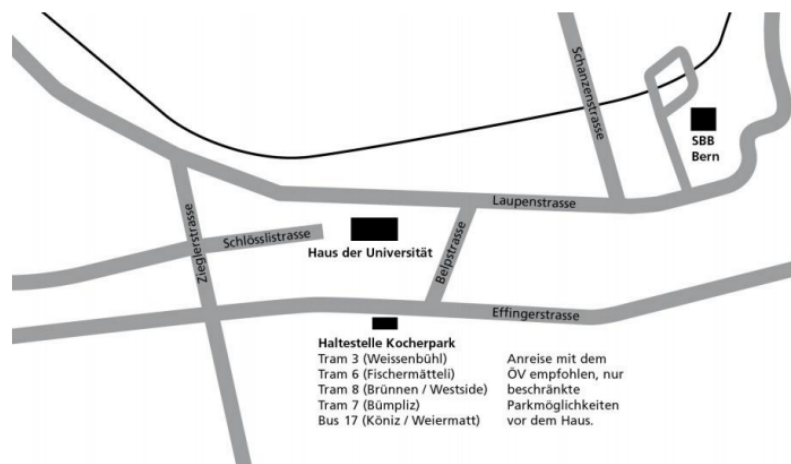


The Jewish life of Jesus (*Toledoth Yeshu*) constitutes one of the most important Jewish anti-Christian literary traditions. Its development can be followed in the long run of Jewish-Christian relations and polemics from late antiquity to the modern period. *Toledoth Yeshu* presents us with a Jewish account of Christianity, mocking Jesus as an illegitimate child and a charlatan, and describing his disciples as a bunch of violent rogues. A "best-seller" among medieval Jews, *Toledoth Yeshu* was also discussed by Christian scholars with a view to expose the alleged Jewish hatred of Christianity in their own anti-Jewish polemics. In the Enlightenment context, *Toledoth Yeshu* came to be subverted by authors such as Voltaire, with the intention to foster their critique of religion and question the historical status of the biblical narrative.

Whereas *Toledoth Yeshu* has most often been studied from a text-critical perspective, the present conference aims to go beyond philological debates and explore the place and function of *Toledoth Yeshu* within the different historical and cultural contexts in which it surfaces and circulates. This conference will thus connect recent inquiries into this text to wider issues pertaining to the historical construction, transformation, and preservation of religious identities, and their inherent discourses on gender, ethnicity, and religion.

**Information/contact:** daniel.barbu@theol.unibe.ch

**The conference will be hosted at the Haus der Universität, Schösslistrasse 5, CH-3008 Bern: [www.hausderuniversitaet.ch](http://www.hausderuniversitaet.ch)**



**u<sup>b</sup>**

**UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**

Theologische Fakultät  
Institut für Judaistik

# The Jewish Life of Jesus (*Toledoth Yeshu*) in Context: Jewish-Christian Polemics in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern History

An international conference at the University of Bern

June 29 – July 1, 2015

With the generous support of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), the Burgergemeinde Bern, the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Judaistische Forschung (SGJF), the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft (SGR), the Fondation Johanna Dürmüller-Bol, and the Adolf und Mary Mil-Stiftung

**FNSNF**  
FONDS NATIONAL SUISSE  
SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS  
FONDO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO  
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION



**SR**  
Schweizerische Gesellschaft für  
Religionswissenschaft (SGR)

## Monday, June 29

Prof. **René BLOCH** (University of Bern), presiding

**9:00–9:15** Prof. **René BLOCH** (University of Bern), Dean of Faculty: *Welcome*

**9:15–9:30** Dr. **Daniel BARBU** (University of Bern): *Introduction*

**9:30–10:15** Prof. **Philip ALEXANDER** (The University of Manchester):  
*The Toledoth Yeshu and Rabbinic Tradition*

**10:15–10:45** *Coffee break*

**10:45–11:30** Prof. **Daniel STOEKL BEN EZRA** (EPHE, Paris):  
*On Some Ancient Elements in Toledoth Yeshu*

**11:30–12:15** *Discussion*

Prof. **Ernst-Axel KNAUF** (University of Bern), presiding

**14:00–14:45** **Gavin McDOWELL** (EPHE, Paris): *"True Chronology": Dating the Events of the Helena Recension of Toledoth Yeshu*

**14:45–15:30** Dr. **Michael MEERSON** (Princeton University): *The Flying Contest: From a Trial by Combat... to Something Else*

**15:30–16:00** *Coffee break*

**16:00–16:45** Dr. **Saskia DÖNITZ** (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main): *Rewriting Polemics: Intertextual Relations Between Toledoth Yeshu and Sefer Yosippon*

**16:45–17:30** *Discussion*

**18:00–19:00** **Keynote Lecture:** Prof. **William HORBURY** (University of Cambridge):  
*Origins and Developments of the Toledoth Yeshu*

## Tuesday, June 30

Prof. **Jens SCHLIETER** (University of Bern), presiding

**9:00–9:45** Prof. **Gideon BOHAK** (Tel Aviv University): *Magic in the Toledoth Yeshu*

**9:45–10:30** Prof. **Alexandra CUFFEL** (Ruhr-Universität Bochum): *The Judeo-Arabic Toledoth Yeshu and its Implications for Jewish Relations with Christians and Muslims in the Fatimid-Mamluk Periods*

**10:30–11:00** *Coffee break*

**11:00–11:45** Prof. **Sarit KATTAN GRIBETZ** (Fordham University):  
*Gender and Sexuality in the Toledoth Yeshu Traditions*

**11:45–12:30** *Discussion*

Prof. **Daniel STOEKL BEN EZRA** (EPHE, Paris), presiding

**14:00–14:45** Dr. **Daniel BARBU** (University of Bern) and Dr. **Yann DAHHAOUI** (University of Lausanne): *The Secret Booklet from Germany. Circulation and Transmission of Toledoth Yeshu at the Borders of the Empire*

**14:45–15:30** Dr. **Yaacov DEUTSCH** (David Yellin College):  
*An Unknown Text of Toledoth Yeshu: The First German Translation*

**15:30–16:00** *Coffee break*

**16:00–16:45** Prof. **Stephen BURNETT** (University of Nebraska, Lincoln):  
*Martin Luther, Toledoth Yeshu and Judaizing Christians in Vom Schem Hamphoras (1543)*

**16:45–17:30** Prof. **Károly Dániel DOBOS** (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest): *Is there a Detectable Evolution in the Popular Jewish Parodies on Jesus?*

**17:30–18:00** *Discussion*

**18:15–19:30** **Dr. Lutz Zwillenberg Lecture:** Prof. **Peter SCHÄFER** (Princeton University/Jewish Museum Berlin): *Anziehung und Abstossung: Juden und Christen in den ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Begegnung* (University of Bern, Main building, Room 101)

## Wednesday, July 1

Prof. **Christoph UEHLINGER** (University of Zurich), presiding

**9:00–9:45** Prof. **Cristiana FACCHINI** (University of Bologna/Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt):  
*Images of Jesus and Early Christianity in the Baroque Period*

**9:45–10:30** Prof. **Claudia ROSENZWEIG** (Bar Ilan University): *Jesus's Taytsh. Bible Vulgarization in the Yiddish Versions of Toledoth Yeshu*

**10:30–11:00** *Coffee break*

**11:00–11:45** Dr. **Yonatan MOSS** (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem):  
*"Witzig, nach einem talmudischen Ausdruck": Samuel Krauss's Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen in Context*

**11:45–12:30** *Final discussion and conclusion*