

As.100.363 The Development of the Sabbatian Movement

Classroom:

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Course Description:

Sabbatianism, the movement triggered by the messianic pronouncements Sabbatai Tsevi (1626-76) was the largest messianic movement in Jewish history. It spread over all main Jewish communities in Europe, Asia, and North Africa and attracted thousands of followers and careful attention of outside observers. Hopes for redemption were dashed in September 1666, when, in a move unexpected even by his most faithful followers, Sabbatai Tsevi converted to Islam. The conversion was an end of Sabbatianism as a public messianic movement and the majority of Jews proclaimed Sabbatai a false messiah. However, some of his believers reinterpreted messianism in light of the apostasy and decided that conversion to another religion is an intrinsic element of the advent of salvation. They founded sectarian groups recognizing the nominally Muslim leader as the true redeemer of Israel. In the course of time, some of these groups converted to Islam (and later also to Christianity); most remained within the framework of institutional Judaism. The course will be devoted to reading the most important primary documents associated with Sabbatianism as well as selected secondary literature.

Required Texts:

1. David J. Halperin, *Sabbatai Zevi: Testimonies to a Fallen Messiah*, Oxford: Littman, 2007
2. Abraham Miguel, Cardozo, *Selected Writings*, trans. D. J. Halperin, New York: Paulist Press, 2001
3. Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, trans. R. J. Z. Werblowski, London: Routledge, 1973 [or any other edition - there is also one from Princeton University Press]
4. Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement 1755-1816*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011
5. Paweł Maciejko, *Sabbatian Heresy: Writings on Mysticism, Messianism, and the Origins of Jewish Modernity* Brandeis University Press, forthcoming March 2017

Course Requirements:

This seminar puts heavy emphasis on close reading and careful analysis of the reading assignments. The reading assignments listed below a given session should be completed by the date under which they appear. I will ask you to put away your laptops, phones, and other multi-use screens for the duration of each class session.

The final decision on any grade derives from my global assessment of your work and cannot be quantified exactly. Roughly speaking, however, the breakdown is as follows:

Participation: 40%

One 5-page paper, topic to be announced: 20%

One 10-page final paper: 40%

No extensions will be granted without my *prior* permission, and late papers will be graded lower at the rate of one grade-step per day (A to A-, A- to B+, etc). Needless to say, complete honesty and probity in your work is a must. For information, see <http://ethics.jhu.edu>

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Dr. Richard Sanders, in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

1/31: Scholem, Gershom. "Redemption through Sin." Translated by Hillel Halkin. In *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. By Gershom Scholem, 78–141. New York: Schocken, 1995.

Maciejko, Pawel, "Introduction", Paweł Maciejko, *Sabbatian Heresy: Writings on Mysticism, Messianism, and the Origins of Jewish Modernity*

2/7: Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, Preface, Chapter 1

Nathan of Gaza, A Letter to Raphael Joseph

Thomas Coenen, Vain Hopes of the Jews

Moses Ben Habib, A Testimony Given before the Rabbinic Court in Jerusalem

2/14: Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, Chapters 2, 4

Baruch of Arezzo, Memorial to the Children of Israel

The Letters of Joseph Halevi

The Biography of Abraham Cuenque

First paper assigned

2/21: Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, Chapter 6

A Letter of Rabbi Joseph Halevi of Livorno to Rabbi Hosea Nantawa of Alexandria

Sabbatai Tsevi, A Letter on Conversion

Nathan of Gaza, A Letter on Conversion

2/28: Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*, Chapters 7-8

Sabbatai Tsevi, Bury My Faith!

First paper due

3/7: Scholem, Gershom. "The Crypto-Jewish Sect of the Dönme (Sabbatians) in Turkey." In *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. By Gershom Scholem, 142–166

Songs and Poems of the Dönme

Yehudah Levi Tovah, Commentary on the Torah Portion Bereshit

3/14: Abraham Miguel, Cardozo, *Selected Writings*, trans. D. J. Halperin, New York: Paulist Press, 2001, pp. 109-167

3/28: Abraham Miguel, Cardozo, *Selected Writings*, trans. D. J. Halperin, New York: Paulist Press, 2001, pp. 168-242

Avraham Miguel Cardozo, A Letter to Isaac Cardozo

Avraham Miguel Cardozo, A Letter to Baruch Enriques

Elijah Kohen, The Book of the Sacred Contention

4/4: Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon, Power to the Lord
Tsevi Hirsch ben Yaakov Ashkenazi (Hakham Tsevi), In the Sight of
All the House of Israel
Moses Hagiz, Destruction of the Wrongdoers
Anonymous, A Review of Hayon's Oz le-Elohim

4/11: Jonathan Eibeschütz, And I Came This Day unto the Fountain
Jacob Emden, Purim's Letter
Jonathan Eibeschütz, A Letter to Rabbi Jacob Yehoshuah Falk
David Friedrich Megerlin: Hidden Testimonies for the Truth
of the Christian Religion Deduced from Twenty-Four New and
Rare Jewish Amulets
Jacob Emden, A Whip on the Fool's Back

4/18: Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement 1755-1816*, Introduction, Chapters 1-2
Jacob Emden, A Bridle for the Deceiver

4/25: Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement 1755-1816*, Chapters 5-7.
Jacob Frank, The Words of the Lord Spoken in Brünn
Jacob Frank, Appendix to the Words of the Lord Spoken
in Brünn

5/02: Paweł Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement 1755-1816*, Chapters 8-9.
Jacob Frank, The Red Letter
Eleazar Fleckeles, The Love of David