



New Studies in Late Antique and Medieval Religion

Graduate-Students' Research Workshop

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz & The Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

5.6.23 Monday, Dekel Room, Building 70, Marcus Campus, Be'er Sheva

10:00-10:30 Gathering and Greetings

- **Dr. Peter Lehnardt**, CSoc Steering Committee Member and Department of Hebrew Literature, BGU
- **Prof. Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby**, Deputy Dean and Department of the Arts, BGU

10:30-11:45 First Session

Chair: Prof. Ephraim Shoham-Steiner, CSoc Steering Committee Member and Department of Jewish History, BGU

- **Marco Büttner**, *Justice as a Conceptual Resource of Legitimation in the Propaganda of the Crusades*
- **Benyamin Storchan**, *The Archeology of Suspended Ostrich Eggs in the Holy Land*

11:45-12:15 Break

12:15-13:30 Second Session

Chair: Dr. Yana Tchekhanovets, CSoc Steering Committee Member and Department of Bible Studies, Archeology and the Ancient Near East

- **Samira Fischer**, *Churches in fortified hilltop settlements in the Dioecesis Daciae (6th century)*
- **Marganit (Niti) Cassapu**, *Crossing perspectives: The use of Iconographical Ambiguity in the analysis of the high cross of Gosforth, Cumbria*

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:45 Third Session

Chair: Dr. Uri Shachar, CSoc Steering Committee Member and Department of General History, BGU

- **Goldie Nagy**, *Cult and Ritual in Connection with Roman Cavalry and Equines*
- **Chaggai Raviv**, *Early Midrashic Sources in the Seder Eliyahu*

15:45-16:00 Closing Remarks

- **Prof. Cana Werman**, CSoc Steering Committee Member and Head of Jewish History Department, BGU

Marco Büttner

Germany Justice as a Conceptual Resource of Legitimation in the Propaganda of the Crusades

The planned dissertation aims to critically examine and concretize the significance of the Just War concept for the crusade movement of the 11th and 12th centuries and to determine more precisely its significance in comparison to other motifs and justification strategies. In doing so, it is to be clarified which role a concept of justice coined by the church father Augustine or his doctrine of the Just War played for the legitimization of the crusades.

The medieval tradition of Augustine's concept of the Just War offers two starting points for a concretization in the crusade discourse: On the one hand, it is to be asked to what extent the concept of Jerusalem and the Holy Land as God's property is effective within the discourse as a motif of a just war. On the other hand, it is to be examined on different levels of discourse to what extent the popes, in relation to the crusades into the Holy Land of the 11th and 12th centuries, understood and staged themselves as legitimate warlords in the sense of a "just" war. In this perspective, it will be determined more concretely to what extent the crusade as a just war authorized by the pope had repercussions on the legitimation and acceptance of papal authority.

For this purpose, testimonies of papal propaganda and their reception will be used in particular to examine legitimation strategies contained therein. The material used for the analysis therefore mainly includes documents and letters of popes, legates and crusade participants as well as historiographical accounts. In examining these sources, it is necessary to ask what role a construction of reality charged with collective symbolism played in the legitimation of the Crusades or, conversely, to what extent such a reality was constructed through the discursive justification of the Crusades. Therefore, the thesis will examine the question to what extent the idea of a just war can also be found in the collective symbolism of the crusade discourse. Subsequently, it will also focus on the power-legitimizing effect of binarisms such as "just" and "unjust".

Marco Büttner studied Philosophy, History and Educational Sciences from 2013 to 2020 at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. During and after his studies he worked as a research and student assistant at the chair for Medieval History and at the Institute for History, Theory and Ethics of Medicine in Mainz. In addition, he has worked as a substitute teacher at various schools in the past. In 2021, he received a research proposal scholarship from the Gutenberg Graduate School of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Mainz. Since 2022, he works on his doctoral thesis "Justice as Ressource of Legitimation in the Propaganda of the Crusades" at the Research Training Group 2304 in Mainz. His research interests include the history of the Crusades, the history of political ideas and the history of science.

Benyamin Storchan

The Archeology of Suspended Ostrich Eggs in the Holy Land

In many of today's eastern Mediterranean churches, mosques and synagogues in the Middle East, Ostrich eggs can be seen suspended from ceilings on metal chains, sometimes above glass lamps. Some researchers have explained the suspension of eggs as a form of insect repellent. Others have indicated that the eggs carry spiritual meaning as they are often placed in liturgically significant areas of these structures. The suspension of eggs in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish religious structures is well documented during the Middle Ages however, the origin of this practice is unclear. Of course, humans have used ostrich eggs since prehistory from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic-Bronze Age periods as a food source and the shell as a container, media for art, raw material for bead production and a symbolically significant inclusion as a grave good. This lecture aims at filling the current research gap and review the archaeological evidence supporting the use of ostrich eggs during Late Antiquity. Based on the available data it seems that ostrich eggs were used for multiple purposes and that appear in structures beginning in the Byzantine-early Islamic period.

Benyamin Storchan is an Archaeologist and PhD candidate from the Department of Bible Studies, Archeology and the Ancient Near East at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His thesis "The Metamorphosis of Holy Land Churches During the Early Islamic Period" traces the process of change and continuity experienced by Christian religious structures during and after the Islamic transition. Storchan has earned an MA degree in Archaeology from Bar Ilan University and BA from Michigan State University. Additionally, He is has been employed at the Israeli Antiquities Authority for over 15 years as a research excavation archaeologist for the Jerusalem region and has directed a number of large-scale excavations including the Glorious Martyr Excavation Project.

Samira Fischer

Churches in fortified hilltop settlements in the Dioecesis Daciae (6th century)

In the 6th century, a change in the settlement pattern can be observed in the late Roman administrative unit *Dioecesis Daciae* (Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bulgaria, northern Macedonia). Newly founded settlements are now located in the mountains (up to 1800 m). These new fortified settlements show elements of early Byzantine fortification and can be attributed to the building activity under Emperor Justinian I (527-565). The change in the settlement pattern and the retreat to the mountains is generally attributed to the so-called barbarian invasions - Avars and Slavs - in the 6th century. Fortified hilltop settlements became the typical form of living in the central Balkan region.

In numerous cases, at least one church was built in the most prominent place within the defensive area. It is estimated that every 6th century fortified settlement had at least one church.

Churches in forts or fortified hilltop settlements are regarded as a sign of a "ruralisation process" that is said to have taken place in the diocese in the 6th century. Despite difficult accessibility, the presence of enclosing walls, defence towers and ramparts, the fortified elevations are completely denied a military use. But does the presence of a church categorically exclude the military use of a fortification?

The lecture deals with the role of churches in fortified hilltop settlements in the *Dioecesis Daciae* in the 6th and early 7th century.

Samira Fischer studied Archaeological Sciences from 2013 to 2017 and Prehistory, Protohistory and Medieval Archaeology from 2017 to 2020/2021 at the Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg im Breisgau. There she worked as a research and student assistant for archaeological publications and also as a Teaching assistant. After her studies, Samira completed a traineeship at the "Archäologisches Landesmuseum Baden-Württemberg" in Constance (2021-2022). She works on her doctoral thesis „Defences in Transition? Fortified Hilltop Settlements in Dioecesis Daciae.“ in the Research Training Group 2304 at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg since August 2022. She also worked for the German Archaeological Institute Madrid on the excavation in Madīnat az-zahrā' in October and November 2022. Since her bachelor thesis, Samira has been working on the transformation processes during Late Antiquity and the so-called Migration Period.

Marganit (Niti) Cassapu

Crossing perspectives: The use of Iconographical Ambiguity in the analysis of the high cross of Gosforth, Cumbria.

This lecture examines the high cross of Gosforth, a 10th-century cross located in Cumbria, from a broad art historical perspective. The high cross is characterized by an intentional iconographic ambiguous program that combines Christian iconography with Norse mythology and expresses multiple layers of meaning. In this lecture, I aim to position the iconographic ambiguity reading as a necessary interpretive tool for analyzing findings related to visual syncretism and to demonstrate the religious integration of the two cultures, as evident in the high crosses in the Insular region (Britain, Scotland, Ireland, and the British Isles) during the early Middle Ages between 750-1050.

Marganit (Niti) Cassapu obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in archaeology and art history as well as a Master of Arts degree in arts and archaeology with a specialization in museum curation from Ben Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) with the highest academic honors, (Summa cum laude). Presently, she is pursuing her doctoral studies in art history, which focuses on early medieval High Crosses from Ireland and the United Kingdom. Her thesis titled "Expressions of Religious Assimilation in the High Crosses of Western Europe ca. 750-1050: New Technological Applications for the Study of Art History and Material Culture" comprises two interconnected fields of inquiry: the art history perspective and the application of new technologies and methodology for research in the visual humanities.

Goldie Nagy

Cult and Ritual in Connection with Roman Cavalry and Equines

This paper is created as part of my ongoing dissertation project „studies on the role of equines within the context of the Roman Military (working title)“, in which I try to recreate the conceptualization of equines (donkeys, mules and especially horses) within the environment of the Roman military as exemplified through its developments during the Roman Imperial era from the first to fourth century A.D. in the Roman Danuban provinces. This paper discusses the specificity of cults and rituals concerning cavalry and equines. It investigates the attempts to protect riders and animals alike through religious means. In this contexts places of worship within camps of mounted auxiliary units (*alae*) are examined, as well as specific cults, which are often associated with the cavalry. Furthermore, religious elements on cavalry, e.g. in form of depictions and amulets, are studied.

Goldie Nagy studied Archeological Sciences at the Ruhr-University Bochum from 2016 to 2018. In 2019 she started her Masters degree in Archaeology and Cultural History of the Ancient Mediterranean at the University of Hamburg. During that time, she worked as a student assistant for the project “Creating Identities: family images and identity formation in the Roman Danuban provinces”. In 2021 she finished her degree with the thesis „Human-animal-relations in the Roman Danuban Provinces. An interdisciplinary investigation of funerary dog and horse depictions, and zooarchaeological findings”, which received the graduation grant of the Karl-H. Ditze foundation. Since 2022 she works on her doctoral thesis “The role of equines within the context of the Roman Military” at the Research Training Group 2304 at Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. She participated in excavations in Germany, Turkey and Israel, and is interested in human-animal-studies and places of contact in border regions of the Roman Empire.

Chaggai Raviv

Early *midrashic* sources in the *Seder Eliyahu*

Seder Eliyahu is regarded as a late *midrash* by most scholars, they date his writing to the ninth century and even later. Despite that during the essay the author presents himself as Elijah the biblical prophet, in the opinion of researchers, this attribution is an artificial literary element. Another characteristic of *Seder Eliyahu* is the multiplicity of unique *Drashot* as well as ideas that differ from the traditional views of *midrash*. Most researchers argue that a specific author created the *Derashot* of *Seder Eliyahu*; thus, the work preserves a unique exegetical method. As part of my work, I examine these *Drashot* closely and compare them with early *midrashic* sources. I am trying to check whether it is possible that these *Drashot* actually reflect ancient *Drashot* that are closer to their original form than the way they appear in the classic *midrashim* and *Talmudic* literature. I'm checking if it's possible that *Seder Eliyahu* presents them in their original form. More and more evidence of these cases will strengthen a hypothesis, heard in the past by several researchers, that the *Seder Eliyahu* that we have is a late composition built around an earlier composition that included ancient material that may be attributed in one way or another to Elijah the prophet. In my lecture, I will try to offer examples for these cases.

Chaggai Raviv holds a B.A and an M.A. in Talmud and Jewish Study at Bar Ilan University. The topic of his thesis was: Quotations of Tana De'bei Eliyahu in the Babylonian Talmud and Their Relationship to Midrash "Seder Eliyahu". Currently, he is a PhD student at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, at the department of Jewish Thought.