

# The Alan Crown Lecture: Secret Societies in Ancient Judaism

with Emeritus Professor Michael Stone,  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The sources for the knowledge of Second Temple Judaism (before 70 CE) present us with descriptions of a number of groups. Of these, at least the Essenes and the Therapeutae are said to have secret teachings. In scholarship, however, when sociological categories have been applied to them, they analyse them on the model of sects and orthodoxy. Prof Stone's proposition is to analyse them as secret societies, that is, social groups organized around the imperative of keeping a body of knowledge and practice secret. As an outcome of this imperative, it was necessary to develop a process of testing and initiation which is graded so only very few reached the highest grade and the innermost secret. This model works well with known Jewish groups and enables us to discern traces of others.



## When

Thursday 6th April, 4:15pm-5:30pm  
(The talk will start at 4.30 sharp)

## Where

Mandelbaum House  
385 Abercrombie St, Darlington

This is the tenth of an ongoing series of lectures named in honour of Emeritus Professor Alan Crown, a former head of department and prominent biblical researcher.

The Alan Crown lectures offer talks on topics aimed at a general audience which showcase the usefulness of academic work in Biblical Studies and Ancient Judaism, and which promote the Biblical Studies and Classical Hebrew courses in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies.



## Entry is free.

Coffee, tea and cake available from 4pm

## Further information:

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within The University of Sydney