

Call for Papers: Theorizing Jewish-Arab Transculturation (Workshop at the Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies, February 7–9 2023, deadline for abstracts: October 15, 2022)

Jewish-Arab relations continue to be explored through the opposing research paradigms of conflict and coexistence: While the conflict paradigm projects the political struggle over Israel/Palestine onto earlier periods of Jewish-Arab relations, the coexistence paradigm imagines an ideal past of inter-ethnic and inter-faith harmony. By contrast, recent scholarship has emphasized the dynamics of interaction, entanglement, and transculturation, crystallized in a long history of hybrid identities: Even in contexts of asymmetric power relations and violent encounters, Jewish-Arab history has produced paradoxical effects of mutual learning and cultural borrowing – ranging from entangled epistemic networks in the Middle Ages to the modern phenomena of the “Hebrew Bedouin” or the PLO’s “Palestinian Zionism” (Sadeq al-Azm).

While the entangled history of Jewish-Arab relations is increasingly well-established, our workshop seeks to advance theory-guided approaches to Jewish-Arab transculturation. How can we explore transfer, interaction, and appropriation in Jewish-Arab history from a comparative perspective? How can we make sense of the radical power shifts caused by European colonialism and the modern nation-state without losing sight of the *longue durée* of Jewish-Arab relations? How could the research field of Transcultural Studies help us to bridge the disciplinary partition between Jewish Studies / Israel Studies and Middle East Studies / Islamic Studies? And how could we refine our understanding of Jewish-Arab relations by studying transculturation in other world regions, ranging from East Asia or South Asia all the way to the Caribbean?

To discuss the theorization of Jewish-Arab transculturation, the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies, the Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies, the Department for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (Heidelberg University) and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute invite papers by scholars in the broader fields of Transcultural Studies, Jewish Studies, Israel Studies / Palestine Studies, and Middle East Studies for a three-day workshop in Heidelberg on February 7–9, 2023. The workshop is supported by Germany’s Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in the framework of the joint research project “Beyond Conflict and Coexistence: An Entangled History of Jewish-Arab Relations” (Heidelberg, Munich, Halle). Based on availability, funding will be provided for accommodation and transportation. The keynote speech at the workshop will be given by Oren Barak (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

The workshop will be held in a three-day format. Papers by young scholars are especially encouraged. The most promising contributions will be published in a special issue of a relevant journal at the intersection of Jewish Studies, Israel Studies, and Middle East Studies. We are especially interested in papers which explore the following topics:

- Theory-guided approaches to Jewish-Arab transculturation (hybridization, creolization, appropriation, mimicry ...) from the Middle Ages until today
- Case studies of Jewish-Arab transculturation (e.g., in terms of language, culture, religion, and politics)
- Transregional comparisons between Jewish-Arab relations and other cases of transculturation

To apply for the workshop, please submit a short abstract (300 words) and a short CV (1–2 pages) with your most important publications by October 15 (contact: beyond-conflict@hcts.uni-heidelberg.de).

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