

CfP: Diaspora and Indigeneity - Intersections of Modern Jewish, Kurdish, and Amazigh History (Conference at the Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies, 27-29 March 2023; deadline for abstracts: 31 October 2022)

Discussion published by Johannes Becke on Sunday, October 2, 2022

The research field of Middle Eastern and North African Studies is increasingly recognizing the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of a region that was (throughout the Cold War) largely approached through the prism of the nation state. This research agenda includes a growing body of literature on hybrid identities, marginalized communities, transnational connections, and the blind spots of this expansive research field itself: as a legacy of methodological nationalism, Middle Eastern and North African Studies still tends to sideline communities that were historically shaped by non-state politics or various strategies of state evasion (James Scott).

As part of this disciplinary diversification, the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies, the Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies and the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Heidelberg University invite papers for a three-day conference exploring the intersections of three research fields that operate at the margins of Middle Eastern and North African Studies: Jewish Studies, Kurdish Studies, and Amazigh Studies. The conference will take place in Heidelberg on 27-29 March 2023; the keynote speaker will be Professor Brahim El Guabli (Williams College, USA).

The goal of the conference is to explore and theorize the intersections of modern Jewish, Kurdish, and Amazigh history, with a special focus on competing claims to identity, indigeneity, and diaspora politics. Papers can be presented in English or French. Contributions by young scholars are highly encouraged. The most promising contributions will be published in a special issue of a relevant journal in the field of Middle Eastern and North African Studies. We are especially interested in papers that explore the following topics:

- Non-state politics / state evasion
- Politics of memory and history (e.g. memory of Anfal and memory of the Shoah)
- Kurdish Jews, Amazigh Jews, and transnational linkages

- Diaspora politics and the dynamics of nation-building
- Language politics in emerging national movements
- Historical role models, including Israel/Palestine in Kurdish and Amazigh nationalism
- Indigeneity and diaspora as represented in art and literature
- Space, toponymy, and neologisms used to foreground repressed or minoritized identities

The conference is supported by the VolkswagenStiftung. Based on availability, funding will be provided for accommodation and transportation. To apply for the conference, please submit a short abstract (300 words) and a short CV (1-2 pages) with your most important publications by 31 October 2022 to the conference organizers (Johannes Becke, Bareez Majid, and Alessia Colonnelli; contact: gathering-the-dispersed@hcts.uni-heidelberg.de).