

**A SYMPOSIUM HOSTED BY B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO**



**L'hébreu, un trésor du
patrimoine humain:
Passé, présent et futur**

**העברית כאוצר
מורשת האנושות:
עבר, הווה ועתיד**

**Hebrew as a Treasure
of Human Heritage:
Past, Present and Future**

15 November 2022

UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (Room IV)

CONCEPT NOTE

In partnership with



Background

The Hebrew language has an exceptional history that engages representatives of governments, academia, civil society, international organizations and other public and private sector actors. The Hebrew language is central to the Jewish people, its history and culture. The language evolved from an endangered language, long reserved largely for religious scripture and liturgy, to a revitalized more secular language. The language continues to change and shows commonalities and interfaces with other languages, such as Arabic.

The Hebrew language was considered largely extinct as a spoken language for much of 2,000 years. It was then revitalized in the 20th century as a living language and is now the official language of the State of Israel, used by some 10 million people. Within the Jewish community, the language has been known as *leshon-haqodesh*, or the “sacred tongue.”

The vitality of the Hebrew language has been impacted by a variety of factors, including widespread migration, globalization and associated technological developments, and other socio-cultural and historical transformations.

Presenting the history of the Hebrew language

Through a partnership between B’nai B’rith International and UNESCO, the Symposium to be organized on 15 November 2022, will analyze three aspects of the history of the Hebrew language:

- The philology of the Hebrew language.
- The survival of the Hebrew language during two millennia of Jewish diasporic existence and its role in today’s Jewish community, and its influence on Jewish exilic languages such as Yiddish in Central and Eastern Europe, Judeo-Spanish in the Mediterranean region, and Judeo-Arabic.
- The process of the revival of the Hebrew language as a modern spoken language, led by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda.

Establishing linkages with international cooperation frameworks and normative instruments for knowledge sharing, capacity building and partnerships

The Symposium will contribute to the ongoing global discussions on the importance of languages for the creation of peaceful, open, inclusive, and resilient societies. UNESCO is fully committed to promoting multilingualism and works to raise awareness on the importance of linguistic diversity for inclusive sustainable development. The Symposium will provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of normative instruments and recommendations such as the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003) to assure resilient societies. It will also draw lessons from the case of the Hebrew language and its

revitalization so as to inform the implementation of the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL2022-2032)¹. Capacity building and partnership initiatives aimed at revitalizing the Hebrew language can be adapted and duplicated for the protection, revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages around the world.

Speakers

Speakers will include representatives of specialized institutions such as the Academy of the Hebrew Language, as well as experts from leading universities in Israel, Europe, North America and North Africa. The experts will also include Indigenous experts, civil society, academia and other public partners.

Hebrew cultural interludes will be featured between sessions.

About B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

B'nai B'rith International, a 179-year-old Jewish communal, humanitarian and social action organization, is a non-governmental organization in official partnership with UNESCO, with associate status.

The Symposium is a follow-up to prior B'nai B'rith conferences at UNESCO on Yiddish in 2012 and on Judeo-Spanish in 2014. The forthcoming symposium will also mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Ben-Yehuda, the lexicographer and newspaper editor who led the rebirth of the Hebrew language as the primary spoken and written national language of Israel.

Practical information

All participants are requested to register online using the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/HqwHZBugxZ>. Due to the limited availability of seats, restrictions imposed by the sanitary situation and security, prior registration for participation in-person is required by **7 November 2022**.

Registered participants will be able to access the Symposium venue from **9.00 a.m. on 15 November 2022**.

All participants are requested to enter UNESCO Headquarters using the Ségur entrance (**125 Avenue de Suffren, 75007 Paris**). Metro stations: line no. 10 "Ségur" and line no. 6 "Cambronne". Participants with disabilities are advised to use the UNESCO Fontenoy entrance (7 Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris).

¹ Ref.: Resolution A/RES/74/135/



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PROGRAMME

15 November 2022
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:30	On-site arrival UNESCO, 125 Avenue de Suffren, 75007 Paris (Room IV)
09:30 – 10:00	Welcome remarks and keynote addresses
	Master of ceremony: Mr. David Michaels , Director of UN and Intercommunal Affairs, B'nai B'rith International (USA)
	Welcome remarks by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B'nai B'rith International: Mr. Daniel S. Mariaschin, CEO (USA) • Representative of UNESCO Opening keynote address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Moshe Bar-Asher, Fourth President, Academy of the Hebrew Language (Israel) <i>"Modern Hebrew and its Heritage from Generations Past"</i> Musical interlude: Dahlia Dumont (song and accordion)

10:00 – 11:15	Session I: Philology of Hebrew
	Moderator: Prof. Cyril Aslanov , Academy of the Hebrew Language, Versailles/Aix-Marseille Université / Institut Universitaire de France (France)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Mohamed Elmedlaoui, IURS / Mohammed V University, Rabat (Morocco) <i>“Multilingualism, Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic in the Maghreb: the Potting Soil of the First School of Systematic Comparative Linguistics (9th – 11th Centuries)”</i> • Prof. Stefan Schorch, Professor of Biblical Studies, Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg (Germany) <i>“Shared Heritage and Linguistic Divergence: The Samaritan Dialect of Hebrew as Identity Marker”</i> • Prof. Paola Mollo, Lecturer, Pontificio Istituto Biblico (Italy) <i>“‘And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech’: Assimilation, Diversity and Language Consciousness in the Hebrew Bible”</i> • Prof. Fritz Werner, Professor (Emeritus) of Hebrew, University of Vienna (Austria) <i>“A New Approach to Arranging a Grammar of Israeli Hebrew”</i>
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:45	Session II: The use of Hebrew in the Jewish exile
	Moderator: Prof. Francine Cicurel , Professor Emerita of Sciences of the Languages, University Sorbonne Nouvelle (France)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Aharon Maman, Bialik Chair for Hebrew Language, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; President, Academy of the Hebrew Language (Israel) <i>“Three Channels Through Which Hebrew was Transmitted Along the 2nd-19th Centuries”</i> • Prof. José Martínez Delgado, Professor of Hebrew Language, Department of Semitic Studies, University of Granada (Spain) <i>“The Revitalization of the Hebrew Language in Al-Andalus”</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Joseph Tedghi, Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature, National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations – INALCO, Paris (France) <i>“The Evolution of the Hebrew Language in the Diaspora: Written and Oral”</i> • Prof. Lewis Glinert, Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire (USA) <i>“Was Talking Hebrew a Diaspora Routine? An Anthropological Angle”</i>
12:45 – 14:15	Lunch break
14:15 – 14:30	Musical interlude: Dahlia Dumont (song and accordion)
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Session III: The reemergence of the Hebrew language as a lingua franca</p> <p>Moderator: Prof. Paola Mollo, Lecturer, Pontificio Istituto Biblico Roma (Italy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Cyril Aslanov, Academy of the Hebrew Language, Versailles/Aix-Marseille Université/Institut Universitaire de France (France) <i>“From Yiddish to Hebrew at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century”</i> • Prof. Ida Zatelli, Professor (Emerita) of Hebrew Language and Literature, University of Florence (Italy) <i>“The Importance of the Bible for the Rebirth of Hebrew as a Native Lingua Franca”</i> • Prof. Pablo-Isaac Kirtchuk-Halevi, Académie de Versailles (France) <i>“Decisive Factors in the Success of the Struggle for the Revival of Hebrew: Retrospective and Prospective”</i> • Dr. Avshalom Kor, Galei Tzahal radio (Israel) <i>“Ambiguity in Ancient and Modern Hebrew”</i>

15:30 – 16:00	Session IV: Lessons learnt from the revival of Hebrew; partnering with international cooperation mechanisms and normative frameworks
	Moderator: Dr. Marielza Oliveira , Director for Partnerships and Operational Programme Monitoring, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
	Panel I: Partnership and cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Marielza Oliveira, Director for Partnerships and Operational Programme Monitoring, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO “2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace” • Dr. Valts Ernštreits, Director, University of Latvia, Livonian Institute (Latvia) and Co-chair of the Global Task Force for Making A Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages “International Decade of Indigenous Language 2022-2032” • Prof. Moshe Koppel, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, Bar-Ilan University; founder and director of DICTA: The Israel Center for Text Analysis (Israel), <i>via video</i>
16:00 – 16:15	Break
16:15 – 17:30	Session IV: Lessons learnt from the revival of Hebrew; partnering with international cooperation mechanisms and normative frameworks
	Moderator: Mr. Alan Schneider, Esq. , Director, B’nai B’rith World Center – Jerusalem (Israel)
	Panel II: Lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Jeremy Benstein, Author of <i>Hebrew Roots, Jewish Routes: A Tribal Language in a Global World (Israel)</i> “Is Modern Hebrew Unique? What Can and Can’t be Learned from the Revival of Hebrew” • Ms. Gail Hareven, Author (Israel) “Imagining Hebrew, Imagining in Hebrew”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Ali Watad, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Beit Berl College, Kfar Sava (Israel) <i>“On the Hebrew Elements of the Arabic of the Arabs in Israel”</i> • Prof. José Ramón Magdalena Nom de Déu, Professor (Emeritus), Faculty of Philology, Department of Semitic Philology (Hebrew-Aramaic), University of Barcelona (Spain) <i>“The Revival of Modern Hebrew in Eretz Yisrael and the Possible Influence on the Standardization of the Basque and Catalan Languages in Spain”</i>
17:30 – 18:00	Closing session
	Closing keynote address
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Geoffrey Khan, Professor of Hebrew, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge (UK) <i>“The Transmission of Biblical Hebrew as a Living Tradition from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages”</i>
	Conclusion of the symposium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Stéphane Teicher, Permanent Representative of B'nai B'rith International to UNESCO

Cover page design

Image credit: Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins and Collectibles of Los Angeles
Ancient Judean coin (circa 130 CE)