



## Union in Separation – Trading Diasporas in the Eastern Mediterranean (1200–1700)

International Conference, Heidelberg

17–19 February 2011

TRANSCULTURAL  
STUDIES



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[http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/transculturality/union\\_in\\_separation.html](http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/transculturality/union_in_separation.html)

## Keynote Lecture

Thursday, February 17th, 7pm

Alte Aula, Universität Heidelberg, Grabengasse 1

Benjamin Arbel: "Mediterranean Jewish Diasporas and the Bill of Exchange: Coping with a Foreign Financial Instrument (16th-17th centuries)"

Renowned scholar Benjamin Arbel from Tel Aviv University will analyse Jewish Diaspora groups in the 16th and 17th centuries and how they adopted the theoretically forbidden cambio system despite religious hindrances.

His presentation will herald a number of intriguing presentations on diaspora groups in the Eastern Mediterranean from 1200-1700. Having explored Cyprus during the Venetian period, Arbel extended his research on Venice and its "colonies" in the Eastern Mediterranean and the interaction between the Muslim Levant and the Christian East in general. His research distinguishes itself through its strong focus on transcultural interaction and the combined use of Arabic and European sources.

Arbel's latest research interests include the relationship between man and animal in history.

## Panel discussion

Friday, February 18th, 6pm

Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Karlstraße 4

The Uncanny Charm of the Other.

Old diasporas – new diasporas: challenges of integration.

In an attempt to connect historical research with up-to-date questions facing contemporary European societies, we suggest exploring integration in the framework of a panel discussion that joins academics and opinion leaders. The debate will be centred around the following questions:

1. What do we mean by integration, what could be a neutral definition of integration in a historical perspective?  
Can we see "integration" as opposed to "parallelism"?
2. Which incentives drove individuals to interact with their foreign neighbours?
3. Is it generally inappropriate to treat "integration" as depending on an individual's willpower rather than on their social and cultural backgrounds? What role does the host society play?

The aim is to discuss the mechanisms of integration from a historical point of view and to apply the findings on contemporary societies.