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Introduction

Forgetting: A Multidisciplinary Exploration

> "We can never understand time, because time is made up of memory, and memory is made up largely of forgetfulness."
>
> Jorge Luis Borges

Forgetting is omnipresent – in our daily lives, in our brains, in all cultural and social formations, and perhaps also in the physical world, the universe. Think of geology: stones have a history, but part, indeed probably most, of that history is lost, forgotten. Physicists try to reconstruct the first nano-seconds of the universe; they are getting closer and closer to the Big Bang, but the very first instants are forgotten, and few physicists believe that we will ever be able to retrieve knowledge about them. No actual or possible culture remembers everything, or for that matter even documents everything; every cultural memory is selective, organized, and framed. The same can be said for the memory of an individual: it is inevitably riddled with gaps, lacunae, and pieces of the past either forgotten or never even stored and memorized.

Already, from these first sentences, we see that memory and forgetting belong together, even though forgetting is *not* just the absence or erasure of memory. Forgetting can be accidental, or intentional, or active (which is not the same as intentional). Thus forgetting follows its own logic and rules and its own mechanisms. This statement seems to be true in all the domains and registers we can study. The intimate relation of memory and forgetting needs

to be explored from many perspectives, and in each case, in each context or discipline, we need to extract and define what makes that particular forgetting unique. This volume constitutes a series of attempts to do just that.

Many questions arise when we start thinking about forgetting. We don't promise to answer any of them. Still, to give a taste: Does coding new memories imply forgetting others? Under what conditions is forgetting reversible? Are there cases where forgetting itself is a kind of memory? Can we learn from studying forgetting in, let us say, archaeology, something relevant to, say, child psychology? When we forget a story, do we also forget the values and ideas embodied by that story – or do they live on in our brains and bodies shaping our behavior? Do the mechanisms of forgetting in the brain translate into mechanisms by which culture deals with collective forgetting? Can we define these mechanisms? Note that we are not implying by the last two questions that there is a usable hierarchy of explanatory powers, whereby neuroscience could explain human societies, or physics could determine biology (even the two authors of this introduction might not agree about the full implications of this sentence). For example, Zsuzsana Török's essay, largely concerned with Paul Ricoeur's phenomenology of memory and forgetting, states the possible opposition starkly and lucidly:

"Against the objectified and mechanical notion of the body of the natural sciences, Ricoeur contrasts the lived, conscious, personalized, self-reflective body of philosophical scrutiny. Bringing these two diverging understandings under a common roof seems for the philospher to be a difficult, nearly impossible undertaking:

> …(W)e do not, at first glance, see any passage from one discourse to other: either I speak of neurons and so forth, and I confine myself to a certain language, or else I talk about thoughts, actions, feelings, and I tie them to my own body, with which I am in a relation of possession, of belonging. (…) The scientist may perhaps venture to say that the human being thinks with his or her brain. For the

> philosopher there is no parallel between the two sentences: 'I grasp with my hands,' 'I understand with my brain.' (Paul Ricoeur)"

How many of us would agree with Ricoeur's statement that the two assertions he cites are, in fact, not parallel? Török asks whether the apparent contradiction between a modern neuroscientific worldview and a more traditional humanistic vision can be reconciled. The answer to this question is far from clear, but the question itself shows that the two camps – or are there more than two? – might do well to speak to another.

Within neuroscience, our understandings of the mechanisms of forgetting are changing, as shown in the essay by Waldhauser and Hanslmayr:

"Many theories on forgetting in the last century focused on passive factors, e.g., the trace decay theory that assumes that we forget because memories just passively fade over time. Presumably this view was driven by the intuitive assumption that forgetting reflects a failure of our memory system and thus everything that produces it must be due to passive factors. However, in the last two decades this view has changed considerably. Several studies suggest that forgetting is indeed an essential part of a healthy memory system and is produced by active processes that enable us to selectively retrieve a desired target memory (e.g., among several other competing memories)."

Here Ricoeur's contrast between a "mechanistic" explanation of mental phenomena and a self-reflective, philosophical one suddenly seems rather artificial. There are moments in this volume, as there were in the workshops that preceded and generated it, when divides between disciplines suddenly become immaterial, even superfluous. There is a long way to go before we see signs of deeper integration, but we, the editors, feel there is hope.

Hope, alone, is not enough. Action is required. We need to organize venues where such a wide-ranging discourse is possible and

possibly fruitful. Such was our aim when the Zukunftskolleg at the University of Konstanz and the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem convened two workshops in June 2012 (in Konstanz) and October 2012 (in Jerusalem). We deliberately created a reflective modality of cross-disciplinary communication, where historians, psychologists, an archaeologist, neuroscientists, a practicing artist, a linguist, philosophers and intellectual and cultural historians all shared a basic set of themes and issues. Discussions were surprisingly vivid, open, and illuminating. Presentations from disciplines previously conceived as remote from one another turned out to be highly relevant for many of the participants. This volume is a collection of written versions of the presentations, with written comments appended by Fellows of the two organizing bodies, including some who were not present at the original workshops. We have attempted to convey and preserve something of the open atmosphere of the workshops in this volume, where the individual essays together with the (sometimes highly critical) comments create a dense web of intellectual interconnectivity. We were not striving toward definitive or final statements, or toward complete coverage of the relevant disciplines. Geology, for example, with which we began this introduction, is missing.

We briefly summarize this diverse menu with a few remarks on the individual essays.

Alexander Schellow takes a practical perspective – reporting from his "event" that he performed with the participants of the workshop. He recollects the components that are formed by memory and by forgetting in his own artistic work – a work particularly influenced by forgetting. Alexander draws images and short video clips from memory, by adding individual black dots to an initially white sheet of paper. In his presentation at the workshop he presented two videos, and his own monologue, with the aim of overloading the listener, creating an artistic mélange of forgotten and retained sensory inputs.

Sibylle Schmidt reports about forgetting in the thought of Montaigne, Nietzsche and Arendt – creating a connection between "forgetting" and "forgiving" in Hannah Arendt's thought. How does forgetting relate to forgiving? This question is important in thinking about an ethics of forgetting, a theme which appears in several of the chapters.

Gadi Sagiv looks at Jewish mysticism across several centuries. Among the mystic's insights is the observation that "a permanent delight is not a delight", and thus only he who forgets his mystic experiences can reexperience them. Thus, mysticisms can offer "a technque of forgetting imbued with social-mystical purpose." This scholarly travel across the centuries ends with an observation of Benjamin about Proust, another example where remembering and forgetting go hand in hand in order to be creative.

Nira Alperson-Afil analyzes prehistoric human settlements, and finds that a technique to make tools of basalt had been forgotten, despite the fact that basalt was still available, and all tool-making skills remained viable. She argues that the movement of human populations led to this loss and she offers new insights into the concepts of collective forgetting and collective memory.

Uriel Simonsohn reports about a work of history – the *Annales* – by the tenth century Byzantine Orthodox Patriarch Ibn Baṭrīq. This scholar was from the Arabic-speaking Byzantine orthodox community that was scattered throughout Syria, Palestine, and Egypt in the early Islamic period, but without loss of their Christian faith. Ibn Baṭrīq writes about history from Antiquity to his present time, and is quite selective, as the author shows with the treatment of the immediate aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon. Furthermore, the *Annales* are found in two extant versions: the Alexandrian recension being close to the original, while the Antiochian recension is dated 300–400 years later, and contains many additions. These *Annales*, the author argues, were used to create a common history, and therefore had a

strong political purpose. Creating such a common history is done by organizing a storyline for a common past, reinterpreting events, but in particular by being selective, i.e., relegating large portions of history into the category of *forgetting*. Thus, historiography is to a large extent the art of forgetting!

Kim Wünschmann looks at the early concentration camps, 1933–1934, within Nazi Germany, concentration camps that have almost been forgotten. The camp in Osthofen has only recently received a visitors' center, and its history has been studied. These camps were forgotten, even though at the time they were highly publicized and situated in the midst of society. Wünschmann mentions three factors for this forgetting: the direct wish to forget by the local members of the community who had brought about or witnessed persecution; the instrumentalization of these camps as political camps, leading to collective forgetting of the fact that non-political Jews was also internalized; and the trivialization of these camps, which appeared relatively harmless as compared to the later extermination camps like Auschwitz. By forgetting Osthofen, the author explains, we forget that Nazi terror started in the local communities and cannot be understood without this early start in the midst of German society.

Michal Pagis looks at forgetting in a psychological and meditative context. During meditation, past memories may resurface and create a sensation of liberation in the meditating subject; similar experiences are evoked in psychoanalysis. Interestingly, these memories are directly related to the body; experiences of bodily pain and/or shivering or other reactions are part of the remembering and then forgetting process – in a way, the author argues, the memories are erased from bodily memory, and the meditator is healed from a past trauma. Forgetting, in this context, is an active action.

Gerd Waldhauser and Simon Hanslmayr look at forgetting from a neurological point of view. They report psyschological experiments

that suggest that forgetting is an active process, induced by the brain to select some memories and suppress others. Thus, forgetting is for memory what selective attention is for perception: a filter. In particular, forgetting is useful to overcome interference (e.g., when retrieving several memories), and motivated forgetting is used to down-regulate memories voluntarily. Both systems use areas in the frontal cortex, among others.

Hiltrud Otto looks at forgetting in children. While children learn about their environment from birth on, autobiographical memories generally go back only to 3.5 years of age. How, and what autobiographical memories are formed is highly dependent on the way that mother and child interact; the author presents a conversation, as example, between a middle-class Berlin mother with her four-year-old child and another between a Cameroonian Nso mother and her child. The two conversations differ enormously in style, the first being more child-centered, the second more society-centered. Otto relates this to the social functions in the different societies and argues that memories, and forgetting, are social entities, related to the social functions they fulfill. But the different communication styles also create different levels of infantile amnesia: in different societies, the onset of autobiographical memory occurs at different ages, varying up to seventeen months.

Liat Hasenfratz looks at young children. There is a common theory of "structural deficit," whereby the fact that young children tend to be optimistic is due to a lack in their capacity to remember negative events; that is, negative outcomes do not lead to appropriate learning. Liat argues against this theory and shows that the "structural deficit" view is more likely the result of experimental settings that have removed all cues to context. However, already at a very young age, children solve problems in a context-dependent manner, and if the right context is introduced, it appears clear that children do remember negative outcomes. Thus, "forgetting" is not physiological in young children, but rather psychological. The common psychological goal,

across cultures, might be the creation of purposeful thinking, of which forgetting is no more than a tool.

These two papers – Liat Hasenfratz and Hiltrud Otto – share an introduction. They both look at "forgetting" in young children and conclude that the relevant parameter, when studying forgetting from a psychological point of view, is the context. Hiltrud looks at a horizontal framework – forgetting across cultures, at the same age – while Liat looks from a vertical point of view, that of forgetting in the child's development across ages, irrespective of culture. Both viewpoints reveal that a passive view of forgetting – as proposed by Ebbinghaus with his logarithmic decay curve for memory – does not account for context-dependent forgetting. Forgetting once more turns out to be a rather active process, with a purpose.

Laura Jockusch reports about documentation centers right after the war, where communities of surviving Jews tried to collect as many memories as possible from other survivors. Such centers were created in many places, to document and create a chronicle of what had happened, with the urge that every survivor had the duty to work against forgetting. Forgetting was seen in two aspects: the fading of the individual's memory, in part also as self-defense in order to live a new life, and the erosion of the society's memory, with the intent to make the past irrelevant. Interestingly, these documentation centers were themselves then largely forgotten, mostly because historians did not agree with the methodology and did not rely on an individual's recollection, often taken in a semi-public setting. It is only in the last two decades that this large body of immediate documentation has come to the attention of historians.

Martin Bruder analyzes the importance of forgetting in nostalgia. The functional significance of nostalgia is fourfold: protective, restorative, existential, and collective. Martin uses the ten-year return journey of Odysseus as an example of how forgetting is important for these four realms. The protective function aims at remembering home as a

protective place (bad feelings are forgotten). The restorative function helps in forgetting current loneliness, thus improving well-being. Existential aspects in nostalgia help in forgetting one's own mortality by selectively forgetting thoughts of death. And the collective aspect creates a retrospective utopia, with social bonding among groups who linger in nostalgia. All of these aspects create a more stable psychological state and thus help survival in an evolutionary sense.

Ynon Wygoda tells us about the "art of memory" according to Cicero, Socrates and Plato, including their arguments with Thermistocles and, importantly, Theaetetus. In particular, Themistocles would greatly appreciate an "art of forgetting," by which targeted forgetting would be possible – but no such art exists, unlike the art of memory, which can be practiced and learned with dedicated techniques. However, Socrates argues that forgetting is important. Socrates argues that because Theaetetus cannot free himself from what he has learned, he cannot think new things, and remains a follower. In order to create new thoughts, it is necessary to question the learned content itself (in a way, forget it), rather then question one's own memory.

Michael Ebstein looks at religious practice, which is strongly dependent on memory, in particular in Judaism and Islam. Ibn al-Arabi (twelfth-thirteenth centuries), however, has an original take on memory. In particular, human forgetting and human errors are necessary for the unfolding and materialization of the Divine plan, because without it, God's plan for the universe would not become realized. Perfect memory would make humans equal to God, so forgetting ensures that one is assuming one's role as a human being.

Dimitri Ginev writes a philosophical chapter. The main argument is that human beings always create a personal narrative of their life (their "having been"), and part of this plotting/temporalizing is, naturally, selective forgetting. In a way, memory (in the sense of plotting one's own past) is only possible because of forgetting. Ginev

takes this observation further to the social situation, observing that sociality elaborates its own techniques for forgetting.

Ariel Gutman looks at forgetting in languages. Languages evolve, change, and die – thus forgetting is a part of language development. Ariel expands on three topics. Language change, e.g., change in sounds, needs forgetting, and in some cases the omission of a particular sound in a word is the prerequisite to new developments. Language death occurs when all native speakers die, a situation that has occurred often in history, though the current pace of language death is unprecedented. Some "dead" languages live on in rituals, e.g., Latin or Syriac. The third case is that of language archives – archives that are generally set up only once a language is highly endangered (and not all dying languages receive an archive). Here modern Hebrew is a special case, because a dead language has been resuscitated, but in the process it has also been altered considerably.

Zsuzsanna Török, as noted above, reports on the thoughts of Paul Ricoeur about memory, history and forgetting, and on his dialogue with the neuroscientist Jean-Pierre Changeux. While on the one hand forgetting is essential for memory (the example of "Funes el Memorioso" by Jorge Luis Borges is illuminating), the nature of forgetting is unclear, even if we ask the neurosciences for help. Indeed, Ricoeur argues that the neurosciences can help to understand how forgetting (or memory) work, but will not affect our self-understanding. Furthermore, forgetting has a social counterpart: forgiving, which in Ricoeur's eyes is transcendental.

Agata Nörenberg looks at the intrumentalization of the Warsaw Rising in 1944, both by the Soviets and Communists during and after the Rising, and by the Polish government in exile in London. Here, non-forgetting is crucial, but at the same time the process of instrumentalization necessitates selective forgetting. Thus a partial or selective memory is part of how past events are used to justify political positions.

Aleida Assmann offers a seven-fold typology of forgetting, seen primarily in its social, political, and cultural applications. She, too, refers to the dream of an "art of forgetting," and she poses questions about the specific qualities and the values of forgetting. She reminds us – if we have forgotten – that "not remembering but forgetting is the default mode of humans and societies." She also differentiates between what one might call the positive, indeed necessary roles of forgetting and "bad forgetting," with its habitual moral and political charge. There are some things that human beings should not be allowed to forget.

We hope that this collection ignites your fantasy. Probably you will forget, sooner or later, the contents of the various essays, thus making space for new thoughts. But we are confident that these will be shaped by some of the traces left over.

On the contributors

Nira Alperson-Afil is currently a senior lecturer, teaching prehistoric archaeology at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. She studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where she completed a BA in Archaeology and Ancient Near East studies followed by an MA in Prehistoric Archaeology. Her PhD thesis was nominated Summa Cum Laude and focused on the issue of early fire use. The use of fire is but one of her research interests, all of which aim at insight into the technological and cultural world of our ancient ancestors**.**

Aleida Assmann has held the chair of English Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Konstanz since 1993. She taught as a guest professor at various universities (Princeton, Yale, Chicago and Vienna). In 2008 she received an Honorary Degree from the University of Oslo. The Max Planck Research Award (2009) allowed her to establish a research group on memory and history (2009-2015). Her main areas of research are historical anthropology, history of media, history and theory of reading and writing, cultural memory, with special emphasis on Holocaust and trauma.

Julia Boll holds a doctorate from the University of Edinburgh UK, where she wrote her thesis on the representation of war and conflict on the contemporary stage. She was director of the Scottish Universities' International Summer School, a teaching assistant at the University of Edinburgh and also worked for the "Edinburgh Review." Since March 2013, she has been a ZIF Marie Curie Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg, where her research focuses on the figure of the

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Daniele Brida received his PhD in Physics at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy, in 2010. Until August 2011 he was a visiting researcher in the group of Prof. Leitenstorfer at the University of Konstanz before becoming group leader and Zukunftskolleg Research Fellow in September 2012. His main scientific interests are the generation of broadband optical pulses ranging from UV to the THz spectral region, their temporal compression down to few optical cycles with adaptive techniques and the passive stabilization of the carrier envelope phase.

Martin Bruder earned a PhD in Social Psychology from Cambridge University, UK, in 2007. Besides his interest in the social functions of nostalgia, he has worked on topics in the areas of personality and social psychology, moral psychology, and economic psychology. He was a Research Fellow of the Zukunftskolleg and member of the Department of Psychology at the University of Konstanz from 2010 to 2012. He now heads the section "Evaluation and Statistics" of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bonn.

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Aramaic, an endangered language spoken in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. In 2004 she passed her PhD on "The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Alqosh" at the University of Cambridge, UK. She also works in the field of historical linguistics, looking at both short- and long-term grammatical changes in the language. Since 2010 she has been a Research Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg/Department of Linguistics at the University of Konstanz, where she leads a project funded by the DFG on how the grammar of Neo-Aramaic dialects has been affected by contact with neighboring languages, namely Kurdish, Arabic, Persian and Turkish.

María Cruz Berrocal passed her PhD in history in 2004 at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. Since September 2013 she has been a ZIF Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg. She is interested in the study of the historical emergence of complex societies and inequality, both in the Western Mediterranean and the Pacific, with a special focus on historical archaeology and the understanding of the impact of colonial processes on local populations in the Pacific, especially in Taiwan. Here she has been carrying out a project since 2011 to study the former Spanish colony founded in Hoping Dao, northern Taiwan, during the 17th century.

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Michael Ebstein is currently a Martin Buber fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He received his PhD in 2012; his dissertation was published as a book in 2014, entitled: *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus. Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabi and the Ismaʿili Tradition*

(Brill). He is mainly interested in medieval Islamic mysticism, the relations between Sunni mysticism and the Shiʿi tradition, and mystical thought in medieval al-Andalus.

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Helen M. Gunter holds a PhD in Zoology since 2007 and worked as postdoctoral research associate at the University of Queensland, Australia, before becoming a Research Fellow of the Zukuntskolleg in 2008. Since 2013 she has further worked as a teaching deputy at the University of Konstanz. Her research interests are evolutionary developmental biology and phenotypic plasticity – its genomic bases and impact on ecology and evolution – as well as transgenerational epigenetic inheritance. In 2013 she received the Young Scholars Fund of the University of Konstanz for her project "Examining the role of phenotypic plasticity in rapidly evolving lineages of Lake Victorian cichlid fish."

Ariel Gutman is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Konstanz, researching Neo-Aramaic dialects. He completed a master in Linguistics (awarded by the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, France) and a master in Computer Science (awarded by the École Normale Supérieure). In between he studied some Indonesian in the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, France, and went to West Papua to conduct linguistic fieldwork. At the same time he wrote his first book (together with Prof. Wido van Peursen) entitled "The Two Syriac Versions of the Prayer of Manasseh."

In 2005 **Simon Hanslmayr** received his PhD in Psychology at Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria. From 2010 until 2013 he was a Research Fellow at the Zukunftskolleg as well as Junior Research Group Leader at the Department of Clinical and Neuropsychology at the University of Konstanz (funded by an Emmy Noether Grant from the DFG). Since autumn of 2013 he has held a position as Senior Lecturer at the School of Psychology at the University of Birmingham, UK. Simon Hanslmayr's research is focused on the role of neural underpinnings of memory and attention.

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Laura Jockusch is a historian of modern European Jewish history, specializing in the Holocaust and post-World War II periods. She received her PhD in 2007 from New York University. She is the author of *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) which won the 2012 National Jewish Book Award and the 2013 Sybil Halpern Milton Book Prize. Her current research explores Jewish conceptions of retributive justice in postwar Germany.

Jeff Kochan received his PhD in History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Cambridge, UK, in 2005. He was a Research Fellow of the Zukunftskolleg until 2012 and afterwards a Visiting Assistant Professor in Epistemology and Theory of Science at the University of Freiburg. He has been engaging in spirited debate with Dimitri Ginev since 2011 and publishes on a wide range of topics in the interdisciplinary field of Science and Technology Studies.

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Hiltrud Otto is a postdoctoral fellow of the Martin Buber Society of the Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. She is scholar specializing in early socio-emotional development, as well as culture and attachment. She received her PhD in 2009 from the University of Osnabrueck, Germany. for her research on the development of attachment relationships among Cameroonian Nso children and their caregivers. Hiltrud Otto is a junior investigator in the research project: Development of Relationships during Infancy: Risk and Protective Factors in Minority and Majority Families in Germany and Israel (supported by the State of Lower-Saxony, Hannover, Germany) and co-director of NEVET: A Greenhouse of Context-Informed Research and Training for Children in Need at the Hebrew University.

Michal Pagis is assistant professor at the department of sociology and anthropology, Bar Ilan University, Israel. She received her PhD (2008) in sociology from the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on processes of self-transformation, using ethnographic methods to shed light on the complex connections between social

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Tanja Rinker received her PhD from the University of Freiburg, Gemany, in 2007, with a dissertation on children with language impairment. Since 2009 she has been the leader of the research group "Multilingualism and Specific Language Impairment" at the University of Konstanz. She currently investigates neuronal bases of multilingualism and language impairment in children in order to understand what happens when children are both multilingual *and* have language impairment. Since 2014, she has been the director of the newly founded Center for Multilingualism at the University of Konstanz that disseminates scientific results to the broader public and connects researchers from different disciplines working on multilingualism.

Between 2010 and 2012 **Alexander Schellow** was Senior Fellow/ Artist in Residence at the Zukunftskolleg. He deals closely with relations of space, perception and action at the junction between an artistic and scientific research. His work revolves around a possible documentation on orientation, in other words, on the way attention is scattered into given spaces. Since 2007, Alexander Schellow has been regularly teaching at universities in Paris, London, Zurich and Brussels, where he has held a professorship (Cinema d'animation, erg – école de recherché graphique/école supérieure des arts) since 2013.

Gadi Sagiv'**s** research fields are Jewish Studies, especially Kabbalah, Hasidism, and Modern Jewish History. He completed his doctoral dissertation at Tel Aviv University (2010). Between 2011-2014 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2014 he joined the faculty of the Open University of Israel.

Sibylle Schmidt is a post-doc research assistant at Freie Universität Berlin. She was a doctoral fellow at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in 2012 and received her PhD in philosophy from Freie Universität Berlin in 2013. Her research topics are the epistemology and ethics of testimony/bearing witness and social dimensions of knowledge. At the moment she is exploring the interplay of doubt and trust in early modern epistemology.

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Ilja A. Seržant received his MA from the University of Cologne in Historical-Comparative Linguistics and Ancient Greek in 2005. He defended his doctoral thesis in Historical-Comparative Indo-European Linguistics with the topic "Causatives in Tocharian" in 2011. In the next year he defended another PhD thesis within General Linguistics with the title "Non-prototypical subjects. Diachrony and Areality." Currently he holds a ZIF Marie Curie postdoctoral position at the Zukunftskolleg.

Uriel Simonsohn earned his PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University in 2008 and is currently a lecturer in the Department for Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa. His publications focus on the history of Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Near East and Mediterranean Basin from Late Antiquity to the High Middle Ages. Among those, his recent book, *A Common Justice: The Legal Allegiances of Christians and Jews under Early Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), deals with the social history of the Jewish

Rabbanite and Eastern Christian communities in the early Islamic period.

Margarita Stolarova holds a PhD in Psychology since 2007 and has a background in neuroscience, developmental psychology and early childhood education. Currently she is a research group leader at the Zukunftskolleg and a visiting professor in Early Childhood Education at the Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Her research focuses on early childhood development and education in different contexts, which include non-parental daycare settings and orphanages. She is actively promoting methodological understanding in interdisciplinary research concerning children, in order to help improve applicability of empirical results to educational and therapeutic settings.

Since 2006 **Attila Tanyi** holds a PhD in philosophy with additional training in economics and political science. At present he works as a lecturer in ethics and applied ethics in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool, UK. He specializes in moral and political philosophy, but his work stretches over disciplinary boundaries. Thus he works with philosophers with specializations very different from his as well as with non-philosophers with interest in philosophical problems. Until the end of 2014 he also served as project leader of the DFG funded research group "Consequentialism and Its Demands."

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