

***THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL
OF
JEWISH STUDIES***

Volume XXXVIII: 2025

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Editorial

Suzanne Faigan and Angelica Jacob

We are very pleased to present to readers the latest volume of the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume XXXVIII, for 2025. Completed in the weeks immediately following the devastating attack on a Jewish festival celebration at Bondi Beach, Sydney, this is a collection of pieces which were conceived long prior.

Overall, 2025 was a year marked by violence, conflict, and upheaval. Looking back at the year through a Jewish lens, the return of most of the remaining Israeli hostages and the ceasefire in Gaza in the latter part of the year brought great relief, if not pure joy, that was like a ray of sunshine in a dark time. At the time of writing, there is only one hostage left to be returned to his family, and the Jewish world is waiting for this to happen.

A positive event which stands out: in Moshav Nevatim, Israel, in November, the Indian Jewish Heritage Center (IJHC) and the Cochin Jewish Heritage Center (CJHC), along with the Polish and Indian embassies in Israel, held an event to commemorate the remarkable story of the Maharaja of Jamnagar's extraordinary rescue of orphaned children from Poland during the Holocaust. The event was mentioned in a speech by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, whose home state is Gujarat, and who said the event was a 'special honour' that celebrated a 'noble deed'. A monument of the Maharaja was also unveiled on the IJHC's grounds, and in Poland, a square, a monument, and public schools are named after the 'Good Maharaja'. The audience learned that some refugees were not identified as Jewish because they were too young to express their Jewish background or were instructed by their parents to hide their Jewish roots, according to research from the Central Zionist Archives. This is only one of many important initiatives undertaken at the IJHC's Nevatim Center to preserve the history, culture, and traditions of India's five Jewish communities and honour the country's pluralism and tolerance. The fact is that many Indian leaders helped the Jewish people by giving them shelter in India during World War Two, like the Maharaja of Jamnagar.

Moving our thoughts even further from the present day, we note two important events in the history of Jewish Studies which took place exactly one hundred years ago, in 1925. In Jerusalem, as is alluded to in Rabbi Elton's piece in this volume, the founding stone was laid for the Hebrew University, at an event attended by thousands of people, including world leaders, dignitaries, and leading academics. And, in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania), the Yidisher Visenshaftlekher Institut [Jewish Scientific Institute; YIVO] was founded as a centre for documenting and study of Jewish life around the world. We can only marvel at the differences between then and



now for these institutions, and celebrate their continued existence providing valuable services as places of learning and archival research.

All in all, despite continued funding difficulties in the education sector, the field of Jewish Studies today gives every impression of thriving. Scholars in Jewish Studies are writing, lecturing, presenting conference papers, and collaborating on research, and Jewish Studies departments are advertising for new staff at all levels of academia, and offering student scholarships. Of course, there are also plenty of scholars in Jewish Studies who are not working under the aegis of a university department or institution that is specifically devoted to Jewish Studies, such is the interdisciplinary nature of Jewish Studies.

Corresponding to that interdisciplinarity, the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* offers tastes from a broad range of topics. We hope readers of this new volume will enjoy visiting the various disciplines and the opportunity for learning about topics that may be outside their normal field of vision, as well as the chance to become acquainted with new research on familiar topics.

This year, the journal's editorial team, supported by our editor-in-chief, Dr. Jennifer Creese, farewells Dr. Joshua Nash, whose high standards for academic writing and experience in academic publishing were so beneficial to the previous two volumes. Thank you, Josh, for your time, input, and collegiality over our two years of close teamwork. And, a warm welcome to Ms. Angelica Jacob, who has joined the team in the role of Reviews Editor. Angelica currently does her journal work in Melbourne, where she is a PhD candidate at Monash University, in the School of Media, Film and Journalism. In 2024, Angelica completed an MPhil on 'The Representation of Diverse Jewish Constituencies within the Australian Jewish Community' at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, School of Social Science (Political Science). The thesis can be accessed via the following link: <https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/30418>

There have been some developments in the past year on the technical side of *AJJS* operations. As a result of the creation of some new webpages for individual journal volumes, a search using the little search window on the Australian Association for Jewish Studies website (<https://aajs.org.au>) will now pick up results from all *AJJS* article titles and author names. This means that it is now possible to, for example, create a list of all of a particular author's publications in the *AJJS*, as well as their AAJS conference presentations. Or, the site could be searched for a particular subject, for example. This function, which is more reliable than a general web search, is already proving very useful. A potential future extension to this work is to make article keywords similarly searchable—we have made a start on this in 2025—, and eventually perhaps even the full text. Relatedly, it should be

possible in the coming year to start uploading pre-2019 *AJJS* articles to the website, to improve access and searchability, and to add to our online archive.

Another development relating to the Association's website this year was the addition of site security. Prior to this, some website users were encountering warnings about the site being unsecure, and sometimes access was blocked completely. Now, the web address prefix has changed from http to https, and there should be no more access problems.

In the domain of social media, the *AJJS* is now on LinkedIn, with account name 'Australian Journal of Jewish Studies (AJJS)', and invites all LinkedIn users to connect.

We thank all contributors to this volume for their submissions, and to all peer reviewers for their comments on the original article drafts. We encourage all scholars in Australia and abroad to consider making a submission for the 2026 volume, either as a standard research paper, review paper, response to a published article, a roundtable, or book review on any topic of relevance to the broad remit of this journal. Please see the *AJJS* webpage (<https://aajs.org.au/journal/>) for submission details, and address any enquiries to ajjewishstudies@aajs.org.au.

Lastly, a special request going forward: authors, **let us know of your new books**, and we will do our best to organise and publish a review.