

Details on Project: Movable cultural objects

Focus Area

OTHER

Particulars of Applicant

Project Leader	Dr Jackie (JS) Du Toit
Faculty	The Humanities
Department/Unit/ Centre	Language Management and Language Practice

Proposal Details

Title	Movable cultural objects, international law and the estrangement of national property:
Description	<p>Subproject: The politics of memory: record keeping, preservation and transfer of information in bridging the oral and the literate</p> <p>This study addresses matters resulting from the estrangement of national cultural property in colonial times, the conservation and protection of cultural property in times of conflict and peace and matters of restoration and redress. Of this, the history of the purchase and nationalization of the Dead Sea Scrolls, act as mid-twentieth century marker: in 1953, McGill University (Canada) became the first institution outside the Government of Jordan to purchase Dead Sea Scrolls. The co-investigators are in the process of finalizing a monograph to be published by McGill Queens Press on this historic event and the implications for international law and movable cultural property when the Dead Sea Scrolls, including the cache purchased by McGill, was nationalized by the Government of Jordan.</p> <p>Recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that international law, as articulated by post-World War II conventions, although expressing the right sentiments, is notoriously weak in addressing the destruction or estrangement of cultural property. The study seeks to theorize the particular challenges of global cultural interchange by identifying the challenges and benefits of viewing national cultural heritage (and indigenous knowledge) of South Africa and other countries, within broader international perspective. The emphasis is on movable cultural objects, as opposed to immovable objects/property.</p> <p>1. "Great Scott! The Dead Sea Scrolls, McGill University, and the Canadian Media." <i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i> 12/1 (2005): 6-23. Invited contribution to international panel of experts on the theme: "The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Popular Imagination." Co-author: J Kalman.</p> <p>2. Book proposal accepted by McGill Queens Press (Canada) for manuscript submission in 2008 – the 400+ pages manuscript is currently being edited and with external readers for the writing of the foreword. Working-title: "Canada's Big Biblical Bargain: How McGill University bought the Dead Sea Scrolls." Co-author: Dr. Jason Kalman (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, USA).</p> <p>3. Currently my co-investigator is also working on the assemblage of archival material for a historiographical article on the involvement of other parties in the purchase of cave 1 scrolls.</p> <p>4. The subproject also has a manuscript accepted for publication by Sheffield Phoenix Press (UK). The working title (to be revised): "The Organization and Use of Documentary Deposits in the Near East from Ancient to Medieval Times: Libraries, Archives, Book Collections and Genizas."</p>
Funding	1. NRF Focus Area Funding since 2005 until the present. 2. Some subsections of the monograph (the major outcome of the first part of this study) were funded by other means, e.g., to scan literature for the monograph to be published shortly, funding was provided by the president of Hebrew Union College, USA; research funding was also forthcoming from the Dean of Humanities (UFS) for research assistance.

Partners

Dr Jason Kalman (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, USA)
Prof B Barry Levy (Dean: Religious Studies, McGill University, Canada)

Members

Dr Vrinda Narain