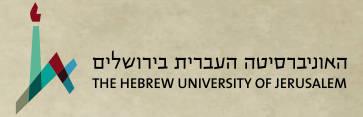




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# Beyond the Elite

## Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

Newsletter #3, Summer 2019

We are delighted to present the third issue of our newsletter describing some of the highlights of our recent activities and achievements.

### Spotlight On:

#### Etelle Kalaora

Widows have a noticeable presence in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century responsa literature, particularly in cases discussing financial disputes between them, family members, and others within their community. Etelle's M.A. thesis examines the social and financial aspects of the lives of these women after the death of their husbands in medieval Ashkenaz, and the possibilities and struggles that loomed large in their daily existence. For Etelle, the opportunity to work with the different team members, particularly Eyal Levinson, proved invaluable to her work as she expanded her methodological perspectives and analyzed other dimensions of the responsa literature, such as the space in which widows lived.

#### Adi Namia-Cohen

Food and eating play an important role in every culture, both as sustenance as well as the symbolic meanings that tend to accompany almost every dish. Adi's M.A. thesis explores the food culture of Jews in medieval Ashkenaz, examining food procurement and preparation; ritual uses of food in life-cycle ceremonies; and eating habits and table manners in Jewish meals. Her work uses food as a prism through which to understand the realities of Jewish-Christian co-existence. Having successfully concluded her master's program, Adi is moving on to her doctoral project on Jewish food in communities under Islam, which will be based on an in-depth exploration of Geniza materials. She will be joining the group "Setting Tables: Eating, Social Boundaries, and Intercultural Transfers" at the Mandel Scholion Research Center of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she will be working under

the direction of Miriam Frenkel. In addition to her research, Adi has also been responsible for coordinating the team's languages learning groups and for collecting the team's wish list for guest-lecturers and conferences, many of which have already come to fruition.

#### Dr. Tzafir Barzilay

In medieval Europe, as in all pre-modern societies, water played a major role in everyday life. It was used for cooking, cleaning, bathing, and of course, drinking, as well as for different industries. Water was also at the heart of many religious rituals, such as Christian baptism and Jewish ritual immersion. Tzafir's research focuses on the idea that there were deep connections between the use of water in these two spheres, everyday life and religious life. It explores the impact of environmental changes, such as the growing urbanization of the continent on the way people drew and used water. His study uses the lens of water to try to bridge some of the gaps between environmental history and cultural history, and to better understand the ideas and practical considerations of non-elite Europeans.



Second Nürnberg Haggadah  
A Jew drawing water from an urban fountain.  
David Sofer Collection London, f. 1v, a detail.

Tzafir completed his dissertation at Columbia University in New York three years ago, and the ERC group is his first academic home in Israel. He states: "The

### Grants & Awards

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

- **Adi Namia Cohen** was awarded the Meir Hefetz Memorial Excellence Scholarship for M.A. students and was accepted as a PhD candidate (for Fall 2019) to the Mandel Scholion research group "Setting Tables"
- **Ariella Lehmann's** graduate thesis was awarded the Erich Kulka Prize for the best thesis in Jewish History
- **Aviya Doron** won a doctoral fellowship from the Leo Baeck Fellowship Program for the academic year 2019-2020
- **Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten** was appointed (starting Fall 2019) head of the Mandel Scholion Research Center for Jewish Studies and the Humanities
- **Miri Fenton** was awarded the Leo Baeck (Jerusalem) dissertation prize for 2018
- **Dr. Eyal Levinson** was awarded a travel grant by Imago: The Israeli Association for Visual Culture of the Middle Ages
- **Dr. Tzafir Barzilay** was awarded a Kreitman Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Ben Gurion University of the Negev

experience of working collaboratively with the members of the team, particularly Professor Baumgarten, has proven extraordinarily enriching, enabling me to extend my research and writing skills, gain new theoretical approaches to the study of social history, and expand my knowledge of medieval Jewish culture, resulting in work that has become increasingly interdisciplinary."



## Conferences

### Considering Things: Jewish Material Culture in Context

This conference (November 7-8, 2018), featured experts from the United States, Germany, and Israel. **Paola Tartakoff** (Rutgers University) opened with her lecture “Devotional Objects, Places of Worship, and Religious Garb in Late Medieval Martyrological Narratives.” The following morning **Sarah-Grace Heller** (Ohio State University) talked about “The Clothing Experience of Bourgeois and menz gens in French Towns in the Long 13<sup>th</sup> Century.” **Elisheva Baumgarten** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) presented a paper on “Black and White Clothing: Internal and External Messages in Medieval Jewish Communities,” and **David Shyovitz** (Northwestern University) spoke about “Some Jews said this Fish was a Jewish Fish’: Animality and Materiality in a Medieval Interreligious Encounter.” The conference concluded with a presentation by **Tanja Potthoff**, curator of archaeology at MiQua - the soon to be opened Jewish museum in Cologne, Germany, who presented fascinating objects found in the excavations of the medieval Jewish quarter in Cologne. The conference provoked exciting discussions and raised interesting questions regarding directions for future research.

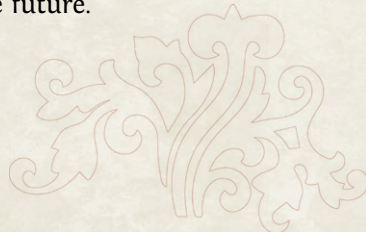


### Guests

Thanks to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s new initiative to bring scholars from abroad to teach intensive courses. We hosted **Elisabeth Hollender** (Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main) this past May. Hollender taught a seminar on Jewish Liturgy in Medieval Ashkenaz, which deepened our understanding of medieval prayers, piyutim and their commentaries. We concluded the year with a two-day seminar led by **Adam Kosto** (Columbia University) on medieval Latin documentary practice.

### Shabbat in Medieval Ashkenaz

We dedicated this conference (January 16, 2019) to the celebration of Shabbat in medieval Ashkenaz. The first session of the conference touched upon the intersection of the home and the city in relation to Shabbat. **Ariella Lehmann** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) presented her work on preparations for Shabbat, and the ways in which Jews and Christian came into contact as a result. **Albert Kohn** (Cambridge University) spoke about the zmirot sung on Shabbat, and the development of Shabbat liturgy. In the second session, **Chana Shacham-Rosby** (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) discussed the figure of the prophet Elijah and his association with the end of Shabbat. **Israel Yuval** (Hebrew University) concluded the conference examining mutual Jewish-Christian understandings and practices related to the holy day as a day of rest. This was our first conference related to the yearly cycle, a topic we hope to further explore in the future.



Our thanks go to the additional scholars we hosted this year, including **Christoph Cluse** (Trier University), **Oren Roman** (Ben Gurion University), **Anna Gutgarts** (Haifa University), **Jeremy Cohen** (Tel Aviv University), **Maria Stürzebecher** (Erfurt, Jewish Museum), **Eva Haverkamp** (Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich), **Sarah Hamilton** (University of Exeter), and **Pinchas Roth** (Bar Ilan University).

### Medieval Stories, Medieval People: Jewish Narratives in Context

Held on April 3, 2019, this conference explored the use of stories in our research, with a focus on Jewish-Christian comparison. **Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu** (CNRS and EHESS) spoke about masses said for the dead on Monday mornings and compared them to a similar Jewish practice on Saturday nights. **Caroline Gruenbaum**, (NYU), discussed elements of Hebrew stories that suggest Jews read the vernacular and copied from it, rather than just hearing the stories. **Rella Kushelevsky** (Bar Ilan University) presented different approaches to reading stories through the lenses of poetics, literature, and folklore, while **Tovi Bibring** (Bar Ilan University) spoke about anti-Christian rhetoric in Berakhiah Nakdan’s Fables.



Credit: Maria Stürzebecher  
TLDA no 5100/98, 5099/98

### Exhibition

As part of the conference, we held an exhibition consisting of a series of posters about medieval Erfurt, loaned to us by the Jewish Museum in Erfurt. The exhibition included recent findings concerning the enamel illuminations on the base of two double cups that tell two stories from Aesop’s Fables. The exhibit provided a glimpse into the contexts in which medieval Jews lived and told their stories. We thank **Maria Stürzebecher** for facilitating the loan and for her vast expertise.

