

The British Association for Jewish Studies  
Annual Conference 2015

# Atheism, Scepticism and Challenges to Monotheism



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5-7 July 2015 The University of Manchester



In cooperation with the Centre for Jewish Studies and the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at The University of Manchester, and the Institut für Jüdische Philosophie und Religion, Universität Hamburg

[www.britishjewishstudies.org](http://www.britishjewishstudies.org)

# BAJS Conference 2015

Atheism, Scepticism, and Challenges to Monotheism  
 5-7 July 2015, Manchester Meeting Place (formally Staff House), The University of Manchester



<b>SUNDAY 5 JULY</b>			
4.00-6.30pm Registration at The Pendulum Hotel (note: daily registration will also take place at the main conference venue, Manchester Meeting Place, from 8.30am)			
5.00-6.30pm Rylands Library Judaica collection presentation with Peter Pormann (Director, John Rylands Research Institute) and Renate Smithuis (Lecturer in Medieval Jewish Studies), and <i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> reception with George Brooke (co-editor of <i>JSS</i> ) (optional)			
6.30pm Dinner at Eastzeast restaurant (optional)			
<b>MONDAY 6 JULY</b>			
	<b>Room 1</b>	<b>Room 2</b>	<b>Room 3</b>
<b>9.00am, session 1</b>	<p><i>A. Bible, Ancient, Classical</i>                      Chair: George Brooke</p> <p>Satire, Monotheism, and Skepticism. Joshua L. Moss, American Hebrew Academy, USA</p> <p>What Shall We Do with Devout Idolaters? Jeremiah 44 Reconsidered. Ruth Fidler, The University of Haifa, Israel</p>	<p><i>C. Modern and Contemporary</i>                      Chair: Nathan Abrams</p> <p>Challenges to monotheism in a post-secular age: an analysis of religious-identity narratives of Orthodox and previously Orthodox Israelis. Ari Engelberg, Hebrew University, Israel</p> <p>When Rabbis Lose Faith: Twelve rabbis tell their stories about their loss of belief in God. Paul Shrell-Fox, The Schechter Institute for Jewish</p>	<p><i>D. Philosophy and Theology</i>                      Chair: Philip Alexander</p> <p>Idoloclasm: The First Task of Second Wave Jewish Feminist Theology. Melissa Raphael, University of Gloucestershire</p> <p>Textualism and Skepticism Post-modern Philosophy and the Theology of Text. Federico Dal Bo, Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Germany</p>

		Studies, Israel	Rejecting the Path but Grappling with the God: The Resistance to Atheism in Women's "Off-the-Derech" Memoirs. Karen E.H. Skinazi, University of Birmingham	Joseph Krauskopf's <i>Evolution and Judaism: One Reform Rabbi's Response to Scepticism and Materialism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century North America</i> . Daniel Langton, University of Manchester
<b>10.30am, coffee break in The Hub</b>				
<b>11.00am, session 2</b>	<i>A. Bible, Ancient, Classical</i> <i>Chair: Charlotte Hempel</i>	Atheism in Jewish antiquity. Sarah Pearce, University of Southampton	Sun and Angels Worship in eastern Jewish Communities of the Roman Empire: from Monotheism to Henotheism? Maureen Attali, Paris IV, La Sorbonne University, France	<i>D. Philosophy and Theology</i> <i>Chair: Alex Samely</i>
		<i>F. Jewish Studies: Communicating knowledge</i> <i>Chair: Simon Mayers</i>	Irish newspapers, journals and other popular press' opinions on the 1948 Palestine War. Stephen Oliver Murray, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland	From Monotheism to Scepticism. Kenneth Seeskin, Northwestern University, USA
			The <i>Common English Bible</i> (2011) and the Limits of Modern Bible Translation. Jonathan G. Campbell, University of Bristol	The Attenuation of God in Modern Jewish Thought. Norman Solomon, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
			The Judaica Project: For a Laboratory Ethics (Dance). Ben Spatz, University of Huddersfield	Jewish Scepticism: The <i>Status Quaestionis</i> . Giuseppe Veltri, Hamburg University, Germany
<b>12.30, lunch in The Mumford Restaurant</b>				
<b>1.30pm, session 3</b>	<i>B. Medieval and Early Modern</i> <i>Chair: Giuseppe Veltri</i>	"I command you, Do not engage yourself with Logic": Reevaluation of Rabbi Hayya Gaon's attitude toward Greek philosophy. Zvi Stampfer, University of Cambridge	<i>C. Modern and Contemporary</i> <i>Chair: Zuleika Rodgers</i>	<i>E. Literature and Film</i> <i>Chair: Melissa Raphael</i>
			Ritual, spirituality and secularization. Kate Miriam Loewenthal, Royal Holloway, University of London	"Why the Geese Shrieked" - Isaac Bashevis Singer's Work between Mysticism and Scepticism. Khayke Beruriah Wiegand, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

	<p>"Too Grand a Scene to be Denied" - Jacob Anatoli (c. 1194-1256) on Truth, Doubt and Certainty in his Sermon on the Ten Commandments. Renate Smithuis, University of Manchester</p> <p>Doubting Abraham doubting God - The Call of Abraham in the <i>Or ha-Sekhel</i>. Benjamin Williams, JRR1, University of Manchester</p>	<p><i>Beit Shirah</i>: Atheists and song in the contemporary progressive Jewish synagogue services. Barbara Borts, Rabbi of Darlington Hebrew Congregation</p>	<p>Atheism and Skepticism in the Poetry of Paul Celan. Dorit Lemberger, Bar-Ilan University, Israel</p> <p>Stanley Kubrick's 'agnostic prayer': 2001: A Space Odyssey. Nathan Abrams, Bangor University</p>
<b>3.00pm, coffee break in The Hub</b>			
<b>3.30pm, Plenary session: Keynote Lecture by David Ruderman: Plenary room 4/5 (chair: Daniel Langton)</b>			
<b>5.15pm, AGM: Plenary room 4/5</b>			
<b>6.30pm, Conference dinner in The Mumford Restaurant (optional)</b>			
<b>TUESDAY 7 JULY</b>			
	<b>Room 1</b>	<b>Room 2</b>	<b>Room 3</b>
<b>9.00am, session 4</b>	<p><i>B. Medieval and Early Modern</i> Chair: Renate Smithuis</p> <p>The Jews and their Doubts. Anti-Jewish Polemics and Christian Apologetics in the <i>Fascicolo delle vanità giudaiche</i> (1583) by</p>	<p><i>D. Philosophy and Theology</i> Chair: Kenneth Seeskin</p> <p>Spinoza, Jewish Studies, and the Theology of Reading. Alex Samely, University of Manchester</p>	<p><i>F. Jewish Studies: Panel on Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology. Chair: James Renton</i></p> <p>Zygmunt Bauman, Postmodern Sociology, and the Ambivalence of Anti-Semitism. Jonathan Judaken, Rhodes College, USA</p>

	<p>Antonino Stabili. <i>Martina Mampieri, University of "Roma Tre", Italy</i></p> <p>Metatron Revisited: Binitarian Overtones in the Kabbalah of Nathan Neta Shapira of Krakow. Agata Paluch, The British Library</p> <p>Scepticism and Politics in Simone Luzzatto's <i>Discourse on the State of the Jews</i> (Venice, 1638). Anna Lissa, University of Hamburg, Germany</p>	<p>The Anti-Christ and the Anti-Moses: Nietzsche, Spinoza and the Possibility of Sacriligious Beatitude. Jeremy Fogel, Tel Aviv University, Israel</p> <p>Kaplan and Wittgenstein: atheism, phenomenology and the use of language. Michael T. Miller, University of Nottingham</p>	<p>Émile Durkheim's Sociology and French Antisemitism. Chad Alan Goldberg, University of Wisconsin, USA</p> <p>Why the positivist attempt to save modernity from itself can mean bad news for the Jews. Marcel Stoetzler, Bangor University</p>
<p><b>10.30am, coffee break in The Hub</b></p>			
<p><b>11.00am, session 5</b></p>	<p><i>B. Medieval and Early Modern</i> Chair: Ben Williams</p> <p>Shim'i the Skeptical: Skeptical attitudes in early modern Jewish Anti-Christian polemical writings. Karoly Daniel Dobos, Pazmany Peter Catholic University, Hungary</p> <p>The "If" of doubt, the "Maybe": On some expressions of epistemic uncertainty in Hebrew poetry of the Baroque era. Yehoshua Granat, Hebrew University, Israel</p> <p>Polytheism, syncretism and Judaism of the Jews at Elephantine: Ashim and Kherem Betel as secondary deities. Eulàlia Vernet, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain</p>	<p><i>Postgraduate masterclass with David Ruderman</i> Chair: Daniel Langton</p>	<p><i>F. Jewish Studies: Jewish Law</i> Chair: Bernard Jackson</p> <p>Breaking the Commandments of God for the Sake of Our Tradition: The Rabbinic 'Supremacy Clause' in Historical Perspective. Holger Zellentin, University of Nottingham</p> <p>The Golden Rule(s) of Love: the Two or the One? Alex Tal, University of Haifa, Israel</p> <p>Challenges to Jewish Law in Times of Transition: Rethinking Parenthood Concepts. Avshalom Westreich, College of Law and Business, Ramat Gan, Israel</p>
<p><b>12.30pm, lunch in the Mumford Restaurant</b></p>			

<p><b>1.30pm, session 6</b></p>	<p><i>C. Modern and Contemporary</i> <i>Chair: Holger Zellentin</i></p> <p>Unveiling the Christianity of European Secularism; or, is a Jewish Secularism Possible? Lucien Wolf, Sylvain Lévi and Leon Trotsky. James Renton, Edge Hill University</p> <p>"This is the time, not for psalms, but for arms". Atheism, messianism, and revolution in the Pale. Piotr Laskowski, University of Warsaw, Poland</p>	<p><i>D. Philosophy and Theology</i> <i>Chair: Maria Cioata</i></p> <p>Is Apophatic Theology the same as Atheism? An Answer from Judaism. Philip Alexander, University of Manchester</p> <p>Gershon Scholem: Scholar between Atheism and Secularism. Rosa Reicher, University of Heidelberg, Germany</p> <p>Secular theology as a challenge for Jewish Atheists. Avner Dinur, Sapir College, Israel</p>	<p><i>F. Jewish Studies: Interfaith</i> <i>Chair: Helen Spurling</i></p> <p>Representations of Jews and Judaism in the Works of the Methodist theologian Adam Clarke (1762-1832). Simon Mayers, University of Manchester</p> <p>A comparison of recent Jewish critiques of the state of Israel and Christian anti-Jewish polemic and its implications for Jewish identity. William Evans, University of Birmingham</p> <p>Global conflict, local peace? Jewish-Muslim relations in the UK. Yulia Egorova, Durham University</p>
<p><b>3.00pm, coffee break in The Hub</b></p>			
<p><b>3.30pm, session 7</b></p>	<p><i>C. Modern and Contemporary</i> <i>Chair: Marcel Stoetzler</i></p> <p>Philosophy, Science, Secularism and Hasidism: the Tzemaḥ Tzedek's <i>Sefer HaHakirah</i> and its later echoes in Habad. Naftali Loewenthal, University College London</p> <p>Reflections of an Atheist Jew. Leonard Mars, Swansea University</p> <p>Creation as coincidence? Religion versus science in Yiddish anarchist reasoning. Lilian Türk, University of Hamburg, Germany</p>	<p><i>E. Literature and Film</i> <i>Chair: Marton Ribary</i></p> <p>יָעַל דַּעַם הַקִּדְוָה: Yom Kippur in modern Israeli Hebrew literature. Tamar S. Drukker, SOAS</p> <p>Judaism and Atheism in the work of the Czech 20th century novelist Ivan Olbracht. Martin Boryšek, University of Cambridge</p>	<p><i>D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law</i> <i>Chair: Jan Lorenz</i></p> <p>'Religious Agnosticism': Judah L. Magnes between Bertrand Russell and William James. David Barak-Gorodetsky, University of Haifa, Israel</p> <p>The Desirable Lenient Policy Concerning Conversion to Judaism: The Relationship between Acceptance of the Jewish Commandments and Religious and Philosophical Scepticism. Yehiel Kaplan, University of Haifa, Israel</p>



**BAJS Conference 2015**  
**Atheism, Scepticism, and Challenges to Monotheism**  
**5-7 July 2015, The University of Manchester**

This conference is hosted by the British Association for Jewish Studies, in cooperation with the Centre for Jewish Studies and the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester, and with the Institut für Jüdische Philosophie und Religion, Universität Hamburg.

**Conference theme**

Jews from across a wide spectrum of perspectives have wrestled with the questions posed by atheism and scepticism. Since, arguably, atheism is not recognised in the Hebrew Bible, the related theme of ‘challenges to Jewish monotheism’ is suggested with regard to the ancient world. Philosophical scepticism and atheism (in both theory and practice) raise questions for Jews about the nature of authority, modes of enquiry and textual analysis, intellectual exchange with non-Jewish culture (including polemics), and shifting conceptions of heresy, nonconformity, and irreligion. What is the relationship in the Jewish imagination between atheism and scepticism? What are the limits of scepticism in rabbinic thought and methodology? What does it mean to be an atheistic Jew? How have Jews engaged with historical-critical and scientific discourse? There have been many different Jewish responses to such questions, ranging from stout defences of monotheistic Judaism, to radical reformulations of Jewish religion, to theological resignation and apostasy, to the establishment of alternative universalist systems of thought by ostensibly non-Jewish Jews. These responses, which include the varieties of Jewish religion but also non-religious ways of being Jewish, appear in many different forms including philosophical, theological, sociological, psychological, legal, mystical, and literary genres.

We welcome contributions from all periods and regions, whether narrowly focused or broadly contextual, synthetic or analytical. The intention of this interdisciplinary conference is to encourage contributions on any issues relating to the engagement of Jews with atheistic and sceptical worldviews for the purpose of understanding Jewish culture and history. The expectation is that the conference will result in an edited collection of essays on this theme. As ever, the annual conference will include papers

that fall outside of the conference theme, and we encourage colleagues to submit abstract proposals for such papers.

### **Timetable**

The academic programme will run from 9am Monday 6 until 5pm Tuesday 7 July, although there will be a (optional) kosher wine reception at the John Rylands Library on the evening of Sunday 5 July and an (optional) opportunity to eat together later that evening.

### **Conference venues**

The venue for the conference is the **Manchester Meeting Place** (formerly Staff House, University of Manchester, Sackville Street Campus, Manchester, M1 3AL), which is a 5 minute walk from Piccadilly Station. On Sunday night there will be an optional tour at **John Rylands Library Deansgate** (150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH), and an optional meal at the **EastzEast Restaurant** (Princess Street, Manchester, M1 7DG). The Monday conference dinner will be held in the **Mumford Restaurant**, at the Manchester Meeting Place.

### **Registration**

Conference registration will take place as follows:

Sunday 5 July, 4.00pm-6.30pm: The Pendulum Hotel

Monday 6 July: 8.30am-9.00am: Manchester Meeting Place

Tuesday 7 July: 8.30am-9.00am: Manchester Meeting Place

You will be provided with a conference badge and a delegate pack, including Wi-Fi information. The registration fee includes attendance at all sessions in the academic programme (Monday and Tuesday), and the daily refreshments and lunches; it also includes the wine reception on the Sunday evening. It excludes the evening meals, which you should have booked as an optional item when you registered. Please note that there are many restaurants and cafes near the main venue. All participants registered as BAJA members should have paid their 2015 fees.

### **Accommodation**

If you have booked campus accommodation all rooms are located in either Weston Hall (Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3BB) and Pendulum Hotel (Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3BB) and are en-suite. To book additional nights in either location, delegates should phone +44 (0)161 9558000, or email [stay@pendulumhotel.co.uk](mailto:stay@pendulumhotel.co.uk). Please note: these options include breakfast, but not a kosher option. Wi-Fi and internet connections can be arranged at the desk.

Check-in is from 2.00pm on your day of arrival and check-out is 11am. The reception desk is open 24 hours per day.

## **Refreshments, lunches and evening meals**

Refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits) and lunches are included in the registration fee. Standard options include meat, fish, and vegetarian, and you were given an opportunity to indicate special dietary requirements, including kosher, on the registration form.

Evening meals are optional and are not included in the registration fee. On Sunday 5 July, the evening meal will be at halal Indian restaurant EastzEast (with meat or vegetarian options and one soft-drink included). On Monday 6 July, the conference dinner will be held in the Mumford Restaurant in the main conference venue (with vegetarian or kosher options); there will be bottle bar available, with wine, beer, lager, soft drinks. It is necessary to have booked these meals in advance, when registering for the conference.

## **Car Parking**

The Charles Street car park is a chargeable multi-storey car park available for conference delegates. Drivers using this car park should collect a ticket on entry and pay at one of the machines prior to collecting their vehicle at the end of the day. The car park is located at the junction of Charles Street and Sackville Street (postcode: M1 3BB). Up to 3 hours £3. Up to 6 hours £5. Up to 10 hours £8. Up to 24 hours £10. After 4pm and weekends £2.

## **Railway stations**

Oxford Road and Piccadilly stations are within walking distance of the main conference venue.

## **Presentations**

Each room will be equipped with a computer connected to a data projector and screen. PowerPoint is available in all the rooms. The computers will be connected to the internet, but will require wifi login. Please bring a copy of your presentation on a USB/data stick. The use of private laptops is discouraged. We will provide all conference delegates with a temporary username and password for access to the University of Manchester Wi-Fi. This will only be available for use during the conference and will only work at the Manchester Meeting Place.

Sending presentations in advance: You are welcome to email your slides to [cjs@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:cjs@manchester.ac.uk) before Monday 29 June 2015 and we will load your presentation on to the computer in advance.

Loading presentations at the conference: If you have sent your presentation in advance, then we will load your presentation on to the computer for you and set it up ready before your session starts. If you do not send your presentation in advance you will need to make your way to the room at least 10 minutes before the session starts. This will help us move quickly from one presentation to another. If you do not load

your presentation in advance, session chairs will take setting up time out of the time allocated for your presentation.

Handouts: Please bring all copies of your handouts; there will not be facilities for photocopying them at the venue.

In most sessions there will be three 20 minute presentations, each with 10 minutes for questions. It is important that you keep your presentations to 20 minutes, to allow time for questions. We will have to chair sessions very tightly so please make sure you keep to time.

### **Cancellations**

If you need to cancel your place after booking, please contact [cjs@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:cjs@manchester.ac.uk). The University of Manchester is able to offer the following refunds: Received before Monday 8 June 2015: full refund. Received after Monday 8 June and before Monday 22 June 2015: 50% refund. Received after Monday 22 June 2015: no refund

### **Contacts**

Accommodation (The Pendulum Hotel and Weston Hall)

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**Keynote Speaker: David Ruderman**

**Are Jews the Only True Monotheists? Some Critical Reflections in Jewish Thought from the Renaissance to the Present**



Monotheism, by simple definition, implies a belief in one God for all peoples, not one particular nation. The Jews might have claimed the privilege of conceiving and bringing the doctrine to the world in its original form, but ultimately, it is only meaningful when it transcends its own particular socio-religious setting, when it addresses the condition of all human beings and all cultures. But as the *Shemah* prayer recalls, God spoke exclusively to Israel in insisting that God is one. This address came to define the essential nature of the Jewish faith, setting it apart from all other faiths both in the pre-modern and modern worlds.

My paper explores the positions of a variety of thinkers on the question of the exclusive status of monotheism in Judaism from the Renaissance until the present day. I begin with the challenge offered to Judaism by the Renaissance thinker Pico della Mirandola and his notion of ancient theology, arguing for a common core of belief among all nations and cultures. I first explore the impact of this universal philosophy of Christianity on a group of early modern Jewish thinkers, consider its developments in the periods of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century both in Western and Eastern Europe, as well as in more recent Jewish thought until our day. Of course the claim that the Jews are the sole possessors of the monotheistic idea was directly related to the ontological status of the non-Jew in Jewish thought. The theological quandary was intimately linked to the social question of how Jews were to relate to the religious other. Were Moslems and Christians, as opposed to pagan idolaters, monotheists as well, and if so, in what way was the Jewish version of monotheism superior to that of its sister faiths? Moreover, if Jews shared the same belief with other religions, what compelled them to maintain their separate religious identity rather than to embrace a common humanity, Pico's ultimate ideal?

I close with some reflections on the fate of the preoccupation with the exclusive status of Jewish monotheism among some post-denominational Jewish thinkers in our own present day. For some, the notion of one God is no longer the private treasure of the Jewish people; rather it is their gift to all humankind and binds them rather than

separates them from their fellow human-beings. Following this line of thinking, Pico's vision of ancient theology appears all the more satisfying, connecting the best of Jewish ideas with Christian ones and justifying a fellowship of merged faith and mingled identities.

## **Biography**

David B. Ruderman is the Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History.

Professor Ruderman is the author of, among other works, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science: The Cultural Universe of a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Physician* (1988), *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (2000), which won the Koret Award for the best book in Jewish History in 2001, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (1995, 2001), which has been published in Italian, Russian, and Hebrew, and *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (2010), which received the National Jewish Book Award in History in 2011. He co-edited with Giuseppe Veltri *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy* (2004) and with Shmuel Feiner *Early Modern Culture and the Haskalah: Reconsidering the Borderlines of Modern Jewish History* (2007).

Professor Ruderman was educated at the City College of New York and Columbia University. He received his rabbinical degree from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1971, and his Ph.D. in Jewish History from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, in 1975. He held the Frederick P. Rose Chair of Jewish History at Yale University (1983-94), where he was instrumental in establishing the Judaic studies program. From 1994 until 2014 he was the Ella Darivoff Director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He was awarded the Charles Ludwig Distinguished Teaching Award at the University of Pennsylvania in 2008.

Professor Ruderman has served on the board and as vice-president of the Association of Jewish Studies, and on the boards of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Journal of Reform Judaism, the Renaissance Society of America, and the World Union of Jewish Studies. He also chaired the Publications Committee of the Yale Judaic Series, published by Yale University Press (1984-94). He served as president of the American Academy for Jewish Research between 2000 and 2004. He has been the editor of the Katz Center's series in Judaic studies called "Jewish culture and contexts" since its inception and is now its co-editor. He has been a visiting professor at many institutions in the USA, Israel and Europe, and was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University and at the American Academy in Berlin. In 2001 the National Foundation for Jewish Culture honored him with its lifetime achievement award for his work in Jewish history.

## Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester

### *History*

The University of Manchester<sup>1</sup> has a distinguished record in the research and teaching of Jewish and Biblical Studies, beginning with the Talmudic scholar Tobias Theodores who taught Biblical Hebrew from 1866.<sup>2</sup> Other prominent individuals include the biblical scholar James Barr and the historian and scholar of Semitic languages, Edward Ullendorff. Modern Hebrew has featured prominently, with language and literature specialists such as Meir Wallenstein, who chaired the city's *Tarbut* Society, and, more recently, Leon Yudkin. In fact, Manchester was amongst the earliest to teach modern Hebrew from the 1930s and was the first UK university to offer a BA degree in modern Hebrew (one of the two first graduates was David Patterson in 1949); it published the modern Hebrew language journal of Jewish Studies, *Melilah* from 1944 to 1955.

The University has long-established links with the local Jewish community, which dates back to the 1780s and remains the largest in the UK outside London. Over the years many Jewish scholars have taught at the University, a number of whom were closely involved with the Zionist movement.<sup>3</sup> Chaim Weizmann lectured on chemistry and Weizmann's contemporary, the eminent philosopher Samuel Alexander, introduced him to Balfour. The modern historian, Sir Lewis Namier, was also active in assisting Weizmann. Philip Hartog, a fervent anti-Zionist, was lecturer in Chemistry (leaving to become academic registrar of London University, just before Weizmann arrived). There were very strong connections to the Manchester Reform congregation; in addition to Theodores and Hartog, Gustav Gottheil, who was rabbi of the synagogue 1860-1873, taught German, and Laurence Mark Simmons, who was rabbi 1878-1900, taught oriental languages.<sup>4</sup> Two other important scholars resident in the city were the Sephardi *hacham* and Zionist leader Moses Gaster, much of whose collection of manuscripts is now held the University library, and the Orthodox rabbi and historian, Alexander Altmann, who established in 1941 the non-affiliated Institution for Higher Jewish Education.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Tobias Theodores: The Founding Father of Jewish Studies at Manchester**

Tobias Theodores (1808-1886) was born in Margulin in the Prussian province of Posen, he had grown up in Berlin at the time of the radical reform movement led by Israel Jacobson, and had come to England as a youth. After an early career as an itinerant language teacher, was appointed in 1851 to a teaching post in German at Owens College, which had been established the same year. From 1866 he was Professor of German (until 1871), of French (until 1880), and of Hebrew (until 1884). Among his publications were an *Introductory Lecture on the Study of Arabic and Hebrew* (1860) and a lecture on 'The Talmud' in *Essays and Addresses by Professors and Lecturers of the Owens College* (1873). He was a frequent contributor of essays and translations relating to various aspects of *halakhah* to

the journal *Hebrew Review and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature* which was published 1834-1836; among other things he addressed such subjects as 'Morality of the Talmud' (1834), which was in large part of a translation of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and 'On the Administration of Justice in the Hebrew Commonwealth' (1836). Theodore was a polemicist who was keen to use scholarship to good social effect, publishing critiques of the blood libel in the Jewish press in the aftermath of the Damascus Affair, and attacking suggestions in the mainstream press that Jews were not fit to sit in Parliament. As a key figure of the Manchester Reform Synagogue, established in 1856, Theodore was instrumental in having the Hungarian rabbi Solomon Schiller-Szinessy appointed as its first minister, and was a close associate of the German-American Reform rabbi Gustav Gottheil (1827-1903).

### ***The Centre for Jewish Studies***

The present Centre for Jewish Studies was established in 1996 when the existing provision was strengthened by the creation of the Alliance Chair in Modern Jewish Studies. It connects staff located in the subject areas of Middle Eastern Studies,<sup>6</sup> Religions and Theology,<sup>7</sup> German, History, Linguistics, and East European Studies.<sup>8</sup> Currently, there are five postgraduate fellows,<sup>9</sup> and recent visiting fellows from abroad have included the Talmudic scholar Natalie Polzer (Louiseville, USA) and the historian of Anglo-Jewry Wang Benli (Suzhou, China). The most recent addition to the list of honorary fellows is Rabbi David Rue, chief justice of the *Beit Din* of Los Angeles, who is working with the Centre on the topic of the *Agunah* problem. There are currently 14 doctoral students in the area of Jewish Studies.<sup>10</sup>

The Centre is largely reliant on external funding for many of its research projects; in the year 2013-14 it managed c.£930,000 in grants, excluding RCUK postdoctoral fellowships. The areas in which the Centre has research strength include Classical Judaism, Medieval Judaism and Jewish/Non-Jewish relations, Modern Jewish history, culture and literature, Modern Jewish/Non-Jewish relations, Holocaust, Modern Israeli society, history and political thought, and Modern Jewish thought (Britain, France, Germany, Israel). A selection of current externally-funded research projects include Corpses of Mass Violence (in collaboration with Ecole des Hautes Etudes des Sciences Sociales, Paris; European Research Council, 2012-16); Darwin's Jews (Leverhulme, 2013-15); Catalogue of Codices, Scrolls, and Other Texts in Hebrew Script in the University of Manchester Library (anonymous Jewish foundation, 2015-18); Translation of Abulafia's Secrets of the Torah in the Kabbalistic Library of Pico della Mirandola (British Academy, 2014-15); Anti-Semitism and Articulations of National Identity in Hungarian Film, 1931-44 (Leverhulme, 2012-15); Moses Gaster: Eclectic Scholar (British Academy, 2013-16); Reading the Bible in the Ottoman Empire (Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, 2014-17); Conversion to Judaism in Contemporary Poland conducted (anonymous Jewish Foundation, 2014-15). Centre

members edit or co-edit *Journal of Semitic Studies*, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, *Studia Judaica* monograph series, and *Melilah: Journal of Jewish Studies*.

In terms of teaching, the Centre has tended to focus on integrating Jewish Studies course options into a wide variety of degree programmes in the humanities, such as religious studies, history and Middle Eastern studies. For last year (2013-14), the total number of enrolments in around 20 undergraduate Jewish Studies classes was more than 400, while the total number of enrolments in 5 masters-level classes was 26.

With regard to outreach and wider engagement, the Centre offers two annual public lecture series, namely, the Sherman Lectures in Jewish Studies and the Bogdanow Lectures in Holocaust Studies,<sup>11</sup> and a research seminar series open to the public that for the last three years has focused on Israel Studies. It maintains close relations with the Manchester Jewish Museum as a venue for academic talks and as a partner for collaborative doctoral studentships using its extensive oral history collection, and, in cooperation with the Imperial War Museum North, it organises an annual Holocaust workshop day, catering for teacher training and a general audience. The Centre remains closely associated with the local Jewish Community and is a constitutive member of the Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester.

### ***Judaica and Hebraica***

The John Rylands Library is one of the largest academic libraries in the UK and some highlights for Jewish Studies include: the *Hebrew Manuscripts Collection* comprising 10,600 fragments from the Genizah of the Synagogue of Elijah in Old Cairo together with 400 codices; the *Haskalah Collection*, a unique collection of around 900 volumes in Hebrew and other languages from the East European Jewish Enlightenment movement; the *Teltscher Collection* which contains some 650 items in English, Hebrew, Latin, German and Czech, ranging in date from the 1550s to the late twentieth century; the *Marmorstein Collection* which is especially rich in classical rabbinic texts and in East European *responsa* printed in Hebrew, English, Hungarian and other languages; and the *Gaster Collection* of a wide variety of manuscripts, including Samaritan materials. In addition to such holdings in the JRL, there is the Bill Williams Library of Modern Jewish history comprising around 4500 volumes.

### ***News on Modern Hebrew Studies***

In 2014-15, the University found itself at the centre of an international protest when a number of degree programmes in the subject area of Middle Eastern Studies, including a BA(Hons) in Hebrew and Israel Studies, and a number of course units, including undergraduate Modern Hebrew, were withdrawn and/or phased out. Support for the Manchester academics who argued in favour of continuing the provision of undergraduate Hebrew language teaching was received from a wide variety of individuals, learned societies, and subject associations, with the BAJIS online petition receiving over 1000 signatures from 45 countries within 10 days. It is therefore with great pleasure that the Centre can now report that management has agreed recently that the credit-bearing undergraduate teaching of Modern Hebrew at all levels will continue (albeit in a reduced capacity), on condition that it be partly paid

for by external funding. As a result, among other things, the Centre is currently developing an innovative hybrid approach to language learning that will facilitate the virtual participation of individuals from around the country in regular classes in Modern Hebrew at Manchester. While disappointed that the withdrawn degrees will not be restored, the Centre is extremely grateful for the assistance that BAJS (and in particular its Secretary, Helen Spurling) and others provided, especially considering the inauspicious economic circumstances and the practical and ideological challenges that face university language teaching in the UK more generally.

Daniel Langton and Alex Samely  
Co-directors, Centre for Jewish Studies  
[www.manchesterjewishstudies.org](http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org)

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<sup>1</sup> The Victoria University of Manchester was established in 1880 and its forerunner, Owens College, was established in 1851.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the history of Jewish Studies in the UK, and Manchester's place in the story, see Daniel R. Langton, 'Wandering Jews in England's Green and Pleasant Land: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in an Anglo-Jewish Context' in *Wissenschaft des Judentums in Europe: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, eds. C. Wiese and M. Thulin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> For Manchester's contribution to the history of Zionism, see the online exhibition Manchester and Zionism: [www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/manchester-and-zionism/](http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/manchester-and-zionism/)

<sup>4</sup> Inexplicably, the University did not employ Solomon Schiller-Szinessy, who was the Manchester Reform synagogue's first rabbi from 1856-1860 and who went on to become Reader of Talmud and Rabbinical Literature at Cambridge, or Abraham Wolf, the congregation's rabbi from 1901-1907, an expert in Spinoza who went on to become professor of Logic and Scientific Method at UCL.

<sup>5</sup> This became the Institute for Jewish Studies in 1953, which was relocated to UCL when Altmann moved to Brandeis University in 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Moshe Behar (Israeli and Middle Eastern Studies), Sophie Garside (Hebrew and Israel Studies), John Healy FBA (emeritus, Semitic Studies), Malka Hodgson (Hebrew) and Alex Samely (Jewish Thought).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Alexander FBA (emeritus, Post-Biblical Literature), George Brooke (Biblical Criticism and Exegesis), Adrian Curtis (ret, Biblical Hebrew), Dan Garner (Jewish Studies), Bernard Jackson (emeritus, Law and Modern Jewish Studies), Daniel Langton (History of Jewish-Christian Relations), Renate Smithuis (Medieval Jewish Studies), and Bill Williams (ret, Local Jewish History).

<sup>8</sup> Cathy Gelbin (German Studies), Jean-Marc Dreyfus (Holocaust Studies), Yaron Matras (Linguistics) and Ewa Ochman (East European Studies).

<sup>9</sup> Currently these include: Maria Cioată (British Academy: Moses Gaster's Collections, Biography and Archives), Gábor Gergely (Leverhulme: Anti-Semitism and Articulations of National Identity in Hungarian film 1931-44), Jan Lorenz (anonymous Jewish foundation: Conversions to Judaism in Contemporary Poland), Katharina Keim (British Academy: Samaritan Correspondence of Moses Gaster), Ben Williams (Leverhulme: Sixteenth Century Jewish Bible Interpretation).

<sup>10</sup> These currently include: Kyung Baek, *The Gospel of Matthew and Rewritten Bible*; Victoria Biggs, *Storytelling, Community, and Memory among Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Youth*; Julianne Burnett, *Was Moses a Magician?* Edmund Chapman, *Afterlives: Benjamin, Derrida and Literature in Translation*; Peter Choi, *The Reception of Leviticus in Second Temple Jewish Literature*; Eyal Clyne, *Orientalism in Israeli Academia*; Marci Freedman, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*; Izabella Goldstein, *Songs of the Jewish Underworld in Pre-World War Two Warsaw*; Jan Gryta, *The Politics of Memory and Jewish Heritage: Warsaw - Krakow - Lodz after 1989*; Jarod Jacobs, *The Hebrew Language of the 'Biblical' Dead Sea Scrolls*; Jessica Keady, *Purity and the Community of the Dead Sea Scroll*; Michelle Magin, *The Three Faces of Germany: Secondary School Holocaust Education Programs in Pre- and Post-unification Germany*; Marton Ribary, *Legal abstraction in Roman and Rabbinic law*; Tereza Ward, *Social and Religious Jewish Non-conformity: Representations of the Anglo-Jewish Experience in the Oral Testimony Archive of the Manchester Jewish Museum*.

<sup>11</sup> In 2014-15, the Shermans were given by Amy-Jill Levine (Vanderbilt University) and the Bogdanows by Christopher Browning (North Carolina at Chapel Hill).



**BAJS Conference 2015**  
**Atheism, Scepticism, and Challenges to Monotheism**  
**5-7 July 2015, The University of Manchester**

**ABSTRACTS**  
**(alphabetical by surname)**

**Individual Papers**

E. Literature and Film

**Stanley Kubrick's 'agnostic prayer': *2001: A Space Odyssey*.**

Nathan Abrams, Bangor University [n.abrams@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:n.abrams@bangor.ac.uk)

*2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) marks a major turning point in director Stanley Kubrick's oeuvre. Not only was it his first solely-helmed film in colour, but also it indicates what can only be described as a 'religious' turn. This is not to say that Kubrick had become religiously observant in any conventional or orthodox sense – indeed, he did not practice anything – but rather that this film became much more of an experience akin to religion, specifically Judaism. Kubrick described *2001* as 'the first six-million dollar religious film.' He also insisted that 'the God concept' lay at the heart of the film and that he had tried to achieve 'a scientific definition of God.' Yet, in what was surely an act of misdirection, he also described it, somewhat paradoxically, as his 'agnostic prayer.' Consequently, many have seen it both as Kubrick's most secular and most religious film. Its religiosity, and lack of it, has been picked up by critics and scholars alike. Yet, their interpretations, when they have been theological, have been overwhelmingly Christian. Arthur C. Clarke, who co-wrote the screenplay with Kubrick, indicated the absurdity of such readings when he wrote: 'People are telling Stanley and me things we didn't realize were in the movie. A theological student said he saw the Signs of the Cross – and he may have, which would have been interesting, since Stanley is a Jew and I'm an atheist.' In contrast, in this paper, I will present a Jewish/Judaic reading of the film to argue that where there had been hints and allusions to Jewish history and culture, in particular the Bible, in Kubrick's previous works none were as developed or extended as to what was to appear in *2001*.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Is Apophatic Theology the same as Atheism? An Answer from Judaism**

Philip Alexander, University of Manchester [philip.alexander@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:philip.alexander@manchester.ac.uk)

Cleanthes in Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* poses the question: 'How do mystics, who maintain the absolute incomprehensibility of the Deity differ from sceptics or

atheists who assert that the first cause of all is unknown and unintelligible?’ In conversation with the English philosopher John Cottingham, this paper will attempt to answer this question from the perspective of Judaism. It will survey and analyse the apophatic tradition in Judaism, from the aniconism of the Tanakh to the apophaticism of the medieval philosophers and Qabbalists, and argue that what makes this different from atheism is the concept of a mitzvah. The unknowable God issues commandments and the Jew responds in obedience. Thus the old adage that Judaism is an orthopraxy rather than an orthodoxy is not simply an apologetic invention of Mendelssohn, but turns out to be profoundly truer than many suppose.

A. Bible, Ancient, Classical

**Sun and Angels Worship in eastern Jewish Communities of the Roman Empire: from Monotheism to Henotheism?**

Maureen Attali, Paris IV, La Sorbonne University, France [maureen.attali@gmail.com](mailto:maureen.attali@gmail.com)

From creatures of an undefined status in the oldest parts of Torah, angels were progressively given precise features as messengers from God. Texts belonging to Jewish Hellenistic Literature, such as *Joseph and Aseneth* and the *Book of Tobit*, illustrate the development of what might be regarded as an authentic angelology. This theological evolution was not specific to Jewish communities: recent studies have shown how the cult of angeloi developed all over the Roman Empire, and especially in its eastern parts, during Late Antiquity. This common feature gave birth to communal celebrations in places where angels were said to have appeared, as in Mamre near Hebron. The same shared evolution can be identified regarding sun worship. While it was being promoted by the emperor Aurelian and associated to the imperial cult at the end of the 3rd century CE, the image of *Helios/Sol Invictus* was used in Jewish worship; remains of mosaics depicting the triumphant Sun, often represented with anthropomorphic features, were found in seven ancient synagogues. These archaeological finds are at the core of a historiographical debate: according to such scholars as Efraim Urbach and, more recently Zeev Weiss, the image of the Sun had become devoid of any of its original religious meaning and was used by Jews to convey the omnipotence of the one God. One can conjecture with Emmanuel Friedheim, however, whether the emergence, or perhaps the renewal, of the worship of celestial beings could hint at a religious evolution from monotheism to henotheism in some eastern Jewish communities. The combined study of Jewish attitudes to both angels and sun worship will enable us to broaden the scope of the analysis and to delve into Jewish pluralism while hopefully preventing us from being trapped by the criticisms issued by Church fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen regarding a supposed departure from monotheism among Jews.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**‘Religious Agnosticism’: Judah L. Magnes between Bertrand Russell and William James**

David Barak-Gorodetsky, University of Haifa, Israel [davidbarak1@gmail.com](mailto:davidbarak1@gmail.com)

Judah Leib Magnes stands out as a unique figure in Jewish-American history: A Reform Rabbi, who broke with the movement in the US on account of his conservative religious views and his support of Zionism, and the first chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, he found himself eventually marginalized due to his promotion of a binationalism in the land of Israel. In the current historiography of his work, religious aspects are often overlooked. Nevertheless, his more personal writings from the period of his first Reform pulpit up until his twilight years, reveal substantial doubts regarding the possibility of communication with the divine, and even more so – the ability to perceive the existence of God in the unfolding of history. For a man whose adult life spanned two great wars, this was always going to be a daunting task, and indeed, both wars had brought his religious thought and writing to the

fore. My aim in this paper is to describe the crisis of faith Magnes had undergone during the First World War in relation to two thinkers who largely influenced his thought at the time: Bertrand Russell and William James. Magnes perceived Russell as a like-minded pacifist, yet wrestled with his outspoken atheism. At the same time, he traced hints of non-institutional religious sentiments in the latter's writings. On the other hand, against the backdrop of the atrocities of war in society at large, Magnes could not revert to the form of personal religiosity populated by William James which shaped his American upbringing. The outcome of this quandary, I wish to argue, is a form of 'Religious Agnosticism', which while renouncing the existence of God continues to search for him. Come the Second World War, when history had again put the faith of Magnes to trial, this initial form of religious thought would evolve into an existential 'theology of doubt', forever seeking a God which cannot be found, while sanctifying the search itself.

### C. Modern and Contemporary

***Beit Shirah: Atheists and song in the contemporary progressive Jewish synagogue services***  
Barbara Borts, Rabbi of Darlington Hebrew Congregation and Honorary Research Fellow, Anthropology, Durham University [therabab@bborts.com](mailto:therabab@bborts.com)

Music is the central focus for those attempting to renew worship at synagogue services, and, within the progressive Jewish world, musical change is actively promoted. During my PhD research on the history and role of music in the Anglo-Reform Jewish world, in which I examined the contention that repertoire change increased interest and attendance, I interviewed those who attended services at various MRJ [Movement for Reform Judaism] synagogues. Amongst those were people expressing either diffidence towards the religious nature of services, or who described themselves as atheists/non-believers. Whilst much attention is paid to the manner in which music can or should facilitate spiritual experience, it is interesting that, for some attendees, music displaces religious commitment. This arouses critical commentary, both amongst theorists and amongst purists within the congregation, with the result that the function of music in prayer is a focus of controversy. In my paper, I will examine the issues surrounding prayer, music, and atheism/agnosticism and offer some theoretical commentary on the power of music in its guise as agent of inclusivity.

### E. Literature and Film

***Judaism and Atheism in the work of the Czech 20th century novelist Ivan Olbracht***  
Martin Borýsek, University of Cambridge [mb770@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mb770@cam.ac.uk)

Journalist and novelist Ivan Olbracht (1882-1952) was one of the prominent literary figures of inter-war Czechoslovakia. Belonging to the radical left wing of his literary generation, he refused the liberal democratic regime of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-38), but rather advocated the politics of the Communist party. Although of partially Jewish origin, Olbracht's upbringing was thoroughly secular and he never identified nor was perceived as a Jewish author. However, he had a keen interest in the Orthodox Jewish community, and its life became the topic of some of his best-known works. This paper examines how Olbracht's portrayal of the beliefs and spiritual life of Orthodox Jews reflects the author's worldview and political ideas and to what extent his 'Jewish stories' can be read as an apology for secular rationalism and a refusal of religious interpretation of the world. Ivan Olbracht spent a substantial amount of time in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, the easternmost and poorest part of Czechoslovakia and the home to a large Orthodox Jewish community. In the 1930s he published three loosely connected prosaic works set in a fictional Ruthenian village inhabited chiefly by Jews, which were inspired by the author's experience. The first two of them, *The Miraculous Julie* and *The Mikveh Affair*, are short sketches picturing scenes from the everyday life. Although written in a light-hearted and humorous tone, the stories can be interpreted as

social criticism of a world where a deep religious belief and automatic acceptance of tradition keeps people in voluntary ignorance. This theme is most fully developed in the third, much longer text, *The Sorrowful Eyes of Hannah Karadzic*. The novella tells a story of a traditionally brought up Jewish girl who leaves her native village to seek work in the West. Her return in the company of her fiancé, an assimilated Jew who proudly proclaims his atheism, provokes a heated wave of emotions which threatens the outbreak of violence. The only solution to this situation is the protagonist's leaving forever, thus liberating herself but at the same time losing any connection to the world of her youth. In my paper, I argue that Olbracht's perception of the Jewish life in the inter-war Ruthenia is torn between deep sympathy and rationalistic refusal of their traditionalist way of life. It remains an open question to what extent this refusal was genuine, and to what extent Olbracht felt obliged by his official political beliefs.

F. Jewish Studies: Communication of Knowledge

***The Common English Bible (2011) and the Limits of Modern Bible Translation***

Jonathan G. Campbell, University of Bristol [j.g.campbell@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:j.g.campbell@bristol.ac.uk)

The last fifty years or so have seen two overlapping and fascinating phenomena: the discovery and subsequent publication of the Scrolls from the Judean desert, on the one hand, and the production of a plethora of English Bible translations, on the other. More particularly, with the publication of the Scrolls now completed, those translations appearing most recently have been able to draw upon the full range of textual evidence from the Dead Sea manuscripts vis-à-vis the Hebrew scriptures. One interesting example of the latter is the Common English Bible (CEB), published in 2011 to match the 400th anniversary of the Kings James Bible and produced by a 120 scholars from assorted Jewish and Christian backgrounds (e.g. Joel Green, Sidnie White Crawford, Sarah Tanzer) under the auspices of a consortium of North American denominational publishers. Indeed, the CEB introduction and other materials explain two features which, it is implied, make this new English version distinct from and, presumably, superior to other ones: (1) the translation offers a fresh English rendering of the original languages which, more than completing versions, successfully combines accuracy with a strong commitment to using an everyday or 'common' level of English; and (2) the CEB, even in its most basic editions, provides the reader in its footnotes with a remarkable amount of textual data, especially when it comes to the Hebrew scriptures as represented in the Dead Sea manuscripts. In light of those features, this paper aims to do several interrelated things. First, the CEB will be introduced briefly in general terms, with the aid of a number of illustrations (via Powerpoint). Second, and also in brief, feature (1) above will be evaluated, again with some examples. Third, and more fully, the way the CEB has employed the evidence of the Scrolls – as per feature (2) above – will be unpacked and evaluated in light of several representative instances (and in comparison with other translations). Finally, a short conclusion will summarise what has been described and demonstrated. Included here will be a tentative suggestion that no translation adopting the traditional Bible format can accurately or fully represent to its readership the textual evidence of the Scrolls.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Textualism and Skepticism Post-modern Philosophy and the Theology of Text**

Federico Dal Bo, Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Germany [fdalbo@gmail.com](mailto:fdalbo@gmail.com)

My paper will address the religious notion of 'textualism', that is, the assumption that a religious text is meaningful only when it is understood in itself and solely from itself. This is particularly evident in the cabalistic evaluation of 'Scripture' that designates a textual universe in which everything is essential and autonomous. Only a proper interpreter can 'penetrate' the actual sense of Scripture and only as long as his or her translation conforms to its inner structure. Postmodern philosophy and especially the scholarship of Marc-Alain Ouaknin and

Jacques Derrida in French as well as the scholarship of Moshe Idel in Israel have proven the limits of this sacral notion of the text and this traditional view of Scripture as a hierophany in its strongest sense, that is, as the actual presence of God within the text. Against this, Ouaknin's notion of 'the burnt book' and Derrida's notion of 'grammatology' have both deconstructed the traditional notion of text. They both claim that the text is not that totality that it would desire to be but rather a construct that is itself exposed to an epistemological failure or skepticism: Holy Books can be burnt (Ouaknin), and the silent and mute 'white' space surrounding the text might be 'more significant' than the 'black' ink of its letters (Derrida). My assumption is that Postmodern philosophy and its textualism accounts for a very peculiar form of secularization: the passage from the religious notion of a text that is infinite and all-comprehensive to the more oblique skeptical assumption that a text inherently resists a 'theology of letters' because of its materiality and its plasticity, using Catherine Malabou's vocabulary. Whereas Kabbalah clearly supports the notion of a totalitarian textualism that would provide the absolute auto-sufficiency of the text, Ouaknin and Derrida claim on the contrary that a referent outside the text may be conceived of a total secularized and skeptical attitude. Their claims to secularization and skepticism notwithstanding, both the notion of 'burnt book' and 'grammatology' are occasionally less clear-cut and suggest an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, there is a clear rejection of the 'ontotheology' with all what this would imply, including: a form of epistemological skepticism towards an 'ultimate truth;' the rejection of traditional monotheism as a form of 'patriarchalism;' and the rejection of the privilege of 'voice,' that is the 'voice' of the interpreter. On the other hand, both Ouaknin and Derrida would still focus on the book and its letters as well as on the claims of mysteries and revelations, albeit expressed in secularized form. As a consequence of this, the skeptical move against the traditional notion of deity as transcendental is somehow contradicted by other theological attitudes centered on a spirituality gravitating around a book. My working thesis, then, is that both Ouaknin and Derrida would agree in describing Kabbalah as evincing 'a kind of atheism' because of the emphasis on textuality and plurivocality characteristic of this lore. Therefore, both of them would exhibit skepticism as well as a certain residue of Kabbalistic thought in their 'cult' of the book or textuality – probably developing into what Eco has called 'atheistic mystics.'

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Secular theology as a challenge for Jewish Atheists**

Avner Dinur, Sapir College, Israel [avnerdinur@gmail.com](mailto:avnerdinur@gmail.com)

In this presentation I suggest a critical analysis of a widespread atheistic approach that sees God's powers and God's control of the Universe as the main thesis of monotheistic religions in general and of Judaism in particular. As a consequence of this approach, atheists portray Jewish secular identity as if it were built on the negation of the existence of God. The use of the term "Jewish secular identity" here is founded in part on the way secular identity is formed in the state of Israel today, but it is not confined to secularists in Israel only. Following the works of three main philosophers, Martin Buber, Emanuel Levinas and Hans Jonas, I suggest that this understanding of religion is inadequate with regard to Jewish sources and therefore secular Jews should not be seen simply as "Jews who don't believe in God". From a theological perspective it is clear that Atheism and Secularism are completely different phenomena and sociological research suggests the same, that is, it is reported that most Jews who define themselves as secular Jews say they believe in God. The conclusion from these two observations, one theological and the other sociological, is that we need to articulate in a different way the essence of the secular-religious debate. The main question will no longer be the existence of God. It is the role that God plays in the two distinct ways of thinking that Secular and religious Jews are actually quarreling about. Thus secular thought is in need of theologians to help articulate what kind of beliefs can be included as secular, what role God

plays in secular beliefs, and finally, how might secular theology contribute to ethical, political, environmental and sociological issues of the present.

#### B. Medieval and Early Modern

##### **Shim'i the Skeptical: Skeptical attitudes in early modern Jewish Anti-Christian polemical writings**

Karoly Daniel Dobos, Pazmany Peter Catholic University, Hungary

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It is a commonplace that Jewish polemical/ apologetic texts have been written since Late Antiquity with the main purpose of strengthening and supporting the faint-hearted members of different Jewish communities throughout the globe. Hence the existence of this kind of texts implicitly suggests the presence of some form of skepticism or religious insecurity in the ranks of the Jewish population. On the other hand, since the beginning of the early modern period a radical change can be felt in the genre. The skeptical figure, who had been present previously only in an implicit way in the texts, now came forth from behind the scenes, and took a clearly identifiable shape, like Shimi, one of the protagonists of the polemical drama (or rather, dialogue) written by the Italian poet and playwright Matatyahu Nissim (Donato) Terni (1745–1810), entitled *Derech Emunah* (Way of the faith). Shimi in Terni's drama incorporates an increasing and tangible segment of contemporary Jewish society, full of doubts and skepticism on the traditional truth of Judaism. He must appear now on the scene, because he represents a real threat, and this time not from outside the community. Early modern Jewish polemical texts provide further possible examples of skeptical attitude. The authors of the Yigdal-parodies – whether well known poets like Simson Cohen Modon (1679–1727) or Yehoshua Segré (1709–1798) or anonymous authors – chose a well-known Jewish liturgical composition as a starting point for their criticism of Christian people and their belief. What considerations inspired the above mentioned authors to rework these well-established and important pieces of the Jewish liturgical tradition into parodies of Christianity? If the sole purpose of Segré, Modon and the others had been to make Jesus and the belief of the Christian people appear ridiculous, I think, they could have generated new texts for this reason, as did many of their contemporaries. Nevertheless, as we will see, they deliberately opted for these well-known Jewish texts as starting points for their attacks on the Christian faith. Why did they do this? Arguably, these phenomena can also be interpreted as a sign of growing skepticism and disillusionment with the traditional teaching of religions.

#### E. Literature and Film

##### **ועל דעת הקהל: Yom Kippur in modern Israeli Hebrew literature**

Tamar S. Drukker, SOAS [td4@soas.ac.uk](mailto:td4@soas.ac.uk)

In 1942, Haim Hazaz published a short story, where the main speaker rejects Jewish history and vehemently criticized traditional-religious Jewish life in the diaspora. This uncompromising denunciation of Jewish faith, custom and history, results in far-reaching dilemmas concerning the nature of Zionism and the possibility of a secular Jewish identity and political entity. This remarkable short story, a passionate secular 'sermon' (as the title of the story suggests), remains at the heart of a debate in Israeli Jewish society, on the possibility and the meaning of a Jewish secular culture, well into the last decade of the twentieth century. Using Hazaz's hesitant speaker as a guide, this paper will explore secular expressions of Jewish tradition in modern Israeli literature and culture, focusing on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, as a study-case moment in the national calendar. The holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, of course gains further significance from 1973 onwards, as the anniversary of the Yom Kippur war. The paper will trace the significance and meaning of this day in the life of fictional Israeli characters in the works of a diverse selection of contemporary

Israeli writers, such as Hanoach Bartov, David Grossman and Etgar Keret. It will also consider the meaning of the day and its observance, in society, in popular culture and in literature.

F. Jewish Studies: Interfaith

**Global conflict, local peace? Jewish-Muslim relations in the UK**

Yulia Egorova, Durham University [yulia.egorova@durham.ac.uk](mailto:yulia.egorova@durham.ac.uk)

The relationship between the Jewish and Muslim communities of Europe, often constructed by public discourse as polarized due to the conflict in the Middle East, has attracted significant attention of anthropologists and other social scientists and humanities scholars, who have attempted to situate their discussion of Jewish-Muslim relations in the wider context of European colonial history and research on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Europe. The proposed paper will contribute to this work by focusing on the case study of the UK and using fine-grain ethnographic analysis to highlight the processual and context-dependent nature of Jewish-Muslim relations.

C. Modern and Contemporary

**Challenges to monotheism in a post-secular age: an analysis of religious-identity narratives of Orthodox and previously Orthodox Israelis.**

Ari Engelberg, Hebrew University, Israel [ari.engelberg@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:ari.engelberg@mail.huji.ac.il)

This lecture will focus upon the roles of skepticism, science, belief in God and atheism in the religious identity-work of young men and women living in Israel and belonging, at least at one point in their lives, to the Religious Zionist society. It is based upon qualitative in-depth interviews conducted both with individuals who left Orthodoxy becoming socially identified as 'secular', and with individuals who chose to remain within the fold. Classic secularization theory claimed that modernity, characterized by rational thinking and scientific progress, would lead to the eventual decline of all religious faiths. Over the last decades this theory has been challenged on various grounds. Scholars point to the resurgence of religion in late-modernity and to a loss of faith in the ability of scientific progress to provide meaning. Instead, other factors such as relativism, egalitarianism, individualism, a search for authenticity and in some cases belief in the magical, have become dominant for many late-moderns. Some scholars use the term 'post-secular' to describe current societal attitudes toward religion. Concordant with these global processes, the religious identity of interviewees was found to be less affected by 'modernist' questions such as whether traditional beliefs regarding the scriptures hold up in face of scientific scrutiny. Rather, concerns regarding authenticity, expressiveness, equal rights, and the relativist belief in multiple truths, impacted upon the process of religious-identity formation. This disposition was shared both by interviewees who left religious society and those who chose to remain within its bounds. However, it is much less present in the writings of the Orthodox rabbinical and educational figures (with some notable exceptions); rather, they tend to stick to modernist rationalist truth discourses, especially with regard to scripture.

F. Jewish Studies: Interfaith

**A comparison of recent Jewish critiques of the state of Israel and Christian anti-Jewish polemic and its implications for Jewish identity.**

William Evans, University of Birmingham [dagradon@gmail.com](mailto:dagradon@gmail.com)

My paper will examine whether contemporary Jewish criticism of the modern state of Israel employs reasoning that is largely identical to Christian anti-Jewish polemic of the Patristic era of Christian theology and, consequently, represents a profoundly self-destructive, even suicidal turn in Jewish identity. Patristic, anti-Jewish polemics represent a distilled and

unvarnished account of Christian perspectives on the Jewish people, specifically why they are spiritually inadequate in the new and superior Christian world and worthy only of extinction. To be sure, Patristic thinkers were writing in the (relative) shadow of the Jewish scattering following 70 ce, when the interplay of religion, covenant and statehood were constantly employed in ways that are, for contemporary Christians, either irrelevant or politically incorrect. In recent years, a growing minority of Jewish intellectuals have taken to critiquing the state of Israel for what they see as Israel's occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people. The content and scope of their critique differs but what is interesting is their use of Christian liberation theology as an appropriate religious tool to critique the state. This examination will not take the form of a political debate on the ever-divisive subject of modern Israel but rather on how Jewish appropriation of Christian liberation theology impacts Jewish religious identity. Criticism of Christian liberation theology by Jewish thinkers has shown how liberation theology relies on an anti-Jewish historical narrative that has a revolutionary Jesus overcoming hypocritical, corrupt, and nationalistic Jewish forces, a caricature that colours both Christian perceptions of Jewish life and liberation theology itself. Many thinkers have already examined liberal Judaism and its similarities to Christian thought but I want to instead look at how Jewish appropriation of Christian theology literally designed to eliminate the Jewish people, at least on a religious level, might achieve its original aim of Jewish annihilation.

A. Bible, Ancient, Classical

**What Shall We Do with Devout Idolaters? Jeremiah 44 Reconsidered**

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The controversy concerning the Queen of Heaven cult in Jeremiah 44:15-19, 20, 25 offers a unique opportunity to explore some of the challenges to monotheism in ancient Israel and in current biblical scholarship. The uniqueness of this text is due to the voices it features, so rarely represented in prophetic denunciations of idolatry: the voices of the accused, those who "serve other gods [..., who] hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness" (Jer 44:3, 5), and who, held responsible for the downfall of Judah (vss. 6, 8), audaciously continue this provocation in their Egyptian refuge. The accused present several counter claims, the most remarkable of which drawn from their own recent history. History proves, so the argument goes, that worshipping the Queen of Heaven 'works', and it is only its neglect that had the direst consequences for the people of Judah (vss. 17-18). The proposed paper will address three interrelated issues that seem to be of interest in the context of this conference: (1) 'Monotheism' in ancient Israel, in view of the very appearance, in the twilight of biblical history, of such a debate as in Jeremiah 44; (2) The nature of the Queen of Heaven cult and the reasons for its marginalization in reception history almost up to present day research; (3) Signs of de-feminization in the textual history of Jeremiah 44 and the possible reasons for this tendency.'

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**The Anti-Christ and the Anti-Moses: Nietzsche, Spinoza and the Possibility of Sacrilegious Beatitude**

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Few postcards in the history of modern philosophy were as laden with significance and intellectual interest as the one Nietzsche sent Franz Overbeck from Sils Maria in July 1881 and in which he shortly, but elatedly, describes his auspicious philosophical encounter with Spinoza: 'I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted!' Nietzsche writes his faithful friend 'I have a precursor, and what a precursor!' Nietzsche adds that Spinoza shares his own 'overtendency' to make 'all knowledge the most power affect' and mentions five specific points in which he

recognizes himself, namely, the denial of 'freedom of will, teleology, the moral-world order, the unegoistic, and evil'. This paper explores similarities between both philosophers, which, though unmentioned, are related to those Nietzsche does explicitly allude to, namely, the philosophical gesture of reevaluation, specifically, the sacrilegious reevaluation of their respective religious traditions, and furthermore, the ensuing positing of forms of secular salvation linked to immanent conceptions of eternity which, in both cases, gain critical importance in their respective philosophies. I will argue these two similarities indicate not only that Nietzsche and Spinoza shared ideas, but that critical aspects of their philosophical projects were significantly alike as well; if Nietzsche thought of himself as the Anti-Christ, there is, I will argue, a convincing case to think of Spinoza as the Anti-Moses. This paper therefore will investigate the similarities of these philosophical projects in order to gain a better understanding of the philosophical effort they reflect and of the analytical and phenomenological meaning of their likeness. It will also say something about the intellectual genealogy of the ideas involved, namely, the surprisingly profound and radical ways in which Spinoza's philosophical work underpins Nietzsche's. In fact, I hope to show Nietzsche would have needed much more than just a postcard to describe how Spinoza was his precursor when the early marks of the latter's influence he so joyfully mentions when describing his 'instinctual' encounter, bloomed into something even more significant and profound. Finally, focusing on the ways in which the greatest Jewish and Christian philosophical heretics not only rejected the values of their religious heritages, but also suggested a radically different and secular form of religiosity instead, will enable a reassessment of the nature of their challenge to monotheism; the possibility of sacrilegious beatitude indicates the possibility of forms of secular religiosity which transcend the traditional dichotomy between believer and heretic.

B. Medieval and Early Modern

**The 'If' of doubt, the 'Maybe': On some expressions of epistemic uncertainty in Hebrew poetry of the Baroque era**

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17th Century Hebrew poetry written across early modern Europe (mainly Italy and the western Sephardic Diaspora) deserves more scholarly attention than it usually attracts. The (relative) academic negligence of this corpus reflects its 'marginal' position in the history of Hebrew verse – standing apart from both the earlier, highly acclaimed medieval schools of Hebrew poetry, and the later Hebrew poetry of the Enlightenment (Haskalah) age. This paper will present and analyse certain noteworthy motifs of self-doubt and epistemic uncertainty in poetic and dramatic works by poets like Moses Zacuto, Jacob Frances, Immanuel Frances and Joshua Joseph Levi. Such motifs, it will be suggested, manifest in an intriguing manner the distinct Baroque (or early modern) poetics and mentality which characterize this unique school of Hebrew poetry.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**The Desirable Lenient Policy Concerning Conversion to Judaism: The Relationship between Acceptance of the Jewish Commandments and Religious and Philosophical Scepticism**

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The Rabbinical courts for conversion in Israel have adopted a lenient approach in Jewish law. This policy, in favour of conversion, is an attempt to assist, as much as possible, candidates for conversion, who are usually immigrants to Israel or their children. The policy of these special courts enables these immigrants and their children to more easily join a desirable religion. Nevertheless, conservative elements in the Rabbinate and especially a group of Jewish judges in the regular Rabbinical courts in Israel stress that the conversion is not valid when the

convert joins the Jewish nation but does not accept the obligation to observe the Jewish commandments. Philosophical or religious scepticism concerning the binding significance of the religious principles of Judaism is not possible. Especially in recent generations the question of a convert's ulterior motive has been scrutinized. The main problem in this context is marriage-motivated conversions. Conversion should be sincere. However, sometimes when a Jewish spouse is cohabiting with a non-Jew, or might cohabite with him or her in the future, regardless of the prohibition of this behaviour in Jewish law, a Rabbinical court may adopt a more lenient policy towards the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse in an attempt to avoid this transgression of the principles of Jewish law. When the convert is sincere and accepts an obligation to observe all the Jewish commandments in an Orthodox court, it is a valid conversion. However, sometimes another court finds out, after the conversion, that the behaviour of the convert is not the behaviour of an observant Jew. Should this fact invalidate the conversion? This issue was addressed in decisions of the High Rabbinical Court in Israel. The state of Israel should encourage the implementation of a lenient conversion policy for these converts. This was the policy of the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Uziel. He adopted a lenient approach concerning the acceptance of converts that might not act in the future in light of the religious ideology and the religious commandments of Jewish law. This policy was especially evident in his writings when the individual that desires to join the Jewish nation was the spouse of a Jew or a descendant of Jews. The obligation is theoretical. This individual should believe that these commandments are binding upon a Jew. The adoption and acceptance of some of the Jewish commandments and some religious principles of Jewish philosophy could be in the future.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Joseph Krauskopf's *Evolution and Judaism*: One Reform Rabbi's Response to Scepticism and Materialism in Nineteenth-century North America**

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The inroads made by scepticism and science into popular culture were a constant source of concern for Reform rabbis in late nineteenth-century North America. Darwinism represented one clear and present danger, and biblical-criticism another. The first suggested that purely materialistic mechanisms accounted for the variety of life, and the second that the irrational elements of the Bible made it largely irrelevant to faith of the modern, sceptical Jew. In response to such challenges, a number of Reform rabbis developed Jewish theologies of biological evolution that treated, among other things, biblical creationism. An interesting example was Joseph Krauskopf's *Evolution and Judaism* (1887), which espoused a sceptical approach to tradition and scriptures and yet offered a panentheistic vision of an evolving universe that justified belief in immortality.

C. Modern and Contemporary

**'This is the time, not for psalms, but for arms'. Atheism, Messianism, and Revolution in the Pale**

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During the Revolution of 1905-1906 a new generation grew up in the small Jewish towns of the Pale of Settlement and Russian Poland. Brought up in yeshivot and shtetlekh, those young people firmly renounced religious tradition and adhered to the socialist and radical movements. In many places revolutionary activity included a temporary take over of the local synagogue to launch a debate with the devout 'elders'. Such cases of an appropriation of a religious space were reported in the Memorial Books of Jewish communities; they were also instantly fictionalized in the literary texts concerning the Revolution of 1905, e.g. S. An-sky's *In Shtrom* and I.M. Weissenberg's *A shtetl*. In the latter the opposition of 'psalms' and 'arms'

was used to articulate the conflict. The aim of this paper is to analyse these particular moments when atheism and religion, revolutionary activity and tradition, Jewish identity and universalist perspective, violence and ideal of harmonious community interweave in the 'constellation overflowing with tensions'. Taking the accounts of Memorial Books and literary images as a starting point we shall reconsider them in the context of the theoretical work of Abba Gordin (1887-1964), a prolific anarchist writer, proponent of a doctrine of 'Anarchism-Universalism', who took very active part in the next Russian Revolution of 1917. Gordin's idea of atheism as a 'Jewish mission' (*missiya yevreystva*), the true fulfilment of Judaism and Jewish history in Eastern Europe, his rejection of monistic 'false messianism', will be informed by the studies by Michel Löwy, Daniel Grinberg and Moshe Goncharok of the 'strange and magical encounter' between messianic and radical thought. Jewish atheistic revolutionary socialism would then appear as neither a rupture with religious heritage, nor a mere continuation (not in the least in terms of symbols or rituals), but carefully negotiated reinterpretation of messianic and cabbalistic tradition in terms of the politics of immanence and multitude.

#### E. Literature and Film

##### **Atheism and Skepticism in the Poetry of Paul Celan**

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Celan's poetry is deemed universal and experimental, and its main characteristic is to "explore possibilities of sense-making." His poetry is also acknowledged to be the apex of Jewish post-Holocaust poetry, contending with existentialist questions such as the existence of God in the Holocaust and the possibility of restoring Jewish identity. In this lecture I will examine how Celan uses paradoxes in his poetry to create atheistic and skeptical expressions. The technique of paradox expresses the concurrent existence of two contradictory possibilities; my lecture will present three types of paradox typical of Celan's poetry: (1) the affirmation and denial of the existence of God; (2) the mention of rituals from Jewish tradition, while voiding them of their conventional meaning; (3) the use of German, specifically, for the reconstitution of Jewish identity. My main argument is that paradox in Celan's work creates a unique voice of atheism and skepticism, since it preserves the ideas that it rejects as a source for fashioning meaning. I will illustrate this by analyzing poems such as "Psalm," "On the White Phylactery," "The Jugs," "Language-Mesh," and others. In order to explore how Celan constructs paradox, I will use Wittgenstein's resolutions of the paradoxes that emerge from the use of language, and I will show how they illuminate Celan's use of this technique.

#### B. Medieval and Early Modern

##### **Scepticism and Politics in Simone Luzzatto's *Discourse on the State of the Jews* (Venice, 1638)**

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Simone Luzzatto's skepticism has been discussed only in relation with his philosophical treatise *Socrates or about Human Knowledge* (1651). This is a partial appraisal of Luzzatto's thought, since his skeptical inclinations are already present in his political treatise the *Discourse on the State of the Jews* (Venice, 1638). At the core of his discussion stands the following problem: how can the truth about the Jewish people be discovered? In other words what can be said in order to give an exact description of a people that has been the object of perpetual slander? The question can only be solved by adopting a specific method: the skeptical method that has been taught by Pyrrho, handed down by Sextus Empiricus and re-adapted to the modern philosophy by Montaigne. The quest for the truth is thus used in the political realm involving first and foremost the definition of a people and of its place and role in the society.

C. Modern and Contemporary

**Ritual, spirituality and secularisation**

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This paper examines features of the development of the distinction between religious ritual, and spirituality and spiritual experience. It suggests that this distinction is associated with secularisation. Other factors associated with this distinction include individualist ideology, and the confabulation of ritual and obsessionality, first developed by Freud in 1907. Ritual is seen as empty routine, and as an aspect of collectivism. This contrasts with the excitement and meaningfulness of personal spiritual experience. Empirical studies of religious experience have focused on extraordinary and spontaneous spiritual experiences rather than “more routine” religious experiences. This research trend examining religious/spiritual experience is associated with a view that repeated ritual involves “empty conformity”. It emerged strongly in the social sciences in the 1970s. There are also roots in the Freudian account of ritual and obsessionality, whereby religion was viewed as a universal (collective) obsessional neurosis, experientially and intellectually empty for the regular practitioner. Freud’s religious and Jewish history are examined as possible contributing factors to Freud’s views on ritual. The view of ritual as collective, and experientially void, by comparison with individual spirituality, is still prevalent. It seems that secularisation “permits” individual spiritual experience as long as it is distinct from organised religion, and does not involve ritual and practice. Some current and recent empirical research on the experiential aspects of ritual offers evidence somewhat counter to this view. There will be some focus on research in Jewish ritual. The paper offers a brief overview of stages in this research and suggests that clarifying the role of secularisation highlights the way that research in this field is culturally determined.

C. Modern and Contemporary

**Philosophy, Science, Secularism and Hasidism: the Tzemah Tzedek’s *Sefer HaHakirah* and its later echoes in Habad**

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The stance of Rabbi Nahman of Braslav (1772-1810) concerning the Jewish philosophic tradition is well known: he forbade his followers to study it, but he himself did so, in order ‘to rescue’ the souls of those who had fallen into its clutches. With this background, we can consider the *Sefer HaHakirah* ‘Book of Philosophy’, by the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, (1789-1866), known as the Tzemah Tzedek, and its later echoes in Habad Hasidism. *Sefer HaHakirah* (Poltava, 1912) consists of discussions of Saadia Gaon, *Guide for the Perplexed* and other philosophical works. Its main overt theme is to provide proofs that the world was created, as described in Genesis, rather than eternal, as was maintained by Aristotle. There is a Habad tradition that its author Rabbi Menahem Mendel studied the Jewish medieval philosophers with his youngest son, who later succeeded him as 4th Rebbe in Lubavitch, Rabbi Shmuel (1834-1882). According to the latter’s son, Rabbi Shalom Dovber (1860-1920), the 5th Lubavitcher Rebbe, the early leaders of Hasidim, disciples of the Maggid of Mezeritch, also studied philosophical works such as Maimonides’ *Guide*. Rabbi Menahem Mendel and his grandson Rabbi Shalom Dovber both fought vigorously against the encroachment of the Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia, as described by Michael Stanislawsky, Ilia Lurie and Naftali Brawer. There is a Habad tradition that the reason why *Sefer HaHakirah* was compiled was to add ammunition in its author’s battle with the Maskilim in the 1840s. In the mid 20th century, Rabbi Menahem Mendel’s descendant, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, also named Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), studied science at university, gaining a diploma in electrical engineering. When he later became Rebbe the overt effect of this knowledge was to strengthen his campaign on behalf of traditional Judaism. Despite his own scientific studies, he tried to persuade most of

his followers to focus on Rabbinic studies, or the feminine equivalent, rather than college education. By contrast he encouraged many of the neo-orthodox who joined his movement to remain in their respective academic fields. His intended goal for them was to join the battle against secularism and to strengthen Jewish tradition. We thus see the *Sefer HaHakirah* paradigm both in the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries, for some, at least: enter the rationalist/scientific world, in order to strengthen traditionalism.

#### B. Medieval and Early Modern

##### **The Jews and their Doubts. Anti-Jewish Polemics and Christian Apologetics in the *Fascicolo delle vanità giudaiche* (1583) by Antonino Stabili**

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The present paper aims to illustrate the contents and the cultural-historical background of the anti-Jewish polemic work *Fascicolo delle vanità giudaiche* (Dossier of Jewish Vanity) written by the Dominican friar Antonino Stabili and printed in Ancona in 1583. The edition, in octavo, is quite rare; it consists of 319 folios recto-verso but was probably intended as part of a greater work. The author's conceit is a philosophical and theological dialogue between the sceptical Jew Moyses and his friend Salomon. Their conversation lasts sixteen days (corresponding to the sixteen chapters of the book) and takes place always on Shabbat when Moyses and Salomon meet and talk about Jewish faith and religion. From the start, Moyses reveals his doubts about his compliance with Mosaic Law, adducing arguments and quotations from the Bible and some rabbinical works. As is well-known, during the second half of the 16th century – especially after Paul IV's papacy (1555-1559) – the situation of the Italian Jews living in the Papal States became increasingly dire because of the application of several bulls (such as the *Cum nimis absurdum*, 1555 and the *Hebraeorum gens*, 1569) which limited the Jewish population to the ghettos of Rome and Ancona and because of other severe restrictions. Moyses states that the miserable condition in which the Jews live is the proof that they are not the chosen people in covenant with God. Salomon tries to respond but with limited success. Among other things, their conversation treats to topics of: free will, God's mercy and grace, the coming of the Messiah and other prophecies, Christian ceremonies, baptism, Adam's sin, Mary's virginity and the birth of Christ, the Ten Commandments and the mitzvot, the prohibition of image worship, the observance of Shabbat, and so on. It is clear that the author speaks to his readers – Christians and Jews as well – through Moyses: at the end, Salomon decides to convert and to receive the baptism with his whole family. The *Fascicolo delle vanità giudaiche*, which has not been studied to date, is thus part of the anti-Jewish polemics' branch and deserves to be examined in parallel with other works of the same period.

#### C. Modern and Contemporary

##### **Reflections of an Atheist Jew**

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In this paper I attempt to document how a single case study, my own, exemplifies one possible response to the question of modern Jewish identity, even if other Jews have chosen different options in responding to a wide variety of factors. I was not born nor raised an atheist Jew. My identity was formed by various factors among them family background; geographical migration; British education; secular Zionism; anthropological study and research. These factors were the precipitates of two earlier modern revolutions that transformed the modern world and that affected both Jews and non-Jews, namely the French Revolution which was political, and the Industrial Revolution which was economic. For Jews the French Revolution split the hitherto fused elements of religion and ethnicity into their component parts whilst the Industrial Revolution gave rise to urbanisation and increasing individualism. Jews were

faced with a choice of various identities; various permutations were adopted, some apparently paradoxical such as Jewish atheist. My research on anthropological studies of Jews has spanned a period of 50 years. As an undergraduate at Edinburgh University I wrote a dissertation on the Jews of Newfoundland. My doctoral research in Max Gluckman's department at Manchester University was conducted among cooperative farmers in Israel. My post-doctoral, research also in Manchester, was on the port workers of Ashdod. For almost 30 years I was on the staff of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Swansea University where I conducted historical and anthropological research on Swansea's Jewish community. While in Swansea, and after my retirement, I taught social anthropology in various Hungarian universities, and, assisted by my wife, Agi, researched Jewish life in post-communist Hungary.

F. Jewish Studies: Interfaith

**Representations of Jews and Judaism in the Works of the Methodist theologian Adam Clarke (1762-1832)**

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This paper will present the results of a project examining how Jews and Judaism were represented in the published works and unpublished manuscripts of Adam Clarke (1762-1832). Clarke was a prominent Methodist theologian, preacher and biblical scholar, best known for his eight-volume commentary on the Old and New Testaments. Whilst the research is still ongoing, the material examined so far would seem to reveal that traditional theological stereotypes were a pervasive feature in Adam Clarke's discourse about both biblical and modern Jews. In his commentaries and sermons, he would often take a passage from the New Testament about 'the Pharisees,' 'the Sadducees,' 'the Herodians,' or the Jewish multitude, and not only expand upon it, but also magnify any polemical antipathy that he found several fold. For example, according to Clarke, the Jews of antiquity regarded the command to love thy neighbour as applying only to 'those of the Jewish race, and all others were considered by them as natural enemies.' The Pharisees in particular were portrayed as not merely hypocritical, wicked, envious, unspiritual, blind and hard-hearted, but also 'radically and totally evil'. Clarke also caricatured Jews of subsequent generations, such as the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, and made numerous references to the Jews of 'the present day' (i.e. the early nineteenth century), suggesting that they had changed little from the Jews of antiquity. He argued that it was by divine providence that the Jews had been preserved as a distinct people, downtrodden, ruined and dispersed among the nations, providing unimpeachable 'evidence' and living 'monuments' to the truth of Christianity. This project is supported by a Seed Corn Fellowship from the John Rylands Research Institute, and is envisioned as the first of a series of projects by the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester which will explore the unique Methodist archives at the John Rylands library (widely recognised as one of the largest and finest Methodist collections in the world).

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Kaplan and Wittgenstein: Atheism, phenomenology and the use of language**

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Mordecai Kaplan, founder of Reconstructionism, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, lived at roughly the same time on opposite sides of the continent – and were apparently oblivious to each other. Yet their attempts at reforming Jewish theology and analytic philosophy respectively share some interesting traits. While Kaplan's scientifically respectable 'atheistic' Judaism sought to reinterpret theological principles in line with a modern-day materialistic vision of the cosmos, Wittgenstein's

reductionist anti-metaphysical philosophy attempted to show that language often leads thought astray by concealing unjustified presuppositions. As a result of these concerns, both were involved in a process of 'cleaning' language – of removing terms from common use in order to refine, redefine and strip away layers of misleading mythology so that they can be returned, purified, to everyday use. For Kaplan the reformation of Jewish religion as a human-centred activity, involved rethinking what we might mean when using terms such as God, soul and redemption. Wittgenstein's concerns, on the other hand, could be typified as largely academic – however there has been a growing emphasis on the underlying religious current to his thinking, one which has led to a number of monographs on the subject. Wittgenstein saw philosophy as a means of combatting the illusory effects of language, what he called the 'immense network of wrong turnings', and led us on an intellectual goose-chase in search of the objects behind words. In the end, both were working towards a modern and holistic theory of redemption in which the human can take their place within the order of the cosmos. This paper will examine their thought side by side in order to demonstrate the similarities between them, and noting contemporary scholarship on both thinkers. I will argue that there is a current of immanence which unites their efforts, flattening the world into a phenomenal-experiential plane, where religious terminology is still retained as crucial for the exercise of meaningful human life but is understood to relate to the immediate lived experience. As a result of this deontologising, religion becomes a matter of ideology rather than objective truth, and ethics becomes paramount.

A. Bible, Ancient, Classical

#### **Satire, Monotheism, and Skepticism**

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Monotheism is Atheism regarding 99.9% of gods. The habits of mind which gave Israel's ancestors cause to doubt the existence of the pagan deities sometimes lead their descendants to doubt the existence of any personal God however conceived. Monotheism was and is a powerful form of Skepticism. The Bible contains notable satires of Paganism, such as Psalm 115 and Isaiah 44 with their biting mockery of idols. Elijah challenged the worshippers of Ba'al to a demonstration of divine power, using satire: 'Shout louder [to Ba'al]! After all, he is a god! But he may be in conversation, he may be relieving himself, or he may be on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and will wake up!' (1 Kings 18) The satire in the tale of Elijah is powerful, for the reader knows that nothing will happen in response to the cries of Baal's worshippers. Nothing ever did. Yet, the worshipper of Israel's God must also be aware that his cries for help often go unanswered. Fire never falls from heaven. The same insight that caused Abraham to smash the idols in his father's shop also shakes the altar erected by Elijah. Doubt, once unleashed, is not easily contained. Skepticism is a natural part of the Jewish experience. In the middle ages Jews were non-believers and dissenters as far as the dominant religions were concerned. With the advent of modernity, those skeptical habits of mind could be applied to religion generally, including Judaism. The results were volatile – and still are. The modern achievements of Jews in the sciences and fields of critical inquiry are not accidental. Not acquiescing in what everybody knows – in any body of knowledge – is a Jewish habit of mind. It is not surprising that many Jews, devoted to the heritage of Israel, should find themselves skeptics and even atheists. This is the way of Abraham our father – to doubt and deny, not in a negative and sterile fashion, but in order to clear the ground for the construction of more adequate models of reality.

F. Jewish Studies: Communication of Knowledge

#### **Irish newspapers, journals and other popular press' opinions on the 1948 Palestine War.**

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Ireland, a non-member of the United Nations (until 1955), was not involved in the 1947 Partition Plan and was not considered internationally a significant nation during the civil war in Mandatory Palestine and the 1948 War. Irish individuals, however, particularly soldiers, journalists and other travellers, were present in the region, with many Irish men and women serving in the Mandatory British armed forces and police. Newspapers, both national and regional, devoted news reports and classifieds to departing and returning Irish soldiers and travellers. Editors in such newspapers and journals devoted editorials to the situation in Palestine that established their positions and stances. Concerns and fears of both editors and the Irish public were showcased in such editorials, with issues of partitions, the safety of Irish individuals, opposition to atheistic Soviet expansion and the Holy Places. Irish attitudes to Jewish aspirations in Palestine and towards the Irish Jewish community were also common, veering from philosemitism to antisemitism, editorials of each newspapers/journals containing differing sympathies and/or criticisms towards Jewish settlement in Palestine. Both secular and sacred journals revealed unique Irish Catholic and Anglican positions, revealing the theological concerns and attitudes of their parishes. This presentation will explore the historicity of the Irish press during this time, keeping in mind that the majority of the newspapers accessed are still in circulation in modern day Ireland.

B. Medieval and Early Modern

**Metatron Revisited: Binitarian Overtones in the Kabbalah of Nathan Neta Shapira of Krakow**

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The Enoch-Metatron tradition has long been of interest to scholars of Jewish mysticism. The early 'Enochic' literature and its influence on ancient forms of worship in both Jewish and Christian milieus have been the subject of numerous studies on the 'Enochic' strand of Judaism. In my presentation I would like to focus on the challenge which the concept of Enoch-Metatron as a semi-divine figure posed to the development of speculative *kabbalah*, especially in Ashkenaz. In Nathan Neta Shapira's (1585-1633) *Megalleh Amuqot*, the constellation of motifs relating to the angel Metatron features prominently in the context of the daily ritual cycle. This imagery, originating in the ancient Jewish mystical sources, was highly elaborated during the Middle Ages in mystical and kabbalistic writings, which in turn exerted a great deal of influence on Ashkenazi *kabbalah*, and on Nathan Shapira's works in particular. In my presentation I will further suggest that certain medieval Ashkenazi traditions on Metatron as mediator of Israel's prayer and a manifestation of the divine, with whom the individual may connect through performance of the prayer rite, may have influenced the role of angelic names and angelic mediation in the development of Lurianic prayer. Although Shapira's text operates within the framework of theurgical references stemming from the Lurianic *kabbalah*, it preserves traces of a magical understanding of the Metatronic figure, according to which this angelic entity can be invoked by means of ritual performance. This understanding of Metatron preserves Metatron's hypostatic, semi-divine status, making him the focus of human worship, while at the same time highlighting his centrality to the sefirotic dynamics as mediator of the flow of divine energy. The framework of ten *sefirot* might seem to downplay the binitarian overtones of the Metatronic constellation, which were latent in some medieval Ashkenazi writings. The figure of Metatron, however, dominates Shapira's notion of ritual as an addressee of the important part of the daily liturgical rite. Shapira's *kabbalah* clearly preserved the ancient *heikhalot* idea of a second (semi-)divine figure who acts as the recipient of human prayer, and channelled it into the early modern Ashkenaz.

A. Bible, Ancient, Classical

**Atheism in Jewish antiquity**

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This paper will explore discourse about atheism in Jewish sources of the hellenistic and early imperial period. The main focus of the discussion is on the writings of Philo of Alexandria, whose writings have an important place in the history of the concept of the 'atheist' and 'atheism'. He uses the terms *atheos* and *atheotes* extensively, more so, apparently, than in earlier Greek sources, and is closest to Plutarch in this respect. Philo is the first Jewish author to use these terms extensively and perhaps the first to use them at all. He takes up the subject on many occasions, indicating its special place as the 'worst of wickednesses' and the 'source of all iniquities'.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Idoloclastism: The First Task of Second Wave Jewish Feminist Theology**

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This paper will suggest that Second Wave Jewish feminist theology undertook the quintessentially religious task of a monotheistic theology, which is to break its own idols. Jewish feminist idoloclasts were at the forefront of an inter-religious coalition of feminists who believed that idolatry is not one of the pitfalls of patriarchy but its symptom and cause. Yet students of Jewish feminist theology have not paid sufficient attention to its counter-idolatrous turn, one claimed at the time to be the ground of liberation, both female and divine. Here, freedom and becoming is dependent on the liberation of the religious imagination from captivity to the patriarchal god called God; the idol of the masculine that has created God in his own image, and the idol of the feminine that becomes a substitute for the real, finite women whose agency it supplants. While, by the early 1980s, some Jewish feminists had followed Naomi Goldenberg and abjured Jewish monotheist theology altogether, adopting a more or less pagan Goddess theology, most, like Judith Plaskow, came to regard feminist idoloclastism as the precondition of a properly monotheistic Jewish theology.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Gershom Scholem: Scholar between Atheism and Secularism**

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Gershom Scholem was arguably the greatest scholar of Jewish Studies in the last century and the outstanding academic personality not only in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he worked over forty years, but in the universal academic world of the 20th century. By the end of World War II, religion appeared to be on the decline throughout Europe. Recent world events had cast doubt on the relevance of religious belief, and modernizing trends made religious rituals look out of place. It was in this atmosphere that the career of Scholem, the twentieth century's legendary scholar in the respective fields of Judaism and the history of religion converged and ultimately revolutionised people's thinking about religion. Between 1949 and 1978, Scholem lectured to Carl Jung's famous Eranos circle in Ascona, Switzerland, where he came to identify the symbolism of mystical experience as a central element of his Jewish tradition. This paper will explore how Gershom Scholem overturned traditional approaches to studying religion by de-emphasizing law, ritual, and social history and by extolling the role of myth and mysticism. Steven Wasserstrom argues in his book, *Religion after Religion. Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos* (1999), that the most controversial aspect of the theory of religion, is that it minimised the binding character of moral law associated with monotheism. The lectures of Scholem to the Eranos participants also show how this scholar generated broader interest in his ideas through his autobiography, diaries, correspondence and interviews. This paper will attempt to analyse Scholem's conception of religion from a broadly integrated, comparative perspective, and set his distinctive thinking into historical and intellectual context, and to interpret the striking

success of his approaches. The most striking aspect of Scholem's religious belief of Judaism is his ambivalent attitude towards atheism and secularism. On the one hand he distanced himself from atheism, though he did not even consider himself a secularist: 'My secularism fails right at the core, owing the fact that I am a religious person, because I am sure of my belief in God. My secularism is not secular.' Rather Scholem is a skeptic; he stood close to a 'pious atheism'. Despite the fact that Scholem did not draw an atheistic conclusion from the Holocaust, this paper will focus on the two main emphases of atheism and secularism to consider Scholem in the tension between faith and scholarship.

#### C. Modern and Contemporary

##### **Unveiling the Christianity of European Secularism; or, is a Jewish Secularism Possible? Lucien Wolf, Sylvain Lévi and Leon Trotsky**

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In his last three books, especially *Blood: A Critique of Christianity* (2014), Gil Anidjar contends that Western modernity is a theological moment, a specifically Christian moment, which represents an outgrowth of medieval thought, rather than a rupture with it. If he is correct, can a truly secular Jewish space be possible? Put another way, can we see, or rather, unveil the Christianity of European secularism in the thought of Europe's primary religious enemy: the Jews? This paper will consider these questions by looking at three individual Jewish responses to Christian Europe in the early twentieth century: a socialist revolutionary (Leon Trotsky); an Orientalist (Sylvain Lévi); and a liberal activist/historian (Lucien Wolf). I will argue that from each of these very different perspectives we can see a shared Jewish recognition of Europe's Christian essence. For Trotsky, faith in European democracy was a form of metaphysics, based upon natural law, which was, in turn, 'a paraphrase of Christian spiritualism'. Only revolution, he believed, could break the spell of this mysticism. Christianity — religion — could only be stopped by smashing the entire political, social and economic system. Lucien Wolf, a British constitutional liberal, also saw an inherent Christianity in Europe—though his solution was, as one would expect, very different: a Judeo-Christian synthesis centred on liberal principles, but, as I will contend, constructed in a fundamentally religious frame. And finally, Sylvain Lévi, Edward Said's archetype of a twentieth century European Orientalist. I will argue that Lévi's underscoring of a European whiteness and civilising republicanism, to which Jews belonged, was a rejection of a theological basis for Europe. Particularly, Lévi was concerned to reject the Christian notion of twinning Jew and Arab. Ultimately, however, Lévi's Orientalism of Western Asia can be read as a different rendition of Wolf's Judeo-Christian bond—ultimately, religion was inescapable. I will finish with the question: can we really speak of Jewish secularism existing in a Christian theocracy? Can it be anything but a gesture?

#### D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

##### **Spinoza, Jewish Studies, and the Theology of Reading**

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Spinoza's critique of religion took two different forms. There is, on the one hand, his epistemology and metaphysics, set out in his *Short Treatise* (c. 1658) and *Ethics* (1675). These take the form of systematic thematic treatments of philosophical topics, the *Ethics* even proceeding in a Euclidian motion of axioms, definitions and demonstrations. His *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), on the other hand, is in large parts a detailed reading of the Hebrew Bible. It examines the historical meanings and growth of the biblical text, and in this work Spinoza continues to some extent the approach of earlier Jewish readings of the Bible. His indebtedness to the medieval commentary tradition in particular has often been stressed. Yet the conclusions to which he leads the reader of the *Tractatus* are diametrically opposed to

those of earlier Jewish hermeneutics of the Bible. He uncovers obsolete meanings and internal contradictions in the Hebrew Bible in order to argue that it cannot serve as a guide to philosophical truths. From this he draws the further conclusion that the modern state's function ought not to be to defend Scriptural authority and truth claims, as invoked by contemporary Christian and Jewish religious groups. In this paper I will explore the possibility that, in creating one of the first examples of a critical and secular engagement with the central texts of the Judaism, ostensibly in order to take the fight to that religious tradition, Spinoza also might have seen himself as in some way continuing that tradition. Critical scholarship created itself at that moment (and also other moments of European modernity), and created 'religion', defined as uncritical tradition, at the same time; but it nevertheless continued the traditional matrix to some extent, namely as a kind of secular theology of reading. If so, Spinoza helped to create a paradigm that appears to be still relevant today for the tacit self-understanding of many academics working in the discipline of Jewish Studies.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

#### **From Monotheism to Scepticism**

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Although it is customary to view monotheism and scepticism as opposites, I want to argue that they are closely related – so closely that if you understand monotheism correctly, you will see that a certain form of scepticism is an inevitable consequence. The key to this connection is to recognize that monotheism is more than a claim about the number of God; it is also a claim about the uniqueness or incomparability of God. The latter raises a central question: How do you characterize something that is incomparable to everything else? Looking at Maimonides and Aquinas, I argue that to a great extent, you cannot characterize it. Thus Maimonides concluded that silence is the best praise we can offer to God. Although Aquinas tried to avoid such a radical conclusion, even he admitted that the words we use to signify God leave the thing signified incomprehensible. Let us now take the next step. If God is the source of all existence, and God is incomprehensible, then scepticism about existence is unavoidable. In the words of Emmanuel Levinas: 'The infinite affects thought by devastating it.'

C. Modern and Contemporary

#### **When Rabbis Lose Faith: Twelve rabbis tell their stories about their loss of belief in God**

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Religious intuition evolves over time. To the degree that belief in a supernatural God is a derivative of religious intuition, it is safe to assume that over one's lifetime, intuition and attitudes towards a belief in God are subject to fluctuation. Dennett and LaScola found this to be true with priests and ministers. Their study was the catalyst for the current study of rabbis' shift in religious beliefs in general, and belief in God in particular. Approximately 25 rabbis voluntarily submitted vignettes concerning their shifts in religious belief. These vignettes were solicited via rabbinic list-serves. Those rabbis who denied a belief in a supernatural being were interviewed to explore the evolution of their religious faith and its impact on their religious practice and behavior. In as much as Judaism places a great emphasis on communal deeds rather than cultural creed, the rabbis still feel comfortable functioning in communities, school settings and informal educational roles. We therefore might expect a little existential angst; but this was found to be only partially true. Some have found other expressions of their talents, while others anxiously await the opportunity to find alternate means of financial support. Specific issues of Jewish dietary practice, Sabbath observance and daily prayer are

addressed, as well as an exploration of the rabbis' connection to the Jewish people, despite waning practice.

#### C. Modern and Contemporary

##### **Rejecting the Path but Grappling with the God: The Resistance to Atheism in Women's 'Off-the-Derech' Memoirs**

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*Unorthodox* (2012), Deborah Feldman's memoir, highlights the horrors of Satmar Hasidism for its female members. A surprise bestseller, *Unorthodox* helped catalyze the popularity of the 'off-the-derech' (off the path of Orthodoxy) genre in Jewish literature. But if Satmar Hasidism is condemned in the book, Judaism - and its god - are not. At the end of the book, Feldman writes, 'For a while I thought I could un-Jew myself. Then I realized ... I am Jewish ... and God is no longer a prescription for paradise but an ally in my heart.' Reva Mann describes a similar push and pull with the versions of God she embraces and rejects over the course of her life in her memoir, *The Rabbi's Daughter* (2007), depicting her life under Orthodoxy as loveless, oppressive, and restrictive. Yet, without faith, she says, 'My soul was starving.' Leah Vincent, too, in her memoir, *Cut Me Loose* (2014), finds peace neither in her Yeshivish upbringing where 'God's will' commands that she limit her education and denies the self, nor in her acts of rebellion against that will. There is no question that there is a sensationalist quality to these narratives delineating the authors' struggles with faith. The insularity of the communities the authors write about means little is known about them in the 'outside world,' and the authors paint colourful pictures to satisfy public curiosity: men who don't know basic anatomy or how to engage in sexual relations; women who allow themselves to live without pleasure or voice; children that are denied basic education. They also use lavish detail to portray their 'scandalous rejection[s]': while Feldman's choice of jeans and a college education seems relatively tame, Vincent and Mann insist on intimate descriptions of anonymous sex, drugs, and self-abuse. And yet, as I will explore in my paper, it is remarkable that despite this sensationalist mode, there is one 'sensationalist' step none of the women authors seem willing to take: the step into atheism. What is it about the need to hold onto a sense of the divine, and to see the soul as Jewish, that illuminates these women's tales? Is it gendered? Why is it that they cannot, like Shulem Deen, in *All Who Go Do Not Return* (2015), the latest in the genre, commit to atheism and its ultimate consequence: 'that every calculation you've ever made is incorrect'? Is this a question of belief or marketability? Does it matter?

#### B. Medieval and Early Modern

##### **'Too Grand a Scene to be Denied' - Jacob Anatoli (c. 1194-1256) on Truth, Doubt and Certainty in his Sermon on the Ten Commandments'**

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According to Jewish tradition, thousands of Israelites witnessed, understood, and did not doubt the divine origin of, the dramatic events at Mount Sinai described in Exodus 19-20. Medieval Jewish philosophers, theologians, exegetes and polemicists have speculated on what exactly happened there, among them Judah Halevi and Maimonides. In this paper I'd like to dwell on this important medieval theological motif, anchoring my talk in Jacob Anatoli's sermon on the Ten Commandments.

#### D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

##### **The Attenuation of God in Modern Jewish Thought**

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Bible scholars reveal much diversity in ancient Israelite notions of God, but whatever the theology, the Bible rarely leaves room for doubt that God is alive, alert, vigorous and righteous; even Job, despite his sense of injustice, doesn't doubt that ultimately God is just. Modern times have seen a change of attitude, not simply on account of the apparent injustice in the world, but more fundamentally because the successes of science have made God redundant as an explanation for natural phenomena. Twentieth-century Jewish thinkers such as Mordecai M. Kaplan have sought to replace God by social constructs, while those who retain traditional God-talk range from Heschel, whose 'anthropopathic God' shares human emotion, to Eliezer Berkovitz ('the hidden God'), and from J. D. Soloveitchik (the God of *halakha*) to Richard Rubenstein (the non-interventionist God) and David Blumenthal (God as abusing parent). In this paper I shall review some of the main theories, while enquiring whether their proponents have anything in common with ancient and mediaeval believers, or whether they have subverted the older God-language, in some cases attenuating the concept of God to the point of atheism.

F. Jewish Studies: Communication of Knowledge

**The Judaica Project: For a Laboratory Ethics (dance)**

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The Judaica Project — based at the Centre for Psychophysical Performance Research in Huddersfield — proposes to study traditional Jewish songs (especially *piyutim* and *nigunim*) through a research methodology of embodied practice rather than or alongside historical and musicological analysis. In framing embodied practice as research, the project raises a number of urgent and difficult questions, such as: • What are the research objects or epistemata of specialized practice as research? • How do these objects of knowledge relate to their counterparts in the 'real world' of religious and secular communities? • What are the ethics and politics of manipulating traditional ritual and paraliturgical songs as epistemata within a university-based laboratory context? • What kinds of outputs and impact can be expected from such research? This paper draws on the sociology of scientific knowledge (Latour, Cetina, Pickering) to address the relationship between the isolated and fragmented epistemata of laboratory research and their functional worldly counterparts. By way of analogies with issues of cultural and intellectual property in laboratory research — such as the appropriation of indigenous knowledge in the development of pharmaceuticals — it attempts to lay out a fundamental set of ethical and political principles for laboratory research in areas that are conventionally understood as cultural or religious. The paper engages with the conference theme insofar as a university-based 'laboratory' approach to ritual and paraliturgical songs necessarily stages a confrontation between the explicitly religious and identitarian content of the songs and the secular research methodology. Positioned at the cutting edge of embodied research in both performance studies and religious studies, the Judaica Project aims to raise new questions about the relationship between orthopraxy and orthodoxy, ethics and politics, religion and identity in the contemporary world.

B. Medieval and Early Modern

**'I command you, Do not engage yourself with Logic': Reevaluation of Rabbi Hayya Gaon's attitude toward Greek philosophy**

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Between the eighth through the tenth centuries, Jews, Christians and Muslims worked together in translating and reworking the Greek/Syriac philosophical and scientific traditions into the new Arabic idiom. There was a continuous, multidimensional exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse, in both formal and informal venues. At the same time, some of the leading Rabbis in that period fought against the study of Greek philosophy. Among them

was, in so far as we know, Rabbi Hayya Ben Sherira Gaon, the head of the Pumbedita Academy in Baghdad. In this paper I will try to re-evaluate Rabbi Hayya Gaon's attitude towards Greek philosophy, using his judicial writings. At first glimpse, philosophy and religious law appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum from each other: philosophy representing secular and foreign (mainly Greek) thought and culture, and religious law representing the religious tradition. However, I will attempt to show that the contacts between these fields were more important than is generally thought. Nonetheless, I will suggest that Rabbi Hayya Gaon was aware of philosophical theories and texts (through textual or personal contacts), and did not hesitate to use philosophical ideas in his legal writings.

F. Jewish Studies: Jewish Law

**The Golden Rule(s) of Love: the Two or the One?**

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As is well known, two biblical obligation concern love: ...thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. 19, 18) And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart (Deut. 6, 5) The first Mitzvah was formulated as a Golden Rule in Rabbinic traditions as well as in Christian ones: R. Akiba said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself – this is a major rule (Sifra, K'doshim, par. 2) Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Mat. 7, 12). As was noted by D. Flusser, and E. E. Urbach, the pairing of this golden rule with another, the love of God, occurs only in Christian writings, e.g.: Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Mat. 22, 37-40). The obvious problem is the absence of the second golden rule in Rabbinic circles. Several answers were suggested for this during the last half of the last century, but they seem partial at best. In this paper I want to propose that the pairing of these two golden rules by Christian circles may have been thought to suggest a duplicity of man and God, rooting out one of the rules by Chazal. The preference of the human love rule over the love of God rule is a telling one, which I will endeavor to explain here.

C. Modern and Contemporary

**Creation as coincidence? Religion versus science in Yiddish anarchist reasoning**

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Is truth a matter of faith and is knowledge simply what one believes to be true? Does the process of creation merely describe a series of coincidences or does it follow an 'inner logic' or even a 'ratio'? If natural law governs the universe, what kind of, and whose rationalism, pervades the law? A. Almi (Eliye-Khayim ben Shlomo-Zalmen Sheps or Eli A. Almi, 1892-1963) held that science does not explain causality. In answering the question of why God allowed evil, Almi responded with a kind of theological minimalism; the right answer to human suffering was not, in his view, the rejection of religion but rather a fierce and self-assertive struggle with God. In my paper I will trace an enquiry into atheism, namely, the 1943 Almi vs. Goldman controversy on religion and knowledge, power and Epicurean free-thinking, faith and indeterminacy. The agnostic idea that ignorance of the *prima causa*, the cause of all causes, is what led Almi to defend God, while it led Goldman to reject religion as totalitarian system of suppressing knowledge. Remarkably, the authors applied rational arguments, comprehensible to both religious and atheist readers. Their reasoning illustrates an important dilemma concerning the limits of knowledge. Religious anarchists fear a dictatorship of abstract sciences and instrumental rationality, while atheist anarchists reject religion as a system that blurred knowledge, preventing true self-fulfilment. I will argue that

Yiddish anarchists struggled with religion because they defined knowledge as crucial to authority. Interestingly this controversy documents a religious shift among Yiddish anarchists in New York City, Philadelphia, Buenos Aires and Tel Aviv after 1918, which of course was highly disputed. Repentance (*teshuvah* / *tshuve*), the return to religion, could be marked as a form of nonconformity, especially in a community that defined itself as being part of the freethinker movement with a strong atheist and anti-religious tradition.

D. Philosophy, Theology, and Law

**Jewish Scepticism: The *Status Quaestionis***

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Although scepticism is so essential to Jewish epistemological understandings of reality, that is, to Jewish sources and systems of knowledge, it is rather surprising to note that it is still largely excluded from, or at least underrepresented in international research debates on scepticism and Jewish philosophy. The entry of Alvin J. Reines in the old and new editions of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, for example, only refer to the question of the unreliability of reason by quoting Judah Halevy and Chasday Crescas on the inadequacy of neo-Platonic and Aristotelian physics and metaphysics as naturally acquired knowledge – a standpoint only recently and uncritically adopted by the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Significantly, Reines' article mentions some important studies of Shaul Horovitz without integrating them into his outline of Jewish scepticism. The study of Jewish scepticism as an important objective of medieval philosophy had already been addressed by the Breslau scholar in 1912; in 1915 he returned to the topic and published an essay on the familiarity of medieval Muslim and Jewish authors with scepticism. The neglect of Horovitz's contribution to Jewish philosophy is all the more regrettable as he introduced the concept of a 'sceptical (under)current' ('skeptische Geistesströmung'), referring to ideas and tropes that survive as fragments in various authors' texts and within movements of sceptical interests, also in the form of criticism. My lecture focus on the status quaestionis on Jewish scepticism until today.

A. Bible, Ancient, Classical

**Polytheism, syncretism and Judaism of the Jews at Elephantine: Ashim and Kherem Betel as secondary deities**

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Under the rule of the Achaemenid Empire from 525BC, Elephantine became the center of the Persian military command in Egypt. A community of mercenary soldiers lived there, composed of military regiments (aram. *degalim* דגלים) of Jewish soldiers (aram. *hilâ Yehudâ* חילא יהודה). The aim of this paper is to offer an updated overview of the religion and the pantheon of the Jewish community that lived on the island as a military garrison, through the papyri and ostraka that were found in Elephantine at the beginning of the 20th century.

F. Jewish Studies: Jewish Law

**Challenges to Jewish Law in Times of Transition: Rethinking Parenthood Concepts**

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The dramatic development of assisted reproductive technologies in the twentieth century, and mainly in the last three decades, did not pass over Jewish law. Jewish law decision makers face new kinds of dilemmas in different legal dimensions. First, they approach questions of what is permitted or prohibited from a formal legal Jewish point of view. Second, they approach metalegal deliberations on family concepts (e.g., fatherhood, motherhood, and parenthood) together with, third, moral discussion of the role of humans in creating life. Clearly, scientific,

historical, and social changes led to the rethinking of traditional concepts and a reevaluation of classic family practices. The proposed paper analyzes the attitudes to the use of reproductive technologies of three groups of Jewish law decision makers: those from the early twentieth century, the mid-twentieth century, and the early twenty-first century. It shows the dynamism of core family concepts in those times of transition. For example, the paper indicates a fascinating change, of moving from physical motherhood (i.e., defining the carrying mother as the child's parent) to genetic motherhood (i.e., defining the egg donor as the mother), and discusses its reasons. The paper explores in depth the historical and sociological challenges which underlie (some) of those decisors' different attitudes towards assisted reproductive technologies. It argues that the expansion of the use of assisted reproductive technologies, as well as their dramatic scientific development, led to a reevaluation of the attitude of Jewish law to those practices, and triggered a process of the reconceptualization of core family concepts.

#### E. Literature and Film

##### **'Why the Geese Shrieked': Isaac Bashevis Singer's Work between Mysticism and Scepticism**

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In a chapter of his memoirs *Mayn tatns beys-din shtub* (In My Father's Court), entitled 'Farvos di gendz hobn geshrign' ('Why the Geese Shrieked'), the acclaimed Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904–1991) grants his readers an insight into the life of his father's rabbinic household in Warsaw – a household full of contrasts and tensions between his parents' conflicting personalities, between Hasidic and Mitnagdic tendencies and between mysticism and scepticism. Bashevis's Hasidic father interprets the shrieking geese as a sign from Heaven and a proof of supernatural forces being at work in the world, whereas his sceptical Mitnagdic mother endeavours to find a rational explanation for this phenomenon. Both his father's mysticism and his mother's scepticism were formative influences on Bashevis, and his writing constantly vacillates between these two world-views. Bashevis is well-known for his short stories about demons, *dybbuks* and other supernatural phenomena, but it is interesting to note that at times his demons clearly seem to be external manifestations of internal, psychological states of being, whereas at other times no rational explanation for an apparent supernatural phenomenon can be found, like in the case of the shed that mysteriously disappears and reappears in his short story 'Mayses fun hintern oyvn' ('Stories from behind the Stove'). Bashevis's narrators and protagonists like Oyzer-Heshel Banet in *Di familye Mushkat* (The Family Moskat) and Yasha Mazur in *Der kuntsnmakher fun Lublin* (The Magician of Lublin) constantly question God and express their scepticism about traditional Jewish beliefs, while, on the other hand, being deeply influenced by Jewish mystical ideas. A good example of this is Yasha Mazur's reaction to the emission of sparks from his lover's silk gown during his attempt of seducing her, which he knows is due to 'static electricity'. But at the same time he is startled by this phenomenon, which Bashevis's readers will recognise from other instances in his works as an allusion to the Lurianic idea of 'sparks of holiness' in contexts of darkness. My paper will examine this constant tension between mysticism and scepticism, between *Kabbalah* and Jewish agnosticism in Bashevis's work.

#### B. Medieval and Early Modern

##### **Doubting Abraham doubting God - The Call of Abraham in the *Or ha-Sekhel***

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Abraham ben Asher's *Or ha-Sekhel* ('The Light of the Intellect'), an exposition of Genesis Rabba, was published in Venice in 1567. The author analyses midrashim by providing lists of 'doubts' (*sefekot* or *she'elot*) that call into question the motivation, consistency and propriety

of the biblical and rabbinic protagonists and their actions. These doubts are inevitably resolved by harmonising interpretations that present each midrash as a coherent whole. The purpose of this paper is to consider Abraham ben Asher's interpretation of Genesis Rabba 39:1, the exposition of the Call of Abraham. The midrash includes the parable (mashal) of the wayfarer who, on seeing a burning building, asks whether it has a manager and is then confronted by the owner in person. As Paul Mandel has explained, this text has long been understood in the light of Maimonides' famous account of Abraham's deduction of the existence of a Prime Cause from the motion of the spheres in the *Sefer ha-Mada'*. Abraham ben Asher's exposition begins with a litany of doubts that call this interpretation into question. Could Abraham really have deduced the existence of God? Did he once doubt that the world had a creator? Did he understand God's providential governance of the universe correctly? Abraham ben Asher then resolves these problems, explaining that Abraham did indeed gain a prophetic apprehension of God who appointed him to lead the peoples of the world. Nevertheless, as this paper argues, he deliberately leads the reader to entertain the notion that Abraham had no proper understanding of monotheism or of divine providence. This serves a rhetorical purpose because, by proposing that the midrash has such startling implications, Abraham ben Asher inspires a more urgent and avid interest in the harmonising explanations that follow. By assailing readers with problematic questions and then providing solutions, he creates the impression that any uncertainties that may arise in the study of midrash will inevitably have satisfactory resolutions because the sages' words can always be expounded so as to reveal harmonious and coherent interpretations.

F. Jewish Studies: Jewish Law

**Breaking the Commandments of God for the Sake of Our Tradition: The Rabbinic 'Supremacy Clause' In Historical Perspective**

Holger Zellentin, University of Nottingham [Holger.zellentin@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Holger.zellentin@nottingham.ac.uk)

The divine commandment to develop the Torah through legal inquiry and discussion stands at the heart of the rabbinic enterprise. Generally, however, Torah law supersedes rabbinic law: a 'supremacy clause' comparable to the way in which federal law supersedes state law in the US constitution. Yet the general clause, on the one hand, allows for occasional exceptions, for 'breaking the commandments of God for the sake of tradition' as it were. On the other hand, the supremacy clause may not always have been universally accepted by all rabbis in the first place. This paper argues that the rabbinic record of legal debate bears carefully dissimulated, yet retrievable traces of Christian anti-Jewish polemics that may have swayed the rabbis first to strengthen the supremacy clause and later to question it. Considering various examples of ways in which rabbis have weighed Torah laws vis-à-vis rabbinic laws from the time of the Mishna to that of the Talmud (with a special emphasis on the Talmud Yerushalmi's legislation on vows) will illustrate a nuanced and carefully balanced legal development.

## **Panel**

F. Jewish Studies: **Panel: Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology**

The more radical and also more typically modern, albeit arguably not the most popular forms of modern antisemitism were of a secular nature and inter alia attacked monotheism, whose origin they located in Judaism. Some nineteenth-century antisemites have linked the spirit of monotheism with exclusivity and domination the defence against which they presented as a democratic or emancipatory struggle. These are some of the aspects that link modern

antisemitism to the more general modern critique of monotheism. The discipline of sociology emerged in similar societal and intellectual milieus as modern antisemitism and shared some of the same concerns, while being forced to constitute itself in opposition to it. This created a complicated and messy constellation of often ineffective and incoherent forms of anti-antisemitism that still today characterises critical and anti-hegemonic discourses on modernity and modernization. The panel will develop aspects of some contributions to the recently published edited volume of the same title (Stoetzler ed., *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology*, Nebraska University Press 2014).

F. Jewish Studies: Panel: Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology

**1. Zygmunt Bauman, Postmodern Sociology, and the Ambivalence of Anti-Semitism**

Jonathan Judaken, Rhodes College, USA [judakenj@rhodes.edu](mailto:judakenj@rhodes.edu)

This paper examines Zygmunt Bauman's postmodern sociological approach to anti-Semitism. What Zygmunt Bauman did in his postmodern turn within sociological theory was to re-theorize social differences and deviance, including anti-Semitism. Bauman articulated the limits of prior approaches to sociology in terms of the desire to rescue and rehabilitate the modern social system through an analysis of its social structures and functions. Bauman's postmodern drift in sociological theory offered a new approach by reflexively examining some the key assumptions and categories within modern sociology, in particular its treatment of alterity: how sociology understood the role of strangers, outsiders, the abnormal, and the dysfunctional, including Jews. In Bauman's rethinking of Jews and Judaism, he drew from Simmel's sociology of the stranger, and Arendt and Horkheimer and Adorno's accounts of anti-Semitism, alongside contemporary French postmodern insights drawn primarily from reflections on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, in order to offer a postmodern sociological account of anti-Semitism. As such, his work is a new catalyst in social theory for re-examining cultural difference post-Holocaust. It was in his breakthrough duo of works, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1991)<sup>4</sup> and *Modernity and Ambivalence* (1991), that Bauman re-conceptualized anti-Semitism as a part of his larger argument about the modernity of the Holocaust, offering a new vocabulary and a different historical perspective on anti-Semitism. Bauman distilled the core claims of his rethinking of anti-Semitism in a section of *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (1995), simply titled "Antisemitism' Reassessed.' In this brief gloss, Bauman brings together his re-evaluation of the work of modern sociology's approach to anti-Semitism developed in his earlier monographs by making four points: (1) the vocabulary of analysis needs to change; (2) this is because Jew hatred is not the core of anti-Semitism; rather what fuels anti-Jewish thought and practice is ambivalence about Jews; (3) Bauman insists that this ambivalence is not timeless and unchanging, and (4) he offers his own historical account of how what he terms 'allosemitism' has changed over time.

F. Jewish Studies: Panel: Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology

**2. Émile Durkheim's Sociology and French Antisemitism**

Chad Alan Goldberg, University of Wisconsin, USA [cgoldber@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:cgoldber@ssc.wisc.edu)

The relationship between European sociology and European antisemitism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is investigated through a case study of Émile Durkheim in Third Republic France. Two forms of antisemitism, reactionary and radical, are distinguished and contrasted to Durkheim's sociological perspective. On the one hand, antisemitic reactionaries who opposed the legacy of the French Revolution attacked Jews as its agents and beneficiaries. These attacks were especially pronounced in clerical circles opposed to laïcité. Durkheim inverted their depiction of Jews as the advance guard of a dangerous and disruptive modernity, and he argued that the Revolution, properly understood, was not a threat to religion but the source of new religious ideals through which social solidarity might be

reestablished. On the other hand, for antisemites on the radical left, the Jews threatened the principles of 1789 with a new financial feudalism or religious obscurantism. Rejecting their exclusionary vision of a social order without Jews, Durkheim expected the new civil religion propagated by the Revolution to transcend the religious divisions of the past and provide a basis for Jewish integration. Durkheim's responses to reactionary and radical forms of antisemitism, it is argued, were closely connected to his views on religion and secularization. To further develop this contribution to *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology*, I conclude with a brief discussion of antisemitism in relation to French colonialism and contemporary calls for a 'postcolonial critique of sociology.'

F. Jewish Studies: Panel: Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology

### **3. Why the positivist attempt to save modernity from itself can mean bad news for the Jews**

Marcel Stoetzler, Bangor University      [m.stoetzler@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:m.stoetzler@bangor.ac.uk)

The dialectic of differentiation and integration is one of the key characteristics of modern society observed by social theory, and frames a dual concern with social cohesion in the face of 'atomization' on the one hand, and with individualism in the face of increasing totalization and closure on the other. How to square the circle? Making society productive and converting, or getting rid of, 'parasites' (unnecessary eaters who spend their time scheming how to defend their privileges), allegedly the real rulers (or at least beneficiaries and exploiters) of honest, hardworking modern society – that is Moses and the Prophets (as Marx would have said) to modern bourgeois thought, including its perhaps most transparent and hard-boiled version, (Comtean) positivism. But who are 'the parasites'? Can hunting parasites (creatures that are at the same time vermin and low-lives, and extremely powerful and omnipresent) help with both problems, promoting modernization and productivization and preserving cohesion, thereby saving modernity from itself? Can this line of thought help explaining the persistence of antisemitism?

# MANCHESTER MEETING PLACE

(formerly Staff House), The University of Manchester, Sackville Street Campus

## Route information

The University takes its social responsibility and relations with the local community seriously and aims to reduce its impacts on the environment through its sustainability policies. Therefore, wherever feasible, you are encouraged to travel by sustainable means.

## By Rail

**PICCADILLY STATION:**  
Head for the escalators to the left of the concourse, following the signs for Taxis/Fairfield Street. Immediately outside the station main entrance, turn right and cross London Road to the Bulls Head pub. Keeping the Bulls Head on your right walk down London Road & turn right again immediately after the railway viaduct, onto Altrincham Street. Continue straight ahead, and to your left you will see the Barnes Wallis Building; continue ahead for a short distance and you will see a set of stone steps on your left leading down to a landscaped lawn. Manchester Meeting Place is on the other side of the lawn, with the main entrance on the left of the building.

## OXFORD ROAD STATION:

At the bottom of the station approach, cross over Oxford St into Whitworth St (to the right of the Palace Theatre). Turn right before the University's Sackville Street Building and continue along Sackville St. Proceed under the railway viaduct, turn left immediately before the security lodge and continue along the pedestrian walkway. Continue past the Renold Building on your right and you will come to a set of stone steps leading down to a landscaped lawn. Manchester Meeting Place is on the other side of the lawn, with the main entrance on the left of the building.

## VICTORIA STATION:

Take the MetroLink Tram to Piccadilly Rail Station. Exit to the street at platform level following signs for 'taxis' and continue directions as for PICCADILLY STATION.

## Cycling

The University provides large numbers of sheffield/hoop stands for cyclists in key locations across both campuses. For detailed information on cycling and routes, as well as a journey planner go to: [www.tfgm.com/cycling](http://www.tfgm.com/cycling)

## Walking

Pedestrians are catered for with designated campus routes and much of Manchester is relatively easy to get around on foot  
To plan your walking route go to: [www.walkit.com/cities/manchester](http://www.walkit.com/cities/manchester)

## By Car

Please use Google Maps ([www.google.co.uk/maps](http://www.google.co.uk/maps))







Post code for multi-storey car park on Charles Street  
(near junction with Sackville Street): **M1 3BB**

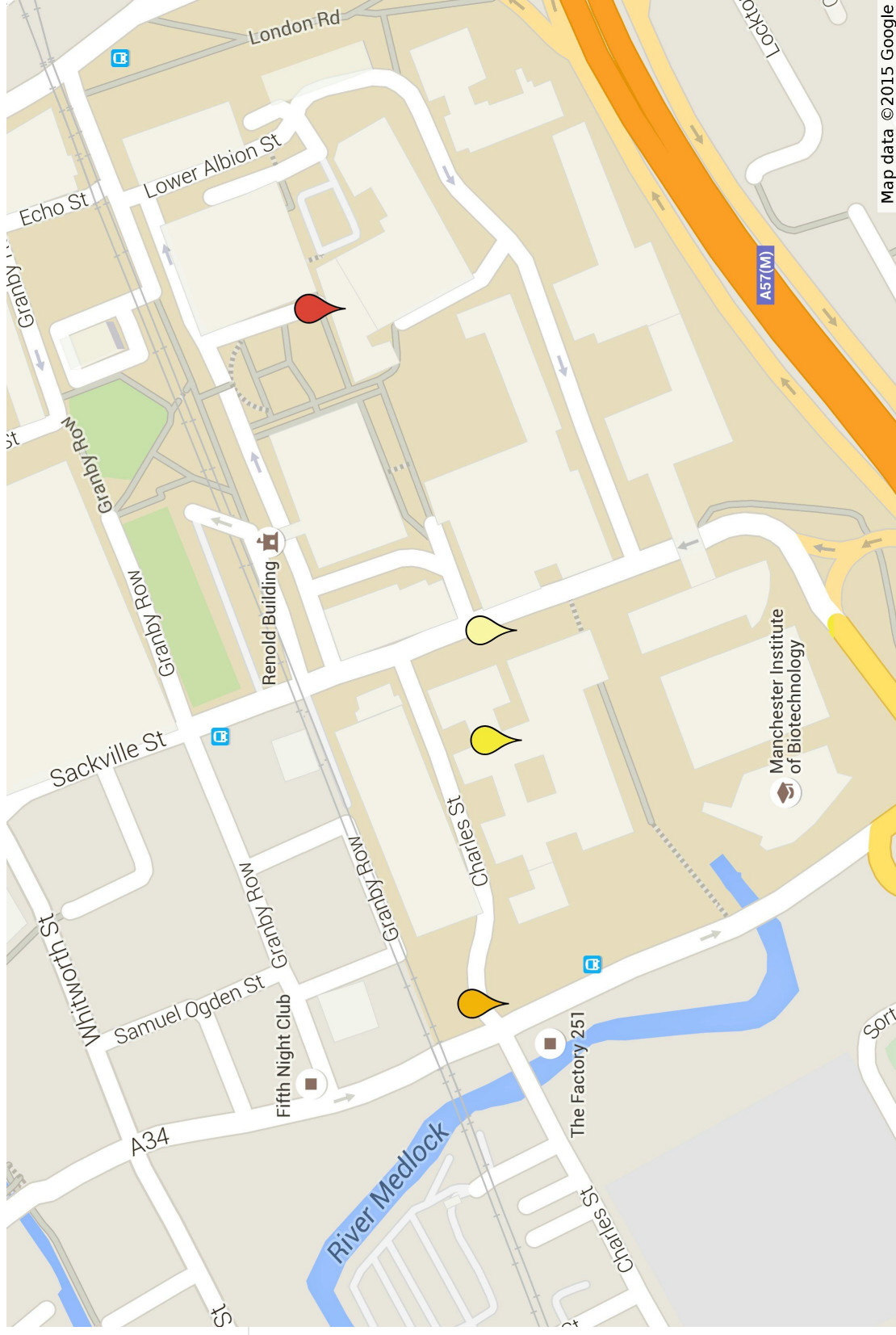
Current charges for the NCP are £10 for 24 hours or £8 for the day

Conference Team **0161 306 4072** or  
email **conference@manchester.ac.uk**

# BAJS Conference 2015 Manchester

## Key venues

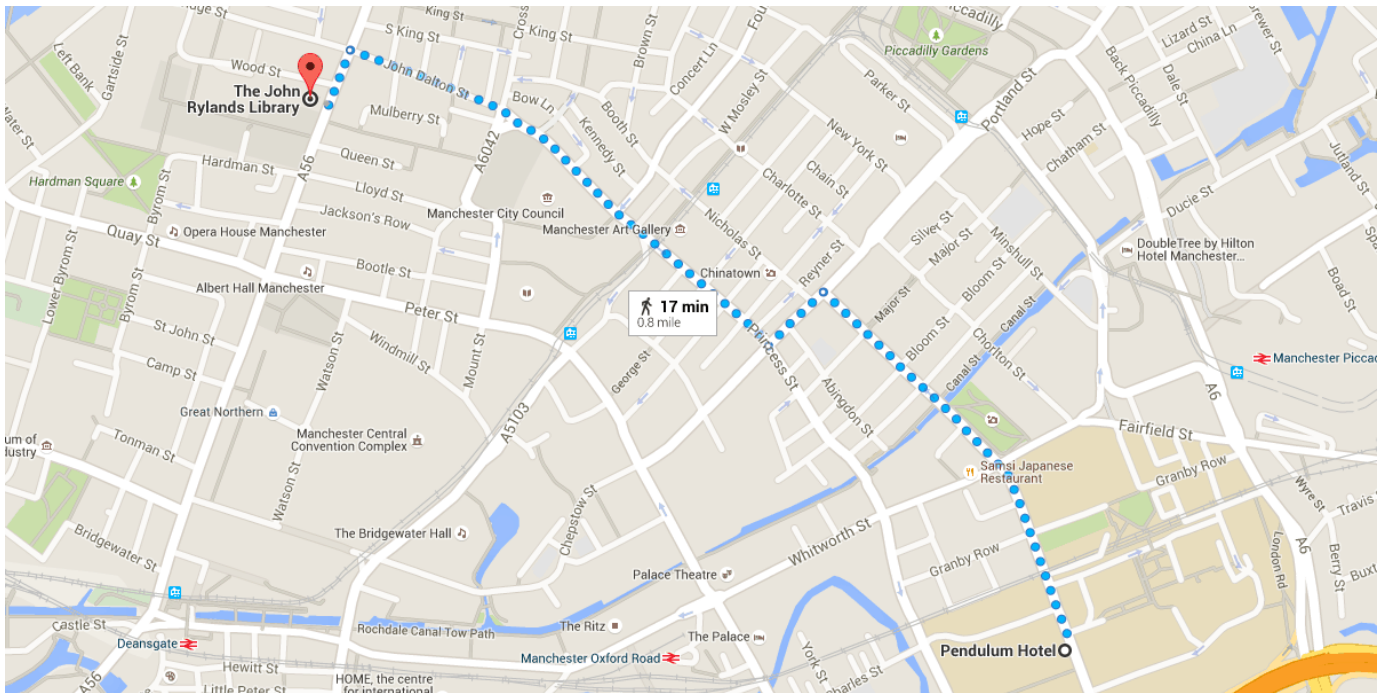
-  Manchester Meeting Place
-  Pendulum Hotel
-  Weston Hall of Residence
-  eastzeast Princess Street





Walk 0.8 mile, 17 min

### Directions from Pendulum Hotel to The John Rylands Library



#### ○ Pendulum Hotel

Use caution - may involve errors or sections not suited for walking

Sackville Street, Manchester M1 3BB, United Kingdom

- ↑ 1. Head north on Sackville St toward Charles St 0.3 mi

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- ↶ 2. Turn left onto Portland St/A5103 312 ft

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- ↷ 3. Turn right onto Princess St/A34  
📘 Continue to follow A34 0.4 mi

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- ↶ 4. Turn left onto Deansgate/A56  
📘 Destination will be on the right 240 ft

#### ⊙ The John Rylands Library

150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH, United Kingdom

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.

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