

***Rabbinic Instruction in Context:  
Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Transmission of  
Religious Knowledge and Praxis in Antiquity and Late Antiquity***

GAUG - Collaborative Research Centre 1136 "Education and Religion"  
In cooperation with the  
European Association for Jewish Studies  
(EAS Conference Grant Programme in European Jewish Studies 2017/18)

Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> 2017  
Taberna am Wilhelmsplatz, 3, 37075 Göttingen

*Concept and organization:* Dr. Elisabetta Abate (Jewish Studies)

*Abstract:*

The conference revolves around religious education in the (late) ancient Mediterranean from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, while focusing on the role of Judaism and on Jewish Studies. In doing so, it shall examine aspects of the intra- and intercultural transmission of religious knowledge and praxis, as they emerge from Jewish, pagan, Christian, and Islamic literary evidence. Each of the main papers, followed by a response, shall offer a comparative analysis of selected relevant texts, drawn from classical Rabbinic literature on the one hand, and from one of the aforementioned religious traditions, on the other. Through the comparative/contrastive textual reading of the literary evidence, the event shall highlight some current ways of interdisciplinary inquiry into Rabbinic Judaism and related traditions, and, at the same time, explore new paths of interdisciplinary research into religious education in the *orbis mediterraneus* and its environment in (late) antiquity.

*Rationale:*

The Collaborative Research Centre 1136 "Education and Religion" ("Bildung und Religion in Kulturen des Mittelmeerraums und seiner Umwelt von der Antike bis zum Mittelalter und zum Klassischen Islam") at the University of Göttingen, as an institutional framework, provides the thematic focus for the conference. At the same time, the specific key categories of religious education through which the event intends to look at Rabbinic instruction (actors, contents, methods, settings, goals, and the correlations and interplay between them) can help differentiate and clarify some central aspects of the phenomenon, which sometimes appear confused or hard to grasp in the sources. Thus, on the plane of Rabbinics, the encounter between the invited experts is meant to enable the exploration of Rabbinic (representations of) constellations of religious education from a variety of viewpoints and sources. Not only that. The conference's institutional framework offers a solid forum for an interdisciplinary exchange of research findings, as well as of theoretical and methodological insights. Thus, the event is meant both to explore and contextualize Rabbinic religious education in its broader environment, and to promote a rich reflection on, and praxis of, interdisciplinary inquiry between Jewish

Studies/Rabbinics and a number of related scholarly fields (Classical Philology, Syriac Studies, Patristics, Liturgical Poetry, Arabic Studies).

*Planned outcomes:*

- a) The conference shall contribute to clarify which notions of instruction and which educational constellations emerge from the evidence examined, thus contributing to research into religious education in the *orbis mediterraneus* in (late) antiquity (e.g., which agents are represented as transmitting which contents? to whom? in which social settings? in which ways and by means of which methods? for which purposes? in which languages and/or language registers? how do the methods and contents relate to the addressees and/or the settings?).
- b) The comparative textual reading shall highlight some current ways of interdisciplinary inquiry into Rabbinic Judaism and related traditions, and, at the same time, explore new paths of interdisciplinary research into religious education in the *orbis mediterraneus* and its environment in (late) antiquity.
- c) The event's interdisciplinary efforts shall be underpinned by a reflection on the transferability of research questions and methods, which shall hopefully offer a contribution to similar endeavours.
- d) The event shall shed some light on the interrelations between Jewish and non-Jewish groups and traditions. A new perspective can be opened up, for example, on the historical question of the emergence of Christianity from Judaism and their differentiation from one another (shorthand: the "parting of the ways/ways that never parted" debate). Possible results in this sense include the emergence of shared notions or practices in terms of religious education, of similar (description/prescription of) behaviour, or of mechanisms of self-positioning of one group against another.

*Schedule:*

Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>

14:00-14:30	Reception and Introduction	Dr. Elisabetta Abate and Prof. Dr. Peter Gemeinhardt (Göttingen)
14:30-ca. 15:15	Keynote Address	Prof. Dr. Günter Stemberger (Vienna): <b>"Rabbinic Literature in Interdisciplinary Perspective"</b>
ca. 15:15-15:30	Discussion	
15:30-16:20	Rabbinic Literature and Hellenistic Background	Dr. Lorena Miralles Maciá (Granada): <b>"Aggadic Fables. Exemplary Tales in Rabbinic Vestments"</b> Respondent: Dr. Elisabetta Abate
16:20-16:50	Discussion	
16:50-17:20	Break	
17:20-18:10	Rabbinic and Qumran Texts	Prof. Dr. Lutz Doering (Münster): <b>Pedagogy and "Curriculum" according to the "Sectarian" Texts from Qumran and Rabbinic Literature</b> Respondent: Dr. Peter Porzig (Göttingen)
18:10-18:40	Discussion	
ca. 19:00	Dinner	

Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>

9:00-9:50	Rabbinic Literature and Liturgical Poetry - Hebrew <i>Piyyut</i> and Syriac <i>Madrosha</i>	Dr. Ophir Münz-Manor (Ra'anana): <b>"From the House of Study to the House of Worship: Hebrew and Syriac Liturgical Poems on the Dispute between Body and Soul"</b> Respondent: PD Dr. Dmitrij Bumazhnov (Göttingen)
9:50-10:20	Discussion	
10:20-10:40	Break	
10:40-11:30	Rabbinic and Eastern Christian Monastic and Apologetic Texts	Dr. Ilaria Briata (Verona): <b>"It is Hard to Teach Orally What Has Not Been Practiced Physically: Ethics, Etiquette, and Education in Rabbinic and Monastic Literature"</b> Respondent: Prof. Dr. Peter Gemeinhardt
11:30-12:00	Discussion	
12:00-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-14:20	Rabbinic and Classical Arabic Texts	Professor Dr. Stefan Schreiner (Tübingen): <b>"Religiöse Bildung im rabbinischen Judentum und im Islam"</b> Respondent: Dr. Yassir El Jamouhi (Göttingen)
14:20-14:50	Discussion	
14:50- 15:20	Conclusion and farewell	Dr. Elisabetta Abate