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Primo Levi's "Argon" & the Jews of Piedmont: About a Noble Working Class with Prof. Alessandro Perissinotto, University of Turin

Wednesday, January 24, 2018 • 2:00-3:50pm
Sturm Hall 480 • 2000 E. Asbury Ave., Denver, CO 80208

The problem of Jewish identity appears with regularity in the narrative reflection of Primo Levi, but does not hold a priority place in his work. Coupled with this, however, there exists another identity problem, that of Levi's "piemontesità", or his belonging to the Region of Piedmont. What does it mean to be a native of Piedmont in Levi's Italy? What is his sense of his own Jewish identity and feeling Jewish? And what does it mean to belong to the Jewish community in Piedmont with its ancient Jewish traditions? Or his belonging to the Region of Piedmont in Italy?

Images of Levi's Turin as the seedbed of the Jewish community and a reading by an English actor of several passages of the short story "Argon" in *The Periodic Table* (1975) will accompany the lecture.

Alessandro Perissinotto is Associate Professor of Narrative Theories and Techniques at the University of Turin, Italy. In addition to his pedagogical and scholarly activity, he has published fifteen novels, including two under the pen name of Arno Saar. His recent narrative production focuses on the Anni di Piombo (the "Leaden Years") and their legacy to contemporary Italy. Among his more acclaimed novels, *Le colpe dei padri / The Sins of the Fathers* (Piemme, 2013) was a finalist for the prestigious *Strega* literary prize. Prof. Perissinotto has also published several scholarly works on narratology and the novel as a literary genre, and the Jews of Piedmont.



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