

REPORT

Hungarian Hebrew Studies Conference (Schweitzer Lectures) 2019
29 January 2019

Webpage: <http://mhk.elte.hu/2019/>

The *Hungarian Hebrew Studies Conference (Schweitzer Lectures)* is the main annual conference of the *Hungarian Association of Hebrew Studies*. This year it was organized on 29/01/2019, in cooperation with the Faculty of Theology of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

The Association (*Magyar Hebraisztikai Társaság*, cf. its website: <http://mht.org.hu/>) was established in 2002 by a group of theologians and scholars of Hebrew studies of various denominations, with former chief-rabbi Prof. József Schweitzer (1922-2015) as its first president. Its bylaws formulate the aim of the association as “to ensure the frameworks of Hebrew studies in Hungary”, with an emphasis on “supporting the research of Hebrew studies scholars in Hungary by creating opportunities for cooperation”, as well as “the dissemination of the results of Hebrew studies scholarship within Hungary, and the promotion of Hungarian Hebrew studies abroad”. With this mission in mind, the Hungarian Association of Hebrew Studies has organized a number of events: conferences, invited talks, project presentations by doctoral students, and so forth. It also publishes a book series with conference volumes, Festschrifts, translations of Hebrew works (the *Sefer Hasidim* of r. Yehuda he-Hasid), and monographs (e.g., on Jewish cemeteries in Hungary).

Early in 2016, a conference was organized by the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities to commemorate the first yearzeit of chief-rabbi Prof. Schweitzer. This event – co-organized by the institutions where József Schweitzer had helped establish Hebrew and Jewish studies, and by his former students – inspired the Association to have a similar conference the subsequent year at the Károli Gáspár University. Since then, the yearly *Schweitzer Lectures* – renamed *Hungarian Hebrew Studies Conference* when it took place at the Eötvös Loránd University in 2018 – has turned into the focal meeting point for scholars in Hebrew and Jewish studies in Hungary. While a call-for-papers was already available in English in 2018, it was only the latest edition that turned it really international, thanks to the generous grant by the *European Association for Jewish Studies*.

The 2019 edition of the Hungarian Hebrew Studies Conference was scheduled to take place again at the Faculty of Theology of the Károli Gáspár University. However, less than a week before the conference, a tragic fire gutted the dormitory of the university, co-located with the Faculty of Theology. Therefore, the conference had to be moved to a newly refurbished residential college of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, which granted a really special atmosphere to the event.

Close to 70 participants attended the conference, which included a keynote lecture and 19 further lectures (1 was cancelled on the day of the conference), running in two parallel sessions. Participants from abroad arrived from Italy, Romania, Germany and Israel. Speakers from outside Hebrew studies proper included historians, theologians and even an Egyptologist. The event offered the opportunity to phd students to receive precious feedback on their ongoing

research, while established scholars could network, present their recent results and get acquainted with the developments in the field. The two goals laid down in the call-for-papers have thus been fully achieved: (1) providing a forum where members of the *Hungarian Association of Hebrew Studies*, and in general, scholars of Hebrew Studies in Hungary and abroad can encounter each other, reflect upon each other's research, and build scholarly networks, as well as (2) enhancing the communication between Hebrew studies and related disciplines.

Detailed overview of the sessions

After the **opening words** of prof. **József Zsengellér**, the **keynote** lecture of **prof. Stefan Schorch** (professor of Biblical studies, the Theological Faculty of the *Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg* in Germany; also an honorary member of the *Academy of the Hebrew Language*, Jerusalem, Israel), on *The relevance of the Samaritan Targum for the textcritic of the Samaritan Pentateuch*, gauged the value of the Aramaic translations of the Torah by the Samaritans as a witness of their version of the Bible.

In a way similar to Jewish manuscripts, Samaritan ones do not go back beyond the high middle ages. Yet, it is known that the Samaritan community switched from Aramaic to Arabic in the 11th century, and thus their *targumim* (Aramaic translations) must have been made before that time, even if extant copies are younger. Prof. Schorch argued that the Samaritan targumim are verbatim translations, much more so than some Jewish targumim, and hence they accurately reflect several textual features of the Samaritan Pentateuch prior to the 11th century. He also provided several examples of how the textual diversity of the Samaritan targumim fit into the general picture of the textual fluidity of the Pentateuch in the first millennium, as attested by the Masoretic Text, as well as the Septuagint and further textual evidences. In his introduction, Stefan Schorch also highlighted the role played by some 19th century Hungarian rabbis in the early study of the Samaritan targumim. While not much time was left to remarks and discussions, an interesting question from the audience inquired whether the Samaritan text could also contribute to our understanding of the reduction of the Pentateuch.

Subsequently, the conference broke up into parallel sessions: one on biblical studies, and one on modern Jewish history in the morning. (Please refer to the general programme at the end of this report.)

The section **Biblical studies 1** contained three papers that approached the Bible from a broader perspective, as opposed to the papers in the section *Biblical studies 2* in the afternoon.

First, **Előd Hodossy-Takács** (Debrecen Reformed Theological University) presented *Palestine, archaeology, ideology*. [Please note that the English titles of the papers originally presented in Hungarian are the translations of the author of this report.] Hodossy-Takács summarized how the traditional field of biblical archaeology has been transformed in recent decades into a modern field independent of theological preconceptions, but relying on state-of-the-art methodologies borrowed from the hard sciences and the social sciences, and building on anthropology and cultural studies. At the same time, he acknowledged that ideological factors (still or again) play a role in the interpretative process of the archaeological findings. He asked the intriguing question: is biblical archaeology still biblical, and if so, to what extent and in what respect? He suggested that only the geographical location makes it biblical. Even the chronology is not confined to biblical times, since even millennia before and centuries after the biblical period belongs to the field.

Subsequently, doctoral candidate **Sándor Fehér** (Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, Budapest) read a paper on *Certain questions pertaining to the dating of the Hebrew Bible*. Relating to contemporary debates on how much linguistic evidence can be relied on to date passages and books in the Bible, and how to avoid the pitfalls of such an approach, he emphasized the role of words with a “forgotten” meaning. Archaic words and words that were clearly incomprehensible in the given context must have been transmitted rather faithfully, without being altered during the various layers of redaction. Based on this assumption, he argued for a more reliable dating of archaic sources, as opposed to sources whose out-of-the-ordinary language should rather be explained by dialectal and sociolinguistic factors, rather than by diachrony.

Tiborné Grüll (Szent Pál [Saint Paul] Academy) had a paper on *Biblical Taxonomy, or Were There Pelicans Living in the Desert?* She compared Linnaean taxonomy and its more recent version, based on information gained from genetics, to the “taxonomy” presented in the Hebrew Bible. She focused on specific words referring to birds, aiming at a better understanding of the hapax legomena. As it became clear from the talk and the ensuing, such an enterprise is far from simple, and full of unresolved issues.

Parallel to this section ran the section titled **Modern Jewish history**. This panel included three presentations in English on 19th and 20th century Jewish intellectual history. It turned out that all three talks had a connection to both Hungary and the Jewish state, more precisely, to individuals originating in areas of the Hungarian Kingdom in the 19th century who could be viewed as precursors of Zionism or were Zionists themselves. These recurring motifs turned this section into an especially coherent block of the conference, with fascinating discussions among the speakers and the audience.

The first talk of the panel, given by **Isaac Hershkowitz** (Bar-Ilan University) and **Amir Mashiach** (Ariel University) bore the title: *Becoming Hebrew: Religious and/or National Motives of Hatam Sofer’s Disciples Immigration to the Land of Israel*. The authors asked how it was possible that some students of Moses Schreiber (the *Hatam Sofer*) who migrated to the Land of Israel in the first half of the 19th century adopted a more practical way of life, seemingly moving away from their master’s Torah-centric ideal. Was it due to practical necessities in this remote angle of the Ottoman Empire, or a changing ideology, or perhaps some lesser-known aspect of the Hatam Sofer’s teachings? The authors seemed to prefer the view that those early religious proto-Zionists “understood the spiritual mission given to them” by their master as the task of “creat[ing] a new Jew, in a new world”. Alternative approaches would allow a more diverse, a more heterogeneous student population in the Yeshivah of Moses Schreiber, not all of whom would be considered generations later as representatives of the ultra-orthodoxy symbolized by the Hatam Sofer. Consequently, the author of the present report argues, the students of Moses Schreiber probably had not had the option to choose between yeshivot with different ideologies (if not in the Hasidic world) in the early 19th century, and consequently many of them had a predisposition that would later move them to more modern forms of life and religion.

Stefania Ragau (Scuola normale superior di Pisa), a doctoral student from Italy, in her paper *A Reaction Against Antisemitism in Hungary: Edmund Eisler and the Flowering of the New Jewish Utopian Genre*, discussed a lesser known roman by the Hungarian born author *Edmund Eisler* (1850-1942), *Ein Zukunftsbild* (1885). That roman was written subsequently to, and – she argued – as a personal reaction to the Tiszaeszlár blood libel (1882). While the roman was re-published in the middle of the twentieth century in Hebrew, the original German version is hardly known, and extant only in a few copies around the globe. It is also known that Herzl

owned a copy thereof, and so it might have served as an antecedent to the *Altneuland*. Ragaù explained how the story, reacting to antisemitism in Hungary, displayed the influence of German-Jewish models (cf. linguistic, literary and stylistic choices), on the one hand, and of ideals and aspirations of Eastern Jews, on the other. The audience agreed with her conclusion: the literary piece “reveals the different evolution of the Haskalah and the secularization of Jewish thought in these regions of the Habsburg Empire, influenced both by the German-Jewish context and by the Eastern-Jewish one. (...) German-Jewish ideals and images, metaphors, concepts arising from eastern Europe are kept together in Eisler’s novel.” The organizers of the conference were extremely pleased with the fact that they could provide this talented young scholar with an opportunity to present her dissertation topic in front of an international audience.

Finally, the talk titled *From Transylvania to Jerusalem: The New East (Új Kelet) and Zionism in the Life and Scholarship of Isaiah Tishby*, given by **Andrea Gondos** (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) demonstrated the important role played by Zionism and the Hungarian-language Transylvanian newspaper *Új Kelet* in the early life of *Isaiah Tishby* (1908-1992). Later a student of Gershom Scholem and eminent scholar of Kabbalah, and born to an orthodox family, he spent his formative years in a complex cultural context: the Jewish communities in Transylvania had developed a strong Hungarian identity before the area became part of Romania after World War I. Gondos argued that the Hungarian language newspaper (still extant in Israel) *Új Kelet* demonstrates how Zionism rose as “an attractive ideology that replaced [...] earlier Hungarian patriotism.” Isaiah Tishby and his family members were exposed to this atmosphere, which, as Gondos demonstrated, were vital in their later choices in life.

Following the keynote address and these two panels in the morning, the lecturers and part of the audience were invited to a **lunch** in the basement of the residential college. As the *Pirkei Avot* says: “If there is no flour, there is no Torah.” However, not only the gastronomical pleasures were the advantages of having lunch together, but also the opportunity for discussing the papers further, and networking in general. Therefore, the lunch – similarly to the coffee breaks and the final drinks – significantly contributed to the goals of the conference.

The lunch was followed again by two parallel sessions. **Biblical studies 2** included three talks that tackled specific texts in the Hebrew Bible. The three theologians, discussing very unlike passages, represented three different denominations, three different stages in their career and three different methodologies. And yet, the audience enjoyed their similarly scholarly approach to the Hebrew Bible, based on their sound knowledge of the Hebrew language.

Doctoral student **Dániel Péntek** (Károli Gáspár Reformed University) discussed the term *Sheol as a Place in the Hebrew Bible, Considering Especially the Prayers Addressing YHVH*. He focused on “sources with a soteriological aspect” that precisely describe the praying person as being placed in *Sheol*. These are primarily Ps 88, Isa 38:9-20 and Jonah 2:3-10. By carefully analyzing these texts, Dániel Péntek first contrasted two traditions: the abode of the dead is located either under the earth, or under the deep waters. Subsequently, he mapped the imaginary structure of the underworld, including the “gates of the *Sheol*” and the “middle of the *Sheol*”. Again, a young talented scholar could present his research to a wider audience, receiving precious feedback from colleagues and lay people alike.

Subsequently, prof. **Jutta Hausmann** (Lutheran Theological University, Budapest) presented a feminist reading of Exodus 2:1-10 and Ruth in her paper *Two Foreign Women – Cornerstones in the History of Israel?* She contrasted the daughter of Pharaoh to Ruth the

Moabite. The deeds of both women were instrumental in the life of a key figure in the history of Israel: Moses and David, respectively. She developed further parallels in the narratives on these two women. Both made decisions by their own, leaving behind the typical women's marginalized roles serving powerful men. Jutta Hausmann also emphasized the message of having foreign protagonists playing such important roles in the biographies of Israelite key figures. This message, she claimed to provoke a discussion with the audience, reinforces the universalist perspective of the Hebrew Bible, and should be contrasted to the widely accepted particularistic-nationalist readings of the Scriptures.

In the last talk of this section, **Márta Hack** (Szent Pál [Saint Paul] Academy) gave a paper with the title *Text and Context: An Example from the Targum of Jonathan ben Uziel to Solve a Problem of Interpretation*. The problem is posed by the words *bahem olam* in Isa 64:4. After having reviewed several solutions and translations, she argued to rely on the Targum Jonathan, which provided a deeper interpretation pointing beyond the text proper. Márta Hack has been working on a new Bible translation on behalf of her denomination, and so she has already discussed challenges posed by the translation in her presentations in previous years. Beside getting an insight into the fascinating details of a Bible translation process, and discussing the pros and cons of possible solutions, the audience can thus also follow how such an important project unfolds from year to year.

The parallel block in the early afternoon slot was **Christianity and Judaism**. Surprisingly or not, a number of submissions each year fall into this general topic, motivating the organizers to set a session on the “interface” of Judaism and Christianity. Yet, as it will become apparent momentarily, these sessions are not about interfaith dialogue, but about an extremely broad array of interactions between the two faiths, and (positive or less positive) reflections upon each other. The three talks, while extremely different, were still in some dialogue with each other – just as Judaism and Christianity are.

The opening paper in this panel was by **Károly Dániel Dobos** (Pázmány Péter Catholic University), on *With the New Testament Against Christianity: Two Unknown Anti-Christian Polemic Texts in Hebrew from Northern Italy*. Dobos, who has already reported on his ongoing research project in previous years, has been compiling a bibliography of polemic texts in Hebrew from 17th and 18th century Italy. This large, and hitherto unresearched corpus of anti-Christian arguments has turned out to represent a vast array of genres, testifying to an exciting cultural milieu. The current paper focused on two pieces. First, a draft by Judah ben Eliezer Brielli (1643-1722), rabbi of Mantua, and expended by his disciple, Joshua Segré (1700-1798), is unique in that it covers and reflects to the entire New Testament. While earlier polemic texts also frequently quoted (or misquoted) passages from the New Testament, this one systematically scrutinizes (almost) all books. Second, *Rosh Amana* by Aaron Hayim (Vita) Volterra (died in 1763) was characterized by Moritz Steinschneider as the “most important piece of the [polemic] genre”; and yet, this book has not been published. It reflects on theoretical preliminaries of polemy, while its author is familiar with patristic literature, reformation literature and contemporaries.

The second speaker was **Réka Újlaki-Nagy** (Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) on *Travelling to the Szekler Jerusalem: Travelogues and the proselyte congregation of Bözödújfalu in the late 19th and early 20th century*. Her research has long been directed to the Szekler (or Székely) Sabbatarians, a Judaizing religious group in Transylvania. Shifting gradually away from their late 16th century Unitarian roots, they adopted more and more Jewish customs. In 1868, they formally turned into a Jewish congregation: a “proselyte congregation”, which joined the neolog federation the subsequent year, even though their religiosity shared

more affinities with the orthodox. In this paper, Réka Újlaki-Nagy gave a remarkable twist to her research: the perspective of the travelogues in the period from their conversion to Judaism up to the Holocaust. The style of these travelogues uncovers the uneasy relations of various Jewish and non-Jewish visitors to this “neither really Jewish, nor Christian” rural community. Are they orthodox Jews (by religiosity), neolog Jews (by affiliation) or Szeklers, i.e., “ideal Hungarians” (by “race”)? The discussion ensuing the paper proved that these questions cannot be settled even today, generations after the community disappeared in the Shoah.

The third presentation in this panel offered yet another perspective on Jewish-Christian relations. **András Kiss** (Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, Budapest) presented *Disputes Pertaining to Jesus in the Early 20th Century Zionist Movement*. Based on his ongoing PhD project, he presented the Brenner-affair (related to Yosef Haim Brenner and Ahad Ha’am) and the answer of Joseph Klausner, as well as the ramifications thereof. Questions and comments on the presentation demonstrated that even a century later these issues are still unresolved: is Christian faith compatible with secular Jewish or Israeli identity? To what extent is secular Jewish identity Jewish? To what extent is it Western?

These two panels were followed by a well-deserved **coffee break**. Subsequently, a panel on rabbinic literature and a panel on Jewish culture were competing for the audience.

The session **Rabbinic literature** should have begun by a presentation by **Antal Babits** on *The Continuation of an Ideal or the Work of an Epigone: Philosophical Guiding by Shem Tov ben Joseph Falaquera*. This talk was, however, cancelled on the day of the conference.

Then, doctoral student **Benjámín Montskó** (ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) presented his paper on *The Problematics of the Book of Qohelet as Interpreted by the Targum Qohelet*. He contrasted the cyclic concept of time in Ecclesiastes to the linear perspective on temporality in the Targum to Ecclesiastes. TgQohelet also lacks the eschatological terminology so typical to rabbinic literature, which fact makes this targum very peculiar. He observed the translation techniques and exegetical methods of the targum that aimed at reconciling the time concept of the biblical book with its Aramaic translation. The audience was impressed by his mastery of the various texts.

Doctoral candidate **Iлона Urbán** (ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) gave a paper on *Rabbinic and Patristic Interpretations of Song of Songs: History of Research and Questions*. As it is known, Judaism reads the Canticles as an allegory of the love between God and Israel, whereas Christianity as love between Jesus and the Church, or Jesus and the individual. Based on specific texts (such as Song 6:3), Urbán reviewed how some scholars in the last century (Urbach, Kimelman, Boyarin, Gottlieb, Goshen-Gottstein) viewed the connection between Origen’s interpretations and the rabbinic readings.

An unintentional ‘sequel’ to the previous one, the last talk in this panel was by rabbi **Péter Radvánszki**, a doctoral student at the Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, concerning *The Jewish Scholarly Commentaries on the Song of Songs*. How did 19th century representatives of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* relate to the Canticles? Can we better understand their approach to modern scholarship, Jewish tradition and the Bible by observing their commentaries? The paper compared the interpretations and comments made to Song 8:6, one of the most problematic verses of the book, by Ludwig Philippson and Heinrich Graetz, beside Christian David Ginsburg.

The parallel session was given the title **Text, artifacts, memories**. As it shall become clear, the common theme to these papers related to modern Jewish culture (mainly in the late 19th and/or early 20th century Hungary) was how memory can be committed to texts and artifacts.

Prof. **János Oláh** and MA student **Rita Tuna** (Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies) presented *Atsat Shalom – A Poem by Simon Bacher on the Occasion of the Universal Congress of the Israelites in Hungary and Transylvania (With Some Remarks on the Life of Simon Bacher)*. Exactly 150 years ago, the Hungarian Jewish Congress was convened with the aim of establishing a nationwide Jewish organization. The maskil Simon Bacher (the father of the scholar Wilhelm Bacher, later professor and director of the Rabbinical Seminary) greeted the congress by writing a poem, which has survived in Hebrew and German. Simon Bacher had been known for translating Hungarian poems to Hebrew, but this time we have his own composition. First prof. Oláh presented the life of Simon Bacher and his family. Then, Rita Tuna provided a literary analysis of the poem, focusing on its structure, the use of literary devices and linguistic choices made by the author. In the discussion period a question was raised as to the possible pronunciation of the Hebrew: whether the literary analysis also holds when reading the poem with an Ashkenazi accent. The authors answered affirmatively.

Subsequently, **Viktória Bányai** and **Szonja Komoróczy** (both: Institute for Minority Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; as well as ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Assyriology and Hebrew Studies) gave a talk on *Objects in the Synagogue Related to Donations*. Two kinds of objects, which hardly have a name, were in the focus of this presentation richly illustrated by data collected by the authors. First, they categorized the different varieties of what they called a “bimah plate”, and is characteristic of synagogues in Hungary, or in the Habsburg Empire only. These are inscriptions in front of the Torah reader that list the organizations and other charity purposes to which a donation can be made. Second, they also reviewed the various techniques (wide-spread in the Jewish world) by which the synagogue clerk could make a “note” on Shabbat to remember the donation amount promised by different people called to the Torah reading service. The advantage of giving such a presentation is that some people in the audience will always have some suggestions about what else to check and where to go to collect further data.

Andrea Fullér, a doctoral student in Egyptology (!) at the ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, discussed the *Egyptizing Memorials in the Jewish Cemeteries of Salgótarjáni út and Kozma utca* (in Budapest). Her talk best exemplifies one of the goals of this conference: to encourage scholarly discourse between Hebrew and Jewish Studies, on the one hand, and its sister disciplines, on the other. While Hebrew studies and Egyptology have ample opportunities to meet, mainly in the field of ancient history, culture and linguistics, one would not expect an Egyptologist to enter the field of Jewish funeral art. And yet, as it turned out, the scholar of Egyptian arts has found the Egyptizing motifs around the turn of the century fascinating. The vivid discussion following the presentation rich in visual aid made it clear that the topic lies at the intersection of three, very remote fields: Egyptian art, social-economic history of the Jewish bourgeoisie, and religious studies. How did the contemporaneous Jews interpret those Egyptizing motifs? What motivated the commissioner and/or the architect? Were those Egyptizing motifs interpreted in the light of the negative image of Egypt in traditional Jewish culture? Or was that “old” Jewish culture put in parenthesis altogether? Each of the three sides left the conference with a novel perspective, with research questions posed by remote disciplines.

Finally, the last presentation of the session, and the very last talk of the conference, was given by **Beáta Kulcsár**, whose presentation was titled *The “Folk Hero” – The Memory of a Citizen of Nagyvárad*. The protagonist (?) of the paper was Emil Vaiszlovich (1868-1944), the owner of a major hotel in *Nagyvárad*, that is, *Oradea* (Romania) after World War I. A “complex” personality in a “complex” historical period, the popular memory of Vaiszlovich

makes the phenomenon even more difficult to comprehend. The talk summarized the “facts” and contrasted them to the literary and folk representations of this “popular hero”. Given the large number of papers related to Jewish topics in early twentieth century Transylvania (Gondos, Újlaki-Nagy and Kulcsár), this “sub-thread” in the conference gave also ample opportunity to further discussions.

The conference ended with **drinks**, which was yet another occasion informally to discuss the papers, as well as to maintain existing and develop new contacts. In his closing words, **prof. József Zsengellér** (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church; Hungarian Association of Hebrew Studies) once again remembered the founding president of the Association, **prof. József Schweitzer (1922-2015)**, and welcomed the members of the Schweitzer family present at the conference. He also announced that preliminary plans are to organize the 2020 edition of the Hungarian Hebrew Studies Conference at the Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, Budapest. That is also when the biennial award of the Schweitzer prize will take place.

Summary and outcomes:

Close to 70 participants attended the conference, including more than 20 speakers, some of which arrived from Israel, Italy, Romania and Germany. Eight phd students and one MA student had the opportunity to present themselves to a larger audience, to get feedback from more experienced colleagues, and in general, to have the experience of participating at an international conference.

As far as networking and new scholarly connections go, it is important to note that certain topics re-occurred in more presentations. Thus, two talks discussed the reception history of the Song of Songs. Four talks in total touched some of the *megillot* (Ruth, Songs, Qohelet). Three authors, including the keynote speaker, worked on targumim. Three talks concerned the Hungarian roots of Zionism. Three papers discussed early twentieth century Transylvania. And three presenters focused on Jewish-Christian relations. One could see that some of the authors immediately grasped the opportunity to engage in a discussion with their newly acquainted colleagues working on a related topic. Moreover, as explained before, the event also assisted international and cross-disciplinary networking.

As already mentioned in the introduction, this conference series had had thus far a national character. Now, it has been turned into an international event, which is certainly having a positive effect on the Hungarian Hebrew and Jewish Studies community. Young scholars, who only have very limited resources to attend conferences abroad, now can better feel interconnected with the international scholarly community.

We plan to continue this conference series, and keeping its international character, should there be sufficient resources available. Moreover, a volume containing the talks of the 2017 conference has just been published, and we hope to be able to also publish (a selection of) the papers of the 2018 and 2019 conferences.