

News from the Director

by Richard S. Sarason, PhD

Director, Pines School of Graduate Studies



Dr. Richard S. Sarason

Dear Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of the Pines School of Graduate Studies,

Because of the worldwide coronavirus outbreak, all four campuses of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion are currently closed. We are continuing our academic and teaching work

electronically. We are also using electronic resources to maintain a strong, vital community and to support each other through these difficult times.

Prior to this outbreak, a highlight of our academic year in the Graduate School was the annual Alumnus-in-Residence Program, which brings to campus one of our distinguished alumni to meet with our current graduate students, offer them two professional workshops, and deliver an academic talk. This year's alumnus-in-residence was Prof. John C. Reeves ('89), Blumenthal Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Prof. Reeves has had a distinguished academic career, publishing widely on various aspects of the literary and historical relationships evidenced among Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, gnostic, and Muslim communities in the Near East during late antiquity and the early medieval era. His academic talk here, "A Traipse Through the Parascriptural: Unpacking an Unusual Prophetic Tale," dealt with an intriguing tale from the "prophetic legends" collection of the Muslim anthologist al-Kisā'ī that echoes certain motifs and characters found only in the Second Temple-era Hebrew Book of Jubilees.



Prof. John C. Reeves, center right; Prof. Adam Kamesar, rear; director Richard Sarason, far left; and PSGS students pose with "Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise" for a photo during a break in this year's Alumnus-in-Residence Program.

Additionally, Prof. Reeves led two professional workshops for our students, "Negotiating the World of Fellowships and Grants" and "Preparing Your Resume for Academia"—both very timely and practical topics. Students and faculty had the opportunity to socialize with Prof. Reeves at an informal dinner reception and throughout the day and a half of his campus stay. Our students highly value and benefit from this kind of hands-on engagement with our alumni.

Yet another PSGS alumna, Dr. Angela Roskop Erisman ('08), has kindly been offering two professional workshops a year to our students on issues pertaining to academic writing, publishing, and delivering academic papers at conferences. This year's workshops have dealt with managing the workflow of academic writing and how to prepare a manuscript submission to a publisher.

Our students had the opportunity this winter to meet over lunch with Mrs. Joan Pines, former chair of the Central Region Board of Overseers, who, with her family, has given the naming gift for the Pines School of Graduate Studies. The conversation benefitted everyone around the table: Joan had a chance to get to know our students individually—their personal backgrounds, academic interests, and professional goals—while our students acquired a deep



Prof. Nili S. Fox, center, honored by PSGS alumni, students, and faculty at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting luncheon.

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appreciation for Joan's passion for higher Jewish learning, interfaith study, and strengthening our institutions of learning that motivates such a substantial financial commitment. Students also indicated their appreciation for the PSGS interfaith study experience that has allowed them to break out of their previous learning silos. (The same appreciation, by the way, also has been expressed by many of our rabbinical students who study in classes together with our graduate students.)

The PSGS hosted its annual luncheon for alumni, students, and friends of the Graduate School at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in San Diego this past November. About sixty people attended. Provost Dr. Andrea Weiss brought greetings from the HUC-JIR administration and our new president, Dr. Andrew Rehfeld. The highlight of the luncheon was a surprise presentation honoring our colleague Prof. Nili S. Fox, who will be retiring at the end of the current academic year. Prof. Fox's former graduate students are preparing in her honor an academic Festschrift volume, edited by Drs. Kristine Garroway ('14), Angela Roskop Erisman ('08), and Christine Palmer ('15), to be published by Hebrew Union College Press. Prof. Fox was presented with a mock-up of the volume, filled with notes of appreciation from her former students.

We were also pleased that our Office of Recruitment and Admissions sponsored at the SBL meeting an evening

reception at a local pub for alumni and prospective applicants to the PSGS. Some of our alumni who are members of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) sponsored an evening reception for alumni at the ETS annual academic meeting also held in San Diego.

As I write these lines, we are still in the midst of our admissions process for the coming academic year. I can report that we have a strong pool of candidates, including a notable spike in the number of applications to our Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (MAJS) program.

We anticipate awarding one PhD, two MAJS, and one MPhil degree (marking the successful completion of all academic requirements for the PhD except for the dissertation) this year and expect that three more MPhils will be completed by late spring. Again, because of the worldwide coronavirus outbreak, May graduation exercises have been cancelled. We also are postponing our Summer in Israel program and the Tel Dan dig until summer 2021. Hopefully, the program will be able to resume at that time.

As always—but it cannot be said enough—we are so grateful to all of you for your gracious and ongoing commitment to our work here educating and training your future colleagues, so many of whom come to us through you. Your financial and academic recruitment support is deeply appreciated!

Ancient Near Eastern Gallery Reinstallation at Art Museum

by Julia R. Olson, PhD Student



Julia R. Olson

In May of 2019, I was offered a Mellon-funded fellowship to assist with curatorial research at the Cincinnati Art Museum. The Mellon Foundation grant funded two researchers from local universities to assist in the reinstallation of the Ancient Near Eastern Gallery at the Museum. The research fellows were brought on to help with everything from individual object research to overall gallery organization.

Fortunately, my work at HUC-JIR had primed me for this job. My concentration is in Near Eastern studies and, like all my fellow students, I am no stranger to hours and hours of research. The first steps of the reinstallation at the Museum involved in-depth research of every object chosen for display. This work has been incredibly educational. I originally started in the areas of my own comfort, with cuneiform tablets from the Neo-Sumerian period, as well as votive statues from Chalcolithic Syria. But the gallery covers so much more than those periods, and as time went on, I was pushed out of my comfort zone and into researching other topics that were new to me.

The reinstallation of the gallery is scheduled to cover over 4,000 years of history, making the construction of an object-centered narrative very difficult at first. I was concerned that there would be too many differing themes in the objects and that our curatorial team would not be able to find one or two threads to run through the collection and tie the entire gallery together. Our earliest objects date to the Sumerian Early Dynastic period, and the latest objects date to the Sasanian empire and the early Islamic period. Interestingly, even though the materials span thousands of years, we soon found several common themes that we could run throughout the gallery. Our focus became the discussion of the ebb and flow of empires and the common iconographic motifs that appear throughout the entire time span presented in the gallery. Our goal is to help visitors investigate the way in which ancient people represented themselves and their deities in art, the importance of animals in the depiction of the strength of empires and kings, and the ways in which art

is incorporated in the architecture of empires.

Given the large expanse of time the gallery will cover, I eventually had to branch out and start researching objects from eras and empires with which I was less familiar. So far, my favorite research of an unfamiliar period has been the work I have done on the Sasanian empire. The empire stretched from ca. 200-600 CE and was centered in Iran. I was enthralled with the ways that the Sasanian kings utilized the art of empires that came before them, including the Achaemenid empire (known for its famous kings Darius I and Cyrus). Motifs that were used hundreds of years before the Sasanians still proved valuable to this empire. My study of the Sasanians confirmed one of the most prominent themes in the Museum's gallery. Ancient iconography proves to be a common thread that can be found woven intricately throughout thousands of years of history and thousands of miles of space. Each time a motif is reused,

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Julia Olson speaks to Dr. Jennifer Grayson's Papyrus, Parchment, and Paper history class at Xavier University about her curatorial research work at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

A Message from the Alumni Association

by H el ene M. Dallaire, PhD, President, PSGS Alumni Association



Dr. H el ene M. Dallaire

Greetings PSGS Alumni! The PSGS Alumni Association continues to be active on a number of fronts. As president of the Alumni Association, I attended the virtual meetings of the Alumni Council led by Dr. Elliott Kleinman, Dr. John Kampen, and Chelsea Simon, whose work as Alumni Program Manager is invaluable. Topics

on the fall-winter meeting agenda included: (1) recent developments under the leadership of our new president, Dr. Andrew Rehfeld; (2) the 2-20-2020 fundraising campaign; and (3) reports by the chairs of the HUC-JIR Alumni Associations. I reported on the successful Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) PSGS alumni gathering in San Diego in November, and the upcoming HUC-JIR website bibliography project for PSGS alumni publications.

This February, the PSGS Alumni Association met to address the following topics: (1) the steps needed to develop the web-based bibliography of PSGS alumni publications; (2) the work of the Alumni Council working groups; (3) the expansion of the PSGS Alumni Association; (4) the PSGS alumni mentoring project; and (5) updates related to PSGS new faculty and staff. The Alumni Association would like to invite your participation in some of these projects. If you would like to know what is happening with alumni behind the scenes, join the Association as a member-at-large. You will be pleasantly surprised by the amount of work done by HUC-JIR alumni around the world. If interested in participating, please contact me at Helene.Dallaire@denverseminary.edu.

Dr. Ken Way, Associate Professor of Bible Exposition at Talbot School of Theology and Chair of Old Testament and Semitics at Biola University, continues his journey of recovery from acute myeloid leukemia. In the autumn, Ken received a bone marrow transplant (from his brother) and although the road to complete recovery is long and arduous, the transplant was successful, and Ken continues to grow stronger each day. Please continue to keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

PSGS Alumni Association Projects

- Developing a web-based bibliography of PSGS alumni publications
- Supporting the Alumni Council working groups
- Expanding the impact of the Alumni Association
- Strengthening the PSGS alumni mentoring project
- Keeping alumni updated on new PSGS faculty and staff

Contact H el ene M. Dallaire at Helene.Dallaire@denverseminary.edu to discuss how you can help contribute to these efforts!

In the fall 2019 issue of the *Kol Hadash* newsletter, we provided excerpts of the responses from PSGS alumni to questions addressed last April with Dr. Rehfeld, Provost Dr. Andrea Weiss, and the members of the HUC-JIR Alumni Council. Following is the remainder of the questions and answers discussed at the meeting.



PSGS alumni attending the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting in San Diego in November met for a dinner at Harbor House.

Why was HUC-JIR a priority for you?

Alumni routinely mentioned the academic reputation of the faculty and the rich library resources. Many came to the College-Institute on the recommendation of their seminary professors who were graduates of the PSGS. They also mentioned the attractiveness of the interfaith context and experience. For example:

- “I thought that studying at a Jewish institution would give me a perspective that I would not receive at a Christian institution.”
- “For me, HUC-JIR was a place (1) where I could study with top scholars in their fields; (2) where I could engage in serious, academic scholarship that was interested in matters of religious tradition in a manner that was critical, but not hostile; and (3) where I could learn more about Jews and the Jewish tradition both academically and interpersonally in a way that benefits the present world. My experience at HUC-JIR was a success on all these fronts.”

“I am proud to be connected to HUC-JIR and promote the school wherever I go.”

How did your time as a student impact your career and life?

Alumni expressed satisfaction with their professional training and exposure to Jewish sources and perspectives. For example:

- “Studying at HUC-JIR revolutionized my perspective on the Hebrew Bible, enhancing it by the rabbinic sources that I studied at [the College-Institute]. I continue to put high value on those sources for exegetical, historical, and theological purposes.”
- “My connection with Jewish scholars who delve deeply into history, biblical interpretation, Semitic texts, and linguistics, prepared me well to be able to teach Semitic languages and Bible and Ancient Near Eastern history in a way that is sensitive to Jewish scholarship. In addition, I have been able to lead introductory seminars in Holocaust studies, Jewish background to Christianity, and other topics for which I would have been ill-equipped to teach had I not studied at HUC-JIR.”
- “Through the mentoring of the faculty, I have been able to present at several conferences and have met peers and colleagues in my field who continue to encourage my academic and professional development.”

What has your continued connection to the College-Institute meant for your career?

- “An opportunity to help in the training of further generations of scholars who benefit Christian institutions. All four of our Hebrew Bible faculty at my institution are HUC-JIR grads!”
- “I have found that [others’] awareness of my academic connection to HUC-JIR gives me the credentials to participate in the professional conversation in my field.”
- “My PhD from HUC-JIR has opened many academic doors. I attribute much of the success of my career to my professors at HUC-JIR, and the kind and generous support I received during my four years in Cincinnati.”
- “I stay involved in alumni activities partly for what I continue to learn, partly to support my friends at HUC-JIR, and partly because I want to partner with HUC-JIR in its task of doing good for the world.”
- “I am proud to be connected to HUC-JIR and promote the school wherever I go.”

Why do you think the PSGS matters to the College-Institute? To other parts of HUC-JIR?

- “It is the bridge to the Christian community [and continues] to promote better understanding between Jews and Christians.”
- “The PSGS is a vital part of the mission of HUC-JIR because it both addresses and exemplifies the collegiality and intellectual rigor of the school. On the Cincinnati campus, rabbinical and graduate students learn together and learn from each other. We are not two schools in one location, but one school of diverse academic interests. The breadth of study is only enhanced by the diversity of students that the PSGS and the Rabbinical School bring together. In an age of rabid prejudice and misinformation, the conjoining of rabbinical and graduate education in one environment stands against the fray that would seek to silence discourse and to eliminate difference in the ‘marketplace’ of our communities.”

Hélène M. Dallaire, PhD ('02), is Professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary in Denver, CO.

The Great Transition

by Ryan M. Replogle, Vice-President,
Graduate Student Association



: Ryan M. Replogle

An alumnus of the Pines School of Graduate Studies recently enlightened me about the transition from coursework to dissertation. “Once you start working on your dissertation,” he explained, “suddenly people start treating you like you’re an expert now.” An expert!

I have yet to cross that Great Divide, but I have begun to experience similar transitions. Having completed coursework, I have had my first opportunity to teach this semester (first-year Biblical Hebrew), and am slated to teach at Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio next year for one of the fifth-year teaching fellowships. On the one hand, having spent close to seven years in graduate school, to be able to use all my acquired skills and knowledge is refreshing. On the other hand, the sudden presence of professional prospects has incited a sobering realization that at some mysterious point in the past few months, I became a teacher!

The dissonance in this transition period has prompted one major takeaway: a feeling of gratitude for HUC-JIR’s commitment not only to scholarly excellence, but also to professional excellence. The teaching opportunities are in themselves testament, but they do not fully encompass that commitment either. From our yearly Alumnus-in-Residence Program to professional workshops with Dr. Angela Roskop Erisman every semester, we have many opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to be successful practitioners in the field. In fact, one of the greatest avenues for development comes from interactions with alumni, whose support and model of success are invaluable sources of growth for current students.

As students transition year by year into more extensive professional roles, may we seize the opportunities and further the HUC-JIR tradition of excellence!

“ . . . suddenly people start treating you like you’re an expert now.”



Cincinnati Art Museum

Ancient Near Eastern Gallery *continued from page 3*

its meaning changes slightly for those utilizing it. My work at the Museum has helped me to connect empires that might otherwise seem disparate and far removed from one another.

One of the most challenging and fulfilling parts of my job is figuring out how to translate my academic knowledge and priorities about the objects into terms that will not only be understandable for the Museum visitor, but interesting to that person as well. Often, the head of the education department will ask us, “But why is that important to a visitor?” This helps the curatorial team figure out whether we are focusing on too many nuances that, in the grand scheme of the gallery, do not contribute to the overall narrative we are telling through the objects. A lot of the time, the job requires us to broaden the scope of our specific knowledge about a piece and fit it into a larger story that will inform visitors rather than bore them.

I have been fortunate to have the education I have had at HUC-JIR, as the knowledge I have gained here has deeply impacted my work at the Cincinnati Art Museum. I also have the unique opportunity to step outside of the academic world and communicate what is interesting to me in my field to a broader audience. It is often easy to forget that, at some point in our careers, we will be communicating information that is important to us as scholars to those for whom that information may not be as important or familiar. I am constantly challenged to find new ways to present ancient information to people who do not have the years of study that I have. It is humbling and incredibly useful for my future career.

I came to the project with a knowledge of the iconography and history of the ancient Levant. But through my work at the Museum, I have had the opportunity to expand that knowledge to the Nabataean kingdom in Jordan, the art and architecture at Persepolis and Nimrud, as well as the influence of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires on Sasanian art. Throughout all these shifting time periods, one can still view the timeless aesthetic values that are present in the art of the ancient Near East. As the gallery comes together more and more, I look forward to seeing these connections and values come alive in a physical space.

Presentations, Publications & Other News

PRESENTATIONS

American Schools of Oriental Research

Gregory Snyder | “Furnishing the Divine Abode: Portable Furniture in Temples of Late Bronze and Iron Age Syria-Palestine.”

Midwest Society of Biblical Literature

Ryan M. Reppogle | “Meta-representational Theory and Divine Imagery: Beyond Literal and Metaphorical.”

PUBLICATIONS

Angela Roskop Erisman | “Caleb and the Territory of Judah,” in *Writing, Rewriting, and Overwriting in the Books of Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets: Essays in Honor of Cynthia Edenburg*. Edited by I. Koch, T. Römer, and O. Sergi. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 304. Leuven: Peeters, 2019. Pg. 81–104.

Kristine Henriksen Garroway | “(Un)Dressing Children in the Lachish Reliefs: Questions of Gender, Status, and Ethnicity.” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 83.1 (2020): 36-41.

— “Childhood in the Ancient Near East.” *Bible Odyssey* (SBL online publication for non-professionals: <http://bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/childhood-in-the-ancient-near-east>).

— Garroway and Shawn Flynn | “Children in the ancient Middle East were valued and vulnerable—not unlike children today.” *The Conversation Canada* (academic online newsletter for non-professionals: econversation.com/children-in-the-ancient-middle-east-were-valued-and-vulnerable-not-unlike-children-today-120490).

— Garroway and John W. Martens | Editors. *Children and Methods: Listening To and Learning From Children in the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, 2020.

Benjamin J. Noonan | *Non-Semitic Loanwords in the Hebrew Bible: A Lexicon of Language Contact*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 14. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019.

— *Advances in the Study of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: New Insights for Reading the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.

Sung Jin Park | *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents: Divisions and Exegetical Roles beyond Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

— “The Validity of the Phonetic Value Changes of Shewa in Various Tiberian Accentual Contexts,” *Hebrew Studies* 60 (2019): 333-355.

Michael J. Thigpen | “The Storm of YHWH: Jeremiah’s Theology of God’s Heart and Motives.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 176 (2019): 418–28.

David L. Turner | *Interpreting the Gospels and Acts: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019.

PROMOTIONS

Michael J. Thigpen will be serving as the Executive Vice-President and Provost of Phoenix Seminary, beginning June 1, 2020.

BIRTHS

Phillip and Sarah Bollinger announce the birth of their son, Asher Thomas, on October 16, 2019.

Kristi and Caleb Gilmore announce the birth of their daughter, Eliana Joy, on October 17, 2019.

NEWS

Mark Shaffer launched the second season of his podcast called Text and Rock. The show is a humanist reading of biblical literature alongside comparative literature (TEXT) and field archaeology (ROCK) geared toward peace of mind and human thriving. The website is textandrock.com and has about 7500 weekly listeners. The hope is to start interviewing more colleagues in Ancient Near Eastern, Classical, and Jewish Studies moving forward.

Your Support is Needed

Alumni support is vital for funding student fellowships. Our spendable annual endowment income does not fully cover the aggregate cost of tuition that the Pines School of Graduate Studies pays to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion each year. Additionally, student stipends are funded entirely out of annual fundraising and contributions. Our goal is to accept more qualified PhD students to the PSGS, but without generous alumni support the number of students that we can fund remains limited.

Please consider a gift specifically designated to the PSGS Scholarship Fund, which supports PhD student stipends. Help us to invest in our current and future students, just as we have invested in each one of you. Every dollar that you contribute goes directly to student financial support. You can donate by mail (your check must specify that this is a gift to the PSGS Scholarship Fund) or online at <https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad>.

Graduate student tuition and candidacy fees are supported by endowed scholarship funds that are earmarked for this purpose. A PSGS scholarship endowment fund has been established in honor of PSGS director Richard Sarason, and we are making good progress in raising its principal. If you wish additionally to contribute to this fund, you should make out a separate check and specify the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund on the memo line. You can also contribute to this fund online at <https://donate.huc.edu/cngrad>, but you must specify the Sarason Endowed Scholarship Fund in the comment box. For questions, contact Shelly Goldfarb, PSGS Administrative Assistant, at 513.487.3230 or gradschool@huc.edu.

We need your support!

Governor's Report *by James E. Bowley, PhD, Governor, HUC-JIR*



Dr. James E. Bowley

Greetings to all of you, my fellow HUC-JIR Alumni and Friends!

The Board of Governors met in Los Angeles on February 9-10. Since beginning his job early last spring, our new president, Dr. Andrew Rehfeld, has been working ceaselessly to get to know HUC-JIR, and his desire to move our institution forward with continued

excellence is clear.

You all know that times are tough in higher education right now for numerous reasons, including demographics and finances. Our board and president are acutely aware of these issues and are working hard for our school's success. We are also aware of our need for new faculty in the Pines School of Graduate Studies. By the time of our next meeting in June, we hope to have major pieces of a strategic plan drafted for our success in the next several years.

Obviously, it goes without saying (so why am I saying it?!) that all the support you give to HUC-JIR is extremely

appreciated and important. And, of course, this includes talking about HUC-JIR with others, referring students to our College-Institute, and anything else you might do to aid the school.

I think there are good reasons for all of us to be optimistic because the Board of Governors and Dr. Rehfeld, along with the school leadership, are demonstrably committed to investing in the PSGS and doing everything possible for our success.

Thanks to all of you who have supported HUC-JIR and the PSGS—let's keep it up!

James E. Bowley, PhD ('92), is Professor of Religious Studies and chair of the department at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS.