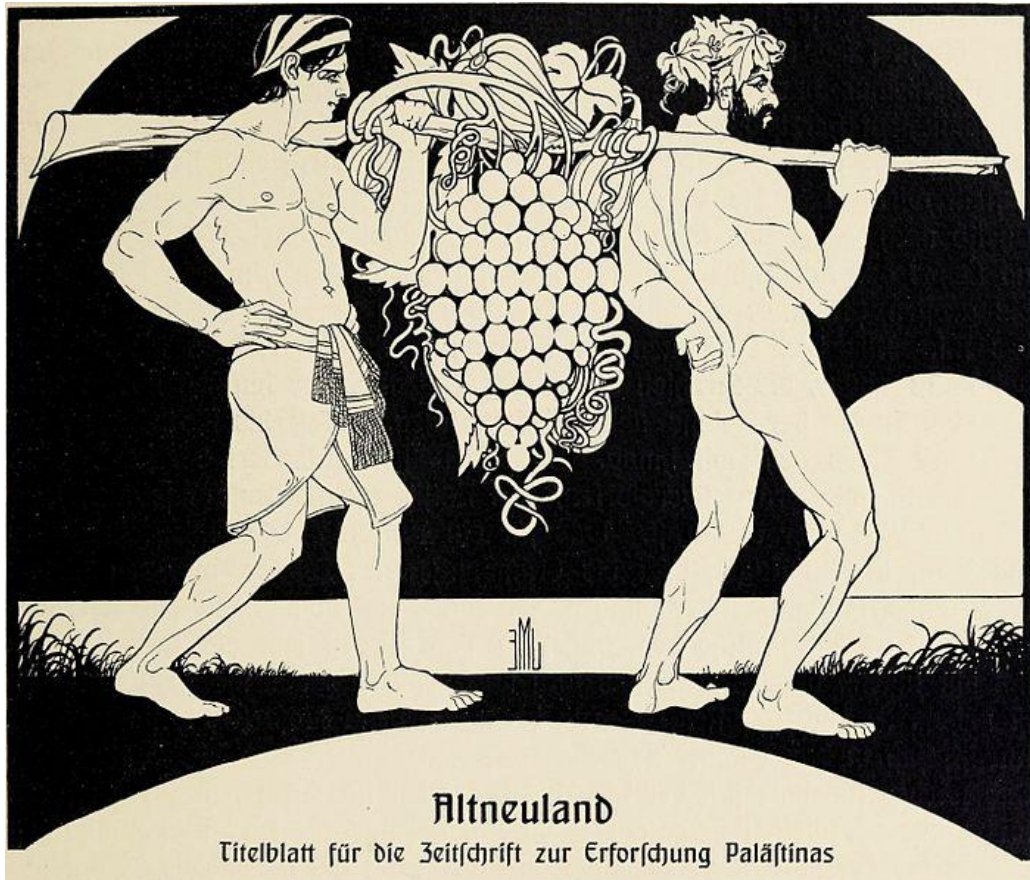
From the Balcony: The Art of Zionist Thought and Israeli Identity

Session Two: Toward Imagining the 'New Jew'



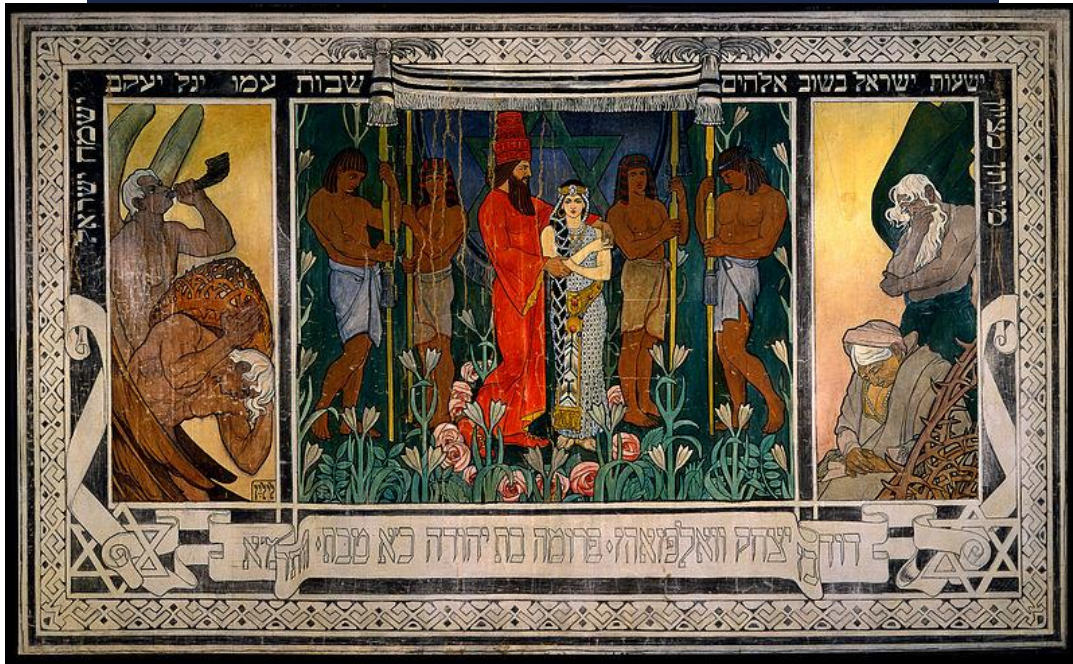
**Boris Schatz, *Mattathias the Maccabee*
(Lithuania & active in Palestine, 1866-1932), 1894**

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION



**Ephraim Moses Lilien (Poland, 1874-1925) , *Altneuland*,
Vol 1, 1904**

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION



Ephraim Moses Lilien, *An Allegorical Wedding*, 1906

1. Max Nordau (Budapest, 1849-1923), *Muskeljudentum, 'Jewry of Muscle,' 1909*

In the narrow Jewish street our poor limbs soon forgot their gay movements; in the dimness of sunless houses our eyes began to blink shyly; the fear of constant persecution turned our powerful voices into frightened whispers . . . Let us take up our oldest traditions; let us once more become deep chested, sturdy, sharp-eyed men. This desire of going back to a glorious past finds a strong expression in the name which the Jewish gymnastic club in Berlin has chosen for itself. "Bar Kokhva" was a hero who refused to know defeat. When in the end victory eluded him, he knew how to die. Bar Kokhva was the last embodiment in world history of a bellicose, militant Jewry. To evoke the name of Bar Kokhva is an unmistakable sign of ambition. But ambition is well suited for gymnasts striving for perfection. For no other people will gymnastics fulfill a more educational purpose than for us Jews. It shall straighten us in body and character . . . We completely lack a sober confidence in our physical prowess. Our new muscle-Jews have not yet regained the heroism of our forefathers . . .

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

2. Saul Tchernikhovsky, *In Front of a Statue of Apollo*, 1899

I come to you, forgotten god of the ages, god of ancient times and other days, ruling the tempests of vigorous men, the breakers of their strength in youth's plenty! . . . I come to you—do you know me still? I am the Jew: your adversary of old! . . . I bow to all precious things—robbed now by human corpses and the rotten seed of man, who rebel against the life bestowed by God, the Almighty—the God of mysterious wildernesses, the God of men who conquered Canaan in a whirlwind—then bound Him with the straps of their *tefillin*.

3. Yaakov Cahan, *The Song of the Brutes (Shir Ha-Biryonim)*, 1903

We've risen up and returned, with the might of youth / We've risen up and returned, we brutes, To redeem our land in the storm of war, Demanding our domain with hand raised high. In blood and fire did Judaea fall; In blood and fire shall Judaea rise!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKzKRlltkU0>

Reflective Question

In reflecting on the rise of modern Zionism, which of these expressions toward a Jewish facelift do you find most resonant, compelling, disorienting, problematic? Other reactions that occur to you?

Zionist Challenge

What influence does '*muskeljudentum*,' 'Jewry of Muscle,' have on the Zionist ethos today? In your view, does it strengthen? Diminish? Something else?

For questions or comments, Matt can be reached at rabbimattberkowitz@gmail.com