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THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

**Department of Hebrew,
Biblical and Jewish Studies
Report 2018–19**

Supported by the Fund For Jewish Higher Education

School of Languages and Cultures



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Cover image: Moses Joseph arrived in the colony in chains in 1827 and by 1842 became the President of the first Australian purpose-built synagogue, the York Street Synagogue. In 1856 he donated the funds for this stained glass window installed in the University of Sydney Quadrangle.

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Contents

2018-2019 Chair's Welcome.....	2
Department Faculty Member Notes..	4
Conferences and Guests	10
Our Students	14
Mandelbaum Program and Scholars in Residence	19
Mandelbaum House: Residential College	23
Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning	24
Publications.....	26
Communicating with Communities - HBJS on Social Media.....	28
A Doubter's Guide.....	30
Australia obtains full membership in International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)	31
The Ann Kirby gift.....	32
Supporters	33

2018–2019 Chairs' Welcome

Welcome to 2018–2019's Report of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. The report is a chance to review the wide range of activities and achievements of our department's staff, honorary associates and students.

While we are only a small department in the university, we are recognized for being big on achievements, whether this is inside the university, for example being the leading department for postgraduate students in our School, or the international reputation of our research. We are the only department in Australia that covers the full history of the Hebrew language from the ancient biblical period, through the Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic Hebrew, and Medieval Hebrew, all the way to Modern Hebrew. We are equally strong in the history and literature of the same time span, from the ancient world of the Bible, all the way through to Jewish history in the modern period, as well as contemporary Jewish life and identity. If you haven't experienced it already, why not come and join our unique and vibrant research community? You can also keep in touch through our department Facebook page. Please visit and 'Like' us at <https://www.facebook.com/HBJSdepartment/>

Out of the many highlights in the report, I would like to draw attention to some of the outstanding achievements of our students. Right from the beginning of their time with us, students tell us that there is something special about the intellectually challenging but very supportive culture of our department that helps them achieve great things. When you turn to the 'student achievements' section you will find out, for

example, how PhD candidate Will Allington was runner up in the 2018 university wide 3 Minute Thesis competition, and hear how what students such as Noam Hayman, Dana Segall and Hila Tsor learned from us has led them to new exciting opportunities in their lives.

We would like to thank Laura Curtis and Yulia Berlin for their amazing work assisting Avril Alba in compiling this Annual Report. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our many generous supporters who together are responsible for the ongoing viability and health of the Fund for Jewish Higher Education (please see 'Our Donors' section for further details). Without their support, our work could not be achieved, and it is only due to their generosity that we can plan for the future growth and development of the department.

**A/Professor Ian Young and Dr Avril Alba
Chairs, Department of Hebrew, Biblical
and Jewish Studies**

Fund for Jewish Higher Education

The Fund for Jewish Higher Education (FJHE) was established in 1981 by six eminent Jewish Australians to promote and encourage the full range of Jewish studies at University level, including Jewish History, Civilisation, Community Life, Literature, Language, Religion and Philosophy.

Since receiving a generous bequest from the late Felicia Einhorn in 2002, the major recipient of support from the FJHE has been the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies ('HBJS') at the University of Sydney, which is the only institution in Australia to offer a full program in Classical Hebrew, Biblical Studies, Modern Hebrew, and Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture, including Holocaust Studies. In 2018-19, the FJHE continued to support the following lectureships in that program:

- Biblical Studies, Classical Hebrew and Language of the Hebrew Bible filled by Dr Gili Kugler from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Associate Professor Ian Young.
- Modern Hebrew: The Malka Einhorn Lectureship in Modern Hebrew filled by Dr Yona Gilead.
- Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture and Holocaust Studies filled by Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod and Dr Avril Alba. Dr Abrahams-Sprod's position is also generously supported by the Roth Charitable Foundation and the Yarranabbe Foundation.
- Teacher training program: The Jewish Studies and Hebrew Teacher Education program is a 50% Lectureship in the Faculty of Education for Classical Hebrew/ Modern Hebrew teaching methods, to train Jewish Day School teachers.
- FJHE Administrator: A part-time administrator Ms Yulia Berlin.

- Casual lecturers as required for Biblical Studies and Classical Hebrew, Modern Hebrew and Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture.

Between 2016 and 2019 the FJHE also received very generous support from Isaac and the late Susan Wakil, which we gratefully acknowledge.

The Department of HBJS is well regarded within the University by academics and the university administration. In the context of the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and rising antisemitism in Australia and overseas, there have been increasing polemical attacks against Israel's legitimacy as the nation-state of the Jewish people, denial of Jewish peoplehood and falsification of Jewish history. Academia has been both the source and the venue for many of these polemical attacks in Australia and overseas, including calls for the boycott of Israel (BDS). It is therefore more important than ever to maintain a strong Jewish academic presence on campus both to rebut propagandistic arguments by anti-Jewish and anti-Israel individuals and groups and to develop and maintain networks with other academics to maintain integrity of discourse about Israel and the Jewish people.

New subjects being offered in 2019 were Holocaust Representation, taught with the English Department, and the Development of Zionism. A positive development has been building relationships with other departments while formulating the new degree and maintaining close academic support for the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Over the last decade, the Department of HBJS has consistently topped the list of enrolled higher degree research students' of the 14 departments in the University's School of Language and Cultures. This has created a rich research environment, and many of our graduates have continued to maintain links with the department in their later careers.

I take this opportunity to thank our trustees, George Lucas, Stanley Roth AM and Deborah Ziegler for devoting their valuable time and efforts to the work of the FJHE. On a sad note Professor Graham de Vahl Davis AM retired as a trustee due to ill health. Graham was one of the original six trustees who established the FJHE in 1981. Due to the vision and foresight of Graham and his colleagues, Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney is an established and well-respected discipline. In Graham's place we welcomed lawyer Deborah Ziegler as a new trustee of the FJHE on 28 June 2019.

At the end of 2018 our administrator Laura Curtis moved on to brighter career opportunities and we welcomed Yulia Berlin in 2019 as our new administrator.

Finally, I thank our office bearers Emeritus Professor Clive Kessler, Professor Konrad Kwiet, and Professor Suzanne Rutland OAM, as well as Dr Avril Alba and our Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod for their unstinting support during the year.

Peter Wertheim
Chair, Fund for Jewish Higher Education

Department Faculty Member Notes 2018–2019



Dr Avril Alba

Senior Lecturer in Holocaust Studies and Jewish Civilisation

has spoken at numerous public and scholarly events in 2018–19 including delivering an address for the opening of the new *Holocaust and Human Rights exhibition* at the Sydney Jewish Museum on 15 February 2018, an exhibition for which she served as Project Manager/Lead CI with CIs A/Professor Jennifer Barrett and Professor Dirk Moses. The exhibition was one of the key research outputs from the Australian Research Council Linkage grant *Australian Holocaust Memory, Human Rights and the Contemporary Museum* and was placed Highly Commended at the MAGNA (Museums and Galleries National Awards). On 18 March 2018 she was a panel member for a discussion of the film *Austerlitz* at Sydney Jewish Museum with Sachsenhausen Curator, Dr Astrid Ley. On 8 May 2018 Dr Alba chaired *Voices and Vision: The Future of Education* with panel members David Gonski AM Belinda Hutchinson, AM and Jenny Allum at the Sydney Jewish Museum. She also served as judge for the Jewish National Fund *Jewish Changemakers Award* in May 2018 and the Hans Kimmel prize in 2019. With Professor Rutland and interstate participants, she serves as an Australian expert delegate at the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance* (IHRA) and was part of the team effort that gained Australia's full membership to IHRA in May 2019. Dr Alba also presented *A Failure of Memory: Revisiting the Demidenko Debate* at the *Lessons and Legacies* conference, *The Holocaust: Global Perspectives and National Narratives*, held at Washington University on 1–4 November 2018. On the 25 May 2019 she interviewed world-renowned public intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy for the Jewish Communal Appeal major fundraising event in front of an audience of 1,700 at the Horden Pavilion. On the 26 May 2019 she was an invited panel discussant for *The Holocaust and Human Rights* with Dr David Silberklang (Yad Vashem), Dr Donna Lee-Frieze (Deakin University) and Mr Ed Santow (Australian HR Commissioner) for the *Gandel Holocaust Education* conference in Melbourne and on 11 June 2019 participated in the panel *Multidirectional Memory? National Holocaust Memorials and (Post-)Colonial Legacies* at the German Historical Institute, London. On 14–18 July 2019 she spoke on *Forging Memory: Indigenous Commemoration in Australia* for the panel *Difficult Memories for Silenced Voices: Genocide of Australian Aborigines* at the *International Association of Holocaust Scholars* conference, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

HBJS faculty celebrate Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod's award: Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland, Dr Gili Kugler, Dr Yona Gilead, Assoc Professor Ian Young, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, Dr Avril Alba





Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies

participated in two national conferences, two university-based research workshops and an event held by the School of Languages and Cultures (SLC). He also gave public lectures in 2018–2019. From 11–12 February 2019 he attended the 31st annual conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies entitled *Jewish Studies in Australia: New Directions* held at Monash University, presenting a paper entitled: *From Humiliation, to Segregation, to Annihilation: The Education of Young Jews in Nazi Germany*. He also delivered a lecture on this same topic to the Hobart Hebrew Congregation on 12 May 2019. On 7 June 2019, Dr Abrahams-Sprod presented at the SLC Research Day, where he delivered a paper entitled: *From Humiliation, to Segregation, to Annihilation – The Case Study of Magdeburg*. From 22–23 September 2019 he attended the 2nd conference of the Australasian Association of Holocaust Organisations

entitled: *Survivor Testimony in the 21st Century...Ensuring the Voices Live on* at the Sydney Jewish Museum, presenting a paper entitled: *Between History, Memory and Emotion: The Holocaust Correspondence, Possessions, Memoirs and Memories of the Herrmann Family*. Dr Abrahams-Sprod also participated in the research huddle *Translatibility of Cultures* at the university on 5 February 2018 and the retreat for *Multilingual Australia: Past and Present* at the university and in the Blue Mountains from 6–9 February 2018. Dr Abrahams-Sprod was also invited to address AUJS on 24 April 2018, where he delivered a presentation entitled: *Reclaiming the Z-Word: A History of Zionism*. He further presented a session at Yom Limmud 2018 at UNSW on 17 June 2018, his session entitled: *Completing the Picture: Oral History and the Story of the Jews of Magdeburg under Nazism*.

Dr Abrahams-Sprod delivered two presentations to the Honours Club of The Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the first on 15 August 2018 entitled: *Jerusalem the Contested City: The Jewish Significance of Jerusalem* and the second on 28 August 2019 entitled: *The Role of Religion in Israeli Politics and Society*. In 2019, Dr Abrahams-Sprod also received a prestigious Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Teaching Excellence Award, which was awarded at an official ceremony on 28 October 2019. On 3 November 2019, he delivered the Annual Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture in Adelaide, presenting on the topic: *Jewish and Israeli Identities in Contemporary Israel*.

Dr Abrahams-Sprod Receives Teaching Excellence Award

On 28 October 2019 at an official award ceremony held in MacLaurin Hall at The University of Sydney, Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod was honoured with this award in recognition of his teaching excellence. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences commented that: “Recipients have demonstrated an evidence informed approach to critical reflection on teaching and learning, evaluation of their teaching practice, engagement with higher education research, and a focus on improving student learning. Michael’s nominees, above all, had made strong reference to his student-centred focus and his interdisciplinary teaching methods. In further letters of support for his award, Chair of the Department, Dr Avril Alba, by way of example stressed the pathbreaking work he has undertaken in co-teaching (with the Department of History and the Department of Arabic Language and Cultures) the unit of study: *HSTY2607: Palestine, Israel and the Middle East* exploring the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict and his pivotal role in redeveloping the program in Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture. Head of the School of Languages and Cultures, Professor Adrian Vickers, commented on the important contribution Michael makes to the teaching culture of the School as a whole and to the nexus between teaching and research and that “in a School that has many excellent teachers, Michael stands out for his commitment and care in teaching”.

Michael commented as follows: “As an educator, I have always been passionate about sharing my subject knowledge, learning from my students and about developing students’ abilities to become independent learners.

My teaching philosophy is very simple and is encapsulated in how I commence each unit of study. I explain to students that it is my hope that we will all learn from each other, that we will enjoy and be challenged by this learning time, that students will find assessment tasks meaningful and that at the conclusion of the unit, that each person will have achieved positive outcomes and will go away with having felt part of a learning community and confident to apply skills learnt to real-world situations”.



Professor Annamarie Jagose, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences presents Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod with a Teaching Excellence Award



Emeritus Professor Rifaat Ebied

continues to serve as Co-Editor of *Sayyab Translation Journal (STJ)* and *Supplements on Translation Studies*, London, UK; as Co-Editor (with Dr Erica Hunter) of *Corpus Codicum Mandaeorum* for publishing works related to the Mandaean Language and Religion by Brepols, Belgium, and as Editor of the English Language Section of *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies [JAAS]*.



The Association for the Development of Poetry and Heritage honours Prof Ebied



Dr Yona Gilead

Malka Einhorn Modern Hebrew Senior Lecturer and Program Coordinator

has continued publishing in her major area of research, acquisition of Modern Hebrew as an additional language. Dr Gilead's latest book *Dynamics of teaching and learning Modern Hebrew as an additional language: Using Hebrew as a means of instruction and acquisition* (published by Brill Rodopi) presents original classroom research and offers both empirical findings and theorization of a beginner-level Modern Hebrew university cohort. The book presents a successful case of Modern Hebrew instruction, as well as serving as a model for replication. It highlights eight key teaching-learning features and provides a detailed analysis of the ways these features functioned interconnectedly to create an effective and positive learning environment. In addition to the book publication, and to coining the acronym THAL (Teaching Hebrew as an Additional Language), further publications from this research have come out as book chapters. More recently, Dr Gilead has embarked on a new research project which looks at the impact formal classroom instruction and informal educational experiences have on Jewish Day school students' identity formation. A major message emerging from this research, to be published in major educational journals, is the importance of studying schooling as a venue for the development of adolescents' identity and the importance of listening to student voices. Dr Gilead has contributed to the department's newly established social media platforms, which now include Facebook, Instagram and YouTube podia. In addition to her work at the University, Dr Gilead has also been actively involved with the wider Jewish community. In the area of education, Dr Gilead has been consulting NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) on a new K-10 Modern Hebrew syllabus, as well as providing Professional Development sessions to Jewish Day schools and BJE Hebrew teachers. Promoting Israeli-Hebrew culture, Dr Gilead organized a lecture for a Hebrew speaking audience with Gil Hovav who is a well renowned author, food critic, T.V. presenter, as well a descendant of the famous Ben-Yehuda and Hovav families.



Dr Gili Kugler

Dr Gili Kugler's research focuses on the development of narratives, traditions and beliefs in the Hebrew Bible. Her research lies within the framework of literary-historical analysis, a method examining the evolution of texts and ideas throughout time, tracing the authors' purposes and concerns, and the historical realities of their time. In 2018 Dr Kugler has published an article based on a presentation she gave at the 2017 AAJS conference: 'Moses died and the people moved on: A Hidden Narrative in Deuteronomy', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43 (2018), 191–204. In 2019 Dr Kugler had spent a half-year sabbatical for research, during which she produced three new articles, now under review: 'Egypt without slavery(?): Tracing the tradition of Israel's residence in Egypt'; 'Not Moses, but David: Theology and Politics in Psalm 78', and 'More than a Servant of God: the Case of Rebekah'. Despite dealing with a relatively wide range of biblical books and genres, a consistent place in Kugler's research is devoted to literary and historical background of the texts, thus to the world and the worldviews of the ancient authors and their audience. In 2019 Dr Kugler published her first book: *When God Wanted to Destroy the Chosen People: Biblical Traditions and Theology on the Move* (DeGruyter, 2019). The book examines the development of ideas found in the Bible, about Israel's non-negotiable status in contrast to God's revocable commitment to them. The notion of the chosen people's near annihilation depicted in the Bible enables a striking exposure of the complex biblical theology and of the intricacy of the text's methods. Employing philological and diachronic tools the book helps to reveal and restore the variety of voices in the biblical literature and on the society that created it. In 2018–19 Dr Kugler has presented her work in several academic conferences and seminars. She was part of the organising committee of the 2018 Conference of the Australian Fellowship for Biblical Studies (FBS), and since the beginning of 2019 has held the role of the Sydney FBS coordinator. Through this role she stays in intensive contact with Hebrew Bible and New Testament lecturers from universities and colleges in NSW, and runs and organises four annual symposiums and events, hosting national and international scholars. With the aim of engaging with the broader community, Kugler has given in the last couple of years several public lectures in the Jewish/Israeli community. In addition, she has published articles in popular newspapers and websites: "Exodus without slavery"; "Moses narrative tried to root out any attraction to Egypt"; "The additional tragedy of Tisha B'Av"; "Moses Dies at the Age of 120 – Was it Premature?" As part of her departmental roles, Dr Kugler has been responsible for the Department's social media platform with the aim to create a public exposure to the work of the department's staff and students, as well as enhancing a sense of community. Dr Kugler has been coordinating and teaching courses in Classical Hebrew and Biblical Studies and continues to supervise three PhD students.



Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet

In 2018-19 Emeritus Professor Kwiet carried out archival studies in Israel, Latvia and Germany. He attended international conferences in Berlin and Akko/Israel. He served as guide of a tour of the Sydney Jewish Museum to Holocaust Memorial sites in Berlin and Poland and continued the search in Latvia for murder sites in *Contaminated Landscapes* of the Holocaust. He published two book chapters and two articles, presided at several book launches, gave several radio and TV interviews and presented a paper on *Holocaust Landscapes* at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne and a keynote speech to 300 Gandel teacher training graduates at the *Gandel Holocaust Education conference* in Melbourne in May 2019.



Rabbi Dr Ari Lobel

Lecturer in Classical Hebrew and Judaism Curriculum in the Sydney School of Education and Social Work

In 2018-19, Rabbi Dr Ari Lobel has been involved in promoting the department in the wider Jewish community, primarily to raise awareness among high school students as to the options of taking courses with the department. He has given presentations throughout the year to Yr11 and Yr12 students at Moriah College, Emmanuel School, Masada College and Kesser Torah College. At Emmanuel School, aside from promoting the department, Dr Lobel gave a lecture to students on the history of the Hebrew alphabet, his major area of research at the moment, on which he aims to publish an article within the next six months. In addition to visiting the high schools, he also gave a presentation promoting the department at a general meeting of the leaders and counselors from all the Jewish youth groups in Sydney. Aside from his work on behalf of the department, Dr Lobel has also been actively involved with the wider community in the area of education. He has been working with NESAs (NSW Education Standards Authority) as part of an HSC Examination Committee and also as a marker and judge for the Classical Hebrew HSC exam. Dr Lobel also served as an education consultant for the Australian government agency, TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency). In terms of Professional Development, Dr Lobel has given sessions to teachers both at Masada College and Kesser Torah College.



Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland

Professor Suzanne Rutland, OAM, has continued to maintain a very active research profile. She continues to edit the Sydney edition of the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, published in June each year. As a member of the Australian expert delegation for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, she has continued as an active participant in the Education Working Group, attending the plenary meetings in Geneva and Bern (2017); Rome and Ferrara (2018), and Luxembourg (June 2019) with Australia moving from

observer to liaison to full member of IHRA. In Bern Australia was upgraded from Observer Status to Liaison Status, with the delegation being applauded by the whole gathering for Australia's efforts in Holocaust education, memory and commemoration and in Luxembourg Australia became a full member. She also served on the conference committee for the 30th Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies in Perth, presenting on 'Revising the concepts of Holocaust memory and national trauma'; has continued her research for Isi Leibler's biography and to work with Professor Zehavit Gross of Bar-Ilan University on their study on Jewish Education in the Asia-Pacific Region, funded by the Pratt Foundation. She also has published further chapters in books and journal articles. Together with Professor Gross, she has been invited to act as consultant for the multi-faith organisation, Better Balanced Futures (BBF) in NSW, Australia which is a response to the NSW Government's review of Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education in Ethics and marks the first time in Australia that such a wide range of faith providers have formed policies together. They prepared a detailed report on the importance of SRE in government schools for the development of young people's values, ethics and morality, and presented their findings and recommendations to the NSW SRE Parliamentary celebration on 22 November when BBF was launched. In early 2019 they were asked to prepare a further report on SRE and multiculturalism, which Professor Rutland presented to the NSW Minister for Multiculturalism and faith leaders in May 2019. In August 2019 BBF futures sponsored a second visit of Professor Gross, and with Professor Rutland, they addressed multi-faith groups and leaders on their research findings in Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart and Melbourne.



Associate Professor Ian Young

Associate Professor Ian Young assisted with convening the fourth National Conference of the Fellowship for Biblical Studies, held in Sydney at the North Sydney Campus of the Australian Catholic University on the 26-28 September 2018. At the conference, Ian delivered the paper *Textual Variants as Comparative Commentary on the Books of the Bible, Illustrated by the Book of Daniel*. The Fellowship is the leading Biblical Studies organization in Australia. He continued to assist the Sydney and NSW Coordinator of the Fellowship, Dr Rachele Gilmour, a former graduate of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies and a current Honorary Research Associate, later succeeded in this role by Dr Gili Kugler from this department, by serving on the Executive Committee. He also served on the Mandelbaum House Academic Advisory Committee.

Conferences and Guests

The Australian Association for Jewish Studies 30th and 31st Annual Conferences

The AAJS conference held its 30th anniversary conference at the University of Western Australia, the first time the Association has held its conference in Perth. The theme of the conference was 'By the Rivers of Babylon: Memory, Emotion and Jews', which attracted both local, national and international scholars. Both immediate past president, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod and Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland were on the conference committee. A number of the scholars associated with the department presented academic papers, as well as chairing sessions. Our lecturer in Biblical Studies and Classical Hebrew, Dr Gili Kugler, spoke on *Egypt without slavery - Ezekiel's alternative tradition of Israel in Egypt*, whilst Professor Suzanne D. Rutland's topic was *Revising the concepts of Holocaust memory and national trauma*. As well, doctoral student, Stephen Cook, spoke on *Memory and emotion in the shaping and interpretation of the story of Jonah* and past MA student Anne-Louise Dadak, spoke on *Food & Memory*. Writing about the conference highlights she commented: 'Scholarship, meticulous research, originality and creativity characterized the 30th annual conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, which focused overall on biblical texts, Jewish history and biography, as well as contemporary themes'.

The 31st AAJS conference was held at Monash in February 2019 with the theme Jewish Studies in Australia: New Directions. Conference convenors A/Prof Julie Kalman and Dr Daniella Doron created an intimate and intensive conference which sought to initiate discussion regarding the state of Jewish, Hebrew and Biblical Studies in Australia. Questions addressed included: What current research is being undertaken? What disciplines are covered? What methodological perspectives and challenges drive research in Australia? Do we share common themes and approaches? AAJS Melbourne, 2019, brought Jewish, Hebrew and Biblical Studies scholars from across the country together in conversation, to present their latest research, and to explore common themes, and maintain community and collegiality in this scholarship in Australian universities. Drs Alba, Abrahams-Sprod and Swarts from the department presented papers on their current research projects as well as department doctoral candidate Mr Will Allington.



Presentation sessions at the 30th anniversary conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies conference held at the University of Western Australia

Jewish, Hebrew and Biblical Studies scholars from across the country together in conversation, to present their latest research, and to explore common themes, and maintain community and collegiality in this scholarship in Australian universities. Drs Alba, Abrahams-Sprod and Swarts from the department presented papers on their current research projects as well as department doctoral candidate Mr Will Allington.

The Fellowship for Biblical Studies (FBS) 2018 National Conference

The Fellowship for Biblical Studies is the major association for scholars of Biblical Studies in Australia. Long established in Melbourne, the Sydney and NSW branch was set up in 2008, and was initially run by A/Prof Ian Young from the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. In 2016 Ian handed over the reins to Dr Rachelle Gilmour, an honorary research associate of the Department, and in 2019 to Dr Gili Kugler, from the Department.

The fourth FBS national conference was held on September 26–28, 2018, at the Australian Catholic University North Sydney campus. Rachelle was in charge of organising it and did a great job of innovatively expanding the sort of sessions that were held, and the range of people who attended. Rachelle's conference committee, who were involved in the planning and organising of the conference included Dr Gareth Wearne from Australian Catholic University, and Dr Gili Kugler and Prof Ian Young from the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. 72 people attended the conference, from Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth, and a couple from New Zealand. A number

of the senior undergraduate students from the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies did an excellent job as conference assistants, making sure everything ran smoothly. It provided them a chance to experience their first academic conference. Gili ran a session specifically for postgraduate research students, which was relevant and helpful for the students who attended, including a very strong contingent of students from the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies.

Of the range of papers presented, there were many from Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies Department staff, postgraduate students, and former students, for example: Staff: Rachelle Gilmour, *Uneven, Uncertain, and Prone to Reversal: Divine Emotion in the Book of Samuel*; Gili Kugler, *The Golden Calf Episode in the Wilderness:*

Not Such a Terrible Sin After All; Ian Young, *Textual Variants as Comparative Commentary on the Books of the Bible, Illustrated by the Book of Daniel*; Current Postgraduate Students: Paul Byun, *A Paradoxical Situation and God's Righteousness in Ezra 9:15*; Steve Cook, *Jonah's Route to Tarshish*; Natalie Mylonas, *No Eye Pitied You: Emotions and the Formation of Social Status in Ezekiel 16:1-7*; Jonathan Thambyrajah, *Loanwords and the Rhetoric against Tyre in Ezekiel 27*; Megan Turton, *Continuity or Contrast? Mapping the Hermeneutical Dynamics of Legal 'versus' Narrative Variants in Exodus 19-24*; Former Staff and Students: Lucy Davey, *The Pomegranate – A Symbol of Contradiction*; John Davies, *The Eloquent Silences of Genesis*; Martin Shields, *Dream Incubation in Qohelet*.



The Fourth FBS National Conference, ACU, North Sydney campus

The Fellowship for Biblical Studies (FBS) 2019 Annual Meetings

The Sydney FBS brings together Hebrew Bible and New Testament scholars in four annual symposiums in Sydney. The 2019 symposiums alternatively took place at Moore Theological College and Sydney University. The meetings had an average of 25 attendees – scholars and lecturers from universities and colleges in NSW, who participated in a social lunch followed by a presentation and discussion on new scholarly research. Our August meeting included an engaging tour of the rare books section of the Fisher library at The University of Sydney.

Our presenters and presentations of 2019 were:

April: Prof Gary Rendsburg, from Rutgers University, USA, on *How the Bible Is Written*

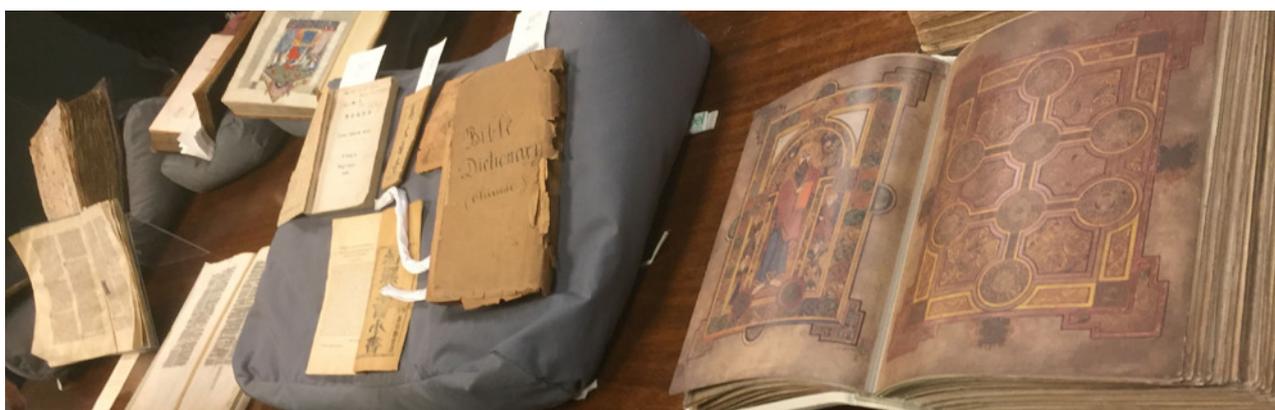
June: Dr Louise Pryke, from Macquarie University, on *Not the Biblical Noah: Communication and Character in Flood Narratives*

August: Dr David Frankel, from the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, on *The Binding of Isaac and Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel*

November: Dr John Davies, from the University of Sydney, on *What Did Luke Think He Was Writing?*

The meetings of the FBS are open for the association's members and friends and are accessible to the general public through the HBS YouTube page.

If you are connected or interested to be connected to Biblical Studies in academia you are welcome to join the FBS society. For details contact Dr Gili Kugler at gili.kugler@sydney.edu.au.



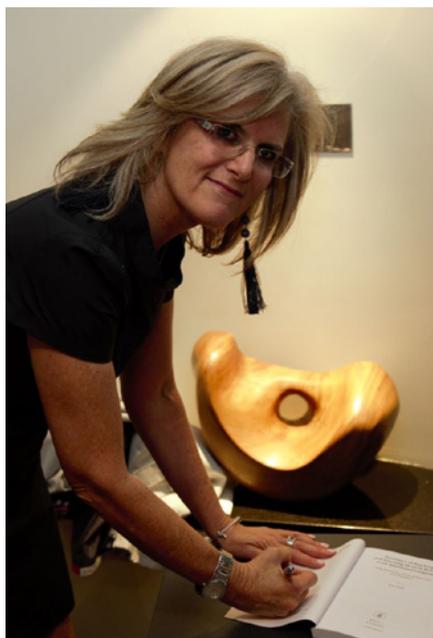
The FBS group at the rare books section in Fisher Library, the University of Sydney, examining some of the Hebrew Bible manuscripts and other treasures held there.

Dynamics – Dr Yona Gilead’s book launch

Dr Yona Gilead’s first book was launched at Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney on Thursday March 22, 2018. Yona is the Malka Einhorn Modern Hebrew lecturer and program coordinator. Her book *Dynamics of teaching and learning Modern Hebrew as an additional language: Using Hebrew as a means of instruction and acquisition*, which is published by Brill Rodopi, was based on her doctoral thesis. The book presents original classroom research and offers both empirical findings and theorization of a beginner-level Modern Hebrew cohort. As the book’s sub-title suggests, Hebrew was used

in speaking, reading and writing, by both teacher and students as the main means of teaching and learning. The book highlights eight key teaching and learning features and provides a detailed analysis of the ways these features functioned interconnectedly to create an effective and positive learning environment. The book presents a successful example of Modern Hebrew instruction, which can serve as a model for other cases. Professor Peter Morgan from the School of Languages and Cultures, Sydney University launched the book. Guest speakers included supervisor Associate Professor Jenny Hammond,

from UTS and associate supervisor, Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland from the University of Sydney. The publisher’s reviewer, who recommended the publication of the book, wrote: ‘This is an important piece of scholarship because there is so little written on the teaching and learning of Modern Hebrew as an additional language.’ The innovative nature of the book and its importance in understanding effective Modern Hebrew pedagogy was stressed by the speakers at the launch.



Left: Dr Yona Gilead

Top Right: Dr Gili Kugler, Professor Peter Morgan, Dr Yona Gilead, Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland, Dr Avril Alba, Assoc Professor Jenny Hammond, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod

Bottom Right: Book launch audience, Mandelbaum House



Our Students



Vice Chancellor Dr Michael Spence presents Will Allington with his 3-minute Thesis Award

Will Allington

Over the last three years, I have been working on my doctorate in the department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. In 2018, I threw my hat in the ring for the 3 Minute Thesis competition, a challenge to communicate my entire doctorate thesis at a layman level within merely 3 minutes. When a doctorate can reach between 80,000 and 100,000 words, limiting it to just a 3-minute speech can be a daunting prospect. Nonetheless, I've wished to develop the essential communication skills needed to bridge the gap between the so-called ivory tower of academia and broader society, and the 3 Minute Thesis competition presented a perfect opportunity.

The 3 Minute Competition originated at the University of Queensland in 2008, making this year the tenth anniversary of the competition. It has since spread to over 200 universities around the globe, and the University of Sydney participates in the Asia-Pacific region of the competition, alongside over 50 other universities. The competition begins at faculty level, and winners from their faculties advance to the university level, with only one winner advancing to the semi-finals.

My doctoral thesis focuses on antisemitism on the internet. It is primarily concerned with how the internet has caused antisemitism to qualitatively and quantitatively change, and how we can develop new strategies to counter its spread online. My supervisor has been the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies' own Dr Avril Alba, and my associate supervisor has been Dr Andre Oboler from La Trobe University and CEO of the Online Hate Prevention Institute.

Even though I was more than a year away from completing my thesis, it was a daunting prospect to summarise it within 180 seconds. I opened with talking about the prospects of racism on the internet, specifically the opportunities it presents to racists and antisemites to spread their bigotry. I followed up with a short summary of the history of antisemitism and how the internet represents the next major step in this history of the 'longest hatred'. Next, I summarised my findings about antisemitism as it is on the internet now, specifically how it has evolved with popular 'meme' culture to attract a young, vulnerable audience. Finally, I concluded with my prospected strategies to combat antisemitism online, and how these strategies can be applied to all forms of online hatred.

In the first week of June 2018 I came first in the first round of the competition, competing against doctoral students from across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. On August 3 I competed in the university-wide level of the competition, competing against the winners from all the other faculties at the University of Sydney. It was a terrific event, presenting the opportunity to learn about all the amazing research being done at the university. I was proud to receive the runner up prize, and proud to represent the department in this highly rewarding competition.



Shirin Jamshir

Teaching and Learning Impact Feature by Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod

Each semester we work with a great variety of students all undertaking studies with us for a variety of reasons. Each semester it also becomes very obvious that our Department is having an impact on those who study with us and pursue careers which either incorporate their studies or have even driven students into certain careers.

The following report is from a student who studied in my unit JCTC2607: *Israel in the Modern Middle East* in S2 2017. Her name is Shirin Jamshir and she was on exchange from her home institution – The University of Uppsala in Sweden. Once she completed her time here, she was so influenced by this unit of study, that she applied for an internship at the Swedish Embassy in Israel. Whilst she was unsuccessful in this venture, she was offered the same position in Jordan, where she is now located. She travels frequently to Israel and her story follows:

At the University of Sydney courses, seminars, and public forums are offered and designed to widen horizons. Originally, the choice to study in Australia was grounded in an interest and curiosity for Australian culture. This idea grew when I realized the opportunities that a tremendous and multicultural city as Sydney had to offer.

During my exchange semester, I enrolled in the unit of study “Israel in the Modern Middle East” with the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. My overall impression of the course was that its pedagogy and lecturer were both of the highest quality and it offered a study environment that encouraged an open conversation both among students and with professors.

The unit of study introduced me to Israel’s position in the modern Middle East and the world from state formation in 1948 to the present day. It introduced me to how the state has been shaped by social, political and economic processes. It introduced me to a deeper understanding of the Balfour Declaration, Sykes-Picot Agreement, The 1967 Six Day War and the Intifadas.

A positive experience with this unit was the combination of history lectures and open discussions in small groups. The lectures were always very interesting to attend, with a such an encouraging and experienced professor. I found the discussions to be very useful conversations that went beyond the subject, and beyond the history itself.

Studying at The University of Sydney has impacted me more than expected. Firstly, it deepened my interest for the Middle East and the conflict. One year later, I found myself moving to Jordan doing an internship at the Swedish Embassy, where I had the opportunity to work first-hand with monitoring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The knowledge I acquired in this unit has helped me understand both sides of the story. To understand the struggles both parties endured. Visiting Israel also strengthen this belief – a land with so much history and culture.



Dr Anna Rosenbaum

The Safe House Down Under

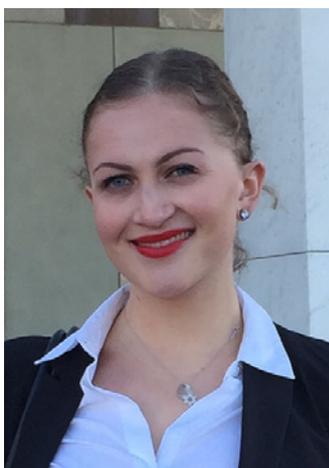
The Safe House Down Under, Jewish Refugees from Czechoslovakia in Australia 1938-1944 (Peter Lang, International Academic Publishers in October 2017)

is based on the doctoral dissertation of Anna Rosenbaum undertaken in the Dept of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. It examines a subject that has so far not been investigated by historians: the attitude of Australia towards the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938-1939.

Following the annexation of Austria in March 1938, Adolf Hitler set his eyes on Czechoslovakia, the only democratic state in Central and Eastern Europe. The highly industrialized country shared a common border with Germany and Austria and during the 1930s many German and Austrian opponents to Nazism found asylum in that country. However, based on fabricated statements of Nazi leaders of the German minority, pointing to oppression on the part of Czech authorities, Hitler was keen to acquire the region, threatening to unleash a new war if he was not given the green light to annex that part of the country to the Third Reich. He succeeded in doing so on 30 September 1938 at Munich. The Munich Agreement became synonymous with the appeasement policy, promoted by the British and French governments.

While the consequences of the Munich Agreement were studied by historians throughout the years following the Second World War, the attitude of Australia towards the betrayal of Czechoslovakia was not. This book studies the impact of the Agreement throughout the late 1930s and during the Second World War on the Australian government, the opposition, on members of the federal parliament, the media, the churches, the Jewish community, NGO organizations and individual Australians.

It contains ten chapters that introduce the reader to the history of the country and follows its development towards the outbreak of the Second World War. The last chapter concentrates on the stories of individuals whom the author interviewed and thus obtained first-hand information on their experiences when trying to escape certain death and finding a safe home in this country.



Dana Segall

My studies with the Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies Department from 2015-18 have profoundly shaped the development of my academic and career aspirations. Majoring in Modern Hebrew has given me the confidence to now pursue a Master's program in Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where classes are going to be conducted entirely in Hebrew. Beyond the Hebrew language skills I've gained, being able to also co-table units of study from Jewish Civilization, Thought and Culture as part of my Modern Hebrew major has allowed me to enrich and expand my knowledge of Jewish and Israeli history, giving me the foundation I'd always needed to truly be able to cultivate this area of interest. The historical knowledge I've gained has been valuable in so many facets of my life, and has proven particularly useful over the course of an internship I have completed at the Israeli embassy in Canberra. I am certain that the comprehensive education and Hebrew language skills I have received from the HBJS department will continue to empower me in all of my future endeavours, and I would like to thank the HBJS staff for giving me, and so many other students, such a wonderful learning experience.



Hila Tsor

Despite being Israeli and growing up in the midst of the Jewish community in Sydney, I never had any formal education in Jewish history or Hebrew, as I attended a state public school.

Undertaking my studies in Jewish Civilization, Thought and Culture, as well as Hebrew, has broadened my understanding of contemporary Jewish issues, helped me map out the entirety of Jewish history, and allowed me to immerse myself in another language. The Department has provided me with a strong foundation and knowledge of the highs and lows of Jewish history.

Following my degree, I knew that I wanted to begin working professionally in the Jewish community, and my studies have directly contributed towards this aspiration. Learning about Judaism has increased my passion, and helped shape my own Jewish identity. My studies have led me into my current role as the Community Relations Officer at the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. I use my knowledge of Judaism on a daily basis, both in my professional life and in my personal life.

I feel that my studies have shaped my personal growth, and I am incredibly thankful to the Department for inspiring that.



Noam Hayman

Ever since I was a child I have been heavily involved in the Jewish community. After completing my HSC I took on leadership roles at Bnei Akiva, some synagogues and began support teaching at different schools. My increased involvement in the community ran parallel to my studies at with the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. During my studies, I found that the variety of subjects offered provided greater depth when teaching and gave me tremendous appreciation for textual study and the complexity of Jewish History. I found the Department and

classmates to be extremely supportive of each other and this provided a wonderful atmosphere conducive to learning - reinforced by the unique guidance offered by such a friendly faculty.

After studying with the Department I began work at Mount Sinai College teaching Jewish Studies and leading their informal Jewish activities. Concurrently, I have been completing a Masters in Jewish Education with Hebrew University via correspondence. Without the foundational knowledge that I received at Sydney University I would not have moved onto full-time work so soon or been able to begin my Masters.

I am grateful to the Department for their positive encouragement during my studies, the personal connections made between staff and students, and their availability for support during and after my degree. With the connections I made and the opportunities that my studies have opened I have the confidence to pursue a career in Jewish education and look forward to seeing what the future has in store for me.

The Holocaust and Human Rights

The Sydney Jewish Museum's newest permanent exhibition, *The Holocaust and Human Rights* was officially opened on 15 February 2018, by Mr Edward Santow, Human Rights Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission. The research for the exhibition was done in collaboration with HBJS and the University of Sydney and partially funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant *Australian Holocaust Memory, Human Rights and the Contemporary Museum*. CIs Dr Avril Alba, A/Professor Jennifer Barrett, Professor A. Dirk Moses, Creative Director Jisuk Han and Research Assistants Sarah Haid, Marie Bonardelli and Elliot Hull undertook three years of research in Australia and internationally in order to produce the first exhibition of its kind in Australia. Designed by Jisuk Han, founder and principal of X2 Design, the exhibition received a Highly Commended Museums and Galleries National Award in June 2018. It currently receives over 40,000 visitors a year.

The extent of Nazi crimes shocked member states of the United Nations (UN) and in December 1948, the UN

General Assembly passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. However, there were limitations to both the Convention and Declaration as they omitted minority and indigenous rights (among others) and neither were able to seriously inhibit state sovereignty. However, they were and remain important statements of principle. Since their passing at the UN, human rights violations and genocide have continued to mark global society.

The Holocaust and Human Rights Exhibition is comprised of three main areas:

- A Timeline of major human rights developments and violations, including two multimedia displays which show the evolution of international human rights law and continuing instances of genocide and mass atrocities in the 20th and 21st centuries. A dedicated section explores human rights developments in Australian history.
- *Coming to the Table* focuses on human rights achievements and challenges in the Australian context. Four multimedia table top installations each explore a human rights theme from a variety of perspectives. Themes include Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

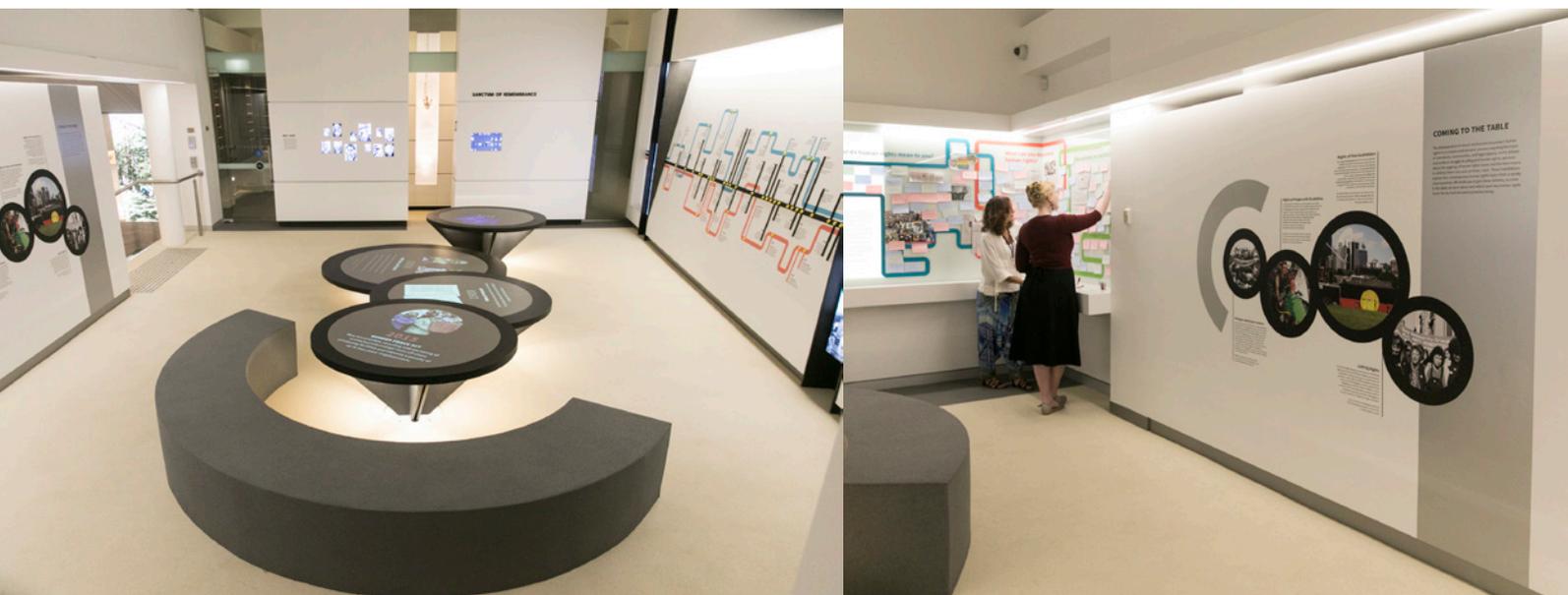
People with Disabilities, Asylum Seekers and Refugees and LGBTIQ Rights.

- The final part of the exhibition is a questioning and interactive space that allows visitors to reflect and write down their thoughts and answers to questions such as: What do human rights mean to you? What can you do to promote human rights? What questions are you left asking?

Through its focuses on historic and contemporary human rights struggles in Australia and the region, *The Holocaust and Human Rights* challenges visitors to explore and question our individual, communal and national responsibilities in upholding human rights today.

**Dr Avril Alba,
A/Prof Jennifer Barrett and
Professor Dirk Moses**

The Holocaust and Human Rights exhibition, Sydney Jewish Museum



Mandelbaum Program and Scholars in Residence

Mandelbaum's scholarship creates bridges between academia and community. The strong partnership between Mandelbaum House, its Scholar in Residence program and the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies continues to offer tremendous speakers to students and to the community.

In the last two years, the Mandelbaum Scholar in Residence program has benefitted enormously from extended visits by Professor Mechthild Gilzmer, Emeritus Professor Carole Fink, Professor Colin Shindler and Professor Gary A. Rendsburg.

Specializing in different ends of history, ancient to modern, these scholars delivered a valuable depth of knowledge and intellectual stimulation to undergraduates and postgraduates through Departmental lectures, Mandelbaum public lectures and guest speaker opportunities in the community. Accommodated on campus at Mandelbaum House, they also positively interact with its multicultural student body.

Mechthild Gilzmer

Professor of French at Universität des Saarlandes, the twentieth century history of Jewish women and their migrations in Europe and North Africa was the focus during this September 2017 visit, where Professor Gilzmer held a dual role as visiting scholar with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Her interests extend to North African literature by Germaine Tillion, a French ethnographer (specialist on Algeria) and French resistance member, who wrote of her experiences while interned in the Ravensbrück concentration camp.

In addition to guest lectures in the Department's Contemporary Jewish Identities course, Professor Gilzmer's public Mandelbaum lectures addressed the Memory of the Holocaust in France since World War II, and the Emigration and Internment of Women in France during the war.

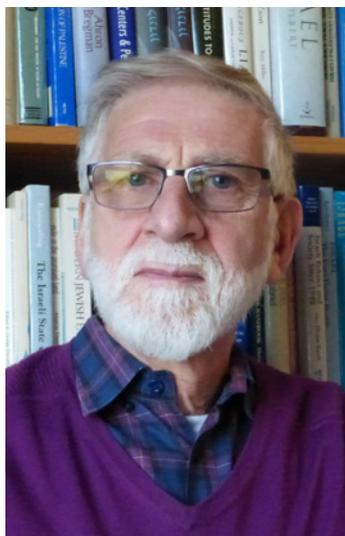




Carole Fink

In a return visit to Sydney in May 2018, following a previous visit as a distinguished Fulbright Research award winner, Professor Fink, Humanities Distinguished Professor of History Emerita at The Ohio State University, focused on International and Jewish historical viewpoints from the last 100 years. Her Mandelbaum lectures included review of Rosa Luxemburg and Emma Goldman, two extraordinary Jewish women who both championed the rights of the oppressed and fought for social justice. Another lecture considered the disparate relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel between 1965-1974 when the countries began a diplomatic relationship.

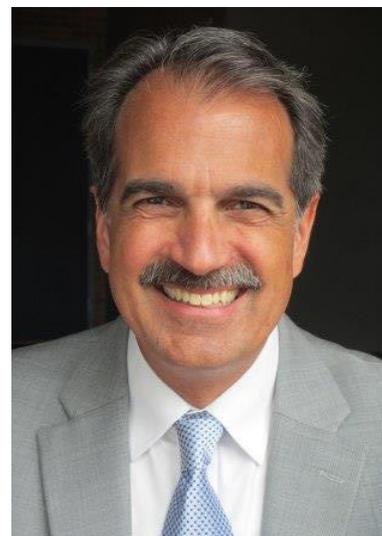
Professor Fink was also a guest lecturer in the Department's course, The Modern Jewish Experience, and presented a cross faculty European Studies / International History seminar on *Rethinking International History: New Tools for an Old Discipline*.



Colin Shindler

Appointed the first Professor of Israel Studies in the United Kingdom and founding chair of the European Association of Israel Studies, University of London SOAS Professor Schindler's areas of expertise include the Israeli Right as well as the European Left. A frequent contributor to international media including the *New York Times*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *History Today*, *Jerusalem Post* and *Ha'aretz*, his lectures at Mandelbaum and in the wider community addressed the shaping of Israeli politics.

His guest lectures and contribution in the Department's Israel in the Modern Middle East course and an inter faculty seminar including History / European Studies academics were outstanding.



Gary A. Rendsburg

Returning in this role for a third successful fellowship, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Professor of Jewish History at Rutgers University, Professor Rendsburg's teaching and research focus of 'all things ancient Israel' shone brightly in his public and University lectures. His work is based primarily on language and literature, and history and archaeology, with his secondary interests including post-biblical Judaism, the Hebrew manuscript tradition, and Jewish life in the Middle Ages.

He received the honour to present the 2019 Alan Crown Lecture with 'The First Diasporas: Egypt and Babylonia'. His lectures centred on the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt, of Arabia and considered England as the Custodian of the Jewish Past. His Departmental guest lectures added great scholarship to Hebrew and Biblical classes.



The Alan Crown Lectures

Hebrew University of Jerusalem prominent scholar of ancient Judaism, Emeritus Professor Michael Stone, presented the 2017 Alan Crown Lecture, titled *Secret Societies in Ancient Judaism*. Department alumna Dr Rachelle Gilmour delivered the address in 2018 with *What does it mean to fear God? A View from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Blanche and Irving Laurie Professor of Jewish History at Rutgers University, Professor Gary A.

Rendsburg delivered the address in 2019 with 'The First Diasporas: Egypt and Babylonia'.

The series is named in honour of the Late Emeritus Professor Alan Crown, a former head of department and prominent biblical researcher, who was the foundation Chairman of Mandelbaum House. The aim of these lectures is to offer talks on topics in Bible aimed at a general audience which showcase the usefulness of academic work in Biblical Studies for the average reader of the Bible, and to promote the Biblical Studies courses in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies.

Guest Lectures

Mandelbaum House was pleased to also host lectures by international scholars visiting Sydney where full houses prevailed, including:



Professor Samuel Kassow

Charles H. Northam Professor of History at Trinity College, Hartford, lectured on *Warsaw: A Jewish Metropolis*, focusing on Warsaw before the war, when it was a magnet that attracted Jewish talent and wealth and a mosaic of different Jewish tribes and how it became one of the most important centers of the Jewish press, of Yiddish theater and of Jewish publishing.



Professor Richard Cohen

specialist in Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Sir Zelman Cowen Visiting Scholar, presented *A Visual Perspective on Modern Jewish History*, introducing the ways various themes and problems have been given visual interpretation from the eighteenth century to the present.



Professor Joshua Jacobson

Director of Choral Activities, Northeastern University and in Sydney for the Australian Jewish Choral Festival, addressed *Tsen Brier: A Russian-Jewish Folksong Becomes a Concentration Camp Requiem* with uplifting respondent **Dr Joseph Toltz**, multi-talented researcher at the University of Sydney's Conservatorium of Music.



Professor Sam Lehman-Wilzig

School of Communication, Bar Ilan University spoke on *The Historical, Theological, and Cultural Roots of Jewish Professional Success*, describing how Jewish religion, culture, and historical circumstances "prepared" Jews in general (and Israel specifically) to excel in the contemporary Information Age.

It was Mandelbaum House's great pleasure to host Dr Yona Gilead's book launch *Dynamics of Teaching and Learning Modern Hebrew as an Additional Language*, launched by Professor Peter Morgan, Director - European Studies Program, School of Languages and Cultures, University of Sydney.

The college also played host for the Department's annual faculty welcome reception, successfully achieving its objective for students and staff to mingle in a social setting.

A highlight was hosting **Lothar Freischlager**, Consul General, Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, where an informal 'conversation' took place with a small audience based on his thesis on the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Holy Land in 1898 and his meeting with Herzl and a Zionist delegation.

Looking Ahead

The will of Rachel Lipton, the remarkable woman whose vision and drive founded Mandelbaum House, observes "I would consider it desirable that the college should work in conjunction with the Department of Semitics of the University."

The fruitful and dynamic association continues to flourish, with the return from the US of Trinity College's Professor Sam Kassow and Smith College Emerita Professor Donna Robinson Divine lined up to lecture to the public and across departments and faculties in the coming year.

The college's distinguished Academic Advisory Committee, headed by Dr Avril Alba and drawn from community and academic circles, continually reviews applications from international scholars to ensure depth, integrity and variety of educational offerings for its programs.

Mandelbaum House: Residential College

Mandelbaum House is the Jewish residential college at the University of Sydney. It is a “home away from home” for 38 Australian and international student residents. It was established in 1996 through a bequest of Rachel Lipton, a graduate of the University, in order to build a college that would house students and provide kosher food on campus. The mix of backgrounds and fields of study amongst our residents provide valuable inter-cultural connections.

All residents study at the University of Sydney and the learning continues in the college. This ranges from an informal chat over breakfast about the daily news, an inspiring talk at one of our monthly formal dinners, a resident presentation about their home country or culture at a theme dinner, or talking about religion and traditions whilst dining in the Sukkah.

Some of the recent highlights in the Mandelbaum calendar for our residents included making *hamentsachen* and *mishloach ma'anut* for Purim, celebrating Israel on Yom Ha'atzmuot and hosting a communal Shabbat dinner with AUJS. Our residents also enjoyed competing in an Intramural Arts and Sports competition with other University residences.

Each month a Formal Dinner is held for residents and a notable guest speaker is invited to present an inspirational and informative talk on their field of expertise or career. Our guest speakers over the past two years have included the University of Sydney Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson AM; Holocaust survivor Eddie Jaku OAM; University of Sydney Deputy Vice Chancellors Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver AM and Professor Pip Pattison AO, Archibald Finalist Loribelle Spirovski; academic Dr Sue Morris, renewable energy expert Mark Schneider; entrepreneur David Vitek; journalist Fiona Harari and historian Emeritus Professor Colin Shindler. Articles and photos from these talks can be found here: www.mandelbaum.usyd.edu.au/blog

We also celebrate the rich and diverse cultural backgrounds of our residents via monthly theme dinners. Our chefs prepare a themed meal and the residents decorate the dining room and informally share information about their home country, religion or culture. Recent theme dinners have included: Diwali, Mexico, Italy, China, Persia, The Philippines and Chile.

Mandelbaum House is also a centre for the study of Jewish heritage, with an education program that brings scholars from around the world. Funded through the Mandelbaum Trust, the Scholar in Residence program offers world-renowned scholars the opportunity to visit, teach, study and research in Sydney. Through public lectures at Mandelbaum House as well as guest speaking opportunities with the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, the residence program encourages wider thinking and intellectual stimulation to the broader Jewish and academic communities. Through having these scholars stay at Mandelbaum, our residents have the wonderful opportunity of engaging with world renowned academics.

Mandelbaum House residents at the University of Sydney Open Day 2019: Yash Budhraj (India), Zoe Moscovici (USA), Matteo Cheodarci (Italy) and Benjamin Leadbetter (Australia)



Shana Kerlander
CEO Mandelbaum House

Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning

2018 and 2019 brought significant growth for the Melton program. Class numbers grew and our revamped strategy with The University of Sydney's Centre for Continuing Education brought a diverse audience to the Melton courses. 2018 started with a bang as Melton Director, Hinda Young, attended the International Director's Conference in Israel.

The conference connected her to other Melton Directors worldwide who have been a tremendous resource to growing our Sydney program. In 2018 three courses were offered a semester and class numbers were better than previous years. A particular highlight was the *Beyond Borders: The History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* course which sold out and had a waitlist. There were two new four-week courses offered in 2018, *We Are What We Remember: The Ever-Evolving Transmission of Jewish History* and *Modern Living Maintaining Balance*. This development of shorter courses was met with delight by many Melton students who struggled to fit the ten-week courses amongst their other obligations. Also, in 2018 was the debut of *The Star and The Crescent: The Long Relationship of Islam and Judaism* taught by Suzanne Rutland. This course was so well received it was taught again in 2019! Finally, the course *Bereshit I: From Adam to Abraham – The First 20 Generations* saw the start of the *Shiv'im Panim* curriculum, a series of courses on Biblical texts. The series of courses has continued in 2019 and the students have raved about the teacher, Tracey Sareff, as well as the selection of material in the course reader.

In 2019 the number of courses offered was increased to four a semester. A significant milestone was the re-starting of the core curriculum. Now offered with The Great Synagogue, Rabbi Benjamin Elton taught the two semesters, semester one covered Jewish holidays and rituals and semester two focused on Jewish theology and major concepts. The courses have been well received by Great Synagogue members as well as the wider community. Students reflect that the atmosphere is warm and welcoming and they learn much from the discussion and the diverse viewpoints of those attending. 2019

Top: Professor Bernie Tuch explaining stem cells in *Jewish Medical Ethics: A 21st Century Discussion*

Bottom: Rabbi Benjamin Elton's Core curriculum class on *Holy Days, Festivities and Religious Practice*





Dr Simon Holloway teaching the March of the Living cohort of *The Holocaust as Reflected in Memoirs and Diaries*

also brought a new course on *Jewish Medical Ethics: A 21st Century Discussion*. Taught by Professor Bernie Tuch, this class attracted a large number of students who shared positive feedback. The material covered was contemporary and the teacher added medical knowledge of the relevant current discussions in Australia. As mentioned previously, the Shiv'im Panim series continued with *Bereshit II: The Story of the First Jewish Family* and *Shemot I: From Slavery to Sinai*. These classes had a loyal following of students as well as new arrivals. Students claim they wish to finish all seven courses with the teacher, Tracey Sareff. 2019 also brought new partnerships for Melton. A six-week class studying selections of *The Holocaust as Reflected in Memoirs and Diaries* was held in conjunction with March of The Living and had 35 students, one of the largest Melton classes in Sydney. Taught by Simon Holloway, this class was meaningful and extremely impactful. Another partnership explored was with the Australian Union of Jewish Students. Many students came together for an evening to study selected material from the *Beyond Borders* course. Finally, there was a partnership between Melton and PJ Library using the Foundations curriculum. These classes were in preparation of the High Holidays to enhance parents' understandings of the PJ Library books.

In the second half of 2018, Hinda Young was on maternity leave and Hilary May Black replaced her. During this time Hilary's considerable experience in marketing led to a resurgence of the Melton public presence. Hilary extended Melton's social media presence with regular news updates to the Melton Sydney Facebook page; she increased distribution of an attractive online Melton newsletter (now sent to over 950 subscribers); and updated Melton information and flyers on key Jewish communal websites. She continued to strategically place paid course advertising in the *Australian Jewish News* and *J-Wire* and liaised with the CCE to produce advertising material to support student recruitment. Regular editorial coverage to promote our classes and activities was achieved in the *Australian Jewish News*, *J-Wire* and *The Jewish Report* as well as in *Jewish Care's Keeping in Touch Magazine*, the *Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Newsletter, and radio interviews (Hebrew and English) on SBS Radio with *Beyond Borders* teacher, Oren Thaler. Following on Hilary's success, Hinda continued to prioritize marketing in 2019 and had success with increased numbers of advertisements and editorials.

Melton has become a well-known fixture in the Sydney Jewish community. In June 2018 Hinda and Hilary attended Yom Limmud to promote Melton. Hilary also promoted a well-attended Melton fund-raising performance of the Shalom play "The Man in the Attic" held at the Eternity Playhouse, Darlinghurst in July 2018 with a Melton guest speaker. In both 2018 and 2019 there have been highly successful "Taste of Melton" evenings to recruit students for the "Beyond Borders" courses; and talks to the Australian Friends of Hebrew University "Honours Club" to promote our courses. As has been the case for the past number of years, Melton is synonymous with high-quality adult Jewish Education in Sydney. There is significant name recognition and past students always rave about the courses. A majority of the teachers for Melton have University of Sydney associations and Melton students recognize they have the tremendous opportunity to study with outstandingly qualified educators. Our association with the University of Sydney's Centre for Continuing Education, has brought new students to our courses and streamlined our internal processes which have allowed for the growth of our program. In the past two years, the reach of Melton has only increased, both in diversity of backgrounds and age demographics. The International Melton program continues to release new programs and we look forward to offering the new courses. Our Sydney community is greatly enriched by the Melton program.

Hinda Young
Program Director

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Communicating with the Communities - HBJS on Social Media

The social media team of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies has been working hard increasing our presence on social media over the last year. We don't view social media as just a tool to streamline communication with our existing community, but also as a way to create and reach out to new communities.

Platforms and Genres of Content

Facebook

The Facebook page has been used in the last couple of years with an aim to increase the visibility of the Departments' activity and achievements, as well as to enhance the communication of staff and students with the broader community. During the last two years we have improved our Facebook page with new genres of content, providing more opportunities to communicate to our followers and increase their numbers. The number of the page's followers has increased by 40% since August 2018. We have introduced new formats of content such as interviews with staff and students, filmed lectures, events conducted by our academics, and links to our publications. We have also initiated a flow of content through a regular post series on Modern Hebrew, Bible and Jewish History.

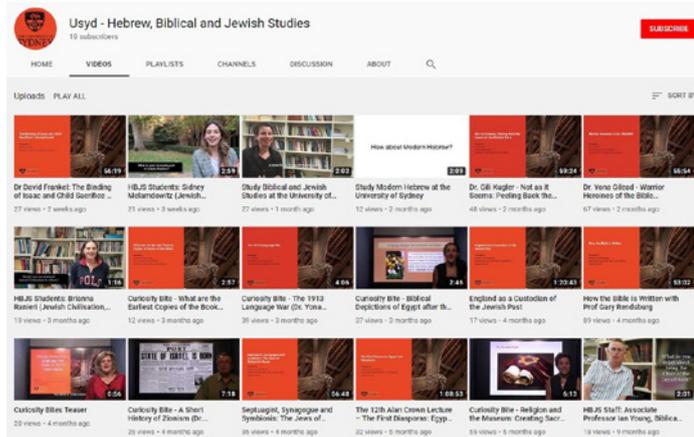
Instagram

Our Instagram page has connected effectively with more communities within the University of Sydney. It has had 76 posts since starting in January 2019 and has been promoted by the official University of Sydney Instagram page. Our Instagram page enables us to connect more directly with various groups at the university, establish a recognisable brand, and even results in new communities following our posts.



YouTube

We started a YouTube channel in December 2018, and since then have uploaded 19 videos of lectures given by our academics and guest lecturers. We can now video our lecturers and share these videos on YouTube, allowing those who missed these valuable lectures to catch up later. To further the promotion of our staff and students, we have conducted a number of video interviews, letting people see the faces behind the work of the department. Our most innovative project has been our “Curiosity Bites”, videos up to five minutes long about a single subject chosen by each of our lecturers, giving a taste of their current research.

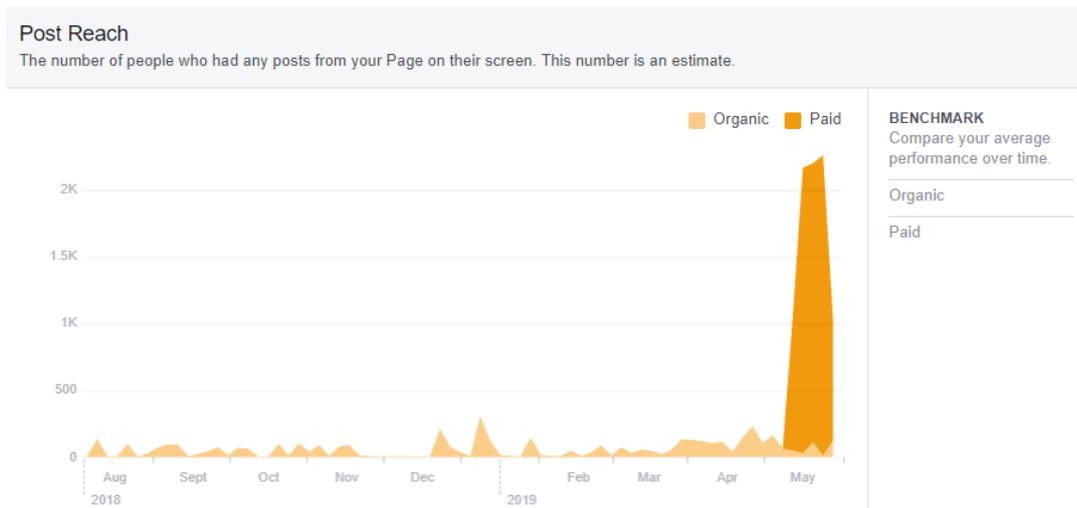


Outcomes

Over 2019 we have run two advertising campaigns on Facebook, using trailers promoting the content of our courses taught in second semester. As noticed in the graph, the use of advertising has dramatically increased the reach of our posts during the campaign.

The first campaign has encouraged people to click through to our department website and performed better than most other education advertisements on Facebook. The second campaign, using trailers, has more than doubled the rate of clicks through to our department page. By adapting the trailer each semester, we hope to increase the rate of enrolment in our undergraduate subjects.

Our social media streams enable us to communicate more broadly with the education and online social communities, allowing us to showcase our activities in more ways than ever before.



A Doubter's Guide to the Man from Nazareth

At the Sydney Writer's Festival in May, Sydney University's Dr John Dickson was in conversation with ABC journalist Johanna Nicholson about the founder of the Christian Faith. Studiously avoiding contentious theological questions and commitments, the discussion focused on Dr Dickson's new book *A Doubter's Guide to Jesus: An Introduction to the Man from Nazareth for Believers and Skeptics* (Zondervan Academic, 2018), which seeks to guide readers through what historians know about this first-century Galilean teacher and what influence he had on Western history.

Our earliest historical sources provide a variety of portraits of Jesus. "I say 'portraits', in the plural," explains Dickson, "because our best information

points not to a tidy, monolithic Jesus, but to a complex, multi-layered and, at times, even contradictory figure." Some of the Christian faithful might be troubled by such talk, fearing that plurality equals incomprehensibility or unreliability. Others take it as an invitation to do some rearranging for themselves. "It has been a perennial problem in the history of scholarship on Jesus, as well as in public discourse about him, that people tend to project onto this ancient figure their own contemporary hopes and preferences", remarked Dr Dickson. People sometimes try to make Jesus neater, more systematic, and digestible.

Others, however—and Dickson admits to being one of them—quite like the idea that after two millennia of spiritual devotion, and more than two centuries of modern critical research, we still cannot fit this figure into a single box. Jesus seems destined to stretch our

imaginations, confront our beliefs, and challenge our ethical commitments for years to come. "If I have done my job properly," Dickson suggests, "readers of my work will find themselves both disturbed and intrigued by the images of Jesus found in the first sources."

Dr John Dickson

Biography

Dr John Dickson completed his PhD in Ancient History at Macquarie University. Since 2011 he has taught "Historical Jesus to Written Gospels" for the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies. He is also currently a Visiting Academic in the Faculty of Classics at the University of Oxford where he is researching the use of memory in ancient education.

Dr John Dickson in Jerusalem



Australia obtains full membership in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)

Working to advance Holocaust education, remembrance and research

In 2019, Australia was admitted as the 33rd membership of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) following a unanimous vote of the plenary in Luxembourg. Australia is the first Indo-Pacific Nation to join the IHRA.

IHRA is the international and intergovernmental body promoting Holocaust education, remembrance and research and countering antisemitism, racism and anti-Roma and Sinti prejudice.

IHRA grew out of the Stockholm Declaration, an initiative of the Swedish government to ensure that countries remember and educate their citizens about the Holocaust and its universal messages.

Membership of the IHRA cements Australia's role in Holocaust education and commemoration

HBJS's Dr Avril Alba and Emeritus Professor Suzanne Rutland were among a small group of expert members of the Australian Delegation to IHRA who worked for more than four years to secure Australia's place in the alliance. "Now that Australia is a full member we are able to fully participate in IHRA's efforts to formulate policies, plans and programs advancing Holocaust education, commemoration and research. This is particularly important given the large number of Holocaust survivors and their descendants in Australia," Dr Alba said.

"Membership also provides a mandate to further enhance Australia's efforts in Holocaust education and commemoration with the support through IHRA of leading experts from around the world," Professor Rutland added.

The Australian government's commitment to IHRA enjoys bi-partisan support and is facilitated through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The Head of the Australian delegation is Lynette Wood, Ambassador to Germany.

The Australian delegation to IHRA pictured left to right: Dr Steven Cooke; Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland OAM; Dr Avril Alba; Dr Donna-Lee Frieze; Ambassador Lynette Wood; Lord Eric Pickles, UK delegation leader; Pauline Rockman OAM; Ciaran Chestnutt, DFAT; Sue Hampel OAM; and Dr Andre Oboler



The Ann Kirby (nee Plotke) Bequest for the teaching of modern and biblical Hebrew and the study of Jewish, non-Jewish relations

The late Ann Kirby (nee Plotke), who passed away in 2017, left a splendidly generous \$2 million bequest to the University of Sydney's Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies to be used for teaching modern and biblical Hebrew, Jewish civilisation and subjects associated with Judaism. Key to her philanthropic vision is the laudable aim of promoting understanding and tolerance between Jewish and non-Jewish faiths.



"This is a generous bequest by an alumna to encourage students to explore the place of Jewish culture in world knowledge. Ann Kirby's support will enrich those students' learning experience and deepen their understanding," said Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Sydney, on hearing of the bequest.

Speaking no English when she arrived in Australia, Ann Kirby - BA 1951, LLB 1958, DipLangStud 2006, GradDipArts 2008 - excelled academically. She completed a BA at the University in 1951, then a law degree in 1958. She became a partner at EJ Kirby and Co law firm, with a special interest in mentoring young solicitors during her 30 years there. After retiring, Ann returned to the University to study classical Hebrew, motivated by a wish to read the Torah aloud and to better understand discussions at her synagogue, Temple Emanuel.

The Department is deeply grateful to Anne for her foresight and generosity.

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