

Call for Papers

International Conference

Judaism, Zionism, and Scepticism in the Scholarship of Richard H. Popkin

21–23 June 2021, Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies (MCAS), Hamburg

The conference committee invites **four early career researchers** (PhD candidates and postdocs) to participate in a round-table discussion at the conference by giving a 20-minute lecture on one of the topics described below. All lectures should be based on current or future research projects.

Richard Popkin's scholarly interest in Judaism appears relatively late in his academic career, following what he described as an "overpowering religious experience" that took place in 1956. His contributions to Jewish history are prevalently focused on the role of Marrano thinkers in early modern scepticism and in Christian messianism and millenarianism. Therefore, recent scholarship on Jewish scepticism has rightly stressed that Popkin's multifarious oeuvre lacks any serious consideration of a specifically Jewish current within the sceptical tradition, which is independent from the converso encounter with classical philosophy and Christian theology.

However, in his correspondence and autobiographical writings, Popkin did acknowledge the importance of his Jewish identity in shaping his intellectual interests and directing his research on scepticism. In view of the forthcoming publication of Popkin's correspondence with Judah Goldin, edited by Giuseppe Veltri, Jeremy Popkin, and Asher Salah, this conference aims to further our understanding of how Popkin's strong commitment to Judaism affected his perception of Jewish history and Jewish philosophy.

The conference committee solicits contributions that address the following tracks:

(1) Popkin's self-perception as a Jew, his spiritual world, and his relationships with normative Jewish tradition and Jewish secularism.

(2) How Popkin's Jewish identity affected his scholarly interest in Jewish intellectual history, the history of the Marranos, Christian millenarianism, Jewish-Christian relations, and Christian Zionism.

(3) Popkin's works on the origins of European racism, Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century, and religious fundamentalism in the twentieth century.

(4) Popkin's relationship with Israel, from his first trip to the country in 1966 to his visiting professorship at Tel Aviv University from 1981 to 1982, and his opinions on Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(5) Popkin's acquaintance and intellectual exchanges with other Jewish scholars and specialists in Jewish studies, such as Judah Goldin, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Cecil Roth, Solomon Grayzel, Israëel Salvator Revah, Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Gershom Sholem, Yosef Agassi, Yosef Kaplan, Amos Funkenstein, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, and Yirmiahu Yovel.

PhD candidates or postdocs who wish to present papers are requested to submit a 200-word abstract and a CV to lilian.tuerk@uni-hamburg.de by **28 February 2021**.

Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies.

MCAS aims to increase the number of women in advanced academic positions as well as conferences, and strongly encourages women to apply.

For further information and questions, please contact:

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