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$\text{changes in } M) \left( \left[ \text{stays} \right]^{\mu, g} \left( \left[ \text{the-same}_y \right]^{\mu, g} \right) \left( \left[ \text{it}_x \right]^{\mu, g} \right) \right)$

$\left( \left[ \lambda f_{\text{set}} \cdot \lambda z_e : \exists t (t < s^* \ \& \ t \leq t_r \ \& \ f(z) = 1 \right) \right)$

$\left( \exists t (t < s^* \ \& \ t \leq t_r \ \& \ x \text{ is the } y\text{-same in } M \text{ at } t) \right)$

17  $\left( \forall x_e (x \text{ is a thing in } M \rightarrow x \text{ changes in } M) \right) \left( \exists t (t < s^* \ \& \ t \leq t_r \ \& \ x \text{ is the } y\text{-same in } M \text{ at } t) \right)$

Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center  
in the Humanities and Jewish Studies

## Annual Report 2020

General Editor: Yana Abramovich-Mahlin

Graphic Design: Stephanie & Ruti Design

**Cover:** Design of the Historical Linguistics and Formal Semantics Research Group.

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# From our Academic Head

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It is with great pleasure that I reflect on my first year as academic director of Mandel Scholion. By all accounts it was an unusual year, especially as far as our second term was concerned, as we, along with the entire world, contended with COVID-19. Nonetheless, we can also sum up the period as one in which the collegial environment that has always characterized Mandel Scholion, one of academic creativity and cooperation, has continued to flourish.

The first term was a busy one. Our first pan-Scholion activity was a wonderful trip to the north led by the **"In Someone Else's Shoes"** group, which studies empathy. We visited a jail, a pre-army program, and the city of Nazareth, as well as many sites within and around the urban center. All the while, group members from diverse disciplines led us in a fascinating exploration of the

potential and the limits of various types of empathy. It was also an extraordinary opportunity for informal cross-pollination among all the groups and all the postdoctoral fellows. Details of the trip can be found in this newsletter.

The winter progressed, with each group enjoying its weekly seminars and all of us learning from each other as part of our monthly meetings. We had the pleasure of hearing all three of this year's first-year Mandel fellows, Dr. Omer Michaelis, Dr. Iyas Nasser and Dr. Guy Ron-Gilboa present their work. January, as always, was marked by a reception and interviews for seven finalists who competed for the two Mandel fellowships (2020-2023). We are proud to announce they were awarded to Dr. Hadar Feldman Samet and Dr. Michael Lukin. As always, competition for these fellowships was intense, and the recipients were chosen from a pool of more than 100 applicants who went through a rigorous assessment process. We look forward to having Hadar and Michael with us in the coming years.

The academic committee also chose a new research group for 2021-2024: **"The Evolution of Attention in Modern and Contemporary Culture: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Making of the Human"** (Profs. Ofer Ashkenazi, Ayelet Landau, Yael Levin and Gal Ventura). This was a difficult process, as a number of excellent proposals were submitted. We look forward to this group joining us in fall 2021. I want to take this opportunity to thank our academic committee members for all of their hard work and dedication. In particular, I wish to thank Profs. Anna Belfer-Cohen, and Carl Posy, who have served on the committee for most of the past decade and are now rotating off.

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This winter, we also helped a number of our Mandel fellows prepare for job talks. We are pleased to congratulate Dr. Omer Michaelis, who this fall will be joining the faculty of Tel Aviv University, Department of Jewish Culture, and Dr. Carla Baricz, who has left to assume a position as a subject librarian for English and Comparative Literature at Yale University. Omer and Carla join the many Mandel fellows who have received academic positions. Out of 38 fellows who have finished their tenure at Scholion, 31 have academic tenure-track positions in Israel and abroad (over 80%). We wish our current Mandel fellows much luck as they seek tenure-track positions for themselves and progress to the next stage of their academic careers.

In March, as the second semester was about to begin, Israel entered lockdown due to COVID-19. Despite not convening on campus, all three of our research groups and the Mandel fellows continued meeting regularly and research progressed as planned, on Zoom. We also held our monthly pan-Scholion meetings. Group members frequently shared how much they enjoyed these weekly and monthly meetings. Once we were allowed to return to campus, our offices filled up and we were all pleased to be back, following the guidelines for social distancing. We are hopeful that meeting in person will be permitted soon and feel confident, after this past spring, that we will be able to sustain our activities – whether online or in person.

As I write these lines, we are preparing to bid farewell to our group on “**Historical Linguistics and Formal Semantics**” and to welcome our new group of scholars studying historiography, “**Past and Past Perfect.**” As a

newcomer to Mandel Scholion, I feel that I have been blessed with a tremendous privilege to learn from all the members of our center and expand my horizons in so many directions. It is inspirational to see how scholars from different disciplines can work and think together, teaching each other and generating new questions for future study.

I conclude by thanking Prof. Danny Schwartz and the Mandel Building staff and our devoted staff at Mandel Scholion, led by Ms. Yana Mahlin-Abramovich. It is thanks to them that we have been able to conduct all of our activities and maintain them so well during these unusual circumstances. I also extend our appreciation and gratitude to the Mandel Foundation for their support and guidance. We are privileged to have their trust and support for our academic endeavors, and I am thankful for their continued advice and concern throughout the year.



Elisheva Baumgarten

# From our Executive Director

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I am excited to conclude my first year with Mandel Scholion as Executive Director. In my previous position, I served as Coordinator for MA Students at the School of Public Policy. This year at Mandel Scholion allowed me to broaden my horizons and be exposed to a new, exciting academic environment. In January, I coordinated the

Mandel Scholion Academic Committee, during which two new Mandel fellows were awarded post-doctoral scholarships. This was an excellent opportunity to immerse myself in all administrative aspects of the program in order to ensure the committee's success. Over this past year, the University introduced a new financial system. The transition to the new system posed administrative and technical challenges, which we overcame, ensuring that all bureaucracy was in place and that salaries were paid on time. In addition, I oversaw the recruitment process for several new staff members. The process of interviewing and integrating our new staff members within the existing team has been a wonderful experience for me, an opportunity to take an active role in building the team and its vision.

Every day at Scholion, I have the pleasure of learning and growing professionally and socially. I especially enjoy working with each group's research coordinator and wish to express my gratitude to them and to my assistant, Ms. Hila Dominstein. I look forward to continuing to be part of the Mandel Scholion staff community.

Yana Mahlin-Abramovich

This Past Year at Scholion  
2019-2020

# Final Year of the "Historical Linguistics and Formal Semantics" Research Group (2017-2020)

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**Prof. Elitzur Bar-Asher Siegal, Prof. Nora Boneh, Prof. Eitan Grossman, Dr. Aynat Rubinstein, Noa Bassel, Kevin Grasso, Omri Amraz, Shira Tal, Timna Raz**

This was our third and final year as a research group at Mandel Scholion. During our first year, we investigated foundational questions and methodologies in the two fields that we seek to integrate in our research: historical linguistics and formal semantics. An important part of this inquiry involved the review of previous attempts to bridge the two subdisciplines within linguistics. In the second year, we started to work on our own projects, both existing and new ones; most of the year was dedicated to presentations of members from our group. This final year was dedicated to preparing the group's concluding conference, originally scheduled for March 2020, now postponed to November 2020.

The conference aims to present the state of the art in the study of historical linguistics and formal linguistics, and at the same time to explore interfaces between historical linguistics and subfields such as experimental linguistics and computational linguistics. Its rich program presents cutting-edge research at the forefront of a field that is gaining momentum in linguistics today. Our concluding conference is scheduled to host the 5th edition of the international conference of this growing community (Formal Diachronic Semantics, FoDS5).

In order to prepare for the conference and ensure that we host a truly interdisciplinary event, the weekly meetings of the first semester were dedicated to reading work by the invited speakers.

As the conference did not take place at the beginning of the second semester, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we dedicated the first half of the semester to Zoom presentations of the talks that the students prepared for the conference.

**Noa Bassel** discussed the diachronic source of exempt anaphors.

**Kevin Grasso** discussed the stative to perfective to perfect to past path in Semitic.

**Omri Amiraz** presented joint work with Eitan Grossman asking why new future markers are often banned from negative contexts.

**Shira Tal** presented joint work with Kenny Smith, Jennifer Culbertson, Eitan Grossman and Inbal Arnon, showing an experimental study considering the impact of information structure on the emergence of differential object marking.

The second half of the semester was conducted again as a reading group, where the readings led to synthesizing and concluding discussions about the work of the group.

# The 2019/2020 Activities of "In Someone Else's Shoes – An Interdisciplinary Research Group for the Study of Empathy in History, Society, and Culture" (2018-2021)

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**Prof. Amos Goldberg, Prof. Ariel Knafo, Prof. Galit Noga-Banai, Prof. Lilah Sagiv, Yonatan Harel, Ofek Kehila, Shai Satran, Tal Orlitsky, Matan Aviel**

After devoting our first year at Mandel Scholion to creating a common language and understanding of what empathy is and how we should think about it, at the beginning of the current academic year we felt ready to apply our newfound theoretical understandings of 'empathy' to a real-world examination. Our group's motivation coincided with the first major project of the year: organizing the Center's annual tour. The tour allowed us to encounter the world together beyond our comfortable workspace, and we were wholly committed to making the most of the opportunity. In planning the tour, we strove to arrange a variety of 'encounters', some intellectual, others simply human.

After much in-group deliberation, we decided to begin the two-day tour with a visit to a prison, which included meetings with both prison staff and prisoners. We were all too aware of the potential pitfalls and inherent ethical problematics of "visiting" a prison and its inhabitants. Still, we felt that the visit would enable us to examine our subject in important ways. The visit itself was a powerful experience, not always easy and definitely not pleasant, but important nonetheless. We continued to meetings with a joint Arab/Jewish pre-military academy, and with a Palestinian artist and activist in Nazareth. We also visited Christian sites in the north of Israel, in which we discussed empathy in art and rituals. During the tour, we avoided lengthy academic discussions of the concept of empathy, preferring to permit a joint understanding to arise through our meetings with others. The somewhat challenging scenarios encountered throughout the tour were experienced differently by different members of the center, and allowed for a continuation of the discussions that began among us in preparation for the tour. We considered this ongoing discussion perhaps the best indication of the success of the tour as a whole.

As a group, we continued our weekly meetings, which fostered further insights into our research subject. Through seminars and activities, we developed shared understandings, moving from discussing the meaning of empathy to discussing its implications in various social contexts. Members of the group, as well as guest lecturers, presented their research, allowing us to consider the role that empathy plays in art creations, in major historical contexts, and in day-to-day interpersonal relationships. Before the end of the first semester, we managed to arrange a group excursion to Ramle and Lod, in which we considered the role of empathy starting in the past, visiting a Byzantine church that had been turned to a mosque, and ending in the present, with an illuminating meeting with the police commander of Lod.

We were looking forward to a second semester of further engagement, full of visits and visitors, encounters and excursions, but our plans met the reality of COVID-19. Once we resumed our weekly meetings, now via Zoom, we realized that the pandemic was both challenging and celebrating empathy in novel and intriguing ways. How does 'in someone else's shoes' work with social distancing? What happens to empathy when so much of our communication has moved online? We began the year looking outwards, and have unexpectedly ended it looking inwards, each at his/her own experience, and then trying to bridge the gap between the two, returning our gaze to the social upheaval around us. The pandemic has offered us an opportunity to begin to both understand and actually feel (the two components of empathy) the situation of so many 'others' who are less fortunate than ourselves. This is a work in progress, but one we look forward to continuing in our next and final year at the center.

# The 2019/2020 Activities of the "Setting Tables - Eating, Social Boundaries and Intercultural Transfers" Research Group (2019-2022)

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**Dr. Dana Kaplan, Dr. Yair Furstenberg, Prof. Nathat Wasserman, Prof. Zeev Weiss, Hadass Shambadal, Nadia Beider, Shlomi Tsemah, Adi Namia-Cohen, Dafna Israel**

This was our first year as a research group at Mandel Scholion. During this year, we laid the ground for our shared work in the years to come by delineating key issues that crosscut our shared work, by reading foundational texts and by acquainting ourselves with each other's disciplines, fields of study, and individual research projects.

During the first semester, each group member presented their work in our weekly seminar.

**Nathan Wasserman** presented his work on fasting in ancient Near Eastern pre-monotheistic religions, focusing on the hardly noticed fact that fast and fasting are totally lacking in these cultures. Nathan went on to theorize that fasting became a powerful religious tool only around the 6th century BCE. With the rise of monotheism, then, a twofold fundamental change occurred; in the concept of the Divine (as a non-eating essence) and in the formation of the human subject (as a dual entity made of an eating body and a never-eating spirit).

**Dana Kaplan** discussed her research into middle-class culinary tastes in Israel, and the advantages of cultural class analysis more broadly. After a short introduction to the discipline of cultural sociology and its critical

underpinnings, Dana presented Pierre Bourdieu's canonic sociological theory of class-based eating practices in France, and discussed the ways in which she intends to use this approach in her project on contemporary upper middle-class weddings in Israel.

**Yair Furstenberg** discussed the continuity between the social role of eating practices in purity among Second Temple Jewry and the identity discourse that characterized the early Christian community. While the early Christians explicitly rejected the kashrut prohibitions, asserting that 'all is pure to the pure,' they nevertheless embraced the very principles underlying kashrut laws and separated themselves de facto from the pagan environment through distinct eating practices.

**Zeev Weiss** presented his project at Sepphoris, followed by a description of his other fields of research in Roman and Late Antique art and architecture in the provinces of Syria-Palestine. To facilitate the group's discussions, he subsequently proposed a number of topics for consideration presenting a variety of archaeological approaches to these issues.

**Hadass Shambadal** presented her PhD thesis on *Bread Production and Consumption in Roman Period in Palestine*

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*in light of the Archaeological Remains and Rabbinic Literature*. She also presented a chapter from her MA thesis on the *dut*, an underground food storage facility mentioned in Rabbinic literature, for which she offered an archaeological identification.

**Nadia Beider** presented the role of both eating and abstinence practices in the construction and maintenance of social boundaries amongst various social groupings, including those based on class and religion, as well as political identity. Nadia discussed her plan to analyze the relationship between eating habits and identities in contemporary Israeli society.

**Shlomi Tsemach** discussed collective eating prohibitions as well as personal eating-related oaths in the Talmudic era. Comparing the terminology used in both cases, Shlomi suggested that both types of restrictions not only maintain social boundaries but also assimilate individuals into communal cultural norms.

**Adi Namia-Cohen** presented her proposed PhD research on *Food and Eating Culture amongst Jews of the Cairo Genizah society (969-1250)*. She also discussed a chapter from her MA thesis on the condemning of gluttony among Ashkenazi Jews in rabbinic moral and halakhic literature of the early thirteenth century.

The second semester was devoted to canonical discussions and major texts that are important for

our group's work. We further advanced our mutual interests and started developing small-scale intergroup collaborations. We started the semester by surveying the field of food studies in Israel (led by Dana and Yair). We then discussed canonical sociological writings by Simmel and Elias on eating practices (Adi, Nadia, and Dana). Zeev led our discussion on Chapter 3 of Petronius Arbiter's *Satyricon*, *The Dinner with Trimalchio* (*Cena Trimalchionis*). The presentation focused on the banquet at Trimalchio's home. Various details were examined in light of archaeological finds concerning table customs in the cities that were destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the Bay of Naples in 79 CE. **Michael Sadeh** presented his MA research on *Writing Food in Modern Hebrew Literature*. Nathan and Shlomi addressed the meaning of eating and non-eating in both ancient Mesopotamia and during the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods. This comparative approach demonstrated that similar lines of thought underlie the social meaning of eating and refraining from eating with others, even in distant times and places. We invited two guest speakers. Professor **Paul Freedman** (Yale) was supposed to present his work on *Food and Social Status: Medieval and Modern*, but unfortunately had to cancel due to COVID-19. **Nurit Goshen**, curator of Chalcolithic and Bronze Age periods, Archaeology (The Israel Museum) discussed *The Feast as a Socio-Political Tool*.

# Mandel Fellows

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**Dr. Giddon Ticotsky, Department of Hebrew Literature (2017-2020)**

**Dr. Yosi Yisraeli, Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry (2017-2020)**

**Dr. Carla Baricz, English Department (2018-2020)**

**Dr. Omer Michaelis, Department of Jewish Thought (2019-2020)**

**Dr. Yonatan Vardi, Department of Hebrew Literature (2018-2021)**

**Dr. Iyas Nasser, Department of Arabic Language and Literature (2019-2022)**

**Dr. Guy Ron-Gilboa, Department of Arabic Language and Literature (2019-2022)**

**Four fellows left us during the summer of 2020. We wish them luck at their new jobs and fellowships!**

## Giddon Ticotsky



According to the Babylonian Talmud, "Three come unaware: The Messiah, a found object and a scorpion." When I won the Mandel scholarship three years ago, this was a find that caught me unaware, a complete surprise. To this day, I am grateful to the former

Academic Head of the Scholion Center and current Head of the Mandel School, Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz, for having decided jointly with the committee members to grant me the scholarship – one of the most precious gifts I have ever received. I shall not forget this show of trust.

The past few months brought with them a scorpion that also came unaware: the COVID-19 pandemic, which taught every one of us how nothing can be taken for granted. This stormy sea only served by way of contrast to accentuate the stability, exceptionality and generosity of an island called the Scholion Center, currently under the steadfast leadership of Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten.

And if two have already come unaware, perhaps the day of the third is not as far off as commonly thought...

My three years at the center were as fertile as they were fascinating. I had the privilege of meeting the finest

scholars in a variety of disciplines and my own – modern Hebrew literature – often leading to serendipitous collaborations. I taught dozens of students in six courses in the Departments of Hebrew Literature and General and Comparative Literature, and experienced various types of teaching: from an undergraduate introductory class of eighty students and five teaching assistants through advanced seminars for graduate students to advising an individual graduate student. At the same time, I went back to school myself, taking the Mandel School course in spoken Arabic – a great privilege which is in my view also a necessity for every native Hebrew speaker.

During these years, I took part in dozens of literary events and conference at the Hebrew University and in various cultural institutes in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. I also had the privilege of organizing two international conferences under the Center's auspices: one with my colleague Dr. Jan Kühne on the work of German-Hebrew poet, Israel Prize laureate Tuvia Rübner, attended by his widow Galila Rübner; and the other on the work of another Israel Prize laureate, poet Dahlia Ravikovitch, attended by her close friend, former Member of Knesset, Yael Dayan.

In addition, I was privileged to curate the Center's permanent exhibition, together with Hebrew University Curator Michal Mor. The exhibition was initiated by the Center's former Executive Director Keren Sagi, with

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the blessing of former Head of the Mandel School Prof. Israel J. Yuval. Entitled “Poetae Docti: Scholarship and Creative Writing,” the exhibition paints the portrait of ten former and current scholars in the Faculty of the Humanities who are also authors, to celebrate this unique combination and promote creativity and groundbreaking thought.

Thanks to this warm academic home, I have managed to make significant progress in my research on modern Hebrew literature. I have written nine articles, mostly in English, almost all on subjects I have managed to study in depth thanks to my stay and work at the Center – including on the encounter of modern Hebrew poetry with the classical cultures, on one of S.Y. Agnon’s story anthologies, and on Paul Celan’s 1969 visit to Israel. I have also edited several books grounded in extensive research, including a selection of articles by Natan Alterman (with Prof. Uri S. Cohen of Tel Aviv University), a selection of articles by Dahlia Ravikovitch, the complete collection of Lea Goldberg’s unpublished poems, and two nonfiction books by Haim Be’er.

Towards the end of my stay at the Center, I won the Levi Eshkol Prime Minister’s Creativity Prize for Hebrew Authors. The warm responses to the news by my colleagues and friends at the Center will continue to light my way, and I am grateful to them for that as well.

### Dr. Yosi Yisraeli



I am historian of Jewish and Christian thought in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. Being a Mandel Scholion postdoctoral Fellow since 2017, I have had the privilege of enjoying the generous support of the

Mandel Foundation for the past three years. During that period, I have come to learn that the benefits of this fellowship go far beyond its material resources. Embedded in the Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, it provides an environment of unique intellectual ferment. The numerous discussions at conferences, panels, field trips, seminars, coffee hours, receptions, and above all, the personal interactions with the other fellows, have been as significant for my research and development as any grant. For all of this, I owe my deepest thanks to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation, and to all the fellows, members, and faculty who bring this wellspring of knowledge and curiosity to life day after day. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to the present and previous academic heads of the Scholion Center, Professor Elisheva Baumgarten and Professor Daniel Schwartz, as well as their executive directors, Ms. Yana Abramovich and Ms. Keren Sagi, who did everything in their power to guide and assist.

This year has seen the appearance of my article, “When Christian Science and Jewish Providence Collide: Conversion and Biblical Discoveries in the 1390s.” Published in *Hispania Judaica*, the paper shows how learned Jewish converts introduced Jewish providential traditions into the political and scientific questions that preoccupied the Christian world, and how enthusiastically these ideas were received in the fifteenth century. The cases explored in this study illustrate the tangible significance of the intellectual synergy among Jews, converts, and Christians to the development of the biblical imagery and scientific theologies on the eve of the early modern period.

Another study that was completed this year and is due to be published in the *AJS Review*, “Jewish Echoes of Anti-Talmudic Literature,” aims to reconstruct elements of the conversionist ideology that developed in Jewish quarters since the thirteenth century. Although this movement had quite an impact on both Christian scholarship and

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actual conversions, it is usually portrayed in historical documents through the eyes of either its Christian patrons or its Jewish antagonists. Thus, it remains, in large part, a story behind a story, waiting to be told. This article takes a step in this direction.

Some collaborative projects, however, take longer to mature. In the winter of 2017, during the first year of my fellowship, I had the opportunity to organize, together with Prof. Claude B. Stuczynski from Bar Ilan University, an international conference under the title *Converso Paulinisms and Other Judeo-Christian Pauline Moments*. The aim of this colloquium was to reconsider how Jewish converts used the image of Paul the Apostle, and his Epistles, in order to recreate their own place in the Church. Bringing together (at Mandel Scholion) scholars who study the interpretation and reception of Paul in different historical settings – from late antiquity to the present – we learned how the readings in the Pauline corpus served (and continue to serve) as a vehicle for defining the relations between Jews and Church, thus radically changing at different historical junctures. On this occasion, I presented my own findings on how the converso crisis of the fifteenth century gave way to new historical readings of Paul as a Jewish convert and helped reshape the ideal of the Pauline conversion. The conference began a series of thoughtful conversations that have continued since and evolved in different academic venues; they are expected to yield significant fruit in the coming years.

In addition to research, Mandel fellows are required to teach two courses annually. Working with the departments of History, Jewish History, and Comparative Religion, this was a wonderful opportunity not only to gain teaching experience, but also to develop a variety of new courses on conversion, the concept of a Jewish dogma, Christian Hebraism, and the writing of Jewish history in the sixteenth century.

Next year I will be joining the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University as a Harry Starr fellow. It is an exciting new chapter that I very much look forward to. As all good things come to an end, I say my farewell with sadness but also with much satisfaction and gratitude.

### Dr. Carla Baricz



I am a scholar of European literature, and in my academic life this work has taken many — sometimes surprising — forms. In my day-to-day work, I am a specialist in early modern British literature, in particular of Shakespeare and of the

early modern London stage. More broadly, I am also a comparatist working in Italian, Romanian, and sometimes French, with a background in literary translation. Over the past two years at Mandel Scholion, I have tried to embody the full potential of the life of the mind, bringing together scholarship, translation, and creative work to sustain what the critic Northrop Frye calls “the educated imagination.”

First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to the Mandel Foundation, whose unparalleled support has made possible my intellectual pursuits, and whose establishment of the Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, and more specifically, of the Mandel Scholion Postdoctoral Program, has contributed not only to my professional development, but also to my intellectual life and to my sense of scholarly vocation. I also would like to thank Professor Daniel Schwartz and Professor Elisheva Baumgarten for their wise, generous, and always kind mentorship and support. Thank you, too, to the senior scholars, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and MA students, and to the wonderful staff at Mandel Scholion for the many conversations over coffee, for their

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collegiality, guidance, friendship, and advice. You have not only enriched my tenure in the program but have constituted it. And, as always, a very grateful thanks to Ms. Yana Abramovich, whose day-to-day help at the center has been invaluable.

I would like to say a few words about my work over the past two years at Mandel Scholion. I have been completing the manuscript of my first monograph, which began as a dissertation project that traced the evolution of serial drama from the Tudor entertainment to the seventeenth-century commercial play and sequel, considering the development of the serial form both on London's stages and in its print shops. While at the Center, the project has evolved into a cross-over trade monograph that more broadly explores the history of the sequel form in English literature, considering questions about narrative structure, particularly what Henry James calls — in the Preface to *Roderick Hudson* — the idea that “really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and [that] the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw . . . the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so.” In other words, the project has evolved into a consideration of repetition as one of the fundamental units of all literary form, approaching the question of sequel writing as a historical and narratological one.

This year, an article from the project, “Richard Jones’ *Tamburlaine*, or How to Print an Early Modern Play and Sequel,” appeared in the summer issue of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*. I have also had the opportunity to present work related to this project at the 2018 International Marlowe Society meeting in Wittenberg, Germany, where I spoke about the competing editions of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays and *Doctor Faustus*, and at the 2019 Shakespeare Association of America conference in Washington D.C., where I spoke about “Piracy and the Fashion for Turk Matter in the Drama of the 1580s and

1590s.” Drawing on the same work, I also gave a talk about failed sequels at the monthly colloquium of the Modern Language Department at Ben Gurion University and a talk on form and seriality in the work of John Milton at one of the Mandel Center conferences organized last year.

While at Mandel Scholion, I have also had the pleasure to teach a number of courses in the English Department at the Hebrew University. In the 2018-2019 academic year, I taught a year-long MA seminar entitled “Not Shakespeare: Imitation on the Early Modern Stage,” which examined how and why Shakespeare became the “soul of [his] age,” when so many of his contemporaries wrote works that explored similar issues, often in similar ways. In the 2019-2020 academic year, I then taught two undergraduate electives. The first, “Renaissance Love Lyric,” aimed to introduce students to a variety of early modern lyric forms by focusing on love poetry. The second, “Romancing Shakespeare,” was an upper-level seminar that considered tragicomedy and formal experimentation in Shakespeare’s late plays. In addition, over the past two years, I also supervised a number of seminar papers related to the courses above, as well as an MA thesis on rituals of dismemberment in the plays of Christopher Marlowe. I very much enjoyed getting to know and being able to work with the students at Hebrew University, and I look forward to supervising several other seminar papers this summer.

In addition to my primary research and my teaching obligations, while in Jerusalem I also had the pleasure of writing a number of articles, literary essays, and general audience pieces, which, while unrelated to my main research, enriched my intellectual life. I published a translation of Benjamin Fondane’s essay on Eastern European theater history and wrote what eventually became a long article on the sub-genre of the “book history” novel, popular from the 1980s onwards. I also

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wrote a series of critical essays for the literary magazine *Ploughshares*, sponsored by Emerson College, which focused on classics and contemporary novels that I consider critical for today's general readership. Articles include pieces on Tove Ditlevsen's *Copenhagen Trilogy*, on Hilary Mantel's *Mirror and the Light*, on the letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, Marina Tsvetayeva, and Boris Pasternak, and on Ali Smith's rewriting of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, entitled *Summer*. In addition, I wrote pieces for the *L.A. Review of Books* and the *Observer Cultural* and translated poems by Radu Vancu.

It is with both sadness and gratitude that I bid farewell to all the wonderful people who call Mandel Scholion home—and to the time I spent in Jerusalem—as I look ahead to beginning a new position at Yale University, where, starting this fall, I will be subject librarian for English and Comparative Literature. I would like to wish all the best to the continuing and incoming postdocs, to the research groups old and new, to the many scholars who frequent the Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, and to the graduate students, staff, and affiliates. May you continue to thrive and may your work and your scholarship always come from a place of joy.

## Dr. Omer Michaelis



I am a scholar of medieval Jewish and Arabic philosophy. In my work, I focus on the close connectedness of Jewish and Muslim thought in the lands of Islam. This trait of the medieval world of Islam requires that the study of the history of

ideas in this realm disregard religious borders and be characterized by an effort at multi-dimensionalism. Another central motivation in my work is the study of

the dynamics of traditions, with a focus on the Jewish tradition. The central question that guides me in this context is: How is the "new" produced, introduced and further transmitted in the Jewish tradition? I ask which patterns of knowledge and orientations, though not part of earlier strata of the Jewish tradition, came to be adopted by it, and how such adoption occurred.

I have been in residence at the Center as a Mandel Post-Doctoral fellow since the autumn of 2019. During the year, I have had the honor of taking part in an environment of collaborative research, and the privilege of sharing ideas, presenting work in progress, and receiving advice from senior and junior scholars alike, in a rich framework for research in the Humanities, in a time of global crisis and uncertainty. I would like to extend my deep gratitude to both the academic and the administrative directors and staff at Mandel Scholion, as well as to all my friends and colleagues there.

Much of my time at Scholion, both in my office and during the period of pandemic seclusion, was devoted to revising the manuscript of my dissertation with an eye toward publication. The work deals with the function of crisis discourse, as employed by Moses Maimonides (1138-1204), in the integration of knowledge and in the transformation of patterns of organizing and transmitting that knowledge.

As a Mandel fellow, I also taught a year-long course at the department of Jewish Thought, entitled "Memory and Forgetting in Medieval Judaism."

With the start of the coming academic year, I will join the Faculty of the Humanities at Tel Aviv University, where I seek to develop my project on the Role of Discourses of Forgetting in Medieval Judaism, as well as offering courses on philosophy, hermeneutics, migration of knowledge and the refashioning of both Jewish and Islamic traditions in the Middle Ages.

# Seminars

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January 9, 2020

**Dr. Iyas Nasar**

Despair as Consolation in Pre- and Early Islamic Poetry

May 7, 2020

**Dr. Omer Michaelis**

Intellectual History of the Jews and Muslims in the Medieval Islamic World: New Insights from the Genizah

June 4, 2020

**Dr. Guy Ron-Gilboa**

Elusive Wonders and Moral Agency in "The Book of the Marvels of India"

# Conference

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January 23, 2020

**Conference about the poetry of Tuvia Rübner**

Organized by Dr. Giddon Tickotsky and Dr. Jan Kühne

In January the Center held an international conference dedicated to the work of German-Hebrew poet Tuvia Rübner.



Rübner, who passed away last year at the age of 95, is considered a prominent author in both Israel and Germany: he won the Konrad Adenauer Literature Prize as well as the Israel Prize for literature, and in many senses became an ambassador of German literature in Israel and of Jewish-Hebrew literature in German speaking countries, even in times when German culture was a taboo in the young state of Israel. Gershom Scholem once said that Agnon's winning of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966 was in part thanks to Rübner's translation of Agnon's works into German.

The conference was a unique venue for a German-Israeli dialogue on Rübner's rich oeuvre as a poet, translator, literary scholar, and photographer. It also marked the Center's cooperation with our neighbours, the Martin Buber Society of Fellows (MBSF), as the conference was a joint initiative of Dr. Giddon Ticotsky, a Mandel fellow, and of Dr. Jan Kühne, a MBSF fellow. A full video recording of the conference is available on the University's Youtube channel, and the proceedings of the conference will be published in a special issue of the Hebrew academic journal *Criticism & Interpretation: Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, edited by Ticotsky and Prof. Tamar Wolf-Monzon.

## Poem | Tuvia Rübner (2009)

But now green has been created  
and it is good, it is good.

A wagtail in its grey coat and yellow vest  
nods its tail in agreement  
as the prancing bird on picket posts  
has returned and will return yet again.

Two lizards are here-and-gone  
sun glimmer, fugitive bliss -  
May he be blessed  
for his creations' glory.

Now the pecan tree sheds its leaves  
green-verses punctuating the air  
and mischievous clouds seduce  
the soul of a stunned blue  
and a poem brings back, also in its brokenness,  
a heart to a heart, and to what is not.

Translated by Rachel Tzvia Back

## שיר | טוביה ריבנר (2009)

אָבֵל עֵכָשׁוּ נִבְרָא יֶרֶק  
כִּי טוֹב, כִּי טוֹב.

וְנִחְלִיאֵלִי מְהִנְהוּן בְּמוֹ זָנְבוֹ  
בְּמַעֲלֵלוֹ הָאֶפְרָפֵר, אֶפְדָּתוֹ הַצְּהָבָה  
כִּי שׁוֹב חֲזָר וְשׁוֹב יִחְזָר  
הַמְנַתֵּר עַל כְּלוֹנְסָאוֹת.

שְׁהִי לְטָאוֹת יִשְׁנֶן אֵינֶן  
נִצְנוֹץ נֶשֶׁל שְׁמֶשׁ, וּמִבְרַח -  
שְׂיִתְבָּרֵךְ

עַל שְׂבַח מַעֲשֵׂה יְדִיו.  
עַץ הַפְּקָאן עֵכָשׁוּ מִשִּׁיר  
וּמִנְקֹד אֶת הָאֹוִיר  
וְעִנְנִים מְשׁוֹבְבִים  
נִפְשׁוּ שֶׁל כְּחוֹל נִדְהָם

וְשִׁיר מְשִׁיב גַם בְּשִׁבְרוֹ  
לֵב אָדָם עַל אָדָם וְכֵן עַל לֵא.

# Field Trip (November, 2019)

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Organized by the "In Someone Else's Shoes – An Interdisciplinary Research Group for the Study of Empathy in History, Society, and Culture" group

The conceptual basis of our tour emerged from the main problem we tackled in our first year at Mandel Scholion, namely, defining the concept of empathy. Discussion eventually led us to understand each other's theoretical grounds on the topic, but also to recognize that our varied approaches to empathy required that we establish a number of agreed-upon assumptions.

As it turns out, physiological schemas, history of art analysis, literary analysis, and philosophical justification could not produce harmony in our discussions, but rather a relation based on some sort of a waiver from all parties involved. Thus we were led to define some basic foundations upon which our discussions could move forward. We reverted to acknowledging the main

gap upon which empathy grounds itself: the sphere between the self and the other. From there we aimed to articulate different actions toward the other, along with their motivations, possible justifications, and implications.

In arranging the tour, we followed this line of thought, thus creating a space in which we would be able to meet others and hear their perspectives. An element of uncertainty was maintained, for we only informed those we were to meet of the main topic, thus allowing them to freely present their views on it. Hence, when we visited the jail, for example, we did not know what to expect, what we would hear, and, more pertinently, how we would feel. Similarly, we did not know what would occur during the other activities, which we did not lead.

These meetings and related activities comprised one aspect of the tour, while the complementary aspect was the group members' presentation of different approaches



to empathy. These presentations either directly related to the meetings or related indirectly through the concept of empathy.

Via this balance – between our presentations and others’ self-presentations – we aimed to address our main topic, which was the concept of empathy, its possible value, and its social implications. By presenting our own thoughts throughout this tour, we hoped to be able to transform them. Our final goal was to make time for reflection during which we could think about and rethink our own positions. We anticipated that other Mandel fellows might fruitfully undertake similar reflection. Accordingly, we hoped to initiate a discussion on the topic of empathy at Mandel Scholion that would enrich us both individually and as a group.

We indeed witnessed this discussion, which has become an ongoing one among the Mandel fellows. Thus, we

believe that we achieved our primary goal, thanks to our conceptual design of the tour: we did not deal with the topic of empathy directly, but rather with our varied reflections on it, while the topic “presented itself to us” through the others we met on the tour.



Coming up  
at Mandel Scholion 2020-2021

# Our New Research Group: “Past and Past Perfect” (2020–2023)

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The past plays a decisive part in the formation of the present, for individuals and groups alike. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that the present plays a pivotal role in the construction of the past, and that the latter “changes” due to political, cultural, religious, and social currents. Recent years have seen a significant increase in studies dealing with the place of the past in the present, and the role of the present in determining the “memory of the past” and its formation. Such studies, however, have mostly dealt with modern societies or individuals.

The research group “**Past and Past Perfect**” (Hebrew: **העבר בעבר** “**The Past of the Past**”), composed of researchers studying societies in the Near East and the Mediterranean in ancient and medieval times, examines an intriguing question: How did pre-modern societies perceive their past? What role did it play in their own present, and what role did their “present” play in their conceptions of their past? This novel historical investigation of “double backwardness,” in diverse periods, societies, and regions, will yield a rich and nuanced understanding of the “formation of memory” in each of the studied groups. The central goal of “Past and Past Perfect” is to identify the impact of various causes and contexts on the crystallization and expression of this “memory of the past” in a wide range of historical, cultural, social, and political circumstances. To this end, our group will address three major themes:

**Stories of Genesis** will concentrate on the memory of the distant past that tells of the origins of groups, dynasties, and ruling institutions, as well as the foundation of spaces such as cities, palaces, and sanctuaries.

- **Continuity and Change** deals with the sense (or illusion) of endurance and transformation, in spite of – or as a consequence of – ethnic, religious or political changes.
- **Memory and Oblivion** – Which personalities, events, and sites of the past (real or imagined) have the investigated groups ‘remembered,’ which were ignored or forgotten, and which were intentionally forced into oblivion?



**Members of the group: Prof. Reuven Amitai, Prof. Uzi Leibner, Prof. Nili Wazana, Prof. Alexander Yakobson, Ronnie Agassi, Reut Avitan, Inbal Lev-Ari, Anita Reisler, Noa Goldberg**

# New Mandel Postdoctoral Fellows

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## **Dr. Michael Lukin, Institute of Arts**



Dr. Michael Lukin studies the traditional culture of Yiddish speakers in eastern Europe. His dissertation, written under the supervision of Prof. Edwin Seroussi and Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem, discusses the poetics and music of the Yiddish folk song and traces the emergence of this folklore, its characteristic

features, and its social functions. In 2019, as a Polonsky Visiting Fellow, Lukin participated in the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, “Between Sacred and Profane: Jewish Musical Cultures in Early Modern Europe”. In this framework he explored the so-called “mediaeval” ballad in eastern Yiddish, its resemblance to Klezmer music, and its remoteness from the German balladic tradition. From 2016 to the present, he has taught courses on Jewish music, Hassidic musical thought, and Yiddish verbal folklore at Sapir Academic College and Bar-Ilan University. His new project is dedicated to the aesthetics and semiotics of traditional eastern Ashkenazi music, with a special emphasis on cantorial art, paraliturgical singing, Klezmer improvisation and the Yiddish lyric folk song. The project aims to shed light on these repertoires’ affinities with the western European heritage, as well as with their Slavic surroundings and with Jewish music from the Ottoman realm.

## **Dr. Hadar Feldman Samet, Department of Jewish Thought**



Dr. Hadar Feldman Samet completed her doctorate in the Department of Jewish Thought and the Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities PhD program at the Hebrew University in 2018. Her main scholarly interest is histories of Jews in Muslim contexts, and she

specializes in Sephardi and Ottoman Jewry between the 16th and 20th centuries. For the past two years, she was a postdoctoral fellow in two research groups at the University of Pennsylvania’s Katz Center and at Harvard University. Much of her scholarship has been dedicated to the Sabbatian messianic movement, and Hadar has worked extensively on multilingual manuscripts produced and used in the Ottoman Empire. Her research offers a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of mysticism and intercultural encounters, and explores their manifestations in poetry, ritual and faith, musical traditions, popular culture, and communal life. As a Mandel fellow, she aims to delve into the understudied intersection between mysticism and modern revolutionism in the late Ottoman era, and its roles in the formation of cultures and societies.

# News in Brief

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## New Research Group (2021-2024)

The new research group chosen for 2021-2024 is entitled "**The Evolution of Attention in Modern and Contemporary Culture: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Making of the Human.**" It was organized by four senior members of the Faculty of Humanities: Prof. **Ofer Ashkenazi** (History Department), Prof. **Gal Ventura** (Art Department), Prof. **Yael Levin** (English Department), and Prof. **Ayelet Landau** (Psychology Department). Doctoral students will be added to the group via a call for applicants in the spring of 2021.

## Scholion Publications



*The Ancient Throne: The Mediterranean, Near East, and Beyond, from the 3rd Millennium BCE to the 14th Century CE. Proceedings of the Workshop held at the 10th ICAANE in Vienna, April 2016, eds. L. Naeh and D. Brostowsky Gilboa. International Series OREA 14. Vienna: Austrian*

Academy of Sciences Press Publications: 2020

This volume was organized by Liat Naeh and Dana Brostowsky Gilboa, members of the "The Picture Power" research group (2012-2015).

## Publication by former fellow:

September 2020



Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum

Edited by: Noah Hacham and

Tal Ilan

In collaboration with: Meron M.

Piotrkowski and Zsuzsanna Szántó.

De Gruyter Oldenbourg | 2020.

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## Congratulations to:

Dr. **Carla Baricz** (Mandel Fellow, 2018–2020), who was appointed to Yale University as the Librarian for Literature in English and Comparative Literature.

Prof. **Nora Boneh** ("Historical Linguistics and Formal Semantics" research group), upon her promotion to the rank of associate professor in the Department of Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Prof. **Eitan Grossman** ("Historical Linguistics and Formal Semantics" research group), upon his promotion to the rank of associate professor in the Department of Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Dr. **Yosi Israeli** ("Mandel Fellow" research group), who was named the Harry Starr Fellow 2020-2021, The Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University.

Dr. **Omer Michaelis** (Mandel Fellow, 2019–2020), who was appointed as an Assistant Professor of Jewish Philosophy in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud at Tel Aviv University.

**Nadia Beider**, of the "Setting Tables" research group for winning the Best Student Paper Award of the International Society for the Study of Religion (ISSR).

Beider, Nadia. 2017. Religious Practices and Beliefs among Religious Stayers and Religious Switchers in Israeli Judaism. *Sociology of Religion* 78(1): 81-99.

Prof. **Elitzur Bar-Asher Siegal** of the "Historical Linguistics research group on the publication of his book: *The NP-strategy for expressing reciprocity: Typology, History, Syntax and Semantics* (Typological Studies in Language 127), Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing House, 2020.

Dr. **Dana Kaplan**, of the "Setting Tables" research group for winning the Best Article Award of the International Society for the Study of Religion (ISSR).

Dana Kaplan and Rachel Werczberger. 2017. New Age, New Economy, New Middle Class: Jewish New Age in Israel and Politics of Identity. *Sociology*, 51(3): 1-17.

Prof. **Nathan Wasserman** of the "Setting Tables" research group on the publication of his book: *The Flood: The Akkadian Sources. A New Edition, Commentary, and a Literary Discussion* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 290), Leuven: Peeters, 2020.

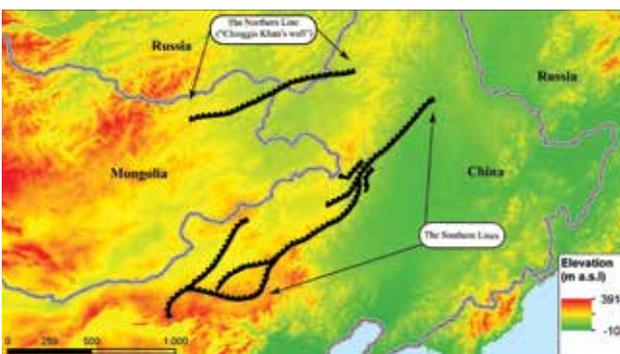




Prof. **Gideon Shelach-Lavi**, The Louis Frieberg Professor of East Asian Studies, Department of Asian Studies of the “Materials for Change” research group for winning an ERC Advanced research Grant for his project: “The Wall: People and Ecology in Medieval Mongolia and China”.

Prof. Shelach-Lavi writes:

In April of this year, I was notified that my application to the ERC Advanced Grants program was approved. This funding, about 2.5 million dollars, will support a five-year interdisciplinary project which combines archaeological, historical, and paleo-climatic research. The focus of The Wall project is the most enigmatic episode of ‘Great Wall’ construction in China and Mongolia: a wall system located in north China and Mongolia that covers a distance of over 3,500 km. The construction of this complex system, which includes long earthen walls and accompanying ditches, auxiliary structures, and roads, is dated roughly to the 10th to 13th centuries CE. However, in spite of the large amount of resources and human effort that must have been invested in the construction of this monument, no dynasty took credit for it and it is unclear who built it,



for what purposes, and how it functioned. Moreover, the location of this system, deep inside the steppe zone and far from other lines of the ‘Great Wall’, in an area that was (and still is) sparsely populated by nomadic tribes, make the construction of this wall-system even more enigmatic.

I initiated this project even before applying for the ERC grant, while I was a member of a research group at the Mandel Scholion Research Center. Our research group, which included archaeologists, historians, anthropologists, and art historians, examined how extraordinary artefacts are defined and how they affect the development of human society. The ‘Great Wall’ of China, arguably the most celebrated monument in human history and a clear case of an exceptional ‘artefact’, immediately attracted my attention. Even more extraordinary are the mediaeval-period walls that I started to research, which were likely built, not by a Chinese dynasty, but by one that was founded by a nomadic group (the Liao dynasty of the Khitan people).

This research marks a turning point in my academic career. I have conducted archaeological field projects in north China since 1994, but, thus far, all my research has focused on prehistoric periods (the Neolithic and Bronze Ages). It is an immense challenge to investigate such a great historic monument, working in both China and Mongolia, and integrating large and diverse data-sets. How is it possible to study such a monument that extends over such a vast area, covering almost the entire northern border of current-day China and the north-eastern border of Mongolia (with a small part in Russia as well)? My approach is not only interdisciplinary – combining archaeological field work



and close reading of historical texts, as well as the scientific analysis of evidence on climatic conditions during the time that the wall was constructed. It is also multi-scale, analyzing this monument at different resolutions: from the entire wall, which my team is studying by analyzing satellite and other types of remote sensing images, to the regional scale which we are studying using drones and surveys, to the local scale addressed through archaeological and geological excavations.

With initial funding provided by the Mandel Scholion Research Center, the Louis Frieberg Chair in East Asian Studies, and the Ring Foundation, I was able to conduct two preliminary seasons of field work, in which we focused on remains of the northernmost section of the mediaeval wall-system, located near the northern borders of Mongolia. During the first season, carried out in the summer of 2018, we documented a section of the wall using drone photography and a systematic pedestrian survey. In an intriguing discovery from that season, we found clusters of large man-made enclosures, some of them rectangular and some circular, that are grouped in areas south of the wall line. We returned in the summer of 2019 to one of these clusters and test-excavated parts of the walls there, as well as locations within two enclosures. The results of those excavations revealed the relatively modest dimensions of the wall itself but also the complexity of the associated structures. Our current hypothesis, which the ERC-funded project will test, is that the wall was not a military fortified border meant to stop invading armies, but rather a system that was built to monitor and perhaps stop large-scale movements of nomadic tribes, which were forced to migrate southwards due to climatic hardships.

The initial funding provided by the Mandel Scholion Research Center, the Louis Frieberg Chair in East Asian Studies, and the Ring Foundation enabled me to collect new primary data and to develop the initial research hypothesis on which my ERC proposal was based. They also allowed me to bring with me to Mongolia researchers and students from the Hebrew University, who were exposed to the culture and heritage of this fascinating country. I am truly grateful for this support.

The research has already resulted in two publications in leading academic journals:

Shelach-Lavi, G., Ido Wachtel, Dan Golan, Otgonjargal Batzorig, Amartuvshin Chunag, Ronnie Ellenblum, and William Honeychurch, 2020. Medieval long-wall construction on the Mongolian Steppe during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries AD. *Antiquity* 94(375): 724-741. doi:10.15184/aqy.2020.51

Shelach-Lavi, G., Honeychurch, W. and Chunag, A. 2020. Does extra-large equal extra-ordinary? The 'Wall of Chinggis Khan' from a multidimensional perspective. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 7, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0524-2>





## Mandel Scholion

Interdisciplinary Research Center in  
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