



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies

# SCHOLION

## News

SCHOLION - INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CENTER IN JEWISH STUDIES

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## Recent Research Group Activities

### The Jews between Minority and Majority Cultures: The Case of Byzantium

Attempting to understand the place of the Jews in the Byzantine world, Scholion's second research group holds three weekly meetings: Monday morning meetings combine discussions about individual member's research projects and the study of texts, which are to be published in an anthology of Jewish Byzantine texts by Prof. Robert Bonfil; Tuesday morning readings of Byzantine and Modern Greek texts guided by Ms. Ariadne Konstantinou; Wednesday work sessions on Classical and Jewish sources from Byzantium. In addition, the group regularly invites renowned



Top to bottom: left to right: Prof. Robert Bonfil, Prof. Vera von Falkenhausen and Prof. Guy Stroumsa; "Byzantium" research group seminar with Dr. Andrist; Prof. Guy Stroumsa (left) and Dr. Patrick Andrist.



colleagues from abroad to meetings with group members and as guest lecturers at their weekly Tuesday seminars.

Recent guests included: **Prof. Evelyne Patlagean**, a prominent researcher of Byzantium (Université de Paris X), who lectured on "Byzantium: Imperial Framework and Jewish Cultural History"; **Prof. Johannes Niehoff** (Central European University in Budapest); **Dr. Patrick Andrist** a young Byzantium researcher (Université de Genève) who spoke about "The Christian - Jewish Polemic in Byzantium"; **Prof. Herbert L. Kessler**, a pioneering researcher in Jewish Art and a worldwide renowned researcher in Christian Art (Johns Hopkins University), gave a lecture entitled, "Judaism and the Development of Byzantine Art"; **Prof. Vera von Falkenhausen**, Italy's top specialist in Byzantine history (Università di Roma - Tor Vergata), was invited to work together with group member **Prof. Robert Bonfil** on his anthology of Jewish Byzantine texts during her three-week visit. She was also invited to deliver a lecture on "The Jews in Byzantine Hagiography," about which she will also write an article for the group's essay compilation concluding its work at Scholion; **Prof. Glen W. Bowersock**, an expert in Late Antiquity (Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton), was invited to lecture on "Iconoclasm: Jewish, Christian, Islamic."



colleagues from abroad to meetings with group members and as guest lecturers at their weekly Tuesday seminars.

## Byzantine Art Revisited

On a recent three-day visit to Scholion, **Prof. Herbert L. Kessler**, a Charlotte Bloomberg Professor of the History of Art at John Hopkins University and

one of the leading scholars in the field of Medieval art, offered the claim that Jewish art was a basis for some of the Christian imagery in Late Antiquity. In a lecture entitled, "Judaism and the Development of Byzantine Art," Kessler, speaking before members of Scholion's "Byzantium" research group and outside guests, went on to show that there is no linear evolution from Jewish to Christian art and suggested the possibility of cross-fertilization between the two traditions, not only during the formative period, but over a period of several centuries. Kessler studied the programmatic decorations in ancient synagogues and discovered they reflect the intense debate between Jews

and Christians. Defending themselves against Christian claims, Jews emphasized the narrative sense of the Biblical text. He suggested that the Sepphoris (Zippori) mosaic shared a model with the manuscripts of the Christian topography of Constantine of Antioch and discussed how and why pictorial imageries have been transmitted from one religion to the other. At the conclusion of his lecture, Kessler reconsidered the role of Judaism in the crisis of Byzantine iconoclasm.

The author and editor of 10 books on Christian and Jewish medieval art, Kessler has been a close friend of

the Hebrew University for many years. On his recent visit, he had several meetings with members of Scholion's second research group, "The Jews between Minority and Majority Cultures: the Case of Byzantium," as well as with doctoral candidates and teachers from the Department of History of Art and the Institute of Archeology. In addition to his lecture at Scholion, Kessler lectured at the Department of History of Art on "*Per visibilem vultum ad invisibilem divinitatis maiestatem: Images of Christ and Communication with God.*"

Written by Dr. Rina Talgam, "Byzantium" research group



"Byzantium" group meeting with Prof. Herbert Kessler.

Prof. Herbert Kessler (left), Dr. Rina Talgam (center) and Prof. Elisheva Ravel.





# Recent Activities of Scholion's First Research Group on Modes of Canonization: The Case of the Cairo Genizah

The "Canonization" research group holds a public seminar every other Wednesday and invites someone who may be a group member, another member of Scholion, an outside researcher or a public figure to discuss his or her area of expertise. These discussions illuminate different aspects of the group's research and open them up to a wider audience at the university.

During the current semester, the Wednesday seminar has hosted leading researchers in a wide range of disciplines. **Prof. Ya'akov Goldenberg** and **Prof. David Mazursky** from the School of Business Administration discussed patterns of creativity that contribute to successful marketing outcomes and applied their findings



the Department of Political Science spoke about the connection between the survival of politicians and the survival of texts. In this meeting MK Burg presented a model for the "short term survival" of politicians, similar in some respects to the templates suggested by our colleagues from the School of Business Administration, while Prof. Diskin suggested a model for the "long term survival" of politicians, based on an analysis of the impression made by U.S. presidents over time. Both agreed with Soreq's emphasis on the effects of traumatic events on political survival. These three meetings were illuminating in pointing to



## Further Activities of the Research Group

### First Semester:

- Opening Session
- Prof. Menachem Brinker (Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies), "Mutual Relations between Canonization and Genizah"
- Mr. Roni Shweka (Scholion), "The Aesthetics of the Canon"
- Mr. Yoel Regev (Scholion), "Canon and Absolute Knowledge—The Crisis of Modernity and the Contemporary Debate on Canon in Literary Studies"
- Dr. Uri Ehrlich (Ben-Gurion University), "Liturgical Texts in the Genizah"
- Prof. Guy Stroumsa (Scholion), "Christianity as a Book Religion"
- Dr. Gideon Bohak (Tel Aviv University), "Magical Texts in the Genizah"
- Prof. Hanan Hever (Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies), "The Literature of 'Oriental' Jews and the Canon of Modern Hebrew Literature"

### Second Semester

- Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson (Scholion), "Processes of Canonization" (interim conclusion)
- Prof. Shaul Shaked (Department of Iranian Studies), "Judeo-Persian in the Genizah—Testimonies to Processes of Establishing a Modern Language and Canonizing Texts"
- Prof. David Mazurski and Prof. Ya'akov Goldenberg (School of Business Administration), "Models of Survival in the World of Marketing"
- Prof. Hermona Soreq (Institute of Life Sciences), "Perpetuating Genetic Characteristics in the Short and Long Term"
- Knesset Member Avraham Burg and Prof. Avraham Diskin (Department of Political Science), "How Do Politicians Survive? Theory and Practice"
- Dr. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (Scholion), "From a Sect of a Library to Religions of Books – The Sects of the Qumran Library and the Sects of the Christian Libraries in Egypt"
- Prof. Moshe Halbertal (Department of Jewish Philosophy), "Canonization, Authority and Meaning"

to models of text survival essential to canonization (see article below).

**Prof. Hermona Soreq**, Vice Dean for Research at the Faculty of Science, demonstrated seven parallels between the canonization of texts and examples of canonization in biological research, as well as in biology and life sciences. She demonstrated, for example, how physical trauma affects the survival or extinction of genes with highly relevant applications to the question of text canonization. Knesset member **Avraham Burg** and **Prof. Avraham Diskin** from



the broad options opened through discourse with completely "other" disciplines, in terminology and perhaps even in content.

The lectures stimulated lively discussions and evoked a sense of mutual interest. After the "Canonization" group presented the criteria and basis for survival and canonization of the texts they had studied, the guest speakers offered scientific models explaining the canonization process in their respective fields.

The members of the research group—senior researchers and doctoral students alike—also meet on Mondays. The topics

of these meetings include discussions of the Wednesday seminar and its connection to the group's research topic, and presentations by the group's doctoral students of their ongoing research. These meetings are especially important for doctoral candidates, who obtain useful methodological guidance and feedback on their work. They are also vital for the continuing progress of the group's shared research.

## Creativity and Canonization

What is creativity? Can one learn to be creative?

Typically, we tend to identify creativeness and innovation, traits associated with success and quality, as sparks of genius differing from ordinary thought patterns. However, according to **Prof. Ya'akov Goldenberg** and **Prof. David Mazursky** from the School of Business Administration, this perception is incorrect. Speaking at the regular Wednesday seminar held by Scholion's "Canonization" research group, they showed that a number of creative thought patterns could be identified, learned and practiced. A few examples from their experiments were provided to demonstrate this claim.

Why is creativity important? There are areas in which the creative component is crucial, such as advertising and marketing. Creativity captures our attention, challenges us

and gets the advertiser's message through effectively. Furthermore, creativity plays an important role in developing new products. In the struggle to attract consumers' attention, it is essential for businesses to identify ever-changing market needs and respond to them. Creativity and innovation contribute to the ability to quickly react to these needs, even though they do not always ensure success.

When we examine processes of canonization, a number of parameters, which also exist in the market model, can be identified. The audience of readers and scholars are the consumers. As consumers, they have changing needs and demands, which authors are supposed to identify and satisfy. However, many additional mediating agents come between the author

and the reader, such as translators, copiers and interpreters. Occasionally, when authors identify similar needs, a number of works compete on the same turf at the same time and place. Various factors account for the market's preference of one work over another. In the framework of the "Canonization" research group, we have learned to identify many of these factors. However, when we attempt to explain them, we often come across tautological arguments. For example, an essay written in Jewish Arabic would not have survived beyond the 13<sup>th</sup> century had it not been translated into Hebrew. Translation, then, is a necessary stage in the process of survival and success of this work. On the other hand, perhaps the essay was translated because it was successful, or perhaps its



Left to right: Prof. Ya'akov Goldenberg, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, Prof. David Mazurski, Mr. Roni Shweka, Mr. Zeev Elkin and Mr. Zvi Stampfer.

success can be attributed to the translation itself. If we assume that creativity and innovation contribute to both the exposure of a written work to the audience and its success, then identifying creative patterns in the essay may improve our understanding regarding our basic research question – why

do certain works survive, some even achieving canonical status, while others disappear without a trace.

Written by Roni Shweka, "Canonization" research group





Left to right: Prof. Emmanuel Etkes, Prof. Michael Heyd, Dr. Tamar El-Or and Dr. Baruch Schwartz.

# Education and Religion: Between Tradition and Novelty

Scholion's Third Research Group  
2004-2007

How are ideologies and religious values transmitted from generation to generation? What institutional, cognitive and emotional mechanisms ensure an unbroken or continuous link? And on the other hand, what are the motivating factors behind changes of values, thinking and behavior patterns, and what roles do educational systems play in these modifications and reforms? Which religious authorities determine educational strategies, content and methods, and to what extent do struggles among competing religious authorities have an impact on educational practices? To whom is the religious educational system addressed, in terms of gender and social groups?

These are among the many issues and questions to be addressed by Scholion's third research group, "Education and Religion: Between Tradition and Novelty," whose work will commence this coming academic year. The Scholion Academic Committee, headed by **Prof. Menachem Magidor** and **Prof. Haim Rabinowitch**, President and Rector of the Hebrew University, considered the submitted research proposals and chose the 2004-2007 research group following intensive interviews with representatives of the groups. The selection took place in January 2004 immediately following the Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon.

The connection between religious traditions and educational systems and practices

constitute an important historical and cultural issue in general and in Jewish history in particular. The research group aims to examine this multi-faceted topic in current Jewish society (Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox), as well as in the modern era in general. An interdisciplinary collaboration comprising two historians, an educational psychologist and an anthropologist, the research team will examine this complex issue from a comparative point of view. The group will compare changes in educational thought and practice in Christian European culture during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries with educational developments in Jewish society which took place in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as in the present ultra-Orthodox world.

By investigating the interconnections between education and religion, between different cultural settings and their educational systems and between educational systems and their pupils, the group aims to acquire a deeper understanding of the forces of continuity and change that shape knowledge and ways of knowing.

Senior members of the research group include: **Prof. Michael Heyd**, Department of History; **Prof. Emmanuel Etkes**, Department of the History of the Jewish People and Education; **Dr. Tamar El-Or**, Department of Sociology and Anthropology; **Prof. Baruch Schwartz**, School of Education.

At a distinguished ceremony, Prof. Guy G. Stroumsa (fifth from left), a member of Scholion's second research group, The Jews Between Minority and Majority Cultures: The Case of Byzantium, was conferred an Honorary Doctorate from Zurich University on April 30, 2004. The Martin Buber Professor of Comparative Religion, Prof. Stroumsa is also the Director of the Center for the Study of Christianity at the Hebrew University.



Dr. Yaron Ben-Naeh



Roli Zilberstein



Dr. Rina Talgam



Ophir Mintz-Manor

## SHELF NEWS

### Commendations and Prizes

- Dr. Yaron Ben-Naeh (Mandel Scholar) was commended as an outstanding teacher.
- Ophir Mintz-Manor, doctoral student ("Byzantium" research group), the Polonsky 2004 Student Prize for Originality and Creativity in the Humanistic Disciplines.
- Prof. Guy Stroumsa ("Byzantium" research group), Honorary Doctorate, the University of Zurich (April 2004).
- Dr. Rina Talgam ("Byzantium" research group) was commended as an outstanding teacher.
- Roli Zilberstein, doctoral student ("Byzantium" research group), the Mendosa Prize for Outstanding Students, Dept. of the History of the Jewish People.



# To the Finish Line: Scholion's Third Cycle of Scholars Chosen

A sense of intellectual anticipation pervaded the corridors of Scholion as the annual Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon got underway this past January to determine the third cycle of Mandel Scholars. Taking place for only the second time (the first two Mandel Scholars were chosen under rigid time constraints), the Marathon has become a stimulating public academic event in the field of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University.

The Marathon is the culmination of an extensive selection process. Scholion's Academic Committee considered 35 applicants, from Israel, Italy, France, England and the United States, whose diverse research interests—from Linguistics and Talmud to Theater and Philosophy—represented a wide range of academic pursuits on which Scholion's interdisciplinary studies thrive. After careful consideration, the committee narrowed the choice to seven

candidates, six of whom were women, two from abroad. The seven finalists were then invited to present their research findings at the second Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon.

The room was packed as one by one the finalists took the podium to speak. **Prof. Menachem Magidor** and **Prof. Haim Rabinowitch**, President and Rector of the University, attended all the lectures, together with the other members of the Academic Committee, including Scholion's Academic Head **Prof. Israel Yuval** and **Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem**, Head of the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies. Also in the audience were junior and senior researchers from the entire

university. Each lecture was followed by an open session, during which candidates fielded questions from the committee and audience.

The first heat of the Marathon was over and the candidates enjoyed lunch with committee members—an informal opportunity to get to know one another. Personal interviews

were then held with each of the candidates, and on the following day committee members continued their deliberations.

After an intense contest, Dr. Manuela Consonni of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and Dr. Tamar Hess of the Department of Hebrew Literature were named the Mandel Scholars, 2004-2007.

Academic Committee members with Mandel Scholar candidates.



## Mandel Scholars (2004 – 2007)

### Dr. Manuela Consonni

Born in Italy, Dr. Manuela Consonni made Aliya in 1991 and received her doctorate from the Hebrew University, writing her dissertation on "Memory and History: War, Resistance and the Shoah in Italy, 1945-1985." Her research will continue to focus on collective memory and the Holocaust and aims to provide a trans-national and comparative perspective for cross border dialogue on history, memory and identity in post World War II Europe. In this respect, she says, Jewish memory of the Holocaust plays a crucial role, serving as a key interpretation of European history and post-war European memory. According to Consonni, European countries like France, Italy and Germany have marginalized the role of survivors from collective national memories. An approach, she says, which allows these countries to pursue policies based on reconciliation "and not responsibility." Consonni's research will examine how history, historiography and memory are used for political purposes in building and shaping national identities. She will also analyze the various agents and factors that influenced how Jewish and non-Jewish society interpreted their recent past and reconstruct the changes that such memory has undergone. Focusing on the historical, cultural and political context in which the memory of the deportations and Holocaust was shaped, Consonni will address the following issues: the relation between politics, memory and history; questions concerning identity in the highly complex multicultural European context; Jewish-Christian relations; and the perception of the 'other' in Western culture, from both a Christian and non-Christian perspective.



### Dr. Tamar Hess

Born and educated in Israel, Dr. Tamar Hess received her doctorate from the Department of Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University, writing her dissertation on "Autobiographical Writings by Women of the Second Aliyah." According to Hess, Israeli autobiography has been thriving in recent years, which, she says, is especially striking in light of the marginal position of the genre during most of the twentieth century. The little critical attention granted to autobiography did not venture beyond the beginning of the twentieth century, although multitudinous autobiographical writings were produced during this century. "A thorough documentation of the Hebrew autobiographical tradition is a project that will demand a collective effort," says Hess, whose research plans include providing a concise historical review of Hebrew and Israeli autobiography, from the middle of the nineteenth century until today. Beyond an initial attempt to map out Modern Hebrew autobiography and mark its characteristics and achievements, her research will view this mammoth corpus in light of theoretical and critical autobiographical discourse. As she has grown increasingly familiar with this genre, it has become clear to Hess that Hebrew autobiography exerts an important influence on concepts of self-representation and the construction of subjectivity in Hebrew culture. Hess adds that, "My research has focused on women's writing, and the Mandel scholarship will allow me to examine the Hebrew autobiography as a whole, a field that necessitates intensive study."



Left to right: Dr. Sarit Shalev-Eyni, Dr. Yaron Ben Naeh, Dr. Amram Tropper, Dr. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra.



## ALL IN THE FAMILY:

Adding to the open intellectual ambience at Scholion, the four current Mandel Scholars recently spoke about how the Interdisciplinary Research Center in Jewish Studies has enriched their scholarly lives. The first two scholars, Dr. Amram D. Tropper and Dr. Yaron Ben-Naeh, took up residence at Scholion almost two years ago, followed a year later by Dr. Sarit Shalev-Eyni and Dr. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra.

## Mandel Scholars Speak Out

Amram Tropper, a researcher of Jewish history during the Graeco-Roman period, has devoted part of his time at Scholion to completing his first book, *Wisdom, Politics and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East* (Oxford University Press). Currently working on a new topic, Children and Childhood in Jewish Late Antiquity, Tropper says that while at Scholion he has been able to expand his research well beyond his original intentions. Tropper also says he has used his time in the classroom—“teaching in Hebrew has been a challenge”—to involve his students in his research and to engage them in an academic discourse. Whether chatting over a cup of coffee, waiting in line for the photocopier or sitting together in a conference room, “being in the same environment as researchers from different disciplines is a unique experience in the academic world,” adds Tropper.

Working in close quarters with other researchers was a bit of a change for Yaron Ben-Naeh. While Ottoman Jewry has been the focus of his scholarly research for over a decade, Ben-Naeh says he was accustomed to “working alone in the library or at home.” He has used his tenure at Scholion to broaden his understanding of Jewish life throughout the Ottoman Empire, as well as other Jewish communities under Islamic rule. A veteran Hebrew University researcher

(both his undergraduate and graduate degrees are from here), coming to an office every day was certainly a new experience for Ben-Naeh. With two books about to be published—one a study of Ottoman Jewish society, the other an anthology of legal documents—he has not only weathered the adjustment well, but says he has in fact benefited from the open intellectual environment at Scholion. Simply put, Ben-Naeh says he takes great pleasure “in being part of the Scholion family.”

Sarit Shalev-Eyni says she too has turned Scholion into her home. With a doctorate in Art History from the Hebrew University, Shalev-Eyni, an authority in Jewish medieval art—she recently organized Hebrew University’s annual Conference of Jewish Art—is currently researching the 13<sup>th</sup> century Ambrosian Bible, the earliest illuminated Hebrew Bible known from South Germany, focusing on its eschatological illustrations. Taking an unusual approach, she is studying the Jewish

influences on medieval Christian Bibles. Shalev-Eyni says interdisciplinary research has always been central to her work, and she has found the connection to scholars from different fields at Scholion “inspiring” and beneficial to the entire academic enterprise.

“While many researchers in the Humanities often become narrowly focused on a specific area, the opposite holds true for scholars at Scholion,” says Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, whose field of expertise is comparative religion. Working amongst scholars from various disciplines widens one’s academic perspective, adds Ben Ezra. “You see how your own small findings may contribute to much larger research issues.” Sometimes, he says, this happens simply by stepping into someone’s office at Scholion. Currently completing a research project entitled, “Godfearers: Pagan Fellow Travelers of Judaism—Boundaries of Jewish Identity,” his general field of scholarship encompasses Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism, New Testament and Early Christian literature. For Ben Ezra, being at Scholion is a constant learning experience—“an opportunity to pack in 3,000 years of history and culture.”



## SHELF NEWS

### Academic publications Books

- Bonfil, Robert, ed. et al., *Samuel David Luzzatto: The Bi-Centennial of his Birth*. Magnes Press, 2004. (“Byzantium” research group)
- Lieblich, Amia, ed. et al., *Healing Plots: The Narrative Basis of Psychotherapy*. APA Books, 2004. (“Canonization” research group)
- Stökl Ben Ezra, Daniel, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*. Mohr Siebeck, 2003. (Mandel Scholar)
- Talgam, Rina, *The Stylistic Origins of Umayyad Sculpture and Architectural Decoration*. Harrassowitz, 2004. (“Byzantium” research group)
- Talgam, Rina and Zeev Weiss, *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris*. Quedem – The Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University, 2004.
- Tropper, Amram, *Wisdom, Politics and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East*. Oxford University Press, 2004. (Mandel Scholar)



Prof. Amia Lieblich



Dr. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra



Dr. Amram Tropper



Prof. Robert Bonfil



# WOMEN SCHOLARS

## in the Darmstadt Haggadah

While women today play a prominent role in Jewish scholarship at Scholion—the newly chosen Mandel Scholars (2004-2007) are both women—that certainly was not the case in times past. However, a unique depiction of women actively participating in scholarly study appears in two illustrated pages in the Darmstadt Haggadah (Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt, Cod. Or. 8) written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by the scribe Israel ben Meir of Heidelberg.

The text in these two pages is surrounded by a luxurious architectural structure with several stories, windows and wings. A family sitting around the Seder table is depicted on the bottom of one of the pages (f. 37v); the diners, both men and women are participating in a discussion related to Passover. Through the gates and windows on the top and sides of the page, women and men are seen studying alone or together, in couples or in groups. Similar arrangements are seen in another miniature in the same Haggadah portraying two main study groups (f. 48v). In the center of the top group, a man is seated and surrounded by women, while in the center of the bottom group, a seated woman is surrounded by men.

While the depiction of women and men sitting together at the Seder table is commonplace in illuminated Hebrew manuscripts, the portrayal of women studying together with men has no direct parallel, either in Jewish or Christian art. However, it seems that the depiction of the woman sitting in the center of the men's group is based on Christian religious models that portray the Virgin Mary sitting among the apostles.

What connection, if any, is there between the illustrations of women studying and the realities of medieval Ashkenazi Jewry? While in Christian society education was accessible for the most part only to nuns or aristocratic women, there is a dispute as to the education of Jewish women during that time. The scenes from the Darmstadt Haggadah may reflect the teachings of *Sefer Hassidim*, a 13<sup>th</sup> century pietistic rabbinic tract, obliging every man to “educate his daughters in the mitzvot such as the halakhic rulings” (paragraph 835). It also states, though, that it is forbidden for a young man to teach girls, even if the father should be present, “for it might excite his or her desire.” It can be assumed that the portrayals of couples studying together in the Darmstadt Haggadah reflect a reality that the author of *Sefer Hassidim* objected to. On the other hand, the illustrations of old men teaching some of the young women in this illuminated Haggadah would comply with the restrictions imposed by this religious text. The unusual presence of the women in the Darmstadt Haggadah suggests that an unknown woman may have commissioned the manuscript.

Written by Dr. Sarit Shalev-Eyni, Mandel Scholar



Depictions from the Darmstadt Haggadah. From the collections of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

## An Honorable Mention

A festive session honoring Prof. Amia Lieblich, a member of Scholion's First Interdisciplinary Research Group, Modes of Canonization: The Case of the Cairo Genizah, was held at the Qualitative Research Methods Conference by Ben-Gurion University. Lieblich was interviewed about her investigative and scholarly studies in the field of qualitative research. Excerpts from her books on Israeli society—examining subjects such as war, the Israeli army, the kibbutz, and more recently, family and women in Israel—were read to the audience by a student from the theater department.





# A Journey to Sepphoris



Prof. Glen Bowersock of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, along with members of Scholion's "Byzantium" research group recently visited the ancient Galilean city of Sepphoris (Zippori), frequently mentioned in Talmudic literature. Dr. Zeev Weiss from the Institute of Archeology presented the many archeological finds there. The group visited the Roman theater, the colonnaded main streets, the agora or Roman forum and various Roman private and Byzantine public buildings. The climax of the tour was the well-preserved and superb mosaic pavements at the site. These included the *triclinium* mosaic in the House of Dionysos, widely recognized as one of the richest cycles depicting the myth of Dionysos and his cult; the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building that provide a remarkable example of early Byzantine public secular art; and, above all, the extraordinary synagogue mosaic that illuminates the relationship between Jewish and Christian art.

Written by Dr. Rina Talgam, "Byzantium" research group



Left to right: Prof. Vera von Falkenhausen, Ms. Roni Amir, Prof. Glen Bowersock, Dr. Zeev Weiss.



## Scholion at the AJS Conference

A special session at the 35th annual conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, which took place in Boston in December 2003, was dedicated to Scholion's first Interdisciplinary Research Group – Modes of Canonization: The Case of the Cairo Genizah. This session, unique in its interdisciplinary amalgamation of textual, phenomenological and analytical modes, spurred considerable interest among the conference attendees and drew a variegated audience, which participated in a lively discussion following the group's presentation. The session gave the group a second opportunity (the first being the August 2003 meeting of the Society for the Study of Medieval Judeo-Arabic Culture in St. Petersburg) to present its own work and the larger framework of Scholion, at an international conference. Scholion scholars exchanged ideas, academic findings and research methods with some of the leading scholars in Jewish studies worldwide. Attending this year's conference were Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, Prof. Amia Lieblich, Prof. Robert Brody and doctoral student Mr. Roni Shweka, all of whom are members of Scholion's first Interdisciplinary Research Group.

The AJS is the chief organization of Jewish Studies in North America, bringing together senior and junior researchers from North America and around the world. According to Lieblich, when compared with other scholarly teams, Scholion's group was unique in being both interdisciplinary and intergenerational.

Brody and Shweka gave historical examples from the Talmud and other legal texts to illustrate the question of why certain texts achieve canonical status while others are lost or forgotten. In describing the adaptation of the ancient liturgical poem *Unetane Tokef* into a purely secular context by members of Kibbutz Beit HaShita, Lieblich provided a contemporary example of the phenomenon of cultural conservation. Ben-Sasson integrated the group's work into a refined model describing the survival of texts over time as a function of canonizing factors. The session was followed by an intellectually engaging discussion in which scholars from various areas of research took part.

## SHELF NEWS

### Academic publications

#### Articles

- Ben-Nach, Yaron, "Poverty, Paupers and Poor Relief in Ottoman Jewish Society," *Sefunot* 23 (Oct. 2003). (Mandel Scholar)
- Ben-Nach, Yaron, "Relations between the Jewish Communities of Cairo and Jerusalem in the 17th Century." In *New Orient: Islam, Society and Space in Jerusalem, Past and Present*, ed. Nimrod Luz. Magnes Press, 2004.
- Ben-Nach, Yaron, "Organization and Leadership of the Jewish Community in the Ottoman Empire in the 17th-19th Centuries." In *Kehal Yisrael, Jewish Self-Rule through the Ages, v. 2: The Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, ed. Avraham Grossman and Y. Kaplan, Zalman Shazar, 2004.
- Ben-Sasson, Menahem, "Jewish Self-Rule in Islamic Countries in the 7th and 12th Centuries." In *Kehal Yisrael, Jewish Self-Rule through the Ages, v. 2: The Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, Zalman Shazar, 2004. ("Canonization" research group).
- Bonfil, Robert, "The Jewish Community in Italy in the Renaissance." In *Kehal Yisrael, Jewish Self-Rule through the Ages, v. 2: The Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, Zalman Shazar, 2004. ("Byzantium" research group)
- Irshai, Oded, "The Priesthood in Jewish Society of Late Antiquity." In *Continuity and Renewal: Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine*, ed. Lee I. Levine, Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2004. ("Byzantium" research group)
- Tropper, Amram, "The Fate of Jewish Historiography after the Bible: A New Interpretation." In *History and Theory*, 2004. (Mandel Scholar)
- Shalev-Eyni, Sarit, "In the Days of the Barley Harvest: The Iconography of Ruth," *Artibus et Historiae*, v. 48 (May 2004). (Mandel Scholar)
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# Scholion's Fabulous Five

“Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Elazar Ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiba were reclining together at Bene-Brak, and they went on narrating the Exodus from Egypt all night, until their disciples came and said to them, ‘Masters, it is now time to recite the morning Shema’.”

What has become something of an emblem for Scholion, the illustration of the five rabbis engaged in a lively scholarly discussion appears in the margins of the London Ashkenazi Haggadah (B.L. Add. 14762). The Haggadah text describes the wise men engaged in conversation while reclining at the Seder table; the illustration, however, shows them standing around a podium, an open book placed on it with other books lying closed on its shelves. One of the scholars gestures towards the text and turns his head towards the scholars standing to his right. The other scholars are also gazing in his direction and most are raising a finger as if making an erudite point.

The omission of the reclining posture in the illustration perhaps has something to do with the manner in which this manuscript was produced. One of the illuminators of the London Haggadah was Joel ben Simeon, who signed his name in the margins of one of the last pages of the Haggadah: “My heart counsels me to reply to him who asks and says, ‘who painted these [pages]?’ I shall answer him: ‘I am he, Feibusch, called Joel’.” Joel ben Simeon was a popular Jewish scribe and illuminator and more than twenty of his manuscripts have survived. He was born in Cologne around 1420, and following the expulsion of the Jewish population in 1424, his family moved to the nearby city of Bonn, where he received his education as a scribe and artist. Towards the middle of the century, he immigrated to Italy and became familiar with Italian stylistic innovations, integrating local motifs into his drawings. Joel was a traveling scribe and artist and returned several times to his native land. Around 1460, on one of his return journeys to the south of Germany, Joel was hired by Rabbi Jacob Mattathiah to illustrate a Haggadah, which was written by a different scribe – Meir ben Israel. Joel illustrated

the Haggadah with his characteristic drawings, but for some unknown reason did not complete his work.

A short while later, a Christian artist named Johannes Bämmler of Augsburg was commissioned to complete the Haggadah. Together with his apprentice, Bämmler completed the missing illustrations and even painted over some of Joel's. The illustration of the five scholars is attributed to the Christian Bämmler, whose work is characterized by squat stout figures, vivid colors and soft fabrics. It is possible that the Jewish patron, or another Jew who guided Bämmler, instructed him to draw five debating scholars. Bämmler, unaware of the context of reclining during the festive meal, omitted the traditional Seder table and placed them around a podium.

The broad cultural and geographical circumstances of the production of the London Ashkenazi Haggadah correspond with the aims of Hebrew University's Interdisciplinary Research Center in Jewish Studies.

Written by Dr. Sarit Shalev-Eyni, Mandel Scholar



## SHELF NEWS

### Scholion's Publications Jan. 2002 – May 2004

- **Scholion Report** - Three activity reports for the Steering Committee (Oct. '02, April '03, Feb. '04) and two activity reports for the Academic Committee meetings (Jan.-Nov. '02, Dec. 2002).
- **ScholionNews** vols. 1-3 of Scholion's newsletter: Spring 2003, Autumn 2003 and Spring 2004.
- **Exhibition Catalogue of Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah** for the founding evening (May 22, 2003).
- **Program** for the founding evening, and texts for the evening's theme, “Cairo – Magenza – Beit Hashita: Stages in the Metamorphosis of *Unetane Tokef*.”
- **Visual Report: Images of an Event** - The Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon; Scholion's Interdisciplinary Research Group 2004-2007 - booklet describing the selection of the two new Mandel Scholars and the new research group by the Academic Committee (January 8-9, 2004).



## Multimedia

- Re-edited video of Yehuda Yaniv's 1991 film *Unetane Tokef* about Kibbutz Beit HaShita's adaptation of the poem.
- Reissued CD of a modern rendition of the poem *Unetane Tokef* performed by Hanoach Albalak, originally produced by the Kibbutz Institute for Jewish Festivals and Holidays (Beit Hashita).
- Founding Evening video (May 22, 2003).
- Scholion and Kibbutz Beit Hashita's Joint Conference on *Unetane Tokef*, video/DVD (October 1-2, 2003).
- The Mandel Scholarship Lecture Marathon, video/DVD (January 8, 2004).

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