



SCHOLION

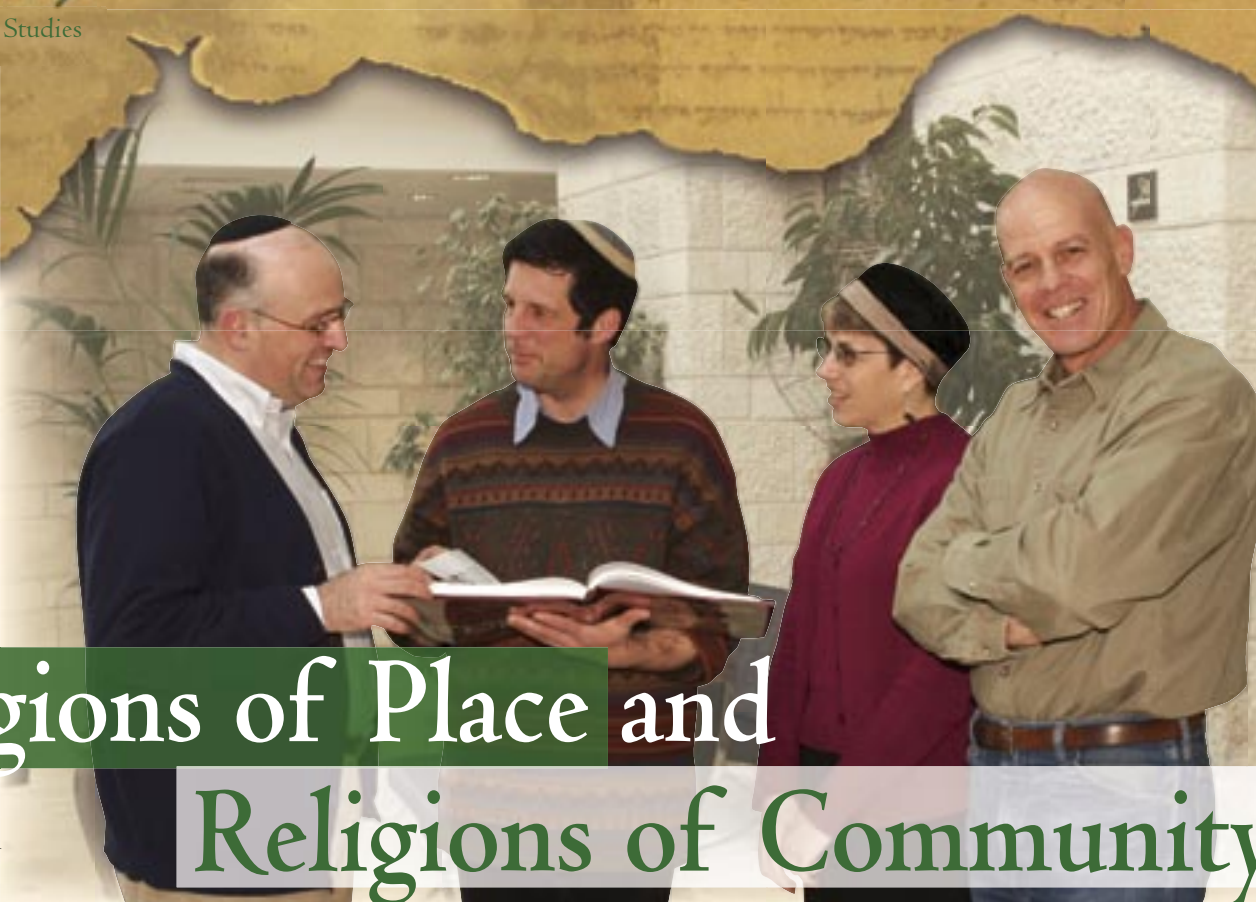
SCHOLION - INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CENTER IN JEWISH STUDIES

NEWS

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האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies



On Religions of Place and Religions of Community

A new group was chosen to join Scholion this coming October. Carefully selected from among five group research proposals submitted to Scholion, "On Religions of Place and Religions of Community" proposes to address the relationship between two sets of contrasts that have hitherto been studied each in a separate context. The first is the study of a religion that centers clearly on a divinely ordained location as opposed

to one that is practiced equally in numerous locations designated by communities. The ramifications of such a contrast between Temple religion and its synagogal counterpart go well beyond this basic distinction between the divinely ordained and the communally consecrated. Fundamental

ritualistic paradigms (sacrifice vs. prayer/sermonizing) and styles (formal vs. informal), as well as broader issues such as authority and leadership (hereditary priesthood vs. learned Rabbinate), and the status of the community in general are all issues that differ vitally between these two poles of disparity.

The second point of contrast deals with Sects and Church, whose differences are much more than the split hairs of pedantic doctrinal variance, but go so far as to include separate and independent rituals and beliefs, not to mention political agendas and, accordingly, custom-tailored cosmologies and

eschatologies that justify their own intractability and mutual estrangement. Scholion's new group will conduct a triennial research effort into the complex interrelationship of these two general points of contrast, attempting to enrich our understanding of the one by comparatively viewing it in the perspective of the other. Three disciplines are joined in the persons of the four senior researchers and their four junior counterparts. Dr. Gidoen Aran from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology is an expert on extremist sects, cults and orders; Dr. Esther Hazon from the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies researches ancient sectarianism and ancient Jewish prayer; her colleague, Prof. Daniel Schwartz, investigates the ancient conflict of religion and state in its Jewish context, and Prof. Ze'ev Weiss from the Department of Archaeology studies ancient Jewish, Christian and pagan community structures.

A Byzantine Evening

A recent evening symposium, "Jews and Byzantium: A Cultural Exchange," held at the Ben-Zvi Institute in the Jerusalem, depicted a world that was culturally rich, dialectically complex and, until recently, poorly charted scholarly ground.

Prof. Aharon Maman, deputy director of the Institute opened the symposium by praising Scholion's cooperation with the Ben-Zvi institute. Then, with a flourish of rhetoric, Prof. Guy Stroumsa introduced the first of the evening's two sessions by provocatively inquiring if it is all really worth investigating. Prof. Robert Bonfil swiftly picked up the gauntlet, observing that "despite its negative image too often viewed as decadent, the period marks a central turning point in the history of the Jewish people." The incessant clash and ensuing discourse between the minority Jewish community and the overwhelming Christian culture surrounding it, posed difficult questions of identity and loyalty that were the crux of the evening's exchange.

Dr. Rina Talgam, presenting an astonishingly communicative slide presentation, went on to describe the similarities and differences between Jewish and Christian art during the Byzantine period. Adopting and discarding common symbols and motifs, the religious art uncovered in synagogues and churches points towards a period of "great visual dialogue".

Ophir Münz-Manor, closed the first session with a discussion about cross-cultural influences, between Jewish and Christian religious poetry (*piyyut*) and hymns.



Top: Dr. Rina Talgam
Below left: Mr. Ophir Münz-Manor
Below right: Prof. Guy Stroumsa



"Exemplifying Scholion's raison d'être, the evening's presentations seek to present Jewish culture within a wider cultural context," noted the Academic Head of Scholion, Prof. Israel Yuval, at the opening of the second session. Moving from larger cultural issues to topics of daily life and personal relationships, Dr. Oded Irshai spoke about physical aggression during the Byzantine period, while Roli Zilberstein focused his lecture on its equally hostile rhetorical counterpart. Micha Perry closed the evening with a discussion on family life, comparing Jewish and Christian approaches to marriage and childrearing during the Byzantine period.



Down from the Mountain

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are often typecast as opposite poles: the ancient holy vs. the bustling modern, the celestial vs. the mundane, Jewish mainstay vs. Western Zeitgeist.

Stereotypes can be misleading, and “Alma” College is just such an exception. Tucked away in the very heart of Tel Aviv, the small liberal arts college prides itself in its interdisciplinary exploration of the vast achievements of Jewish heritage and Hebrew culture within a multicultural context. This academic personality resembles Scholion uncannily, and it would be only fitting to establish some sort of intellectual collaboration with so close a companion.

At the beginning of December last, Scholion hosted a meeting between Ms. Ruth Kalderon, founder and director of Alma College, Prof. Israel Yuval and Ms. Zohar Marcovich, academic head and administrative director respectively of Scholion, and Dr. Tamar Elor, a senior researcher in the ‘Education and Religion’

group to bring just such a cooperative end to fruition. This encounter yielded a formal proposal of collaboration by Alma College to host a series of lectures headed “The Garden of Eden in the Culture of Israel”, to be delivered in turns by the senior members of Scholion’s ‘Ascending and Descending’ research group, whose vast expertise and current research interests lie in this sphere of knowledge.

The eve of the 19th of January saw the inaugural lecture in this series called “The Garden of Eden in the Religious Imagination”, Prof. Yoram Bilu of Scholion expounded on the rise and fall of “The Gate of Heaven,” a holy site “discovered” recently in Beit She’an, by a dreamer. He presented the seer’s “biography of dreams” and the “society of dreams” that developed at and around the site, concluding the lecture with the eventual disappearance of this consecrated site a few years later from the map of Jewish pilgrimages. The lecture and its bearer were both warmly received by the audience, who are granted free entry to this series of lectures.



Prof. Yoram Bilu

No Place Like Home: Young Scholars Find Their Place at Scholion

The esteemed author of Peter Pan once observed with characteristic jocularly that if he were younger, he’d know more. So it is a charming paradox that James Barrie could never write so sincerely of youth until he was, in fact, much grown up. Indeed youth can sometimes be found unaccountably wise and age may be quietly disregarded when important work is to be done. So it is at Scholion, that a collaborative atmosphere is nurtured that causes academic generation gaps to melt away, allowing seasoned academics and young researchers to unite their cultivated intellects to the benefit of both and in the true service of learning and knowledge. Thirteen young scholars, hailing from disciplines as diverse as Jewish studies, art and architecture, sociology, anthropology and history, mix minds with senior researchers as joint members of Scholion’s three research groups. Earnestly in the thick of writing and refining their dissertations, ask any of these energetic and talented doctoral students about their position at the interdisciplinary research center in Jewish studies and the answer is the same: Scholion is their

academic home away from home. Roni Amir calls it a scholar’s paradise. Like many Scholion scholars, her academic background is hardly in Jewish studies, but in art history and archaeology, having turned her postgraduate attentions to Egyptian Art, a member of the Byzantium research group, Amir is currently examining the relationship between Jewish synagogues, pagan temples, and Christian churches in northern Syria. “Bringing various disciplines together creates an ideal academic atmosphere,” she says. Micha Perry agrees. Also part of Scholion’s second research group and personally dedicated to the study of the transmission of knowledge in the Middle Ages, Perry is especially impressed by the accessibility of the senior scholars and avails himself often of their professional advice. “If I have a question about Arabic culture, I knock on one door, a question about Talmud, I knock on another, and if my questions regard Greek culture or German-Jewish history, I know who to approach,” says Perry. “Their



Mr. Shlomo Tikochinsky, Mr. Assaf Ben-Tov, Mr. Ilya Luria, Ms. Michal Kravel-Tovi

doors are always open.” Three junior members of the Education and Religion research group, Shlomo Tikochinsky, Michal Kravel-Tovi and Asaph Ben-Tov, have reached the halfway point of their term at Scholion. Describing herself as a minority both as a woman and as a social scientist, Kravel-Tovi says from the very beginning everyone has gone out of their way to make things

comfortable for her. These three are a classic example of scholars from different fields of expertise who would not mingle professionally but in Scholion. For instance, whereas Tikochinsky is directly involved in the world of Jewish History, researching Lithuanian yeshivot between the two world wars, his colleague, Asaph Ben-Tov studies pedagogical views among Lutheran humanists. “While I don’t deal with Jewish history per se, I am interested in studying different approaches to education,” says Ben-Tov, who was worried that he might feel out of place at the center. “That,” he says emphatically, “has not been the case at all.” Gila Vachman and Adam Klin Oron are members of the most recent research group, Ascending and Descending. Both grew up on kibbutzim and say the academic atmosphere at Scholion calls to mind the environment of their youth. “There are no strangers here,” says Vachman, who is writing her dissertation on Midrash and Aggadah. “Everyone, senior and junior scholars alike, willingly shares ideas, research and knowledge.” When working on her dissertation, Vachman, who has

a B.A. and M.A. in Talmud and Hebrew Literature, is content spending her days at Scholion contemplating celestial planes. Klin Oron approaches paradise from a very different angle. With an undergraduate and graduate degree in Sociology, he has a special academic interest in religious experiences, which induced him to write his M.A. thesis on the recreational habits of Haredim. Klin Oron is in the initial stages of doctoral research in Socio-anthropology, and is even now turning his attention to “channeling” or “spiritual media,” that is people who communicate with and receive messages from otherworldly beings. “It’s actually a very middle-class, New-Age pursuit,” quips Klin Oron, whose progressive research interest adds an interesting twist to the group’s subject matter. Klin Oron describes Scholion as “an ideal, dream-come-true academic environment.” From an eclectic group of scholars a mere door-knock away, to the warm administrative staff and comfortable working conditions, Klin Oron, only a few months at Scholion, finds this academic sanctuary a small, but welcome, piece of heaven on earth.



Mr. Yossef Soffer, Mr. Ophir Münz-Manor, Mr. Roli Zilberstein, Ms. Roni Amir, Mr. Micha Perry

Canon and Genizah Conference

The Canon and Genizah Group celebrated the culmination of their three-year term at Scholion with an academic conference on 1-2 June 2005. The plurality of group members, and several colleagues from Israel and abroad who took part in group activities and enriched its discourse, presented the fruits of their research.

On the one hand, each lecturer presented an elaboration of his/her individual work within a specific corpus and discipline; at the same time, however, all the lectures shared criteria, terminology, and common prismic paradigms through which the questions of survival, reception, prestige, popularity and canon were addressed. The goal of the group's research, which began its activity in 2002 and was Scholion's first sponsored endeavor of this type, was to formulate a working model rationalizing how and why some works merit meticulous preservation over generations while others are deplorably consigned to oblivion.

The conference opened with an overture on theoretical matters. Prof. Robert Brody began by offering definitions for the term and concept of Canon, presenting a model for applying these to the Genizah Corpus, and open questions. Following him, Yoel Regev, a doctoral student in philosophy, spoke enthralingly about canon as an intellectual phenomenon – particularly within academe, ultimately honing in on Jewish Studies. The first lecture covered some aspects of the origin of canon, and the second touched on many contemporary issues, thus providing a frame that exposed the diachronic and disciplinary spectra.

The following session of the day exposed an interdisciplinary dimension of canon research at Scholion, touching as it did on non-textual canonicity, a subtopic which does not usually receive due attention. Prof. Amia Lieblich presented her study of collective memory

among the children of Kfar Ezion after the atrocious massacres of 1948, and the process of selection, survival, mythologizing and ritualization of that memory. Prof. Lieblich's doctoral student at the Psychology Department, Maya Benish-Weisman, presented her work on the identity of Jews, Israelis and Russians in the eyes of Jewish Russian Immigrants to Israel in the '90s. This case study offered a freeze-frame of conditions affecting the canonical status of the stereotypical traits ascribed to these three socio-ethnic groups. The next two sessions were devoted to Genizah Texts, namely, the relative representation and absence of various disciplines or genres in the Cairo Genizah. Zeev Elkin, a doctoral student of Prof. Ben-Sasson, presented a provocative thesis that a tradition of historiography among Jews in Arab lands exists as part of the canon, enlisting the contents of the Cairo Genizah to back his claim. Moshe Lavi, who attended the group's public seminar since its inception, presented the audience with a composite of the intellectual world of a figure whose status was not exactly canonical, R. Y. Rosh ha-Seder, tabulating and analyzing for us the book lists and task lists of this librarian, book dealer and intellectual. He painted a fascinating picture of readership, reflective comment and critique, and a personal hierarchy of texts, at once both a picture of the subjective taste of an individual, and a mirror of the shared conventions and choices affected by a Zeitgeist. Two further disciplines represented in the Genizah were the center of the final session of the first day of the conference: belles-lettres, presented by Prof. Shulamith Elitzur, an expert in Medieval Jewish Poetry, and lexicography, presented by Prof. Aharon Maman, an authority on Semitic linguistic thought and texts. Both of these Genizah scholars took closed textual



corpora and examined questions of their survival within the Cairo Genizah and without it in continuous manuscript tradition, in comparison to other authors in equivalent genres. The tension between the practical and the ritual, between the secular and religious, and between Hebrew and Arabic language and culture and their status continually surfaced in these lectures, complementing their mention elsewhere. The moderator of this session, Dr. Ofra Tirosh-Becker, presented a model of survival of Karaite fragments within rabbinic texts, while Prof. Maman honed the audiences understanding by his cross-references almost all the guest lectures over the three year period in which the Canonization and Genizah meetings convened.

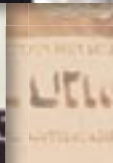
Day two offered a more sociological dimension of the Genizah offered by two other close associates of the Canon and Genizah project: Roni Shweka, a doctoral student of Prof. Brody, examined the culture of scientific writing as a factor affecting success of an author in halakhic texts preserved in the Genizah. This was one of the few lectures to devote central attention to formal elements of a text as a factor in their survival, reception, popularity and inclusion in a canon. Miriam Fraenkel presented a tableau of book dealing and intellectual salons in the Egyptian metropolis, a lecture which brought to life the socio-

intellectual circumstances behind what we see today as blurred shreds of papyrus, paper, or parchment.

The last two sessions of the conference shared the issues of canonization and prestige not only of texts, but of the men behind the texts, and their status as cultural leaders and heroes. Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson studied Maimonides' reputation and self-professed aims through a close reading of reflective passages in introductory and other texts, as well as objective documents charting his career not only as a scholar but also a community leader. Similarly, Dr. Zvi Stampfer culled the writings of the halakhic arbiter Shmuel ben Hofni for comments that testify to this Gaon's reputation, reading between the lines to interpret the rhetoric and formulaic codes of this genre. From the world of Jews, the conference turned to Hellas as two classicists presented cases of survival and processes of canonization in the Greco-roman world. Dr. Donna Shalev examined the typically Greek cultural phenomenon of 'first inventor' and its deliberate manipulation as a mechanism for raising (and lowering) the

prestige of cultural heroes. Gabriela Cerra, a doctoral student in classics, presented the case of Cicero's translation into Latin of Aratus' didactic poem on astronomy. Survival, curriculum, translation, commentary, and literary showmanship were all significant factors in preserving the work in its original and through translations.

The two-day conference, whose sessions attracted a wide-ranging audience, was of a very high academic standard, while by and large remaining communicative to audiences from many disciplines; the ongoing long-term and routine discussion of the group members showed its benefits: threads of common argument and terminology wove their way into and out of presentations by scholars from a very wide range of fields and methodologies studying very different corpora of texts and non-textual phenomena. The shared outlook, terms of reference, and mutual rapprochement of models enriched the individual investigations and the cumulative, complex, and heterogeneous picture of Canonization and Genizah.



Education and Religion:

An Evening with the Dinur Center



Top: Dr. Moshe Samet
Middle: Dr. Tamar Elor
Bottom: Prof. Shlomo Deshen

Interest in the bond between history and sociology brought Scholion's research group 'Education and Religion' to hold a joint conference with the Dinur Center for the Study of Jewish History, honoring the recent publication by the Dinur Center of Dr. Moshe Samet's complete works. The conference took place in Yad Ben Zvi before a packed audience.

Dr. Samet pioneered research of the Ultra-orthodox society and paved the way for much of the research taking place in Israel today in this field. The first of the conference's two panels, chaired by Scholion's Prof. Emmanuel Etkes, dealt with Halacha per se and with some of its social manifestations in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Prof. Etkes's doctoral student, Shlomo Tikochinsky, divulged his familiarity with the Lithuanian Yeshivas in mandatory Palestine. Maoz Kahana, illuminated the Hatam Sofer's (1762–1839) view of himself as Halachist, and Dr. Benjamin Brown, described the conjunction of Halachah and modernity during the lives of two great modern Halachists, the Hatam Sofer aforementioned and the Hazon Ish (1878-1953).

Prof. Israel Yuval, Academic Head of Scholion, chaired the conference's second panel, which focused on contemporary sociological-anthropological aspects of orthodox Halacha. Yoske Ahituv's discussion of contemporary religious Zionism's Ultra-orthodox makeover, and Prof. Shlomo Deshen's illustration of the Ultra-Orthodox movement among Oriental Jewry were followed by Dr. Tamar Elor, who synthesized the topics above into a lecture on women of Oriental descent within the current rightward social drift toward orthodoxy and Ultra-Orthodoxy.





Full Circle:

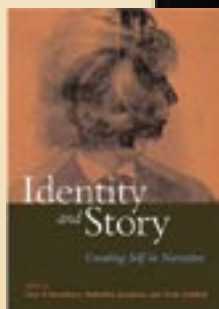
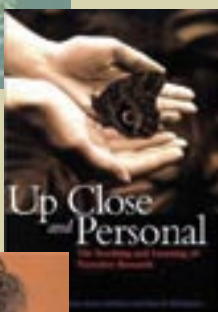
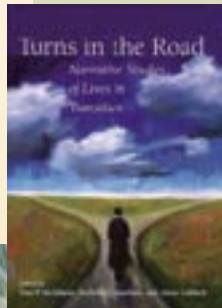


A Profile of Prof. Amia Lieblich

Prof. Amia Lieblich vividly recalls her father waking her in the middle of the night and putting her on his shoulders to join the throngs of people dancing and singing in the courtyard of the Jewish Agency building in Jerusalem. The eve of November 29th 1947 is but one of Lieblich's many vivid memories of the hopeful and trying years of the nascent state. "I think my whole generation lived the life of the emerging nation—its development, its wars, its joys," reminisces Lieblich, the Artery Professor of Personality Studies, due to retire at the end of this year from Hebrew University's Department of Psychology. "It was all part of our personal lives." Born in Tel Aviv in 1939, Lieblich's childhood was divided between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, "depending where my father, an official in the Jewish Agency and then the newly established government, was asked to serve." Lieblich grew up in a strongly Zionist home—her parents made Aliyah from Poland in 1936—and current events were an inseparable part of her upbringing. She recalls standing guard outside her apartment while her father, a member of the Haganah, met with a Lehi

leader in an attempt to ease tensions between the two groups. She also recalls her parents' daily concern for family members during the Holocaust and the relatives who began trickling in from Europe after the war. "Nobody ever tried to hide the truth from us," recalls Lieblich of those difficult years. The young Lieblich went on to study Psychology at the Hebrew University. From her first year there she sensed that the university was her academic abode—"this is where I wanted to stay." She and her late husband were among the first group of doctoral students to march to the amphitheatre—"everything was in ruins"—to receive their degrees at the very first graduation ceremony atop Mount Scopus in 1967. Lieblich eventually moved away from what she calls "conventional research" and embarked on what would become her academic trademark: Qualitative Research, or as she puts it, "the psychology of life stories." Casting an academic eye on Israeli society, Lieblich has written scholarly and investigative studies on the kibbutz, Israeli army and war, as well as family and women in Israel. Of her ten published

books, six became bestsellers in Israel—an unusual, though not always lauded feat in the academic world—and one, *Seder Nashim*, went on to become the basis of a successful theatrical production. The esteemed Professor's most recent work is a pioneering lesson in collective memory and identity, based on an evocative case study which includes 51 life stories as told by second generation descendents of Kfar Ezion survivors. Writing the book while a member of Scholion's first research group, "Canon and Genizah", Lieblich says it was her exposure to the different scholarly perspectives there—"my three years at Scholion were a great gift"—that led her to ask questions she would never have thought of asking and to write a study that she would never have thought of writing. "All of a sudden I was using historical tools and not writing in terms of individual grief and trauma, but from the perception of collective memory," she says. For Lieblich completing this study has brought her full circle. Kfar Etzion fell the day after the establishment of the State. "My father, who had attended the declaration ceremony at the Museum in Tel Aviv, had many friends there who fell defending the kibbutz." Written at the end of her academic career at the Hebrew University, this closure is coupled by Lieblich's upcoming move to Jaffa, not far from where she grew up, to be near her children, grandchildren and life partner, Nahi Alon. Thankful for her many years at the Hebrew University, Lieblich is ready to move on. "Change," she says with a smile, "is always good."



The New Mandel

Postdoctoral Scholars

Dr. Ishay Rosen-Zvi says he can't keep a new idea to himself for more than a couple of minutes. "I just knock on one scholar's door and then another and another," says this energetic Mandel Scholar. A newcomer to the Scholion community, Rosen-Zvi finds himself already very much at home. "In addition to the wonderful material conditions," says Rosen-Zvi, as he looks around his spacious office, "this is a true community of scholars." It is a shame, he laments, that in too many academic institutions scholars work in virtual isolation. "Here, people actually talk to each other."

Born in Tel Aviv in 1971, Rosen-Zvi is new to both the Hebrew University and Jerusalem. He received his doctorate from the Cohen Institute for the History of Ideas at Tel Aviv University, writing his dissertation on the Ritual of the Suspected Adulteress (*Sotah*) in Tannaitic Literature. He spent two years teaching in California, first at Berkley—"which I loved"—and then in Los Angeles, describing his experience there as "an eye-opener." Upon his return to Israel he "immigrated" to Jerusalem to spend a year at the Institute for Jewish Studies as a Lady Davis post-doctorate fellow after which he was awarded a three-year Mandel scholarship. Rosen-Zvi currently has two main projects on his plate. The first is a broad monograph on *Yezer Hara*—the evil inclination—in ancient sources, both Jewish and Christian. Surprised and delighted that it was never done;

Rosen-Zvi hopes to explore how the *Yezer Hara* became one of the most important concepts defining humanity, transforming the human being from an acting into a desiring animal. His other scholarly undertaking is taking him in a very different direction, and involves reexamining the nature of Temple rituals as they are described in Tannaitic literature. While he plans to eventually produce a book based on his dissertation, Rosen-Zvi says he is at present letting the topic simmer.

Dr. Pawel Maciejko's office is just down the hall. Having taken up residence at Scholion the same time as Rosen-Zvi, Maciejko's background could not be more different. His enthusiasm for the research center, however, is one and the same. Maciejko was born in Warsaw in 1971, but feels very much at home in Jerusalem,

whose informality reminds him of Eastern Europe, and at Scholion, where he feels fortunate to have found an academic institution that balances serious scholarship with social interaction. He should know. Maciejko received an M.A. from the University of Warsaw (Philosophy), a second master's (Jewish Studies) and doctorate (Modern History) from Oxford University, did post-doctorate research at the University of Chicago, touching down occasionally at various German and Italian institutions of higher learning, the Vatican not least. He can read texts in Hebrew, English, Aramaic, Yiddish, Polish, German, Russian, French, Italian and Latin. To round out his background, he is currently learning Armenian. Soft-spoken and passionate about what he does, Maciejko has become something of an expert in Frankism, a religious messianic movement that erupted in Poland and spread into the Hapsburg Empire and German lands during the second half of the 18th century. He hopes to finish his first book on the Frankist movement this coming year, before moving on to his next project: Jews and the Freemasons in the 18th century. For Maciejko, who prefers to work in the company of others, Scholion provides a perfect work atmosphere, providing enough intellectual stimulation to keep his academic batteries fully charged.



Dr. Ishay Rosen-Zvi



Dr. Pawel Maciejko



An Educational Trip:

A Visit to the Baha'i Centers in Haifa and Acre

It was like stepping foot in another world. Less than two hours from Mount Scopus, members of Scholion's third research group, 'Education and Religion: Between Tradition and Novelty', as well as other Scholion members, headed north this past November and visited the two sacred centers to the Bahá'i religion in Israel, the Shrine of The Báb and World Center of the Bahá'i Faith in Haifa, with its world-famous terraced gardens, and their quarters in Acre, including the Bahji, the holiest shrine of the Bahá'i.

"Our research group is interested in the relationship between education and religious movements, and in Israel we have so many religious sects

at our fingertips," notes Prof. Michael Heyd, one of the senior members of the group. On the bus trip up, Hebrew University Bahá'i expert and group leader, Prof. Moshe Sharon of the Institute of Asian and African Studies, provided background about the youngest of the world's independent religions. The group toured the gardens in Haifa, taking in its various shrines and administrative buildings whose architecture is curiously reminiscent of classical Greece. Though the holy sites and archives are usually unapproachable by the wide public, the group from Scholion was privileged to be escorted throughout the day by senior Bahá'i officials, including Dr. Albert Lincoln and Mr. Murray Smith, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General respectively of the Baha'i International Community. Prof. Houda Mahmoudi lectured on "Education in the Bahá'i

Communities", captivating her academic audience thereby, whose field of expertise and current research interests rendered them particularly receptive. What the group found especially fascinating, remarks Heyd, was the faith's ability, unguided by a clerical elite to adjust en bloc to the liberal atmosphere of modern society while successfully transmitting traditional values. "The lecture and visit was of the utmost relevance to the group's intellectual concerns," he adds, "and broadened our horizons on issues we deal with on an almost daily basis."



Newsitems

The staff at Scholion wishes the best of luck to two former members who, after three productive years of academic research in Scholion, have chosen to contribute their skills to public service. Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson and his doctoral student, Mr. Ze'ev Elkin were members of Scholion's first triennial research group on 'Canon and Genizah' from 2002–2005, before being offered seats on the list of the political party, "Kadimah".



The first pair of individuals to win the Mandel Scholarships in 2002 have found themselves new academic homes after making the most of their valuable time at Scholion. Dr. Yaron Ben-Naeh, a talented researcher in the Department of the history of the Jewish people, working on Jewish society within Ottoman Metropolis in the 17th century, got a position in the Hebrew University. Dr. Amram Tropper, who came to Israel after winning the Mandel Scholarship, and during his research in Scholion wrote his book; *"Wisdom, Politics, and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East"* was snatched up by Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

Scholion in the World Congress of Jewish Studies



The 14th Congress of Jewish Studies took place in the summer of 2005 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Scholion filled three sessions of the Congress, after a keynote lecture on Jewish studies and Jewish creativity delivered by former member of Scholion, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, who recently replaced Justice Prof. Menahem Elon as President of the World Union of Jewish Studies.

The two first sessions were exclusive to sponsored research in Scholion. The first of these, chaired by Dr. Oded Ir-Shai,

showcased the principal facets of the "Byzantium" research project regarding a comparative study of cultural osmosis between minority and majority cultures with the case of the Jews of Byzantium. The other session, chaired in turn by Prof. Robert Brody, featured another research group by Scholion: the Cairo Genizah and the relevance of its contents to the study of canonicity and canonization phenomena.

The last plenary session in which Scholion was represented dealt with the Structure and organization of the Mishneh Torah by Maimonides, where Prof. Ben-Sasson lectured about interrelationships of authority and text in the canonization of Maimonides.



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