

**Advanced School in the Humanities, "Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Religious Communities and Communities of Knowledge" (IAS Princeton, June 12-14, 2017)
Co-sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and the Israel Institute for Advanced Study, Jerusalem**

Conveners:

Sabine Schmidtke (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton)

Guy G. Stroumsa (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem / University of Oxford)

Program

MONDAY 12 JUNE

Morning Session (9:00 am-12:00 pm)

Registration and Welcome (Sabine Schmidtke and Guy Stroumsa)

Emanuel Fiano, Parting Ways of Knowing: Re-reading the "Two Powers" Statement in TB Ḥagigah 15a

Winrich Löhr, To Divide and Construct- Ancient Christian Hereseology, Its Rise and Impact

Moshe Blidstein, Inter-communal oaths from antiquity to late antiquity

Afternoon Session (1:00 pm-5:00 pm)

Jack Tannous, Simple Believers: The Layering of Knowledge in Christian Communities

George A. Kiraz, The Greek-Syriac-Arabic Intellectual Interface Before Bayt al-Ḥikmah: The Case of George of the Arabs

Yonatan Moss, Science in the Service of Biblical History: A Ninth-Century Northern-Mesopotamian Account of the Longevity of the Patriarchs

TUESDAY 13 JUNE

Morning Session (9:30 am-12:00 pm)

Maribel Fierro, Narrating translation into Arabic in al-Andalus

Sarah Stroumsa, The Significance of Silence: Single-source evidence on intercommunal events in al-Andalus

Stefan Schorch, The Chosen Place as Point of Content and Contention: Samaritan Traditions About Mount Garizim

Afternoon Session (1:00 pm-5:00 pm)

Miriam Hjälms, Between Hebraica veritas, Graeca veritas and taḥrīf : Exegetical strategies in early Rūm Orthodox (Melkite) polemic tracts

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, Copts in coexistence with their Muslim Rulers in 11th century Egypt

Hinrich Biesterfeld, Knowledge of the Hidden. The systematic place of the "Occult Sciences" in some 4th-8th century H. Arabic and Persian classifications of the sciences

Reimund Leicht, The concept of *Adab* among Muslim and Jews in 11th and 12th century Andalusia

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE



Morning Session (9:30 am-12:00 pm)

[Steven Harvey](#), Lost in Translation: Obstacles Endangering the Safe Journey of Philosophical Texts across Religious, Cultural, and Linguistic Boundaries

[Katja Krause](#), Selecting, Transforming, Integrating: The Mechanics of Appropriating Arabic 'Ilm among Thirteenth-Century Dominicans

[Ayelet Even Ezra](#), Learned magic and popular beliefs: new evidence for the origins of the 'witches-sabbat'

Afternoon Session (1:30 pm-4:30 pm)

[Jonathan Decter](#), The Other 'Great Eagle': Inter-religious Panegyrics and the Limits of Interpretation

[Robert G. Morrison](#), Astrology Serving Judaism: Moses Ashkenazi Cohen's Urim ve-Tummim and Jewish Thought in the Fifteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean

Final Remarks ([Michael Cook](#))

Participants, Titles, and Abstracts

Jack Tannous (Princeton University) <jtannous@princeton.edu>

Simple Believers: The Layering of Knowledge in Christian Communities

Abstract: In my talk, I will explore the idea their being different levels of knowledge, interest, and engagement in doctrine and theological ideas in the Christian community and will then raise the question of the implications of such a layering for how we think about relationships between different Christian communities as well as between Christians and non-Christians.

Stefan Schorch (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg)

<stefan.schorch@theologie.uni-halle.de>

The Chosen Place as Point of Content and Contention: Samaritan Traditions About Mount Garizim

Abstract: Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Samaritans share the concept of sacral geography, i.e. the religious semantization of certain sites, landscapes, or even whole regions. The concept of sacral places is thus capable to become a subject of contention and interreligious polemics, but also an interface of knowledge transfer between these religions. The paper will demonstrate this phenomenon with regard to the veneration of Mount Garizim in the Samaritan believe, its forms of expression, its historical developments, and its role. According to the Samaritans, Mount Garizim, south to Nablus, is the place chosen by the God of Israel “to establish His name there” (Deut 12:5), at the former sites of Abraham’s altar (Gen 12:7), and Jacob’s “house of God” (Gen 28:19). Proceeding from these traditions found in the Torah, the views of Mount Garizim as Israel’s holy place were further elaborated and developed by the Samaritans in the late antique and the medieval periods. This can be well observed in the Samaritan Aramaic, Arabic and Hebrew literature during that time, mainly in liturgical poetry and exegetical tractates. Most obviously, both the concepts and the literary means of their expression changed in close contact with the neighboring religions, and often under their immediate influence.

Jonathan Decter (Brandeis) <decter@brandeis.edu>

The Other ‘Great Eagle’: Inter-religious Panegyrics and the Limits of Interpretation

Abstract: “The Other ‘Great Eagle’: Inter-religious Panegyrics and the Limits of Interpretation” treats the several panegyrics penned by Jewish authors in honor of Muslim or Christian addressees in Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, Arabic, and Castilian. The chapter studies the discursive strategies through which Jews praised non-Jewish rulers and explores how Jews used panegyric to negotiate their political position within local and imperial structures. Although recognizing the temporal authority of non-Jewish potentates while maintaining traditional Jewish stances on sacred history could certainly be awkward, inter-religious panegyrics reveal various strategies for accommodating these rival claims. Further, the chapter investigates the methodological issues involved in determining whether words of praise should be read subversively as containing a “hidden transcript” that conceals a poetics of Jewish resistance.

George A. Kiraz (Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute) <gkiraz@gorgiaspress.com>

The Greek-Syriac-Arabic Intellectual Interface Before Bayt al-Hikmah: The Case of George of the Arabs

Abstract: The talk will explore how Syriac could have played a bridge role between Greek and Arabic culture prior to the well-known Abbasid period. While literary sources may be lacking for this period, we know of Syriac clerics who had leading roles among the Arabs. George of the Arabs (or of the Nations) was such a leader. At the same time, he was an intellectual and a prolific writer who wrote not only on matters of theology but also on astronomy and mathematics. The talk will explore George's writings and how they could have infiltrated the Arab intellectual space.

Emanuel Fiano (Fordham University) <emfian@gmail.com>

Parting Ways of Knowing: Re-reading the “Two Powers” Statement in TB Ḥagigah 15a

Abstract: This paper is devoted to a re-thinking of the late ancient ‘parting of the ways’ between Christianity and Judaism as one between communities of knowledge, through an examination of the story—transmitted in different forms by a cluster of texts—of the first-century tanna Elisha ben Abuyah’s ascent to a mystical realm and view of the angel Meṭaṭron. In reaction to this vision, Elisha is reported to have uttered a statement containing the famous syntagm shteī reshuyot (‘two powers’), and, at least in traditional scholarly interpretations, to have been punished as a consequence. The phrase shteī reshuyot occurs elsewhere in Jewish literature, in reference to different varieties of minut (religious deviance) possibly including Christian binitarianism. As such, its value has been investigated also with regard to the role that theological beliefs could have played in the ‘parting of the ways’ between Christianity and Judaism in late antiquity. In a recent article, David Grossberg has compared the two narratives about the encounter between Elisha ben Abuyah and Meṭaṭron contained in TB Ḥagigah and in 3 Enoch, concluding that they emphasize orthopraxy and orthodoxy, respectively. Focusing on the account contained in the Bavli, and utilizing a previously unnoticed textual clue, I propose that the undeniable concern with religious practice is better understood as woven within a contrast between legitimate and illegitimate ways of knowing, and that the variety of discourse the text disavows and casts as foreign is consciously linked to a system of justification comparable to the Christian one and incompatible with that of the Rabbis. Building on scholarly analyses of the divergent yet congruent discursivities deployed by post-Nicene Christian writers and late-fourth-century Rabbis, I conclude that this sugiyah points to the possibility that, within the Rabbinic field, the crystallization of particular modes of intellectual inquiry, connected to a restricted “horizon of the questionable” (A. de Libera), affected a distinct self-understanding more significantly than potential theological disagreement.

Robert G. Morrison (Bowdoin) <rgmorrison@bowdoin.edu>

Astrology Serving Judaism: Moses Ashkenazi Cohen's Urim ve-Tummim and Jewish Thought in the Fifteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean

Abstract: This paper will examine the text Urim ve-Tummim, a Hebrew text on astrology composed in the fifteenth century probably in the Eastern Mediterranean. This text is highly significant in that it not only defends astrology, but, in fact, advocates astrology as a way to gain insight into one’s religious obligations. According to Urim ve-Tummim, astrology does not contravene free will; in fact, in this text, astrology comes off as a religious philosophy that is superior to Qabalah. Tzvi Langermann gave an overview of the contents of the text

in his chapter in Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures. Further analysis of this text will provide more information about the role of astrology in the Jewish communities of the Byzantine Empire. Though Ashkenazi Cohen was not a practitioner of Qabbalah himself, his justification of astrology, at the beginning of the text, touched on mystical matters. More important, astrology could enhance one's performance of religious obligations. This paper will also place Urim ve-Tummim in the context of the Jewish thought in the Eastern Mediterranean in the fifteenth century.

Michael Cook (Princeton University) <mcook@princeton.edu> <discussant>

Yonatan Moss (Martin Buber Society of Fellows, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
<yonsmoss@gmail.com>

Science in the Service of Biblical History: A Ninth-Century Northern-Mesopotamian Account of the Longevity of the Patriarchs

Abstract: In the course of his unpublished "Consolation for [the Death of] Children," the West-Syrian bishop Moses bar Kepha (d. 903) dedicates several chapters to explaining various natural differences between people in his own time and their antediluvian ancestors. He appeals to a series of demographic, medical and environmental causes in ways that differ from earlier reflections on the question. I will attempt to show that Bar Kepha's discussion, including reliance on what he terms "physiology," has more in common with contemporary Jewish and Muslim discourse than with the Greco-Syriac patristic tradition, on which he professes to draw.

Ayelet Even Ezra (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) <ayelet.even-ezra@mail.huji.ac.il>

Learned magic and popular beliefs: new evidence for the origins of the 'witches-sabbat'

Abstract: My paper will present a 13th century account by a Dominican theologian describing a popular belief, according to which men and women smear themselves at night with a certain ointment, then fly and copulate with each other.

Although no contemporary source mentions such a belief - nothing about nightly flight between the 11th and 15th centuries, and nothing about flying ointments before the 15th - the author remarks that it is a common belief not only among Christians, but among Jews and Saracens as well. In his attempts to judge whether such a thing is possible, he uses his knowledge of magic books recently translated from Arabic. I will address the importance of this account to the study of the medieval origins of the myth of the witches-sabbat, the perception of rural "superstitions" as not religious-specific, and the peculiar interactions it reveals between the learned and the popular.

Steven Harvey (Bar Ilan University) <steven.harvey@biu.ac.il>

Lost in Translation: Obstacles Endangering the Safe Journey of Philosophical Texts across Religious, Cultural, and Linguistic Boundaries

Abstract: The leading translators of philosophical and scientific texts into Arabic and Hebrew took their translations seriously. As is well known, the father of Arabic translators, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, described in detail his own industrious method of translation, which did not even begin until he had gathered and collated all the manuscripts of the source text he could find. The actual method of translation was not word for word, one word after another, but sentence by sentence, where the meaning of the sentence was first understood and then

translated. Dimitri Gutas rightly speaks of the “high level of translation technique and philological accuracy achieved by Ḥunayn, his associates, and other translators early in the fourth/tenth century.” (Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbasid Society* (2nd-4th / 8th-10th centuries) (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 141.) The results, in general, were truly impressive, even with the inevitable mistakes and misunderstandings. The Arabic-to-Hebrew translators of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries worked no less assiduously and conscientiously at their craft, and their results were also impressive. Indeed because of the close relationship between Arabic and Hebrew, these translations were often more literal and more reliable than those of the translators into Arabic, and made possible the careful study of philosophy and science by Hebrew-reading Jews of the period. Nonetheless, daunting obstacles – many of which had little to do with the translator’s competence and his knowledge of the source and target languages – often endangered and even prevented the transmission of philosophical texts from one language to another, obstacles seemingly inherent in the transmission of philosophical texts from one language or culture or religion to another. This paper will consider a variety of such obstacles, primarily in the transmission of Greek and Arabic philosophy to a Hebrew-reading audience, and provide examples of the ways in which scholars sought to confront or circumvent these obstacles and thereby enable the safe passage of philosophical texts to their intended readership.

Sarah Stroumsa (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) <sarah.stroumsa@mail.huji.ac.il>

The Significance of Silence: Single-source evidence on intercommunal events in al-Andalus

Abstract: In the historiography of the medieval Islamic world, major events that concern more than one religious community sometimes appear in the records of only one of the relevant communities. The absence of evidence for such a major event from the records of a community it supposedly concerns is open to interpretations that can vary greatly. It can be seen as reflecting the haphazard survival of manuscripts, or it may cast doubt on the veracity of the existing reports concerning this event. The present paper discusses the methodological question regarding the interpretation of such unbalanced records, through the examination of two examples from Umayyad al-Andalus: the so-called Christian voluntary martyrs of Cordoba, and the family of Samuel ha-Nagid/Ibn al-Narghilla.

Moshe Blidstein <moshe.blidstein@mail.huji.ac.il> (Martin Buber Society of Fellows, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Inter-communal oaths from antiquity to late antiquity

Abstract: Oaths are a family of ritual speech-acts, ranging from mundane interjections in regular speech to complex performances of allegiance. Though oaths rest on a nearly universal notion of obligating and truthful speech, they are also particular to specific religions (invoking specific divinities or powers), cultures (performed through specific rituals) and spheres of life (used differently in magic, courtroom, ordinary speech and international treaty). As powerful acts of communication, oaths are, and were, inherently suited to cross communal boundaries, though lingual and cultural obstacles always exist. For example, members of one community may use the oath invoking the gods of another, or perform oaths in a way usually performed by another; an oath ritual may include the invocation of a number of competing gods; members of different communities may communicate through oaths beholden to competing ritual scripts. I would like to examine a number of cases of

such boundary-crossing oaths to see how oaths were used in these contexts, whether to mediate and express inter-communal tensions or to avert them entirely.

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (Cordoba U) <ff1mosaj@uco.es>

Copts in coexistence with their Muslim Rulers in 11th century Egypt

Abstract: During two decades (1074-1094 CE) an interesting ethnic-religious coexistence took place in Egypt between the religious minority represented by the Copts and an ethnic minority, the Armenians that ruled over Egypt at that time. The relationship between both communities was vividly described by the anonymous author that composed the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Athanasius. The author gives a favourable account that is particularly striking given that the emir that ruled Egypt during these twenty years was an Armenian Muslim who made important agreements with the Coptic Church. Thanks to these agreements the Christian communities enjoyed twenty years of social, economic and religious stability.

Maribel Fierro (CSIC, Madrid) <maribel.fierro@cchs.csic.es>

Narrating translation into Arabic in al-Andalus

Abstract: The Iberian Peninsula is considered one of the privileged spaces for translating activities during the Middle Ages. This may be so for translations from Arabic into other languages, but the reverse process is not so evident if put under scrutiny. When dealing with translation from other languages into Arabic, the case that immediately is brought to the fore for the case of al-Andalus (i.e. the territory of the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim rule) is the translation of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* and Orosius' *Histories* that would have taken place in Umayyad Cordoba during the 4th/10th century. While the translation of Orosius' Latin text could be carried out with local resources, lack of knowledge of Greek was a problem for translating Dioscorides' works, solved thanks to the help provided by the Byzantine emperor who was also responsible for the arrival of both books into Andalusian lands. An analysis of the report by Ibn Abi Usaybi'a – quoting the Cordoban Ibn Juljul, a witness of the event – could contribute to the aim of the present conference (to 'sharpen our understanding of the mechanics through which knowledge crossed religious, cultural and linguistic boundaries, reshaping communities') by dealing with the reliability of the narratives upon which our understanding of Medieval translating activities is based, the use made of such narratives by modern scholars and what is highlighted and sometimes silenced by them, and the question of the links between translation and specific political orders.

Katja Krause (Durham University) <katja.krause@durham.ac.uk>

Selecting, Transforming, Integrating: The Mechanics of Appropriating Arabic 'Ilm among Thirteenth-Century Dominicans

Abstract: When Arabic medical and philosophical works reached Latin Europe, beginning in the eleventh century, they inspired an unprecedented wave of scientific inquiry. The carefully crafted and scientifically superior works quickly became an indispensable tool for mastering Galenic-Avicennian medicine on the one hand, and for understanding Aristotelian philosophical teachings on the other. For Latin medieval thinkers, they contained nothing short of entirely new systems of thought and of apprehending the world. Yet at the same time, some of these works ignited fierce controversies, inspired hostile treatises by famous Latin thinkers, and eventually involved church authorities condemning the teachings contained in them. While these historical events are well documented, the precise

mechanics of medieval appropriations of the material contained in them have not yet been studied analytically. The purpose of this paper is to help fill this gap in the literature and to shed light on some appropriating mechanisms—selection, transformation, and integration—in the famous Latin Dominicans Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. This case study will suggest how and why a limited number of Arabic scientific texts could mould Latin medieval thought and identity, advance disciplinary developments in philosophy, theology, and medicine, and form European academic institutions to scales and scopes that would last well into the sixteenth century.

Miriam Hjälm (LMU, Munich) <mili1154@gmail.com>

Between Hebraica veritas, Graeca veritas and taḥrīf : Exegetical strategies in early Rūm Orthodox (Melkite) polemic tracts

Abstract: Despite many Church Fathers' complex relation to the Jewish Scriptures, it is well known that the Hebrew Bible played an important (yet not decisive) role in determining the Christian Old Testament canon (Gallagher, 2012), especially in Eastern Christianity. Nevertheless, subsequent to John of Damascus (d. ca. 750), Near Eastern Christians abruptly ceased using the Hebrew Bible as a canonical benchmark in their canon lists and increasingly expanded the canon (Hjäl

m, 2017). Although somewhat more complex, this appears to be connected with taḥrīf: instead of being used to legitimize Christianity as the rightful heirs of Judaism, the Hebrew Bible became a subversive element questioning Christians' (and Jews') ability to accurately transmit divine revelation. There are several examples of where Christians overtly or covertly address taḥrīf (Treiger, 2017; Tarras, 2017) and by doing so, these Christians accepted the accusation of taḥrīf as such, but blamed it on the Jews. In other words, the struggle over who owned the correct version of the Scriptures clearly intensified in the Islamic world, as widely known. The main aim of the present study, is to examine whether this "paradigmatic shift of focus" came to effect the exegetical methods used in polemic tracts composed by early Arabic-speaking Rūm Orthodox (Melkite) Christians. Most Church Fathers resorted extensively to non-literal, typological interpretations as a means to prove that Jesus Christ was the Jewish Messiah (as Jews or "Judeo-Christians" and their literal interpretation strategies were their main antagonists). Though such kinds of interpretations continued to be used, it seems, however, that there was a growing focus on the Bible's literal level in early Rūm Orthodox polemic texts (where Muslims, potential converts to Islam, or Islamizing tendencies were the main antagonists). This paper will study this assumption further and categorize various methods used in these tracts, with an emphasize on biblical passages that are interpreted in a literal manner. By doing so, I hope to contribute to the study of inter-religious interface and show that such concerns caused Near Eastern Christians to adjust their traditions in an ongoing process of accommodation on the one hand and resistance on the other vis-à-vis the dominant culture (Griffith, 2008).

Hinrich Biesterfeldt (Bochum University) <hinrich.biesterfeldt@rub.de>

Knowledge of the Hidden. The systematic place of the "Occult Sciences" in some 4th-8th century H. Arabic and Persian classifications of the sciences

Abstract: Like history, the so-called Occult Sciences do not occupy a firm position in Muslim scholarship and in the early classifications of the sciences. It is instructive to examine those

encyclopedias which contain these disciplines and to analyze their systematic context and possibly consult them for their place in contemporary society.

Reimund Leicht (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) <leichtreimund@gmail.com>

The concept of *Adab* among Muslim and Jews in 11th and 12th century Andalusia

Abstract: *Adab* is perhaps one of the most elusive concepts of knowledge and education in the Islamicate world. Whereas terms like *mutakallim/kalām*, *ḥakīm/falṣafa* or even *ṣūfī/taṣawwuf* designate much more clearly delimited corpora of knowledge and practice identified with specific persons and social groups (often in mutual contest for intellectual and social supremacy), *adīb* and *adab* stand for a much less rigid concept of education both regarding doctrinal contents and social context. The kind of universal literary education (*Bildung*) essential for the *adīb* – though foundational for a person’s social status – is thus not necessarily limited to specific social or religious groups. The relative openness of the *adab* allowed members of non-Muslim communities in the Islamicate world to adopt this “universal” concept of literary *Bildung*. In fact, a considerable number of Jews in al-Andalus seem to have internalized these ideas deeply, and they practiced *adab* in terms almost indistinguishable from their Muslim neighbours. On the other hand, *adab* is to a large degree connected to Islam and the Arabic language as culturally and politically determining factors. Accordingly, the difference in religious affiliation and the “reference language” (Hebrew instead of Arabic) lead to the creation of a second kind of *adab*: Jewish *adab* as a cultural calque for this Arab-Muslim one. This yielded a situation in which *adab* fulfilled multiple functions in different communities. For the Islamicate world in its ecumenical sense, *adab* was potentially a unifying concept for individuals from different communities, but for a medieval Jew becoming an *adīb* could be either be a way to enhance social prestige within the Islamicate society as such, or it could stand for the acquisition of a certain kind of literary *Bildung* which stood in high esteem within his own separate socio-religious community. The purpose of this paper will be to describe this ambivalence in the function of *adab* for the formation of different communities of knowledge and will exemplify this with outstanding figures from Andalusian culture.

Winrich Löhr (winrich.loehr@wst.uni-heidelberg.de) (Heidelberg University)

To Divide and Construct- Ancient Christian Hereseology, Its Rise and Impact

Abstract: My paper will explore the emergence of Christian hereseology as a new kind of religious knowledge. The following questions will be addressed: How and why did ancient Christian hereseology emerge? Is it something new, or are there antecedents and parallels? Who were the producers of this knowledge, who the target audience? To which different uses was hereseology put from the 2nd to the 6th century? What kind of rationality (if any) is underlying hereseology? Did it have any impact (for example by shaping legislation)? Did it contribute to forming the identities of groups and communities, by inclusion and / or exclusion? Are there indications of resistance against hereseological labelling? The discussion of my paper could – among other questions – discuss possible parallels to ancient Christian hereseology (or their conspicuous absence) in Judaism and Islam.