

Newsletter No
46
September

Australian Association of Jewish Studies

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We wish you



שנה טובה !

A Happy New Year!

Editorial

As President of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies may I take this opportunity to wish you a happy, healthy, peaceful and prosperous New Year and well over the Fast.

May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life for another productive year and may our prayers and hopes for peace for all peoples afflicted by war and conflict be fulfilled as we all work together for a better future for all peoples.

May I also take this opportunity to enlist your support in the campaign to attract more members and sponsors to our association.

Wishing you and your families L'Shana Tova,

Michael Abrahams-Sprod

Visiting Scholars at the University of Sydney Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies

Professor Mark Leuchter

Professor Mark Leuchter, Director of Jewish Studies at Temple University (Philadelphia, USA), recently spent three weeks as a visiting lecturer with the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at University of Sydney. During this time, he completed the manuscript for a forthcoming scholarly book on the history of the Levites in Biblical tradition, and provided the lectures for the senior Biblical studies class on prophecy and apocalyptic literature.



He also delivered a public lecture at Mandelbaum House entitled "The Levites and the Canaanite Combat Myth", which explored the points of contact between the Torah's portrayal of Levite duties and the mythology of the ancient near east regarding the battles between warrior deities and their cosmic foes.

Professor Bezalal Porten

My training took place at Temple University in Philadelphia and at Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, in the fields of general and Jewish History and Bible. mentors were Profs. Shalom Spiegel, H.L. Ginsberg, and Salo Baron. I had Prof. E.Y. Kutscher as a private tutor for Aramaic and acquired working knowledge of Egyptian, especially demotic, at the Institute of the University of Chicago. I developed the field of Aramaic papyrology and wrote a seminal work on the Jews of the ancient military colony on the island of Elephantine, opposite Aswan in Egypt, during the fifth century BCE. In addition to numerous individual studies on Biblical narrative, the Jews of Egypt, and Aramaic studies, I collaborated with H.Z. Szubin in producing over a dozen articles on the law of the Aramaic papyri and with Ada Yardeni in the publication of four volumes entitled *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*.



I have taught at Spertus College and Roosevelt University in Chicago The University of California at Berkeley and Davis, the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Yale University in New Haven, and the Universities of Tel-Aviv and Haifa and the Hebrew University in Israel. I am here in Sydney, staying at Mandelbaum House and giving a course at the University, for the second time. I was last here in 1998 and it is a pleasure to be back. Then as now, I gave four classes on Aramaic documents. This time, we devoted two sessions to the documents from Elephantine and two to the Idumean ostraca. In the sessions on the Elephantine documents we dealt with a comparison of the two drafts of the Bagavahya letters, which came first, and of a comparison among the three marriage documents. In both cases we screened photos of the texts. In the sessions on the Idumean ostraca, we selected twelve ostraca published by Eph'al-Naveh, screened photos and hand-copies of them, and had students try to read them. It was an exercise in letter recognition. We also screened a power-point presentation, "The Joy of Studying Aramaic Ostraca," discussing the different kinds of texts and methods of studying them.

A general lecture entitled “The Beloved in the Song of Songs; Typical or Atypical?” was presented at Mandelbaum House and a lively discussion followed the presentation. I also delivered a scholarly lecture at Macquarie University entitled “Aramaic Papyrology and Ostracology.” I felt a welcoming reception in both my classes and lectures and hope to have the opportunity to return.

Bezalal Porten

Dr Nili Wazana

Dr Nili Wazana is the head of the Department of Bible Studies and a member of the Department of the History of the Jewish People at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She is a visiting scholar of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies of Sydney University for a month, thanks to the Sir Zelman



Cowen Universities Fund.

Dr Wazana is teaching classes on the book of Amos, part of a course entitled "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic". Amos, the first classical prophet, affords opportunities to look at various prophetic literary genres, such as oracles against the nations, admonitions, prophetic stories and more. She will also give a talk at the Mandelbaum House, on Wednesday, Sep. 1st 4:15-6:00 pm on: "Are Trees of the Field Human: war laws in the bible". The paper will look into the meaning of six unique war laws contained in the book of Deuteronomy 20-23, pertaining to different aspects of behaviour before and during war. This presentation will look into the questions whether these laws were practical or ideal, and what prompted their composition in the light of the concept of war in the cultural milieu of the Bible – the Ancient Near East.

Nili Wazana has published many papers and a book entitled *All the Boundaries of the Land: The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East*, which is currently being translated into English. Her interests are the Bible in the light of the ancient Near Eastern literature and understanding that the Bible is a product of its time. Her research looks into the historical background of the Hebrew Bible, and the ideational framework of its various parts.

**Australian Association of Jewish Studies
23rd Annual Conference
Religion and Politics
13-14 February 2011
ACT Jewish Community Centre
31 National Circuit, Forrest, Canberra**

The Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies (AAJS) provides a meeting place for tertiary academics, Jewish educators, researchers, students and others devoted to the study of Jewish life, thought and culture.

The AAJS website: www.aajs.org.au

- Registration will take place between 8:15am and 9:15am on Sunday 13 February.
- A wide range of papers will be presented between 9:00am and 5:00pm on both days of the Conference.
- The Annual General Meeting of the AAJS will be held during the Conference.
- Receipts will be available at the Conference unless otherwise requested.

Conference fees (includes registration, entry to all sessions, programme, booklet of abstracts, morning and afternoon tea, lunch, AAJS 2011 membership and journal):

Two day rate: \$215

Single day rate: \$140

Two day rate (student/pensioner): \$105

Single day rate (student/pensioner): \$70

Individual session: \$25

Late Conference fees (after 1 February):

Two day rate: \$230

Single day rate: \$150

Two day rate (student/pensioner): \$110

Single day rate (student/pensioner): \$75

For online registration and secure credit card payments, please use the AAJS website (above).

Please make all cheques payable to: **Australian Association of Jewish Studies** and post to:

Australian Association of Jewish Studies
PO Box 233
Holme Building
University of Sydney NSW
Australia

You may also send this registration form to the above address. Please include:

Title (please circle): Prof/Assoc Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms/Rabbi/Rev

Name:

Postal address:

Email address:

Phone:

All other correspondence may be sent to the above postal address or alternatively to manny.waks@gmail.com.

Accommodation:

Convenient accommodation is available at two hotels across the road from the Conference venue. Rydges Capital Hill are offering a mixture of Queen bedded rooms and two double bedded rooms at \$189/night for one guest and \$209 for two guests including breakfast (www.rydges.com/capitalhill). Bentley Suites prices are \$235/night for a one bedroom apartment, \$275 for two and \$355 for three (www.bentleysuites.com.au). To secure your booking, please ensure to book ASAP.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Conference Committee:

Mr Manny Waks – Conference Convenor
Dr Anna Hueneke – Academic Convenor
Associate Professor Philip Mendes
Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland
Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod
Dr Marianne Dacy
Dr Myer Samra
Ms Anna Rosenbaum

Australian Association of Jewish Studies

23rd Annual Conference

Religion and Politics

Call for Papers

The conference theme for 2011 is "Religion and Politics". We are seeking to create a forum in which to explore these two powerful concepts in the context of Jewish history, traditions, texts and cultures, social economic and political conditions, and the like of Jewish communities in Israel and across the diaspora.

Papers from a variety of disciplines are welcome, and these may discuss any aspect of the relationship of Judaism to religion and/or politics.

Papers on other topics will be considered but preference will be given to those bearing directly on the conference theme.

Submissions to present papers must be made by 6 September 2010. Acceptance of papers will be notified by email no later than October 2010. Submissions must include author's name, postal and email address, institutional affiliation, abstract of the paper to be presented and short biographical note. The abstract must be 200-300 words and the biographical note no more than 50 words.

The AAJS encourages students who are engaged in academic research to submit proposals based on their work to the program committee. Authors should clearly indicate their student status with their submission.

Presenters are invited to submit written articles for consideration for publication in *The Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*.

Proposals should be sent either electronically or by post to:

Dr Anna Hueneke

Anna.Hueneke@canberra.edu.au

Lecturer

Counselling
Discipline of Community Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Canberra
ACT 2601
Australia

PROPOSALS MUST ARRIVE BY 6 SEPTEMBER, 2010

That We May Know One Another (ICCJ Conference in Istanbul 20 -24 June 2010).

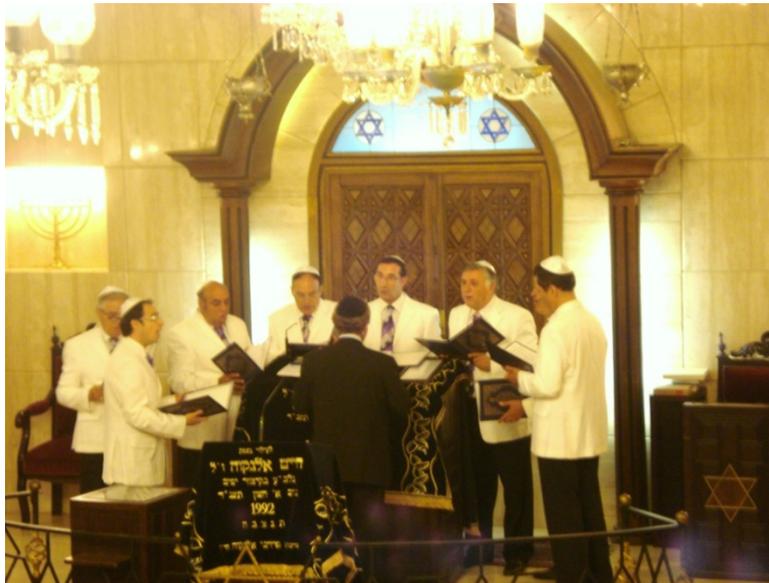
In June I attended the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews in Istanbul and found it to be one of the most informative and enjoyable conferences I have attended. It is the first time this conference has been held in a predominantly Muslim country. Despite tensions following the Flotilla incident, it was decided that the conference would go ahead. Turkey has been a long term ally of Israel and saved many victims of the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. The Gaza incident caused tensions, but despite this, it was felt that the time to have an interfaith conference was appropriate, especially when the friendship is being tested

Present were about one hundred participants from several countries including Poland, Israel, Canada, USA, Australia, the Netherlands, South America, France, Slovakia, South Africa and Turkey itself. For many, it was their first experience of the shining, multi cultured coastal city by the sea, Istanbul with its many minarets piercing the skyline.

The title of the conference: 'That we may know one another' comes from a verse in the Koran. A young participant thanked the ICCJ for creating a safe space where expressed opinions could be aired without fear of reprisal. She said she wished to challenge those members of our community, who do not wish to meet the 'other' and wished to remain within the confines of their own safe world. We have need not only of interreligious dialogue but also of intra religious dialogue to bring people who resist change into the relationship of openness. At the same time, it was said that we should create a home for ourselves within the confines of the structures in which we live, and to devise new models to attract people. On this basis, the ICCJ has resolved to create stronger links with the *Young leadership Committee*, whose meeting was in

Dublin in July. Next year their meeting will be at the same time as the ICCJ conference, which will be in Cracow.

One keynote speaker Susannah Heschel, quoting her father Abraham Hershel said ‘What I receive I must transform.’ However, the ICCJ is not about to become the *International Council of Jews, Christians and Muslims*, but has resolved to develop more dialogue with Islam. The ICCJ focus will remain on the relations between Jews and Christians but it has resolved to revive the Abrahamic Conference founded some years ago, which needs needs re-invigorating.



In several workshops, we learnt about the religious and political situation in Turkey— how it has applied to join the European Union and how religion is strictly controlled by the State as well as the situation of Orthodox Christians in Turkey. There was also a discussion on the controversial Kairos document, published by Middle Eastern church leaders. One evening we attended a Sephardi synagogue service in Istanbul and a concert by nine cantors from different synagogues followed by a sumptuous dinner in the covered courtyard outside the synagogue. The dining room was the earlier synagogue. I was at the table with the nine cantors and their wives.

Another time, we visited the Catholic Cathedral attached to the French School (Francis Lisesi) owned by the Sisters of Sion, where I stayed after the ICCJ conference. The bishop spoke to the group, but the sound system was poor and he spoke in French which was translated by an African priest. A superb organist played some favourite pieces from Palestrina, Handel and other great composers. A female Muslim soloist from Ankara accompanied the organist.

There are only 5000 Christians in Istanbul as there was an enforced population exchange between Muslims from Athens in 1923, a time of great hardship.

All who attended, the ICCJ conference learnt about the richness of the culture of the 'other' in the exotic, Turkish setting, and went from the conference enriched and enlightened. As Susannah Hershel said: 'What I receive I transform'.

It was a pleasant experience to be right on the Bosphoros with its birds, fresh sea air, in view of the passage of ships and boats and close to ancient cultural heritage sites that had not been razed by wars.



However, one was warned against drinking the water, so bottled water was on sale everywhere for varying prices. The large sweet cherries in season, figs the size of apples and apricots as well as fresh produce in this very agricultural country, the handicrafts, the pottery and the fabulous carpets all combined with the quality of the conference to make this an exhilarating experience.



I was fortunate enough also to take a four day tour on the local buses to Cappadocia and Ephesus.

Marianne Dacy

Tribute to Professor Sol Encel delivered at the AGM of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies: 17 August 2010

It is with great sadness that the Australian Association of Jewish Studies marks the passing of Emeritus Professor Sol Encel on Friday 23 July. He was a distinguished university educator and researcher, an esteemed contributor to ideas and knowledge and public policy in the Australian community and the Jewish community, and a wonderful committed family man, friend and colleague. Sol Encel made these contributions over six decades since his graduation as a political scientist from the University of Melbourne, from which time he was a teacher, researcher, writer and collaborator on many significant projects and public policy bodies until the day before he died. He truly lived the maxim of never giving up his intellectual work and writing, never giving up teaching and learning, or his contributions to the wellbeing of the community, or on his deep-seated policy commitments to human rights and anti-discrimination.



Included in this was his ongoing support of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies, of which he was a founding member in 1987. He was a regular contributor to AAJS conferences and was happy to assist as a reviewer for the Journal. He brought a wealth of knowledge to Jewish academia in Australia. He is an inspiration to us all on living a full, good, committed life with his family

and wide circle of friends, and in the wider community and the Jewish community.

Born in Warsaw in 1925, Sol Encel immigrated to Melbourne with his parents Godel and Hadassah and his older sister Stella when he was four years old. He began his studies at Melbourne University but then enlisted a medical orderly, serving in the Pacific arena until the end of World War II. He then returned to Melbourne where he completed his degree in the humanities and social sciences. After completing his degree, he married Diana Hovev. Both came from committed Zionist backgrounds and they spent the first year of their married life on a kibbutz in Israel.

Following the completion and publication of his PhD, a pioneering study of Cabinet Government in Australia, Sol taught and carried out research at three Universities: Melbourne University, The Australian National University and the University of NSW, first as a political scientist, but from his appointment to the Chair of Sociology at the University of NSW in 1966, he soon became known as the father of Australian Sociology. Following his retirement from the School of Sociology in 1991 at the age of 66, Sol without missing a beat became Emeritus Professor at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW, where he worked on a range of projects, contributing his great knowledge, experience and research skills and engaging productively with key public policy issues. He remained in this position until he passed away, still an active member of several important projects. He was particularly concerned about issues relating to racism, discrimination, ethnicity and multiculturalism. In the latter years he focused on problems of ageing.

Sol was actively involved in research and publication relating to the Jewish community and Jewish affairs since 1969, when he directed a large survey of the NSW Jewish community, which was updated in 1978. From 1976

he undertook analyses of the Commonwealth Population Census on behalf of the Jewish Communal Appeal. The results were very important for planning and for the work of Jewish welfare and education bodies, providing them with essential demographic information about the community.

In 2004 Sol and Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland of the University of Sydney were awarded an ARC Linkage Grant with the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and Jewish Community Council of Victoria as the linkage partners to investigate 'The Political Sociology of Australian Jewry'. Sol and Suzanne conducted focus group discussions with community leaders in all the Jewish centres and published a number of articles in journals and books dealing with women, the smaller communities, and the issues of racism and multiculturalism. Sol was also a Deputy on the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and active on the Board's Social Justice Committee, engaging in particular with issues of poverty and ageing in our community. He was a giant figure of influence and held in high esteem in the Jewish Community, on the Board of Deputies, the Jewish Communal Appeal, the Jewish Centre on the Ageing, among many other organisations which benefited greatly from his research, knowledge and unstinting contributions.

His wisdom, knowledge, experience and generosity of spirit will be sorely and greatly missed by all those who knew him, his friends and colleagues, those who worked and studied with him, learnt from him and were inspired by him.

We send our deep condolences to his wife Diana and their family.

Bettina Cass Professor at the Social Policy Research Centre

University of NSW

Chair of the Social Justice Committee

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies

MEMBERSHIP FEES for 2010 for Australian Association of Jewish Studies

Fees are current from 1 January 2010–31 December 2010 , include the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* published annually (early in the next year), AAJS Newsletter (online) book discounts, and discounted registration fee for the AAJS annual February conference). Those who register for the conference will also register for that year as member.

Benefactor : \$250

Regular: \$60 (Aus)

Pensioner/ Full-time Student: \$25 (Aus)

Institutional: \$70 (Aus)

Overseas: \$80 (Aus)

All correspondence to: PO Box 233, Holme Building, University of Sydney NSW 2006

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לשנה טובה תכתבו !



Newsletter edited by Anna Rosenbaum.