

Call For Papers – Australian Association for Jewish Studies

The 30th AAJS Conference, 11-12 February 2018,
Curtin University, Perth (Western Australia)

By the Rivers of Babylon: Memory, Emotion and Jews

Psalms 137 is perhaps the paradigmatic text for the interplay of memory and emotion in the construction of both Jewish history and the Jewish self. The psalmist lays the groundwork for the depiction and understanding of exile, and provides the paradigm for over 2000 years of fears, anxieties, hopes and aspirations, which for some culminates in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This paradigm corresponds with the messianic hopes, which emphasize the optimistic future rather than the tragic present or past.

While memory and emotion have shaped the discourse about the Holocaust, and equally become significant reference points for reading Jewish history as a whole, they, particularly emotion, have been relatively de-emphasized in both rabbinic discussions of Halacha and academic analyses of Jewish rituals and practices. Even Jewish mystical speculation is largely presented in a rationalist mode. Hasidism, is perhaps the primary exception to this pattern; this is specifically found in the Baal Shem Tov's rejection of the basis of the rabbinic system of his time, with a concomitant focus on emotion rather than reason as the fundamental basis of religious experience. Arguably, Chabad has provided a mechanism for moving Hasidic discourse back towards emphasis on reason.

Geography, particularly Zion, has been a consistent focus for memory and emotion expressed in longing. This trope is first expressed in the quotation from Psalms, it is also the heart and power of the poetry of Yehuda HaLevi. The importance of place is the heart of modern Zionism, and is one of the most significant motivators in modern Jewish life and thought.

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

AAJS 2018 Perth, entitled "**By the Rivers of Babylon: Memory, Emotion and Jews**", will provide a trans-disciplinary forum for addressing perspicaciously both memory and emotion - both providing a basis for challenging and understanding their implications. It also seeks from the opposite direction to reassess our understanding of Judaism by resorting to general theories of memory and emotion. We hope that AAJS 2018 Perth would act as an epistemological bridge, as an antidote for parallel discourses surrounding Memory, Emotion and Jews.

Proposed papers can look at the theme from any angle, for example psychological, linguistic, philosophical, anthropological, theological, musical, political, biological, historical, cross-cultural. Papers on other topics would be considered too.

Please submit your paper proposal by Tuesday, **1 August 2017** to the convenor, Professor Seth Kunin:
seth.kunin@curtin.edu.au (Subject: AAJS 2018 Perth Abstract).
Notice of acceptance will be sent out by **1 September 2017**.

Submissions must include the following:

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

AAJS encourages students engaged in academic research to submit proposals based on their work to the conference committee.

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

Conference Committee: Professor Seth Kunin (Conference Convener) Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, Dr Jan Láníček, Dr Anna Hirsch, Dr Vicky Schinkel, Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland OAM, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod

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

Visit www.aajs.org.au for details.