



SCHOLION NEWS

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האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies



Scholion Conference:

“Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon”



In the course of their research on Rabbinic texts in their Mesopotamian context, Shai Secunda and Uri Gabbay, Mandel post-doctoral fellows at Scholion, came up with the idea of organizing a conference which would focus on the two main cultures with which ancient Judaism had contact in Mesopotamia – the ancient Babylonian and the Iranian. They approached Prof. Israel Yuval and Ms. Maya Sherman, the academic and administrative heads of Scholion, whose enthusiastic response paved the way to the conference “Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon: Conversations between Jews, Iranians and Babylonians in Antiquity,” held during 23-25 May, 2011 in Scholion. Nineteen leading scholars from the disciplines of Jewish Studies, Iranian Studies and Assyriology, from Israel, England, Germany and the USA, were invited to present their recent discoveries on the cultural contacts between ancient Babylonians, Iranians and Jews in antiquity.

“Encounters by the Rivers of Babylon” dealt with a period of more than 1000 years: from the Judean exile to Babylon in the sixth century BCE until the

end of the Sassanian empire in the seventh century CE. The conference covered a broad cultural scope but with a single focus: the encounters that Jews had with their neighboring cultures in Mesopotamia, mostly under Persian rule. These encounters took place in various fields: social, economic, legal, religious, and intellectual, and the conference dealt with all of them. Each session included lectures both on contacts between the inhabitants of ancient Babylonia and the exiled Judeans, and between Iranians and Jews.

Following greetings by Prof. Reuven Amitai, dean of the Faculty of Humanities, and Prof. Israel Yuval, the academic head of Scholion, the conference began with introductory lectures by Dr. Irving Finkel of the British Museum, Prof. P. Oktor Skjaervo from Harvard University and Prof. Isaiah Gafni from the Hebrew University on the intellectual histories of ancient Babylonian, Iranians and the Jews in Babylonia. On the first full day of the conference, Prof. Yaakov Elman from Yeshiva University analyzed the similarities and differences in the scholarly rhetoric and content of the three cultures. Prof. Ran

Zadok from Tel-Aviv University and Dr. Kathleen Abraham from Bar-Ilan University presented new evidence from recently discovered cuneiform tablets regarding the exiled Jews living in Babylonia in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Prof. Maria Macuch from the Free University of Berlin spoke about the civil legal system under Sassanian rule, and the way it provided space for minority groups, like Babylonian Jews, to administer justice on their own terms. Dr. Caroline Waerzeggers from the University College London spoke about the ancient Babylonian temple and its relevance to the Second Temple of Jerusalem, and Dr. Geoffrey Herman from Cornell University spoke about the religious and civil institutional systems of the Jews in Babylonia. Prof. Daniel Schwartz and Prof. Robert Brody from the Hebrew University responded to these lectures which led to a lively discussion among the participants and audience. The afternoon session dealt with the Aramaic magic



bowls from Mesopotamia in Late Antiquity, with a lecture by Dr. James Nathan Ford from Bar-Ilan University, who presented new discoveries on the ancient Babylonian influences found in the magic bowls, and a lecture by Prof. Shaul Shaked of the Hebrew University who regarded social aspects which arise from the bowls. Prof. Gideon Bohak from Tel-Aviv University responded to these two lectures, attempting to set them in the larger context of Jewish magic.

The next day began with a session on the incorporation of Babylonian and Iranian knowledge into Jewish tradition. Prof. Nathan Wasserman from the Hebrew University tackled the question of how much of ancient Mesopotamian magic is found in Jewish magical texts, and Dr. Abraham Winitzer from Notre Dame University presented new understandings of the book of Ezekiel in light of ancient Babylonian scholarly texts. Dr. Jonathan Ben-Dov from Haifa University spoke about common astronomical and calendrical traditions, and Dr. Reuven Kiperwasser from the Open University spoke about Iranian mythological motifs which found their way into Talmudic stories. The session was concluded with a response by Dr. Reimund Leicht from the Hebrew University who critically defined the various modes of the incorporation of knowledge. The concluding session of the conference, on scriptural exegesis, contained an overview on ancient Babylonian commentary texts by Prof. Eckart

Frahm from Yale University, and a comparison of the exegetical terminology of the Babylonian and Jewish sources by Dr. Uri Gabbay from Scholion. Dr. Shai Secunda from Scholion spoke about the hermeneutical principals found in Jewish and Iranian texts, and Mr. Yishai Kiel from the Hebrew University spoke about Iranian and Talmudic exegetical treatments of impurity.

The conference did not only introduce the ancient encounters by the Rivers of Babylon, but managed to introduce yet another encounter as well, an encounter between the modern disciplines involved in this research: Jewish Studies, Iranian Studies and Assyriology. This unique encounter has already led to fruitful cooperation between scholars of all three disciplines, and will hopefully continue to do so. Scholars from Jewish Studies were enriched by discussions with Assyriologists and Iranists who have first-hand knowledge of the relevant texts, which are not easily accessible to non-specialists. Similarly, Assyriologists and Iranists benefited from discussions with scholars of Jewish Studies, who study the sources critically. Much time for discussion in each session, as well as the free time between the sessions, enabled the participants and the audience to use the opportunity for discussion, questions and dialogue.

The proceeding of the conference will be published as a book which will be edited by Uri Gabbay and Shai Secunda.



The Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon

It seems today that the Mandel Scholars program in Scholion center needs little introduction – it is widely recognized as one of the leading spring-boards in Judaic studies worldwide. We take great pride in the program's consistency in attracting the best young scholars from around the world, who come to present their research in the annual lectures marathon in the hope of being elected for the scholarship.

After last year's hiatus, this year's marathon, held on January 2, 2011, proved especially fascinating and engaging. Eleven scholars, out of 79 applicants, were chosen to present their intended research projects in well thought-out lectures, in a variety of subjects ranging from popular culture and Halakhic discourse in antiquity to modern literature and Zionism. Each lecture was followed by questions posed by members of the academic committee and the audience. After a session of personal interviews with the candidates, and serious deliberations, the committee finally chose four new Mandel scholars, to join the center in October 2011 – Dr. Yair Furstenberg (“The Hand-Washing Dispute: The Formation of the Tannaitic Idea of Purity in Light of Greco-Roman Practice”), Dr. Maoz Kahana (“Text, Hermeneutics and Redemption in the Writings of the ‘Hatam Sofer’”), Dr. Yair Lipshitz (“Playing with the Sacred: Ritual Objects on the Jewish Theatre Stage”), and Dr. Noam Mizrahi (“Living Divine Figures: Linguistic Conservatism and Theological Innovation”).



From left to right: Ayala Eliyahu, Eran Viesel, Natasha Gordinsky, Rafael Tsirkin-Sadan, Naama Vilozy, Shira Stav, Yair Lipshitz, Yair Furstenberg, Noam Mizrahi, Maoz Kahana, Jonatan Meir

“Eros, Family and Community” –

As in every year, Scholion's academic committee convened in order to make the difficult decision between the excellent proposals for the new research group. After thorough discussions a decision was made and the “Eros, Family and Community” research group was chosen. The group's four senior members are Prof. Ruth Fine (Department of Romance and Latin American Studies), Prof. Yosef Kaplan (History of Jewish People Department), Dr. Shimrit Peled (Hebrew Literature Department)

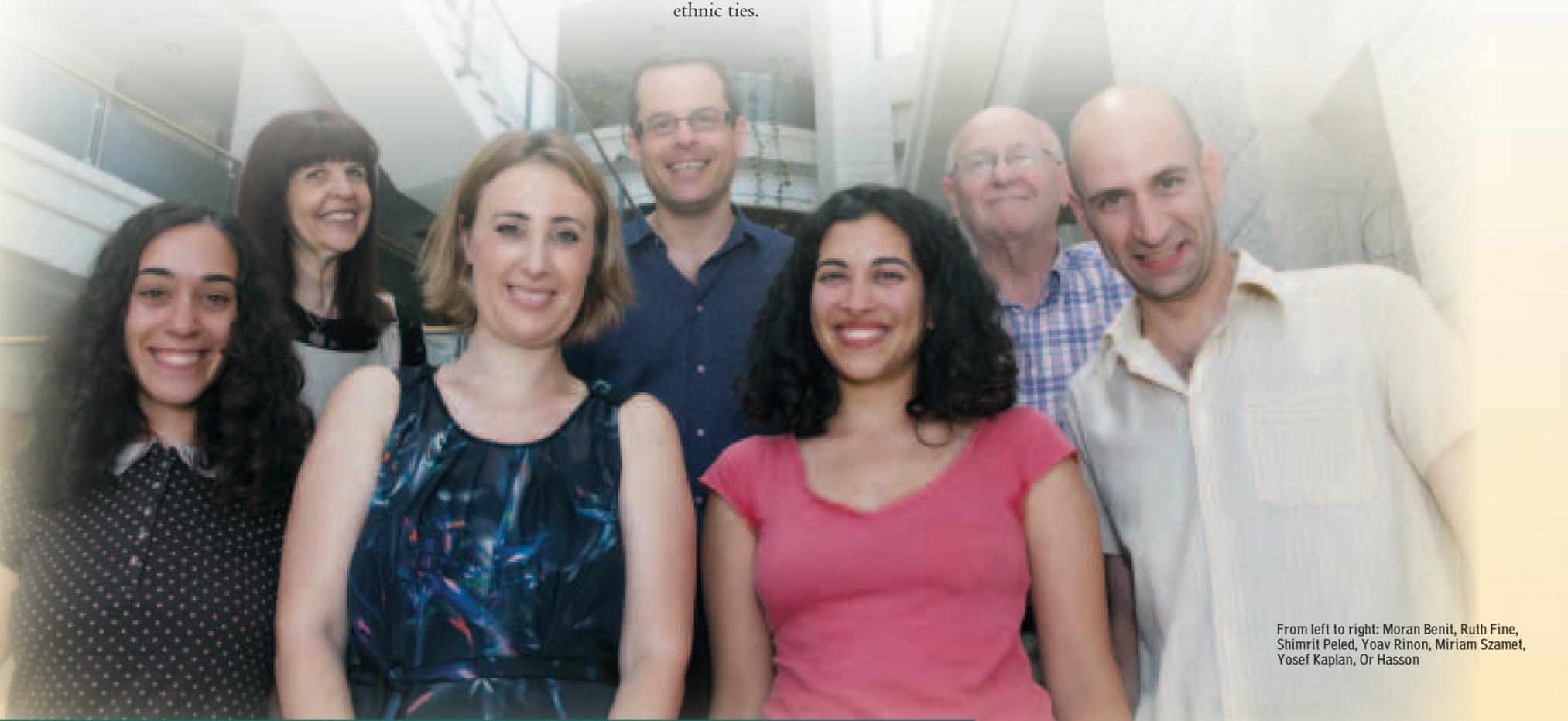
and Dr. Yoav Rinon (Department of General and Comparative Literature & Department of Classics). After the selection of four PhD students, the group is now complete with Moran Benit (Hebrew Literature Department), Or Hasson (Department of Romance and Latin American Studies & Department of Psychology), Dana Kaplan (Department of Sociology and Anthropology), and Miriam Szamet (Contemporary Jewry and History of the Jewish People Department).

a New Research Group

The group's research will focus on Eros, as a nexus with far-reaching implications within both the private and public domains. The conceptualization of Eros is a rich locus of signification: in public spheres, Eros directly and deeply affects the nature and character of social organizations, both small-scale units such as the family and larger entities such as communities bound by cultural, religious or ethnic ties.

Eros seems to be a perfect candidate for research and analysis through Scholion's academic framework, since the concept of Eros is essentially interdisciplinary, frequently crossing boundaries and even transgressing limits that define and confine subject, gender, class, ethnicity, nationality and religion. Accordingly, and devoted to Scholion's aims, the group will establish an interdisciplinary

research project combining Jewish history, Israeli history, Romance literature, Jewish and Hebrew literature, and Classical studies, while utilizing a variety of research methodologies that aim at exposing and investigating the links between the different expressions of Eros in these areas.



From left to right: Moran Benit, Ruth Fine, Shimrit Peled, Yoav Rinon, Miriam Szamet, Yosef Kaplan, Or Hasson



Annual

Research Field Trip

As winter came to an end and pleasant weather was with us once more, the Scholion team set out for the north on its annual research field trip, with various sites on our mind. The first day, a mid-March Thursday, was dedicated to a variety of Christian landmarks: we started the day at the Mount of Beatitudes, where Masha Halevi told us of the site's history and its significance within Christian faith, as it is believed to be the very site where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Much attention was also granted to the mosaic in the floor in front of the church, installed by Italian artist Vasco Nasorri in 1984. Michal Kimhi-Bitton complemented Masha's illustration, using her expertise in Christian gardens, and elaborated on the garden's design. The garden, a specifically multi-layered venue, demanded closer inspection and our full attention. Under Italian ownership, the garden at the Mount of Beatitudes exhibits a subsiding of the Church's dominance, which characterizes many Christian — and especially Franciscan — sites throughout Israel. Nevertheless, the garden around the church expands with each coming year as prayer and service niches accumulate, becoming a ritual garden, as if to acknowledge the importance of the view, surroundings and the unmitigated connection between man, earth and heaven, characteristic of the Sermon on the Mount.

A local Spanish guide accompanied us afterwards, as we moved to Domus Galilaeae, or House of Galilee. Situated at the peak of the Mount of Beatitudes, this modern Christian meeting place was inaugurated by Pope John Paul II in his Millennium visit to the Holy Land. Domus Galilaeae is run by the Catholic organization Neocatechumenal Way, and holds great inter-faith significance, as our guide's life story boldly showed. The day was still young, and we headed for a light snack at the side of the river at Tabgha. Few people know that a restful spot lies alongside the Church of Multiplication, named after the miracle of multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Mark 6:30-46), traditionally believed to have taken place there. We had a pleasant walk alongside the shore to the pilgrim house Karei Deshe. There we enjoyed the beautifully ordered gardens and unique greenery. Resting under the shade, we were once more fortunate to have Michal Kimhi-Bitton's commentary about the garden. The site holds three prayer and service locations, situated in secluded points along the waterside. Their plan is in remarkable contrast to the ritualistic design seen at the Mount of Beatitudes, as they make much use of natural substances — rocks,

tree parts, native plants and primitive, archaic construction methods. Thus this site inspires among its visitors a serene feeling of seclusion.

By mid-afternoon, just as the sun started to make its way down, we reached Ateret fortress, *Vadum Jacob* in Latin, where Prof. Ronnie Ellenblum explained the strategic importance of the place, and the special archaeological and geological importance of the site. We were fortunate to hear firsthand of his sensational findings during research he conducted in Metsad Ateret in the mid-1990's. The sun had set as we

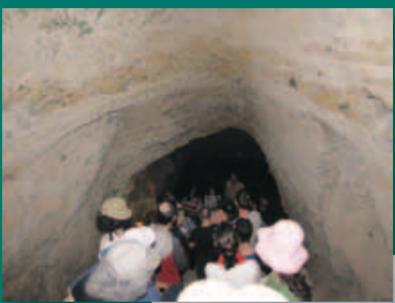
arrived at the guesthouse in Kfar Szold named after Henrietta Szold, and freshened up before heading to Dag Al HaDan, the restaurant situated at the crossing of the Hasbani and Dan rivers, and which supplies fresh fish and a unique outdoor atmosphere.

After dining, we gathered again to hear Prof. Eli Lederhendler's lecture on the unusual life of Henrietta Szold, founder of the Hadassah Women's Organization. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, this rabbi's daughter was greatly committed to Zionism, intensified by a trip to Palestine in 1909. Three years later she founded Hadassah and served as its president. In 1933 she immigrated to Palestine, where she died, twelve years later, at the age of 84.

Early Friday morning we left Kfar Szold after a traditional kibbutz breakfast, headed for the Hazor archeological site. Uri Davidovich, who had participated in the excavations on the site, told us about the findings and research conducted there. During the main part of the second millennium BC (18th-13th centuries), Hazor was the biggest city in the Southern Levant, and as such was mentioned in the Bible as "the head of all those kingdoms," referring to the numerous small city-states in Canaan during this time-span. Hazor was also the last large city in the southwestern corner of the "Fertile Crescent," and had important connections to rather remote kingdoms such as Babylon and Mari on the Euphrates. The greatness of Hazor is clearly reflected in its size (800 dunam, four times more than the next large city in our area) and in its monumental buildings, some of which we saw on our tour — the large "Podium Building" in Area M, possibly part of the Late Bronze Age Palace, and the "Monumental Building" of Area A, whose exact function is still being debated. We also discussed in detail the fall of Hazor at the end of the Late Bronze Age, and its possible correlation with the biblical passage related to its conquest by Joshua. Uri then led further on to some of Hazor's main remnants from the Iron Age ("The Israelite period"), such as the six-chambered gate assigned by Yadin to Solomon, the magnificent water system from the time of Ahab, and the fortress of Area B which recalls the last days of the city, on the eve of the Assyrian conquest.

Though we had left the Hebrew University premises, the Scholion interdisciplinary atmosphere was in full force. And so we heard Dr. Uri Gabbay's lecture on the historical and religious aspects of Hazor in their broader Ancient Near Eastern context. He prepared translations of letters and administrative documents from the kingdom of the city of Mari in Syria, written in cuneiform script in the Akkadian language and dating to the 18th century BC, which deal with Hazor as a political and commercial neighboring kingdom. He also presented an overview of the cuneiform tablets found in Hazor, and especially the clay models of livers of sacrificial sheep, some of which bearing cuneiform captions, which were used for the act of divination. These talks were concluded with Dr. Nili Wazana's lecture on the biblical aspects of Hazor. All these resulted in a lively discussion in which many Scholion members participated, reflecting his or her unique expertise and field of interest.

Though we were reluctant to part, time was going by fast, and Sabbath quickly approaching. So we headed back to Jerusalem, to relish the memories of this trip.





Concluding Conference of the

“Interpretive Imagination”

Research Group

In May 2011, the “Interpretive Imagination” research group (consisting of Professors Richard Cohen, Ruth HaCohen, Galit Hasan-Rokem, and Ilana Pardes and doctoral students Jonathan Benarroch, Irina Chernetsky, Anat Danziger, Vered Madar, and Tehila Mishor) held its concluding conference with several guests from abroad (Professors David Nirenberg, Vivian Liska, Hent de Vries, and Michael Steinberg) and two guest speakers from Israel (Professors Freddie Rokem and David Shulman). The conference was designed to break away from the regular pattern of conferences in which dialogue between the speakers and the audience is often minimal. In order to engage the audience more openly with our theme, that relates to different expressions of the arts and from a wide range of perspectives, we tried to create an atmosphere of a workshop. The conference opened in this spirit with two papers pursuing a common methodological problem – how one can designate and perceive Jews in Christian art and art in Jewish texts. After a lively discussion on both papers the audience was invited to a one hour

concert offered by the Tafillalt ensemble that attempts to integrate Jewish music from all corners of the world into a growing repertoire of Jewish music. The concert was both well received and well attended.



Each morning of the following two days was dedicated to a particular text, taught by one of the visitors from abroad. The participants of the conference were all encouraged to read/listen to the texts prior to the session in order to be able to take a more active part in the discussion. Such was indeed the case with both “workshops” as a lively interchange between the



presenters and the audience ensued. Each morning session set the tone for the following session. After reading together a story from Kafka in the first morning workshop, a session was devoted to literary themes and issues of secularism; after listening to and discussing aspects of Mahler’s symphonies in the second workshop, the following session concentrated on “resonating vocalities,” treating issues of the individual and the communal voice among Yemenite women, an opera dealing with a book written by A. B. Yehoshua, and “tones of atonement” from the early 19th century to Arnold Schoenberg.



Other sessions of the conference brought together a medley of themes, ranging from theatrical issues (that also had musical concerns) to ways in which the divine is represented in different traditions, to visual images and interpretations of two cities in their peak. Each one of these sessions was well attended and the spirit of discussion and controversy permeated each and every one of them, not the least in the concluding round table in which the four senior scholars and the Head of Scholion presented their thoughts on Interpretive Imagination.

All in all, the research group was very pleased with the high level of the papers, the participation and attendance of the audience, and the issues of interpretation that continued to resonate throughout the conference.

The Scholion Library

It has been a fruitful year for the Scholion library – with three books published, the shelves are starting to fill up. The first in line is *A Garden Eastward in Eden – Traditions of Paradise: Changing Jewish Perspectives and Comparative Dimensions of Culture*, edited by Rachel Elijor. Comprising twenty-two essays and an introduction, this collaborative piece focuses on the various representations of the Garden of Eden in religious traditions and in literary, artistic and cultural works dating from antiquity to today. The essays are based on the findings of the research group “Ascending and Descending” – Navigating between the Celestial and the Mundane,” which operated between 2005-2008. It is supplemented by lectures delivered at a conference organized by the members of the group on 5-6.II.06, on the topic of the Garden of Eden. The book deals with the first

of three investigations this group conducted, while the other two – *Like A Fleeting Dream*, and *Between Worlds*, will comprise the second volume collectively written by the members of the group.

It was not long before another book adorned the Scholion bookshelf. *Uncovering the Canon – Studies in Canonicity and Genizah*, edited by Menahem Ben-Sasson, Robert Brody, Amia Lieblich, and Donna Shalev, soon followed. The book was the fruit of Scholion’s first research group, “Modes of Canonization: The Case of the Cairo Genizah,” which operated between 2002-2005, and sought to answer how it is that some works achieve canonical status while others are completely forgotten. The fragments of the Cairo Genizahs, which this book focuses on, make it possible to compare what was canonized with what was lost. And though much has been said and written about the Genizah documents, the participation of scholars from

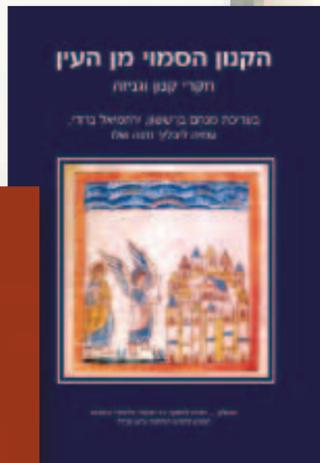
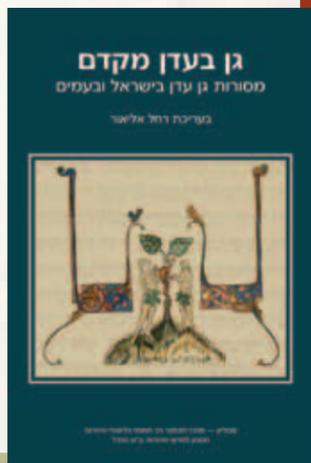
multiple disciplines resulted in new and exciting approaches to Genizah research, approaches which had possibly never been previously tried in these fields.

The celebration of both these books was at the center of a symposium held at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute this February. Two of the editors, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson and Prof. Rachel Elijor, presented the themes of the books through their groups’ work, and a current member of Scholion, Prof. Ruth HaCohen, as well as a Martin Buber Fellow, Dr. Yehoshua Granat, spoke on additional aspects of these topics which were not dealt within the books – music and *Piyyut*.

The last of the books published this year is *Education and Religion: Authority and Autonomy*, edited by Tamar Elor, Immanuel Etkes, Michael

Heyd and Baruch Schwarz. The book, which is the fruit of “Religion and Education” research group in the years 2004-2007, deals with the tensions between education and religion, mainly within Jewish tradition but also in Christian society. Questions such as the role of the educational system in implementing religious reforms, the aim of the religious education system, and the relationship between religious and ‘secular’ educational institutions, were dealt with

in this volume. It is uniquely composed in the form of articles and response articles, and in the spirit of all Scholion enterprises, it is the fruit of interdisciplinary efforts and scholarly variety.



Jud Süß Conference - March 24, 2011



The conference entitled “Jud Süß: In the Mixture of History and Fiction: Literature, Cinema, Music,” was a joint effort of members of the “Interpretive Imagination” research group. This day of study dealt with the infamous Nazi movie “Jud Süß” and hosted Dr. Felix Moeller of Munich, Germany, the director of the documentary movie “Harlan: In the Shadow of Jew Süß” (2008). Both movies were screened and lectures were given by members of the group regarding various aspects of the first movie: an historical overview by Prof. Richard Cohen, a literary review by Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem, and a musicological analysis by Prof. Ruth HaCohen.

“Archaeologies of Memory”:

Tours to the Negev and Petra

On February 13, 2011 the group participated in a one-day tour to the Negev. During that day the group visited three out of the forty-five “fortress” sites that appeared in the Negev during the Iron Age. The participants discussed their dating, the possible reasons for their erection, the sociological, anthropological, and economical processes at stake, and the reasons for their fast desertion. It was the second tour held this year by the group, following Negev communities that developed in the desert, existed for short or long periods of time (the “fortress” phenomena apparently lasted for less than a hundred years), and collapsed for reasons yet unknown. Researchers and doctoral students from different universities took part in this tour (arranged by Uri Davidovich), among whom were: Prof. Israel Finkelstein (Tel-Aviv University), Dr. Ruth Shahak-Gross (Weizmann Institute and Bar-Ilan University), Dr. Gideon Avni (Israel Antiquities Authority), Prof. Ami Mazar (The Hebrew University), Dr. Gunnar Lehmann (Ben-Gurion University), Dr. Erez Ben-Yosef (who participated in an excavation in the copper mines at Faynan in Jordan, as part of a research expedition on behalf of the University of California, San Diego), and of course members of our group: Prof. Gideon Shelach-

Lavy, Prof. Ronnie Ellenblum, Dr. Nili Wazana, Michal Kimhi-Bitton, Guy Rak, and Yonat Birin. We were accompanied by doctoral students from Tel-Aviv from the fields of Egyptology, paleontology and other research areas.

Prof. Finkelstein presented a detailed theory, which explains this phenomenon as a settlement peak of autochthonic population. The rise and fall of the Negev are explained as a result of the copper commerce from Faynan, which also experienced considerable fluctuation during the Iron Age. As a result of the initial presentation and an on-the-field examination of the architectonic, material and environmental characteristics of these sites, a lively discussion ensued between all the participants regarding fundamental questions in archeology: research methodologies (surveys, excavations, science and archeology), the relationship between the Bible and archeology, dating issues and the statistical meaning of radiometric samples, the ethnical implication of various types of archeological vessels, anthropological processes, nomadic sedentism and economy, the relationship between water resources and archeological sites, GIS (geographical information systems) and archeological explanations, grand theories and

thorough and in-depth debate has never taken place in the heart of the Negev, concerning settlement in the Iron Age. The researchers, some of the best archeologists and archeology doctoral students in the country, deliberated with mutual respect and without regard to official academic status.

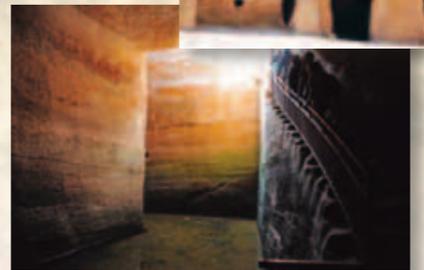
The tour to the surroundings of Petra which took place between July, 7-II was the concluding event of the group’s first year. It was devoted to this year’s central idea: the collapse and destruction of cultural frameworks. The trip was constructed around one topic, the decline of the south-Arabian trading system in the Late Roman period, following the spread of the Roman Empire over the Nabataean Kingdom. This issue was discussed over two whole days, during trips to Petra and its surrounding environs which presented Petra as the main site of the Nabataean Kingdom, alongside environmental and archaeological aspects of the Petra region (resources, routes, changes in the settlement patterns). One afternoon was devoted to lectures regarding historical, political, cultural, economical, and ethnic angles related to the broad topic. In addition to the main theme, two additional ones were examined. On the first day the group discussed the Kingdom of Edom during the Iron Age and the “rock shelters” phenomenon; and on the last day the group dealt with the crusader involvement in medieval southern Jordan, with an emphasis on the place and decline of the Christian autochthon settlement in the

region. Following the group’s first two trips to the Negev earlier this year, the trip to southern Jordan contributed in creating a comprehensive picture concerning the rise and fall of cultures in the arid region of the southern Levant.

Prof. Israel Yuval, who was invited to participate in the trip to Petra, wrote a few words describing his experience:

I gladly accepted the “Archaeologies of Memory” group’s proposal to take part in its trip to Petra. For years I dreamt of visiting the site with a group of scholars who would help me to understand the story of this remarkable city. In addition to the group’s members’ expertise in many and varied fields, we were accompanied by other experts from diverse fields such as history, Islamic history, Far-East history, geology, botany, geography, and climatology, as well as archeologists from different realms, especially ones who research the Nabataean settlement in Jordan. The prodigious areas of expertise became a fruitful ground for fascinating discussions regarding the relationship between archeological findings and literary biblical descriptions of the Edomite kingdom. Climbing by foot a rather steep rise of an Edomite bastion, known as “Rock Shelters”, situated on a

mountain with restricted access routes, a scholarly discourse arose trying to understand why the Edomites decided to surround this inaccessible site with a wall. The riddle remains unsolved. The crown jewel of our visit was the city of Petra and the attempt to understand this city in view of its surrounding space, the trade routes that led to it, the reasons for its rise and fall and more. I was impressed by the group’s initiative in visiting members of a Brown University delegation who are currently performing an excavation at the site. Right after the exhausting tour we sat down for a joint seminar with the Brown researchers, thus forming the basis for future research collaboration between the two universities’ researchers. The personal and disciplinary variety, alongside exemplary organization – whether didactically, scientifically or thematically – yielded a wonderful farewell gift from Scholion for me.

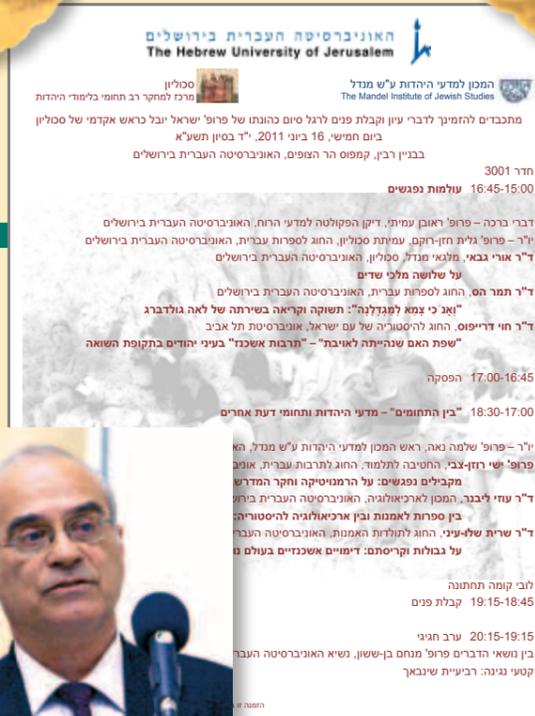


Bidding farewell to Israel

At the end of the current school year we held a conference in honor of Prof. Israel Yuval, who will complete his role as the academic head of Scholion at the end of September. Former and current Mandel Fellows, Dr. Uri Gabbay, Dr. Tamar Hess, Dr. Havi Dreifuss, Prof. Ishai Rosen-Zvi, Dr. Uzi Leibner, and Dr. Sarit Shalev-Eyni lectured on various topics. After the talks we celebrated a festive evening in the presence of a broad audience including Israel's friends and family members, Scholion members, administrative and academic faculty, and honored guests from the Mandel Foundation including Mr. Morton and Barbara Mandel, Prof. Jehuda Reinharz, and Ms. Annette Hochstein.

A section from Prof. Menachem Magidor's speech, read by Prof. Richard Cohen, follows:

"First, let me focus on the crucial part you had in shaping the program and laying its foundation... During the process, we realized that, although the institute of Jewish Studies is the jewel in the crown of the Hebrew University, in order for this jewel to shine ever further, we must form a new discourse. A discourse that crosses borders between disciplines, various genres of spiritual works, cultures and periods... With wisdom, patience and modesty you formed a community of scholars in Jewish Studies. A multi-cultural, multi-aged community that knew how to pour vintage wine into new vessels... I realize that Scholion is now becoming a cornerstone of a more expanded program that includes all of the humanities. I'm sure, after all our conversation, that you see this as a huge success stemming from what you began here in Scholion."



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Welcoming Danny



Daniel R. Schwartz, who will be coming in as Scholion's new academic head, is not a stranger to Scholion nor to academic administration. A professor in the Dept. of the History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewry, who specializes in the Second Temple period, he was a member of Scholion's "Religion of Place to Religion of Community" research group

(2006-2009) and is now co-editing its conference volume, *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History?* In recent years he chaired Hebrew University's Committee on Instructional Rules and Procedures, and before that was academic head of Revivim – an honors teacher-training program in Jewish studies. He says that he is quite aware of the challenge of keeping up

the high standards that Israel set for Scholion, especially in light of the need to find the proper place and orientation for Scholion in association with the Faculty of Humanities' fledgling Mandel School for Advanced Studies to which Prof. Magidor alluded above – and that he looks forward to cooperation from all sides.

NEWS >>

From July until September 2011, the "Jews and Cities" group hosted Prof. Michael Miller of Central European University's Nationalism Studies Program and Jewish Studies Program. A specialist in the Jewish communities of the Habsburg Empire, Prof. Miller dedicated his time at Scholion to a new research project which addresses interactions between Jews and non-Jews in Prague, Budapest, Berlin and other Central European cities. Prof. Miller also worked closely with other members of the "Jews and Cities" group on various cooperative projects, consulted with graduate students and helped lay the foundations for future cooperation between the Hebrew University and Central European University.



>> Dr. Uri Gabbay, after his final year as a Mandel Scholar, will join the Martin Buber society of fellows.



<< Dr. Dimitry Shumsky and Vered Madar will both join the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, as fellows.

