James Joyce left Dublin for good in October 1904 at the age of twenty-two. Dublin, of course, never left him: “all my books are about Dublin,” he liked to say. And the Joyce household’s frequent address changes and Joyce’s own flâneur habits meant that he knew his Dublin well. In Ulysses he wanted “to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed from my book” (as cited in Delany 10; see also Bulson). But how much of the topographical and other detail in Ulysses did he carry with him in his head? How much of it relied on letters from home and on the two brief return trips that he made in 1909 and 1912? Such questions are grist to the mill of Joyce scholarship. The same questions have been asked about Leopold Bloom. Critics still debate Bloom’s compositional makeup. To some extent, he represented Joyce himself. He was also fashioned in part from Joyce’s encounters in Dublin. Joyce’s biographer Richard Ellmann has shown that Bloom was the same height and weight as one of Joyce’s college friends and that he made a living as a billboard advertiser, like another acquaintance (Ellmann, James Joyce 374–75); and Bloom was not an uncommon Jewish name in Ireland.

In their search for Leopold’s real-life alter ego, both Ellmann and Louis Hyman, author of The Jews of Ireland, canvassed the possible links between Leopold and practically every Jewish family named Bloom in Ireland. Ellmann, prompted by a throwaway remark by Dublin academic

1. I am grateful to Mady and Michael Edelstein, Paul Muldoon, John McCourt, Tony Roche, and an anonymous referee for comments on an earlier version of this essay, which is an offshoot of research into the economic history of Irish Jewry. I wrote it while a Visiting Fellow at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center, Princeton University.

2. I am grateful to Guy Beiner for this reference.

A.J. Leventhal on their first meeting in 1952,\(^3\) was fixated for a time on a case involving an Irish Bloom who was party to a suicide pact, while Louis Hyman peppered one of his main informants about *fin de siècle* Jewish Dublin, Jessie Bloom, with queries by mail about Pesach Bloom (her husband), Solomon Bloom, “one of the Lombard Street Blooms who married a daughter of Levy of Cork,” “the Simon Bloom who was involved in the Wexford murder of 1910,” Basseh Bloom, “probably a sister of Simon or some near relative,” “an A. Bloom who was murdered in his saloon in Chicago in 1899,” and the “Jacob Bloom [who] had a daughter named Bertha Jenny who was born in Sligo in 1900.”\(^4\) Ellmann and Hyman both made far too much of even the most tenuous connections between Joyce’s Bloom and real-life Dublin namesakes. The Simon Bloom murder had taken place in a photographer’s shop in Wexford in 1910; for Ellmann, this “presumably” is how Milly, Leopold Bloom’s daughter, came to work in a similar establishment in Mullingar. Louis Hyman even speculated whether Leopold was modeled in part on Benny Bloom, listed in the 1901 census as a traveler and still selling holy pictures in Dublin in the 1960s. However, since Benny joined the army at the age of twenty in 1901 and did not return to Dublin until 1916, he seemed an unlikely candidate. All these searches for Leopold Bloom’s Dublin cousins turned out to be wild goose chases (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 375; Hyman 173–74).

Joyce lived mostly in the Hapsburg port city of Trieste while writing *Ulysses*. So was Leopold a Dublinized Middle European Jew? Joyce scholars (e.g. McCourt; Hartshorn) also have their answers to this question. Italian writer Italo Svevo, Jewish by birth though a convert to Roman Catholicism, once pleaded with Joyce’s brother: “Tell me some secrets about Irishmen. You know your brother has been asking me so many questions about Jews that I want to get even with him” (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 374).

Of course, critics also debate Bloom’s Jewishness. On the one hand, it is claimed that he did not qualify by strictly confessional criteria (compare Steinberg; Levitt, “Family of Bloom”). His mother, Ellen Higgins, was a gentile; his father converted in order to marry her; their son Leopold was neither circumcised nor bar mitzvahed; he married out, going through the motions of conversion to Catholicism in the process; he flouted the Jewish dietary laws, and proclaimed himself an atheist. On the other hand, in support of the Jewish Bloom there is the possibility that his maternal grandmother was a Hungarian Jew.\(^5\) But surely what matters most is that Bloom was perceived as (or even mistaken for) Jewish by others: in Cyclops he is dubbed “a new apostle to the gentiles” and the “new Messiah for Ireland” by the anti-Semitic “Citizen.”\(^6\) The deity that he rejected was Jewish, and he always wore his Jewishness on his sleeve. For Joyce too, surely Bloom was an Irish Jew.\(^7\)

In part, the ongoing controversy about Bloom’s Jewishness springs from rival definitions of Jewishness. But it overlooks a key issue: what was it to be an Irish Jew a century ago? In 1866, the year of Leopold Bloom’s birth, Dublin contained no more than a few hundred Jews. The community,

---

4. Louis Hyman to Jessie Bloom, June 11, 1968; July 7, 1968; August 6, 1968; August 25, 1968; October 9, 1970 (Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ms. Collection #93, Robert and Jessie Bloom Collection, Box 4: folder 15).
5. But see Steinberg (38). Molly’s mother (Gibraltar-born Lunita Laredo) may also have been Jewish, though this was never a consideration in her marrying Bloom.
7. The voluminous literature on Joyce, Bloom, and Irish Jewry includes Leventhal; Goldberg; Davison; Ellmann; Reizbaum, *James Joyce’s Judaic Other*; Reizbaum, “Sennschrift”; Nadel; Cheyette; Levitt, *Joyce and Modernism*; Price (77–84).
scattered thinly throughout middle-class Dublin, was in decline; it recorded only nine births in that year. Its status as a religious community was precarious: an English Jew who often made business trips to the city in the early 1870s was more than once summoned from his hotel on the Sabbath to make up the necessary minyan of ten adult males. The reason for the small size of the Jewish community was not (as the bigoted Garrett Deasy proclaimed in *Ulysses*) that Ireland had “never let them in” (Joyce 30:437–42); it was Irish economic backwardness. Ireland had long been a place of emigration, not immigration. Within a few years, however, the earliest representatives of an inflow that would define Irish Jewry for a century settled in Dublin. Thanks to these immigrants from a cluster of small towns and villages in northwestern Lithuania, Dublin’s Jewish population exceeded two thousand by 1900, and it was nearly three thousand by 1914.8

The half-dozen or so families that arrived in the 1870s settled first in run-down tenement housing. Some lived in Chancery Lane, not far from St. Patrick’s Cathedral, “in a little square wherein stood the police station, joining the other foreigners — Italian organ-grinders, bear leaders, one-man-band operators, and makers of small, cheap plaster casts of saints of the Catholic church.”9 Others lived north of the River Liffey on Jervis and Moore Streets, perhaps in order to be nearer Dublin’s only synagogue at St. Mary’s Abbey. Conditions were tough: Molly Harmel Sayers, a delicate child born in a Mercer Street tenement in 1878, “survived only because of the tender care bestowed on her by a drunken applewoman.”10

These plucky newcomers did not remain in the tenements for long. The first movers to the complex of small streets off Lower Clanbrassil Street and the South Circular Road on the southern edge of the city proper, where most of the community would settle, can be inferred from *Thom’s Directory* (a source much favored by Joyce while writing *Ulysses*) and other sources. Harris Lipman and Jacob Davis were living in Oakfield Place by 1880, and Michael Harmel was living in Lombard Street West; Meyer Schindler was a tenant in nearby St. Kevin’s Parade a year later. There they found purpose-built family housing, mostly rented out in three- or four-room terraced units. Others quickly followed, and by century’s end the Lithuanian-Jewish presence stretched south across the South Circular Road as far as the Grand Canal. Robert Bradlaw, “prince” of the immigrant community, formed its first chevra (or prayer house) in 1883, at number 7 St. Kevin’s Parade.

The area became Dublin’s “Little Jerusalem.” Few streets would ever become completely Jewish, or remain so for long. This was not the East End or the Lower East Side. Nonetheless, the area would boast a significant and unbroken Jewish presence for several decades. There is evidence of some confessional clustering within streets: the analysis of settlement patterns suggests that Jewish householders preferred to live next to Jewish neighbors.11

Most of the newcomers, like the unfortunate Moses Herzog in the Cyclops episode of *Ulysses*, made their living as peddlers or credit drapers. This involved selling dry goods on credit to the poor, who were supposed to repay in weekly installments. Naturally, the peddlers became known as “weekly men.” There were skilled craftsmen among the Lithuanian (or Litvak) immigrants too — cabinet-makers, shoemakers, tailors, cap-makers — some of whom worked for Jewish

---

8. Data on the Jewish population of Ireland and its main cities are given in the population censuses of 1901 and 1911.
11. These points are elaborated in Ó Gráda.
employers. But most of the immigrants lived up to the Yiddish dictum that “arbeiter far yennem was for a goy, nicht far a Yid.” A few quickly graduated to petty moneylending: the most prominent machers among the first generation of Litvaks were nearly all moneylenders.

The Litvaks arrived with mind-sets formed in the small shtetls of Lithuania. In considering Leopold Bloom’s Jewish milieu, this is very important. One hallmark of the Litvak community in the early years was quasi-endemic bickering about ritual and doctrine between factions within the community, and also between the immigrants and the “English” Jews in Ireland before them. In Cork the feuding between the Clein and Jackson factions lasted for years, to the bemusement of the local goyim. Blows and insults were often traded. In the wake of one reconciliation, Cork’s rabbi was congratulated on the shalom in the community by the Chief Rabbi, but Cork’s request for a new sefer torah was rejected, because the warring parties had beaten each other about the head with the previous one.12 In Limerick in early 1889 the police were notified when “the Chazan was knocked down, and the book used for the service was carried off.” That dispute lasted for several years; in 1901 a row about the ethics of moneylending resulted in another bitter split in the community. In Belfast in November 1912 the defeat of the “English” Mitanglim in an election for the vice-president of the new synagogue (which had been under “English” control from the outset) prompted enthusiastic celebrations by the Litvak Haredim.13 These tensions were a central feature of Jewish life in Ireland a century ago, yet, on the evidence of Ulysses, Joyce and Bloom were impervious to them.

Both contemporary reports and autobiographical memoirs testify to the Litvaks’ intense religious orthodoxy (compare Bloom; Harris; Price). Consider the tragic deaths of Joseph and Rebecca Reuben, whose bodies were found hanging in their house on Walworth Road on a Saturday night in late March 1894. The Reubens were comfortably off, Joseph being a well-stocked wholesale draper. A near relative could offer no explanation for what the Dublin Evening Mail dubbed “the Jewish suicides.” However, earlier that day two of Joseph’s clients, whom he had accused of theft, had appeared before a civil court. According to the Freeman’s Journal’s reporter, it was believed that remorse for having brought two co-religionists to court on the Sabbath led to the Reubens’ deaths.14

According to the late Esther Hesselberg (née Birkahn), who grew up in Cork’s “Jewtown” in the 1890s, so observant were Cork Jews that in the early days “nobody carried a handkerchief on the Sabbath.” The shul provided spittoons for the “bronchitic baila batim,” and Esther’s brother related how “those kosher hillybillys were ‘dead eye dicks’ and never missed their target.”15 In Dublin as in Cork, observant Jews refused to even handle money on the Sabbath, and the shabbas goyim who lit and stoked their fires and boiled their water were left their penny or two on the table or else collected it on a Sunday.

The newcomers from the east, some of them almost penniless on arrival, were not made welcome by their co-religionists already in Dublin. This was a common pattern wherever East European Jews settled. Indeed, representatives of the mainly middle-class “English” community offered the glazier

12. Interview with Larry Elyan, 1972 (Oral History Department, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem); Hyman 219; National Library of Ireland, Carol Weinstock, interview with Larry Elyan, July 1987, Acc 5734 (unsorted). My thanks to Gerard Lyne, National Library of Ireland, for alerting me to the NLI material.
14. Freeman’s Journal [Dublin], March 26, 1894; Dublin Evening Mail, March 26, 1894; Jewish Chronicle, March 30, 1894.
Jacob Davis, one of the first men (if not the first) to arrive from Lithuania, the considerable sum of £40 (enough then to employ an unskilled worker for a year or more, or about $8,000 in today’s money) to betake himself and his panes of glass elsewhere. Long after the establishment of a grand “English” synagogue on Adelaide Road on the south side of the city in 1892, a majority of the Litvak faithful clung to their own rabbis and places of worship. In late 1889, as members of the Dublin “English” community rehearsed their annual show for the Montefiore Musical and Dramatic Club, a group of young Litvaks were establishing reading and lecture rooms in Curzon Street. The latter belonged to “the poorest class,” “extremely anxious to raise their educational status,” and welcoming gifts of books in English, German, and Hebrew. For a time in the 1900s the Adelaide Road *shul* suffered the indignity of having to pay a few poor Litvaks to attend in case they were needed to make up a *minyan*. The most successful of the Litvak men married into the “English” community, but that meant forsaking Little Jerusalem; “they all lived on this side of the system [...] and didn’t have much to do with the foreigners on the other side.”

The immigrants probably did not think much of the native gentiles at first either. Their attitudes towards non-Jews back in *der heim* were unflattering, to say the least. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* entry on Lithuanian Jewry:

Lithuania was a poor country, and the mass of its inhabitants, consisting of Lithuanian and Belorussian peasants, formed a low social stratum whose national culture was undeveloped. The Jews, who had contacts with them as contractors, merchants, shopkeepers, innkeepers, craftsmen, etc. regarded themselves as their superior in every respect.

It surely stands to reason that the immigrants brought some of their superiority complexes with them to Ireland and that this conditioned their initial interaction with the host community. There are scattered hints that such was the case. Writer Leslie Daiken, who grew up in Little Jerusalem, recalled an earthy and unpleasant piece of Yiddish doggerel doing the rounds during his childhood, and presumably imported from *der heim*: “*Yashka Pandre liget in drerd, Kush mein tokkes vee a ganz ferd* (Jesus Christ lies in shit; kiss my arse the size of a horse)” (Daiken 19). *Yaski* (or *Yoshke*) *Pandre* was a rude and offensive way of describing Catholics. An unpublished family memoir refers to drunken Galway neighbors in the 1880s as “horrible — all Yoshke Pandres.” Much in the same vein is the currency in early twentieth-century Dublin of “*laptzies*” or “*laptseh*,” a disparaging Yiddish term for gullible gentile clients (Schlimeel). The terms *goy* and *shikse* were also in widespread use; in those Jewish households that could afford an (invariably Catholic) domestic servant, she was called the *shikse*. Jessie Spiro Bloom’s mother banned the use of the word in their home by the Grand Canal, but her parents were atypical. Her father shunned the “weekly payment” business because, according to Jessie, “the idea of taking a shilling a week from poor Irish people who were hardly able to repay it repelled him” (Bloom 23).

The immigrant community in the 1880s and 1890s was clannish and resilient and steeped in what economists and sociologists dub “social capital.” It was wonderful at caring for its own,

---

17. National Library of Ireland, Carol Weinstock, interview with Sylvia Crivon, Acc 5734 (unsorted).
18. On Jewish attitudes compare Liebman and Cohen 37–38; Zborowski and Herzog 152, 156; Morawska 16; Hundert 50–51; see also Bushee 156–57.
quickly establishing a vibrant and exclusive network of clubs and support groups. It was made up of immensely gregarious people, who had fun together. A police report dating from the early 1900s noted: “They only associate with themselves [. . .] always trading when possible with one another.”

Chaim Herzog, future president of Israel and resident of Little Jerusalem (where he was known to his friends as Hymie) between 1917 and 1935, concurred. “Physically and psychologically, he remembered, “the Jewish community was closed in on itself. [. . .] Very few Jews mingled socially with non-Jews” (Herzog 9).

Ongoing day-to-day contact between native and newcomer in Little Jerusalem and its satellites in Belfast and Cork would erode such attitudes in due course. Initial suspicions, rudeness, and hostility on both sides gave way to mutual respect and, on occasion, close friendships and intimacy. Children helped to break the ice. Leslie Daiken’s mother advised him not to have “anything to do with that rough crowd from the back streets,” but he ignored her, and “could not find anything bad about them” (Yodaiken 30).

For most of their existence these Irish Little Jerusalems were successful experiments in multiculturalism. They are warmly remembered as such by both present and former residents of all faiths. Yet, almost certainly, negative stereotypes were still powerfully present on both sides up to 1904, when James Joyce left Dublin. Even in the 1920s it took a long time for “a [Jewish] trader from Hungary with his big red beard and a lot of children” to be accepted by the Litvaks.

The story of Leopold Bloom fits uncomfortably into the setting described here. The first false note concerns Bloom’s putative birth in May 1866 at 52 Upper Clanbrassil Street. A Dublin Tourism plaque marks the spot today. Upper Clanbrassil Street links Little Jerusalem proper to Harold’s Cross on the other side of the Grand Canal: presumably Joyce chose it with Little Jerusalem in mind. Yet, as we have seen, there was no Little Jerusalem in 1866. And although Peisa Harmel, at one time the wealthiest man in the Litvak community, lived on Upper Clanbrassil Street for a while in the 1880s and 1890s, the street never really formed part of Little Jerusalem. On Lower Clanbrassil Street, to the north of Leonard’s Corner, it was a different story. That was “the kosher street where we go to do our shopping [with] foodstuffs that you cannot buy in O’Connor’s, Burke’s or Purcell’s” (Yodaiken 29). But neither Joyce nor his interpreters made the distinction between the two Clanbrassil Streets. Joyce’s quest for verisimilitude, his ear for the varieties of Dublin English, and his eye for Dublin foibles and characters, make Ulysses a rich source for the historian of Ireland and its capital city. The same cannot be said for his account of Irish Jewry. At a time when it was almost unimaginable for an Irish Jew to “marry out,” Leopold Bloom, the son of a Hungarian-Jewish father and an Irish Protestant mother, married a Catholic. What stretches credibility even more is that Bloom could have blended into the immigrant Litvak community described above. Joyce paints a vivid and credible picture of the petty racist jibes inflicted on Bloom by the “Citizen” and others. But had Bloom stepped from the written page into the real-life Little Jerusalem of Joyce’s day, his mixed parentage and his marrying out would almost certainly have ensured him a rather cold welcome from that quarter also. Much has been made of Joyce’s references to several real-life inhabitants of the Jewish quarter. Louis Hyman identified Moses Herzog, featured in the Cyclops chapter (Joyce 240: 31–34), as the peddler who lived at number 13 St. Kevin’s Parade between 1894 and 1906.

22. That Molly is Jewish to the extent that her mother may have been a Gibraltar Jew scarcely matters here.
“Poor Citron,” with whom Bloom spent “pleasant evenings,” was Israel Citron, another peddler, who lived at number 17 between 1904 and 1908. “Mastiansky [recte Masliansky] with the old either” in the same passage in Calypso was Citron’s next-door neighbor. But it is well known that Joyce lifted these and most of the Jewish names used in Ulysses from his copy of Thom’s Directory, perpetuating some of the transcription errors in the directory in the process (Hyman 168, 185).

Citron and “Mastiansky,” both natives of Lithuania, are supposed to have been Leopold Bloom’s friends. But would their English have been fluent enough for nocturnal conversations with Bloom on topics such as “music, literature, Ireland, [. . .] prostitution, diet, the influence of gaslight or the light of arc and glowlamps on the growth of adjoining paraheliotropic trees, exposed corporation emergency dustbuckets” (Joyce 544:11–18)? Bloom’s background and upbringing would almost certainly have precluded him from understanding Yiddish, the dominant language in the homes where he spent so many “pleasant times.” Rudolph Bloom had attempted to pass on a little Hebrew and some knowledge of the Jewish scriptures to his son, but he was no Yiddish speaker. It is difficult to imagine the immigrants in the 1880s or 1890s switching to English, even if they could, for an outsider like Leopold Bloom.

And whatever about Leopold Bloom himself, it is simply inconceivable that Molly Bloom, that sensuous and earthy shikse, would have been offered the basket-chair normally reserved for Israel Citron when she and Bloom visited the Citron home in St. Kevin’s Parade (Joyce 49:205–07). Nor by the same token is it easy to imagine the “funny sight” in the “Lestrygonians” episode of the pregnant “Molly and Mrs. Moisel [. . .] two of them together, their bellies out” on their way to a mothers’ meeting (Joyce 132:391–92; Hyman 190). Most likely the pious residents of St. Kevin’s Parade or Greenville Terrace would have shunned Leopold and Molly; Leopold for doing the unthinkable and marrying out (insofar as they would have regarded him as Jewish in the first place), and Molly for being the trollop who seduced him. So — to refer to the “Circe” episode of Ulysses — Harris Rosenberg, Moses Herzog, Joseph Goldwater, and others of the “circumcised” would have been far from ‘wail[ing] [. . .] with swaying arms [. . .] in pneuma over the recreant Bloom” (Joyce 444:3,219–25). Nor — given the social distance between the two groups — is it likely that an “English” Jew like Bloom would have been happy to work as a mere canvasser for one of the Litvak “weekly men.”

The Litvaks differed from Leopold Bloom in yet another respect: while Bloom, like the Joyce family, were Parnellites in politics, in the early 1900s the Litvaks were still emphatically loyalist. Only a few years earlier they had celebrated Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee in 1897 with gusto, and during the Boer War they sided with the British, while the Catholic Irish tended to be pro-Boer. In the alleyways of Little Jerusalem, Jewish lads had fought “battles of sticks and stones with the Catholic boys, we representing the British and they the Boers [. . .].” When Joseph Edelstein, Jacob Elyan, Arthur Newman, and a few others established the short-lived Judaeo-Irish Home Rule Association in September 1908, they faced considerable opposition within their own community,

---

23. Most first-generation Litvak males (such as Citron and Masliansky) would have acquired enough English to make a living, but their world continued to be an enclosed, mainly Yiddish-speaking one. See Heanue.
24. True, Leopold remembers bits of Yiddish learnt from his father, and his father utters a few stock Yiddish phrases in his Circe appearance.
25. Elyan and Newman had spent their childhoods in Cork where, unlike Dublin and Belfast, Jewish allegiances were nationalist almost from the outset. Edelstein, a socialist in his youth, was the author of a scurrilous novelette, The Moneylender (1908).
and their first public meeting in Dublin’s Mansion House ended “with several interruptions and a free fight.”

Despite the huge literature on the Jewish content of *Ulysses*, and Joyce’s reputation for being fastidious — indeed obsessive — about context and geography while writing it, it is hard not to conclude that his portrait of Leopold Bloom owed much more to information garnered during his time in Trieste (1904–1919) than to first-hand contacts with Irish Jews before leaving Dublin at the age of twenty-two. The very different character of Trieste Jewry — more urbane, more middle-class, more integrated, more western than their Dublin brethren — would have suited both Joyce and Bloom well. Though some *Ostjuden* had reached Trieste in the 1880s and 1890s, in 1910 nearly three-fifths of its Jews spoke either Italian or German as a first language. Bloom’s agnosticism would have been more acceptable in a city where one Jew in five had renounced his or her faith, and where a significant proportion of marriages involving Jews were mixed.

Richard Ellmann began to work on his classic biography of Joyce in 1952, and he showed an interest in likely connections Joyce might have had with Irish Jewry from the start. In his quest for the Jewish in Joyce, he was sometimes reluctant to give up the hares he raised. Long after Louis Hyman had proven to him that the “dark complexioned Dublin Jew named Hunter,” who rescued Joyce from a fracas outside a brothel in early 1904, was not Jewish at all, Ellmann continued to refer to him as “putative Jewish” (*Ellmann, James Joyce* 162, 230; Delany 53–54). And the Sinclair twins, William and Harry, whom Joyce met through the writer Padraic Colum, were thoroughly assimilated and only nominally Jewish (*Hyman* 148–49; *Ellmann, James Joyce* 579). Culturally and economically, Hunter and the Sinclairs were far removed from the ex-*shtetl* Litvaks represented by Moses Herzog, Israel Citron, et al.

Other aspects of *Ulysses* reinforce the suspicion that Joyce knew less of Jewish Dublin before he left in 1904 than his many interpreters suppose. The boycott against Jewish traders in Limerick earlier in that year would surely have been still fresh in Jewish minds on June 16, yet there is no explicit reference to it in the text. Indeed, for all the detailed references to Jewish custom and Jewish Dublin, there is no hard evidence that Joyce knew anybody in the Litvak community well. In his scrupulous identification of the real-life Jews named by Joyce, Louis Hyman, who did more than anyone to clarify what he called the “Jewish backgrounds of *Ulysses*,” admitted as much.

---


27. On this aspect of Joyce’s career McCourt is a revelation.

28. Hyman had informed Ellmann of his discovery of Hunter’s marriage certificate in a letter dated October 14 1969 (*Ellmann Papers*, Box 53). In The Jews of Ireland (p. 169), Hyman claimed that Ellmann was misled about Hunter’s Jewishness by Stanislaus Joyce. This is not to rule out the role that this incident may have played in Joyce’s imagination: Bloom would rescue Stephen in a similar fashion in the Eumaeus episode of *Ulysses*. One of Ellmann’s descriptions of Joyce’s encounter with Hunter is as follows:

> Another “incident” that occurred when Joyce was 22 had its effect. As far as it can be pieced together from the talk of family and friends, Joyce was dead drunk one night in Dublin’s brothel district, and was Knocked down in a fight. From this predicament a man he scarcely knew, named Alfred Hunter, rescued him. Hunter was rumored to be Jewish, and he was rumored to have an unfaithful wife, two points that became important later. Oddly enough, the very fact that they were so slightly acquainted and of such different backgrounds was what held Joyce’s attention. Up to this time his experience of life had been in his own opinion on a gloomy vista of betrayals and alienations. [...] *Ulysses* probably grew out of a prolonged meditation on the strange possibilities of cohesion between apparently dissimilar men (*Ellmann Papers*, Box 83, “Joyce and the Jews,” typescript, undated).

He evidently did so with reluctance. In the end, Ellmann too implicitly conceded that he had exaggerated the influence Dublin Jewry had on Joyce’s creative imagination. Three decades after his first musings about Joyce’s interests in Jews and Judaism, Ellmann declared that there was “not much in it” (Ellmann, as cited in Reizbaum, “Sennschrift” 1). It is surely telling that for all Joyce’s empathy with the tribulations of Irish and world Jewry, there was no one in the Dublin Litvak community to whom he could address queries from Trieste. None of this, of course, takes away from the genius of James Joyce or Ulysses.

WORKS CITED

Edelstein, Joseph. The Moneylender Dublin: Dollard, 1908.
———. Ellmann Papers. University of Tulsa, Oklahoma.
Jewish Chronicle [London].


