

The Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław
and the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe
invite you to participate in a conference

Reading Benno Jacob

26 OCTOBER 2022 IN ROOM 115 AT THE TAUBE DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES

Rabbi Benno Jacob (1862–1945) was born in Breslau, where he studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary and at the University of Breslau, with a focus on biblical exegesis. Jacob was a social activist who fought against antisemitism. He worked as a rabbi in Göttingen and Dortmund from 1891 to 1929, emigrated to England in 1939 and stayed in London.

Jacob's achievements as a scholar and an activist are almost unknown in Poland. We thus begin our reading of Benno Jacob with a general question: how can we situate his work on a contemporary map of thought and with special consideration of his commentary on Akeda (Genesis 22). It was Hilda Burger, a Dutch exegete, who drew attention to the importance of this commentary for understanding of Jacob's work, as well as for understanding of Akeda in the context of barbarity, suffering, and martyrdom in our times. The story of the sacrifice

of Isaac gives rise to several significant theological and philosophical commentaries related to various cultural and religious traditions over the centuries (for example by Soren Kierkegaard, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Franz Hinkelammert, or Józef Tischner).

Our intention in organizing this conference devoted to Benno Jacob is to initiate a discussion on both his achievements and more broadly, on the achievements of the intellectual community of Jews associated with Breslau/Wrocław before 1939.

Organizers

Katarzyna Liszka, PhD, Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław

Edward Skubisz, MA, Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe



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Participants

Hans-Christoph Aurin, PhD — Freie Universität Berlin, author of the book *Benno Jacob on Leviticus. With an Edition of an Early Leviticus Manuscript c. 17–20* (forthcoming, 2022, Mohr Siebeck Tübingen). He currently works on the Benno Jacob Edition project at the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen under the supervision of Prof. Reinhard Kratz from Göttingen and Dr. Shimon Gesundheit from Jerusalem.

Prof. Jan Willem van Henten — University of Amsterdam. He taught Judaism and New Testament at the Universities of Amsterdam, Leiden, and Utrecht and is full professor of New Testament, Early Jewish and Early Christian Literature at the University of Amsterdam since 1993. His research projects concern Jewish literature from antiquity, especially a commentary on Jewish Antiquities by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (in preparation for the Brill Josephus project), martyrdom among Jews and Christians, as well as the reception of the Bible in contemporary culture.

Alex van Heusden, MA — studied philosophy at the Catholic University of Nijmegen and theology at the Catholic Theological University of Amsterdam. He specializes in biblical studies, Judaism, and the history of early Christianity. Since 1997, he has been working as a secretary and translator for the Reading and Explaining the Whole Bible project. Together with Huub Oosterhuis, he translated the Bible books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers and the Gospel of Luke. Since 2011, he works at the center De Nieuwe Liefde in Amsterdam, where he conducts House of Learning meetings.

Katarzyna Liszka, PhD — assistant professor at the Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław. Her academic interests are divided between culture studies, philosophy, and Jewish Studies. Her primary scholarly focus is on issues of the Holocaust and modern philosophy, including Jewish philosophy. She has published, among others, the monograph *Etyka i pamięć o Zagładzie* (Ethics and Shoah Memory, 2016) and a collaborative volume *Wiedza (nie)umiejscowiona. Jak uczyć o Zagładzie w Polsce w XXI w.? ((Un)situated Knowledge. How do We Teach the Holocaust in Twentieth Century Poland?)*.

Agata Rybińska, PhD — assistant professor at the Center for Jewish Culture and History at the Institute of Cultural Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. She graduated from pedagogy, the Jewish Studies, and the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław and biblical theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Rybińska is the author of numerous articles and the book *Granice integracji. Religijność Żydów wrocławskich w drugiej połowie XIX wieku (1854–1890)* (The Limits of Integration. The Religiosity of Wrocław Jews in the Second Half of the 19th Century (1854–1890)).

Kees Schakel, MA — studied theology at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam (VU) and the University of Amsterdam (UvA). As a pastor in various communities and a religion teacher, he also studied Judaism for many years. He continues to conduct meetings at the House of Learning in the Netherlands as well as Hebrew courses in various places in the Netherlands. He is a member of the editorial board of *Kerk & Israël Onderweg*. Schakel inspired Hilde Burger to write her thesis on Benno Jacob.

Edward Skubisz, MA — studied theology in Nijmegen and Amsterdam. He has worked in communities and schools in Amsterdam, Amersfoort, Zwolle, and Breda, and as researcher at the University of Nijmegen. Since 2004, he has been organizing and providing peace and civil education programs in Poland, often in cooperation with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe. From 2008, he has organized meetings about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Edith Stein, Katharina Staritz and Benno Jacob. He is writing a doctoral dissertation about sacrificial theology and sexual violence in western culture (University of Amsterdam).

Lieve Teugels, PhD — received her doctorate in Theology at the KU Leuven in Belgium in 1994. She specializes in Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature, especially midrash. From 1994 to 2002, she was assistant professor of Judaism at the faculty of theology of Utrecht University. In 2000–2002, she was a visiting scholar at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. She is the editor of the book *The Meshalim in the Mekhiltoṭ*. Teugels works at the Semitics and Jewish Studies Department at the PTHU in Amsterdam since June 2016. She is one of the driving forces behind the Centre for Early Jewish Hermeneutics, and is part of the Moving Identities research group.