



JACK, JOSEPH, AND MORTON MANDEL SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE HUMANITIES

MANDEL SCHOLION NEWS

MANDEL SCHOLION - INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE HUMANITIES AND JEWISH STUDIES



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Marathon and New Mandel Fellows

The 2016 lecture marathon of the Mandel postdoctoral fellowships, which rang in the New Year on December 31, 2015, was the first to be held in our new home in the Mandel Building—in the glass-enclosed lecture hall on the top floor, in which lecturers had better be good because they must compete with quite an impressive view of the Judean Desert. It culminated an intensive process of selection over the preceding months: more than twenty scholars, in a few stages of academic review, participated, not without a good bit of anguish, in the whittling of more than one hundred applicants down to a manageable short list of eight finalists. They were quite a varied group, including three who completed their doctorates here in Jerusalem, two in Tel-Aviv, and three in the USA; four in Jewish studies and four in other branches of the humanities; three women and five men; five who were here already, and three who flew in specially for the event.

On the eve of the marathon the eight gathered for a reception together with the members of the academic committee and representatives of the Mandel Foundation, and Dr. Jonathan Stavsky, a second-year Mandel Fellow (who is now leaving us to take up a tenure-track appointment at Tel Aviv University), shared with them some reflections on his current project under the title “Fuzzy Genres and Scholarly Discipline.” His short talk demonstrated some of the interdisciplinary methods he uses in his research by focusing on the importance of anti-literary and non-literary sources for understanding how the category of literature came into being. The marathon itself, the next morning, was well-attended and, as usual, was a lively event for the spectators and, hopefully, not too nerve-wracking for the finalists. The lecturers addressed, each in his or her own style, topics from their own research. As may

be seen from the abstract booklet, which is available under “Publications” on our website, their lectures—four in English, four in Hebrew—ran the chronological gamut from law and society in ancient Mesopotamia to the ethics of using robots in the 21st century, the geographical gamut from Kabbala and melancholy in medieval and early modern Spain to the image of the Far East in modern Hebrew literature, and the disciplinary gamut from epigraphy, philology and iconography to history, literature and philosophy. Each contestant strove to find the best balance between proving that they are accomplished and innovative scholars in the fields of their doctorate but also have other new projects that they hope to develop here at Mandel Scholion, while of course also showing that they can present their specializations successfully to non-specialists. And all of that in twenty minutes each, with ten minutes for questions. The finalists’ presentations in the morning of course served, along with their rather thick dossiers, as the basis for the candidates’ interviews by the academic committee later in the day.

Usually two finalists are chosen, but this year, due to the extraordinary success of current fellows in finding academic positions (see News in Brief), which freed up budgets earlier than expected, we were able to take three, all three of whom completed their doctorates in 2015.

Dr. Avishai Bar-Asher studied Philosophy and Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University. During his doctoral studies he spent a year at NYU, and last year he was a postdoctoral fellow in Princeton, where he pursued his research on medieval and early modern kabbalistic manuscripts. His research proposal for Mandel Scholion focused on anonymity, pseudonymity, and the creation of a canon in medieval Jewish esotericism. But he’ll have

only a year to pursue that with us, because he has recently been appointed to a tenure-track position in Hebrew University’s Dept. of Jewish Thought, beginning in the summer of 2017.

Dr. Or Hasson studied Spanish and Latin American literature and clinical psychology here at the Hebrew University; his last years as a doctoral student were spent at Mandel Scholion, as a member of our 2011–2014 research group on “Eros, Family, and Community.” Since then he has been a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard. Broadening out from his doctoral dissertation on the early modern Spanish concept of locura (“madness”) and the contemporary dialogue between medical and literary writing about madness, over the next years he plans to work on three topics: the relation between locura and ethnic and religious otherness in early modern Spanish folklore, the place of the Arabic language in seventeenth-century Spanish lexicography, and literary and cultural encounters in medieval Iberia.

Dr. Rachel Wamsley received her 2015 doctorate in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, where she specialized in late medieval and early modern Yiddish. Her dissertation examined early modern Yiddish literature and its material instantiations as alternative, transgressive vehicles for the transmission of the Hebrew Bible and classical rabbinic interpretation. Then she split her time in 2015/16 between a Harvard postdoctorate and a Mellon fellowship in critical bibliography at the University of Virginia. During 2014–2016 she had a University of Virginia Mellon Fellowship in critical bibliography, and in 2015/16 she was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard. Of the two projects she plans to pursue at Mandel Scholion, the first expands on her work in book history, exploring how

the intensive collaboration of Jews, converts, and Christians in the printing houses of early modern Europe came to decisively shape the transmission of biblical literature after Gutenberg; the second is a conceptual analysis of archaism and anachronism as two entangled modes of literary imagining, which formally and thematically renegotiate historical distance.



Dr. Avishai Bar-Asher



Dr. Rachel Wamsley



Dr. Or Hasson



“Emergence of Modern Hebrew” Research Group – Concluding Conference

The 2013-2016 research group on the Emergence of Modern Hebrew held its concluding conference on July 4th-7th in the Mandel Building. Cosponsored by the Israel Science Foundation, it was entitled: Language Contact, Continuity and Change in the Emergence of Modern Hebrew.

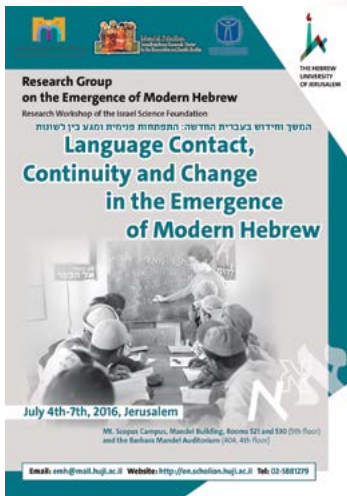
The conference was very well attended. About 120 people were present for the opening of the conference, including 15 participants from abroad (of whom 10 were invited speakers), and usually there were about a hundred throughout the conference. The opening lecture was delivered by Moshe Bar-Asher of the Hebrew University, President of the Academy of the Hebrew Language. He spoke on real and imaginary residues of Biblical Hebrew within the grammar of Modern Hebrew. This was followed by the lecture of a distinguished historical linguist, Brian Joseph of Ohio State University, on the apparent paradox of language continuity in the context of language contact. After a light lunch, the rest of the day was mostly split into two parallel sessions, one in Hebrew and one in English, which featured lectures by scholars from different Israeli institutions (the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Achva College, Ben-Gurion University, David Yellin College, Haifa University, the Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv University) on various grammatical phenomena of Modern Hebrew. These sessions were accompanied by a poster exhibit, in which 5 graduate students from several Israeli universities presented their work (in English and Hebrew), and also by a book display by two local publishers. The academic program of the first day concluded with a lecture by Bernard Spolsky (Bar-Ilan University) on the history of the revival of Hebrew and its subsequent rediasporization. The day ended with a musical performance by the delightful Piyyut Ensemble of the Ben Zvi Institute, which sang Jewish Maghrebi religious and mystical hymns.

The lectures on the other three days were all in English. The scholars who lectured, linguists from Israel and abroad, related to various theoretical and empirical issues of language contact, change, creolization, and revival.

On the second day, several plenary lectures were given by leading creolists and other theoretical linguists from Canada, the Netherlands, and the US; the other lectures were delivered within two parallel sessions. The third day was reserved for plenary lectures by invited speakers, who discussed situations of linguistic contact in different parts of the globe: the contact of Old Norse and Middle English; the contact of Aboriginal Warlpiri and English in Australia; Turkish and Dutch in the Netherlands; Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language and Israeli Sign Language in the Negev. Other lectures suggested theoretical frames for the understanding of language change in situations of linguistic contact.

The fourth and last day was dedicated to a walking tour in West Jerusalem, guided by Nir Avital of the Ben Zvi Institute, in the footsteps of the revivers of the Hebrew language. It was followed by a visit to the Shrine of the Book in the Israel Museum, guided by Dr. Noam Mizrahi of Tel-Aviv University, who is expert on the language of the Qumran scrolls. About 30 conference participants took part in the tour, including practically all the guests from abroad. The tour ended in a late lunch at the museum.

The conference, which included 37 lectures, was one of the largest ever held by our Center. The organizers intend to publish a special volume which will include as many contributions as possible.



The Life of Religious Texts

June 8-9, 2016

Room 530, 5th floor, Mandel Building, Mt. Scopus



Wednesday, June 8

9:30-10:00 **Opening Session**

Chair: Bruria Bitton-Ashkelony (usu)

9:30 **Greeting, Opening Remarks:**

Daniel Schwartz, Director of Mandel School Center

David Sattari, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies

Carmen Meinert, Ruhr University Bochum

Eviatar Shulman, Mandel School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Department of Comparative Religion

Ilana Pardes (usu)

Toni Morrison's Prophets, Beloved: The Song of Songs in African American Culture

Donit Ricci (usu)

Reading Between the Lines: Islamic Texts and Interlinear Translation

Coffee Break

11:25-11:50 **Second Session** - Chair: Ehud Halperin (usu)

William Sax (Heidelberg University)

David Sattari, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies

Yosef Raz (Mandel School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Exodus's Word: Prophecy and the Question of Textuality

Lunch Break

15:30-16:00 **Third Session** - Chair: Israel Naveh (usu)

Jessie Pons (Ruhr University Bochum)

Reading and viewing the *Sabbath paragon*: Textual and Visual Interpretation in Literature

Coffee Break

16:00-16:20 **Shai Secunda**, Martin Rubei, Society of Fellows (HUJ)

"House of the One Book": Orality and the Invention of Textual Culture

Eviatar Shulman (Mandel School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

The Play of Formulas in Early Rabbinic Oral Literature

Discussion

18:00 Dinner off campus (for participants)

Thursday, June 9

9:40-10:00 **Fourth Session**

Chair: Jonathan Carls (usu)

Sharon Aronson (Lehigh Univ)

Religious Theatre: Medieval and Modern Paradigms

Natalie Gummer (Beloit College)

Reading Rabbinic Texts: The Role of the Reader in the Construction of a "Jewish" Culture of the Late Middle Ages

Coffee Break

11:25-11:50 **Fifth Session**

Chair: Dani Schreier (usu)

Jonathan Sacks (Central Synagogue, New York)

Shabbat as Theology: Jewish as Theater in the Age of the Holocaust

Ruthie Abelliovich (Martin Rubei Society of Fellows, HUJ)

Listen to the Dialect: The Life and Afterlife of Aron's Drama

Lunch Break

15:30-16:00 **Closing Session**

Chair: Moshe Shohovits (usu)

Carmen Meinert (Ruhr University Bochum)

Reading Chinese Buddhist Ritual Manuals

From the Ashes, 12th C.

Ruth Hachohen (usu)

Uncovering the Death of Gold: J. S. Badi's "Surfing on the Wave" (Shabbat, my heart and other songs)

Coffee Break

16:40-17:00 Discussion

17:00-18:00 Dinner off campus (for participants)



Mandel Scholion
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
in the Humanities and Jewish Studies



Josh. Joseph, and Moshe Mandel School
for Advanced Studies in the Humanities



The Life of Religious Texts

Last June Mandel Scholion hosted a workshop on “The Life of Religious Texts.” The workshop was organized by Dr. Eviatar Shulman, and it included participants from Europe, Israel and the US. Among them were Dr. Carmen Meinert and Dr. Jessie Pons, from the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at the Ruhr-University of Bochum, who also participated in funding the workshop as part of a developing co-operation between the universities.

The idea of the workshop was to move away from the cold, all too common, scholarly focus on texts as transmitters of verbal and conceptual information, and to work toward a discussion of the way texts really function in religious life. Texts do not actually live on shelves, but are rather sung, acted, pictured, recited, used in prayer and in divination, and so forth, so that they engage people through their senses and their bodies, with less concern for the ideas they convey. Among the topics of the presentations in the workshop we may mention: the poetry embedded in Johann Sebastian Bach's celebrated “St. John's Passion”, which is a grand dramatic and musical presentation of the last days of Jesus in the gospel of St. John (Ruth Hachohen); modern and medieval plays that work with the crucifixion of Jesus in grotesque ways that reflect upon contemporary violence (Sharon Aronson-

International Workshop

Lehavi); the heart-wrenching adaptation of “The Song of Song” in Tony Morrison's “Beloved”, which becomes a powerful statement on the pains of slavery in America (Ilana Pardes); William Sax (Heidelberg) introduced us to the gods who control remote regions in the Himalayas through their oracles, which resonated in fascinating ways with the idea of prophecy that arises from Ezekiel 6 (Yosef Raz); Natalie Gummer (Beloit College, USA) showed how Buddhas become present in performances of the “Lotus Sutra”; Shai Secunda (former Mandel Fellow, now at Bard College) revealed the playful reflectivity in the Talmud, which recommends that texts be stored in one's stomach; and much more.

The workshop was a successful demonstration of the possible fruits of interdisciplinary research, of the kind cultivated and supported by the Mandel Scholion Center and the Mandel School. This was a thrilling intellectual encounter that revealed the genuine value of comparative study – the rich field for discussion, created by scholars coming from diverse theoretical disciplines, allowed a focus on deep and fundamental issues, at the core of which was the idea of text and its role in religious phenomenology. In fact, the questions that arose from the workshop, and that

we plan to be at the base of a future publication stemming from it, focus on the very rationale for studying and teaching religion in the secular academy, and, more generally, for conducting research in the humanities. Scholarship must be capable of accessing the grounds of lived, subjective experience, and not only of assessing it “objectively”, if it is to remain a powerful cultural agent in a world in which knowledge is readily available in a click of a mouse-button.

When the logic of experience is given the place it deserves, it becomes clear that religion makes sense to most people and helps them find their place in a world they feel is worth living in. Religious Studies thus pose an interesting challenge to the humanistic disciplines – if religious texts are deeply meaningful to people, is our job only to understand the historical conditions that make them so? Can we understand this without personally engaging with the texts ourselves? How much should we commit ourselves to such experimentation? Does studying religious texts “from without” really teach us what they are and what they do in the world, and does this allow us and our students to become the well-informed, reflective, competent subjects academic study strives for?

The Galilean Roots of Modern Hebrew

This year's study trip, planned as usual by the third-year research group, took us to the Galilee. On Thursday-Friday, March 31-April 1 we visited, in chronological order and under the tutelage of members of the "Emergence of Modern Hebrew" group and colleagues they invited, numerous sites that played formative roles in the development of Modern Hebrew.



We began early on Thursday with a long bus ride north to Tzippori (Sepphoris), where an opening orientation by Edit Doron was followed by a brief archaeological tour of the site guided by Hillel Silberklang, who works with the "Question of Identity" group but also participated in the Tzippori excavations. Then, in the city's synagogue, of which the early fifth-century mosaic floor features Hebrew inscriptions, Yael Reshef spoke about the contribution of classical layers of Hebrew (namely, Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew) to Modern Hebrew. By closely examining textual examples from both corpora, Reshef argued that while the morphology of Modern Hebrew is largely the legacy of Biblical Hebrew, its syntax is, in large measure, a continuation of Rabbinic Hebrew. The modern lexicon, in contrast, cannot be traced to any particular layer of classical Hebrew, since it inherited lexical items from both of those seminal periods, as well as from other sources.

Our next stop was the old city of Safed, where we turned our attention to a late-medieval chapter in the story of Hebrew. Eyal Davidson, of the Orot Israel College, guided us in the city, telling us about its Jewish community in the 16th century, and that was followed by a lecture by group member Chanan Ariel on the influence of medieval Safed on Modern Hebrew. Ariel pointed to certain linguistic phenomena in texts by Rabbi Yosef Caro and Rabbi Haim Vital, in Safed of the 16th century, which have

clear counterparts in Modern Hebrew. In addition, their contemporaries also developed a linguistic ideology comparable to that of the modern movement for reviving Hebrew speech, exemplified by Rabbi Isaac Luria's (Ha'Ari) well-documented practice of speaking Hebrew on the Sabbath.

From 16th-century Safed we traveled to late 19th-century Rosh Pina, above Tiberias, one of the first Jewish agricultural settlements of the first Aliya, a national heritage site. Under the guidance of Smadar Sinai of the Rosh Pina Restoration Association we visited one-story public buildings, including the doctor's house, the hotel, and the synagogue, and learned about the life of the first settlers and their use of Hebrew in the 1880s when Rosh Pina was founded. In the evening we convened in the guesthouse's auditorium for a presentation by group member Miri Bar-Ziv Levy, together with the group's research assistant, Daniel Shetreet, about the role of East-European Jewish women in the revival of Hebrew. As a rule, women in Jewish communities in 19th-century Eastern Europe did not study Hebrew, often due to religious objections to their knowledge of the Holy Language. In 1911-1917, however, a small number of Hebrew-speaking female settlers were trained in agriculture at Havat Ha'alamot (lit. "Maidens' Farm"), founded by Dr. Hannah Meisel, where exclusive Hebrew speech was promoted, influencing the men of neighboring Kinnereth as well. We finished the first day with an informal farewell for Eti Nahmany, who had faithfully served as Mandel Scholion's senior secretary for seven years.

The next morning, after some early frisbee throwing on the beach, we set out to the

historic cemetery at Kinnereth, which is the final resting place of several influential figures of the first and second Aliyot. The director of the Kinnereth Farmyard, Zehava Hacham Gabbai, guided us among the Hebrew-engraved headstones of early settlers, and then, near the gravestone of the poetess Rachel (Rachel Bluwstein, 1890-1931), Avigail Tsirkin-Sadan spoke on the tension between Hebrew and Russian in Rachel's writings. As typical of her generation of women, Rachel's dominant language was Russian. Only at 19, after moving to Palestine, did she devote herself to mastering the ancient language. Tsirkin-Sadan pointed out Slavic residues in her Hebrew poetry and personal correspondence that exemplify her solutions to lexical and grammatical gaps. That lecture was followed, a few steps further along, near the gravestone of the modern poetess/songwriter Naomi Shemer, by one by Einat Keren on the advantage children have in second-language learning over adults, and their implications for the formation of Modern Hebrew. To illustrate the depth of the difference between native and non-native speakers' linguistic choices, Keren compared two poems, one by native speaker Shemer and the other by non-native speaker Rachel.

After we left the cemetery, Zehava Hacham Gabbai guided us around the Kinnereth Farmyard, focusing especially on the life and language(s) of the early settlers. The tour led us to one of the farm buildings, where Noah Hacham, of the "Question of Identity" group, presented a rare linguistic corpus of personal letters in Hebrew written there, ca. 1913, by Naomi Shapira, who would become his grandmother, to her family in Zichron Yaakov.

Finally, Malka Rappaport-Hovav concluded the tour with remarks bringing together the main theme, in the footsteps of the development of Hebrew, and then we returned to Jerusalem, leaving next year's third-year group, "Question of Identity," to face the daunting challenge of putting together a study trip that can compete with one that was so well-planned and intensive.





Workshop: Anērān in Ērānšahr - Ethnic Groups in the Iranian Realm

The second day of the workshop opened with a discussion by Laurie Pearce (Berkeley) of the possibilities and limitations of onomastic studies for the study of ancient ethnic groups. Geoffrey Herman (Mandel Scholion) presented an overview of the extant evidence for Jewish communities outside of the Babylonian province during the Sasanian period and Ofir Haim (HUJI) presented new evidence for the Jewish diaspora in Greater Iran during the first centuries of Islam. The second session featured two lectures by scholars from the Van Leer Institute's Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study: Domenico Agostini discussed the historical development of Iranian identity from the ethnic term *Ēr* to the concept of an Iranian empire or kingdom as a political entity, *Ērān-šahr*, and Roy Viložny discussed the possible infiltration of certain stylistic and thematic elements from Middle Persian literature into the Shi'i corpus of *badith*. Ran Zadok (Tel Aviv University) presented an overview of the ethno-linguistic character of the area of Khuzistan from earliest times until the arrival of the Iranian tribes, and that was complemented by a discussion of the reasons for the negative portrayal of the Jews of Khuzistan in the Babylonian Talmud, which was given by Yakir Paz (Martin Buber Society of Fellows); he suggested that it be contextualized in light of contemporary Christian sources. After Doug Hitch (Harvard University and Yukon Cultural Center) presented an overview on the plethora of groups and languages in the area of Turfan and the historical impact of local geography and ruling powers on culture and ethnic diversity, Michael Shenkar (HUJI) focused on the religious and sociopolitical structures of the Sogdians (4th-8th centuries CE). Yigal Bloch (HUJI) opened the final session of the workshop with a paper on the topic of the Sabbath and the new moon in the Judean community of Elephantine, Egypt, during the period of the Achaemenid Empire, and the final lecture of the workshop, given by Peter Zilberg (Mandel Scholion), addressed the contacts of the residents of the easternmost provinces of the Achaemenid Empire, such as India and Bactria, with the Achaemenid administration and other groups of minorities and exiles.

“Practical Postulates”

— International conference



In mid-December the Mandel Scholion Center hosted, with the assistance of the Humanities Fund, a conference titled “Reconsidering the Significance of Kant’s Critical Revolution in Philosophy: Practical Postulates and Philosophical Fictions.” Mandel postdoctoral fellow Dr. Karin Nisenbaum convened the conference and assembled some of the most reputable scholars working on the philosophy of Kant and the post-Kantian German Idealists, to discuss the legacy and impact of Kant’s views on religious belief.

One of the central concerns of Kant’s critical or transcendental philosophy was to defend a religious outlook that could be consistent with the Enlightenment. This involved criticizing traditional proofs of God’s existence, such as the so-called “ontological” proof, and developing new views on how to understand and justify religious concepts and beliefs, including the belief in God’s existence, the immortality of the soul, and human freedom. Kant called these three beliefs “postulates of practical reason,” by which he meant assertions that are theoretical in form (i.e., assertions that make existential claims such as “God exists,” “we have an immortal soul,” or “we are free”), but whose truth can only be determined practically, not theoretically. For example, the ontological proof of God’s existence is a theoretical proof of God’s existence insofar as it infers God’s existence from the concept of a supremely perfect being. Kant thought that no such proof was possible; he thought that the only possible proof of God’s existence was to show that belief in God’s existence is a necessary condition for moral action. More specifically, Kant thought that acting morally involves trusting that the natural world is amenable to the realization of our

moral ends; acting morally involves trusting that the natural world will not thwart our good intentions. If we conceive of God as He who ensures that there is a harmony between morality and nature, then belief in God’s existence is a necessary condition for moral action. His “proof” of God’s existence is practical, because it shows that this belief is a prerequisite of moral action. Kant provides a similar “proof” of the immortality of the soul and human freedom.

Yet many of Kant’s critics ask whether Kant’s view that God’s existence is a “postulate of practical reason” really establishes God’s existence, or only belief in God’s existence. Even if we think that belief in God’s existence is a necessary condition for moral action, does that establish anything about God, or does it only establish something about us, namely that we need to believe that God ensures that the laws of nature and morality harmonize? Doesn’t Kant’s view amount to the idea that belief in God is something like a useful or even unavoidable fiction? Questions such as these continue to spark heated philosophical debates, not only about Kant’s philosophy of religion, but also about his philosophical legacy more generally. This is because Kant developed similar methods to justify our use of many other concepts, including the basic concepts employed in the natural sciences. These questions forced Kant and his heirs to rethink how we understand the relationship between our beliefs about the world and the world as such.

The conference took place in one of the large seminar rooms on the fifth floor of the new Mandel Building, overlooking the Arab neighborhood of Al-Issawiya. This setting invited reflection on the contemporary relevance of the conference’s theme, for part of what was at issue were the sorts of reasons we can give in defense of religious beliefs, and the recourses that are available to us when we are trying to settle issues of religious and moral disagreement.

Although this topic didn’t surface in any explicit way in any of the papers, it was an important topic of discussion during coffee breaks and meals.

The opening remarks by Daniel R. Schwartz and Karin Nisenbaum set the stage for three days of concentrated philosophical discussion. The first day included presentations by Daniel Breazeale (University of Kentucky), Gideon Freudenthal (Tel Aviv University), Johannes Haag (University of Potsdam), Michelle Kosch (Cornell University), Eli Friedlander (Tel Aviv University), and James Conant (University of Chicago); the second day continued with presentations by Karin Nisenbaum (now at Colgate University), Benjamin Pollock (MSU and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Paul Franks (Yale University), James Reid (Metropolitan State University of Denver), and Benjamin Crowe (University of Utah and Boston University); on the last day, we enjoyed two presentations by Ulrich Schlösser (University of Tübingen) and Wayne Martin (University of Essex), and the conference concluded with a walking tour of the Old City.

The proceedings of the conference will be published in a special issue of the *European Journal of Philosophy*.



Reconsidering the Significance of Kant’s Critical Revolution in Philosophy: Practical Postulates and Philosophical Fictions

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Mt. Scopus, Mandel Building, Room 530

Sunday, December 20, 2015

9:30-9:45 Coffee
9:45-10:00 Opening Remarks: Daniel R. Schwartz and Karin Nisenbaum

Session 1
10:00-11:00 Daniel Breazeale (University of Kentucky), “Philosophy and the Method of Fictions”: Salomon Maimon and his Contemporary Critics
11:00-12:00 Gideon Freudenthal (Tel Aviv University), “Maimon on Impossible Objects”
Chair: Ofra Rechter (Tel Aviv University)

12:00-13:30 Break

Session 2
13:30-14:30 Johannes Haag (University of Potsdam), “Kant’s Postulates and the Methodology of Limiting Concepts”
14:30-15:30 Michelle Kosch (Cornell University), “The formative drive (Bildungstrieb) in Fichte’s System of Ethics”
Chair: Michael Della Rocca (Yale University)

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

Session 3
16:00-17:00 Eli Friedlander (Tel Aviv University), “Hope for the Past: Walter Benjamin’s Transformation of Kant’s Practical Postulates”
17:00-18:00 James Conant (University of Chicago), “Philosophical Fiction and Transcendental Deduction”
Chair: Carl Posy (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Monday, December 21

9:45-10:00 Coffee

Session 4
10:00-11:00 Sebastian Gardner (University College London), “Vaihinger’s *Philosophie des Als Ob*”
11:00-12:00 Karin Nisenbaum (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “The Cover of Skepticism and the Subjectivity of Truth in Kant and Kierkegaard”
Chair: Sharon Kitchik (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

12:00-13:30 Break

Session 5
13:30-14:30 Benjamin Pollock (MSU and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “On God as an Object of Action: Franz Rosenzweig between System-Program and *The Star of Redemption*”
14:30-15:30 Paul Franks (Yale University), “On the common saying: ‘That may be correct in practice, but is of no use in theory’”
Chair: Karin Nisenbaum (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

Session 6
16:00-17:00 James Reid (Metropolitan State University of Denver), “Novalis’s Philosophical Fictions: Magical Idealism in Context”
17:00-18:00 Benjamin Crowe (University of Utah and Boston University), “Truth is No Stranger to Fiction: Jacobi on Fiction in the Novel *Aiwahl*”
Chair: Ynon Wygoda (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Tuesday, December 22

9:15-9:30 Coffee

Session 7
9:30-10:30 Ulrich Schlösser (University of Tübingen), “Skepticism, Fictions and Postulates: Fichte vs. Maimon”
10:30-11:30 Wayne Martin (University of Essex), “Self-Positing and Gombit Normativity”
Chair: Michael Roubach (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

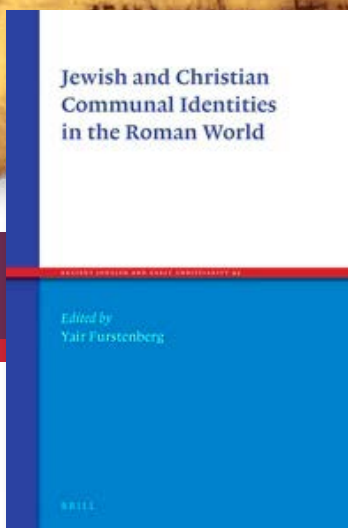
11:30-13:00 Concluding Discussion

Lecturers
Prof. Daniel Breazeale (University of Kentucky)
Prof. James Conant (University of Chicago)
Prof. Benjamin D. Crowe (University of Utah and Boston University)
Prof. Paul W. Franks (Yale University)
Prof. Gideon Freudenthal (Tel Aviv University, Cohn Institute)
Prof. Eli Friedlander (Tel Aviv University)
Prof. Sebastian Gardner (University College London)
Prof. Johannes Haag (University of Potsdam)
Prof. Michelle Kosch (Cornell University)
Prof. Wayne Martin (University of Essex)
Dr. Karin Nisenbaum (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Prof. Benjamin Pollock (Michigan State University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Prof. James D. Reid (Metropolitan State University of Denver)
Prof. Ulrich Schlösser (University of Tübingen)



Mandel

Scholion Library



Jewish and Christian
Communal Identities
in the Roman World

Edited by
Yair Furstenberg



הדמיון הפרשני
דת ואמנות בתרבות היהודית בהקשריה
עורכים: ד"ר חיים חזקוני, ד"ר חגית שוורץ, ד"ר חגית שוורץ



Language Contact and
the Development of
Modern Hebrew

This year saw the appearance of two volumes in this library, one in Hebrew and one in English.

Our 2008-2011 research group on “The Interpretive Imagination” published, in Hebrew, a collection of articles that derive from its concluding conference. The eleven articles in the volume, *The Interpretive Imagination: Religion and Art in Jewish Culture in Its Contexts*, edited by the senior members of the group and published by the Hebrew University’s Magnes Press, reflect the variety of disciplines that met in the work of this group. In its research and activities, and in the published book, the group attempted an integrated examination of the religious and artistic, and of their aesthetic, experiential, and interpretive aspects. Bringing together scholars of literature and folklore, art, music, theatre, and history, the research group took as its underlying goal the integration of two seminal notions: interpretation and imagination. By considering them in tandem while studying religious and artistic texts, the articles reveal the imaginative depth of the creators of the texts, and show how the different methodological orientations of the scholars were insightfully sharpened by the years together.

The other volume is *Language Contact and the Development of Modern Hebrew*. The volume, published by Brill, consists of articles written by the members of our 2013- 2016 research group on the Emergence of Modern Hebrew and by additional authors, and was edited by group member Edit Doron. On March 10 we held a gathering in honor of its appearance; it was attended by fellows of the Center, by the contributors to the volume, and by many additional scholars from the Hebrew University, and featured lectures by Zohar Shavit of Tel Aviv University and Uri Mor of Ben-Gurion University.

The volume is a first attempt to present detailed analysis of the origins of the syntax of Modern Hebrew, which goes beyond the deep-rooted controversy between the traditional and the radical views regarding the genesis of Modern Hebrew. Opinions concerning the nature of Modern Hebrew are strongly polarized. Speakers and traditional scholars of Hebrew firmly believe that Modern Hebrew directly continues earlier stages of Hebrew. In contrast, those who have recognized discontinuity have analyzed Modern Hebrew as a creole based on a substrate of contact languages – particularly Yiddish, the

native language of many of the first Modern Hebrew speakers – and a Hebrew superstrate, which serves solely as a relexifier. According to that view, the lexicon of Modern Hebrew derives from its Hebrew superstrate, whereas its grammar is that of Yiddish. The published volume is the first systematic syntactic study of the formative stages of the emergent language. The results published in the volume disprove the creolization/relexification hypothesis; they exhibit constructions that are based on contact with a range of languages, not just Yiddish, and, in many of the cases, are modifications of constructions that existed in some form in earlier stages of Hebrew.

Here too we should mention the appearance of another volume that grew out of Mandel Scholion activity, namely, a collection of studies on *Jewish and Christian Communal Identities in the Roman World*. The volume was edited by Yair Furstenberg, a former Mandel Fellow, now on the faculty of Ben-Gurion University, who organized a joint Mandel Scholion/Brill conference on that topic in 2013. Details about all of our volumes may be found on our website, under Publications.

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NEWS IN BRIEF: >>

- >> New Appointments of Mandel Fellows: Dr. Aynat Rubinstein and Dr. Eviatar Shulman have been appointed to tenure-track positions at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Dr. Karin Nisenbaum and Dr. Shai Secunda have been appointed to professorships in New York State — at Colgate University and Bard College, respectively.
- >> Research group for 2017–2020: Our academic committee selected, out of a number of proposals, one that will address diachrony and formal semantics and their roles in recurrent patterns of semantic change. The group’s four members, all of them on the faculty of HUJI, will be joined by four doctoral students, to be chosen, as usual, in the wake of another call for applicants during the coming winter.
- >> Prizes and Fellowships: Congratulations to Peter Zilberg, of the “Question of Identity” group, who received the prestigious Rotenstreich doctoral fellowship, and to several members of the “Emergence of Modern Hebrew” group: Miri Bar-Ziv Levy, who received the Morag Prize for the study of modern Hebrew; Einat Keren, who was accepted into the Harry and Sylvia Hoffman Leadership and Responsibility Program for doctoral students; and Prof. Edit Doron, who received the Israel Prize in Linguistics.
- >> Changes in the administrative staff: Two long-time members of Mandel Scholion’s administrative staff were promoted to new positions in the University: Maya Sherman, our administrative director for the past six years, was appointed coordinator of the America, Asia and the Pacific desk at the Authority for Research and Development, and Eti Nahmany, our senior secretary for the past seven years, was appointed finance and human resources assistant at the Pre-Academic Mechina. Keren Sagi, who coordinated the Franz Rosenzweig Center for the past eight years, was appointed our new executive director, and Liron Hershkowitz who was hitherto academic secretary at the Efrata College, was appointed senior secretary. We wish all four of them much success in their new positions.

SAVE THE DATES

- January 2–5, 2017:** Concluding international conference of the “Question of Identity” research group.
- January 12, 2017:** The annual Mandel Fellows lecture marathon.
- June 5-7, 2017:** An international conference on “Prophetic Urgency from Romanticism to the Contemporary,” organized by Mandel Fellow Dr. Yosefa Raz.

For additional information please visit our website.