

[Obituary: Prof. William W. Hallo](#)

Discussion published by Sarah Imhoff on Sunday, March 29, 2015

H-Judaic is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Prof. William W. Hallo (1928-2015), emeritus professor at Yale and one of the foremost Assyriologists and Bible Scholars of our time. Born in Kassel, Germany, and the son of Rudolf Hallo, pioneering German art historian and successor to Franz Rosenzweig at the Frankfurt Lehrhaus, William Hallo was saved by the kindertransport and came to the United States in 1940. He studied at Harvard, in Leiden, and at the University of Chicago, where he received his Ph.D. He then taught at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion before moving to Yale in 1962. Hallo was a renaissance scholar: in addition to his work in Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern documents related to the Bible, he also wrote important essays for the Reform Jewish Torah Commentary and he translated Franz Rosenzweig's *STAR OF REDEMPTION*. In addition, he influenced a generation of students as Master of Morse College at Yale.

Prof. David Sperling wrote the following brief biography of Hallo for the 2nd edition of the *ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA*:

HALLO, WILLIAM (1928-), Assyriologist and Bible scholar. Hallo was born into a prominent Jewish family in Kassel, Germany. His father **Rudolf Hallo** was one of the founders of the discipline of Jewish art history, and successor to **Franz Rosenzweig** at the Frankfurt Lehrhaus. His mother was Dr. Gertrude Rubensohn **Hallo**. **William Hallo** and his sisters were among a group of Jewish children who were sent out of Nazi Germany and other Nazi-held areas in 1939 to England as part of the *Kindertransport* program. Rejoined by their mother (his father had died in 1933), Hallo and his sisters came to the United States in 1940. He earned his B.A. at Harvard in 1950 and spent 1950-51 at Leiden University, Netherlands, on a Fulbright scholarship studying the languages of ancient Mesopotamia with F.R. Kraus, among others. He came to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1955 under **Ignace Gelb**. He was also an assistant to **Benno Landsberger**. Between 1956 and 1962, Hallo taught at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He left for Yale in 1962, where he was appointed curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection and professor of Assyriology, and spent the next 40 years at Yale. Within Assyriology, Hallo specialized in Sumerian literature, history, and language. Applying his work in Assyriology to biblical studies, Hallo pioneered in a "contextual" approach that shows the importance of comparing and contrasting the respective literatures. With K.L. Younger, Hallo edited the three-volume

The Context of Scripture (1997-2002), a collection of ancient Near Eastern documents. A highly prolific professional scholar, Hallo brought some of the results of his scholarship before larger audiences through his contributions to the Torah Commentaries published by the Reform movement. He also translated Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption* (1990).

We extend deepest condolences to Prof. Hallo's widow, Nanette Stahl, and to his children and grandchildren.

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Chair, H-Judaic