

Jewish-German literature in different contexts

Research Seminar with Dr. Ulrike Schneider

25.3-4.4. 2019, 10:00-12:00

Education Building, Room 665, 6th Floor, University of Haifa

In 1845, Leopold Zunz – one of the leading figures of the movement *Wissenschaft des Judentums/Science of Judaism* – extended the definition of Jewish Literature to different languages, one of them was German. In the 19th and 20th century different researchers, but writers as well worked with diverse concepts of “Jewish-German literature”. This course will focus on these different concepts in relation to their historical backgrounds. In addition, we will discuss novels and plays from the Enlightenment until Exile during the period from 1933 to 1945.



Dr. Ulrike Schneider is assistant professor of German-Jewish Literature at the University of Potsdam. Her research focuses on German-Jewish literature of the 19th and 20th century, Holocaust literature and Post-War German literature as well as commemorative culture. Since 2014, she has been co-editor of the Yearbook *Argonautenschiff* of the Anna Seghers Association.

1st Meeting, 25.3.2019

Introduction: Definitions of "Jewish-German literature" in their different historical contexts. An overview from the Haskalah until 1945.

After an overview about the different concepts of Jewish-German literature, we will discuss an article, which describes the development of this literature over the ages.

Gilman, Sander; Zipes, Jack (ed.): Introduction. In: Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996. New Haven: Yale University Press 1997, pp. xvii-xxxiv.

2nd Meeting, 28.3.2019

Heinrich Heine and the *Verein für die Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* The ghetto tale *The Rabbi of Bacharach*.

From 1821 until 1823 Heinrich Heine lived in Berlin and was a member of the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden*, which was founded in 1819 as a result of the so-called “Hep-Hep-Unruhen”. After his visit and before he converted to Christianity in 1825 he worked on the ghetto tale *The Rabbi of Bacharach*, which was published in 1840. Today a lot of researchers classify this novel as “Jewish-German literature”. In the seminar we will question this classification.

Heinrich Heine: The Rabbi of Bacharach.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Works_of_Heinrich_Heine/Vol._1/The_Rabbi_of_Bacharach

3rd Meeting, 1.4.2019

Images of Jews in German literature of the 18th and 19th century

Since the end of the 18th century 'the Jew' as a literary figure has been illustrated in novels and plays. The representations, which the authors used, offer perspectives of the German-Christian society as well as the position which Jews was given in this society during the Emancipation-process. We will discuss the representation and function of Jewish figures and debate the term "literary anti-Semitism" on the basis of the play *The Jews* (1749) by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and some chapters of the novel *Debit and Credit* (1855) by Gustav Freytag.

Ritchie Robertson: *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature 1749–1939. Emancipation and its Discontents.* Oxford 1999.

4th Meeting, 4.4.2019

Definitions of "Jewish-German literature" in Exile

In April 1944 Hannah Arendt's *The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition* appeared in the periodical *Jewish Social Studies*. In this publication Arendt discussed the project of German-Jewish assimilation based on essays by authors as Heinrich Heine, Franz Kafka or Stefan Zweig. In the same year Franz Werfel published the play *Jacobowsky and the Colonel*, which was a great success on Broadway between March 1944 until March 1945. In the seminar we will question the analysis of assimilation of Arendt and the description of Exile of Werfel.