Between Colonial, National and Ethnic Networks: Elmaleh and his Counterparts, 1900-1967

An International Workshop at Tel Aviv University

In recent years, many scholars focusing on Jewish intellectuals in the Muslim world have employed new analytical categories in comprehending the intellectual ideas and worldviews that make up the legacy of their subject matter. Quite often, this is done in concert with the general ongoing shift in Humanities and Social Sciences. As a consequence, once rigidly formulated identity categories such as "Judeo-Arabs", "Zionists", "Sephardic", "Westernized", "secular", "Mizrahim" are gradually being replaced by more nuanced conceptions and means of interpretation. "Between Colonial, National and Ethnic Networks" seeks to contribute to these ongoing efforts, by exploring the evolution of Jewish intellectual writing and activities as addressed above, from a dynamic, social networks perspective.

We wish to discuss the function of dynamic social networks in the creation of discourses and ideas that evolved as intellectuals and writers across the Mediterranean engaged with each other's work; often while in transit, shaping, transforming and reshaping their intellectual identities, over time and throughout their day-to-day social interactions. Special attention will be given to certain individuals who "traveled" between reference groups, as suggested above, concurrently sharing, absorbing and generating new realms of knowledge, by means of editing, as well as authoring a steady stream of monographs, anthologies and periodicals.

A central exemplar of this type would be Abraham Elmaleh (1885-1967), active from the twilight years of Ottoman rule in Palestine, during the British Mandate, as well as the two decades in the state of Israel's existence. This
multifaceted and rather prolific ethnographer, journalist and Sephardic public leader from Jerusalem commanded Hebrew, Ladino (and Spanish), French, Arabic, English and Turkish, as demonstrated by his constant literary activity. We believe that Elmaleh, his intellectual interlocutors and various fellow travelers who were exposed to his ideas, created a cultural "intersection", worth resurrecting in our own time as a meeting point for authorities from a variety of disciplines to offer a variety of complementary perspectives on Jewish identity in the making.

Our perspective on the evolution of Jewish intellectual history focuses on the Muslim Mediterranean, but we eagerly welcome perspectives from other Mediterranean lands and regions such as France, Italy, Spain, and the Balkans, as well as relevant émigré communities in other parts of the world. Through this border spanning, social perceptive we wish to revisit the borders of commonly assumed geographical, colonial, national and cultural units, linguistic environments and places of origin. Our final goal is to critically reflect on current trends in the intellectual history of Jews in Asia and Africa in general, while charting new ways for enriching an already familiar discussion on Modern Jewish identities.

Based on these aspirations we intend to organize a two-day International Workshop, that will both crown and continue to develop our recent discussions throughout the 2015-2016 JIC Workshop, an Inter-University workshop for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers focusing on the study of Jews of Muslim countries.

Whereas the International Workshop will encompass several session related to the topic addressed above, we would like to dedicate a core session to issues related in particular to the Sephardic press. This session will seek to promote a discussion on the ongoing digitations process of Sephardic periodicals, addressing dilemmas and difficulties immanent to Sephardi journalism in particular. We therefore seek papers and reviews that will draw on recently conducted works on the theme. We also eagerly welcome papers based on the utilization of the Ladino and some related Hebrew-language periodicals that have already been digitized and uploaded to the JPress website (http://web.nli.org.il/sites/JPress). Such would include El Progresso/La Boz del Pueblo/La Époka de Nu York; La Amérika; Ha-Zvi/ Ha-Or and Hashkafa; Ha-Herut; Hed Ha-Mizrach, Etc. We will conclude this section of the workshop by celebrating the latest launch of Ha-Herut periodical following the completion of its digitation.
The workshop will take place both in Hebrew and English. It will be held on Monday-Tuesday, **November 9-10, 2015 at Tel-Aviv University.** Researchers from all disciplines are invited to submit a proposal. **Please send a 300-400 words abstract together with a short CV to Dr. Aviad Moreno at aviad.moreno@gmail.com, no later than August 22, 2015.**

We will endeavor to partially cover travel and accommodation expenses for those coming from abroad, by offering three travel grants.

**The organizing committee:**  
Chair: Prof. Yaron Tsur, Tel-Aviv University  
Dr. Aviad Moreno, Tel-Aviv University and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
Dr. Noah Gerber, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Dr. Amos Noy, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Achva Academic College  
Tamir Karkason, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
David Guedj, Tel-Aviv University