



# Beyond the Elite

## Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

Newsletter #4, Spring 2020

We are delighted to present the fourth issue of our newsletter.

Our first semester was filled with activities, many of which are featured below.

We have saved some of them for our next newsletter!

As we begin this second term, we, like people all over the world, are working off campus due to COVID-19.

### Spotlight On:

**Miri Fenton, Ph.D Candidate**

My Ph.D examines the everyday functioning of ordinary people within the Jewish community, comparing between the communities of Ashkenaz and those of the Crown of Aragon. Exploring different non-institutional practices, I use these to reconstruct the ways in which local legal contexts, interactions between Jews and Christians, and Jewish custom and law combined to create complex, multi-layered, but highly distinct communities in Ashkenaz and Aragon. Being a part of the Beyond the Elite team, with the members' diverse array of interests, has been an invaluable experience, one that, in particular, has prompted me to consider more deeply the economic factors that informed different customs and legal choices of the period.



We are continuing to hold our weekly meetings and work on our joint and individual projects. We hope everyone reading this newsletter and all of your loved ones are safe and healthy.



**Andreas Lehnertz, Post-doctoral Fellow**

After joining Beyond the Elite as a post-doctoral fellow in October 2018, my research has focused on topics such as Jewish sealing practices, Jewish and Christian oath-taking, the early transmission of Yiddish, and Jewish craftspeople in the Middle Ages. I am currently working on a social history of medieval Jewish craftspeople in Northern Europe. It is clear to me that being a part of this ERC group has given me vital tools for enhancing my research capabilities, particularly with regards to exploring and discussing medieval Hebrew sources – a focal point of the group's research. My recent talk on shofar making in 15<sup>th</sup> century Erfurt, presented at the Money Matters conference in December, is a case in point.



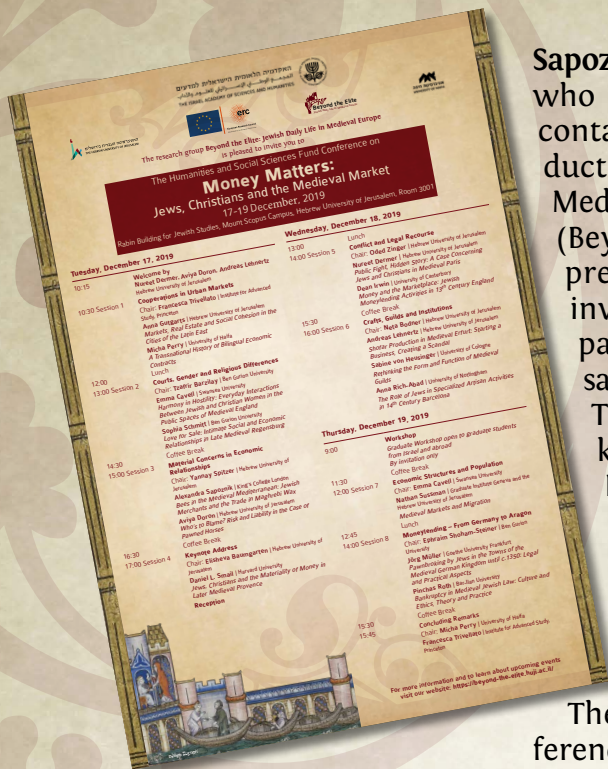
### Grants & Awards

**Congratulations to our Beyond the Elite team members!**

- ✿ **Dr. Neta Bodner** was awarded a Masada Fellowship from Worcester College at the University of Oxford
- ✿ **Aviya Doron** was awarded the Mendoza Prize by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Department of Jewish History
- ✿ **Albert Kohn** was awarded a Nachson Fellowship
- ✿ **Andreas Lehnertz** was awarded a Martin Buber Society Fellowship (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2020-2024) and won the Professor Marie-Luis Niewodniczansk-Price Award given by Trier University's Freundeskreis e.V. for his Ph.D. thesis (November 2019)
- ✿ **Amit Shafran** was awarded a Mandel School M.A. Fellowship
- ✿ **Hannah (Teddy) Schachter** was awarded a Szloma Album Fellowship



Credit: The Erfurt *Judeneid* (oath taken by Jews); Erfurt, Municipal Archives, 0-0/A XLVII, n. 1



# Conference

## Money Matters: Jews, Christians, and the Medieval Market

This conference, held on December 17-19, 2019, featured leading scholars from the U.S., U.K., Germany, and Israel, and focused on economic interactions between Jews and Christians in medieval Europe. On the first day, **Anna Gutgarts** (HUJI) spoke about social cohesion and urban development, comparing the cases of Jerusalem and Acre, followed by **Micha Perry** (University of Haifa), who surveyed the development of bilingual contracts across Europe.

**Emma Cavell** (Swansea University) discussed how litigation records reflect daily entanglements of English Jews, and **Sophia Schmidt** (Ben-Gurion University) delved into the socio-economic motivations behind the city of Regensburg's prosecution of Jewish clients of Christian prostitutes. The next session explored material concerns, beginning with **Alexandra**

**Sapoznik** (King's College London) who focused on inter-religious contacts triggered by wax production and trade across the Mediterranean, and **Aviya Doron** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI) who presented the unique risks involved in Jews' reliance on pawned horses in credit transactions in the German Empire. The day concluded with a keynote lecture given by **Daniel Lord Smail** (Harvard University), who used notarial acts from the city of Marseille to assess Jews' centrality in the city's economic activity.

The second day of the conference began with a tour of the Old City of Jerusalem led by **Neta Bodner** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI). We then dealt with legal proceedings. **Nureet Dermer** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI) discussed the question of Jews' foreignness in the city of Paris, and **Dean Irwin** (University of Canterbury) presented practical and procedural aspects of English Jews' moneylending activities. The final session of the day focused on crafts and guilds. **Andreas Lehnertz** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI) presented a case of economic and religious conflict stemming from a Jewish-Christian clash over shofar production, **Sabine von Heusinger** (University of Cologne) addressed the flexibility of the guild institution and how it functioned in medieval Germany, and **Anna Rich-Abad** (University of Nottingham) discussed the varied and specialized artisanal activities in which Jews were involved in 14th century Barcelona.

The following morning **Daniel Lord Smail** and **Francesca Trivellato** (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton) led a graduate student workshop, in which **Annika**

**Funke** (Arye Maimon Institute, University of Trier) **Max Holfelder** (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), **Hannah (Teddy) Schachter** (Beyond the Elite, Hochschule für jüdische Studien Heidelberg), **Albert Kohn** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI) and **Miri Fenton** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI) all presented their work.

In the following session **Nathan Sussman** (Graduate Institute Geneva and HUJI) spoke about economic incentives for migration and immigration using the case of medieval Paris, **Jörg Müller** (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt) presented an overview of Jews' pawnbroking activities in medieval Germany until 1350, and **Pinchas Roth** (Bar Ilan University) discussed Jewish halakhic approaches to bankruptcy and ethical concerns when redeeming debt from those who went bankrupt. The conference concluded with remarks by **Francesca Trivellato** and a fruitful discussion on the diverse sources and approaches to exploring questions regarding Jewish-Christian economic interactions.



The conference was funded by a grant awarded to **Elisheva Baumgarten** (HUJI) and **Micha Perry** (University of Haifa) by the **Fund for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Israel** at the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

## Workshop

### MiQua & Beyond the Elite

As part of preparations for the opening of MiQua, the archaeological museum in Cologne, this workshop, held on December 2-4, 2019, brought the MiQua team and various scholars to Mount Scopus in Jerusalem where we discussed the intersection of material and textual sources and considered a variety of approaches to presenting Jewish-Christian relations in the medieval city to modern museumgoers. **Thomas Otten** (MiQua) provided a survey of the archaeological sources of Jewish life in Cologne, followed by a discussion



of local Jewish ritual baths (mikvaot) led by **Neta Bodner** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI). **Tanja Potthoff** (MiQua) presented the topography of the medieval Jewish quarter in Cologne and the shared Jewish-Christian spaces, after which **Christiane Twiehaus**

(MiQua) introduced sources on the people in and of the medieval Jewish quarter **Malin Drees** (MiQua) and **Maximilian Holfelder** (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt)'s presentation of their findings of slate fragments from Cologne was followed first by a discussion on the Cologne Jewish liturgy by **Elisabeth Hollender** (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt), and then by a consideration of lay leadership in the local medieval Jewish community by **Ephraim Shoham-Steiner** (Ben-Gurion University). The workshop concluded with a round table discussion led by **Elisheva**

**Baumgarten** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI), **Ido Noy** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI), and **Christiane Twiehaus** (MiQua). We look forward to future collaborations and the forthcoming opening of this promising museum.

## Testimonies from our Short Term Guests

### Annika Funke, University of Trier

My visit to the Beyond the Elite research group in December 2019, offered me the opportunity to round off old projects and develop new ideas for the next stage of my academic career. I had the opportunity to present my master's thesis on the late medieval court book of Hofheim am Taunus, a small town in Hesse, at numerous productive events. My research, originally meant to examine the history of Jewish settlement, opened up additional perspectives on small town life and resulted in a study of local economic and legal activities.

I presented my findings at the graduate workshop as part of the Money Matters conference, focusing on aspects of Jewish mobility, court practices, and occupations. Following my visit, I then returned to the University of Trier in January to begin my doctorate on the late medieval Jewish communities of Alsace and Wetterau, invigorated with new energy and ideas.

### Maximilian Holfelder, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt

I am currently part of a research project headed by Professor Elisabeth Hollender that is analyzing

Hebrew and German inscriptions found on medieval slate fragments and preparing them for publication. The fragments were discovered during the excavation of Cologne's medieval Jewish quarter, which was destroyed in 1349. I am working on one group of fragments in particular, which contain lists of names, written in Hebrew letters, documenting financial activities that took place within Cologne's Jewish community. Providing insight into the structure of everyday economic transactions among Jewish individuals, these sources also allow for the identification of many members of Cologne's Jewish community and provide additional information on language and names.

Although a part of the Beyond the Elite team for only three weeks, during which time I attended the workshop with MiQua and the Money Matters conference, I found the experience to be extremely valuable. Discussing my work with members of the research group helped me refine my methodological approach and provided an opportunity to reevaluate my assumptions about my materials. I am deeply grateful for the new perspectives I gained from this visit.

### Group Publication

#### Chidushim: Studies in the History of German and Central European Jewry, Vol 21

The latest issue (Vol. 21, 2019) of **Chidushim: Studies in the History of German and Central European Jewry** published by the Leo Baeck Institute of Jerusalem, was dedicated to new studies conducted by members of our research group. Edited by **Elisheva Baumgarten** and **Doron Avraham** of the Leo Baeck Institute, the volume consists of an introduction by Baumgarten and articles by **Tzafir Barzilay**, **Ido Noy**, **Neta Bodner** and **Ariella Lehmann**, and **Eyal Levinson**. All four articles focus on various aspects of Jewish daily life in German speaking lands during the High and Late Middle Ages. The studies shed light on the formation of gendered identities, ritual immersions, suspicions of well poisonings, and conceptions of status and chastity. They demonstrate, as **Doron Avraham** explains in the introduction to the volume, that “often the familiar, the everyday, and the routine gives us new insights, no less than examining the implications of constitutive historical moves.” Included in this volume are five reviews of recently published books on medieval and early modern Jewish daily life, written by **Aviya Doron**, **Nureet Dermer**, **Miri Fenton**, **Adi Namia-Cohen**, and **Etele Kalaora**.

The publication was celebrated with an evening at the Leo Baeck Institute featuring a guest lecture by Professor **Michael Brocke** and presentations by the team members who wrote the articles that appear in the journal.

### Evening in Honor of Professor Michael Toch

In November 2019, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's History Department and the Beyond the Elite research project celebrated the publication of the Hebrew translation of Professor **Michael Toch's** book *The Economic History of European Jews: Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages*.

Four lecturers: **Nureet Dermer** (Beyond the Elite, HUJI), **Dr. Debra Kaplan** (Bar Ilan University),



### Seminar Guests

In June 2019, Professor **Adam Kosto** from Columbia University taught two seminars on documentary practices in medieval Catalonia. The first addressed material culture, examining a series of eleventh century Catalonian wills. In the second seminar a complaint from an ecclesiastical institution to a local count concerning abuses committed against its properties was translated and then discussed. Professor Kosto explored possible ways of reconstructing the social and economic history of non-elite people by paying attention to the snippets of material and social history preserved in documents like these. It concluded with a productive discussion on the challenges of working with archival material when writing social history. We are very grateful to Professor Kosto who has remained in close contact with our team ever since his visit.



Michael Brocke and Elisheva Baumgarten

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Professor **Michael Brocke** from the Steinheim Institut, Duisburg-Essen visited our ERC research group. Professor Brocke, a renowned specialist of medieval Hebrew epitaphs, heads the Salomon Steinheim Institute's EPIDAT project, which is editing all extant Hebrew epitaphs from Germany from the Middle Ages up to the modern period. Over lunch Professor Brocke told us about his career path and showed some of the materials he is currently working on. Later that day he delivered the keynote lecture at a celebration in honor of the publication of the latest issue of the journal *Chidushim* that featured the work of the group. During the lecture he spoke about the Hebrew epitaphs of Alexander von Wimpfen and Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg.

Professor **Israel Yuval** (HUJI), and Professor **Michael Toch** (HUJI) spoke on topics ranging from the Jews in local and regional economies during the Middle Ages and Early Modern era to environmental aspects of medieval economic history.