

Newsletter No
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Australian Association for Jewish Studies

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Editor's Welcome



AAJS Newsletter
Editor Jennifer
Creese.

Hello members,
and welcome to
the May 2017
issue of the
Australian
Association for
Jewish Studies
Newsletter.

The Association Committee would like
to thank all those who attended our
Annual Conference in February and
helped to make it such a resounding
success. Many thanks also to the
organising committee and our
wonderful keynote speakers, Dr Dan
Porat, Sam Lipski and Dr Rachael

Kohn. Each delivered outstanding presentations and inspired the attendees with their wonderful insights.

We are pleased to welcome our new President, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, and extend our thanks and best wishes to outgoing President Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod for his wonderful work over the years. We would also like to commend Dr Anna Rosenbaum for her twelve outstanding years as editor of this newsletter, and Dr Myer Samra for his valuable contribution over the years as editor of the Australian Journal of Jewish Studies.

Who's Who in the AAJS Committee

Your AAJS Committee consists of:

President: Prof Ghil'ad Zuckermann
(ghilad.zuckermann@adelaide.edu.au)

Vice-President (NSW): Dr Jan Lanicek
(j.lanicek@unsw.edu.au)

Vice-President (VIC): Dr Anna Hirsh
(anna.hirsh@gmail.com)

Secretary: Sr Dr Marianne Dacy
(marianne.dacy@sydney.edu.au)

Membership Secretary: Nathan Compton
(ncom4846@uni.sydney.edu.au)

In this edition, you'll find out more about your new president and his work, get the details for sharing your academic output through the Australian Journal for Jewish Studies and the 2018 Australian Association for Jewish Studies Conference, and hear from several Association members about the highlights of recent conferences. As incoming newsletter editor, I hope you find this edition interesting and informative, and I look forward to sharing more of interest to the Association with you in future.

Jennifer Creese, Editor

School of Social Science, University of Queensland

Treasurer: Marilynne Mill
(mirimill75@gmail.com)

Journal Editor: Dr Vicky Schinkel
(vickyschinkel@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Creese
(Jennifer.creese@uqconnect.edu.au)

Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, Emeritus Professor Suzanne Rutland OAM, Dr Myer Samra, Dr Miriam Munz, Dr Anna Rosenbaum, and Professor Seth Kunin also serve on the committee.

Introducing our new AAJS president



Above: Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann. Photograph courtesy of University of Adelaide.

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann (DPhil Oxford; PhD Cambridge, titular; MA Tel Aviv, *summa cum laude*) is Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages at the University of Adelaide. He is a chief investigator in a large research project assessing language revival and mental health, funded by Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). He is the author of the seminal bestseller *Israelit Safa Yafa* (Israeli – A Beautiful Language; Am Oved, 2008), *Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), three

chapters of the *Israeli Tingo* (Keren, 2011), *Engaging – A Guide to Interacting Respectfully and Reciprocally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and their Arts Practices and Intellectual Property* (2015) and the first online *Dictionary of the Barngarla Aboriginal Language* (2016). He is the editor of *Burning Issues in Afro-Asiatic Linguistics* (2012), *Jewish Language Contact* (2014), a special issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, and the co-editor of *Endangered Words, Signs of Revival* (2014). He is the founder of *Revivalistics*, a new trans-disciplinary field of enquiry surrounding language reclamation, revitalization and reinvigoration. He has launched, with the Barngarla Aboriginal communities of Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, the reclamation of the Barngarla language, applying lessons from the Israeli language.

Professor Zuckermann is an elected member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Foundation for Endangered Languages

(FEL). He was President of AustraLex in 2013-2015, Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Fellow in 2007–2011, and Gulbenkian Research Fellow at Churchill College Cambridge in 2000-2004. He has been Consultant and Expert Witness in (corpus) lexicography and (forensic) linguistics, in court cases all over the globe.



Above: Professor Zuckermann empowering endangered Khoisan languages in Namibia, April 2017. Photo courtesy G. Zuckermann

He has been Distinguished Visiting Professor at Shanghai International Studies University, and taught at the University of Cambridge, University of Queensland, National University of Singapore, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, East China Normal

University, Shanghai International Studies University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and University of Miami. He has been Research Fellow at the Weizmann Institute of Science; Tel Aviv University; Rockefeller Foundation's Study and Conference Center, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy; Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Institute for Advanced Study, La Trobe University; Institute of Linguistics, Shanghai International Studies University; and Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyūjo, National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, Tokyo. He has been Denise Skinner Scholar at St Hugh's College Oxford, Scatcherd European Scholar at the University of Oxford, and scholar at the United World College of the Adriatic (Italy). His MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), Language Revival: Securing the Future of Endangered Languages, has attracted more than 8,500 students from more than 150 countries.

<https://www.edx.org/course/language-revival-securing-future-adelaidex-lang101x>

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news79582.html>

<http://www.facebook.com/ProfessorZuckermann>

Call for Papers: Australian Association for Jewish Studies Journal 2017

The editor invites submissions for inclusion in the 2017 edition. The Journal is an international, peer-reviewed Journal published annually and includes articles on all aspects of Jewish scholarship, experience and ideas. Book reviews are also welcome.



**Introduction and Call for Papers
The 30th Annual AAJS (Australian Association for Jewish Studies) Conference
Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia: 11-12 February 2018.
“By the Rivers of Babylon: Memory, Emotion and Jews”.**

Psalm 137 is perhaps the paradigmatic text for the interplay of memory and emotion in the construction of both Jewish history and the Jewish self. The psalmist lays the groundwork for the depiction and understanding of exile, and provides the paradigm for over 2000 years of fears, anxieties, hopes and aspirations, which for some culminates in the establishment of the

The closing date for submissions is 30th June 2017. Submissions must include an abstract, a short author biography and a postal address. Please forward all articles, reviews and correspondence to the editor, Dr Vicky Schinkel, at vickyschinkel@gmail.com

State of Israel in 1948. This paradigm corresponds with the messianic hopes, which emphasize the optimistic future rather than the tragic present or past. While memory and emotion have shaped the discourse about the Holocaust, and equally become significant reference points for reading Jewish history as a whole, they, particularly emotion, have been relatively de-emphasized in both rabbinic discussions of Halacha and academic analyses of Jewish rituals and practices. Even Jewish mystical speculation is largely presented in a rationalist mode. Hasidism, is perhaps the primary exception to this pattern; this is specifically found in the Baal Shem Tov's rejection of the basis of the rabbinic system of his time, with a

concomitant focus on emotion rather than reason as the fundamental basis of religious experience. Arguably, Chabad has provided a mechanism for moving Hasidic discourse back towards emphasis on reason. Geography, particularly Zion, has been a consistent focus for memory and emotion expressed in longing. This trope is first expressed in the quotation from Psalms, it is also the heart and power of the poetry of Yehuda HaLevi. The importance of place is the heart of modern Zionism, and is one of the most significant motivators in modern Jewish life and thought.

The 30th Australian Association for Jewish Studies (AAJS) conference, to take place in Perth, Western Australia on 11-12 February 2018, seeks to redress the absence of these tropes in the understanding of Jewish practice and law, as well as exemplifying its importance in aspects of Jewish thought and historical experience; it also seeks to provide a forum for wider discussions of memory and emotions as they touch on all aspects of Judaism. AAJS 2018 Perth, entitled "By the Rivers of Babylon: Memory, Emotion and Jews", will provide a trans-disciplinary forum for addressing perspicaciously both memory and

emotion - both providing a basis for challenging and understanding their implications. It also seeks from the opposite direction to reassess our understanding of Judaism by resorting to general theories of memory and emotion. We hope that AAJS 2018 Perth would act as an epistemological bridge, as an antidote for parallel discourses surrounding Memory, Emotion and Jews.

Proposed papers can look at the theme from any angle, for example psychological, linguistic, philosophical, anthropological, theological, musical, political, biological, historical, cross-cultural. Papers on other topics would be considered too. Please submit your paper proposal by Tuesday, 1 August 2017 to the convenor, Professor Seth Kunin: seth.kunin@curtin.edu.au (Subject: AAJS 2018 Perth Abstract). Notice of acceptance will be sent out by 1 September 2017.

Submissions must include the following:

- Postal and email address
- Abstract of the paper to be presented (no more than 250 words)
- Short biographical note (no more than 50 words)

AAJS encourages students engaged in academic research to submit proposals based on their work to the conference committee. Authors should clearly indicate their student status on their submission. Presenters are also invited to submit written articles for consideration for publication in the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*. Communication about the conference should be sent electronically to Professor Seth Kunin: seth.kunin@curtin.edu.au.

Conference Committee: Professor Seth Kunin (Conference Convener)

Conference Report: The 29th Annual Australian Association for Jewish Studies Conference, February 2017

The Australian Association for Jewish Studies conference for 2017, dealing with the theme of '*Narratives and Counter-Narratives: Jews, Nation and Nationhood*' provided a rich array of papers covering many different topics and themes. Held in the inspiring and thought-provoking environs of the Sydney Jewish Museum, the conference showcased an outstanding collection of contributions.

Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, Dr Jan Lániček, Dr Anna Hirsch, Dr Vicky Schinkel, Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland OAM, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod.

As this Conference addresses a small community of scholars, it is imperative that we all support the Association. Thus, it is a requirement that all presenters at this conference must have paid the conference registration fee, which includes the AAJS membership for 2018, by 1 December 2017. Visit www.aajs.org.au for details.



Above: Dr Rachael Kohn highlights her distinguished and lengthy career bringing Jewish knowledge to the ABC. Photo Credit: G. Zuckermann.



Above: Dr Dan Porat details Israeli trials of Shoah kapos. Photo Credit: A. Hirsh

The conference's three keynote addresses, each dealing with a different topic, were each riveting in its own way. Dr Rachael Kohn, in her opening address, outlined how she first became involved in her decades-long career in ABC religious radio programs. She provided an overview of the key themes she had explored over the years, as she sought to ensure that the Jewish experience was included in the programs, as well as speaking about some of her favourite programs.

Dr Dan Porat of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and publisher of *The Boy: A Holocaust Story*, investigated the dominant Holocaust narratives of Jews as innocent and guiltless victims, and explored the role

of Jewish functionaries in the Holocaust in his paper: *State of Suspicion: Israel Prosecutes Holocaust Survivors as Nazi Collaborators*. Specifically, he asked: Why did the Israeli State pursue these people, and how did the courts deal with 'contested' memories of Holocaust survivors? Using examples, he extended and explicated the complex issues attached to public narratives and the judicial system.



Above: Noted Australian journalist and author Sam Lipski captivates the crowd with his depiction of the Light Horse at Beersheba. Photo Credit: G. Zuckermann.

Meanwhile, Sam Lipski, in his paper *Audacity and Watershed: The Australian Light Horse Charge at Beersheba, 31 October 1917* noted this 'audacious military victory' and its far-reaching repercussions which resulted in contributing to a change in the history of the Middle East. The loss of Beersheba foreshadowed the end of the

Ottoman Empire and was integral in the creation of a 'road to Jerusalem.' This symbolic event had profound implications for not only the establishment of a Jewish state, but for the world.

With such a broad range of papers on offer, it was difficult to choose which presentations to attend – this has been a feature of the conference and is testament to the advanced scholarship currently evident in Jewish Studies. A few of the many stand-out papers included Dr Anna Rosenbaum speaking on the role of Ord Nansen and other working to get visas for Czech Jews to get to Norway, Professor Tova Cohen showcasing the work of the first female Hebrew poet Rachel Morpurgo, Professor Sonja Hedgepeth exploring the work of German-Jewish poet Gertrud Kolmar, and Shannon Biederman fine-tuning the statement that 'Australia accepted more survivors on a pro-rata basis than any other place outside Israel'.

All presenters inspired attendees, and created a foundation for intense and profound discussions and

the sharing of ideas. Congratulations to all – organisers, presenters and attendees for contributing to yet another fantastic and inspiring conference.

*Professor Emerita Suzanne D. Rutland,
Department of Hebrew, Biblical &
Jewish Studies, University of Sydney*

*Dr Vicky Schinkel, International
College, Queensland University of
Technology*



Above: AAJS Treasurer Miri Mills ensures the smooth management of hundreds of registrations. Photo Credit: A. Hirsh.

**Conference Report: “Prevention of Mass Violence and Promotion of Tolerance: Lessons from History”
Kolkata, India, 27-28 February 2017**

In February Dr Navras Aafreedi organised a conference on ‘Prevention of Mass Violence and Promotion of Tolerance: Lessons from History’ which was part of the 200th anniversary of Presidency University founded in 1817 in British Calcutta. As part of this conference a number of key Jewish scholars were invited from Israel and the Diaspora. They included Professor Dina Porat, of Tel Aviv University and Yad Vashem; Rabbi David Rosen, honorary president of the International Council of Christians and Jews and now the American Jewish Committee’s International Director of Interreligious Affairs, Dr Charles Ehrlich of the Salzburg Global Seminar, Professor Reuven Firestone, of Hebrew Union College, LA, and the University of South Carolina, a renowned expert in medieval Judaism and Islam and journalist and author Edward Mortimer, as well as Dr Stephanie (Shosh) Bloom, who heads the Museum program at Tel Aviv University, and David Matas, an independent scholar who has researched and written about Nazi war

criminals in Canada, as well as human rights law, immigration and refugees. Additionally, a number of key Indian scholars attended, most of whom were working on the 1971 Bangladesh Genocide.

Professor Sarva-Daman Singh, who is the Director of the Institute of Asian Studies in Brisbane opened the conference with a moving overview of issues relating to the destructive effects of violence and the need not only for tolerance, but understanding and dialogue, which he argued provide the basis of tolerance. This was followed by the panel sessions over the two days, most of which focused on the Holocaust and the 1971 conflict between East and West Pakistan, which led to the separation of the two areas and which, for the inhabitants of East Pakistan is considered a war of independence. However, this war led to the death of three million people, with between two to four million women suffering from violence, rape and terrible degradation following the separation or death of their menfolk. Other issues were also canvassed, such as Black slavery in the United States, as seen through

literature, and the issue of mass killing in China for organ transplants and prisoners of conscience, particularly the Falun Gong.



Above: Professor Rutland in discussion with Professor Dina Porat and Dr Stephanie Rotem (both of Tel Aviv University). Photo Credit: S. Rutland.

My own paper dealt with Holocaust education in Australia, and built on a presentation I did with Sue Hampel of the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University and Co-President of the Melbourne

**Call for Submissions, AAJS
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Do you have a story, report or review you'd like to see in the next edition of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies Newsletter? Send your submissions, or even just your ideas, to jennifer.creese@uqconnect.edu.au.

Jewish Holocaust and Research Centre, to the November 2016 meeting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) in Iasi, Rumania. It looked at the issue of the parochialism and universalism in terms of Holocaust remembrance, a theme also picked up by Professor Porat and Dr Bloom.

This was an important conference and an important event for India, where there has been little focus on the Holocaust or the conflicting periods in India history, both with the separation in 1947 between India and Pakistan, and then the 1971 war. We all learnt a lot about the other's narratives and the focus on less well-known periods of violence and genocide.

Professor Emerita Suzanne D. Rutland

Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney