



Beyond the Elite

Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

Newsletter #9, Summer 2022

Dear Friends,

This has been a busy term, with the publication of books by three group members and many other projects underway. It was also our last full semester as part of the European Research Council framework. We tried to make the most of our time together, hosting local and international scholars and undertaking a trip to Paris. Details can be found below.

An exciting summer awaits us. We will be presenting in five sessions at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, where we will also be providing guided tours to our exhibit and then holding a workshop in September and more. We look forward to sharing details of our upcoming events in our next and final installment.

Spotlight On



Susanne Weigand

Visiting PhD Candidate

(Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)

In my dissertation, I explore the everyday socio-economic interactions of Jews and Christians in late medieval Regensburg. My research is based on the analysis of 5 municipal court books that roughly span the 65 years leading up to the expulsion of the Jewish community in 1519. The abundance of singular entries in the municipal court records enables me to analyze social networks within the medieval city as well as examine daily economic behavior of its various inhabitants and

give a panoramic view of non-elite Regensburg.

I am very grateful to have had the pleasure to join the *Beyond the Elite* team for an extended period of time from October 2021 to September 2022 and to present my research within that framework. The bi-weekly meetings have fostered a wonderful opportunity for academic exchange, and I received useful feedback and new directions that will undoubtedly enrich my work moving forward. I have been lucky to enjoy the group's various activities: daily discussions, workshops and conferences, and meetings with exceptional international researchers in an intimate setting. I would like to thank Elisheva Baumgarten and the entire *Beyond the Elite* team for their warm welcome.



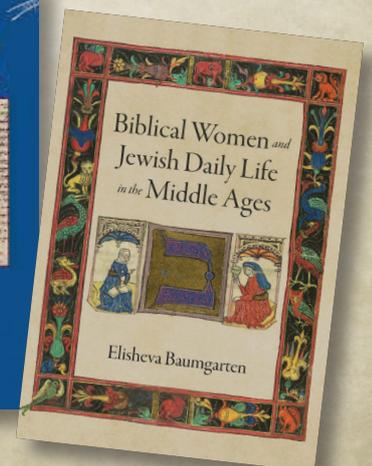
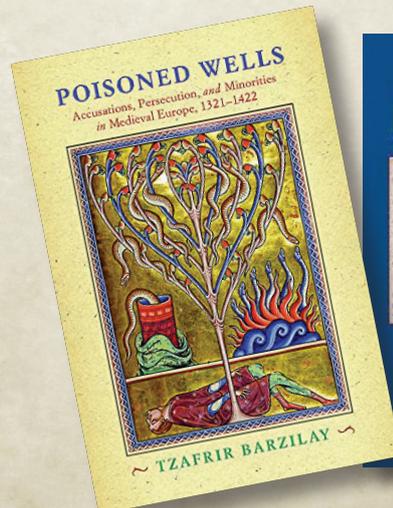
Publications

Three new books were published this spring by members of our team, Tzafir Barzilay, Eyal Levinson, and Elisheva Baumgarten.

Grants & Awards

Congratulations to our *Beyond the Elite* team member!

Hannah Teddy Schachter was awarded the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Research Award of Brandeis University (USA), which recognizes work that will make an important contribution to the field of Jewish Women's and Gender Studies.



Beyond the Elite Presentations Around the World

Team members have continued to present at conferences and colloquiums and speak publicly in Israel, Europe, and the United States. **Aviya Doron** presented her work on relational databases during The Third Annual Winter School for Digital Humanities at the Hebrew University. **Miri Fenton** delivered a talk entitled “Community and Identity in Medieval Europe: Interpreting Talmudic Texts for Everyday Life” to UK Rabbinics Network (March, 2022). **Aviya Doron** and **Nureet Dermer** each presented at the Colloquium for Medieval History, headed by **Eva Haverkamp**, **Julia Burkhardt**, and **Knut Görich**, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Aviya presented her lecture entitled: “Objects of Trust? The Materiality of Pawns in Jewish-Christian Exchange.” Nureet’s topic was “Urban Space and Social Perceptions - Jewish Settlements in 14th Century Paris.” Together with **Ryan Low** (Harvard University), Aviya organized a session at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds on Information and Trust between Jews and Christians. The four-paper session was well-attended and included papers by the organizers **Birgit Wiedl** and **Nureet Dermer**.

Hannah Teddy Schachter was guest lecturer at the University of Cologne, in a seminar of **Andreas Lehnertz** entitled “Jüdisch-christliche Beziehungen im mittelalterlichen Reich” in the Medieval History Department. **Eyal Levinson** presented his work as part of the same seminar and also gave a

lecture in a class taught by **Oded Zinger** at HUJI. Eyal presented a paper at the 45th Annual Conference of the Historical Society of Israel: “And the Young Men Played With Us: Youth, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Ashkenaz.” **Annika Funke** presented her work about Jewish political agency in the face of condominium power struggles at the international workshop “Disruption and Resilience in Later Medieval Ashkenaz” in Trier.

Elisheva Baumgarten participated in the Medieval Academy of America’s annual meeting, delivering a talk in a session entitled “Formidable Mothers.” She also delivered the Meyerhoff Lecture at the University of Pennsylvania, entitled: “Legal Knowledge and Everyday Practice in Medieval Ashkenaz” and was a guest at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies. From Philadelphia, Elisheva travelled to Chicago, where she delivered the Shapiro Annual lecture and participated in the Perelmuter Conference at Catholic Theological Union. In March, she also lectured online at Charles University in Prague, presenting our exhibit “*In and Out, Between and Beyond*.” In addition, she spoke at the local Ofek school for gifted children and at Nofei Yerushalayim, a retirement residence in Jerusalem, on behalf of the University.



Our Activities this Term

February 2022

Online meeting with Tamar

Menashe (University of Pennsylvania) We held an online meeting with **Tamar Menashe** who told us about her current work on archives of the Imperial Court of the Holy Roman Empire during the 15th century and we discussed some of the difficulties and joys of working with these materials and studying courts. It was a fascinating and productive meeting, and we look forward to Tamar’s forthcoming publications.



Group Hike

Our ambitious plan to visit the Benedictine Monastery in Abu Gosh and tour with the local monks was thwarted when all the monks came down with COVID-19 during the days before our visit. Instead, we decided to enjoy some Israeli hiking, which was capped by a delicious lunch in Beit Nekofa.

April 2022

Two-Day Workshop with

Rowan Dorin (Stanford University)

We held a fascinating two-part

seminar with **Rowan Dorin** entitled “Demystifying Medieval Law: A Hands-on Introduction to the Romano-Canonical Tradition.” During the first seminar, Rowan provided an overview of the development of Roman and Canon law during the high Middle Ages. We encountered the full range of medieval legal texts and were taught how to research and cross-reference legal citations in both print and online editions of medieval texts. We also discussed how legal knowledge was structured during this period, and how different sorts of law were practiced in parallel. During the second semi-

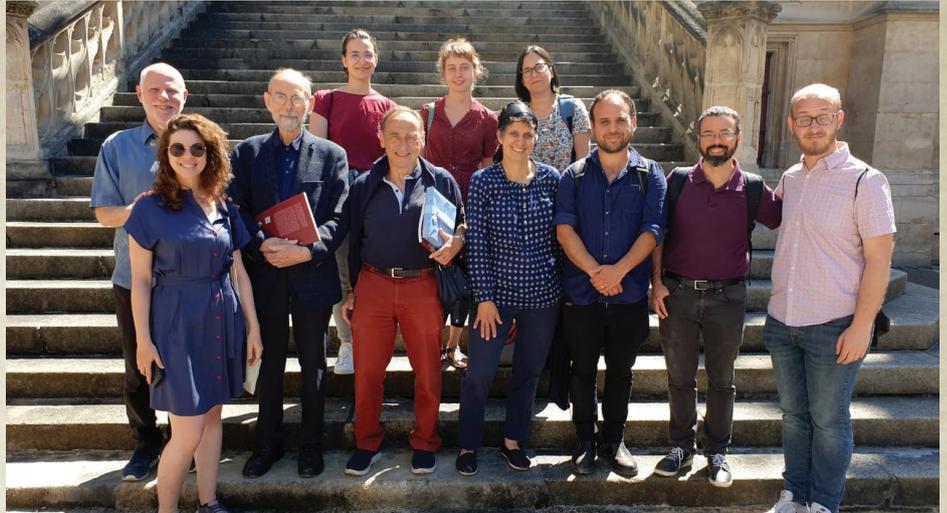


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nar, we put our newly acquired skills to the test. Breaking up into small groups, we decoded the citations in a medieval commentary written by a 14th century Bolognese lawyer.

The seminar introduced our research team and other graduate students who joined from across the country to the usually closed world of medieval legal texts and their cross-referencing systems.



Book Evening in Honor of *Poisoned Wells*

On April 25, 2022, the *Beyond the Elite* team co-hosted an evening in honor of the

publication of **Tzafir Barzilay's** new book *Poisoned Wells: Accusations, Persecutions and Minorities in Medieval Europe 1321-1422* (University of Pennsylvania Press) together with the Haifa Center for Mediterranean History (University of Haifa). The three speakers at the event were, **Rowan Dorin** (Stanford University), **Naama Cohen-Hanegbi** (Tel Aviv University), and **Lee Mordechai** (HUJI). All three highlighted different aspects of the book and detailed the ways Barzilay's book sheds new and valuable light on this period in the lives of members of minority groups - lepers, Jews, Muslims, paupers, and beggars - accused of spreading the plague.

May 2022

In May our research group embarked on our long-awaited and repeatedly postponed trip to Paris.

Day 1

Our journey through medieval Paris started on Sunday, with a picnic under Tour Saint-Jacques, the remains of a former 16th century church. Together with He-

brew University's **Ayelet Even-Ezra**, who is spending the current academic year in Paris, we discovered the cityscape through the lens of a medievalist, visiting the Church of Saint-Séverin and the former Cistercian college, Collège des Bernardins. We ended the day in the basements of the Louvre, where we examined Paris' appearance, first as King Philip Augustus's fortress in the 13th century, then as a royal residence about a hundred years later, and eventually as the palace we know today. In the Louvre's medieval collection, we saw extraordinary examples of ecclesiastic objects such as reliquaries, icons, and statuettes with rich iconographic programs.

Day 2

Our second day in Paris began at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne) where we participated in **Judith Olszowy-Schlanger's** seminar. Our group members and the students in the seminar presented their research. From there we walked across the Seine to the magnificent Richelieu Library, where **Laurent Hélicher**, chief curator of the Oriental manuscripts division, guided us through the library and allowed us to examine beautifully decorated Hebrew manuscripts relating to the re-

search of our group members.

We spent the last part of our day at the German Historical Institute where we met our colleague **Claire Soussen** and some of the institute's postdocs and discussed our shared research interests.

Day 3

On the third day of our visit, we traveled to Rouen to visit the Maison Sublime, one of France's most ancient Jewish monuments, currently situated underneath the Palais de Justice. We were accompanied by **Jacques Klein** and **Henry Decaëns** (University of Rouen). We listened to a detailed description of the process of excavations held in the area in the 1970s and an explanation of the historical attempts to restore the Jewish quarter in Rouen, based on the archaeological findings and other historical evidence. We visited the marvelous remains and inspected the Hebrew engravings still visible on the walls of what scholars believe to have been the medieval synagogue. We then visited the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Rouen and the medieval marketplace (Place du Vieux-Marché) before returning to Paris.

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Day 4

The fourth day of our trip opened with a visit to the CNRS campus, where we were greeted by **Judith Kogel**. Kogel is the director of research at the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes. We toured the offices in the premises, where several researchers exposed us to their field of work, both in terms of content and methodology. It was edifying to get a sense of both the similarities and differences between our approaches and theirs and to gain familiarity with the valuable databases being worked on in medieval studies. We then visited the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (MAJH), where we were fortunate to be personally guided through the exhibitions by the museum director, **Paul Salmona**. Salmona gave us an especially exciting presentation of the recent archeological discoveries regarding the history of Jews in France in late antique and early medieval times. The day ended with a visit to the Musée Carnavalet, which enabled us to broaden our historical perspective regarding the general history of the city of Paris and see the collection of medieval Hebrew tombstones.

Day 5

On our final day together in France, we visited the 15th century building Tour de Jean sans Peur [Tower of John the Fearless], which stands among the highest medieval civil towers visible in Paris today. **Albert Kohn** guided us through this historic monument, which contains 5 levels of living quarters and a spiral staircase with ornate architectural elements. We

explored this princely medieval home while reading different sources relevant to our group's research and reflecting on how medieval people engaged with different domestic issues: light and heating, beds and privacy, latrines and hygiene, the quarters of servants vs. masters. We then visited the newly opened Musée de Cluny. To conclude our wonderful trip, we then gathered in a park to debrief about our impressions. We discussed our experiences of coming to one central geographic site of the world we study, and yet still feeling a world away.



We also discussed the benefits of having explored Paris together and the possibilities for sharing the fruits of these meaningful days in future collaborative projects. We were grateful to be joined by colleagues in each of the places we visited as well as by **Manon Banoun** (Paris I) and **Ryan Low** (Harvard University).

June 2022

Sarina Kuersteiner (University of Haifa)

During the first week of June, the group had the pleasure of hosting **Sarina Kuersteiner**, post-doctoral researcher at the Haifa Center for Mediterranean His-

tory and incoming Assistant Professor at Union College (Schenectady, NY). Sarina discussed her forthcoming book on the lives and characteristics of notaries in the medieval urban Mediterranean. She argued that while notaries were professional writers of contracts, court records, administrative documents, and other official acts, the contractual text is far from the only content we find in their notarial registers. One finds poems, prayers, images, and sketches as well. Sarina presented her research on the interplay between the legal texts and surrounding marginalia in notarial sources, and asked what it can teach us about the mindset of medieval notaries.

Sara McDougall (John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY)

On June 27th, we hosted **Sara McDougall**, our final guest of the 2021-22 academic year. Sara presented her rich and diverse perspectives, whose range reflected subjects that all members of the group could closely relate to from their own research interests. We learned about her upcoming book project, and she shared with us the challenges, as well as promise, of writing a biography of a medieval woman. Her engaging talk, as well as the personal conversations with each of the group members that touched upon the intersection of law, gender, and society, supplied us with much food for thought into the summer months.

For more information, to learn about upcoming events and to see the [online exhibition](#) and [catalogue](#), visit our website: beyond-the-elite.huji.ac.il

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