

Scholarship and Intellectuality among the Lithuanian Jews.  
18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**An international scholarly conference dedicated to the 300<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of  
the Vilna Gaon**

Vilnius, April 21-22 2020

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

**Conference partners**

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and its Judaica Research Center (Vilnius)

Department of History, Vilnius University

Lithuanian Institute of History

Leibniz-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur - Simon Dubnow (Leipzig)

German Historical Institute Warsaw

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York)

**Conference Committee**

Jolanta Budriūnienė, Head of Department of Documentary Heritage at Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Prof. Jurgita Verbickienė, Vilnius University

Dr. Darius Staliūnas, Lithuanian Institute of History

Prof. Mordechai Zalkin, Ben-Gurion University of Negev

Prof. Marcin Wodzinski, Head of Taube Department for Jewish Studies, University of Wrocław

Dr. Marcos Silber, University of Haifa

Prof. Ruth Leiserowitz, Deputy Director of the German Historical Institute Warsaw

Dr. Lara Lempertienė, Head of Judaica Research Center at Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Committee Secretary: Julijana Leganovič, Judaica Research Center at Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The year 2020 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, the Vilna Gaon, who was a major and lasting influence on the Jews of Lithuania and brought Lithuanian Jewry to the fore of Jewish religious and intellectual development of Europe. This year will be commemorated in Lithuania as the Year of Vilna Gaon and Jewish History.

The conference will discuss the multiple, changing and contending meanings and effects of the Vilna Gaon on Jewish religious and intellectual life in his time, and how this meaning was constructed, reshaped, and engaged with during the subsequent two centuries. The organizers invite participants to address also the politicization of Gaon's cultural heritage, its appropriations in different political, cultural and economic projects and further in the process of constructing a Litvak identity. In addition, the Gaon may be regarded as an iconic or referential image, discussing his role in formative movements and phenomena in Lithuania in its historical borders from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because the patrimonial Gaon's legacy, in terms of temporal, cultural and geographical extensions, goes well beyond Lithuania in its historical borders, transcultural and transnational scope will be considered as well.

**We invite proposals for lectures and complete panels of new research on (but not limited to) the following topics:**

- Intellectuality and scholarship as the Jewish community's social ideal formed by the Vilna Gaon and his circle;
- Creating Mitnagdic identity and consciousness in opposition to Hasidism;
- The Gaon and the construction of Litvak identity;
- Interaction of religious and nascent secular culture within the Prussian and Lithuanian Haskalah;
- Impact of religious literature on secular culture and intellectuality of Lithuanian Jewry in the 20 century;
- Strategies of Lithuanian-Jewish publishers in catering to changing cultural needs of readers and influencing reading culture;
- Lithuanian-Jewish heritage and modern Lithuanian society's politics of memory in European and worldwide context.

Please send a brief summary of proposed presentation (300 words maximum) and a short CV (200 words maximum) until November 15, 2019 to the Secretary of the Committee: [julijana.leganovic@lnb.lt](mailto:julijana.leganovic@lnb.lt)

The Committee will announce its decisions by January 5, 2020.