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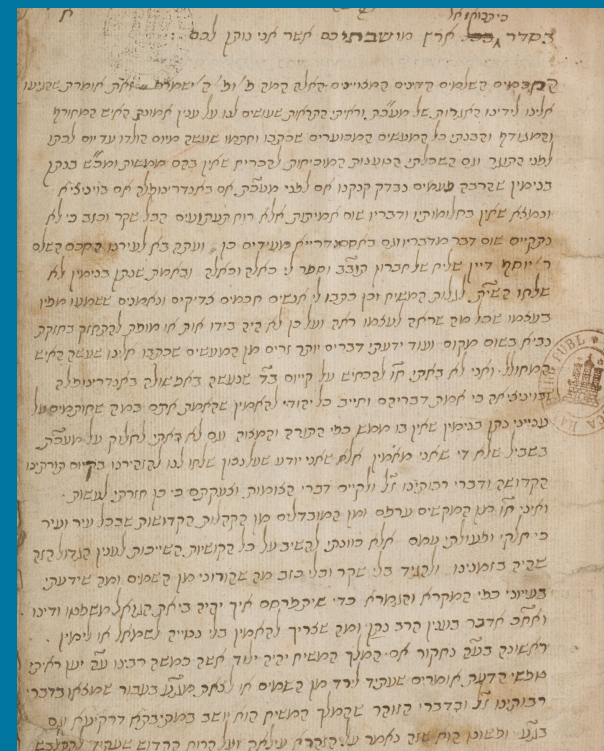
Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies
JEWISH SCEPTICISM

Workshop

Questioning Authority

Kabbalah between Dialectical Disputes,
Religious Dissent, and Proto-Academic
Scholarship in Medieval and Early Modern
Europe

18–19 June 2024



Picture: Hamburg, The Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky, Cod. hebr. 280a, 1r

In his autobiography, *Ani ha-Mekhunneh*, the erstwhile converso and later Sabbatian Kabbalist Avraham Miguel Cardozo (1626–1706) records the terms of a Jewish-Christian dispute on the nature of the *Shekhinah*. He relates that his beliefs were shattered to the core when a certain monk challenged the rabbis of Venice by asking whether the *Shekhinah* was eternal or created. Their inability to answer this question engulfed the young Cardozo in serious doubts: he became aware that behind the dilemma, which questioned the very notion of divine unity, lay the problem of the human ability to know God. From its emergence in the late Middle Ages and throughout the early modern period, kabbalistic literature was harnessed for controversy not only between Judaism and Christianity, but also within Judaism itself. Moreover, kabbalistic literature was often itself a matter of dispute, with its opponents frequently doubting the primordial antiquity of its texts and hence questioning their authority. As exemplified by the heterodox sceptic Cardozo, who was torn between kabbalistic Judaism, Sabbatian messianism, and Christianity, this workshop explores the role of controversies and religious dissent in the history of Kabbalah, both within Judaism and beyond.

Convenors

- Niels Eggerz (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)
- Margherita Mantovani (Alma Mater - Università di Bologna)

Participants

- Emma Abate (Alma Mater - Università di Bologna)
- Saverio Campanini (Alma Mater - Università di Bologna)
- Matt Goldish (Ohio State University)
- Moshe Idel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- Efrat Lederfein-Gilboa (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)
- Agata Paluch (Freie Universität Berlin)
- Leor Sachs-Shmueli (Bar Ilan University)
- Tzahi Weiss (The Open University)

Venue

Maimonides Centre for
Advanced Studies

Please contact MCAS for registration
and further information.

maimonides-centre@uni-hamburg.de

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