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16th Annual AAJS Conference Call For Papers

The 16th annual AAJS conference will be convened at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia on 15-16 February 2004.

The conference theme, *Israel and the Diaspora*, may include any variation on this theme from ancient times to the present day. This is an interdisciplinary conference and papers relating to history, literature, the arts and political science are welcomed. 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 12 September 2003. Acceptance of papers will be notified by email no later than 30 September.

Abstracts should not exceed three hundred words and must include title, author's name, postal and email address. The program committee will referee all abstracts.

Papers of particular merit and significance may be selected for publication in the conference proceedings.

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.

Proposals should be sent either electronically or by post to:

Miriam Munz
The Australian Centre for the Study of
Jewish Civilisation
Monash University
Clayton VIC 3800
Australia
Email:
miriam.munz@education.monash.edu.au

**PROPOSALS MUST ARRIVE BY
12 SEPTEMBER 2003**

Registration information

Two days including lunch: \$150/\$120
AAJS Members/\$80 Students

One day including lunch: \$85/\$70 AAJS
Members/\$40 Students

Presenters and conference attendees
should pay their conference fees no later
than 8 December 2003.

Payments can be made by cheque or
international money order made out to
THE AAJS CONFERENCE.

Questions about the conference should be
made directly to:

Professor Andrew Markus
Tel: +613 9905 2200
Fax: +613 9905 2210
andrew.markus@arts.monash.edu.au

or
Miriam Munz
Tel: +613 9905 2205
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"We were most fortunate to welcome, and to hear, such a great number of both local and visiting scholars, whose numbers are too numerous to list."



A Veritable Feast!

Musings on the 15h Annual AAJS Conference : "Jewish Kabbalah, Mysticism and Jewish Thought"

It was a great privilege, and, indeed, a pleasure to attend our association's annual conference held at Mandelbaum House in Sydney from 16-17 February 2003. With this year's theme providing such a broad and often controversial spectrum, conference attendees were provided with a fascinatingly varied and highly scholarly menu of paper presentations. Papers not related to the conference theme were no less fascinating, not to mention numerous.

Rabbi Professor Elliot Ginsburg's keynote address "A World That is Entirely Shabbat: Three Kabbalistic Contemplative Strategies for Extending Shabbat into the Week" on 16 February could only be described as inspirational, as could equally be described his public address at Mandelbaum House on the same evening, which boasted a capacity audience. No less inspirational also was the keynote address on day two of the conference, where Professor Alison Coudert presented an equally outstanding paper entitled "The Kabbalah, Science and the Enlightenment".

Whilst the majority of the conference's papers dealt with the chosen theme, a great variety of other themes dealing with no less fascinating areas of scholarship were also presented. I had the pleasure of attending a number of these, including Professor Bill Rubinstein's "Jews in Grandmaster Chess Since the Mid-Nineteenth Century, Associate Professor Ziva Shavitzky's "The People of Israel in Exile: Contacts with Aram (Syria) from the Time of King David to the Fall of Damascus 732 BCE" and Dr. Ian Young's "Masoretic Text and Proto-MT among the Qumran (Dead Sea) Biblical Scrolls" to name but a few.

We were most fortunate to welcome, and to hear, such a great number of both local and visiting scholars, whose numbers are too numerous to list. The papers presented, and the ensuing discussions, provided a dynamic and highly informative exchange of ideas over the two days of the conference. One most impressive and pleasing observation was that this conference attracted a highly varied composition of attendees, indicating that both the conference theme and the papers themselves were of great relevance and interest to many sectors of the community, both academic and non-academic and both Jewish and non-Jewish.

As is the custom at all conferences, it was also delightful to take the opportunity to catch up with colleagues and friends, and to make new acquaintances; both being very valuable in our pursuit of furthering Jewish Studies in Australia. On reflection of the conference, it is pleasing to know that Jewish Studies is indeed flourishing in this country, even though we are a small association.

To conclude, I would like to endorse the vote of thanks made by our President, Dr. Suzanne Rutland, to all those persons involved in the organisation of this conference, which in my opinion, was an outstanding success. No doubt, we are all already looking very much forward to the 2004 conference in Melbourne!

Michael Abrahams-Sprod

Vice President (NSW), Honorary Secretary, AAJS

2001 ACADEMIC REPORT

Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education

Suzanne D. Rutland, Academic Chair

The year of 2002 was a year of consolidation for Jewish education at university level, with a few new developments following on from the initiatives of 2001. Student numbers continued to grow, particularly in the Jewish Civilisation program at both the Universities of New South Wales and Sydney.

Department of Semitic Studies, University of Sydney

2002 proved to be a very active year for the department. It has continued to operate in the School of European, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies headed by Professor Tony Stephens who previously headed the School of Languages at the University of Melbourne. In November 2002, Professor Stephens took study leave until the end of June 2003 and Professor Hugh Clarke became acting head.

New Department Structure: Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies

As a result of the Faculty restructure in July 2000, a decision was taken to split the Department of Semitic Studies into two departments: Arabic and Islamic Studies, and Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. It has taken time to go through all the correct steps according to university policy for this division to take effect, but it was fully approved in the middle of 2002 by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Stephen Garton, and took effect on 1 January 2003.

A formal launch of the new department took place on Monday 10 March 2003, at the Holme Building, University of Sydney, 5.30-7.00 pm. The department continues to offer a broad range of programs: Biblical Studies, Hebrew, both Modern and Classical, Jewish Civilisation, and Yiddish. University of Sydney Vice-chancellor, Prof Gavin Brown, agreed to launch the new department and invitations were sent to all members of the Joint Committee.

Biblical Studies

In 2002 for the first time a full major in Biblical Studies was offered, following the approval of two new courses in 2001. The program was coordinated by Ruth Lewin in Semester I, but in Semester II she took leave to work on her doctorate and Lucy Davey coordinated the program. We were lucky to have Professor Eliezer Oren, an expert in biblical archaeology at Ben Gurion University to undertake a

substantial part of the teaching of First Year Biblical Studies. Our first year enrolment was again large, over 50 in Semester I, although enrolment numbers in the upper years is still small.

I would like to express my appreciation to Lucy Davey who shouldered the responsibility of taking over from Ms Lewin as Biblical Studies coordinator in Semester II. She was appointed on nomination for a four-month period to undertake this position.

Classical Hebrew at Sydney University

Classical Hebrew continued to operate on the same basis in 2001. The advanced strand of Classical Hebrew has continued with 6 students. In Semester I, they were taught by Ruth Lewin and in Semester II by Lucy Davey and Rabbi Gourarie who introduced them to Talmudic study.

Appointment of Dr Shani Berrin

Dr Shani L. Berrin recently joined the faculty at the University of Sydney as a lecturer in Classical Hebrew and coordinator of Biblical Studies. Her curriculum vitae is exceptional, and details follows this report.

Visiting Scholars for 2002

Two scholars taught in the Department of Semitic Studies in 2002. Mandelbaum scholar, Dr Rivka Maoz, from the Rothberg School of Overseas Jewry taught part of a course on Modern Israel within the department's Jewish Civilisation program., using Israeli literature as the tool to explore the evolution of Israeli society I would like to thank Professor Crown and the Mandelbaum Trust for their support of Dr Maoz. Ms Esti Simons, lecturer in Modern Hebrew at the Ulpan also at the Rothberg School, Hebrew University and the Lowy School, Tel Aviv University, spent Semester I teaching in the department. She was also involved with inservices for the schools. Her visit to Sydney was funded by the Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund and the NSW Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education.

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Visiting Scholars for 2003

In Semester I, Professors Dan Michman and Yehuda Bauer, both Holocaust scholars, were in Sydney, sponsored jointly by the Shalom Institute, the Sydney Jewish Museum and the Joint Committee for Jewish Higher Education. They gave guest lectures for the Sydney Jewish Museum, form the backbone for a Melton/Mosaic course, coordinated by Professor Kwiet, and guest lectures in the department.

The Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund has agreed to sponsor two scholars in the Department of Hebrew Biblical and Jewish Studies in Semester II: Professor Michael Stone and Professor Joseph Hacker. Professor Stone will be in Sydney for most of the Semester. Originally from Sydney, he is a leading scholar in Armenian Studies at the Hebrew University as well as being the director of the Orion Centre for Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship. Professor Joseph Hacker is an expert in Sephardi Jewish history and will assume my teaching for the month of August, so that I can undertake research in Jerusalem. I met with both scholars during my recent visit to Israel, on my way to attending a conference, 'Beyond Camps and Forced labour' at the Imperial War Museum, London.

Again, I would like to thank the trustees of the Sir Zelman Cowen Fund for continuing to support the academic exchange program between the University of Sydney and the Hebrew University. This program has greatly strengthened the department and has additional offshoots, such as an opportunity to apply for participation in a new high school Hebrew curriculum being developed by Boston College and the Hebrew University. Yona Gilead and Lilly Maltz were invited to attend an inservice in Boston last year in relation to this program, known as NETA.

While in Jerusalem, I also met with Professor Yom Tov Assis, head of the International Centre for the teaching of Jewish Civilisation in Universities from Abroad, to discuss this exchange program and other ways in which the two universities can work together to further Jewish Studies.

Jewish Education Coordinator, School of Policy and Practice, Faculty of Education

In September 2002, Mr Harry Oppermann took early retirement from this position. At present negotiations are underway with the Interschools Committee and the Faculty to appoint someone on nomination in a part-time capacity to shepherd the position so that it can be advertised widely to find a suitable replacement for 2004. The Jewish Studies teacher education program is of central importance for Higher Jewish Education and I hope that a suitable person will be found to fill this most important post. In 2003, the Judaic Studies Method course will be on offer. Visiting scholar, Dr David Resnick, lecturer in Jewish education at Bar Ilan University and JESNA (Jewish Education Society of North America) Director in Israel, arrived in Sydney in June and will teach within the program. I also met with him during my recent visit to Israel.

Report from University of New South Wales:

In 2002, Professor Konrad Kwiet again coordinated and taught the first year course on Jewish Emancipation. The Semester II first year course on Zionism was taught by A/Prof Ian Bickerton. Most courses on offer attracted good student enrolments, between 30 to 40 students in each course.

In 2002 two new upper level courses were offered. They were: Holocaust and Genocide in Historical Perspective taught by Dr Dirk Moses of the Department of History at the University of Sydney with 50 students and Women in Contemporary Judaism, Islam and Christianity, taught by Ms Ruth Lewin, of the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Sydney, with 11 students. I also taught my course on the Australian Jewish experience with 11 students, while NSW academics, Dr Geoffrey Levey, Prof Clive Kessler and Prof John Milfull offered their Jewish Studies courses. Dr Geoffrey Levey again was the Jewish Studies coordinator.

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Academic Report, cont'd

In 2003 the units of study are 'The Modern Jewish Experience: Emancipation to the Holocaust', 'Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths', and 'Jewish Law'. The course on Jerusalem will be taught by visiting Jewish academic from Tel Aviv University, Dr Leah Kinberg.

There are moves to create lectureship in Jewish history within the School of history at UNSW to ensure that the program is fully

staffed. For 2003, Geoffrey Levey will continue as program coordinator.

Macquarie University/UTS and University of Western Sydney

The Politics of Genocide and Genocide Studies - 2001

Professor Tatz continues to successfully teach this course through the University of Technology, Sydney and Macquarie University.

Yad Vashem Winter Course

I continue to be the academic adviser for the Yad Vashem Winter Institute for Educators from Abroad. Despite the uncertainty in regards to the Gulf War, we sent seven Australians to join a group of 12 Eastern Europeans and one American at Yad Vashem. Given that both the Winter Institute of 2001/2002 and the Summer Institute 2002 were cancelled, it was most gratifying that we were able to attract sufficient student numbers for the course to go ahead.

Guest Speaker 2002

Rabbi Dr Yosef Wosk addressed a function run jointly with Shalom College and the Sydney Jewish Museum. As a result of wide publicity, the Hall at the Sydney Jewish Museum was full with over 200 people present. While it proved an interesting evening, the speaker did not match up to people's expectations.

Australian Association for Jewish Studies Conference

As conference convenor, I am pleased to report that the conference on Kabbalah, Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Thought, held at Mandelbaum House on 16 – 17 February attracted a very strong international representation and proved to be most interesting. I would like to thank the Mandelbaum Trust for their sponsorship of Professor Elliot Ginsburg.

Course Brochure

An attractive new brochure was produced again thanks to the hard work of our administrator, Miriam Ehrlich. I would like to also thank the designer, Judy Echin, and Mrs Barbara Linz, for her assistance and sponsorship of the design of this brochure. Mrs Linz has been a tower of strength for this Committee.

Conclusion

I would like to thank Dr Geoffrey Levey for his willing assistance and cooperation and also all my academic colleagues at the University of Sydney. I hope they will forgive me for not listing them individually. I believe that anyone looking at the newly produced brochure will see that Jewish Studies at higher education institutions is flourishing. I would also like to thank Peter Wertheim, our president, and Miriam Ehrlich, for all their assistance. Above all, I would like to pay tribute to the late Fela Einhorn, whose vision and generosity has made the expansion described in this report possible. We have now received the full amount allocated to us from her bequest.

**Australian
Association For
Jewish Studies**

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.geocities.com/
aajssite/](http://www.geocities.com/aajssite/)

Dr Shani Berrin

In December 2002, Ruth Lewin's two-year contract terminated and, according to University of Sydney policy, the Department of Semitic Studies was obliged to advertise the position in Post-Biblical Hebrew. The advertisement went out in May and was posted on a number of websites. The response was excellent, with an international field almost all of whom had a doctorate.

The committee felt that Dr Shani Berrin was by far the best candidate. She completed her doctorate at New York University, where she specialised in the study of biblical interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls under the supervision of Prof Lawrence Schiffman, a renowned Dead Sea Scrolls scholar whose texts we use in the department.

Dr Berrin has taught Bible and ancient Judaism at Yeshiva University, Hunter College, New York University, and the

London School of Jewish Studies. She has also lectured to a wide range of scholarly and popular audiences in the US, the UK, and Jerusalem.

Her publications include entries in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Dead Sea Scrolls* and her forthcoming book on *Pesher Nahum* will be published by Brill Academic Publishers.

Dr Berrin's academic awards include a Fulbright Fellowship and a doctoral scholarship from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Dr Rutland met with Professor Schiffmann in Los Angeles while she attended the conference of the Association for Jewish Studies there in December 2002, and he spoke most highly of Dr Berrin.