

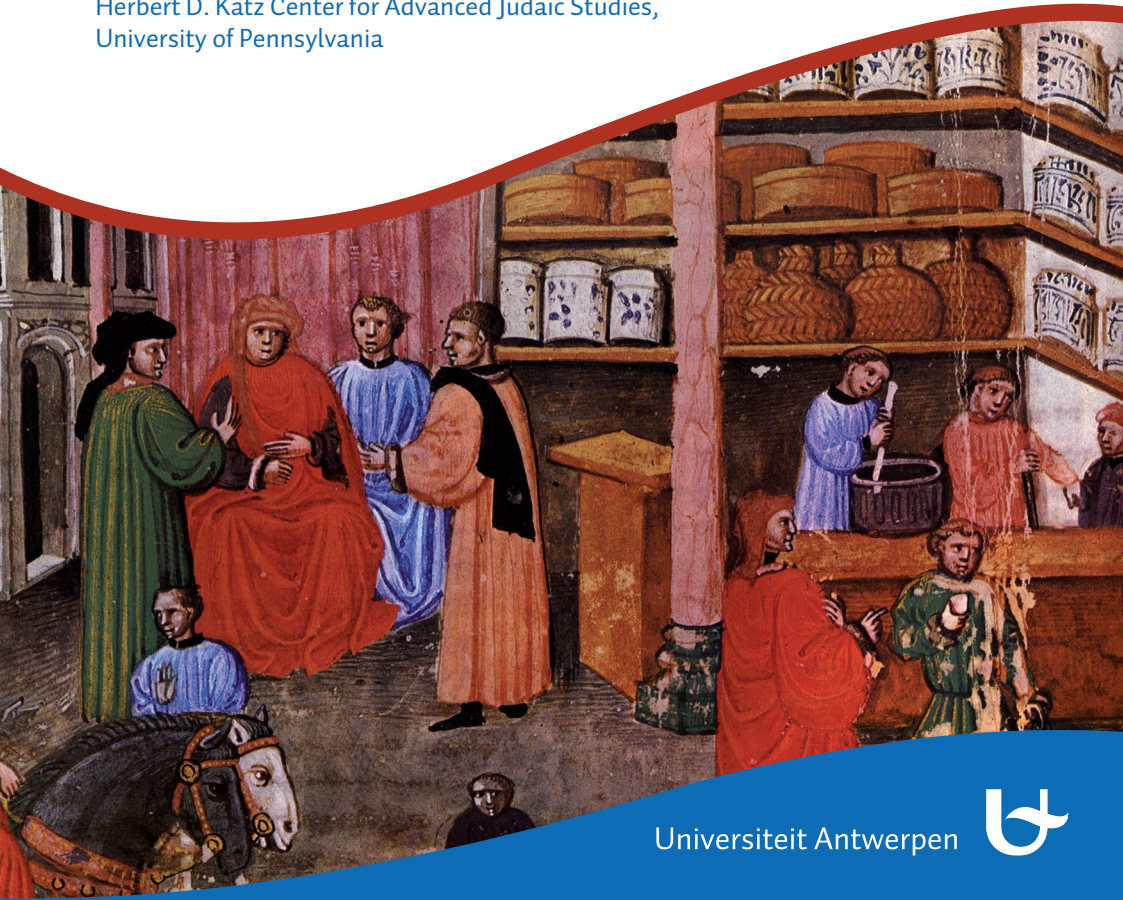
International conference

# JEWES, COMMERCE, AND CULTURE

20-22 June, 2010

University of Antwerp

In cooperation with the  
Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies,  
University of Pennsylvania



COVER IMAGE: Apothecary shop in Northern Italy, ca. 1438-1440.  
Bologna, *Bibliotheca Universitaria*, Ms. 2197, folio 492 recto (detail)  
Source: Metzger, Thérèse et Mendel. *La vie juive au moyen âge*  
illustrée par les manuscrits hébraïques enluminés du 13e au  
16e siècle. *Fribourg: Office du Livre*, 1982.

## The Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp (IJS)

The Institute of Jewish Studies was established in the Autumn of 2001. It is fully integrated into the University of Antwerp and supported by the Ministry of Education of the Flemish Community in Belgium. Its goal is the academic study of Judaism from a variety of perspectives: historical, philological, cultural, literary, religious, philosophical and sociological. The Institute's activities cover academic research, university teaching and educational services for a general public.

The Institute organizes an annual series of over twenty lectures on various topics in the field of Jewish Studies, language courses in Yiddish and modern Hebrew at different levels of linguistic competence, courses in Jewish Studies integrated in the department of Literature and Philosophy, and special academic and public events such as conferences, symposia, workshops, and reading groups.

The Institute's research topics, academic gatherings and public events focus on modern Jewish history, literature, philosophy and cultural studies. Simultaneously, they touch upon a range of issues at the heart of current concerns in Europe's academic, cultural and social life.

More information on the Institute, its staff, and its activities can be found on the (bilingual) website: [www.ua.ac.be/ijs](http://www.ua.ac.be/ijs)

## JEWES, COMMERCE, AND CULTURE

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This international conference challenges scholars to reconsider the economic dimensions of the Jewish past and to integrate that knowledge within the emerging narratives of Jewish experience. Although the field has moved far beyond the need for apologetics, there is an abiding reluctance to engage the Jews' historic economic functions, which have long nourished anti-Semitic fantasies. Yet these functions formed the basis of Jewish global civilization: mercantile, transnational, and reliant upon money as a source of power. We will explore such topics as Jewish livelihoods, social structures, trade networks, and fiscal mechanisms, thus investigating anew the relationship between the material and cultural components of Jewish civilization. By bringing together scholars from across the humanities and social sciences, we seek to devise a fresh research agenda for exposing the shifting linkages between commerce and culture in Jewish life from medieval to modern times.

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## Sunday, 20 June 2010

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20:00 Welcome

**Vivian Liska** - Institute of Jewish Studies (University of Antwerp)

*Introduction to the Keynote Lecture*

**David B. Ruderman** - Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies

20:30

**Derek J. Penslar** - University of Toronto

**KEYNOTE LECTURE**

*The Persistence of Difference: Jews as Economic Agents in the Modern World*

Followed by a reception

## Monday, 21 June 2010

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### SESSION I

#### JEWISH ECONOMIC LIFE IN EASTERN EUROPE

09:30 Coffee

10:00 **Adam Teller** - University of Haifa

*The Rise and Fall of the Ickowicz Brothers: International Jewish Businessmen in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania*

**Cornelia Aust** - University of Pennsylvania

*Commercial Cosmopolitans? The Eighteenth-Century Jewish Mercantile Elite between Warsaw and Amsterdam*

**Glenn Dynner** - Sarah Lawrence College

*Tavernkeepers & Crypto-Tavernkeepers: Jews in the Polish Liquor Trade*

12:00 Lunch Break

15:15 **Veerle Vanden Daelen** - University of Antwerp

*Jewish Economic Life in a Non-Jewish Surrounding: Antwerp's Diamond Jews*

16:00 Coffee Break

## SESSION II

### SEPHARDIC ECONOMIC NETWORKS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

- 16:30 **Yosef Kaplan** - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
*The Western Sephardi Social Elite: Commerce, Religion and Ethnic Solidarity*
- Evelyne Oliel-Grausz** - Sorbonne Paris  
*Transnational Networks and Intercommunal Solidarity in the Western Sephardic Diaspora: Landmarks, Patterns, Finances*
- Robert Bonfil** - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
*Business, Politics and Philanthropy of the Powerless: Doña Gracia Nasi as Metaphor*

**Tuesday, 22 June 2010**

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## SESSION III

### INTERSECTIONS OF JEWISH ECONOMIC LIFE BETWEEN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- 09:00 **Eli Lederhendler** - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
*Of Markets and Revolutions: Jews in the Early American Economy*
- Jonathan Dekel-Chen** - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
*Jewels from the Earth: Histories and Legacies of Jewish Agriculturalism on Four Continents*
- 10:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30 **Rebecca Kobrin** - Columbia University  
*Exceptional Failures: East European Jewish 'Bankers,' Financial Failure and the Reshaping of American Capitalism, 1873-1914*
- Jonathan Karp** - Binghamton University, SUNY  
*Brokering a Rock 'n' Roll International: Jewish Record Men in the US and UK*
- 13:00 Lunch Break
- ### FINAL LECTURE AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRESENT REALITIES
- 14:30 **Jerry Z. Muller** - Catholic University of America, Washington DC  
*Some Final Reflections on Capitalism and the Jews*

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CORNELIA AUST

### **Commercial Cosmopolitans? The Eighteenth-Century Jewish Mercantile Elite between Warsaw and Amsterdam**

The exploration of European Jewish history is often undertaken from a particular regional or local vantage point, while transregional connections among Jews across and beyond Europe are frequently disregarded. In this paper, I will explore the nature of commercial networks of members of the Jewish mercantile elite from Amsterdam, Frankfurt/Oder, and Warsaw in the second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. Family ties created via marriage often were the basis for these commercial networks. They were, however, closely integrated into the general world of commerce as for example the trade in bills of exchange shows. It was the mobility, occupational flexibility, and transregional connections of the mercantile elite that allowed its members to successfully enter new fields of business such as army supplying in Warsaw and the borderlands between Prussia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. I will further address the shifting of these commercial networks with the economic and political changes of the early nineteenth century. Finally, I will cast some light on the cultural implications of these commercial connections.

**Cornelia Aust** recently received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Pennsylvania. In her dissertation titled *Commercial Cosmopolitans. Networks of Jewish Merchants between Warsaw and Amsterdam, 1750-1820* she examines the functioning of commercial and familial networks of members of the Jewish mercantile elite as well as the intersection between economic and social power. She studied in Leipzig, Jerusalem, Berlin, and Warsaw, and holds an M.A. from the Free University Berlin (2003). She received various fellowships including a DAAD fellowship to study in Israel (1999-2000), a Benjamin Franklin Fellowship from the University of Pennsylvania, and an International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (2006-2007). She was a fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies in Philadelphia in 2008-2009.

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ROBERT BONFIL

### **Business, Politics and Philanthropy of the Powerless: Doña Gracia Nasi as Metaphor**

The author will suggest that the well-known documentary evidence displaying almost clearly recurring patterns of behavior justifies referring to Doña Gracia's image as to a metaphor mirroring all kinds of analogous situations involving human activity (in business as in private affairs) on all possible planes (female as male, young as aged, individual as national), in which apparent *fragility*, *passivity* and *resignation* are in fact real *strength*, *activity* and *determination*.

**Robert Bonfil** is a graduate of the Italian Rabbinic Seminary (1959), Torino University (in Physics, 1960), and holds a Ph.D. in Jewish History (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1976). He was formerly Acting Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of

Milan, and Emeritus Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University. His areas of scholarly interest and experience are: The history of the Jews in the Middle Ages; the history of the Jews in Italy, particularly in the Renaissance; the history of the Jews of southern Italy and of the Byzantine world in the Middle Ages; Halakhic and homiletic literature as historical source. Among his publications: *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization by Oxford University Press, 1990); *Jewish Life In Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1994); *Tra due mondi. Cultura ebraica e cultura cristiana nel Medioevo* (Napoli: Liguori, 1996); *History and Folklore in a Medieval Jewish Chronicle - The Family Chronicle of Ahima'az ben Paltiel* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009); *Cultural Change Among the Jews of Early Modern Italy* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010 [=Variorum collected studies series, 945]).

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## **JONATHAN DEKEL-CHEN**

### ***Jewels from the Earth: Histories and Legacies of Jewish Agriculaturalism on Four Continents***

This lecture examines the little-known economic and social history of the Jewish agrarianization movement from the 1880s until the eve of the Second World War. It simultaneously looks at the achievements and failures of settlement regions spread over four continents, together with the large philanthropic campaigns in the Jewish world that made them possible. To clarify the ideological, organizational and personal links across these decades and vast geographic spaces, I will present some of the ideologies and people behind the agricultural settlement projects that arose during these years from Argentina to northern California, and from the prairies of southern Russia to the Zionist agricultural settlement in the hills and valleys of Eretz Yisrael. Although mostly forgotten since 1948, this history and its legacies are of pivotal importance for the understanding of economic life and organizational development during this formative era in the Jewish world.

**Jonathan Dekel-Chen** is a senior lecturer in modern history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is also the academic chairman of the Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry at the Hebrew University. During 2008-2009, he was a research fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and at Columbia University's Harriman Institute. Dr. Dekel-Chen is author of *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Power in Soviet Russia, 1924-41* (Yale University Press, 2005) and co-editor of *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Indiana University Press, 2010).

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## GLENN DYNNER

### *Tavernkeepers & Crypto-tavernkeepers: Jews in the Polish Liquor Trade*

By the end of the eighteenth century, Jews comprised the vast majority of tavernkeepers in Poland-Lithuania, leasing taverns and distilleries from the nobility. According to most historians, Polish Jews were driven out of the liquor trade over the course of the next century. Yet nineteenth-century archival sources provide evidence of the continued flourishing of Polish Jewish tavernkeepers, both open and surreptitious. While Jewish tavernkeeping was vigorously opposed by powerful groups in Polish society, one crucial group continued to provide them with cover: the very local Christians they were accused of victimizing. The involvement of Jews in this sector of the Polish economy during this later period points to the fact that the feudal economic system survived amidst a period of industrialization and modernization. This talk analyzes the robust but technically illegal Polish Jewish liquor trade during the nineteenth century.

**Glenn Dynner** teaches Judaic Studies at Sarah Lawrence College and is author of *Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (Oxford University Press, 2006), which received the Koret Publication Prize and was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. As a Fulbright scholar, Dynner traveled to Poland and began uncovering hitherto unknown archival sources on nineteenth-century Polish Jewry, which he has continually sought to integrate with internal Jewish sources. He is the latest recipient of the YIVO Workmen's Circle/Dr. Emanuel Patt Visiting Professorship, as well as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University this coming Fall. Currently, he is writing a monograph on the subject of Jews in the Polish liquor trade. He is also editing a forthcoming book on Jewish and Christian mysticism in Eastern Europe. Dynner holds a B.A. and Ph.D. from Brandeis University, and an M.A. from McGill University.

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## YOSEF KAPLAN

### *The Western Sephardi Social Elite: Commerce, Religion and Ethnic Solidarity*

In the Western Sephardic Diaspora a number of magnates were active who claimed venerable aristocratic origins and whose return to Judaism added great economic power to their communities. These wealthy merchants established an extensive network of economic connections between Northwestern Europe, Iberia, and colonies in the Caribbean. Some of them became court Jews in every respect and maintained sumptuous lifestyles as befit their status. They sought to embellish their position by offering what they viewed as a dignified presentation of the riches of the Jewish heritage. Their emotional and cultural ties with the Iberian world were not obscured even after they left the peninsula, and their connections with Spain and Portugal led the most prominent members of this elite to serve the interests of those countries.



**Yosef Kaplan** is Bernard Cherrick Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the president of the World Union of Jewish Studies. His main publications include: *From Christianity to Judaism* (1989); *The Western Sephardi Diaspora* (1994); *Les nouveaux-juifs d'Amsterdam* (1999); *An Alternative Path to Judaism* (2000). He has edited many books including *Dutch Jews as Perceived by Themselves and by Others* (2001); *The Dutch Intersection. The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History* (2008). He has written many studies on Iberian Jewry in the late Middle Ages, the Marranos and the Sephardi Diaspora after the Expulsion from Spain, and the Early Enlightenment in Western European Jewish Society. He is a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities since 2004.

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## **JONATHAN KARP**

### **Brokering a Rock 'n' Roll International: Jewish Record Men in the US and UK**

While the phenomenon of Jewish pop music entrepreneurship in America has received limited academic attention, even less has been written about Anglo-Jewry's place in the music business. I begin by exploring the key role of Jewish businessmen in creating independent record labels in the U.S. specializing in Rhythm and Blues and later Rock 'n' Roll music. I then turn to the British scene of the 1950s and 1960s to examine the parallel and related phenomenon of Jewish dominance of pop music management in the UK. Throughout the presentation I address the question of what such a comparative analysis might reveal about the distinctive class and entrepreneurial orientation of Jews deriving from similar East European backgrounds yet operating in different national and cultural settings. I conclude by treating the evolution of mid twentieth-century Jewish music entrepreneurship in relation to the global exportation of American culture and capitalism.

**Jonathan Karp** is Associate Professor in the Judaic Studies and History Departments at Binghamton University, SUNY. He has taught at Franklin & Marshall College and was Brownstone Visiting Professor at Dartmouth College in 2006. His book, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce in Europe, 1638-1848* was published in 2008 by Cambridge University Press. His co-edited volume with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, was recently released in paperback and another collection of essays, co-edited with Adam Sutcliffe, on *Philosemitism in History*, will be published at the end of 2009 (also by Cambridge). Karp has written on a range of subjects in intellectual and cultural history, including recent articles on Paul Robeson and Bob Dylan. He is currently completing a book manuscript on economic and cultural relations between Blacks and Jews.

***Exceptional Failures: East European Jewish ‘Bankers,’ Financial Failure and the Reshaping of American Capitalism, 1873-1914***

My paper investigates the methods, trade networks, and fiscal mechanisms deployed by East European immigrant Jewish “bankers” in the early twentieth century and the ways in which their businesses reshaped the regulation of American finance in Gilded-Age America. While a vigorous academic industry has grown around the study of capitalism in the United States, American Jewish historians have most of their devoted attention to mapping out the careers and family connections of investment bankers such as Felix Warburg, or Jacob Schiff who fit squarely into America’s mythology of success; their discussion of East European immigrant Jews in this era focuses largely on this group’s participation in organizing the garment industry. But East European Jews also played a central role in America’s evolving commercial banking industry as exemplified by the most famous (or infamous) Jewish banker in Gilded-Age New York: Sender Jarmulovsky. Having made thousands of dollars selling ship tickets in Europe, Jarmulovsky migrated to the United States in 1873 where he opened a bank and ship ticket sales office in New York City. By 1904, Jarmulowksy’s Bank not only claimed 60,000 depositors, but the Holland American line noted how he practically controlled the trans-Atlantic market, selling approximately three-fifths of their tickets on installment to immigrants already in the United States. His spectacular rise was quickly forgotten after August 30, 1914, when a riot broke out on New York’s Lower East Side in front of the Jarmulovsky bank. Demanding the bank return their deposits so that they could send money back to relatives in Europe, the enraged crowd, who had been saving money in Jarmulowksy’s bank to bring over their relatives, paraded to City Hall where they attacked clerks. The incident provoked a myriad of court cases, precedent-setting judicial decisions and city officials to craft new banking legislation to protect New York from becoming infected with “speculitis,” a disease all agreed was transforming not only New York but America itself. While few recall the Jarmulovsky saga, the riot it sparked or the banking reforms it set in motion, this episode highlights the ways in which looking closely at Jewish economic failure in America can contribute to the larger debate on the interrelationship between American character and capitalism, a literature that rarely grapples upfront with Jews.

**Rebecca Kobrin** is the Russell and Bettina Knapp Assistant Professor of American Jewish History at Columbia University. Her first book, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Indiana University Press, 2010), applies a transnational lens to the study of East European Jewish immigration. She is the editor of the forthcoming volume, *Chosen Capital: Jews and American Capitalism* (Rutgers University Press, 2011). She served as the Hilda Blaustein Post-Doctoral Fellow at Yale University (2002-2004) and the American Academy of Jewish Research Post-Doctoral Fellow at New York University (2004-2006). She is presently working on a book project entitled *Destructive Creators: Jewish Immigrant Bankers, Financial Failure and the Reshaping of American Capitalism, 1900-1930*.

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## ELI LEDERHENDLER

### *Of Markets and Revolutions: Jews in the Early American Economy*

This paper discusses the terms of Jewish integration into the colonial American economy from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century. Thematic connections have been drawn in the past between the Jewish experience in Dutch, French, and British America and the larger “Atlantic economy,” on the one hand, and the Dutch-Spanish-Caribbean trade nexus in particular. That angle of analysis has been useful for tracing the rise of trading networks among family relations and closely knit ethno-religious minorities spread around the Atlantic basin. However, the height of the Sephardi trading nexus was soon passed, as the British began to establish a dominant role in Atlantic trade. Moreover, it is demonstrable that the terms for Jewish economic and civic integration in the North American colonies surpassed those that existed elsewhere. Therefore, the questions to be raised must go beyond the more familiar theme of trans-Atlantic networking to include an analysis of the colonial American “difference.”

**Eli Lederhendler** is the Stephen S. Wise Professor of American Jewish History and Institutions at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of numerous studies on American and East European Jewish history, including *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1950-1970* (2001), and *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (1989). He is co-editor of the annual journal, *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (New York: Oxford University Press).

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## JERRY Z. MULLER

### *Some Final Reflections on Capitalism and the Jews*

**Jerry Z. Muller** is professor of history at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC. He studied at Brandeis University, the Hebrew University, and Columbia University. His most recent book, *Capitalism and the Jews*, was published by Princeton University Press in February, 2010. His previous books include *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in European Thought* (Knopf, 2002). His 36-part lecture series, *Thinking about Capitalism* was released by The Teaching Company in 2009. His essays and articles have appeared in *Commentary*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Republic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other journals.

**EVELYNE OLIEL-GRAUSZ**

### ***Transnational Networks and Intercommunal Solidarity in the Western Sephardic Diaspora: Landmarks, Patterns, Finances***

The Ancona boycott is one of the few episodes of intercommunal solidarity that has been studied in depth: as it is unparalleled in early Modern times, it cannot serve as a paradigm of transnational solidarity. Nevertheless, two of its distinctive features may be used to address the issue in more general terms: the juxtaposition of intercommunal solidarity and communal tensions, on the one hand, and the nexus between merchant and intercommunal networks on the other hand. This paper will examine the plurality of protagonists involved in varying degrees in intercommunal solidarity as implemented in the Western Sephardic diaspora, in ordinary times or in times of crisis: major communities, court Jew-type figures, merchants. A particular emphasis will bear on the role of mercantile networks and agents for the channeling of funds, information or diplomatic influence. The evolution of the various forms of solidarity will be questioned as the diasporic Sephardic Nation evolves into national communities during the 18th century.

**Evelyne Oliel-Grausz** holds a Ph.D. in Modern European History from the University of Paris (Sorbonne). After having taught for four years at the University of Lyon, she returned to Paris to become a Faculty Member in Early Modern and Modern Jewish History. She is one of the leading scholars working on trade, family, and communication networks in eighteenth-century Sephardi diaspora in Northern Europe. In 2008-2009, she held the Primo Levi Fellowship at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, studying the relation between culture and economic history in early modern Sephardi diaspora. She has published several articles and book chapters on ethnicity, cultural identity, Sephardi diaspora and Jewish leadership. She is co-editor of *Les Juifs et la Révolution française. Histoire et mentalités* (with Mireille Hadas-Lebel), is currently finishing a book on intercommunal networks and communication in the Sephardic diaspora. Her current research bears on eighteenth-century Sephardic trade networks and conflict resolution.

**DEREK J. PENSLAR**

### ***The Persistence of Difference: Jews as Economic Agents in the Modern World***

Until the mid twentieth century, Jewish economic activity was a frequent topic of public discussion in the western world. Although often a target of antisemitic attacks, “homo economicus judaicus” was also an object of awe and wonder. Jews energetically engaged this discussion, at times defensively, but also triumphantly. In our own era, due to the spread of globalized capitalism and sensitivity about antisemitism in the wake of the Holocaust, public conversation about Jews rarely deals with economics, and scholarship on Jewish economic history, although rich and highly sophisticated, usually evades the issue of Jewish singularity or denies it altogether through comparison between Jews and other trading communities. Yet the Jews are in fact different in that they constitute a middleman minority that until very

recently did not have roots as a colonized middleman majority. Comparison between Jewish and modern Indian economic history will throw light on this difference, as well as the peculiar features of the economy of Israel, where Jews constitute a sovereign middleman majority.

**Derek J. Penslar** is the Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History at the University of Toronto. His publications focus on modern European Jewry, the history of the Zionist movement, and the state of Israel. He is author or editor of eight books, including *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (2001); *Orientalism and the Jews* (2005) and *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (2006). He is currently writing two books: *The Origins of the State of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History* (with Eran Kaplan, under contract to the University of Wisconsin Press), and *Jews, War and the Military in Modern History* (under contract to Princeton University Press). Penslar is co-editor of *Jewish Social Studies* and *The Journal of Israeli History* and is a vice-president of the Association for Jewish Studies. He has been a "Directeur d'études invité" at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, the Nachshon Visiting Professor of Israel Studies at Harvard, and visiting professor of Israel Studies at Columbia.

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## **DAVID B. RUDERMAN**

### ***Introduction to the Keynote Lecture***

**David B. Ruderman** is the Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History and the Ella Darivoff director of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Ruderman was educated at the City College of New York, the Teacher's Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Columbia University. He received his rabbinical degree from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, and his Ph.D. in Jewish history from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Professor Ruderman has taught in the Graduate School of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University. In June 2001, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture honored him with its lifetime achievement award for his work in Jewish history.

Selected Publications: *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, 2010); *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (2007); *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy* (2004); *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (2001); *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (2000); *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (1995).

### ***The Rise and Fall of the Ickowicz Brothers: International Jewish Businessmen in Eighteenth Century Lithuania***

The brothers Szmojlo and Jozef Gdal Ickowicz were probably the most wealthy – and famous – Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 1730s and 1740s. Their contacts with both the Baal Shem Tov and the philosopher Solomon Maimon meant that they were known in Jewish culture long after their deaths as “The Leaseholders” – Dzherzhavtses. They made their fortune through their economic contacts with the enormously rich and powerful Radziwill family, whose estates they managed, until the debt-ridden and psychopathic Hieronim Florian Radziwill had them arrested in order to confiscate their money and property. This paper will examine the economic strategies the brothers used to amass their wealth within the Radziwill estate economy, paying particular attention to the regional and transregional economic connections they developed in doing so. It will demonstrate how the brothers translated their incomes into positions of power in both Jewish and non-Jewish society. Finally, by looking at the brothers’ fall, it will examine both the limitations on Jewish wealth-creation and the dangers facing the Jewish economic elite in early modern Poland-Lithuania.

**Adam Teller** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa. His area of expertise is the economic, social, legal, and cultural history of East European Jews in the early modern period. He has published two books: *Living Together: The Jewish Quarter of Poznan and its Inhabitants in the Seventeenth Century* (Jerusalem, 2003) and *Money, Power, and Influence: The Jews on the Radziwill Estates in Eighteenth-Century Lithuania* (Jerusalem, 2005). He co-edited volume 22 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* dealing with *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Pre-Modern Poland* (published in 2010). In addition to serving as a fellow of the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 2008-2009, he has also been a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins and Columbia Universities. He is a member of the core academic team designing the new Museum for the History of Polish Jews which will open in Warsaw in 2012.

### ***Jewish Economic Life in a Non-Jewish Surrounding: Antwerp’s Diamond Jews***

The quick growth of Antwerp’s Jewish population went hand in hand with huge developments in the city’s diamond sector. Indeed, the end of the nineteenth century was not only the start of mass migration waves of Jews to Antwerp, also five diamond exchanges, in which Jews held major positions, were founded between 1898 and 1929. On the eve of the Second World War, 90% of the management, the big merchants and brokers in the diamond sector were said to be Jews. Jewish labourers did not constitute the majority of workers in the sector at that time, even though they did dominate certain jobs in the processing process, such as cleaving. In the first couple

of decades after the Second World War, the economic profile of Antwerp's decimated Jewish community was even more concentrated in the diamond trade and industry than it had been before. Jewish life centred in and around the diamond district. This lecture will delve into the history of Jews and their economic activity in Antwerp. What were the consequences of concentrating in one economic sector for a minority group? How did this affect Jewish life? How did this minority group settle in a non-Jewish environment?

**Veerle Vanden Daelen** works as a post-doctoral research fellow of the Research Foundation Flanders at the University of Antwerp, where she teaches Migration History, courses on Jewish History and other topics. She has a B.A. and M.A. in History from Ghent University and completed a Ph.D. at the University of Antwerp in 2006. The topic of her dissertation was the return of Jewish life to Antwerp after the Second World War. In her current research, she continues to explore the rich history of Jewish life in Antwerp and extends the chronological framework of her study to the pre-war period. She has held fellowships at the University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania, and has published, next to several articles, two monographs: *Vrouwbeelden in het Vlaams Blok* (2002) and *Laten we hun lied verder zingen. De heropbouw van de joodse gemeenschap in Antwerpen na de Tweede Wereldoorlog, 1944-1960* [*The Reconstruction of the Jewish Community in Antwerp after the Second World War, 1944-1960*] (2008).

# International Conference JEWS, COMMERCE, AND CULTURE

## Organizers

Institute of Jewish Studies (University of Antwerp)  
in cooperation with the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies  
(University of Pennsylvania)

## Registration & Contact

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Conference in English - participation free of charge

