

## Introducing *JJMJS*: A New Interdisciplinary Journal

We are pleased to present the first issue of *Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting: From the First to the Seventh Century (JJMJS)*. *JJMJS* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal published in collaboration with Eisenbrauns, offering high quality research free of charge to a global audience. The journal aims to advance scholarship on this crucial period in the early history of the Jewish and Christian traditions when they developed into what are today known as two world religions, mutually shaping one another as they did so.

In recent years, scholars in various subfields within New Testament studies, Christian origins, early Jewish studies, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, rabbinics, patristics, and archaeology have increasingly focused on issues related to this development, the importance of which can hardly be overstated. However, while considerable progress and findings of great significance have been made, it has become clear that, to the detriment of the progression of knowledge, there is limited communication between these inter-related areas of research, even though developments in one field may have direct implications for findings in the others.

This situation is likely due to traditional divisions between academic disciplines, divisions with roots that go back centuries and reflect the distinct identities of contemporary forms of Judaism and Christianity. Recent research has, however, challenged assumptions about such distinct identities as applied to the ancient period, requiring scholars to rethink the way the source material is categorized and approached, as well as how undergraduate and graduate programs and courses are structured in academic institutions.

There have been several efforts within academic societies, such as the Society of Biblical Literature, to address this new situation through introducing new consultations and sections dealing with the many challenges that scholarship is now faced with, including revisions of the terminology used in historical analyses.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence of these scholarly developments, we are currently experiencing what may be described as the early stages of a transformation of the study and teaching of the early histories of what became Judaism and Christianity.

Such a transformation brings with it the need to rethink the shape of scholarly communication and the sharing of research results between disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> Note, e.g., the SBL *Paul and Judaism* and *Jewish Christianity/Christian Judaism* sections.

No forum exists today which focuses uniquely on these issues over an extended period of time and across disciplines, allowing for—and even emphasizing the importance of—diverse methodological approaches. This is so despite the fact that distinct Jewish and Christian identities took centuries to form, making the study of one of the traditions methodologically dependent on equal attention to the other. *JJMJS* wants to address this need, to facilitate and encourage scholarly communication across disciplinary boundaries, and to make the results of cutting-edge research available to a worldwide audience.

The purpose of *JJMJS* is, then, to publish research on any topic that directly addresses or has implications for the understanding of Judaism and the Jesus movement from the first to the seventh century. We welcome the submission of studies within any of the following fields: Christian origins, New Testament studies, early Jewish studies (including Philo and Josephus), the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, rabbinic studies, patristics, history of ancient Christianity, reception history, and archaeology. Since methodological diversity is an important factor in interdisciplinary research, we encourage authors to apply any type of methodology that is effective for the task at hand, including but not limited to literary, rhetorical, linguistic, socio-historical, intellectual-historical, social scientific, and archaeological approaches.

This aim of publishing leading research of interdisciplinary relevance to the fields of study mentioned, as well as the journal's commitment to global communication of scholarship, made it necessary for us to carefully consider the venue through which the purpose of *JJMJS* could be realized most effectively. We strongly believe that broad dissemination of research is not only central to the academic enterprise as it relates to the society which it serves, but will also benefit research itself, inspiring new thinking and insights within and between different academic settings around the globe.<sup>2</sup> This is all the more important when the unavoidably interdisciplinary character of the study of the intertwined histories of Judaism and Christianity is taken into consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the mission statement at the Berlin 11 Open Access Conference of the Max Planck Society, issued in 2013, ten years after the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, which states that “a stable, competitive, and quality-assured O[pen] A[ccess] research publishing system offers immense benefits not only to scholarship but also to society as a whole” ([http://openaccess.mpg.de/mission-statement\\_en](http://openaccess.mpg.de/mission-statement_en); [accessed August 20, 2014]). For those who are new to open access publishing, see the widely acclaimed introduction by Peter Sauber, *Open Access* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012); [www.cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap/Open\\_Access\\_\(the\\_book\)](http://www.cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap/Open_Access_(the_book)) [accessed August 20, 2014].

In light of this, the Internet presents itself as a very useful tool for the dissemination of knowledge. Recent years have seen the emergence of various innovative forms of open-access publishing across all academic fields, challenging more traditional ways of communicating scholarly discussions and results. The Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities defines open access as “a comprehensive source of human knowledge and cultural heritage that has been approved by the scientific community.”<sup>3</sup>

The open-access movement has rightly been described as accelerating the pace of scientific discovery, encouraging innovation, and enriching education; it is evident that, while still developing, open-access publication has come to stay. This does not mean, however, that traditional print has disappeared; for many reasons, print publication is still—and will remain—important. Therefore, we have worked closely with Eisenbrauns to generate a form of publication that not only responds to present demands but also represents an innovative move in that it combines the advantages of open-access publishing (free, immediate, and global access to scholarship) with the benefits associated with traditional print publication by a well-established and highly regarded publisher. In addition to the online version of *JMJS*, then, Eisenbrauns will publish hard copies of each issue of the journal.

Further, the *JMJS* website forum provides an opportunity for readers and authors to interact with one another, a feature that will facilitate succinct informal discussion and exchange of ideas without each participant in the conversation having to produce article-length responses and submit them for peer review. The forum is monitored by *JMJS* personnel, but we encourage authors to interact directly with reader queries and comments. This arrangement will, we hope, strike the right balance between shorter conversations and in-depth presentations of research results, accelerating the process of scholarly exchange in order to facilitate new discoveries and theoretical innovation in the field. We are grateful to Eisenbrauns for working with us to achieve this goal; their flexibility and dedication to the advancement of scholarship have been indispensable in the process of planning and launching the journal.

Over time, *JMJS* will build an online archive with the goal of providing scholars and students with unrestricted and easily accessible cutting-edge

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<sup>3</sup> Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, the Max Planck Society, 2003 (<http://openaccess.mpg.de/286432/Berlin-Declaration> [accessed August 20, 2014]).

research. The journal publishes first and foremost new research, but it may also re-publish, to a limited degree, studies that the editors deem to be essential for the field. This may include translation of studies originally published in languages other than English in order to make them available for a wider English speaking audience. We encourage readers to submit suggestions for such articles to the managing editor. While *JJMJS* does not contain a review section, we accept longer review articles of major publications relevant to the purpose of the journal. Such articles will give the reader the benefit of more detailed discussions of new advances in the field than is possible in shorter reviews.

The editors would like to thank their co-workers on the editorial committee and the experts on the editorial board, who enthusiastically have made their skills available despite busy schedules. We would like to recognize the initiative and efforts of Dr. Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg, now at Hebrew University's eTeacherBiblical, and Knut H. Høyland, the managing editor of *JJMJS*, as the journal first began to take form. In addition to his current position as a member of the editorial board, Professor Rainer Riesner, Dortmund University, has also played an important role in the shaping of the journal. Andreas Johansson, editorial secretary of *JJMJS*, and Heidi Tohmola and Cindy Osborne of Caspari Center have all provided technical assistance as the journal and the website were designed. Finally, Dale Askey, associate university librarian at McMaster University, has assisted us as we have worked with the details of the open-access format. *JJMJS* remains an independent academic journal and does not represent any particular theological school or religious organization.

We look forward to many years of academic discussion and debate as we work together with readers and contributors to take the study of the earliest histories of what developed into Judaism and Christianity to the next level.

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