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BIAJS

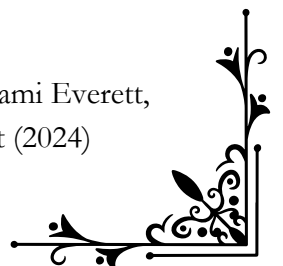
BIAJS

British and Irish
Association for Jewish Studies

BIAJS Bulletin 2024

Edited by Yulia Egorova and Sami Everett

Cover image: 'Maimonides' designed as part of 'Maimonides from Scratch' project by Sami Everett,
Anoushka Alexander-Rose, Anastasia Badder and Panoply Vase Animation Project (2024)



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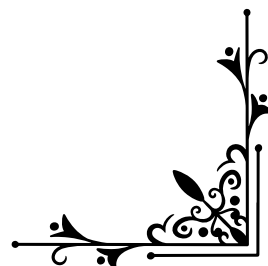
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Messages from the committee

Mia Spiro (President 2024-2025).

Dear BIAJS members,

It is my pleasure to deliver this message, from Glasgow, in my third month as President of the British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies (BIAJS) at the beginning of the academic (2024-25) and Jewish new year (5785).



Sadly, we continue to find ourselves in disturbing and uncertain times following a year that, since October 7, 2023, has been a challenge for academics working in Jewish studies. The tensions on campuses surrounding the Israel-Hamas conflict and alarming rise of antisemitism in the UK has put Jews and, by extension, Jewish studies in the spotlight. As many of us can attest, the impact of the war extends to all of us in Jewish studies, even when our fields of scholarship are far removed from current affairs or contemporary issues. BIAJS has an even more important role to play than ever in supporting our members to promote freedom of debate and nuance in the study and understandings of Jewish history, culture, and experiences.

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to BIAJS committee for their promotion of our aims and for their hard work in the past year: Karen Skinazi (immediate past president), James Renton (past president 2023) Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (former treasurer), Lindsey Davidson (secretary), Hannah Ewence (Membership Secretary), Yulia Egorova (co-editor of BIAJS Bulletin), Zuleika Rogers (website/online coordinator), Ben Gidley (social media coordinator) and committee members: Eva Frojmovic, Jaclyn Granick, Sonia Gollance, and Alexander Samely. I also want to mark the sad passing of our committee member, Ilana Tahan, on 6 July 2024. She was a valuable colleague, a dedicated scholar to Jewish studies.

We welcome new members:

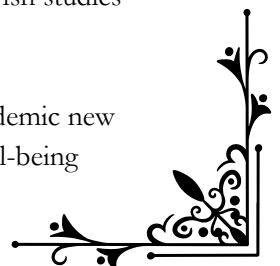
Sami Everett; Hannah Bash; Steven Samols, Katrin Steffen; Meron Piotrkowski and Kerry Mccall.

Our 2024 annual conference under the theme 'Jews, Gender and Sexuality', hosted by Karen Skinazi at Bristol University from 8 to 10 July 2024 was a great success. Not only was there an impressive number of fascinating papers, but it also drew a remarkable contingent of national and international scholars from around the world. Highlights included keynotes by Dorit Geva, Rowena Kennedy-Epstein and Alexandra Cuffel as well as a smashing Yiddish dance party, led by Sonia Gollance and a film screening of *Husband*, along with a conversation with filmmakers Devorah Baum and Josh Appignanesi.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the theme for the BIAJS 2025 Conference: 'Border-Crossing in Jewish Studies,' which will take place 7-9 July 2025 at the University of Glasgow. The Call for Papers will soon be distributed to members and Jewish Studies networks in early November.

This year saw numerous BIAJS members publish books, chapters and peer-reviewed articles. We are working on getting proper representation in Jewish studies for the next Research Excellence Framework exercise to adequately represent the kind of significant interdisciplinary contribution to scholarship that Jewish studies provides to our universities and our respective fields.

Finally, I wish you, your families and friends health and wellbeing in the coming Jewish and academic new year. I hope that this year brings better news and meaningful solutions to the war and to the well-being of staff and students on our campuses.



Sami Everett (incoming Bulletin Editor).

A note to say that I am delighted to be taking over as Bulletin editor alongside Professor David Tollerton from Professor Yulia Egorova and appreciate her showing me the ropes this time around. A note of thanks also to Anoushka Alexander-Rose for helping me with the Bulletin this year. The image on the front cover is the first time that our Maimonides has been made public. The figure will be the centrepiece of the digital animation to come out of a joint impact and public engagement "Maimonides from Scratch" project, a co-constructed series of stop-motion and illustrated animations with volunteers at the Manchester Jewish Museum and King David School.

I would like to acknowledge our partners: the Manchester Jewish Museum, the Panoply Vase Project, the Genizah Research Unit, the Parkes Institute, the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, and the Winchester School of Art and unveil our fantastic team: Anoushka Alexander-Rose, Anastasia Badder, Eliaou Balouka, Sonya Nevin, Kwame Phillips and Steve Simons. More news in the next bulletin!

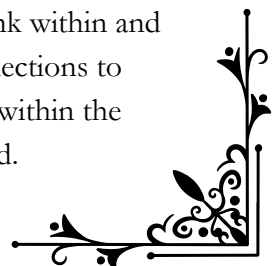
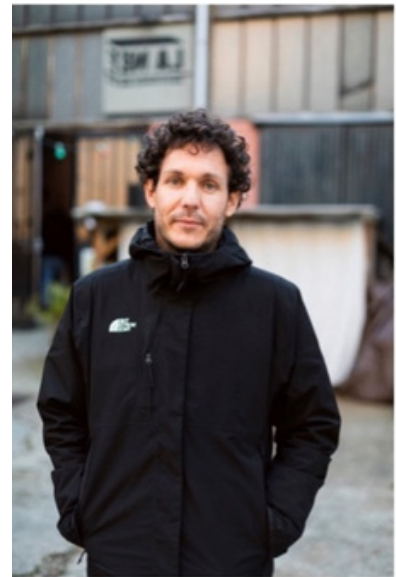
BIAJS conference 2024

Report from Karen Skinazi (2023-24 President).

On "Jews, Gender, and Sexuality," University of Bristol, UK, 8-10 July 2024



As soon as I was invited to be president of the British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies—a true honour for someone who has a solid case of impostor syndrome and always feels she's hovering on the edges of the field—I knew what I wanted the topic to be. It seemed at that moment (and as the news cycle around the Olympics indicated, ongoing) that everywhere you went, you would find yourself mired in debates about trans rights, feminism, identity, equality, women's leadership, Queer representation, or reproductive rights...And what struck me is that all these issues sit squarely within Jewish Studies. So, the 2024 British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies conference focused on questions of gender and sexuality. We invited scholars to think within and across disciplines and to forge new connections to allow us to rethink gender and sexuality within the Jewish world, Jewish Studies, and beyond.



Although BIAJS conferences are always open to panels and papers beyond the immediate theme, this particular theme is one that allowed for many strands of inquiry. The conference proposed to pursue, among others, the following questions:

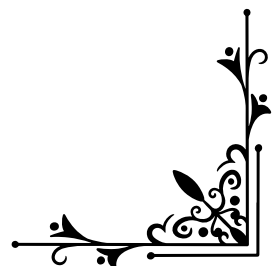
- How did and do Jews understand concepts of gender and sexuality in biblical texts?
- How have these concepts been regarded similarly to and differently from non-Jewish perspectives?
- How can understandings of (Jewish) history be rethought using Queer or feminist lenses?
- What Jewish (or Jew-ish) women or other gender or sexual minorities have been excluded from the historical record or popular imaginary that ought to be or are being recovered?
- What gains has Jewish Studies made in the field of gender and sexuality since the University of Birmingham hosted BAJIS in 2005 with the theme ‘Women in the Jewish World’?

In a lively, busy, intellectually stimulating, and dare I say, FUN event, over 140 participants came from around the world to discuss and debate these and other topics.

Recently, a book called *Jews and Gender* was published (Purdue University Press, 2021), following a similarly titled symposium in the United States. Although the scholars examine phenomena from the Hebrew bible through the 21st-century comedy television series, *Broad City*, the complete exclusion of essays by Europe and Britain-based scholars and of European and British contexts is notable. The 2024 BIAJS conference in Bristol, UK, aimed to put European and British scholars at the forefront of this important and timely conversation.

In the last few years, issues of gender and sexuality have become a central part of mainstream discourse. These issues have also become core to the Jewish world, even in places that previously suppressed such discussions. For instance, in 2018, Rabbi Efraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, came out with a wellbeing guide for LGBT+ students in Orthodox schools. Other exciting developments have ensued: in 2020, Shel Maala, a ‘digital-first queer yeshiva’ was founded; in 2022, the Conservative Movement developed a new language for calling non-binary people to the Torah; in 2023, a queer yeshiva authored a series of ‘teshuvot’ that ‘use the language of halakha to respond to questions about Jewish life and practice that emerge directly from trans people’; also in 2023, a queer-led virtual chevra kedisha, working to make death and dying rituals more accessible to all Jewish people, was formed.

Within the sphere of Jewish Studies, too, the questions of gender and sexuality have come to play a prominent role, and many of these were represented at the conference:

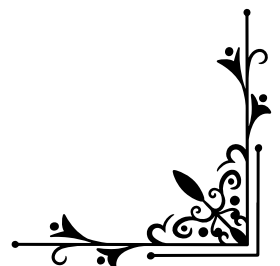


1) Jewish masculinity has been examined by historian Miriam Mora in her book, *Carrying a Big Schtick: American Jewish Acculturation and Masculinity in the Twentieth Century* (Wayne State, 2023) and by Ronnie Grinberg in *Write Like a Man: Jewish Masculinity and the New York Intellectuals* (Princeton University Press, 2024). Grinberg's book has garnered significant media attention, the research written up in *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *New Statesman*, and elsewhere. Both scholars presented their work at the conference.

2) The burgeoning field of Haredi Studies and more broadly Orthodox Jewish Studies are rife with interrogations of gender, with such recent publications as my own *Women of Valor: Orthodox Jewish Troll Fighters, Crime Writers and Rock Stars in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (Rutgers, 2018), Michal Raucher's *Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority Among Haredi Women* (Indiana University Press, 2020), and Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz's *Challenge and Conformity: The Religious Lives of Orthodox Jewish Women* (Littman, 2021). I organised the conference, and Taylor-Guthartz presented on issues of gender and Orthodoxy, as did Katja Stuerzenhofecker, Melissa Weininger, Heather Munro, Katharina Hadassa Wendl, and Asher Suzin, an array of scholars looking at the topic through anthropological, historical, religious, and cultural studies lenses.

3) Queer Jewish Studies, which had its start early in the twenty-first century with *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question* edited by Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini and *Queer Jews* edited by David Schneer and Caryn Aviv, has since been picked up and expanded by many and diverse scholars. In recent years, Marla Brettschneider published *Jewish Lesbian Scholarship in a Time of Change* (Routledge, 2022) and Max K. Strassfeld *Trans Talmud: Androgynes and Eunuchs in Rabbinic Literature* (University of California, 2023). Bringing together Haredi and Queer Studies, Orit Avishai published *Queer Judaism: LGBT Activism and the Remaking of Jewish Orthodoxy in Israel* (NYU Press, 2023). At the conference, multiple papers and whole panels addressed the intersection of Queer Studies and Jewishness. We heard Irina Rabinovich's talk "Beyond the Pale Veil: Tracing Jewish Lesbian Lives from the Nineteenth-Century Pale to the Horizons of Early Twentieth-Century America"; Daniella Shaw's "Activist-Researcher Perspectives on Jewish, Queer, and Interfaith Lived Experiences"; Stav Meishar's "Viva La Diva: Jewish and Israeli Dragtivism"; Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah's "Joseph and their life of many genders"; Eliya Amsalem's "Lesbian Soldiers in the IDF During the 70s and the 80s"; Dotan Brom's "Beyond Conventional Jewish Narratives: The Life and Work of Robert Friend"; Gavin Schaffer's "Leaning on Lionel: Understanding Jewish faith in Britain through the Writing of Lionel Blue"; Angelica Giménez Ravanelli's "Queering the memory of the Holocaust in Argentina"; Gal Dafadi's "Paradoxical Nature: The Israeli Supreme Court's Perspective on Nature and the Body in Surrogacy Cases"; and the roundtable "'Bad' Jews Around the World."

The conference offered time and space to pursue the nexus of Jews, Gender, and Sexuality in a setting where scholars and practitioners from a variety of places and backgrounds, could engage productively with each other to shape new research questions, directions, and outcomes.



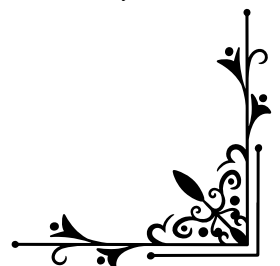
The conference took place Monday 8 July – Wednesday 10 July 2024. Conference presentations were selected after an international call for panel/roundtable proposals as well as individual papers. Submissions came from scholars from all career stages, including early career scholars and PhD students, as well as practitioners (rabbis, circus performer). Nine sessions were held, each with multiple (up to 5) parallel strands during each. Traditional panels included three or four thematically linked presentations, focusing on specific issues or approaches; we also had roundtables, a pedagogy workshop, and six “Conversations.” The Conversations gave participants the opportunity to discuss pressing issues for Jewish Studies scholars. The topics included were “Teaching Israel/Zionism,” “What Would a British Jewish History Month Look Like?” “Jewish Staff Networks,” “The War’s Impact on University Campuses,” “Academic Boycotts,” and “How Do We Make Our Scholarship Part of Public Debates?” Sessions were very well attended, some with standing-room only.

Keynote speakers, representing research fields from antiquity to the present, and such disciplines as political sociology, literary criticism, history, Women’s Studies, and religious studies offered new insights into the intersection of gender and Judaism. Our three keynote speakers were Professor Dorit Geva, Professor of Politics and Gender, University of Vienna, speaking on “The Jew in the European Radical Right,” Professor Rowena Kennedy-Epstein, Professor of Gender Studies and Women’s Writing, University of Bristol, speaking on the poet Muriel Rukeyser in a talk called “To Be a Jew in the 20th Century,” and Professor Alexandra Cuffel, Professor of Jewish Religion in Past and Present Times at the Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, whose talk was called “Ideal Men and Dangerous Concubines According to Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi and His Contemporaries.”

Funding for the two keynotes from Europe—as well as bursaries for ten postgraduate/early career research academics from the UK, Europe, the US, and Israel—came from the European Association for Jewish Studies.

On Monday morning, we began with an introduction to the conference by me as BIAJS president and the university Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Evelyn Welch, who emphasized how welcome everyone was at the university. We then began our sessions—the day included 3 panels, 5 roundtables, a pedagogy workshop, a “Conversation,” as well as a keynote lecture, vegetarian lunch, annual general meeting, and wine reception.

The wine reception was hosted by the Faculty of Arts, Law, and Social Sciences at University of Bristol. At the reception, I gave a short speech attesting to the value of the contributions of the conference. The Faculty Dean, Professor Martyn Powell, then welcomed the participants. Finally, BIAJS executive committee members announced the winner of the 2024 Book Award. Every year since 2018 we have run a book prize, with an award of £1000, to recognise and promote outstanding scholarship in the field of Jewish Studies. Last year the prize was won by Dr Jan Rybak, with honourable mentions for Professor Emily Michelson and Dr Jaclyn Granick. Our annual award for the best monograph submitted alternate between books on the ancient to medieval period and early modern to modern period.



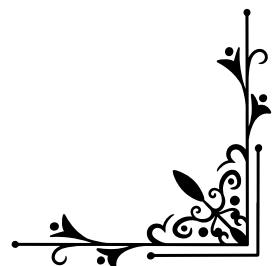
For the 2024 prize we invited submissions focused on topics relating to the ancient to medieval period. The winner was: Aaron Hornkohl for The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew. Aaron came to the conference from Cambridge to accept his award. We also had an Honourable Mention for the book prize: Jewish and Christian Women in the Ancient Mediterranean by Sara Parks, Shayna Sheinfeld, and Meredith J.C. Warren. The recipients joined us by Zoom.

Next, we announced the winners of our student essay awards. The postgraduate prize went to Pia Regensburger for “On the Theme of Theosis in 4 Maccabees and other Jewish Greek Texts.” The undergraduate prize was awarded to Konor Sajti for “Regimenting Emotions: Emotional Communities under Israeli Militarism during the 1969-1970 War of Attrition.” Additionally, there was an undergraduate Honourable Mention: Max Benster, “A Study of the Motif of Celestial Book Erasure in Ancient Judaism.”

Following the wine reception, we were treated to a film screening of the laugh-out-loud comedy “Husband” and Q&A with filmmakers Josh Appignanesi and Dr Devorah Baum (of Southampton University), hosted by Professor Gavin Schaffer.

Many participants then joined us for a three-course plated vegetarian conference dinner, held at the beautiful Hotel du Vin Avon Gorge overlooking the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

After dinner, a DJ arrived and we hit the dance floor, joined by colleagues who had dined elsewhere. This was yet another exciting cultural event: a Yiddish dance lesson led by UCL’s Dr Sonia Gollance, author of *It Could Lead to Dancing: Mixed-Sex Dancing and Jewish Modernity*. The day wrapped up at 11:59pm!



Tuesday was again a very full day, beginning at 8am. We had 13 panels, one roundtable, three “Conversations,” and a keynote lecture. People chatted and networked over coffees and a vegetarian lunch. The day ended with two more highlights. The first was a Mizrahi cooking workshop and one-woman performance of “My Angry Turkish Savta” by anthropologist Dr Michal Nahman of University of the West of England (UWE), a scholar who leads on “The Mizrahi Food Project.” The event took place at Co-Exist Community Kitchen. Participants in the workshop made Yemeni malawach, chraymeh (Tunisian white fish in spicy tomato sauce with caraway seeds, cumin, garlic, date syrup, lemon and fresh coriander), baked aubergine medallions coated in breadcrumbs, Turkish piyaz salad of white beans, tomatoes, red onions, sumac, pomegranate molasses and cilantro, and a dessert of kataif noodles slathered in rose syrup, baked, and served with clotted Turkish buffalo cream, kaimak, pistachios, and roasted peaches. Many participants told me it was the highlight of the conference—or of all conferences ever!

The second event was walking tour of the Jewish communities of Bristol led by University of Bristol History postgraduate student Caroline Gurney. Focused primarily on the 17th and 18th-century communities, Caroline also showed participants some of the more recent sites of Jewish life (e.g., the 1871 Park Row Synagogue and the site where the inventor of the moving picture camera did his photography apprenticeship 1869-75) and medieval sites (e.g., “Jacob’s Well,” the water source once thought to be a mikveh, now understood as a Bet Tehorah, and the Jewish burial ground now beneath a school in Bristol). In addition to leading the tour, which lasted four hours (!), Caroline prepared a map in both hard copy and as a phone app for those who could not join her. It can be found [here](#).

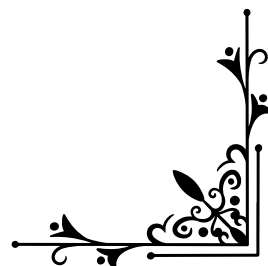
The last day, Wednesday, saw 11 more panels, a keynote lecture, a vegetarian lunch, and two “Conversations” before participants went on their way.

In sum, we had a wildly successful event, featuring scholars from 16 countries presenting on a wide range of Jewish Studies topics, and diverse and exciting cultural events. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Please see [programme booklet](#) for further details about talks and participant biographies.

Looking forward to next year in Glasgow!

All my best,

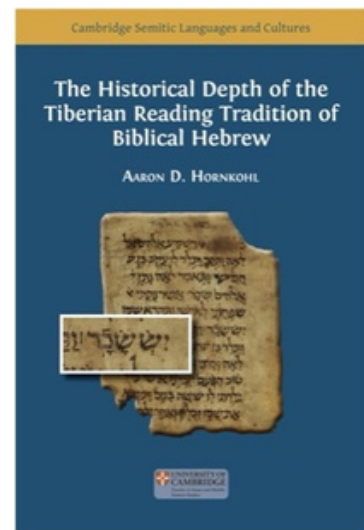


BIAJS book prize 2024

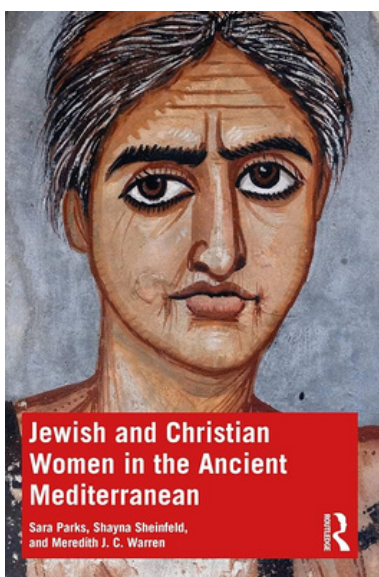
Winner and special mentions

WINNER: Aaron Hornkohl, *The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew*, Cambridge University Press, 2023.

The judging panel stated that ‘This book is an impressive piece of research in both establishing the antiquity of features of the Tiberian reading tradition as far back as the Second Temple period. It makes a significant contribution in that it shows that the Tiberian traditions are much earlier than previously assumed and not a late innovation, which in turn highlights the need for its reconsideration for our understanding of the biblical text. The volume considers theologically motivated developments as well as developments driven by linguistic evolution. At the same time this is not presented simplistically as a monolithic tradition but a complex multilayered development.’



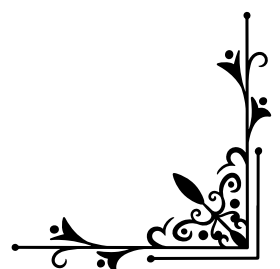
SPECIAL MENTION: Sara Parks, Shayna Sheinfeld and Meredith Warren, *Jewish and Christian Women in the Ancient Mediterranean*



The judging panel stated that the book ‘Brings prominence to the experience and representation of women in the ancient world and uses a wide range of sources to produce a most useful textbook for students.’

Congratulations to Aaron, Sara, Shayna, and Meredith! And thank you to everyone who served on the judging panel or submitted work to this year’s competition.

The 2025 BIAJS book prize competition will focus on Jewish studies work related to early modern and modern period. Details of the competition will be announced in the autumn.



Aaron D. Hornkohl's acceptance speech

I stand before you this afternoon an honoured and delighted, if somewhat surprised academic. The surprise stems not just from the fact that long, densely written philological studies of dubious readability do not commonly win prizes, but also because the book in question was not one I originally set out to write. Rather, as so often happens (or so I'm given to understand), this monograph accidentally grew out of a series of articles and lectures that I only secondarily noticed were connected by a common thread. In some ways—and perhaps this can be of encouragement to others—this accolade comes as external positive reinforcement for the extended commitment to indulging one's own intellectual curiosity in deliberate resistance to doubts about there actually being something in it. Honestly pursue almost anything to its depths, and you are bound to uncover something worth the effort... even if only solid disproof of concept.

I mentioned a common thread to the research that culminated in this book. That thread can be summarised as follows: the standard Tiberian Masoretic tradition of Biblical Hebrew is comprised of related but semi-independent written and pronunciation components, i.e., the so-called consonantal text, on the one hand, and its vocalisation, on the other. The two components are in harmony throughout most of the text, but clearly diverge in a significant minority of cases. Some of these are explicitly acknowledged in the tradition as *ketiv-qere* or *qere perpetuum*, but many are nowhere officially recognised. Where they differ, the pronunciation component is, generally speaking and as expected, typologically later than the written component. And yet—and here is the corrective of which biblical scholarship has been in need—by dint of its linguistic similarity to Second Temple evidence—both biblical and extra-biblical—and on account of occasional agreement with minority features in Iron Age sources, the pronunciation tradition—so often viewed with suspicion as an anachronistic and artificial product of medieval times—is revealed as a tradition of impressive historical depth, having substantially crystallised in the Second Temple period, but with many features rooted in the Iron Age.

If accepted, the conclusions have implications for exegetical, literary, textual, historical, and linguistic research. But perhaps more broadly, they suggest that we scholars should reassess certain aspects of our bias in favour of written sources. Consider the biblical text—as important as our written evidence is, it is incomplete in the absence of the text's oral realisation, i.e., the performance of its oral vocalic and prosodic components—which the written signs were meant merely to safeguard. The actual text is oral. Further, it is not a single text, but a collective, community tradition represented by multiple written exemplars and extant reading traditions. I am reminded of the argument of the 10th-century Karaite scholar al-Qirqisānī, who contended that the ultimate authoritative source for the Hebrew Bible was the reading tradition of the community of Tiberias, one of his justifications being—and here I quote my friend and senior colleague, Geoffrey Khan (*The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew* [Cambridge: Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and Open Book Publishers, 2021], I:123–24)—“that the reading tradition had been transmitted by the whole community (*ʿumma*) since the time of the prophets whereas the written orthography had been transmitted on the authority of small circles of scribes, which is, therefore, more liable to corruption or wilful change” (italics mine: ADH).

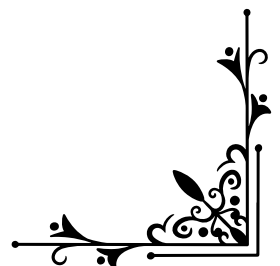


Among the implications for modern scholarship is the need for detailed enquiry into the intricacies of not just the Tiberian and other medieval traditions, many of whose oral particularities have been lost and must be reconstructed, but also of extant Jewish reading traditions, some vibrant, others endangered or moribund, and all artefacts worthy of study.

I said earlier that I was honoured, delighted, and surprised that my book has received this award. Scholars of various sorts—not just philologists and linguistics—labour away on our niche topics in relative obscurity, often wondering if our material will ever be read beyond the circles of our own students, i.e., those we compel to read it. Indeed, when in the course of ongoing research, I need to consult my own work—including the present book—I am assailed by doubts as to relevance and readability. Is whatever pattern I observed one that anyone else would discern? Is it as significant as I believe? Will anyone ever even know that it's been written on? In the context of apparent scholarly consensus, am I delusional? Even if substantially true and convincing, does the significance of the arguments justify such verbosity and exhaustive detail? In the face of these and similar doubts and questions, the affirmation of such a prize is deeply encouraging and I am immensely grateful to the committee, as well as our host and BIAJS President, Karen Skinazi, for facilitating my participation.

I conclude with further thanks: to my colleagues and students at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in Cambridge; to my colleagues, students, and the staff of the coffee houses in Middlebury, Vermont, where I wrote so much of the volume; to my Hebraist and other colleagues further afield, especially from the Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew section of SBL—and here I acknowledge the profoundly difficult period that so many of you have recently faced; to Open Book Publishers, Geoffrey Khan, and the editorial board of the Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures Series; and to my lovely and supportive partner, Anna, and our children, Emily, Yoel, and Yoni.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to you all for listening so kindly to me voice this mix of ruminations, convictions, insecurities, and appreciation.



Jewish Studies activity across the UK and Ireland

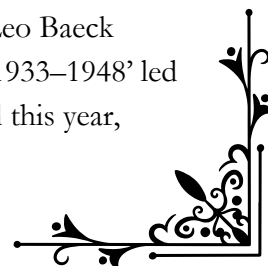
Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, University of London

The sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in many countries following Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel on the 7 October 2023 and Israel's war on Gaza has had a significant impact on BISA's work this year. Media outlets have sought the Institute's guidance on discourse on Israel and Palestine and how to define antisemitism. Institute staff have been interviewed and quoted in UK, European and international titles as well as publishing their own opinion pieces and commentary.

Academic publications this year included: Anthony Bale, *A Travel Guide to the Middle Ages: the World through Medieval Eyes* (Viking Penguin, 2023); David Feldman, 'A Retreat from Universalism: Opposing and Defining Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Britain, ca. 1990–2018' in Scott Ury and Guy Miron eds., *Antisemitism and the Politics of History* (Brandeis University Press, 2023) and Ben Gidley, 'Postcolonial hauntings in riverine London: conviviality and melancholia', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 57/1-2, Jan 2024. Research undertaken by postdoctoral fellows while at BISA has also been published this year: William Pimlott, 'The Yiddish press and the making of South African Jewry in the British world: exclusion, libel, and Jewish nationalism, 1890–1914', *Jewish Historical Studies: A Journal of English-Speaking Jewry*, 55/1, Jan 2024; and Jan Rybak, 'Emanzipation mit der Waffe: Zur historischen Verortung jüdischer Selbstverteidigung', *Jüdische Geschichte & Kultur: Magazin des Simon-Dubnow Instituts* 7, 2024; 'Building Pillars of the Nation: Zionist Care and Education for Galician Refugee Children in WW1 Austria', *POLIN: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 36, Jan 2024; AND 'A Revolutionary Woman's Self-Emancipation: Malke Schorr's Childhood and Youth in East Galicia', *Jewish History Quarterly*, 3/287, 2023.

The transnational research project, 'Muslim-Jewish Encounter, Diversity and Distance in Urban Europe: Religion, Culture and Social Model', led by Ben Gidley and delivered in partnership with Durham, Gottingen, Heidelberg, Science Po and Strasbourg universities and the Max Planck Institute for Religious and Cultural Diversity, completed its research phase in autumn 2023 and held events in Berlin and Heidelberg. The final report will be presented in Berlin and in Paris in autumn 2024. The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project, 'Making and Remaking the Jewish East End; Space, Language and Time', undertaken in collaboration with Queen Mary, University of London, concluded in December 2023.

Two research students have been awarded their doctorate: Jemima Jarman, 'The history of attempts to convert Jews to Christianity in Victorian London'; and Emilie Wiedemann, 'Jewish internationalism and the international politics of opposing antisemitism, 1960-2005'. The Institute co-convened an international conference, 'Entangled Otherings: Islamophobia, antisemitism and philosemitism after October 7', in collaboration with the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, University of Cambridge, the Center for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin, and the Department of German Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington (funded by DAAD). In partnership with the Leo Baeck Institute London, BISA hosted a workshop on 'Jewish Refugees in the British Empire, 1933–1948' led by Atina Grossman, Cooper Union. BISA's international seminar programme continued this year, with eight online seminars.



The Institute mounted 12 public lectures, partnering with the Institute for Historical Research, the Holocaust Research Institute at Royal Holloway, University of London, University College London and The Wiener Holocaust Library. The most popular lectures attracted audiences of well over 100 people.

To extend its reach, BISA has uploaded podcasts from its archive (2010-2020) to its [YouTube Channel](#).

University of Bristol

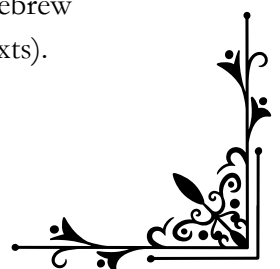
Dr Lindsey Davidson led the organising committee for a [conference](#) held at the University of Bristol on 14-15 June 2023, entitled: “Alpha, Aleph and AI: Languages of the Ancient Mediterranean and Near East,” together with co-organisers in Classics: Dr Ben Folit-Weinberg, Dr Maiken Mosleth King, and Dr Martina Delucchi. The conference was interdisciplinary, with twenty-six speakers from Classics, Near Eastern studies, Biblical studies, and Late Antiquity, all bringing together research on machine learning, AI, linguistics, and antiquity. Many of the presentations were recorded for public viewing [here](#). The conference was generously funded by the Institute for Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition, and the Institute for Classical Studies.

Lindsey is currently working on several articles and book chapters, including: Late Biblical Hebrew language change, LXX rendering of Biblical Hebrew genitives, the political setting of Ben Sira, the economics of Qumran and associated Dead Sea Scrolls literature, Herod the Great in Josephus and rabbinic sources, and the economic and fiscal policies of Herod the Great. She won the Bristol Teaching Awards’ CREATE PGCAP Unit 2 Best Portfolio Award 2023, recognising outstanding teaching practice.

University of Cambridge

Jewish Studies in Cambridge continues to generate a vibrant array of directions in both research and teaching. Recent new appointments include Dr Benjamin Kantor (Asian and Middle Eastern Studies) as Assistant Professor in Hebrew and the Jews of the Mediaeval Middle East and Dr Arjen Baker (Divinity) as Assistant Professor in Second Temple Judaism.

Other researchers in Cambridge include Prof. Katharine Dell (Hebrew Bible), Prof. Esra Ozyurek (Interreligious Relations and Post-Holocaust Studies), Prof. Ben Outhwaite (Cairo Genizah), Dr Tali Artman-Partok (Rabbinic literature), Dr Marieke Dhont (Jewish-Greek literature), Dr David Friedman (Josephus), Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner (Judaeo-Arabic), Dr Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (Music), Dr Anastasia Badder (Ethnographies of Jewish Communities), Dr Reuven Leigh (Jewish Philosophy), Dr Melonie Schmierer-Lee (Cairo Geniza), Prof. Geoffrey Khan (Hebrew and Aramaic), Prof. Yaron Peleg (Israel Studies), Prof. Nathan MacDonald (Hebrew Bible), Dr Aaron Hornkohl (Hebrew Language and Literature), and Prof. Daniel Weiss (Philosophy of Religion and Jewish Texts).



There are also a wide variety of post-doctoral researchers working on projects in various areas of Jewish Studies, along with numerous research grants currently being carried out. Various annual lectures, such as the annual lecture in Modern Hebrew Studies, and the annual Yerushah Lecture, draw audiences from across Faculties and from outside the University.

University of Durham Centre for the Study of Jewish Culture, Society and Politics

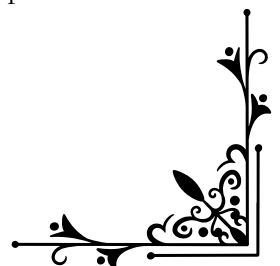
In the past academic year, we co-hosted a number of seminars and events including the following:

In January 2024 to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day Zoe Roth together with the Tyneside Cinema co-organised a film series, titled ‘The Holocaust on Film’, which explored landmark films in Holocaust representation, including a double billing of *Night and Fog* (1955) and *Three Minutes: A Lengthening* (2021), *Son of Saul* (2015), and the premiere of Jonathan Glazer’s critically acclaimed new film *The Zone of Interest* (2024), based on Martin Amis’ novel. All of the films were introduced by scholars from Durham, Northumbria, and Sheffield Universities.



In June 2024 Yulia Egorova together with Hannah Holtschneider (Edinburgh) hosted the 8th Northern UK and Dublin Jewish studies partnership programme featuring presentations by Zoe Roth (Durham), Nathan Devir (University of Utah), and Mia Spiro (Glasgow). The event attracted PhD students and early career researchers from Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, and Manchester. We are grateful to Edinburgh University and St Aidan’s College at Durham for their support.

Later in the month, we held the annual Lucille Cairns Memorial Lecture, delivered by Mia Spiro (Glasgow), chaired by Zoe Roth, titled *Points of Arrival: Crossings and Borders in Holocaust Survivor memoirs*. The talk examined the way post-war entries into countries in the west are remembered (especially in original, unedited versions of the manuscripts) and what they reveal about the border-crossing/migration experience for Holocaust survivors. As reflections on home, belonging, and the self, these “points of arrival” challenge readers’ expectations of not only survivors and their stories, but enlighten key issues related to migration, refugees, and border crossing in the current political arena.



In 2023-2024 the Centre organised the following events:

A Hebrew Bible and the Bestiary: In this talk, Dr Adam Cohen investigated images from the Rothschild Pentateuch, a richly illustrated Hebrew bible, that relate specifically to the medieval bestiary tradition. Adam explored what this reveal not only about how patron Joseph ben Joseph Martel would have used his bible but also about Jewish-Christian intellectual and social interactions at the end of the thirteenth century.

A Leeds-Sheffield double bill: Dr Anne Caldwell discussed the divergent relationship with which David Bomberg and Reuven Rubin perceived Palestine, the land, and its people. For the famous art critic PG Konody, Bomberg's work reflected his perspective as "the alien tourist", while Rubin was "the first national painter of the Zionist Palestine State". Dr Mor Cohen's talk provided an introduction to Mizrahi art and its place within the cultural and political field in Israel. By examining three art catalogues who brought to the forefront marginalised artistic and activist legacies, the talk rethought Mizrahi art beyond identity politics and multicultural framings that tend to deradicalise and sectoralise its transgressive possibilities.



International Holocaust Memorial Day event: The authors of Safe Haven, Jon Silverman and Robert Sherwood, introduced their research on why there was only one conviction out of hundreds of cases against the Eastern European Nazi collaborators given refuge in Britain after 1945. Jon Silverman and Robert Sherwood showed that, after the passage of the controversial War Crimes Act in 1991, UK police and legal enquiries failed because (by imposing restrictive criteria about who should be prosecuted) the UK effectively divorced the war crimes process from the Holocaust.

A Jewish woman in art: Helen Rosenau by Griselda Pollock: Art historian and Oxford professor Jas Elsner joined Griselda Pollock to situate Rosenau as feminist, art historian and Jewish studies scholar who plotted the changing concepts of 'woman' across anthropology, philosophy, sociology, law, theology, Biblical literature and history through images. Eighty years after the publication of what she termed 'my little book' - Woman in Art: From Type to Personality - a new volume resets Rosenau's radical text in full colour, framing it between biographical essays—by Adrian Rifkin, Rachel Dickson and Griselda Pollock—and Pollock's contextual reading of Rosenau's stunning originality and contemporary relevance to both feminist and Jewish studies. You can watch the event [here](#).



Symposium: Queer Experiences in the Holocaust: Organised by Helen Finch and Roseanna Ramsden for the Centre for Jewish Studies, funded by the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, this workshop explored the ways in which victims of Nazi persecution have testified to and have left traces of queer experience. Inspired by – and seeking to build upon – the recent turn towards queer historiography in Holocaust studies, this workshop focused on queer experiences of the Holocaust. It is particularly concerned both with how survivors have testified to these queer experiences, and how scholars can uncover their traces despite the ways they have been silenced, obscured, hidden and flattened by traditional discourses, and despite the fact that many of these traces are held in the archives of the perpetrators.

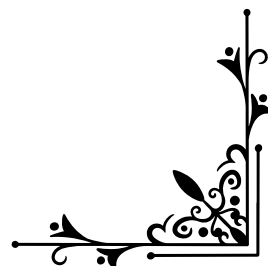
Hybrid photographer's talk: Erasures in an Imagined Geography: In this presentation, photographer Leslie Hakim-Dowek focussed on two bodies of work in progress exploring her family history in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, and themes of conflict and fragmentation.



The Erased series relates to small tentative steps to retain the memory of a life, that of her mother's, within a dispersed history and a frenetic mediated world. In Lullen, in the context of Thessaloniki this time, Hakim-Dowek further explores the notions of erasure and domicile through the spectral remains of a community that perished, in almost its entirety, during the Holocaust.

Book Launch: Secret lives of our Jewish mothers: a conversation between two writers: A special event with visiting writer Monique Charlesworth and University of Leeds writer Jay Prosser, in conversation about their recently published memoirs, and the surprising secrets they discovered on their matrilineal side.

Jewish Studies at the International Medieval Congress – a Jewish studies conference hidden in plain sight: The International Medieval Congress has over the years developed into one of the largest annual conferences in medieval Jewish Studies – but this is a secret hidden in plain sight as the Jewish studies papers are integrated into a vast programme of global scholarship across more than a millennium. The 2024 programme, centred around “Crisis”, wholly or in part dealt with medieval Jewish culture or intercultural relations involving Jews or Judaism; as well assessments/papers about the medieval Holy Land and about non-Jewish re-imaginings of Biblical figures.



University of Manchester Centre for Jewish Studies

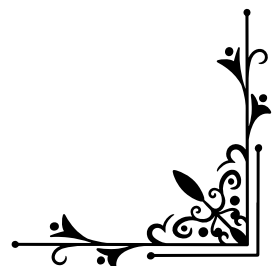
Over the last year, the Centre's candidate Rabbi Aaron Lipsey was successful in winning an AHRC PhD studentship for a project entitled 'The Responses of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the Holocaust: A Study of His Letters, Talks and Teachings'. Two Rothschild Foundation postdoc fellowships were awarded, starting in 2024 and 2025 respectively, namely, Nina Valbousquet on 'Jewish-Catholic Odysseys: "Non-Aryan" Refugees, the Holocaust, and Pius XII's Vatican (1938-1950)', and Hannah Wilson on "'These things are part of us, almost like limbs of our body': The Material Memory of the Holocaust in Domestic Spaces, Private Memories and Public Spheres'.

In addition to many individual staff publications, there were two major collaborative achievements. The first was the completion of the Hebrew Manuscripts catalogue of holdings at the Rylands Library of the University of Manchester; this project began in 1992 and includes over 400 manuscripts dating back to the 14th century. Secondly, Daniel Langton and Siobhan Jolly edited a ten-part podcast series, 'What Would Jesus the Jew Do?', This is an educational podcast that explores key questions that will help readers of the New Testament to better understand Judaism at the time of Jesus. In each episode, scholars from the Centre for Jewish Studies and Centre for Biblical Studies at the University of Manchester talk listeners through a topic. There are also additional online resources for further study.

The Centre's event programme over the last year included the Bogdanow Lectures in Holocaust Studies 2024, which featured Prof. Omer Bartov (Brown University) on 'The Return of the Repressed: Ukraine's Unresolved Pasts', and the Sherman Community Lecture 2024 which was presented by Prof. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Arizona State University) on 'Judaism and Climate Change: Religious Responses to the Eco-Crisis.' The Sherman Conversation day-conference was entitled 'Encountering Others, Encountering Ourselves: Reflexivity and the Jewish Studies Researcher' and organised by Dr Katja Stuerzenhofecker and Rabba Dr Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz. There was the normal programme of the Biblical Hebrew Reading group and the Scriptural Encounters seminar series for discussion of difficult scriptural texts. In addition to papers given by various staff members, there were, among our other events and activities, public lectures (e.g. to the Muslim-Jewish forum) and workshops (e.g. at the Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

The academic year of 2023-2024 began in tragic circumstances at OCHJS -- the terrible attacks on 7 October 2023 and subsequent war in Israel and Gaza affected us all. Many of our visiting scholars from Israel had to cancel their research trips to Oxford. We have worked hard to ensure that the necessary security measures are in place.



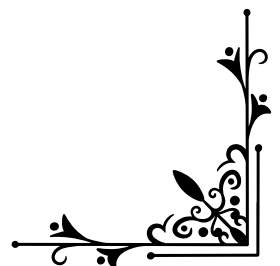
Despite these difficult circumstances, we are happy to report that OCHJS has continued to convene and organise seminars, lectures, symposiums, workshops and activities to enrich the minds and lives of academics in Oxford and online. We welcomed eighteen international senior academic visitors and young career scholars to conduct research here as part of our visiting academic programmes. We also facilitated get-together informal meetings for local students and staff. Many students from various departments of the University attended our different gatherings throughout the year, especially the Thursday morning teatime. More informal meetings were convened by our outstanding Modern Hebrew teacher, Esther Yadgar. In addition, the OCHJS helped a group of Israeli students to organise a weekly lunch on our premises – a friendly opportunity to exchange ideas and speak together in Hebrew. We also started hosting Hebrew Movie Nights, convened by Esther Yadgar, where students had the opportunity to watch and discuss a variety of Israeli films.

As in every term, the OCHJS and its Fellows offered numerous lecture series and research seminars on topics ranging from the Bible to Jewish literature in the Greco-Roman Period, the Holocaust and Memory, Babylonian Talmud, materiality and hermeneutics, rare Jewish languages, contemporary Jewish thought and modern Israel. Professor Sébastien Morlet returned in Hilary Term to give the Grinfield lecture, continuing his series on “The Plurality of the Biblical Text - Past and Present”. This year, the Eighth Edward Ullendorff Memorial Lecture on Hebrew & Semitic Languages was given by Professor Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (École pratique des hautes études, PSL-University Paris) on ‘Semitic Manuscripts Studies in the Computational Age’.

One of our visiting scholars, Dr Emily Rose, organised the first Oxford Virtual International Symposium. The symposium took place on Zoom over four days from 5th – 8th March. With 50 contributors from ten countries, the symposium covered subjects from early modern social history to religion and migration, the Atlantic World, book history, Jews in British literature, economic thought, material culture, racialization, Caribbean influences, family histories, and the resettlement of Jews in Britain. Over 230 people attended online over the course of the four days.

In partnership with the Maison Française d’Oxford, we were excited to host the famed Israeli artist Eran Zur in concert on 4 June, accompanied by Elad Uzan (classical guitar), a member of Oxford’s Faculty of Philosophy. Together, they explored the connection between the Hebrew language, medieval texts and musical expression, and the art of composing poetry. The show was part of the Brichto Israeli Arts & Culture events and was attended by more than seventy participants.

The OCHJS once again hosted our two summer programmes in late June and early July—The Hebrew Manuscript Studies Workshop: Codicology, Palaeography, Art History, co-hosted with the Bodleian Library, and The Oxford Summer Institute on Modern & Contemporary Judaism, which explored the theme ‘Young, Old, and Everything in Between: Age as a Category of Analysis in Modern Jewish Studies’. Both programmes attracted full cohorts of international researchers.



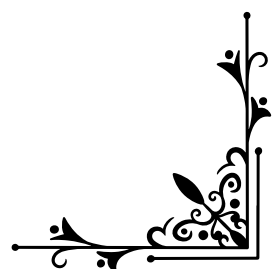
The study of Hebrew and endangered Jewish languages continues to be one of the OCHJS's priorities, and the Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages (OSRJL) continues to be very popular worldwide. We have increased the number of rare Jewish languages we teach from 15 to 18. Over 350 students across the globe benefitted from the OSRJL's language classes, online Tutorials platforms and series of lectures on Judeo languages this year. The OSRJL continues to publish a series of articles on its own academic blog, The Jewish Language Bookshelf. Last year, we were pleased to launch the Jewish Languages subseries within the Handbooks of World and Minority Languages series (published by UCL Press). The first two textbooks, Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic and Ladino, were submitted earlier this year. And we look forward to the next two publications in Neo-Aramaic and Judeo-Italian.

Starting in 2024, the OCHJS entrusted the Liverpool University Press with the publication of its Journal of Jewish Studies, a leading academic journal. The OCHJS still remains the sole owner and is in charge of the scientific quality and the appointment of the scientific editors. We are delighted to work with the LUP to provide this high-quality academic publication.

The OCHJS worked alongside many other centres and departments in Oxford, in the UK and internationally on various seminars, lecture series and workshops. Among others, the OCHJS and its Fellows worked with the Centre for the Study of the Bible, the Centre for the Study of the Book, the Centre for Classical Studies, the Faculty of Classics, the Oxford Faculty of Linguistics and the Faculty of Theology and Religion, as well as the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in Cambridge. The OCHJS remains committed to its mission to support, at the highest level, the full scope of Hebrew and Jewish Studies from antiquity to the contemporary world, in collaboration with scholars and academics in our field and across disciplines. The OCHJS's rich array of academic and public outreach activities, including the Modern Hebrew Ulpan and the OSRJL, is offered to students and the wider public free of charge.

Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations

It has been a year of renewal for the Parkes Institute, with Neil Gregor becoming director in September and new staff joining us. After the retirement of our two very valued academic members Professors Joachim Schlör and Mark Cornwall, we were delighted to welcome two new colleagues: Dr Janek Gryta as Lecturer in Holocaust History and Dr Noémie Duhaut as Lecturer in Modern European Jewish History. They are wonderful additions to our team and bring a lot of important expertise – Holocaust memorialisation in Poland and 19th century European Jewish politics.

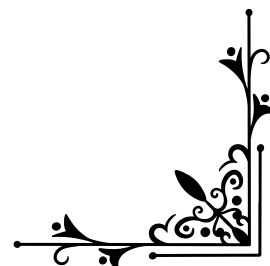


The main event for us this year was the launch of our new MA Holocaust: History, Experience, Heritage. It was a real pleasure to teach our inaugural cohort of very engaged students who worked very hard and made the first year a success. The highlights for them were the modules 'Jewish life and antisemitism', 'Holocaust as Public History' that included field trips to the Imperial War Museum and the Wiener Library as well as workshops at our Special Collections and with Holocaust Education specialists, and the field trip to Poland that brought us to Krakow, Plaszów, Auschwitz, Kazimierz, Treblinka, Warsaw and Polin museum. You can read about their experience on our [blog](#).

Our named lectures this year were delivered by high-profile scholars on a wide range of topics, chronologies and geographies: Elisabeth Becker Topkara (Heidelberg) for the Interfaith Lecture on Jewish, Muslims and contemporary Europe; Jaclyn Granick (Cardiff) for the Rein Lecture on Jewish medical humanitarianism in the Great War; Ra'anana Boustan (Princeton) and Karen Britt (Northwest Missouri) for the Montefiore Lecture on Jerusalem in Jewish and Christian mosaics. The Karten Lecture was given by Janek Gryta on Holocaust memory in socialist Poland. The Parkes Lecture was a very enjoyable conversation between our colleagues Devorah Baum and Katie Power, and David Schneider on his career as actor, writer and director. We were also privileged to welcome Maria Cieśla as our visiting fellow in the autumn and to hear about her research on 17th century Jewish-Christian relations in Sluck.

We were very proud, and also sad to see them go, that six of our PhD students graduated this year: Nicola Woodhead (Transnational Kindertransport), Verity Steele (Ideology and networks of Bachad movement), Ryan Hugh Ross (Viennese Composer Julius Bürger), Katie Power (New Yiddish Theatre in London), Joseph Finlay (Jews and race relations in postwar Britain) and Uri Agnon (Music and political activism). We are grateful to current PhD students Charlie Knight and Anoushka Alexandra-Rose for all their support as outreach fellows and we were delighted that they received Turing scheme awards to spend a month in our partner institution Potsdam University, among many other conferences that they attended or organised.

Our outreach and public engagement was as rich as ever: we hosted a visit of the Jewish Historical Society of England, supported the two-week run of our PhD student Uri Agnon Antisemitism – a ((musical))) in London, hosted the first performance of music composed in Dachau concentration camp and organised round-table discussions on the films *One Life* and *The Zone of Interest* on top of our annual commemoration of Holocaust and Genocide Memorial Day (this year with a survivor of the Rwanda genocide). Most of our events are available to watch on our [YouTube channel](#) and you can sign up to receive our newsletter [here](#). Additionally, we are excited that Parkes Institute researchers Sami Everett and Anoushka Alexander-Rose have commenced their Maimonides from Scratch project, and showcased their methodology at the AHRC IAA SE Cluster Regional Research Event at the University of Sussex in May.



UCL Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies

This academic year has been very difficult for our students, staff, and communities with the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas and the unfolding tragedies have all taken their toll on us. Nevertheless, we hope to be able to bring some good news despite the challenging times in which we find ourselves.

We are very lucky to have been joined by Professor Kate Loewenthal and Dr Jonathan Boyd, who are now Honorary Research Fellows in HJS and have already been enriching Departmental life through their research, teaching, and conference organisation.

We are also very fortunate to have gained a new Rothschild Foundation postdoctoral research fellow: Dr Steven Samols is conducting a project on Jews in fascist Italy and will be teaching a module in the Department in the new academic year. We are also very pleased that Dr Samols has won the 2024 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize at the German Historical Institute for his dissertation Photobooks as Jewish History: German-speaking Jews, Images, and the Transatlantic Construction of a Common Past.

Congratulations are also in order for Prof Sacha Stern, who has been awarded a prestigious European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant, worth just under 2.5m Euro over five years for his project Astronomy, calendar, and related sciences in Near Eastern cultures, third-eighth centuries CE.

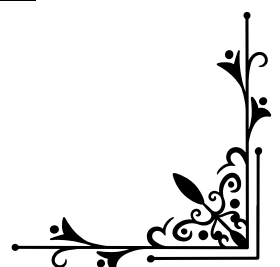
We extend our congratulations to Tamara Novis, our Lecturer (Teaching) in Modern Hebrew, for being awarded an FHEA Fellowship.

We are further delighted to announce that Dr Sonia Gollance was awarded a Knowledge-Exchange grant to fund a Yiddish theatre series in collaboration with the Yiddish Café Trust and JW3. Earlier this year she organised A Season of Yiddish Theatre, an exciting series of performances, workshops, and staged readings, which were held at JW3. This series introduced the riches of Yiddish theatre to a broad audience.

Some more good news is that our UKRI/Marie Curie postdoctoral fellow Dr Carlos Yebra López has secured a permanent academic position at California State University Fullerton, where he will continue to teach, research, and raise awareness of Ladino. We are very grateful to Carlos for having taught a beginners' Ladino course in the Department this year, which was extremely popular and helped to revitalise this endangered Jewish language for a new generation of learners.

Our PhD student Mie Jensen paired with Holocaust survivor Michal Ashkenazi to share her story on social media so "never again" means never again. You can read the full story here.

Prof Lily Kahn was interviewed by BBC Shropshire to help unravel the mystery of a stone slab with what appeared to be Hebrew text was dug up: Mystery Hebrew writing on slab is 'gibberish' or listen to the radio piece here.



Three HJS colleagues have been successful in their Senior Promotions applications this year. A heartfelt mazal tov to:

Seth Anziska – promoted to Professor of Jewish-Muslim Relations

Sonia Gollance – promoted to Associate Professor of Yiddish Studies

Tali Loewenthal – promoted to Associate Professor of Jewish Spirituality (Teaching)

Finally, we are sad to announce the passing of Dr Gillian Greenberg on 6 August 2023, at the age of 88. Gillian was a longstanding and beloved member of the Department and we miss her very much.

News from related associations

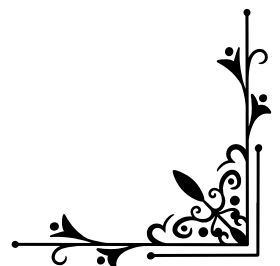
European Association for Jewish Studies

From François Guesnet (EAJS Secretary):

The European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS) held its 12th Congress in July 2023. Hosted by the Department for Judaic Studies at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt on Main, it was entitled Branching Out: Diversity of Jewish Studies. It featured over 700 presentations across all disciplines in Jewish Studies. It was held in one building which made conversations with colleagues, fuelling up with coffee and reaching the next talk extremely convenient. Participants of the Congress had funded a travel bursary programme for colleagues from Ukraine to join the event. The EAJS also funded a travel scheme for participants of the Congress presenting research in south-eastern European Jewish Studies, presented in a series of dedicated panels.

The EAJS continues to support conferences and workshops through its Conference Grant Programme, and the most recent iterations saw a return to pre-pandemic levels of applications for face-to-face academic events, which is an encouraging development. In cooperation with its core funder, the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, the EAJS in the autumn of 2023 launched a new Small Research Grant Programme, allowing Full and Student Members (a reminder: the EAJS accepts PhD students enrolled at European universities to join for free) to apply to up to £ 2,500 for individual research projects. The first round of this new scheme proved very popular, and the second round went live in May 2024. Fingers crossed this attractive programme will become part of the future activities of the Association!

Furthermore, work has started to hold the first iteration of ‘EAJS Virtual 2024’, a new online conference format for EAJS Full, Associate, and Student Members to take place on November 21, 2024, around the theme of Jewish Literatures, Places, and Heritage. All members will be invited to submit paper and panel proposals in the very near future, with the event allowing members of the Association to join around this broad theme.



The Jewish Historical Society of England

From Miri Rubin (the President of the JHSE)

The JHSE has had a busy year as it seeks to grow its membership, forge collaborations and partnerships, and most importantly support research into Jewish History in universities and communities. BIAJS is a treasured partner.

We are particularly proud of the achievements of our New Generation Group (NGG). Founded during Covid as a peer group for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, the NGG has developed into a UK-based but international network with a rich programme of reading groups, workshops, and in 2024, its first two-day research conference that took place at Queen Mary University of London. If any BIAJS member of supervising a PhD or mentoring a postdoctoral researcher, please suggest that they contact ngg@jhse.org where they will be welcomed.

The JHSE is active at several levels, one being its Branches. I am delighted to report that a Manchester Branch is being developed in collaboration with the Manchester Jewish Museum. A Cambridge Branch is also in planning. BIAJS members are encouraged to contribute to mailing them robust and effective branches, so do contact me with signs of your interest.

JHSE welcomes talks by enthusiastic researchers who are keen to engage with wider publics. BIAJS members are welcome to send me suggestions of possible talks online, or to our branches in person. I can liaise with our Branch organisers on the behalf of any interested speakers.

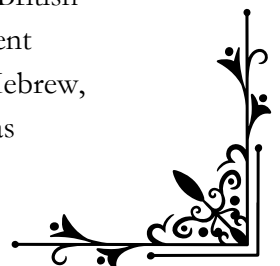
I hope to see JHSE members contributing to the BIAJS annual conference.

In memory

Ilana Tahan (1946–2024).

From Stewart Brookes

Ilana Antoinette Tahan was born in Romania and earned her BA from the Hebrew University. It was in Jerusalem that she met and married the Iraqi-born scientist and researcher Menashe Tahan. Moving to England, Ilana was awarded an MPhil from Aston University in Birmingham, her thesis being a study of the novels of the Russian-French author and historian Henri Troyat (1911–2007). In 1989, Ilana was appointed Hebraica Curator at the British Library, thus beginning an association that would span some 35 years. In 2002, Ilana was promoted to Head of the Hebrew Section, overseeing 3,000 medieval manuscripts, 7,000 Genizah fragments and more than 73,000 printed books (dating from 1450 onwards). As colleagues retired, Ilana's remit extended to cover a vast range of the British Library's collections and in 2010 she became Lead Curator of Hebrew and Christian Orient Collections, having within her purview a vast number of Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Hebrew, Jewish-language, and Syriac manuscripts and printed books. Many would have seen this as overwhelming, but Ilana took in her stride the responsibility that this entailed.

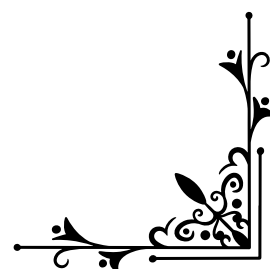


As technology moved on, so did Ilana's specialisms. From 2013-2020, she oversaw the impressive and transformative Hebrew Manuscripts Digitisation Project (the first phase of which was funded by the Polonsky Foundation and the second phase in partnership with the National Library of Israel). This was a major accomplishment which led to the entirety of the British Library's Hebrew manuscripts being made available online for free. And, significantly for Digital Humanities research, the resultant 730,000 digitised images were also packaged as a download as part of the BL Labs initiative. Such an endeavour is not that of a single person, and it is a credit to Ilana's vision that she selected a series of gifted scholars with whom to work, including Adi Keinan-Schoonbaert, Miri Lewis and Zsófia Buda.

Ilana published many book chapters and articles, and her single-authored books include *Memorial Volumes to Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust: A Bibliography of British Library Holdings* (2004) and *Hebrew Manuscripts: The Power of Word and Image* (2008).

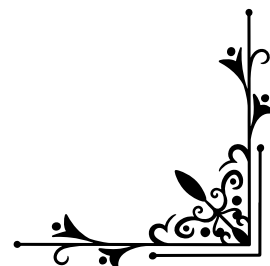
At conferences, and through her membership of professional bodies, Ilana worked hard to promote the British Library's collections and was a strong advocate for her field and for the work of librarians, archivists, imaging scientists and more. Many will have fond memories of Ilana's presentations at, for example, the Association of Jewish Libraries, the Leeds International Medieval Congress, the NLI and, of course, at BIAJS. And, for many years, Ilana was also co-convenor (with Vanessa Freedman) of the Hebraica Libraries Group.

Ilana was also exemplary in her public engagement activities, bringing faith communities into contact with the manuscripts under her remit, including sacred texts written in Ge'ez, Hebrew and Latin. The study visits and 'show and tell' sessions that she organised were legendary and I was fortunate enough to attend several of these over the years. Ilana's expertise and commitment to the material was matched by her wish to share her favourite items from her beloved collection of manuscripts. She was in her element at these 'show and tell' sessions: funny, knowledgeable and clearly enjoying the interaction with members of the public. She wore her learning lightly and treated even the most basic questions with kindness and respect, drawing out ideas from her small group audiences with a twinkle in her eyes. In recent years, these sessions went online, with Ilana often holding court from her book-lined home, inviting us into her world with a warm smile and an eagerness to show highlights from the British Library's holdings. This dedication to publicising the collections under her care was evident when Ilana was awarded the Order of the British Empire for services to scholarship in 2009; with characteristic commitment to her then position as Head of the Hebrew Section, Ilana told the *Jewish Chronicle* that the OBE was important because it would help to bring the British Library's significant collection of Judaic manuscripts to the attention of the wider public. Behind the scenes, Ilana's passion for supporting small communities led to her helping the Samaritan Community to raise the funds to have their more than 200 manuscripts digitised. As an expression of their gratitude, the Samaritan Community awarded Ilana the Samaritan Medal and, in August 2024, they presented her family with a Memorial Medal as a posthumous honour in recognition of her tremendous contributions on their behalf.



While Ilana had made significant contributions and loans to exhibitions both in the UK and abroad, four years ago she realised her dream of organising an exhibition that was based solely on the British Library's holdings, 'Hebrew Manuscripts: Journeys of the Written Word' (co-organised and co-curated with Zsófia Buda). The opening of the exhibition was hit hard by the pandemic: the launch was scheduled for March 2020 with a closure date of August 2020! In a thoughtful acknowledgement of the work that had gone into the exhibition, the British Library extended the timeframe for an extra 11 months, allowing visits between lockdowns and possibly making it the longest-running exhibition ever held at the British Library. Rather than offering a 'greatest hits' of the Hebrew manuscripts at the British Library (Golden Haggadah, Barcelona Haggadah and Lisbon Bible – I'm looking at you!), Ilana and Zsófia's vision for 'Journeys of the Written Word' was an impressively nuanced celebration of the diversity of the Jewish experience and the vast range of text types that survive. Amongst the 44 items on display were a Sefer Torah from Kaifeng; a thirteenth-century Hebrew charter issued by a woman; magical incantations and amulets; scientific treatises; philosophy; a Judeo-Urdu fairy-tale; and – bringing the exhibition bang up-to-date – a loan of Miri Lewis's ketubah.

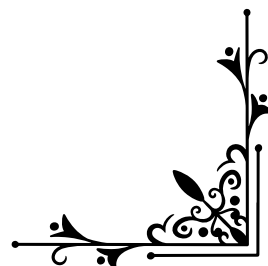
On a personal note, I've known Ilana for more than four decades, first meeting her when I was a child because we both attended Ealing United Synagogue. Though I grew from young person into academic, and was on roundtables alongside Ilana at conferences, she had a penchant for telling people that she had been at my Bar Mitzvah. This would puzzle fellow academics, but I'd suggest that perhaps my Bar Mitzvah was such a remarkable event that you really had to be there? That aside, having Ilana as a friend of my family gave me a sense that entering the field of manuscript studies was a possibility. In fact, the first time that I spoke about medieval Hebrew manuscript art was at the all-night study session of a Tikkun Leil Shavuot at Ealing Synagogue. I was nineteen and had been given the not-to-be envied 2am slot. As I distributed the glossy handouts of manuscripts that were mostly from the British Library's collections, I felt both excited and intimidated that Ilana was in the audience. She came up afterwards and was generous in her encouragement, asking why I'd only spoken for 15 minutes when I had 20 minutes: 'You obviously had so much more to say!'. I replied that I'd looked out into the tired eyes of my audience and had sensed that less was more. But the encouragement of Ilana's comment pleased me. Reflecting on that memory from the now very long ago, it amuses that Ilana asked why I'd stopped early: Ilana was famous for never keeping to time in her conference papers and for nobody minding because what she had to share was so interesting and her delivery so compelling. A memorable example of that was at the 2015 conference on 'Digital Approaches to Hebrew Manuscripts' that I co-organised at King's College London. The chair of the session in which Ilana was due to speak had boasted to me that they had never permitted a speaker to overrun, showing me a set of laminated cards that said, '5 mins', '3 mins', '0 mins' and 'STOP!'. As you may have guessed, neither the chair nor the cards were a match for Ilana, who appealed to the audience for their verdict. She was given a unanimous 'Keep going!' from the rapt attendees and this was the end of the negotiation. I will add that we were not sorry. What was 5 minutes less for lunch when we could enjoy more of Ilana's expertise?



Although Ilana was intensely private when it came to herself, like many a parent she delighted in talking about her children (Avy and Margalit) and sharing their achievements. I treasure the memory of her insisting that I follow her to the 'Turning the Pages' computer in the exhibition gallery in order to listen to the audio narration that was explaining the history of the Golden Haggadah: 'That's my Marga!' she said, confiding that she would sometimes go and listen to her daughter's voice during her lunch hour. But Ilana was a formidable presence when it came to scholarship about the manuscripts under her care. As I soon discovered, one had to work hard to impress her and, to get anywhere, one needed an attention to detail and a rigour equal to her own. She could be exigent and was not often swayed by 'innovative' arguments. That being the case, I was a little wary when she motioned for me to sit down on a nearby bench one day at the BL, asking if I'd read Marc Michael Epstein's *The Medieval Haggadah: Art, Narrative, and Religious Imagination* (2011). I replied that I had, and Ilana looked at me intently: 'then read it again! I have read it five times and,' she said with slight tears in her eyes, 'he has new things to say!'

Ilana leaves behind her an impressive legacy and legions of scholars who benefited from her kindness, expertise and willingness to assist them in their research. She also leaves a huge gap. In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* in 2016, Ilana stated: 'The Bible and the Talmud are not old texts, they are everlasting texts.' May her memory be for a blessing.

(JC interview, November 2016)



Announcements

Journal of Jewish Studies: LUP and call for papers

The Editors of the Journal of Jewish Studies are glad to announce, on the 75th anniversary of the Journal, that publication and distribution of the Journal will be outsourced from now onwards to Liverpool University Press, following the recent retirement of Margaret Vermes, longstanding JJS Managing Editor. The Editorial team will remain based at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. We take this opportunity to call for submission of papers. Papers from junior to senior scholars are most welcome, from the late biblical to the modern era. We aim to publish within one year only from the date of initial submission.

New book marks 50 years since the founding of the Genizah Research Unit

The Illustrated Cairo Genizah

By Nick Posegay & Melonie Schmierer-Lee

Gorgias Press 2024

ISBN 978-1-4632-4772-0

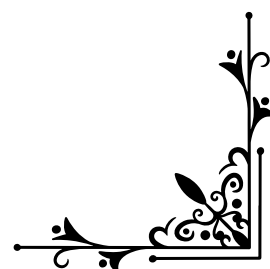
Description: Almost one thousand years ago, the Jews of Old Cairo began to place their worn-out books and scrolls into a hidden storage room – a genizah – of their synagogue. Over the years, they added all sorts of writings to the pile, sacred and secular texts alike. When the chamber was emptied at the end of the 19th century, it held hundreds of thousands of paper and parchment fragments. Now known as the ‘Cairo Genizah’, it has become one of the most important sources of knowledge for the history of the Middle East and the Mediterranean world. This book offers the first illustrated introduction to the unique collections of Cairo Genizah manuscripts at Cambridge University Library.

Join Genizah experts Nick Posegay and Melonie Schmierer-Lee as they take you on a journey of discovery through more than 125 years of research at the University of Cambridge, showcasing over 300 stunning, full-colour manuscript images across 12 thematic chapters. From ancient Bibles to medieval magic and Renaissance printing presses, The Illustrated Cairo Genizah reveals the forgotten stories of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities at the centre of a millennium of world history.

Endorsements

“This book is a superb overview of the rich diversity of the contents of the Cairo Genizah. It is inspiring for all, specialists and non-specialists, by the attractiveness of its production with superb colour images and the clarity of the learned comments on the manuscripts.”

Geoffrey Khan, Regius Professor of Hebrew, University of Cambridge



“People in my line of work have been waiting their whole careers for a Genizah coffee table book, and it has finally arrived. Marvels await you. A single, all but vanished group of Jews survives in the world’s imagination because they left an extraordinary number of written traces. If you want to know more about them, this is the book for you. If you want to know why anyone would devote themselves to studying ancient, tattered, dusty and often illegible manuscript fragments, this book will not just tell you but show you with copious images. If you already know the manuscripts and the history and the community they document, you’ll still be humbled by the commitment of the librarians, conservators and scholars whose labor has made them legible for the future. (And of course there’s a cat fragment.)”

Marina Rustow, Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East and Professor of History, Princeton University

"The Illustrated Cairo Genizah is an utterly transporting presentation of original materials that range across centuries, oceans, cultures, and languages. The Arabic and Islamic sources are presented with great insight, and now and again, you'll read a line that simply takes your breath away."

Professor Kristina Richardson, John L. Nau III Professor of the History and Principles of Democracy, Professor of History and Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages and Cultures University of Virginia

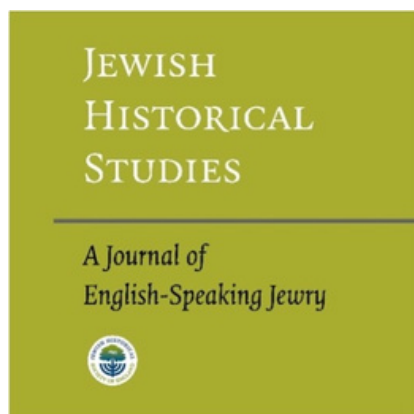
Register for the book launch at Heffer's Bookshop, Cambridge UK, 12 November, 6-7pm [here](#)

Order UK copies [here](#) (available for delivery now)

Order US copies [here](#) (available for pre-order, coming soon)

For assistance, email gemma@gorgiaspress.com

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We are excited to share that the UCL Press Open Access Journal, Jewish Historical Studies: A Journal of English-Speaking Jewry has launched on a new platform; providing a more intuitive, improved navigation experience for its global readers.

First published in 1893, the journal is the official publication of the Jewish Historical Society of England, the oldest historical and learned society of its kind in Europe. Jewish Historical Studies: A journal of English-speaking Jewry publishes original, peer reviewed research that explores the historical experience of Jews across the English-speaking Jewish world.

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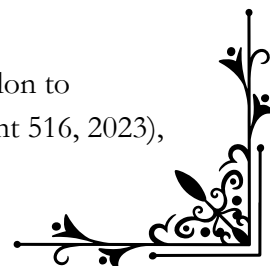
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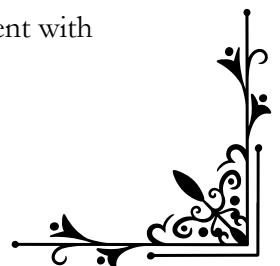
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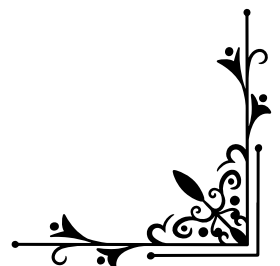
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