



THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CONVERSION & INTER-RELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS  
5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# AGENTS OF CONVERSION

## MAY 22 - 25, 2017

**BARKAN HALL** | ZLOTOWSKI STUDENT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
(70), BGU MARCUS FAMILY CAMPUS, BEER-SHEVA

### MONDAY, MAY 22, 2017

#### 9:30 Reception

#### 10:00 - 10:30 Opening Remarks

**Rivka Carmi**, President, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

**Harvey Hames**, CSOC Director, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, General History, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

**Nimrod Hurvitz**, CSOC, Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

#### 10:30 - 12:30 Session 1 - Who and What Converts

Chair: **Pnina Arad**, CSOC, The Open University of Israel

"Polemical Encounters: Was Polemical Literature an Agent of Conversion?"

**Mercedes García-Arenal Rodríguez**, CSIC, Madrid

"The Problem of Conversion in the Guaraní-Jesuit Missions of Paraguay"

**Brian Owensby**, History, University of Virginia

"Images of Franciscan Missionaries in Italian Art and Sermons"

**Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby**, Arts, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Respondent: **Zur Shalev**, General History, University of Haifa

#### 12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

#### 13:30 - 15:30 Session 2 - Mystics

Chair: **David Sorozkin**, CSOC, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Conversion into Conversion: Guillaume Postel and his Mission to the Jews"

**Judith Weiss**, Mandel Scholion Research Center in the Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Where Have All the Sufis Gone? Some Comments on the Islamization of the Turks of Central Asia in the Tenth Century"

**Reuven Amitai**, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Sufi Saints and the Making of Christian Converts in Thirteenth Century Syria and Anatolia: Hagiographical Tales in their Regional Settings"

**Daphna Ephrat**, History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, The Open University of Israel

Respondent: **Sara Sviri**, Arabic Language and Literature, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

#### 15:30 - 16:00 Coffee break

#### 16:00 - 18:00 Session 3 - Clandestine Convertors

Chair: **Yosi Yisraeli**, CSOC, Bar-Ilan University

"Discrete Disputes: Catholic and Jewish Proselytizers among the Portuguese Merchants of Seventeenth-Century France"

**Carsten L. Wilke**, Center for Religious Studies, Central European University

"A Spirited Woman rather than an Imbecilic Man: Conversion in an Immanent Universe"

**Alexander van der Haven**, CSOC, The Open University of Israel

"Converso Merchants as 'Secret' Agents of Portugal's Imperial Catholicism"

**Claude B. Stuczynski**, CSOC, General History, Bar-Ilan University

Respondent: **Miriam Eliav-Feldon**, Chairperson, The Historical Society of Israel, Tel Aviv University

#### 18:30 Dinner

### TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017

#### Excursion (Jerusalem)

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

#### 9:30 - 11:30 Session 4 - Tactics I: Words and Deeds

Chair: **Ora Limor**, CSOC, History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, The Open University of Israel

"Converting the Jews of Early Modern Rome: New, Old and Failed Tactics"

**Emily Michelson**, History, University of St Andrews

"Tools in the Hand of God? The Missionaries of the London Society and their Role in the Conversion of the Jews"

**Agnieszka Jagodzińska**, Jewish Studies, The University of Wrocław

"Conversion, Confrontation, Controversy: Jesuit Responses to Islam in the Seventeenth Century"

**Paul Shore**, Religious Studies, University of Regina

Respondent: **Nurit Stadler**, Sociology & Anthropology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

#### 11:30 - 12:00 Coffee break

#### 12:00 - 14:00 Session 5 - Tactics II: Universal Meets Local

Chair: **Ram Ben-Shalom**, History of the Jewish People, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Jesuit Efforts for Converting Ascetic Figures in Ethiopia and India during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"

**Leonardo Cohen**, CSOC, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"The Reality of Conversion and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in the Jesuit Missions to Asia: Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci"

**Joan-Pau Rubiés Mirabet**, ICREA and Universitat Pompeu Fabra

"Keys and Bridges: Evangelical Missionaries in Southwest China and the Christian Translation of Culture and Myth"

**Gideon Elazar**, CSOC, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Respondent: **Vasileios Syros**, Academy of Finland

#### 14:00 - 15:00 Lunch

#### 15:00 - 17:00 Session 6 - Families and Networks

Chair: **Ephraim Shoham-Steiner**, CSOC, Jewish History, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Are You with the Jews, Your Father's People, or with your Mother and the Gentiles?"

**Moshe Yagur**, CSOC, History of the Jewish People, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Family Ties: Children and Conversion in Late Medieval Ashkenaz"

**Ahuva Liberles Noiman**, CSOC, History of the Jewish People, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Agents of Conversion in al-Andalus (Islamic Iberia)"

**Janina Safran**, History, Penn State University

Respondent: **Moshe Rosman**, Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry, Bar-Ilan University and Fellow, at The Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (IIAS)

#### 17:30 Dinner

### THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

#### 9:30 - 11:30 Session 7 - Elites

Chair: **Daniel J. Lasker**, CSOC, Jewish Thought, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Premodern Muslim Rulers as Agents of Officials' Conversion: Rules and Exceptions" (via Skype)

**Luke Yarbrough**, History, Saint Louis University

"Jewish Conversion Narratives and Documentary Evidence - Who Really Were the Agents of Mass Conversion in South Italy?"

**Nadia Zeldes**, CSOC, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Evidence of Conversion, Conversion of Evidence: Óláfr Tryggvason and the Conversion of the North Atlantic"

**Rosie Bonté**, Publishing Manager, Brepols Publishers, UK

Respondent: **Dror Zeevi**, Middle East Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

#### 11:30 - 12:00 Coffee break

#### 12:00 - 14:00 Session 8 - Women as Convertors

Chair: **Amir Ashur**, CSOC, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Nuns as Agents of Conversion in Early Modern Italy"

**Tamar Herzog**, History, Tel Aviv University

"From the Margins to the Center, the Voyage into Conversion"

**Keren Abbou Hershkovits**, CSOC, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

"Women as Agents of Conversion to Islam: The Significance of Sahābiyāt Models"  
**Uriel Simonsohn**, CSOC, Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa

Respondent: **Moshe Sluhovsky**, History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

#### 14:00 - 15:00 Lunch

#### 15:00 - 17:00 Session 9 - Imagining and Remembering Convertors

Chair: **Avital Davidovich-Eshed**, CSOC, Bar-Ilan University

"Jews as Agents of Conversion in Medieval Christendom: Between Calumny and Misperception"

**Paola Tartakoff**, History and Jewish Studies, Rutgers University and Fellow, at The Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (IIAS)

"Aventus of Vienne's Mysterious Heretics, or How to Talk Like an 'Agent of Conversion'"

**Yaniv Fox**, CSOC, General History, Bar-Ilan University

"The Soteriological Geography of Late Medieval Mission to the East"

**Uri Zvi Shachar**, CSOC, General History, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Respondent: **Piero Capelli**, Studies on Africa and the Mediterranean, University of Venice

#### 17:00 Concluding Remarks

**Claude B. Stuczynski**, CSOC, General History, Bar-Ilan University



Hermann Wislicenus, The Destruction of the Saxon Holy Tree "Irmensul" by Charlemagne during his War and Conversion of the Saxons (late 8<sup>th</sup> century)

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