

GIL BEN-HERUT

Curriculum Vitae

University of South Florida
Department of Religious Studies
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EDUCATION

- 2013 Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University
Dissertation: "Narrating Devotion: Representation and Prescriptions of the Early Kannada Śivabhakti Tradition according to Harihara's *Śivaśaraṇara Ragaleḡaḡu*."
Chair: Laurie Patton. Readers: Velcheru Narayana Rao, Sara L. McClintock, R. V. S. Sundaram
- 2007 Master of Arts (*summa cum laude*), Religious Studies Program of the School of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, Israel
Thesis: "The Descent of Goddess Gaṅgā: A Translation of a *Mahākāvya* Poem from Sanskrit into Hebrew and Research on the Political, Historical, and Religious Background of This Work." Advisor: Yohanan Grinshpon
- 2004 Bachelor of Arts (*summa cum laude*), East and South Asian Studies, Tel Aviv University, Israel

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2013-Present Assistant Professor of South Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

South-Asian devotional traditions, pre-modern religious literature in the Kannada language, Hindu narrative traditions, Sanskrit poetics and courtly literature.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Under review* *The Inclusive Edge: Devotion, Diversity, and Accommodation in Thirteenth-Century Kannada*

Edited Volumes

In preparation *Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers in South Asia's Regional Communities of Devotion*, co-edited with Jon Keune and Anne Monius.

Refereed Journal Articles

- 2016 "Things Standing Shall Move: Temple Worship in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies." *International Journal of Hindu Studies* vol. 20 (2): 129-58.
- 2015 "Figuring the South-Indian Śivabhakti Movement: The Broad Narrative Gaze of Early Kannada Hagiographic Literature." *Journal of Hindu Studies* vol. 8 (3): 274-95.
- 2012 "Literary Genres and Textual Representations of Early Vīraśaiva History: Revisiting Ekānta Rāmayya's Self-Beheading." *International Journal of Hindu Studies* vol. 16 (2): 129-87.
- 2009 "Sharing Language: On the Problem of Meaning in Classic Buddhist and Brahmanical Traditions." *Religions of South Asia* 3 (1):125-146.

Book Chapters

- In preparation* "Religious Equality, Social Conservatism: The Shivabhakti Community as Imagined in Early Kannada Hagiographies," in *The Power of Bhakti: Social Location and Public Affect in India's Religion of the Heart*, eds. John Stratton Hawley, Christian Lee Novetzke, and Swapna Sharma.
- In preparation* "Arguing with Vaiṣṇavas, Annihilating Jains: Two Religious Others in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies," in *Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers in South Asia's Regional Communities of Devotion*, eds. Gil Ben-Herut, Jon Keune, and Anne Monius.
- 2011 "Nāyaka Elaborations of Personhood: A Reading of *The Descent of Gaṅgā* by Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita," in *World without Borders: Being Tamil, Being Human (3rd Tamil Studies Conference, University of Toronto)*, ed. R. Cheran. Toronto: TSAR Publications, 72-85.

Translations

- In preparation* Hampeya Harihara. *Selected Saints' Stories from the Śivaśaraṇara Ragaḷeḷaḷu*. Co-Translated with R. V. S. Sundaram.
- 2015 Anonymous. *Udayādityālaṅkāraṃ: A Compendium on Poetry Dedicated to King Udayāditya. Transliteration, English Translation and Notes*. Co-Translated with R. V. S. Sundaram. Mysuru: Central Institute of Indian Languages.

Encyclopedia Entries and Bibliographies

In preparation “Hinduism in Karnataka,” a bibliography resource in *Oxford Bibliographies in Hinduism*, ed. Tracy Coleman.

In preparation “‘I Will Sing as I Love!’: The Devotional Poetry of Basavaṇṇa,” an encyclopedia entry in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Literature*, eds. Ken Seignourie et al.

Other Publications

2013 Online Dissertation Review: “Eknāth Remembered and Reformed: Bhakti, Brahmins, and Untouchables in Marathi Historiography,” by Jon Milton Keune. February 20. Available from <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/7690>.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2016 CAS Internal Awards, College of the Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. February.

2014 CAS Internal Awards, College of the Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. April.

2013 The John Fenton Prize in the Comparative Study of Religion, Emory University. April.

2012 Honorary Mention in the Robert Detweiler Essay Prize Competition in Literature and Religion, Emory University. May.

2004 South Asian Studies Grant to Outstanding Graduate Assistants, Tel Aviv University. December.

2003 The Kruvi Foundation Grant to Outstanding Students. March.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2016 Creative Scholarship Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. April.

2016 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. February.

2014 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. March.

- 2014 Humanities Institute Summer Grant, University of South Florida. March.
- 2014 New Researcher Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. February.
- 2013 Humanities Institute International Research Grant, University of South Florida, December.
- 2012 The Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry (FCHI) Graduate Dissertation Completion Fellowship 2012-13, Emory University. April.
- 2010 American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) One Year Tuition Fellowship. April.
- 2007 The Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Emory University. March.

INVITED LECTURES

- 2017 “Saints as Arguments: Society and Religion in Early Hagiographies from the Kannada-Speaking Region.” Department of Religious Studies, Yale University. February 16.
- 2017 “Religiously Egalitarian, Socially Conservative: Rethinking the Social Ideals of Early Kannada Śivabhakti.” Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia. February 2.
- 2014 “A Literary Revolution: Kannada Literary History and Harihara’s *Ragaḷegaḷu*.” The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), Mysore, Karnataka, India. July 14.
- 2014 “Things Standing Shall Move: A Look at the Vīraśaiva Tradition of South India.” The Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra), University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. April 3.
- 2014 “Attaining the Void and Winning over Tāntrikas: Vīraśaiva Hagiographies and Mystical Experience.” The Religious Studies Department, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida. March 20.
- 2013 “Imagined Courtly Interactions, Historical Political Negotiations.” The South and East Asian Departmental Colloquium, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. June 4.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Workshops and Panels Organized

- 2016 Co-organizer of “Beyond Familiar Boundaries: Collaborative Studies of Bhakti across Limits of Language and Region.” A preconference workshop at the 45th

Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 20.

- 2015 Co-organizer of “Regional Bhakti Traditions: Who’s In, Who’s Out?” A preconference workshop at the 44th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 22.
- 2014 Co-organizer of “On the Idea of the Bhakti Movement: Responding to Jack Hawley's *A Storm of Songs*.” A preconference workshop at the 43rd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 16.
- 2014 Co-organizer of “Bhakti between the Elite and the Popular: Religion, Poetics, and Audience in the South-Asian Vernaculars.” A two-day workshop sponsored by the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 19-20.

Papers Presented

- 2017 “Religious Egalitarianism, Social Conservatism: Rethinking Early Kannada Śivabhakti with Harihara’s *Śivaśaraṇara Raḡaḷeḡaḷu*.” CHiTra Mela, Research and Pedagogy in South Asia and Global Hindu Traditions: A Symposium for Faculty and Graduate Students in Florida, Gainesville, Florida. January 21.
- 2016 “‘Don’t Marry a Jain, Convert Him’: Complicating the Śaiva Vilification of Jains in the Kannada-Speaking Regions.” The 2016 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas. November 20.
- 2016 “South to Mt. Meru: A Comparative View of the Early Tamil and Kannada Śaiva Literatures.” Co-presented with Anne Monius (Harvard University). The 45th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 20.
- 2016 “Implicit Borrowings: Buddhists and Brahminical Cross-Fertilizations in the Classical Philosophical Discourse about Language and Meaning.” Conference title: “Truth and Meaning in Buddhism.” Sponsored by the Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, September 12.
- 2016 “From Marginal to Canonical: A Premodern Translation of Saints’ Lives from Telugu to Kannada in the Śivabhakti Tradition.” The 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies, the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS), Warsaw, Poland. July 29.
- 2016 “Śiva Assemblies as Sites of Worship in Early Kannada Śivabhakti.” 13th Biennial Conference of Asian Studies in Israel, Tel-Hai College, Israel. May 19.

- 2016 “After the Vacanas, Before the Siddhānta: The Open and Inclusive Vision of Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies.” Conference title: “Exploring Bhakti.” Sponsored by the South Asian Studies Council, Yale University. May 15.
- 2015 “The King's Embellishments and the Embellishment of the King: Patronage and Poetics in the Kannada *Udayādityālaṅkāram*” Conference title: “A Lasting Vision: Daṇḍin's *Mirror* in the World of Asian Letters.” Sponsored by the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. December 15.
- 2015 “Arguing with Vaiṣṇavas, Annihilating Jains: Two Religious Others in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies.” The 44th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 22.
- 2015 “‘Siva, You Are the Ruler of Hampi’: Patronage and Early Kannada Śivabhakti Literature.” The 2015 Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois. March 28.
- 2014 “Translating a Metaphor: Vernacularization at the Verse Level in the Kannada Poetic Treatise the *Kavirājamārgam*.” The 2014 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. November 24.
- 2014 “The Genealogy of Terminology and its Implication on the Early Kannada Śivabhakti Tradition.” The 43rd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 16.
- 2014 “Sacred Spaces in Early Vīraśaiva Literature.” International Conference on Sacred Geographies, Religious Cultures, and Popular Practices in History and Imagination, Government Arts College, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India. June 28.
- 2014 “Complicating Equality: Resistance to Brahminical Ideology of Exclusion and Negotiation of Social Difference in Early Vīraśaiva Literature.” The 12th Biennial Conference of Asian Studies, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel. May 26.
- 2014 “Poetics, Audience, and Developments in the History of Early Kannada Śivabhakti Literature.” Conference title: “Bhakti between the Elite and the Popular: Religion, Poetics, and Audience in the South-Asian Vernaculars.” Sponsored by the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 20.
- 2013 “Remembering the Ancient Ones and the Recent Ones: Situating Early Vīraśaivism in Its Broader South Indian Context.” The 2013 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland. November 26.
- 2012 “Royal Patronage and Book Accounting: Kannada Hagiographies about Vīraśaivas at the King's Court.” The 41st Annual Conference on South Asia,

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 14.

- 2012 “Sectarianism in the Domestic Sphere: Thirteenth-Century Kannada Stories about Marriages between Śaivas and Jains.” Conference title: “Monastery Mosque & Temple: Jains, Muslims, and Hindus in the Medieval Deccan (C. 700-1700).” Sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. April 28.
- 2012 “Pottery as Devotion: A Kannada Tale about a Bhakta who Made Śiva Burst into Dance.” The 2012 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Southeastern (SECSOR) Regional Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia. March 3.
- 2011 “*Rūpaka* Superimposed: A Comparative Look at *Rūpakālaṅkāra* in the *Kāvyaḍarśa* and the *Kavirājamārgam*.” Conference title: “Manuscripts on Poetics in Southern Peninsula.” Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, Hyderabad, India. March 19.
- 2009 “Textual Genres and Historical Representations in the Early Vīraśaiva Materials” in the panel “New Directions in the Study of Religion in South Asia.” The 2009 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Montréal, QB, Canada. November 8.
- 2009 “Reconstructions of Religious Identities in the Vīraśaiva Movement.” The 2009 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Southeastern (SECSOR) Regional Meeting, Greensboro, North Carolina. March 14.
- 2008 “Divine and Human: Nāyaka Elaborations of Personhood.” The 2008 Tamil Studies Conference, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. May 17.
- 2007 “Man, God, and Goddess in Late Sanskrit Literature.” The Annual Conference for Asian Studies in Israel, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel. May 10.
- 2005 “Regional Sanskrit Literatures Summer Academy.” The Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. July 16.

CAMPUS TALKS

- 2016 “History and Remembered History in Medieval South India: Reconsidering the Past of the Heroic Saints of the God Śiva.” The Medieval/Renaissance Colloquium, University of South Florida. March 23.
- 2013 “Speaking of Śiva’s Saints: Reconstructing Early Vīraśaivism in the Kannada-Speaking Regions.” West and South Asian Religions Colloquium, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. March 28.
- 2012 “Serving the King, Devoted to the God: Prescribing Political Resistance in

Thirteenth-Century South-Indian Hagiographies.” Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. November 7.

SELECTED COURSES TAUGHT

“The Miraculous Lives of Hindu Saints: A Journey into South-Asian Hagiographical Imaginaire” Graduate Seminar (Spring 2017, Spring 2015, Spring 2014)

“Epic Literature in History: The Many Voices of the Ramayana” Graduate Seminar (Fall 2016, Fall 2014)

“Religious Quest in Contemporary Film” Writing-Intensive, Advance Undergraduate Course (Spring 2016).

“Gods and Goddesses of India” Advance Undergraduate Course (Spring 2016, Summer 2015, Fall 2014, Fall 2013).

“Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion” Graduate Seminar (Fall 2015).

“Major Texts: Reading Religious Literature in Context” Advance Undergraduate Course (Spring 2017, Spring 2015, Spring 2014).

Directed Readings: Sanskrit (Spring 2017, Fall 2016, Spring 2016, Fall 2015)

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

2015–Present Member of Religion in South Asia (RISA) Section Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion (AAR). Since November 11.

2014–Present Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Regional Bhakti Scholars Network (RBSN). Since September 1.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2016–Present Director of the MA Graduate Program, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida. Since August 7.

2014–2015 Institute for Research in Art (IRA) Advisory Committee, University of South Florida. September 2015 to April 2015.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND WORKSHOPS

2014 Active Learning vs. Guided Learning, Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida. March 19.

2014 Teaching as a Non-Native Speaker Workshop, Academy for Teaching and

Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida. January 23.

- 2013 “Dissertation into Book Preconference Workshop.” Sponsored by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS). The 42nd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 13-14.
- 2013 Visual Thinking Strategies Workshop, the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida, August 9.
- 2010-2011 American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), Advanced Kannada Academic Year program, Mysore, India. September 2010 to April 2011.
- 2008 Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Kannada Basic Language Structure Summer Course, Mysore India. July to August.

LANGUAGES

Sanskrit: excellent reading

Kannada (Classical, Medieval, Modern): excellent reading, conversational speaking

Hebrew: native

French: academic reading

NON-ACADEMIC TALKS

- 2014 Radio Interview: “The Study of Hinduism as a Field in Religious Studies,” With Michael Fenton, Hawk Radio, Hillsborough Community College - Ybor City Campus, Tampa. December 1.
- 2011 Radio Interview: “Studying Kannada in Mysore,” Akashvani Radio, Mysore, India. August 5.