



University of
St Andrews

600
YEARS



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Asian and
Middle Eastern Studies

Collaborative Research Initiative:
Khamriyya as a World Poetic Genre: Comparative
Perspectives on Wine Poetry in Near and Middle Eastern
Literatures

University of St Andrews and University of Cambridge

Research Workshop 2:

Cambridge, 20–22 June 2016

*Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue,
CB3 9DA Cambridge*

Conveners:

Dr Christine van Ruymbeke
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
University of Cambridge

Dr Kirill Dmitriev
School of Modern Languages
University of St Andrews

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 20 JUNE 2016

*Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue,
CB3 9DA Cambridge*

14.30

Welcome by Convenors

Christine van Ruymbeke (University of Cambridge)

Kirill Dmitriev (University of St Andrews)

15.00-16.20

Session 1:

‘Adī ibn Zayd al-‘Ibādī and the Origins of the Arabic Wine Song

Kirill Dmitriev (University of St Andrews)

**Of Fight and Feast: Metaphors of Wine in Persian Iran-Iraq War
Poetry**

Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden University)

17:00-19.40

**Garden Party at the AIIT, for the workshop participants and invited
guests.**

*The ANCIENT INDIA AND IRAN TRUST (AIIT) is situated at
23, Brooklands Avenue, CAMBRIDGE, next to the Botanical Gardens, a 30
minutes’ walk from the faculty.*

TUESDAY, 21 JUNE 2016

*Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue,
CB3 9DA Cambridge*

09.30-10.50

Session 2:

**An Integral Abū Nuwās: “Transgressive” readings of his khamriyyāt
and zuhdiyyāt**

Jeremy Farrel (Emory University)

**The Qalandariyyāt as Heterotopic Countergenre: A Case Study of a
Distant Reading Approach to the “Rogue Lyrics” of Early Persian
Poetry**

Matthew Thomas Miller (University of Maryland)

10.50-11.10

Coffee/tea

11.10-12.30

Session 3:

"Bury me under the grapevine" - Comparative perspectives on an Arabic-Latin motif of transgression

Agnes Imhof (Göttingen University)

Partying for Patrons. The Art of celebrating in Ghaznavid Court Poetry

Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden University)

12.30-14.00

Lunch

14.10-15.30

Session 4:

The Theme of Wine in medieval Andalusian strophic poetry: from Arabic and Hebrew *muwashshaḥât* to Ibn Quzmân's *azjâl*

Arie Schippers (University of Amsterdam)

Aesthetic criteria and imagery evolution of wine poetry (*khamriyyât*) in VI-XI centuries

Christina Ossipova (Moscow State University)

15.20-15.40

Coffee/tea

15.40-17.00

Session 5:

Wine and the Pleasures of Delhi in Urdu Court Poetry

Sunil Sharma (Boston University)

On Wine and Oneness: The Sober Lives and Drunken Lines of Ḥāfeẓ and Hanshan

Rafal Stepień (Hampshire College)

19.00

Dinner at Darwin College, in the Richard King Room, for the invited speakers only.

DARWIN COLLEGE is situated at the corner of Sidgwick Avenue, Queens' Road, Silver Street and Newnham Terrace, 2 minutes' walk from the Faculty.

Darwin College

WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2016

*Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue,
CB3 9DA Cambridge*

10.00-11.20

Session 6

Haleti's Sakiname. A Genre-Defining Ottoman Work?

Sooyong Kim (Koç University)

Vanishing Wine. From pre-Islamic Arabic poetry to the apex of Ottoman Poetry

Orhan Elmaz (University of St Andrews)

11.20-11.40

Coffee/tea

11.40-13.00

Session 7

Mystifying Wine An Analysis of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani's Commentary on Ibn al-Farid's Wine Ode

Enrico Boccaccini (Göttingen University)

The Dispute between Jug and Goblet. Joseph ben Tanhum Yerushalmi's Hebrew. Wine Poems from early Mamluk Egypt

Joachim Yashaya (Goethe University)

Closing remarks, end of the workshop

Abstracts

Enrico Boccaccini, (Gottingen University)

Mystifying Wine. An Analysis of Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani’s Commentary on Ibn al-Farid’s Wine Ode

This paper seeks to add to our understandings of the role and workings of medieval commentaries on poetry, by analysing the way in which the Persian mystic Sayyid ‘Ali Hamadani (b. 1314) treats and defines the bacchic images in the *Khamriyya* of the Egyptian mystic Ibn al-Farid (1181-1235). This paper offers a discussion of a limited number of the *Khamriyya*'s lines and an analysis of Hamadani's interpretation that reveals basic concepts of Islamic mysticism that can be traced back to such eminent scholars as Ibn ‘Arabi or al-Ghazali. The analysis of Hamadani's commentary (*Masharib al-Adhwaq*) and its comparison with other commentaries on Ibn al-Farid's *Khamriyya* sheds light on the stabilisation of a poem's 'meaning' through commentaries, while it also supports the view that mystical authors often composed commentaries on poetry mainly to present and support their own theosophical system. As a result, the analysis of *Masharib al-Adhwaq* suggests a dialectic relation between commentaries and poetry that goes across linguistic and literary (prose/verse; treatise/poetry) boundaries.

Kirill Dimitriev (St Andrews University)

‘Adi ibn Zayd al-‘Ibādi and the Origins of the Arabic Wine Song

Poetic texts dedicated entirely to the motif of wine are attested in Arabic poetry already in the pre-Islamic period. Most of them are attributed to authors associated with the Christian milieu of al-Ḥīra and the court culture of the Laḥmids. The talk will present and discuss in detail one of such poems by ‘Adi ibn Zayd al-‘Ibādi addressing questions of the origins of the wine song in Arabic, its earliest literary forms and functions.

Orhan Elmaz (St Andrews University)

Vanishing wine. From pre-Islamic Arabic poetry to the apex of Ottoman poetry

Building on the paper on "Wine in Fuzūlī's Poetry" which I read at the first *khamriyya* workshop in St Andrews, I will present some of the contexts of wine in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and demonstrate how the genre developed by comparing and contrasting them with examples from the apex of Ottoman poetry, namely poems by Fuzūlī, Bâqī, and "Sappho of the Ottomans" Mihri Hatun.

Among the references to wine in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, we will discuss excerpts of poems by Imru’ al-Qays, ‘Amr b. Kulthūm, ‘Antara, Ṭarafa, Labīd, Ka‘b b. Zuhayr, and al-A‘shā who gained fame for his wine descriptions (*waṣf*). I will present examples of wine drinking for the purpose of praise (*fakhr* and *madḥ*), and wine imagery which was rather limited.

In contrast, we can observe in different genres of Ottoman poetry, that wine drinking has developed into a motif which mostly restricts wine imagery to the metaphorical level, notwithstanding infamous exceptions

Jeremy Farrell (Emory University)

An Integral Abū Nuwās: “Transgressive” readings of his *khamriyyāt* and *zuhdiyyāt*

Previous scholarship has directed much interest toward the relationship between the *khamriyyāt* and the *zuhdiyyāt* of Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan b. Hānī’ al-Ḥakamī (b. 139 or 140/756–8, d. 198-200/813–5). The poet's use of these genres is taken to present an instrumentalist “two-faced image”; as characterized in Ewald Wagner's work a transition takes place from his licentious phase of *khamriyyāt* to a later, more pious state, reflected in his composition of *zuhdiyyāt*.² However, evidence for such an assertion remains tendentious. Abū Nuwās clearly wrote *zuhdiyyāt* early in his career - just as he did not abstain from *khamriyyāt* later in life – and neither does this characterization take into account Abū Nuwās' occasional, brilliant display of erudition in the more sober religious science of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*

¹ I borrow this image from David Blumenthal's characterization of readings of the “esoteric” and “exoteric” aspects of Maimonides' philosophy. See: *Maimonides and Mysticism*, ed. A. Elqayam and D. Schwartz, Da’at 64-66 (2009): v-xxv; modified and reprinted in D. Blumenthal, *Philosophic Mysticism: Studies in Rational Religion* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2006), 128-51.

² Ewald Wagner. “Abū Nuwās,” *EP = EF*. This view is also echoed in R.B. Seargent's review of Ewald's *Diwān*. See: Serjeant. "Review: Ewald Wagner (ed.): *Der Diwān des Abū Nuwās. Teil II...*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37.1 (1974), 230.

as a young man. Even studies which admit these facts prefer to see Abū Nuwās as primarily and “dissolute”-ly engaged in the production of *khamriyyāt*, given only at times to bouts of piety; as an example of this imbalanced duality, Andras Hamori sees only “flourishes of poetic versatility, or expressions of religious anguish,” in Abū Nuwās' *zuhdiyyāt*, or a religious “truancy” in his ecstatic *khamriyyāt*.³

Only recently has this characterization of a “two-faced” Abū Nuwās been challenged. James E. Montgomery argues at length that Abū Nuwās and the Caliph al-Amin (r. 193-198/809-813) served the cause of a charismatic form of Islam that viewed “sinning as virtue.”⁴ Following Montgomery, I argue that Abū Nuwās' composition of both *khamriyyāt* and *zuhdiyyāt* constitute an integral conception of his religious self, informed by what Sunthar Visuvalingam has termed a sense of “transgressive sacrality,” and Gershom Sholem's model of “redemption through sin.”⁵ These models, developed in relation to sacred Hindu texts and the Kabbala respectively, conceived of the dominant religious tradition as merely an exoteric prerequisite for a spiritual liberation achieved through a combination of “truly penitential and ascetic practices... and radically transgressive elements... [to form] *integral spiritual disciplines*.”⁶ When viewed as simultaneously “transgressive” and sacred, Abū Nuwās' poetic endorsement of drunkenness and asceticism gain a moral and literary coherence otherwise framed as duality. This approach thus frames Abū Nuwās' composition of both *khamriyyāt* and *zuhdiyyāt* as indicative of a consistent, “virtuous” vision of impropriety, and connects concepts of transgressive behavior and asceticism within and across religious traditions of the pre-modern Near East.

Agnes Imhof (Göttingen University)

Bury me under the grapevine” - Comparative perspectives on an Arabic-Latin motif of transgression.

Transgression of religious norms is nothing uncommon in the poetry of Abu Nuwas. Asking to be buried under the grapevine with his feet towards Mecca, but his head towards the grape fits well into the context of his work, particularly regarding the author's often ironical play with religious motifs. The opposition of religion and intoxication can even be regarded as a kind of *leitmotiv* of his work: also visible in his play with the pre-Islamic motif of the *atlal* saying that the places of prayer were deserted because their “inhabitants” had changed to the tavern.

However, the motif is not only familiar in Abu Nuwas' poetry. It appears also in a text by an Arabic writing Andalusī author and, shortly afterwards, one by a Latin writing person in the entourage of Cologne's archbishop-elect Rainald von Dassel: the Archpoet. His famous poem has for a long time been interpreted as a rejection of ecclesial norms favouring the life of a vagabond - this has recently been denied (again) when P. Godman has shed new light on the text and the author. However, reading the poem in the context of its Arabic predecessors should open new comparative perspectives on the motif's function and the discourse it emerged from.

The contribution shall provide a brief comparative investigation of the Arabic and Latin texts and analyse the function of the motif within the respective religio-political context defining its literary and socio-political role.

Sooyong Kim (Koç University)

Haleti's *Sakiname*, A Genre-Defining Ottoman Work?

Haleti's *sakiname*, dating from the early seventeenth century, has generally been regarded by scholars as the work that popularized the poetic genre in the Ottoman literary context, reflecting the assessment of E. J. W. Gibb over a century ago. The question remains, however, of the extent to which Haleti's *sakiname*, a *mesnevi* structured around addresses to the cupbearer, followed by descriptions of wine and the tavern, of party etiquette and nighttime revelry, set the parameters for the emergent genre. The paper explores that question by looking at comparable poems that were produced afterward, as well as considering possible Persian models that might have shaped the Ottoman versions. As will be argued, Haleti made it fashionable among literati to compose a *sakiname*, but his successors defined the very contours of the genre.

3 Fatehi-Nezhad, Enayatollah; Azarnoosh, Azartash; Negahban, Farzin, .s.v., “Abū Nuwās,” *Encyclopaedia Islamica*; Andras Hamori, “Ascetic Poetry (*Zuhdiyyāt*),” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: ‘Abbāsīd belles-lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, et. al. (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 265-74; idem *On the Art of Medieval Araic Literature*. (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1974), 58-9.

4 James E. Montgomery, “Abū Nuwās, The Justified Sinner?” *Oriens*, 39.1 (2011), 75-164.

5 Sunthar Visuvalingam, “The Transgressive Sacrality of the Dikṣīta: Sacrifice, Criminality and the Khakti in the Hindu Tradition,” in *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees: Essay on the Guardians of Popular Hinduism*, ed. Alf Hiltebeitel (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 427-62. For Judaism, see Gershom Gerhard Sholem, “Redemption Through the Sin,” in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 78-141.

6 Visuvalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 429. Emphasis mine.

Matthew Thomas Miller (University of Maryland)

The Qalandariyyāt as Heterotopic Countergenre: A Case Study of a Distant Reading Approach to the “Rogue Lyrics” of Early Persian Poetry

In some of the earliest manuscripts of Sanāʿī's (d. 1131) *dīvān* and 'Attār's (d. 1221) *Mukhtar-Nāmeḥ*, the term *qalandariyyāt* is applied to a group of poems that have a shared concern with a variety of different antinomian and transgressive figures, settings, and motifs.⁷ The central figure of the poetic world of the *qalandariyyāt* is the libertine “rogue” or “rascal” (*qalandar/qallāsh/oubāsh/rend*) and its poetic axis is the winehouse (*kharābāt/mey-khāneh*)—a heterotopic space in which the poet, adopting the persona of “poet as rogue,” exhorts the readers to reject the pretenses of superficial Islamic piety in favor of a “true infidelity” (*kufī-e haqīqī*). Several prominent scholars (e.g. Shafī'i-Kadkani, Utas), however, have questioned whether or not the *qalandariyyāt* should be regarded as a generic category. *Pace* proponents of this view, I will argue in this presentation that manuscript evidence, close reading, and new forms of macro, computational textual analysis all indicate that the monothematic forms of *qalandariyyāt* constitute a flexible thematic genre in early Persian poetry which functions as a heterotopic countergenre to religious-homiletic (*zuhdiyyāt, mavā'ez*) and royal panegyric (*madhiyyāt*) poetry. At the methodological level, I will focus in particular on how I am leveraging a new form of computational textual analysis called topic modeling to test and map at the macro level the generic contours of *qalandariyyāt* poetry.

Christina Ossipova (Moscow State University)

Aesthetic criteria and imagery evolution of wine poetry (*khamriyyāt*) in VI-XI centuries.

Medieval Arabic philologists rarely dealt with the aesthetic transformation of wine poetry (*khamriyyāt*) as such. Bacchic lines in various anthologies were prefaced by expressions evaluating its eloquence, origin or beauty without detailed comments on the way poets beautify the world around them. Yet several peculiar considerations concerning *khamriyyāt* can be found in works on poetics where authors examined the notion of “beautiful lie” and speculated on the way poetical figure can be pleasant or not to the audience.

This paper is an attempt to reconstruct the main directions in which the imagery evolution of *khamriyyāt* took place beginning with pre-Islamic poetry and up to middle Classical period. For this purpose I will try to adjust the theoretic recommendations of medieval scholars of considerable importance such as Qudāma ibn al-Ja'far (“*Naqd al-shi'r*”), Ibn Rāshiq (“*al-'Umda*”), al-'Askarī (“*Dīwān al-ma'ān*” and “*Kitāb al-ṣinā'tayn*”) to the lines of most prominent poets of VI-XI centuries presented in the famous anthology of wine poetry and anecdotes by Ibn al-Rāqīq (“*Quṭb al-surūr*”). How has changed the notion of good and beautiful in wine poetry? What motifs dominated in different periods? How has changed the imagery with the evolution of aesthetic tastes?

Arie Schippers (University of Amsterdam)

The Theme of Wine in medieval Andalusian strophic poetry: from Arabic and Hebrew *muwashshahāt* to Ibn Quzmān's *azjāl*.

The metrics of the strophic poetic genres which originated in Muslim Spain, comprising the more Classical genre of the *muwashshah* as well as the vernacular genre of the *zajal*, have raised in the past ample discussions, especially whether or not European medieval strophic poetry such as the one of the Occitan troubadours is related with them or not. In this context it is important to investigate the wine and love motifs in Arabic and Hebrew *muwashshahāt* (“Girdle poems”) and in Arabic *azjāl*, stylized strophic poetry in a Western Arabic dialect, as produced for instance by the famous poet Ibn Quzmān.

In my contribution I will deal with the different wine and love motifs in Arabic, Hebrew and Andalusian Arabic.

Sunil Sharma (Boston University)

Wine and the Pleasures of Delhi in Urdu Court Poetry

The genres and forms of Persianate poetry are familiar but the linguistic and social contexts are new. Classical Urdu poetry in the seventeenth century is therefore not just a translation of older Persian models but a deployment of the vernacular for aesthetic ideals and a literary culture specific to that time and place. The topos of the *saqi* and wine

⁷ Similar such “transgressive” poems are attributed to a wide range of other medieval Persian poets (including Burhānī, Amīr Mu'ezzī, Khāqānī, Anvarī, Rūmī, Sa'dī, amongst others); however, this literary “type” is represented most prolifically in the *dīvāns* of Sanāʿī, 'Attār, and 'Erāqī (d. 1289).

most often occurred in Persian courtly literature depicting the intimate *majlis* of a patron and his close companions. Over the course of the seventeenth century when Urdu flourished next to Persian, going on to become the privileged language of the literati, new spaces opened up as the setting and staging of various kinds of literary texts. Most prominently, the city with became the setting of choice for a whole range of activities, moving from a private realm to a vernacular public display. This paper studies this shift in the Urdu courtly *masnavi* by Shah Hatim, *Bazm-e 'ishrat* (Assembly of Pleasure), where the season of spring in the city of Shahjahanabad (Delhi) provides the occasion for wine-drinking and merriment. The wine imagery in this poem is almost completely devoid of mystical significance, rather symbolizing the enjoyment of the sensory pleasures offered by the season and city of joy.

Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (Leiden University)

Of Fight and Feast: Metaphors of Wine in Persian Iran-Iraq War Poetry

As an icon of identity, Persian poetry has remained popular with Persian-speaking peoples for more than one millennium. This poetry is used in a wide range of cultural and political domains. Wine and all concepts and themes connected to wine in classical Persian poetry was used during the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988). Persian poetry was an effective medium to mobilize Iranians to go to the front and offer their lives. By propagating the cult of martyrdom and introducing the mystic concept of the “academy of love” (*madrese-ye eshq*) in which self-sacrifice is the lesson, the war was interpreted in terms of love, and its violence was justified. In this paper, I will devote my attention to new usages of classical poetry in the context of warfare, concentrating on metaphors of wine, tavern and cupbearer, illustrating how peaceful classical metaphors are applied in a violent modern setting.

Rafal Stepień (Hampshire College)

On Wine and Oneness: The Sober Lives and Drunken Lines of Ḥāfez and Hanshan

Wine is a staple ingredient in classical Persian poetry, where its consumption often serves to differentiate the cooked connoisseurs from the raw rookies on the spiritual path. Typically, those who refuse its inebriating allure do so on the basis of a strict adherence to religious regulations derided by recusant poet-contemplatives claiming to have transcended, in intoxication, such extrinsic distinctions in favour of an inner unity of the divine and the mundane. The poetry of Ḥāfez (d. c. 1389) is a paradigmatic exemplar of such themes; one whose various uses and Arabo-Persian sources have been extensively studied. That there should exist striking analogies, however, between the Islamic poetry of Persia and that of Buddhist East-Asia has hitherto remained unremarked. This paper thus hopes to simultaneously close a serious gap in current scholarship and open a new field of inquiry by placing the wine imagery of Ḥāfez in juxtaposition with its surprisingly akin use by the Chinese Buddhist poet Hanshan (d. c. 850). In so doing, it seeks to challenge unquestioned assumptions as to the mutual incongruity of Islamic and Buddhist literature and thought, and contribute to the dawning awareness of extensive historical transmissions of literary motifs as well as religious doctrines.

Hanshan is typically portrayed as a dishevelled recluse – something of a Chinese *darvīsh* – whose poetry is as uncouth as its author's mountain hideaway. The literary sophistication and profusion of Buddhist tropes in his poetry, however, attest to a thorough knowledge of and adherence to the sutras and strictures studied and practiced in his day. Foremost among the postulates of the Tang-dynasty Chan Buddhism to which Hanshan subscribed was the notion of ‘Buddha-nature’; the pure and pre-existing mind whose realization was the professed goal of Buddhist believers. And foremost among the precepts to which practitioners adhered in order to sober this (intrinsically undefiled yet perceptibly entangled) mind from worldly pollution was the avoidance of any intoxicants or mind-altering substances such as wine.

In this paper, I will initiate the systematic examination of widespread commonalities I have identified between Islamic and Buddhist poetic formulations of the wine motif. Specifically, I will focus upon the use of wine-inebriation by Ḥāfez and Hanshan to designate the original state of undifferentiated union. For although Ḥāfez and Hanshan – like other practicing Muslims and Buddhists – presumably never indulged in the wine of the grape, both were nevertheless drawn to use its inebriating qualities in poetic allusion to the ecstatic apprehension of the divine within. For both Ḥāfez and Hanshan, wine, in blurring the false distinctions of the analytical mind, restores the heart to its original state of purity, be this conceived as the pre-eternal covenant or the timeless Buddha-nature.

Gabrielle van den Berg (Leiden University)

Partying for patrons - the art of celebrating in Ghaznavid court poetry

Wine forms an integral part of marking certain occasions celebrated in the panegyric poetry composed for Ghaznavid rulers and officials in the 11th century. I would like to focus in this paper on the representation of some aspects of court life in Ghaznavid court poetry, in particular on the ways Islamic and pre-Islamic feasts interact in a number of qasidas by court poets such as Farrokhi Sistani and how this correlates with the descriptions of certain events in the Tarikh-e Beyhaqi which will also be discussed.

Joachim Yashaia, (Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main)

The Dispute between Jug and Goblet. Joseph ben Talhum yerushalmi's Hebrew Wine Poems from Early Mamluk Egypt

In the twelfth through fourteenth centuries CE, several Jewish poets were active in the Islamic Middle East, particularly in major cities like Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad. These poets used Arabic and Hebrew as their literary languages. While the Jews wrote most of their prose in Judeo-Arabic, they generally preferred to compose their poetry in Hebrew. A paradigmatic writer among these bilinguistic poets is the Egyptian Jewish poet Joseph ben Tanhum Yerushalmi (b. 1262), who lived in early Mamluk times. Already as a young poet, Joseph enjoyed the patronage of the supreme Jewish leader in Egypt, the Ra'is al-Yahud "Head of the Jews" David ben Abraham Maimonides (1222-1300), a grandson of the famous philosopher and physician Moses Maimonides (1138-1204). Joseph may be described as a house poet to the family of David, and several of his poems were written on the occasion of a wedding or death in his extended family. Joseph's oeuvre is preserved in two books: a poetic collection in seven parts and *Sefer arugot ha-besamim* ("Book of the Perfumed Flower Beds"). Judith Dishon published the latter book, a collection of homonymic epigrams, in 2005. While certain portions of the *diwan* have also been published (by Mann, Ratzaby, Sheynin, Shy, and Yahalom), it is far from being fully available and easily accessible to research.

The proposed lecture—presenting the first results of the postdoctoral project *A Reappraisal of Jewish Poetry from Mamluk Egypt. Communal Identity and Elite Culture in the Arabic and Hebrew Oeuvre of Joseph ben Tanhum Yerushalmi* (University of Ghent, Belgium, 2016-2018)—will scrutinize Joseph's wine poems in the fifth section of his *diwan* and re-conceptualize them as the product of the specific Jewish culture which developed in the Middle East. Particular attention will be paid to socio- and cross-cultural aspects of the wine poems, with the aim of finding answers to the following issues relevant to the field of comparative Islamic-Jewish studies: A) Do the poems reflect then prevailing and opposite social and religious views on the drinking of wine? Does the poet include justifications of wine drinking? B) Does the poet adopt formal and stylistic conventions from Arabic poetry and how are these conventions transformed in the context of the Hebrew poems? To what extent was Joseph acquainted with classical, Andalusian and Mamluk period Arabic and Hebrew literature?