

**16:00-19:00 Modern Monsters I**

Chair: Christian Wiese (Frankfurt)

Cathy Gelbin (Manchester)

Monsters, Gender and Race in Early German Cinema

Joela Jacobs (Tucson, AZ)

A Jewish Frankenstein? Making Monsters in Modernist German Literature

Jay Geller (Nashville, TN)

'Der Volf' or The Jew as Out(side of the)law

**19:30 Dinner**

**Tuesday, 24 May 2016**

**9:30-11:30 Modern Monsters II**

Chair: Mirjam Thulin (Mainz)

Vered Weiss (Urbana, IL)

Modern Monstrous Others: Locating Liminal Jewish Identities from S. Y. Agnon to Nir Baram

Kobi Kabalek (Jerusalem)

Monsters and Ghosts in Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors

**11:30-12:30 Concluding Open Discussion**

Chair: David B. Ruderman (Philadelphia)

**12:30 Lunch**

Image taken from: Jewish Fairy Tales and Legends, by Aunt Naomi (pseud. Gertrude Landa), New York 1919.

**Participation is free, no registration is required**

**Contact**

Prof. Dr. Christian Wiese

069/798-33313

c.wiese@em.uni-frankfurt.de

**Organized by**



Martin Buber Chair in Jewish Thought and Philosophy

**Funded by**



Stiftung zur Förderung der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Beziehungen der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität

**MONSTERS, DEMONS AND WONDERS IN EUROPEAN-JEWISH HISTORY**

International Conference

**22-24 May 2016**  
Goethe University Frankfurt/M.  
Campus Westend  
Casino 1.801



Designed by www.agentur-blueline.de

**Monsters** are creatures of the dark. They conceal themselves under children's beds or in deep closets, emerging only after we turn out the lights. At the same time, these shadowy creatures have a kind of unique revelatory power, allowing them to bring to light some of the most well hidden truths. The very word "monster" is derived from the Latin "monstrare" meaning to show, to demonstrate, or to reveal. It is this unique revelatory power of the monster which makes it such a powerful ally to the historian. The trans-historical presence of the monster is an ominous sign of continuity in history, and at the same time, a reminder of the complete and utter strangeness of past cultures and ways of thought. The monster is a compulsive border-crosser, which bears powerful testimony to the artificial nature of rigid distinctions. So transgressive, so untamable, it defies all our attempts to define it, to contain it within a single genre, period or space. From the pages of novels and broadsheets, folktales and archival documents, science books and theological works, it reaches out to us, mocking our tales of secularization, modernization, or rationalization and offering us a different history – not one of unfolding narratives, but of shifting anxieties, of fears that are at once primordial and particular, ancient and new.

Perceived throughout much of history as monsters or wonders in their own right, European Jews invoked images of monsters, demons and wonders in their texts, art, and folktales. This conference attempts to unravel the history and the idiosyncrasies of these images from a variety of perspectives, and to pinpoint their political, cultural and religious uses from the medieval into the modern period.

## Sunday, 22 May 2016

### 9:30-10:00 Opening remarks

Christian Wiese (Frankfurt)

Iris Idelson-Shein (Frankfurt)

### 10:00-13:00 Medieval Monsters I

Chair: Lucia Raspe (Frankfurt/Berlin)

Debra Higgs Strickland (Glasgow)

Monsters, Demons, and Jews in the Painting of Hieronymus Bosch

Marc Michael Epstein (Poughkeepsie, NY)

Monsters in the Margins: Race, Ethnicity and Otherness in Jewish Manuscript Illumination

David Rotman (Tel Aviv)

The Outsiders Among Us: Demons as Literary Characters in Medieval Jewish Folk Narratives

### 13:00-14:30 Lunch

### 14:30-16:30 Medieval Monsters II

Chair: Rebekka Voß (Frankfurt)

Martin Jacobs (St. Louis)

Flying Camels and Other Wondrous Creatures:

Natural Marvels in Medieval Jewish Travel Literature

David Shyovitz (Chicago)

Kol Yoshevi Tevel: The Antipodes and their Inhabitants between Mysticism, Narrative, and Halakhah

### 16:30-16:45 Coffee

### 16:45-18:45 Early Modern Monsters I

Chair: Cornelia Aust (Mainz)

Andrew Berns (Columbia, SC)

Abraham Portaleone (1542-1612) and Monsters

Astrid Lembke (Berlin)

Love and Marriage Gone Sour in Werewolf Stories by Marie de France and in the Mayse-bukh

### 19:30 Dinner

## Monday, 23 May 2016

### 10:00-12:00 Early Modern Monsters II

Chair: Iris Idelson-Shein (Frankfurt)

Jeremy Dauber (New York)

Dybbuks, Gilguls, and Noel Carroll: On Fission, Fusion, and a Theory of Jewish Monstrosity

Rebekka Voß (Frankfurt)

Re-appropriating the Demonic: The Red Body in Early Modern Yiddish Culture

### 12:00-13:30 Lunch

### 13:30-15:30 Early Modern Monsters III

Chair: Eva Bucher (Frankfurt)

Iris Idelson-Shein (Frankfurt)

Meditations on a Monkey Face: Monsters and Monstrosity in the Jewish Eulenspiegel

J. H. (Yossi) Chajes (Haifa)

Ansky's Dybbuk as Heretical Midrash

### 15:30-16:00 Coffee