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# KATJA VEHLow

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Assistant Professor  
Department of Religious Studies  
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## ***Current Position***

Aug. 2008- **Assistant Professor of Religious Studies**, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

## ***Previous Positions and Education***

Sept. 2006- **Weinstein Post-Doctoral Fellow**, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Aug. 2008 Concurrently Honorary Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities, UW-Madison.

1999-2006 **New York University**, New York.

**Doctor of Philosophy** from the Department of Hebrew & Judaic Studies, awarded September 2006.

Dissertation Title: *Abraham ibn Daud's Historiography: the History of the Kings of Israel and the Brief History of Rome*. Supervised by Robert Chazan.

1996-1999 **Hebrew University**, Jerusalem, Israel.

**Master of Arts in Jewish Civilization (summa cum laude)**, awarded May 2002.

Thesis Title: *The Mother of the Messiah in Sefer Zerubavel*. Supervised by Israel Yuval.

1993-1996 **Ruprecht-Karls-Universität**, Heidelberg.

**Master of Arts in Theology** ("Erstes Kirchliches Examen"), awarded 1996.

Thesis Title: *The Angel in Apoc 12*. Supervised by Klaus Berger.

**Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies** ("Zwischenprüfung"), awarded 1994.

1992-1993 **Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC)**, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, UK.

Year-long studies program, 1992-1993. Advisors: Christian Troll S.J., Bert Breiner.

1990-1992 **Ruhr-Universität Bochum**, Bochum.

**Bachelor of Arts in Theology** ("Zwischenprüfung"), awarded 1992.

## ***Fellowships, Awards, and Honors***

- Weinstein Post-Doctoral Fellowship, UW-Madison, 2006-2008.
- Honorary Fellow at the Institute for Research in the Humanities, UW-Madison, 2006-2008.
- Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, 2005-2006.
- Fellow at the Center for Jewish Learning and Leadership (CLAL), 2003-2004.

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- Andrew Sauter Fellowship for Predoctoral Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2003.
- Antonia S. Ranieri International Scholars Fellowship, 2003.
- Departmental Fellowship, NYU, 1999-2002.
- GSAS Travel Grant, NYU, 2001, 2003.
- Shalom Hartman Fellowship, Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, 1998-1999.
- Golda Meir Scholarship for Women Leadership, International Rothberg School, 1997-1998.
- Travel Award, Selly Oak Colleges, 1996.

## **Publications**

“Jewish historiography in Islamic Lands” in Robert Chazan, Marina Rustow (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism, volumes*, Cambridge University Press. (forthcoming)

“The Legend of the Septuagint in the Jewish Middle Ages” in Ineke van’t Spijker (ed.), *The Role of Exegesis in Medieval Culture*, Brill. (forthcoming)

Review: “Eva Haverkamp’s Edition of the Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs” in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. (forthcoming)

*Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*. Ed. Robert E. Bjork. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Entries for Yehiel of Paris, Peter the Venerable, and Eldad ha-Dani. (forthcoming)

“The Swiss Reformers Zwingli, Bullinger and Bibliander and their Attitude to Islam (1520-1560).” *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 6, 2 (1995): 229-254.

## **Guides to Collections of the Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives**

([http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/tam/fa\\_index.html](http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/tam/fa_index.html))

- “Guide to the Jay and Si-lan Chen Leyda Papers 1913-1987” with Peter Filardo, 2003.
- “Guide to Victor Riesel Papers 1929-1994” with Roy Felshin, 2003.
- “Guide to the George Breitman Papers 1928-1986” with Ellen Kastel and Peter Filardo, 2001.
- “Guide to the Virginia Gardner Papers 1922-1990,” 2001.

## **Selected Translations**

- Paul F. Knitter, “Sprache als Kommunikation, Einschränkung und Unterdrückung: auf dem Weg zu einem befreienden interreligiösen Dialog,” in Michael von Brück (ed.). *Themenheft. Sprache im Dialog. Dialog der Religionen* 1/5 (1995), 2-20. (from English into German)
- Yfaat Weiss, “‘East European Jewry’ as a Concept and ‘East European Jews’ as Precedence in German Zionism,” *Gal-Ed* 18 (2002), 73-88. (from German into English)
- Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6 of H.G. Alder, *Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft: Geschichte, Soziologie, Psychologie*. (into English, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in association with the Terezín Publication Project and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) (from German into English)

## **Works in Progress**

- Monograph-length edition of Ibn Daud's historical works with English translation and commentary.
- Heroes of the Jewish Middle Ages in graphic novels.

## **Conference Papers**

"The Septuagint in medieval Jewish narratives." International Medieval Congress, Leeds July 2007.

"Sefer Zerubavel and the afterlife of Hephzibah and the marble statue in medieval narratives." UW-Madison, March 2007

"A new reading of Abraham ibn Daud's historical works." Association of Jewish Studies, Washington, DC, December 2005.

"The Maccabees in medieval Jewish historiographies." The International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2005.

"Hephzibah, the Mother of the Messiah." *Mary: Mediterranean, European, Global*. NYU, April 2005.

"Abraham ibn Daud's perception of Roman history." Association of Jewish Studies, Chicago, IL, December 2004.

"Historiography of twelfth century Andalusian Jewry." *Jewish and Muslim Hermeneutics*. Center for Advanced Studies, Berlin. August 2003.

"Abraham ibn Daud: Jewish History Writing in the Shadow of the Almohad Invasion." The International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2003.

*Jews in the Middle Ages: Culture, Settlement and Mobility*. Graduate Student Seminar. Cambridge, April 2002.

"Ibn Daud's historiography in *Zikron Divrei Romi* and *Divrei Malkei Israel*." AAJR Graduate Student Summer Seminar, Vassar College, NY, June 4-8, 2001.

"Rupert of Deutz and the Jews in his commentary on the Good Friday liturgy." The International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2001.

"Women of faith in leadership and decision-making roles - now and in the future." *Women of Faith* (Christian, Druze, Jewish, Muslim) in Culture and Society, Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem, May 1996.

## **Research and Teaching Interests**

Jewish studies; religious thought; apocalypticism; messianism; medieval and modern inter-religious polemics; Jewish and Near-Eastern medieval history; historiography; Islamic Studies; Christianity; the Mediterranean; Hebrew language and literature; medieval Hebrew manuscripts; reception history of medieval texts and motifs; medievalism in contemporary film, children's and popular literature.

## **Teaching Experience**

*Jews and Christians* (USC-Columbia 2009)

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For most of the last two millennia, Jews and Christians had a complex relationship fraught with conflict as well as mutual gain that was based on a range of competing claims. This class looks at some of these claims and considers how cultural, social and economic conditions shaped this encounter from both the Jewish and Christian perspectives. In what ways did unfavourable teachings contribute toward violence against the Jews? What is the relationship between Christian anti-Jewish teachings and anti-Semitism? And, not least: how did Jewish thinkers react to claims made by Christians? An undergraduate class.

## ***Holy women in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (RELG 491H, WOST 430H)*** (taught USC-Columbia 2009)

Over the centuries, holy women have inspired the faithful and even the not-so pious, shaping ideas of martyrdom, monasticism, mysticism, and social activism. By examining holy women from various traditions and times, this class looks at the ways in which particular communities have understood, practiced, and endorsed essential elements of holiness. Taking Peter Brown's classic *Cult of the Saints* as a starting point, this class studies women who set standards for holiness in their respective traditions (Sara, Mary, Aisha), including particularly outspoken scholars and mystics (the Doctor of the Church Catherine of Siena, Hildegard of Bingen, Dolce of Worms, Rabi'a) and women holy to more than one tradition (Hagar, Mary/Maryam). The course closes with a look at modern personifications of holiness such as Mother Teresa, Edith Stein, and Fatimah Yashrutiyah.

## ***Introduction to Religious Studies (RELG 110)***

This course is an introduction to the study of religions, covering the origins, history, and major developments of five major religious traditions, namely Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

## ***From Jesus to the Rebbe: Jewish Messianism Through the Ages*** (taught UW-Madison 2008; USC-Columbia 2009)

Messianic anticipation is an integral part of Jewish core beliefs. But how exactly did and do Jews envision the advent of this redeemer and how did they react to the various messianic contenders as they appeared throughout history? Taking a historical approach and beginning with Biblical notions of messianism and some early representatives (Jesus and Bar Kokhbar), this class studies medieval authorities (Moses Maimonides) and leading kabbalists (Luria) whose writings have shaped mainstream ideas on messianism and mysticism until this day. The early modern period was characterized by the arrival of an extraordinarily successful contender, Shabbetai Tsvi as well as a growing Christian interest in Jewish mysticism. The course closes with a look at contemporary phenomena, in particular the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the impact of messianic ideas in Israel. An undergraduate class.

## ***Jewish and Christians in the Middle Ages*** (taught UW-Madison 2008)

In the Middle Ages, Jews and Christians lived side by side in much of Europe. There was a complex relationship fraught with conflict and mutual gain based on a range of contradicting claims. This class considered how cultural, social and economic conditions shaped this encounter from both the Jewish and Christian perspectives. Students surveyed the legal standing of the Jews, their communal life and in particular the intellectual history and cultural achievements of medieval European Jewry in Christendom. This class focused primarily on the northern European Middle Ages but considered also the Jewish world outside of northern Europe as it became relevant for an understanding of the Ashkenazic experience. Beginning with the construction of Jewish and Christian religious identities in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, this class followed both a thematic as well as a chronological order. An undergraduate class.

## ***The Middle Ages at the Movies*** (taught NYU 2004, 2005)

Movies are a dominant form of contemporary cultural expression. At the same time, they shape our conceptions of the realities of the past (*Schindler's List*) and our anxieties about the future (*The Matrix* series). This course explored what has been called "medievalism," namely the study of the many ways in which modern society and its popular culture interact with and interpret the actual history of the Middle Ages.

Through movies and close readings of primary sources, students analyzed the function of movies dealing with the Middle Ages, especially the ways in which they tell us what we think we know about the medieval period. A mixed undergraduate-graduate summer class.

## **Teaching Experience (continued)**

2001-2006     **Preceptor at the Morse Academic Plan (MAP), NYU.**

*Antiquity and the Middle Ages* with Jindrich Zezula, Spring 2006; *Antiquities and the Renaissance* with Bill Klein Spring 2005, Fall 2005; *Antiquity and the Middle Ages* with Alfred Ivry, Fall 2004; *Antiquity and the Enlightenment* with Robert Chazan, Fall 2003; *Antiquity and the Renaissance* with Kenneth Krabbenhoft, Fall 2001.

The Morse Academic Plan (MAP) of the College of Arts and Science is an integrated general education curriculum in the liberal arts. As a receptor, I led two weekly recitation sections that aimed at deepening the students' analytical skills, both in writing and speaking, taking into consideration the varied academic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of my students, many of whom were not English native speakers. In addition, I designed and graded virtually all exams and response papers.

## **Language Instruction**

### Hebrew

2002-2004     Hebrew and Judaic Studies Department, NYU. Levels 1-3 of Hebrew.

2001-2002     Congregation Mt. Sinai, Brooklyn.

2000-2001     Speaking Freely, NYU.

### English

1996-1997     Ein Kerem Boarding School, Jerusalem.

## **Professional Activities, Service and Related Experience**

*Storytelling Workshops*, NYU, 2004-2005. Administrator of yearlong university-wide workshop with six conferences.

*Liturgy Group*. NYU and Columbia University. 2003-2004. Organized yearlong colloquia series.

*Department of Middle Eastern Studies*, NYU. Spring 2002. Assistant to the editor of *Iranian Studies*.

*FAS Colloquium on Orality, Writing, and Culture*, NYU. 2001-2004. Assisted in organizing and procuring grants for yearlong colloquia series.

2000-2003. *NYU, Tamiment Institute Library & Wagner Labor Archives*. Processed archival material and wrote guides for archival collections.

*Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, NYU. 2000-2001. Administrative assistant.

*Medieval and Renaissance Graduate Information Network (MARGIN)*, NYU, 2001-2003. Co-chair of weekly student-led lunch talks, events, tours and listserv.

*"Moreshet Ashkenaz," Jerusalem*. Administrator and researcher, 1997-1999. Co-ordinated researchers. Created and designed project's website. Oversaw budget. Catalogued synagogues destroyed on *Kristallnacht* in Bavaria.

Delegate at the national student committee of theology students in Germany (FAT), 1988-1991.

Student delegate at the Synod of the *Evangelical Church of Baden*. 1991.

Coordinator of a Qur'an study group under Ayatollah Dr. Mehdi Haeri Khorshidi, Bochum, 1989-1991.

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Member of the student committee ("ASTA") at the *Kirchliche Hochschule in Bethel/Bielefeld*, responsible for contacts to the local Muslim communities, 1989.

## **Conference Organization**

*Medieval Dance: A Roundtable*. NYU, May 2003. Co-organized symposium.

*Why the Classics Were Reunited in the Middle Ages*. NYU, November 2002. Co-organized one-day conference.

*Johannes Reuchlin – Recommendation Whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burn All Jewish Books. A Classic Treatise against Anti-Semitism*. NYU, March 2001. Co-organized one-day symposium.

*Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University*, 1996. Organized workshops with Israelis and Palestinians on conflict resolution.

*Islam in the Media*. Stuttgart, November 1995. Organized and chaired three-day conference.

*Are We Prisoners of Our History? Standing Conference of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Europe*. Bendorf, February 1994. Assisted in the organization, interpreted, and facilitated sessions.

*Gewalt gegen Frauen. Dies Academicus*. Bochum, February 1991. Organized one-day symposium and chaired session, "Strategies of Violence against Women in the Church Fathers."

## **Languages**

Native German.

Native-level fluency: English, Hebrew.

Reading knowledge of Dutch, French, Italian, Latin, Spanish, Yiddish; some Arabic and Classical Greek.

## **Language Training**

- Two-month intensive course in Modern Hebrew (level C), Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1996.
- Three months intensive course in Modern Hebrew, Yaelim Absorption Center, Beer Sheva, 1996.
- One-month intensive course in Modern Standard Arabic, Goethe-Institute Damascus, Syria, 1994.
- One-month intensive course in Ancient Greek, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg, 1989.
- Six-week intensive course in Biblical Hebrew, Annweiler, 1988.

## **Additional Employment and Social Outreach**

*Jewish Show-Case*. Compiled background material for educational Jewish Studies website, 2006.

*Lambda Educational Technologies, Jerusalem*. Voice-overs for educational games for children; 1997-2001.

*Artus Klinik*, Nurse's aid, Heidelberg. 1995.

One-month internship at a Psychiatric Adult Day Care Center in Karlsruhe, 1994.

Nurse's aid, psychiatric care for a mentally ill woman, *Arbeiterwohlfahrt*, Bochum, 1991-1992.

Six-week Internship at the *Academy for Adult Education*, Schloß Beuggen, 1992.

Assisted Albanian Kurdish refugee family with bureaucratic, cultural, and medical issues, 1988-1989.