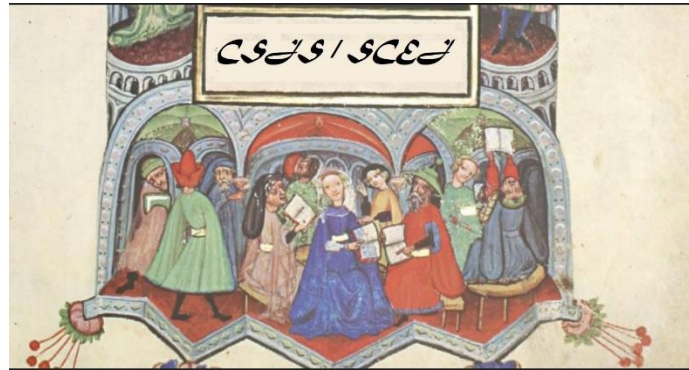


Canadian Society for Jewish Studies Online Conference 2022
Conférence en ligne de la Société canadienne des études juives, 2022

Monday May 9 – Thursday May 12 / lundi 9 mai – jeudi 12 mai 2022

PROGRAM BOOKLET / LIVRET DE PROGRAMME



Welcome to the CSJS conference! There is no charge to attend, but all are invited to consider becoming members of CSJS: <http://www.csjs.ca/membership>.

Bienvenue à la conférence de la SCÉJ. La participation est gratuite mais on vous invite à devenir membres de la société, <http://www.csjs.ca/membership>. La conférence se déroulera surtout en anglais, mais il y aura un panel francophone le premier jour, soit lundi après-midi. Nous espérons augmenter la présence francophone à nos conférences dans les années à venir.

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Land and Treaty Acknowledgement: The Canadian Society for Jewish Studies was founded in Winnipeg, in Anishinaabe territory and the homeland of the Métis nation. We acknowledge with gratitude that our lives and work as scholars, teachers, and students take place on Indigenous lands, the territories of many Nations. We accept our responsibilities under Treaty and in our historical situation to work toward healing and justice in this land. Everyone participating in our annual conference is invited to reflect on the land you live in, the Peoples whose home it is, and the responsibilities it brings you.

Reconnaissance des territoires et des traités: La Société canadienne des études juives a été fondée à Winnipeg, territoire Anishinaabe et foyer de la nation métisse. Nous reconnaissons avec gratitude que nos vies et notre travail en tant que chercheurs, enseignants et étudiants se déroulent sur des terres autochtones, territoires de nombreuses nations. Nous acceptons notre responsabilité, compte tenu des traités et de notre position historique, d'œuvrer pour la réconciliation et la justice dans ce pays. Tous ceux qui assistent à notre conférence sont invités à réfléchir sur le pays que vous habitez, les peuples qui y vivent et les responsabilités qu'il vous apporte.

PROGRAM SUMMARY / RÉSUMÉ DU PROGRAMME

Daily schedule / horaire de chaque jour:

Session 1: 10-11:30 am Eastern Time / heure de l'Est (5-6:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Session 2: 1-2:30 pm Eastern Time / heure de l'Est (8-9:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Monday May 9 / lundi 9 mai

Session 1 (10-11:30 am Eastern Time / 5-6:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Sephardi Experiences

Chair: TBA

Yoel Marciano (*Lecturer, Ariel University*)

The first wave of immigration of Jews from Aragon to Algeria: challenges of immigration and acclimatization

Ana Marques (*MA student, Medieval Studies, University of Porto*)

Jewish Criminality in the Reign of D. João II

Idan Breier (*Senior Lecturer, Jewish History Department, Bar-Ilan University*)

"The Fading Flower of its Glorious Beauty" (Isa. 28: 1b): The Use of Biblical Verses in Rabbi Yaacob Sasportas' "Tzitzat Novel Tzvi".

Session 2 (1-2:30 pm heure de l'Est / 8-9:30 pm heure de Jérusalem)

Panel francophone

Président : Pierre Ancil (*Professeur en histoire, Université d'Ottawa*)

Jonathan Bourgel (*Professeur adjoint en études juives, Université Laval*)

« Hérode le Juif »? Réflexion renouvelée sur la judéité d'Hérode le Grand

Guadalupe Gonzalez Dieguez (*Professeure adjointe*) et **Adam Mittelberg** (*Doctorant*)

(*Institut d'études religieuses, Université de Montréal*)

« Le bouquet de myrrhe » par Isaac b. Abraham ibn Latif (ca. 1210-1280) : réflexions sur l'édition des manuscrits hébreux médiévaux aujourd'hui

Vicky Karali (*MA en études d'Israël, School of Oriental and African Studies*)

L'antisémitisme sur l'internet grec : quelques incidents récents (2020-2021)

Tuesday May 10

Session 1 (10-11:30 am Eastern Time / 5-6:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Rabbinic Literature

Chair: Eric Caplan (*Associate Professor, Jewish Studies / Education, McGill University*)

Harry Fox (*Professor, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto*)

Who is the Anonymous Tanna of Mishnah?

Brachi Elitzur (*Lecturer, Rabbinic Literature, Herzog College*)

Polemical trends in shaping the characters of Doeg and Ahitophel in Rabbinic literature

Natalie C. Polzer (*Associate Professor, Jewish and Religious Studies, University of Louisville*)

The White Drop and the Fetid Drop – Gendered Reproductive Theology in Moral and Medical Discourse in Classical Rabbinic Tradition

Session 2 (1-2:30 pm Eastern Time / 8-9:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Death and Love in Literature and Art

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Nadine Sheinberg (*PhD student, York University*)

Self-Portraiture of Felix Nussbaum: An Intentional Representation of Bios

Laura Wiseman (*Associate Professor, Jewish Teacher Education & Jewish Studies, York*)

A Peculiar Pair: “Couple” by Sivan Har-Shefi

Aubrey Glazer (*Independent Scholar*)

Do You Really Want It Darker? *Chibut Hakever* & *Dhātu Manasikāra* in Light of Leonard Cohen’s Death, Dying & Self-Mourning Lyrical Rituals

Wednesday May 11

Session 1 (10-11:30 am Eastern Time / 5-6:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Ideas and Identities

Chair: Dustin Atlas (*Director of Jewish Studies, Queen’s University*)

Ronel Atiya (*Lecturer, Orot Israel College of Education*)

Between Israel and the Nations—on Judaism, Christianity, and Zionism in the Writings of Rabbi Mordechai Hacoen of Tripoli

Mariann Farkas (*PhD student, Bar-Ilan University*)

A Jewish Artist in Quest of Identity: Fra Angelico’s Annunciation

Reinterpreted by Hédi Tarján (1932-2008)

Orna Cohen (*Lecturer, Herzog College and research fellow, Hebrew University*)

Why Are Arab MKs Serving in Zionist Parties?

Wednesday May 11 (continued)

Session 2 (1-2:30 pm Eastern Time / 8-9:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Women and Jewish Law and Lore

Chair: Lilach Somberg (*MA student, Jewish Studies, University of British Columbia*)

Marinka Yossifon (*PhD student, University of Toronto*)

The legal positions of women who vitiate or sell their marriage contracts

Tirzah Meacham (*Associate Professor, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations, Toronto*)

Original Sin, Punishment, Atonement, and Conception

Deidre Butler (*Associate Prof., Religion*) and **Betina Appel Kuzmarov** (*Associate Prof., Law*)
(*Carleton University*)

Kosher Divorce? When Canadian Jewish Divorce Isn't Orthodox

Thursday May 12

Session 1 (10-11:30 am Eastern Time / 5-6:30 pm Jerusalem time)

Struggles of Faith

Chair: Emily Kopley (*Lecturer, Jewish Studies, McGill University*)

Eyal Davidson (*Lecturer, Herzog College and Orot Israel College*)

“He Shall First Come to the Galilee” – The Background for Messianic Yearning in the Galilee at the Dawn of the Modern Era

Evyatar Varman (*PhD student, Department of Jewish Thought, Hebrew University*)

Logic, Experience and Language in Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*

Daniel Reiser (*Associate Professor, Department of Jewish Thought, Herzog College*)

Elie Wiesel's *Tale of a Niggun*: Between Literature and History

Session 2 (1-2:30 pm Eastern Time / 8-9:30 pm Jerusalem time)

What Kind of Jewish?

Chair: Heidi Epstein (*Associate Professor, Religion & Culture, St. Thomas More College*)

Robert A. Katz (*Professor of Law, Indiana University*)

The Cincinnati Torah War

Itay Zutra (*Yiddish Teaching Fellow, University of Manitoba*)

Dancing Jews and Bear Taming in Modernist Yiddish Poetry

Ira Robinson (*Professor Emeritus, Department of Religions & Cultures, Concordia University*)

The New Haven Yeshiva, 1923-1937: An Experiment in American Jewish Education

ABSTRACTS / RÉSUMÉS DES COMMUNICATIONS

Monday, May 9

Session 1: Sephardi Experiences

Chair: TBA

Yoel Marciano (*Lecturer, Ariel University*)

The first wave of immigration of Jews from Aragon to Algeria: challenges of immigration and acclimatization

The Iberian Peninsula riots in 1391 set off a mass Jewish emigration from the Crown of Aragon to Algeria, creating an abrupt and radical transition from Christian to Muslim surroundings. For the first time, extensive settlement of erstwhile Iberians in the Maghreb came about, as did new organizational and leadership patterns and behavioral norms. These Jews, whom some sources call *Capusim* (due to their European hats), remained separate for generations.

Research has not given this historical reality the attention it deserves. The arrival of the expellees from Spain about a century after the *Capusim* blurred the distinction between the two waves of emigration and blunted the importance of studying the first. Therefore, dealing with this issue will sharpen the distinction between the Aragonese-Catalonian émigrés of 1391 and the expellees from Spain in 1492, most of whom came from Castile.

This talk will focus on the challenges faced by these immigrants in their new Muslim environment, with an emphasis on the émigrés' attitudes toward the local Jewish population and its customs and culture, as well as toward the surrounding Muslim society and the Islamic faith.

Ana Marques (*MA student, Medieval Studies, University of Porto*)

Jewish Criminality in the Reign of D. João II

Criminality in the Portuguese Middle Ages is not a new field of study. However numerous studies on this era fail to investigate Jewish criminality and instead end up being a constant repetition of stereotypes. We get to know the merchant Jew, the physician-surgeon Jew, and even the usurer Jew, but not the "other face" of the Jew.

We know that they suffer and are discriminated against; we know that they are victims of violent crimes committed by Christians; we know that exclusion is a reality. But the question arises: as the human being that he is, constantly the target of rejection and unfounded prejudices - often created within the court itself - would the Jew not have moments of revolt and violence? The Jew, unlike the Christian, did not steal? Did not commit adultery? Did not commit crimes of a sexual nature?

To investigate the subject of Jewish criminality in medieval society, I decided to establish a brief chronology of 10 years, focusing on the pardon letters found in the Chancellery of the reign of D. João II.

Monday, May 9, Session 1: Sephardi Experiences (continued)

Idan Breier (*Senior Lecturer, Jewish History Department, Bar-Ilan University*)

"The Fading Flower of its Glorious Beauty" (Isa. 28: 1b):

The Use of Biblical Verses in Rabbi Yaacob Sasportas' "Tzitzat Novel Tzvi".

Shabtai Zvi (1676-1626) was the most famous and influential false messiah in the history of the Jewish people. He was recognized and supported as a true Messiah by substantial groups of Jews (1665-1666), and some even believed in his Messianic essence after his conversion to Islam and even after his death. The first person behind the declaration of Shabtai as the Messiah, and the living spirit of the Sabbatean movement, was Rabbi Avraham Natan Ashkenazi, known as the prophet Nathan of Gaza (1643-1680). Nathan of Gaza, presented himself as a true prophet, and the Sabbateans relied on his "prophecies." However, the head of the opposition to the Sabbatean movement was Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas (1610-1698), who was born in Oran (Algeria) and moved to Hamburg. Rabbi Sasportas presented Shabtai Zvi as a false Messiah and Nathan of Gaza as a false prophet. In the extensive correspondence that took place between Rabbi Sasportas and his opponents, both sides used biblical verses to substantiate their arguments, creating original ideological commentary from its verses to support their claims.

In my paper, I will present and analyze a representative sample of these biblical verses, along with their ideological commentary, as it appears in the letters of both sides, collected and published by Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas in his book *Tzitzat Novel Tzvi*.

lundi 9 mai

Session 2: Panel francophone

Président : Pierre Anctil (*Professeur en histoire, Université d'Ottawa*)

Jonathan Bourgel (*Professeur adjoint en études juives, Université Laval*)

« Hérode le Juif »? Réflexion renouvelée sur la judéité d'Hérode le Grand

Hérode le Grand a régné sur la Judée de 37 à 4 AEC en tant que roi-client installé par Rome sur un territoire comptant une majorité juive et une large minorité païenne. Issu par son père d'une noble famille iduméenne convertie de fraîche date au judaïsme, d'origine nabatéenne par sa mère et citoyen romain, la question de sa judéité a été fréquemment débattue et parfois contestée dans la recherche moderne.

Dans cette présentation nous chercherons à démontrer qu'Hérode se considérait juif et était regardé comme tel par ses contemporains et proche contemporains. Il nous apparaîtra que ses sujets juifs lui reprochaient non pas d'être un gentil, mais plutôt d'être issu d'une famille trop obscure pour régner sur la Judée. Pour cela nous nous fonderons notamment sur les écrits perdus de l'historien Nicolas de Damas qui fut au service d'Hérode et dont Flavius Josèphe a reproduit certains passages. Nous aurons aussi recours à certains textes apocryphes et classiques et à de récentes découvertes archéologiques. Puis nous verrons que c'est dans la littérature patristique qu'Hérode fut d'abord dépeint comme un non-Juif, ceci notamment pour des raisons apologétiques.

lundi 9 mai, Session 2: Panel francophone (suite)

Guadalupe Gonzalez Dieguez (*Professeure adjointe*) et **Adam Mittelberg** (*Doctorant*)
(*Institut d'études religieuses, Université de Montréal*)

« Le bouquet de myrrhe » par Isaac b. Abraham ibn Latif (ca. 1210-1280) : réflexions sur l'édition des manuscrits hébreux médiévaux aujourd'hui

Prenant comme cas d'étude notre projet en cours d'édition et de traduction critique-diplomatique du texte *Le bouquet de myrrhe* (*Tseror ha-mor*) du philosophe-kabbaliste castillan Isaac b. Abraham ibn Latif (ca. 1210-1280), notre présentation interrogera certaines questions méthodologiques affrontées par les praticiens de la philologie aujourd'hui, parmi d'autres : les répercussions de l'accès généralisé aux versions numérisées des manuscrits ; la remise en cause de la méthode traditionnelle d'édition critique qui crée une reconstruction idéale d'un prétendu « texte original » ; les implications des choix de l'éditeur dans la mise en page ; et les théories qui sous-tendent les méthodes de traduction. Notre présentation sera divisée en deux parties : dans la première, nous présenterons brièvement la figure d'Ibn Latif et le contenu de son bref ouvrage ; dans la seconde, nous explorerons les enjeux méthodologiques et fournirons des exemples concrets tirés du texte. Compte tenu de l'augmentation spectaculaire de la disponibilité des manuscrits hébreux numérisés, l'examen critique de la façon dont nous les utilisons et de l'impact de leur nature numérique sur la tâche de l'étude textuelle semble être une contribution opportune et nécessaire pour la recherche.

Vicky Karali (*MA en études d'Israël, School of Oriental and African Studies*)

L'antisémitisme sur l'internet grec : quelques incidents récents (2020-2021)

Cette communication examinera trois études de cas de discours antisémites, qui ont eu lieu dans les trois principaux secteurs de la vie publique en Grèce : la scène politique, le milieu religieux (chrétien orthodoxe) et les blogs d'information.

Selon le rapport 2015 de l'Anti-Defamation League, le "ADL Global 100", 69% de la population adulte en Grèce a des attitudes antisémites. Des études locales supplémentaires, lancées en 2017, révèlent que seulement 55% des Grecs pensent que l'enseignement sur l'Holocauste dans les écoles devrait être obligatoire. En Grèce prospère un antisémitisme répandu et populaire des théories du complot, qui conduit parfois au vandalisme des monuments et sites juifs. Les convictions complotistes sont tenues largement, mais pas exclusivement, dans les cercles électoraux de droite.

Cependant, l'opinion commune des savants internationaux est que l'attitude des Grecs envers les Juifs est continuellement progressiste.

Deux tendances ont caractérisé le quasi-antisémitisme pendant ces derniers mois :

1. Le thème «Les vaccinations COVID-19 liées à l'antisémitisme», qui a été ravivé par le fait que le PDG de la plus grande industrie de vaccins est un juif grec.
2. L'affaire de la Pâques grecque orthodoxe 2021 : une diffamation de sang moderne, unique par son incroyable et sa sémiotique.

Avec cet article, j'espère simplement apporter une modeste contribution à la compréhension du phénomène de l'antisémitisme et de la société grecque moderne, telle qu'elle se reflète en ligne.

Tuesday May 10
Session 1: Rabbinic Literature

Chair: Eric Caplan (*Associate Professor, Jewish Studies / Education, McGill University*)

Harry Fox (*Professor, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto*)
Who is the Anonymous Tanna of Mishnah?

Mishnaic source criticism, so important a part of Y.N. Epstein's study of the sources, received important advances especially in the work of Abraham Goldberg and Abraham Walfish. In this paper on Mishnah Tractate Sukkah 1:1a, I would like to address the topic concerning this anonymous Mishnah which begins the tractate. The study of this Mishnah reveals a redactional strategy in which a multiplicity of perspectives allows identification of the anonymous voice of the Tanna, in a recognition method that allows convergence of his identity. In turn one begins to recognize the introductory nature of the first Mishnah in the tractate which to some extent is mirrored in the savoraic introduction to various tractates in the Babylonian Talmud. It is conjectured that similar outcomes are available for other tractates of Mishnah as well. The identification of this anonymous voice reveals that it may prove to be a sufficient identifier for what would then be the base text upon which the mishnaic tractate in its entirety is built. The effect of additional studies would allow for reasonable assumptions to be made for each new tractate studied. Together the identification of the *Tanna* of each tractate would allow us to decide whether Mishnah, as a whole, converges on a single personality or authority or multiple source material indicative of an authorship. Outlier tractates like Eduyot and Avot would be testable against a significant body of material. It would, for example, go a long way to deciding whether Eduyot gathers texts together from other pre-existing tractates or rather distributes them to other tractates given that many of its texts are doubled elsewhere in Mishnah. Progress can thereby be made on some classical problems of Talmudic scholarship.

Related problems of orality versus written text and the deep nature of Mishnah as a law code or legal textbook will prove amenable to the central identification of Mishnah's anonymous voice. We will conclude with speculation why this voice tends towards anonymity while in comparison written scriptures all provide identification of whose voice we are hearing.

Brachi Elitzur (*Lecturer, Rabbinic Literature, Herzog College*)
Polemic trends in shaping the characters of Doeg and Ahitophel in Rabbinic literature

The Mishna counts Doeg and Ahitophel among four commoners who "have no share in the World to Come," as opposed to the reward promised to all of Israel. Scholars have tried to decipher the symbolism behind the identity of these four commoners. Although there is no complete agreement among these scholars, many have suggested they represent four key personalities in early Christianity, or at the very least seceding sects and enemy religions of the Pharisees. Some scholars identified Doeg and Ahitophel (as well as Gehazi) as representations of Jesus; others disagree with this view and point to the caution necessary in making such parallels.

In my lecture I will reinforce the symbolic polemical assumptions attributed to the identity of these two characters, tracing the development of traditions related to them, and proposing that Doeg and Ahitophel fulfill a number of roles in Judeo-Christian polemics.

This lecture will point out the identity components of Doeg and Ahitophel as described in biblical verses and in the Midrash, comparing them with those of Judas Iscariot as described in early Christian literature. The lecture will compare the Sages' interpretation of Psalms telling about David's enemies with Christological interpretations by Early Church Fathers who identified David's enemies in these Psalms with the treachery of Judas Iscariot. The question of the increasing disdain for Doeg and Ahitophel, assuming that they are the prototype for Judas Iscariot, will be discussed as an explanation for revulsion toward the person who was apparently trying to frustrate the development of the enemy religion.

Tuesday May 10, Session 1: Rabbinic Literature (continued)

Natalie C. Polzer (*Associate Professor, Jewish & Religious Studies, Louisville*)
The White Drop and the Fetid Drop – Gendered Reproductive Theology in Moral and Medical Discourse in Classical Rabbinic Tradition

Building on Gwynn Kessler's study of reproductive theology (*Conceiving Israel*, 2009), this paper explores the theological significance of male reproductive fluid in classical rabbinic sources. While the term *zera* (seed) is used to designate semen in the context of ritual purity and impurity, semen in the reproductive context is designated as *tippah* (drop). After a summary of the semantic usage of the key terms, *tippah levana* (white drop) and *tippah seruḥah* (fetid drop), this paper will trace the theological development of these motifs from the Mishnah to early medieval rabbinic literature, focusing on the reception history of the saying of Rabbi Akabya ben Mahalaleel (*MAvot* 3.1). This process shows a consistent "death in life" theology, in which human mortal destiny is projected through the image of inherent bodily decay at the moment of conception ("the fetid drop"). Significantly, notions of inherent sin and ritual impurity are almost never associated with the motif of the "fetid drop" or the "white drop." Instead, theological notions of impurity associated with human reproduction appear to be gendered, associated with female reproductive organs and processes rather than with the role of the male "drop" in conception. Concerning male reproductive fluids, the findings correlate with Jonathan Klawans' claim about the separation of ritual and moral purity in classical rabbinic tradition (*Impurity and Sin*, 2000); by contrast, female reproductive processes are associated with ritual impurity, though never with sin in these sources.

Tuesday May 10 **Session 2: Death and Love in Literature and Art** Chair: TBA

Nadine Sheinberg (*PhD student, York University*)
Self-Portraiture of Felix Nussbaum: An Intentional Representation of Bios

This paper analyzes the impact of the external, socio-political climate in Europe, before and during World War II, on the painter Felix Nussbaum's self-perception and awareness as is evidenced in his visual representations of self. Through visual analysis of the artist's paintings, this presentation explores the transition of the artist's view of himself as an artist, as well as the

artist's evolving understanding of himself as a Jew in the eyes of his persecutors. I hope to contribute to the field of Holocaust studies through a continued exploration of the historical period and the relationship between art, visual portraiture, the external forces and increasing lack of agency that the artist was forced to confront.

There is an implicit understanding inherent to publication of both visual and written portraits of self: the finished product will be consumed by an audience. The careful control that the artist wields over the creation of the finished product is lost once the work is unveiled, exposing the carefully curated self to the unknown audience. Felix Nussbaum painted representations of self throughout a time of chaos. The only control or voice he had was the use of self-portraits to portray self and serve as a record of *bios*. As such, the portraiture of Felix Nussbaum is not only a metaphor of self, but a metaphor and record of the suffering he and others endured.

Tuesday May 10, Session 2: Death and Love in Literature and Art (continued)

Laura Wiseman (*Associate Professor, Jewish Teacher Education / Jewish Studies, York*)
A Peculiar Pair: “Couple” by Sivan Har-Shefi

This paper examines the poem “Couple” that opens “Bride’s Journey,” a sequence of Hebrew love poems by Sivan Har-Shefi in *Psalms for a Day of Thunder* (*sic.* 2010). With the benefit of hindsight, this paper follows up on the presenter’s set of stand-alone papers analyzing the motifs and techniques of the central poems in that sequence.

The sequence itself accompanies a pair of lovers as they wed, then dedicate their relationship and Jerusalem home with lovemaking. It stays with them while their waves of desire ebb and flow; when they age their relationship like fine wine; and as they establish their love as sacred space. “Couple” exhibits an appealing, playful simplicity. At the same time, next to the sensuality and abandon of the central poems of the sequence, “Couple” initially seems tame and somewhat shorter on the intricacy and layered imagery that characterize the sequence. In retrospect, however, the poem’s complexity surfaces from its engagement with some foundational *aggadot* about couples in *sifrut hazal*.

To elucidate the intertextual conversations that facilitate the identification of the peculiar pair in “Couple,” and in turn help situate it to herald the poems to come, this presentation dips into a not-so-peculiar pair of aggadic sources in the Talmud and *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*.

Aubrey Glazer (*Independent Scholar*)
Do You Really Want It Darker? *Chibut Hakever* & *Dhātu Manasikāra* in Light of
Leonard Cohen’s Death, Dying & Self-Mourning Lyrical Rituals

What would you do if you had only a year to live? Would you learn to recite *kaddish* and teach it to someone you love to recite it for you? Or practice meditations on Kabbalistic *chibut hakever* [torments of the grave] or Zen Buddhist *dhātu manasikāra* grave contemplations? If you were given the date of your final decree of living, would you tear your garment that covers your heart as a declaration of *keriya* that is self-mourning? When Leonard Cohen got the decree delivered of one year left to live, he chose to keep on singing with the two words for his tombstone guiding him—עלה למרום “ascended above”—and with his four remaining words extended it into two full

length records of music and spoken word poetry, *You Want it Darker* (2016) and *Thanks for the Dance* (2019). Cohen's songbook did its work on listeners as it tore through his current self and exposed the heart of his true self and the landscape of his soul, mourning his own passing before it actually arrived. This theme of self-mourning from *Kaddish* to *Hineini* compared with Kabbalistic *chibut hakever* [torments of the grave] and Zen Buddhist *dhātu manasikāra* grave contemplations that emerges through Leonard Cohen's tearing will be critically analyzed through theories and methods current in religious studies and criticism to elucidate why death, dying and self-mourning matter to a post-secular saint like Cohen, and why it provides solace along life's journey.

Wednesday May 11

Session 1: Ideas and Identities

Chair: Dustin Atlas (*Director of Jewish Studies, Queen's University*)

Ronel Atiya (*Lecturer, Orot Israel College of Education*)

Between Israel and the Nations—on Judaism, Christianity, and Zionism in the Writings of Rabbi Mordechai Hacohen of Tripoli

The development of the Maskilic press among North African Jewry has become a topic of scholarly attention. Yossef Chetrit regards the steady increase in journalistic involvement by rabbinical personalities in Northern Africa from the middle of the nineteenth century onward as epitomic evidence of the expansion of Haskalah circles. One of several determining factors in this development, according to Chetrit, was the dulling of the acrid disputations between secular Haskalah circles, which preached total secularization of Jewish life, and leaders of traditional and religious strata at the time. As a consequence, growing numbers of Maskilic rabbinical personalities became active in journalism, seeing no irresolvable contradiction between modern Haskalah values and Jewish faith and traditions. The trend also found expression in the strong reverberation of these writings in Jewish press vehicles such as *Hatsefira*, *Hamagid* and *Haherut*, where most writings from Haskalah circles were published—in contrast to *Hamelitz*, published in Odessa, which made relatively little headway in Northern Africa due to its anti-traditional stances. In addition to the Hebrew press, which claimed a salient place among the Jews of Northern Africa, some rabbinical personalities in that area turned to the Judeo-Arabic press to publish their writing. These were local newspapers, intended foremost for local Jews living in Northern Africa, in which local Maskilim advertised their ideological, intellectual and experiential aspirations.

Most writings published by North African Jews were reviews or articles that made direct or indirect reference to various Jewish communities, including the social and cultural problems that those communities faced due to European modernity. The venues in which these Jewish authors mostly published fell into two main journalistic categories:

1. Jewish periodicals—modern and in most cases published in Europe—that dealt largely with the Zionist Movement: its development, progress, challenges, and so on. Appearing largely in Hebrew or French, they included descriptions of local affairs in Jewish communities as a basis for discussion of Jews around the world.

2. Mixed Jewish/Arab periodicals, usually published in Judeo-Arabic and devoted largely to discussions of internal challenges to North African Jewish communities such as regime changes, education, and culture. These sources are of prime value in revealing these communities' internal trends of thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Rabbi Mordechai Hacoheh, the spiritual leader of the Jews of Tripoli, took part in this movement that gathered momentum over the course of the nineteenth century. He invested most of his vigor and funds in this cause and offered his services to publishers as an active writer on their editorial boards. He also acted to integrate Jewish newspapers into his community by encouraging widening circles of members to subscribe. Not only did he write regularly for the accepted Jewish newspapers, he also wrote for Judeo-Italian periodicals. In addition to this exceptional fact, the contents of his contributions are rather interesting, suggesting that he wished to call attention to the new way of coping that his community adopted after the Italian occupation.

Wednesday May 11, Session 1: Ideas and Identities (continued)

Mariann Farkas (*PhD student, Bar-Ilan University*)

A Jewish Artist in Quest of Identity: Fra Angelico's Annunciation

Reinterpreted by Hédi Tarján (1932-2008)

Although several researchers have analyzed the relationship between Christian iconography and Jewish visual art, only a few of them have concentrated on convert artists. My presentation aims to introduce a non-traditional variant of the Annunciation story (Luke 1: 26-38), the series called *Homage to Fra Angelico* by Hédi Tarján.

Hédi Tarján (1932–2008) was born in an assimilated Jewish family in Budapest that converted to Christianity. Her series was created in Jerusalem between the 1980s and the 2000s and was scattered in different collections. It depicts her patroness saint and exemplifies a possible reconciliation of her hybrid national and religious identities. Tarján retained the traditional elements of Mary's blue garments and the *hortus conclusus*. At the same time, she altered the original works' iconography by translating different literary sources into visual language. The most unusual part is the close embrace of the saint and the angel. It can invoke the iconography of Jacob wrestling with the angel and the Christian Visitation. The former episode, when Jacob was renamed Israel, can also allude to Tarján's Holocaust trauma and to her struggles as an immigrant to integrate into a new society.

The subject will be explored through interdisciplinary and methodologies, including perspectives of art history, hagiography, iconography, Jewish studies, and memory studies. The lecture presents ways in which visual art can contribute to cross-cultural, interfaith dialogue, and at the same time strengthen and rethink the Israel–Diaspora relationship.

Orna Cohen (*Lecturer, Herzog College and research fellow, Hebrew University*)

Why Are Arab MKs Serving in Zionist Parties?

Arab citizens have been participating in the Israeli political system and have served as members of *Knesset*, the Israeli parliament, since its inception in 1949, representing non-Zionist Arab-Jewish parties, Jewish-Zionist parties and, since 1988, Arab parties. This lecture will examine Arab representation in the Knesset as members of Zionist-oriented parties. It will analyze why Arab citizens in the State of Israel have chosen to join and represent Zionist parties in the

Knesset from the State's early days until today. The lecture will present groundbreaking primary research on the political activity of Arab citizens in Zionist parties, thus offering a contribution to scholarship in this field.

The main thesis in this paper is that Arabs, as a national minority in a Jewish state, tend to join Zionist political frameworks for pragmatic reasons and as part of their effort to adapt to the Jewish state and fit into a Jewish-Zionist majority. It should be noted that the Zionist parties are the ruling parties in Israel and, as such, wield enormous power in all areas of life. This is also one of the reasons why some Arab politicians decide to join Zionist parties. However, this does not mean they identify with Zionist principles or the main objectives of the Zionist enterprise – such as building and developing a Jewish nation-state, encouraging Jewish immigration to Israel, and so on.

Wednesday May 11

Session 2: Women and Jewish Law and Lore

Chair: Lilach Somberg (*MA student, Jewish Studies, University of British Columbia*)

Marinka Yossifon (*PhD student, University of Toronto*)

The legal positions of women who vitiate or sell their marriage contracts

Married women in talmudic literature are extremely constrained with regard to their financial autonomy. One of the few avenues that tannaitic and amoraic literature recognize for a married woman's financial independence is the possibility that she receive a cash advance on her *ketubbah* – as *pogemet ketubbata* – or that she sell her *ketubbah* payment to a third party for a cash advance – *be-tovat hana'ah*. These possibilities allow the wife to arrange a material benefit for herself in the present, but require her to (partly) forego future financial claims on her ex-husband or his estates. Although the parameters of these transactions are murky, clues as to the details of the contracts that regulate these speculative *ketubbah* sales are scattered throughout the *gemara*. These women, who seek some financial autonomy, face resistance: although the Sages view these sales with deep suspicion, they nevertheless appear to tolerate them in practice. Starting with the *gemara* on *bKetubbot* 87a this paper will explore the legal positions of *pogemet ketubbata* and the woman who sells her *ketubah*, *betovat hana'ah*, with regard to these contracts and the challenges they face.

Tirzah Meacham (*Associate Professor, Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations, Toronto*)

Original Sin, Punishment, Atonement, and Conception

S. Levy and Samuel Cohon note that all the elements to create a doctrine of Original Sin exist in biblical and rabbinic texts. Nevertheless, normative Judaism did not ultimately establish such a doctrine possibly in contradistinction to its early establishment as an important doctrine in Christianity where it became a mainstream theological idea. Rather, rabbinic Judaism focused on the notion of free will and individual responsibility without predetermination. Cohon enumerates three ideas concerning sin and death in early Christianity focusing on the Garden of Eden story: 1) the hereditary nature of the corruption of humanity; 2) connection to Adam's sin in the Garden resulting in his posterity's liability to punishment; and 3) sin as a human action committed only by an individual. The last is the normative theological position in Judaism whereas the first two

were well developed in Christianity. Miryam Brand notes how in different texts of Second Temple literature and apocryphal and pseudo-epigraphical sources sometimes Adam is blamed for the corruption of humanity, sometimes Eve, and sometimes it is attributed only to individuals. Alan Cooper extends the above studies to include the concept of sin and Original Sin in Zohar.

This paper will trace Original Sin and its afterlife in certain mystical prayers composed by men for women in Italy in the 17th-18th centuries. Atonement plays a significant role in these Hebrew *tehinot* and indicate a substantial number of (potential) sins for which women must or should atone. We shall examine the interaction of sin, punishment, atonement, and conception. Of the ten curses with which Eve was cursed, most relate to female physiology and anatomy (Eruvin 100b). There is a sense that women were constantly reminded that they are guilty of Original Sin expressed in these prayers, as *pitqa shel Havah*, the (divine) decree against Eve. Insofar as both Jewish and Christian women were meant to pray for the welfare of their families, this constant sense of foreboding or anxiety created by emphasis on female sin allows one to speculate how this mindset serves to control women.

Wednesday May 11, Session 2: Women and Jewish Law and Lore (continued)

Deidre Butler (*Associate Professor, Religion*)

Betina Appel Kuzmarov (*Associate Professor, Law*) (*both Carleton University*)

Kosher Divorce? When Canadian Jewish Divorce Isn't Orthodox

What happens when non-Orthodox Jews negotiate Canadian Jewish divorce? Canadian Jews are overwhelmingly *not* Orthodox.¹ Yet when non-Orthodox Jews divorce religiously, they engage with Jewish divorce through persistently Orthodox norms. This paper explores how this disjunction in Canadian Jewish life impacts divorce and argues that this disjunction is key to understanding the distinct Canadian experience of divorce. All Jewish divorce, across denominations, already proceeds in relation to, in conversation with, and in response to Orthodox praxis. In over one hundred interviews, our research shows that there are real concerns among both rabbis and laypersons as to the legitimacy of divorce proceedings and the possible consequences to future generations if divorce is not enacted correctly. But we also hear stories of non-Orthodox Jews negotiating a range of choices that include Orthodox *batei din*, but also other denominational options. Unsurprisingly, the power of men to refuse to grant a divorce is key to many of these choices; a recalcitrant husband may preclude the possibility of an Orthodox divorce. Respondents describe how their divorces were driven by questions of legitimacy, but also by the halakhic status of the original marriage, accessibility to a *beit din*, commitments to egalitarianism or even a lack of knowledge of the process or the options that might be available. We are intrigued by how divorce choices may change in one person's story, through multiple divorces in shifting contexts. Extending our original theoretical framework of "troubling orthopraxy" to the question of non-Orthodox divorce choices, this research contributes new data as to the variability of Jewish divorce across denominations in Canada.

¹ Only one fifth of Canadians identify as Orthodox (including Hasidic or Hareidi) with the two largest non-Orthodox groups being Conservative (26%) and unaffiliated (31% "don't know" or "Other"). Brym R, Lenton R and Neuman K (2018) *2018 Survey Jews in Canada Final Report*. Toronto: Environics Institute for Survey Research.

Thursday May 12
Session 1: Struggles of Faith

Chair: Emily Kopley (*Lecturer, Jewish Studies, McGill University*)

Eyal Davidson (*Lecturer, Herzog College and Orot Israel College*)

“He Shall First Come to the Galilee” – The Background for Messianic Yearning in the Galilee at the Dawn of the Modern Era

Jewish messianic yearning appears to have focused on Jerusalem, which played a central role in prayers and religious customs. It is thus rather surprising to encounter references to the Galilee as the focus of future messianic appearances in Jewish literature in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era. In this lecture, we will try to examine the historical roots of this approach and its expressions in kabbalistic literature and ‘external’ Midrashic literature, while dwelling on the manifestation of this view in 16th century Safed. At that time, Safed was receiving large numbers of Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, including renowned figures and scholars. Many arrived in Israel after years of wandering and hardship, fervently believing that they were living in an era of redemption. This belief formed the basis of many of their religious and spiritual actions.

It appears that despite the centrality of Jerusalem in the messianic mindset, only a minority of Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal preferred to settle in Jerusalem, while the majority preferred to settle in the Upper Galilee. Despite other reasons for this preference, this lecture shall stress the messianic aspect affecting the choice of Safed at that time. The new arrivals believed that the Messiah would come to the Galilee before Jerusalem, and we shall consider this as a key reason for their choosing to live in Safed.

Evyatar Varman (*PhD student, Department of Jewish Thought, Hebrew University*)
Logic, Experience and Language in Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*

As a response to German Idealism, Franz Rosenzweig sets out to create a philosophical system that does not abstract the individual and her earthly fear of death. In order to do so, he differentiates in the *Star of Redemption* between the individual's knowledge, achieved through logic, and the knowledge revealed to him when encountering God. Rosenzweig guides his readers from knowledge based on logic (Part One of the book) to knowledge based on experience (Part Two), where truth is revealed through a person's interactions with God and World.

However, perceiving past the limits of logic is not an easy task, especially when God has not yet revealed himself to Rosenzweig's reader. Moreover, the reader is left with unresolved questions regarding the relation between logic and experience in Rosenzweig's system; namely, one may ask why Philosophy (logic) is needed in Rosenzweig's system if Theology (experience) reveals a wider perspective. In my talk, I will shed light on these topics through Rosenzweig's phenomenology of language.

As I will show, according to Rosenzweig, the transition from logic to experience is demonstrated in the elements of language: from a logic on which "primary words" are based to grammar to spoken language. I will present how Rosenzweig's description of language exemplifies the need for logic in his system and its relation to experience. As language teaches the *Star's* reader, knowing her primary reality – the logical, created reality, which has not yet been experienced and revealed – will guide her to believe in its revelation.

Thursday May 12, Session 1: Struggles of Faith (continued)

Daniel Reiser (*Associate Professor, Department of Jewish Thought, Herzog College*)
Elie Wiesel's *Tale of a Niggun*: Between Literature and History

In 1978 Elie Wiesel published a poem, "The Tale of a Niggun."² This poem was quickly forgotten, ignored and seldom revisited. Consequently, Wiesel's unique approach to Hasidic perceptions sank back into the margins of history.

The poem begins with a cruel and tragic scene. The Nazis, or "the enemy" as referred to in the poem, demand from the leaders of the Jewish community of the "ghetto / somewhere in the East / during the reign of night/" to hand over ten Jews. The enemy does not hide its intent – death by hanging. This is to come as a vengeful response to the hanging of the ten sons of Haman, by the Jews, some 2,400 years ago, in Shushan, the capital of the then Persian Empire: "Tomorrow is Purim/ and the enemy / planning to avenge / Haman's ten sons / will hang ten of our own". The community leaders are unwilling to make the decision of choosing ten Jews; instead, they turn to the ghetto's rabbi and ask him to make his decision in accordance with halakha. The rabbi is shaken by the question to the depths of his soul.

The poem deals with the rabbi's halakhic/spiritual struggle, as his engrossing study of books becomes an astral journey, in which he meets exemplary figures from Jewish history, from Maimonides to the Ba'al-Shem-Tov. The Besht teaches him a divine niggun which plays a major role in the poem.

In this lecture I show that the background story is not just a literary product of Wiesel's imagination, rather is (unfortunately) based on historical sources. I will show this using archival sources and testimonies, which I have collected from several archives. Furthermore, I show that by representing the doubts and indecisions of the ghetto's rabbi, Elie Wiesel builds his own unique approach to the Hasidic niggun, its power and complex meaning.

Thursday May 12 Session 2: What Kind of Jewish?

Chair: Heidi Epstein (*Associate Professor, Religion & Culture, St. Thomas More College*)

Robert A. Katz (*Professor of Law, Indiana University*)
The Cincinnati Torah War

This paper examines the decision of Cincinnati's Jewish community in the mid-1860s to close its Jewish day schools and send its children to the city's public schools, notwithstanding the public school's practice of starting the school day with readings from the Protestant (KJV) Bible and the singing of Protestant hymns. This decision reflected the community's prudential belief that embracing the public schools would lead to greater inclusion and less antisemitism and its

² Elie Wiesel, "The Tale of a Niggun," Arthur A. Chiel (ed.), *Perspectives on Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of Wolfe Kelman* (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1978), pp. 455-475. The poem has recently been reprinted as a book in itself (Schocken, 2021), and I hope it will now attract more attention.

Reform rabbis' commitment to an American Judaism that fully engaged with civic institutions, even at the expense of Jewish engagement. Rather than boycott the public schools over the Protestant practices, the Jewish community chose to work within the system to repeal them. This approach was vindicated in 1869 when the Cincinnati school board decided to stop the Protestant practices, a decision that triggered a national controversy known as the Cincinnati Bible War.

The Cincinnati Jewish community's debate over public and parochial schools foreshadowed two recurring themes in the American Jewish community's pursuit of equality, inclusion, and self-actualization in education. Most American Jews today, like their Cincinnati forebears, are both committed to public schools and opposed to religious (typically Christian) instruction and exercises in such schools. This opposition finds expression in the united legal efforts of Jewish defense organizations to challenge these practices as unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. By contrast, the American Jewish Community is more robustly heterogeneous in religious orientation than its Cincinnati forebears, and thus more divided as to the value of a Jewish day school education and its role in forming American identity. This division finds expression in opposing legal positions of Orthodox versus non-Orthodox Jewish defense organizations as to the constitutionality of public support of parochial education.

Thursday May 12, Session 2: What Kind of Jewish? (continued)

Itay Zutra (*Yiddish Teaching Fellow, University of Manitoba*)
Dancing Jews and Bear Taming in Modernist Yiddish Poetry

In his book *Dancing Bears* (2014), Witold Szablowski documented post-communist reality in Eastern Europe. In the images of dancing bears and their tamers, he found the key to understanding life under tyranny. The bears' inability to free themselves from the dance is seen as a symbol of the Soviet people's inability to overcome their past. Among other locations, Szablowski reached Smorgon, Belarus, home to a renowned bear training academy and a large Jewish community.

Smorgon was also the birthplace of the Yiddish modernist, Moyshe Kulbak (1896-1940). In 1922, while living in Berlin, he wrote his poem "Asore Divraye" featuring a rough bear tamer ironically nicknamed "The Ten Commandments." In 1926, the New York based, Polish born modernist, Yankev Glatshteyn (1896-1971), published his poem "Gegi" also describing a sexually abusive old-school bear tamer. Both poems evoke the legend of the "Mayofes" dance in which a Polish nobleman made his court Jew dance a bear dance as a form of humiliation. Modern Jewish writers negated the passivity of the "Mayofes" Jew. Instead, they endorsed the rise of a strong Jew and heteronormative Jewish masculinity.

This paper will compare Glatshteyn's and Kulbak's poems and analyze the poetic strategies used by the diasporic modernists to satirize and reject the national agenda of the "New Jew" in favour of a more sensitive, nuanced, and cosmopolitan Jewish identity. The modernist 'take' on Jewish bear taming will further our understanding of modern, secular Jewish complexities and challenge gender hierarchies.

Thursday May 12, Session 2: What Kind of Jewish? (continued)

Ira Robinson (*Professor Emeritus, Department of Religions & Cultures*)
The New Haven Yeshiva, 1923-1937: An Experiment in American Jewish Education

In the twenty-first century, the network of Lithuanian-style yeshivot in North America and Israel offering advanced Rabbinic studies to Orthodox men is large and expanding. From a scholarly perspective, there is a consensus that the major impact of such institutions in North America began in earnest in the 1940s. Nonetheless, it is relevant to note some important developments in this area in the earlier twentieth century. Of the early institutions of postsecondary yeshiva education in North America, most scholarly attention has been given to the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York (founded in 1915), and Chicago's Hebrew Theological College (founded in 1922), both of which enjoyed continuity and success in the postwar era.

There were other postsecondary yeshivot founded in the prewar era, however, which did not enjoy such continuity. This presentation tells the story of a yeshiva that was founded in New Haven, Connecticut in 1923, moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1929, and went out of existence in 1937. It was known as the "New Haven Yeshiva," both in its original home in New Haven, as well as in Cleveland. Likely because it had no institutional continuity in the postwar period, the existence of the New Haven Yeshiva has received relatively little attention. However, in the words of William Helmreich, it merits our attention as "the first mussar yeshiva in the United States, as well as the first yeshiva patterned almost completely after those in Eastern Europe." Its rise, as well as its demise, has much to tell us concerning the development of Orthodox Judaism in North America in the 1920s and 1930s.