

The Freyne Library – a prestigious multidisciplinary book collection on Galilee in the first century CE – launched by the Provost.

A unique specialist library of biblical, archaeological and socio-historical studies on the Greco-Roman world, Jewish Hellenism and the Roman Near East has come to Trinity. Donated by the family of Seán Freyne (1935-2013), it offers multiple avenues to the region with which his international reputation is associated: Galilee as a context for the ministry of Jesus and for the emergence of the early Jesus movement. As the founding Professor of Theology (1980-2002) in the School of Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies, he established the first non-denominational setting for the study of the Bible and theology within the humanities at an Irish university. The Department of Religions and Theology is privileged to house this library in fulfilment of Professor Freyne's wish that it be made available to scholars in his memory.

In the presence of the Irish and Australian members of the Freyne family, of former Provost Tom Mitchell, the Vive-Provost, College officers, colleagues in and beyond Trinity, from media and sports, as well as students and alumni, the Provost warmly welcomed the donation. He pointed out the decidedly pluralist approach he brought to the exploration of the Bible and its histories of reception: "Seán was pluralist in his interests, in his interdisciplinary approach, in his travels, in his openness to other cultures, and in his commitment to disseminating discourse outside the university." As a "creative, courageous and independent thinker" he contributed to religious and cultural debate in the Irish public sphere. The Provost equally highlighted his capacity to create innovative academic institutions: he was "an immensely gifted director, manager, administrator, fundraiser, motivator," providing the basis for teaching and research in Jewish and in Islamic Studies also through his instrumental role in creating Trinity's government-funded Centre for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, of which he was director." His legacy is carried on in the Department of Religions and Theology and in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies

Launching Seán Freyne's final book, *The Jesus Movement. Meaning and Mission*, Erasmus Smith's Professor of Hebrew (emeritus) Andrew Mayes took the cover mosaic of fishes, a wine jug and a breadloaf as illustrating how "thoroughly grounded in the realia of the lives of ordinary people" Seán was. "He loved the rural" and "closely identified with Galilee and Galileans... it is the real lives of Galilean Jews he is concerned with, and it is only someone like Seán who could give us this account, a significant contribution to current academic scholarship."

Dr Margaret Daly-Denton, his previous doctoral student and colleague to whom the family had entrusted the task of fulfilling Seán's wishes, led the large gathering through the two launches, which began with a choral piece composed by ... for the occasion, sung by the Chapel Choir.

Calligrapher Tim O'Neill designed the logo of The Freyne Library which gives access to sources from which our modern cultural self-understandings developed: the encounters, conflicts and transformations between the cultures of the Ancient Near East, of Greece and Rome, and the different traditions of biblical monotheism. A biennial Seán Freyne Memorial Lecture will explore their ongoing interaction.

The Provost's speech may be found at http://www.tcd.ie/provost/addresses/2014-05-17_FreyneLibraryLaunch.php
Further information on the Library and on Professor Freyne can be found here.

