

The Freyne Library

This library is the bequest of Seán Freyne (1935 – 2013), a much loved teacher, colleague and friend who from 1980 to 2002 held the inaugural Chair of Theology in the School of Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies, the first non-denominational setting for the study of the Bible and theology within a faculty of Arts and Humanities at an Irish university. During his retirement, Professor Freyne “downsized” his library, thereby endowing, with characteristic generosity, the libraries of several of his former students who now carry forward his legacy in the Department of Religions and Theology and the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies. The collection contains the books that Professor Freyne kept at that time and others that he continued to acquire during a further decade of research and writing on the area which had over the years become almost synonymous with his name: the Galilee region in the first century CE as a context for the ministry of Jesus and for the emergence of a particular strand of the early Jesus movement. In these years he also served as president of the SNTS, responded to numerous international lecturing invitations, and taught as a visiting Professor at Harvard Divinity School. In the last year of his life, in spite of declining health, Prof. Freyne was able to bring his more recent research together in a final book, *The Jesus Movement and its Expansion: Meaning and Mission*, published by Wm B. Eerdmans in 2014.

The artwork in the Library is the tribute of Seán Freyne’s friend, calligrapher Timothy O’Neill. The sign is written on papyrus in an uncial hand loosely based on a sixth century Italian gospel book (British Library Ms Harley 1775). The map is the original of a map that appears on page 311 of *The Jesus Movement and its Expansion*. It shows “The land remaining” north of Galilee (Josh 13:5-6) envisaged in Jewish restoration eschatology as part of the Promised Land. In his book Seán Freyne suggests that the historical Jesus may have been motivated by this ideal map in his journeys outside the political Galilee of his day, seeking to gather ‘the lost sheep of the House of Israel.’

The Freyne Library is principally a specialist collection of archaeological and socio-historical material on the Greco-Roman world, Jewish Hellenism, the Roman Near East, Roman Palestine, especially Galilee. It also contains rich resources for the study of Second Temple and formative Judaism, the historical Jesus, the gospels and Christian origins. The online catalogue. Meanwhile a basic inventory of the library may be viewed at www.librarything.com. Search for “SeanFreyneLibrary”

The Department of Religions and Theology at TCD welcomes scholars and post-graduate students wishing to do research in this unique and prestigious library. Access is by prior arrangement with the Department. Two week’s notice of a proposed extended visit would be much appreciated.

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