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The Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry

Department Newsletter no. 4 October 2015

This newsletter is being published at a time of change in the leadership of the department, as Prof. Yaron Harel, department chair during the past four years, hands over the reins to his successor, Prof. Kimmy Caplan.

From the Outgoing Department Chair, Prof. Yaron Harel:



This annual newsletter, the fourth of its kind, marks the end of my own fourth and final year as chair of the department. I could have used this opportunity to record all of the achievements and changes that occurred in the department over the past four years, but they were all listed in the past three newsletters. In the following lines I wish

only to give thanks for having the opportunity to serve the department's faculty and student body.

The running of a department is too heavy a load for a single person to bear. For this reason I was fortunate to have the full cooperation of all the members of the department, who readily took on any request. The department changed over these years as new and excellent members joined our ranks and quickly made the department their home. The department office staff, lead by Ms. Cochava Akrabi, did everything that was in their power to make the department a pleasant place in which to work and to study.

The department, however, does not exist in a vacuum, for we are a part of the Faculty of Jewish Studies. The former dean Prof. Eliezer Tauber aided us in the implementation of several needed reforms in the department, both in our curriculum and in the composition of our faculty. Prof. Elie Assis, the present dean, is a loyal friend of our department, and is always prepared to help in any way possible. I am certain that under his leadership, the Faculty, and the department as a part of the Faculty, will achieve even more.

The Faculty, in turn, is part of the greater academic orchestra that is the university, presided over by the rector. I had the good fortune to have spent the past four years with the wonderful cooperation of both the former rector, Prof. Haim Taitelbaum, and the present rector, Prof. Miri Faust. Their understanding of the department's needs and their recognition of its achievements led them to reply favorably to almost any request, and for this I am grateful. The fresh spirit which Prof. Faust has brought to the university will most certainly bring it to its rightful place among the country's institutions of higher learning.

As always, I wish to highlight the generosity of the Koschitzky family, to whom we owe so many of our achievements over the past four years.

And last but not least, to my friend and colleague Prof. Kimmy Caplan, who will stand at the head of the department for the coming years. I am certain that under his leadership the department will solidify its position as the leading department of its type in the academic world, both in size and in the quantity and quality of the research produced by its faculty and graduate students. May you be successful!

The New Department Chair: Prof. Kimmy Caplan:



In the elections that took place towards the end of the last academic year, Professor Kimmy Caplan was elected to chair our department for the coming three years. Kimmy completed his under-graduate and graduate studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and wrote his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Professor Joseph Dan. He began teaching in our department in 1997 following a post-doctoral year at Harvard University. His field of scholarly interest is religious history in Jewish society in the 19th and 20th centuries, and his topics of research include religious trends, popular religion, and sermons and homiletic literature.

Kimmy sent us the following message for this issue:

Dear students of our department, my colleagues, the administrative staff, and readers of this newsletter. My feelings upon beginning this journey as chair of our department are, admittedly, mixed. I am privileged and happy to contribute to the department of which I am a part, and at the same time hesitant of the various challenges and missions which I will face, and primarily saddened by the fact that Professor Yaron Harel is ending his term as chair. Throughout his term, Yaron worked in a transparent and cooperative manner, with much grace and cordiality. He acted in a way that was both understanding and sympathetic, with much sensitivity and determination, always listened carefully, and went out of the way to help and to resolve problems. I will be satisfied if I succeed in accomplishing half of what he did. Yaron, we all owe you many thanks and much gratitude, and I thank you personally for sharing your experience and wisdom with me. Our department faces several challenges in the next few years, and I will mention three of them: replacing several members of our faculty who are retiring with up and coming scholars who will expose our students to the best quality and current challenges of historical research and knowledge, and gain their interest in the rich and unending goldmines of the past; encouraging scholarly originality, excellence, and commitment among our graduate students; and fully incorporating the Contemporary Jewry program into our department. We have a great deal to work on, and I am confident that our faculty will join forces with a view to further advance our department. Chairs come and chairs go, and our excellent administrative staff is always here for us. I very much look forward to working with Cochava Akrabi, department coordinator, and Nicole Messika, departmental secretary, and to be sure - it will very intensive!

I conclude with wishing us all a fruitful, pleasant, challenging, and blessed academic year.

Kimmy Caplan

The Twelfth International Conference on Jewish Names

On March 18, 2015, the Project for the Study of Jewish Names, which has been operating within the department for the past 25 years, held its twelfth international conference. The conference was organized by Prof. Aaron Demsky, head of the Project for the Study of Jewish Names, Dr. Yigal Levin and Dr. Idan Breier of our department, Prof. Ber Kotlerman of the Department of Yiddish Studies and Dr. Tsvi Sadan from the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages. About 30 scholars of Jewish Onomastics from the biblical period through contemporary times participated, including several scholars who arrived from the United States, France, Germany, Spain and Hungary. During part of the day, parallel sessions were held in both Hebrew and in English, in order to allow the participants to discuss the various papers in the language with which they were most comfortable. The different sessions included names in the Bible and in ancient inscriptions, in the various Jewish communities worldwide, in Hebrew literature throughout the ages and in contemporary Israeli society. The central plenary session, which was addressed by university president Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, dean Prof. Elie Assis and department chair Prof. Yaron Harel, included a talk by Israeli poet and social activist Mr. Erez Biton, Bialik Prize Laureate for 2015 and later announced as Israel Prize Laureate for literature as well. Mr. Biton discussed his use of names in his various works.

Besides the well-known scholars who arrived from various countries, we were also happy to include several papers by younger scholars, graduate students and recent PhD's. We believe that their participation in such a conference contributes both to their own development as scholars, and to the conference itself by introducing fresh ideas and approaches. Most of the papers presented at the conference were video-recorded and uploaded to the Bar-Ilan YouTube channel, and a booklet of abstracts in Hebrew and English was available at the conference and also put online.

A conference such as this cannot take place without the aid of many different people and organizations. The organizers would like first of all to thank the project's home, the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry and the department chair Prof. Yaron Harel, for giving us the department's full financial and logistical support. The conference was also supported by the Dahan Center and by the university's vice president for research, the late Prof. Benjamin Ehrenberg, whose untimely death was a shock to us all. Thanks to the members of the department who agreed to act as session chairs, and finally to the department office staff Ms. Cochava Akrabi and Ms. Nicole Messika for all of their help both before and during the conference.



Prof. Asher Ovadia speaking on Jewish Names in the Cave of Elijah



The Twelfth International Conference on Jewish Names

Retiring Faculty: Professor Dan Michman



Prof. Dan Michman, one of our most respected and beloved faculty members, is retiring this year. Before doing so, Prof. Michman answered a few of our questions.

Danny, could you tell us a little about your academic career prior to your arrival at our department?

During my high school years in Jerusalem I became very interested in ancient Jewish history. I participated in archaeological digs at Tel Arad under Yochanan Aharoni (a Bronze-Age game board I found is on display at the Israel Museum) and at Masada under Yigael Yadin. I was also interested in ancient languages and inscriptions. So when I began my studies at the Hebrew University in 1967, fresh out of the army, I enrolled in the departments of Hebrew and Semitic Languages. However, the advanced courses in Ge'ez and in Syriac that I "fell into" convinced me that I was in over my head and I soon transferred to the department of Jewish History, remaining in Hebrew Language as well.

As I advanced towards my degree in history, I gradually drifted from the ancient period to the modern. I also took some courses in Medieval Jewish History, in one of which I met Bruria, who later became my wife. I went straight into graduate school, and when the university approved the direct PhD track, I signed up. Since I had already written a couple of papers on Dutch Jewry (one of which was later published and is still being used by my colleague Prof. Shmuel Feiner to this day!), I wanted to write my dissertation on Dutch Jewry as well, and to go to Holland to conduct research. The chair of Jewish History at the time, Prof. Shmuel Ettinger, convinced me to write about Jews in the diamond trade in 17th and 18th century Amsterdam, London and Antwerp, and assigned Dr. Isaiah Shachar, an expert on Jewish art and Hasidism, as my advisor. So I went off to Holland with a pregnant wife and a child, and managed to find teaching positions in the university and in the local rabbinical seminary. After several months of trying to read unreadable archival documents I realized that this project would take forever to complete, and I began looking for a new dissertation topic. My father suggested that I research the Jewish refugees who came to Holland after the rise of the Nazis in Germany in 1933. I received the support of Prof. Lou de Jong, director of the Royal Dutch Institute for the Documentation of World War II (Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie). Dr. Shachar continued as my advisor, but after he left the Hebrew University I was assigned to Dr. Abraham Margalit, who I flew to Israel to meet for the first time, as a second advisor. Dr. Shachar passed away in 1976 at the age of 47, and I submitted my dissertation of over 500 pages, which was approved within four months.

By the way, my research on Jews in the diamond industry was not totally wasted. I published a short article in the local Jewish paper, based on a legal document from 1616. The first documented Jew in the industry was a man who pushed the huge stone used to crush the rough diamonds, and he worked with a non-Jewish woman. Their work together caused her to become pregnant, for which she sued him in court...

How and when did you arrive in our department?

In late 1974, while still in Holland, I began applying to the various universities in Israel, hoping to land a position in modern Jewish history. But in that year Prof. Meir Dworzecki, the founder of Holocaust studies in Bar-Ilan, passed away, and the department

chair, Prof. Moshe Beer, who I knew from my childhood in Rehavia, wanted to hire a young Holocaust scholar, and chose me. I began teaching here in 1976, and have been here ever since.

Who would you consider to have had the greatest influence on your academic work?



You could say that the greatest influence on my career was my father, the late Joseph Michman. He helped me choose my dissertation topic, referred me to documents and helped me with my language skills. We also wrote a book together for Yad Vashem, *Pinkas Hakehillot: The Netherlands*, which was published in Hebrew in 1985 and was translated into Dutch, became a best-seller, and is a basic textbook for the study of Dutch Jewry, including in high schools, to this day.

In the area of Holocaust studies I made my own way, since I did not study under any of the known Holocaust scholars. I did study under Professors Otto Dov Kulka and George Mosse and was influenced by a seminar on modern nationalism given by Prof. Jacob Talmon. I was in contact with Prof. Uriel Tal, a scholar of anti-Semitism and Nazism. At Bar-Ilan, I developed an ongoing relationship with Prof. Zvi Bacharach, and in our department, with Professors Mordechai Eliav, Nathaniel Katzburg, Mordechai Breuer and Simon Schwarzfuchs. I would not say that they had a direct influence on my research, but I did learn from them. Prof. Breuer once taught me that “the greatest enemy of a book is an article”, and he was right! I spent several years working with Prof. Katzburg at the Institute for Holocaust Studies, who helped me understand the Hungarian Haredim. I had especially close ties to Prof. Yehoshua Kaniel, and together we organized a department trip to Poland in 1987, still during the Communist era. He took me to the village of Popów, where he had hidden for two years as a child during the Holocaust.

The things that most influenced my academic path were my training in languages, my interest in the theoretical aspects of historiography, which at the time were ignored in Israeli universities, and the invitation I received in 1979 from the Open University to write a comprehensive course on the Holocaust. This task, which took me over ten years to complete, forced me to deal with basic questions about the

Holocaust, and together with questions raised by students at our university, was the source of a good many articles that I later published.

What, in your opinion, has been your most important contribution to the study and the teaching of the Holocaust?

That is a question that you should ask others, since I’m hardly objective. But I do think that I have made some contributions. From the beginning I believed that Bar-Ilan was the place at which to develop a critical, academic view of the question of religious Judaism in the Holocaust. Until the late 1970’s there was only a limited number of studies on the reaction of rabbis and religious thinkers to the Holocaust. I thought that the topic should be treated like any other: to examine the Nazis’ policy on religion, the daily religious behavior of the Jews, the prayers that were composed, the real-time reactions – using letters and other contemporary sources. My initial lectures on this topic were met with extreme criticism, because I ruined the ideal view that was held by some people, but over time my approach came to be accepted, and I’m happy to have caused that change. In 1986 I organized the first international conference on “Religious Judaism and Religious Thought during and after the Holocaust”, and while I’m sorry to say that the proceedings were never published, they are archived at the Institute for Holocaust Studies.

Another contribution of mine has been in the field of historical theory, as it relates to the study of the Holocaust. My book *Holocaust Historiography: A Jewish Perspective. Conceptualizations, Terminology, Approaches and Fundamental Issues* was published in six languages and is used worldwide. The proceedings of a conference that I organized at Yad Vashem in 2004, co-edited together with the late David Bankier, is also a basic text in the field. These books are a part of the ongoing dispute with genocide scholars over the unique character of the Holocaust.

In 1989 I organized an international conference on the Holocaust in Belgium, a topic which had been overlooked even in Belgium; the proceedings that I edited and the volume on Belgium in Yad Vashem’s *Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations* are now the basic resources on this subject.

My research into the memory of the Holocaust in Israel made me aware of the initial stages of the post-Zionist movement. My first article on this was in the journal of the Meimad movement in 1994, which I later expanded into a 600-page collection

of newspaper items on the Holocaust in post-Zionist thought. This collection has become a basic resource on the history of post-Zionism.

One final thing. In the late 1970’s I was asked by the Open University to develop a comprehensive course on the Holocaust, which came out in 1985 under the title of *Days of Holocaust and Reckoning*. Since that time it has been taken by thousands of students, and I know that sections of it have been used by colleagues in universities and colleges as well. This course was translated into Spanish, Russian and Ukrainian, and since most of the literature on the Holocaust has not been translated, this book enables readers in those languages to study the Holocaust as well. This fills me with satisfaction.

What would you consider to be your crowning achievement of your work in the department?

I served as department chair in 1992-1995, and during my term our enrollment rose to an all-time record of 140-150 new undergraduates every year! However I do not think that this had anything to do with my actions, but more with the general atmosphere of the time, just as the drastic decline of recent years is not the “fault” of the department heads since my time.

So, looking back, I think that there are two related things that I have contributed to the department. When I arrived in the department, the general attitude was that of a college: our task was to train teachers and people who were interested in history. The idea that the task of a research university was to train scholars was not considered to be our main job, even though we had quite a few top scholars in the department. One of them – I’ll refrain from naming him – said that “our main job is to train teachers”. My generation of faculty members considered its task to be the development of a more research-oriented critical approach, and the encouraging of students to continue their studies. I think that the increased number of graduate students in the department shows that we were successful.

In this context, I’m especially proud of the many masters and doctoral students that I have advised over the years, especially when their work has been published and has earned much respect. I have supervised over forty students so far, and there are still quite a few on the way.

What would you like to see happen to the area of Holocaust studies in the department after your retirement?

I am actually quite worried. There are actually less people in Israeli universities

who are dealing with what I call “core Holocaust” (the Holocaust itself – the 1930’s and 40’s), although there is an increase in those dealing with the aftermath and the memory of the Holocaust. The reasons for this are decreasing budgets, lack of students and also lack of language abilities. As a result, Israel is losing its place as the world leader in Holocaust studies, and I consider this to be a disgrace.

I fear that because of budgetary problems, the university will not appoint a replacement for my position. I know that both the outgoing department chair and the new chair very much want to find someone, and that both the dean and the rector are sympathetic, but conditions are difficult. I hope that they will find a way. In any case, I’m still willing to help in any way I can.

What are your plans for the near future?

Besides my position at Bar-Ilan I also serve as head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem. This is a very intensive job: organization of conferences, workshops and seminars, research projects, a fellowship program, support of graduate students, publication of books and journals and so on. Because of the internationally high profile of Yad Vashem and of Holocaust studies, people turn to us in all sorts of matters.

Personally, I’m working on two books: one on the terminology of the Holocaust and its relationship to genocide, and the other on the Judenrat phenomenon. I also owe Yad Vashem a book on the Holocaust in Belgium.

In general, I’m not worried. In our profession, there is life after retirement. An example of this is the important historian Jacob Katz: not many remember that his groundbreaking *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* was published when he was 55, and that most of his important work was published even later – until he was 94. I can only hope...

Professor Michman, we thank you for all of this, and wish you many more years of contribution to the field of Holocaust studies.



On December 1-3 2015, the department, in cooperation with Yad Vashem, held an international conference in honor of Professor Dan Michman, on the occasion of his retirement. Colleagues and students from our department and from other institutions in Israel and abroad presented papers on the various areas with which Prof. Michman has dealt, including historiography and historical thought, religious life during the Holocaust and the memory of the Holocaust.

A full description of the conference will appear in the next newsletter.

Visit to the Sarona Compound

On December 21, which was the fifth day of Hanukkah, the department faculty toured the recently-renovated Sarona complex. The tour was led by department graduate and leading tour guide Ilan Shchori, who is a specialist in the history of Tel Aviv. The members learned about the establishment of the Sarona colony by the German Templers in 1871 and its history until its disbandment by the British during the Second World War, and the various events that occurred there from the establishment of the State of Israel until the opening of the shopping and entertainment complex that now occupies the site. After the tour the participants went to a nearby restaurant for a festive department meeting.



Department members touring the Sarona compound in Tel Aviv

History and Halakha at Kibbutz Lavi

On the weekend of Shabbat Parashat Va'era (Jan. 17, 2015), several members of the department participated in a weekend lecture series on Halakha and history at Kibbutz Lavi. Professor Emmanuel Friedheim examined rabbinic attitudes toward Greek and Roman culture. Dr. Debra Kaplan discussed the shifting ways that rabbis in medieval and early modern Europe conceived of working women, and how their attitudes were shaped by contemporary Christian norms. Professor Kimmy Caplan explored the sources of stringent halakhic rulings, and discussed their impact on the wider community. In a roundtable led by Professor Yaron Harel, who also contrasted what participants learned over the weekend with halakhic decisions rendered by Sephardic rabbis in the modern period, the faculty engaged in a lively discussion about how historians use halakhic sources to write history, and how halakhic decisions were impacted by historical events. The long weekend also included a performance by the Gevatron choir and a guided excursion to the Old City of Safed. Approximately 70 people participated in the weekend, and a wonderful time was had by all.

Prof. Yaron Harel
lecturing at Kibbitz Lavi



“Domestic Devotions” conference at Cambridge

In July 2015, an international conference on Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World was held in Cambridge, England. Dr. Debra Kaplan, one of three keynote speakers, discussed the wide range of activities that took place in early modern homes, and demonstrated the central role that Jewish ritual played for both men and women’s activities within the home. Dr. Dotan Arad lectured on synagogues that were situated in Jewish homes in the Ottoman Empire. While visiting Cambridge, the two faculty members also visited the university library, which houses the Taylor-Schechter Geniza Research Unit, where Dr. Arad has conducted much of his research. There, they looked



at some of the materials from the Cairo Geniza, including autographs of Maimonides and medieval schoolbooks for children.

Dr. Debra Kaplan and Dr. Dotan Arad with a letter by Maimonides

The Words of Gad the Seer by Prof. Meir Bar-Ilan

This year saw the publication of *The Words of Gad the Seer* by Prof. Meir Bar-Ilan, culminating over 34 years of research. The book is based on a manuscript copied about 250 years ago in Cochin, India, and brought to the library in Cambridge around 1800. The present edition is a scholarly edition of the ancient text, but also includes maps, drawings, timelines and introductions that are aimed at the lay reader as well. Angels of God accompany the reader on his journey through the text.

The Words of Gad the Seer is an apocryphal book that was lost over the ages. It is written in pseudo-biblical Hebrew, with chapters, verses and a Mesorah of its own. The name of God is spelled out. It is written as the revelation of a prophet, and is basically an anthology of stories about King David, as well as one chapter about his daughter Tamar. The biblical quotations reflect knowledge of a biblical text that is different from the Mesoretic Text, and includes the "lost" 14th verse of Psalm 145: "All your enemies, O Lord, have fallen, and all of their might is lost".

All of Jewish history is reflected in this tale of exile in Yemen and in India, a story of survival and theology, mysticism and apocalypse. An ancient and secret prophecy will take the reader to enchanted places and times.



יבני בראשקוב – מאבק בין המלאך מיכאל למלאך סמאל

Illustration by Yevgeni Brashkov from *The Words of Gad the Seer*



Dr. Michel Boeglin –Guest Scholar from France

Dr. Michel Boeglin is Senior Lecturer of Spanish Literature and Civilization at Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier (France). His research is related to the history of cultural and religious minorities in 16th century Spain. During

December 2014-January 2015 he was at our department as part of the EDEN - Erasmus MunDus AcadEmic Network. He is presently working, in collaboration with Prof. Moises Orfali, on a biography and a study of the works of Constantino de la Fuente, Jewish-descendant theologian and royal preacher, who played a central role in the confessional debate in the mid-16th century in Spain.

Oxford Summer Institute for Modern and Contemporary Judaism 2015

The second annual Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism (OSI-MCJ) took place from June 29 – July 7, 2014 in Oxford, UK. This framework, which is under the auspices of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, an affiliate of University of Oxford, is intended to cultivate innovative and challenging academic perspectives that have the potential to influence broader thinking about contemporary Judaism. The OSI-MCJ is co-convened by Prof. Adam Ferziger of Bar-Ilan's Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry and Dr. Miri Freud-Kandel of Oxford.

The 2015 OSI-MCJ was titled "State and Spirit: The Impact of Sovereignty on Judaism", and examined the relationship between Jewish sovereignty and the varied paths of Judaism as a living religion which has developed over the past sixty-seven years. The goal was not to focus on the political relations between Israel and other Jewish communities, but on the diverse ways that key aspects of Jewish religious culture and practice have evolved in response to the growth of the modern Jewish state.



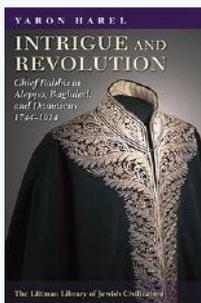
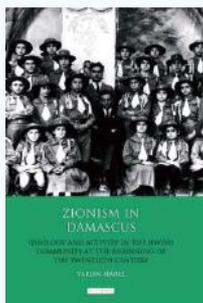
Nineteen outstanding scholars from Israel, Germany, Hungary, the USA and the UK joined together for this intensive nine-day seminar. Prominent among them were Prof.

Yoram Bilu of the

Departments of Anthropology and Psychology at the Hebrew University and 2013 Israel Prize winner; Leora Batnizky of the Department of Religion at Princeton University; Prof. Aryeh Edrei of Tel Aviv University Law School; Prof. Tamar Ross of the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University; Prof. David Myers of the Department of History at UCLA; Prof. Nomi Stolzenberg of USC Law School; Dr. Zsafia Kata Vincze of the Department of Sociology at ELTE University in Budapest; Prof. Dalia Marx of the Department of Jewish Liturgy at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. The presentations were prepared in advance as written academic articles which were distributed to all the participants for reading prior to the Institute itself. At each session, other experts among the group offered formal responses to the papers, followed by an open discussion in which comments from all the attendees were invited. All of the sessions were digitally voice recorded.

At the conclusion of the Institute, one of the participants expressed an exceedingly positive impression of the quality of the research and discussions, and generously proposed that an entire issue of the academic journal for which they serve as co-editor-in-chief be dedicated to written versions of the 2015 OSI-MCJ presentations. The authors are currently revising their initial contributions for publication.

Two Books by Prof. Yaron Harel



On 13.5.2015 a ceremony was held at the Shazar Center in Jerusalem to mark the publication of *Damascus Temporarily in Our Hands: Zionism in Damascus 1908-1923*. In a separate ceremony at the President's residence,

Prof. Harel gave President Reuven Rivlin a copy of his new book. Meanwhile, another book by Prof. Harel, *Intrigue and Revolution: Chief Rabbis in Aleppo, Baghdad, and Damascus, 1744-1914*, was published by the Littman Library of Jewish Studies in London.

Research Group on Sephardic Rabbis and General Education

An inter-university and interdisciplinary research group, funded by the Israeli Centers of Research Excellence (I-CORE) and the department and led by Prof. Yaron Harel and Prof. Zvi Zohar, met every two weeks to discuss the Sephardic rabbis who were open to secular education and to the world of general knowledge. The group included 14 scholars from Bar-Ilan, the Hebrew University, the University of Haifa, Tel Aviv University, the Open University and the Efrata and Talpiot Colleges and dealt with a wide geographical range, from Morocco to the Caucasus. Each session included a lecture and lively and fruitful discussion.

The Departmental Seminar in memory of Prof. Yehoshua Kamiel

During the 2014-2015 academic year, our weekly seminar hosted a large variety of speakers from Israel and abroad. The lectures all reflected innovative research on Jewish history in all periods, from biblical times to the present. We marked the opening the academic year with a lecture by Prof. Moshe Rosman, who presented the different narratives of several important museums for the history of the Jews around the world. In a special event we hosted Israel Prize laureate Prof. Anita Shapira of Tel Aviv University, who spoke on "the culture of silence and its implications". We had several lectures on the history of the Jews of Yemen. Dr. Yoel Finkelman reviewed new activities at the National Library in Jerusalem, and we hosted writer Yitzhak Goren, who spoke about the relationship between literature and history. We had a lecture by Prof. Yifat Weiss, as part of the annual lecture of the Samuel Braun Chair for the History of the Jews in Prussia. Other lectures dealt with issues such as art and history, Holocaust studies, sects and religious groups and more. As part of our weekly seminar we held several prize awarding ceremonies: the Klar, Shmuelevich and Churgin prizes were awarded to several outstanding research students in the department.

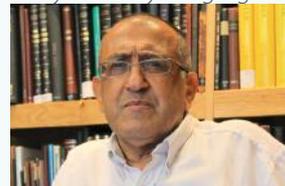
Towards the end of the academic year we held an event in the memory of our late colleague Dr. Efraim Ya'akov, who passed away during the year. This event was attended by family members and some of his friends and colleagues talked about Efraim and his academic achievements.

The Seminar was coordinated by Dr. Uriel Gelman. In the coming academic year we will change the format of the

seminar: instead of holding weekly sessions we will meet several times each semester. We are confident that our seminar will continue to be a most important platform for innovations in Jewish history and Contemporary Jewry.

In Memoriam: Dr. Efraim Ya'akov ז"ל

On March 31, 2015, our colleague Dr. Efraim Ya'akov passed away at the young age of 62. Efraim was born to a family of



olim from Al-Hujariah in Yemen, and grew up in Nahariah. He completed his academic degrees in the departments of History and of Philosophy in the Hebrew University, working as an assistant to the late Prof. Yeshayahu

Leibowitz. He wrote his master's and doctoral theses on Kabbalah among the Jews of Yemen under Prof. Moshe Idel. In addition to his academic studies, he also studied under two of the most prominent Yemenite rabbis in Israel, Mori Yosef Kapah and Mori Haim Yihya Sinwani.

Much of his academic and public career was dedicated to the preservation, documentation and recording of the heritage of the Jews of Al-Hujariah, traveling from community to community and recording piyyutim, prayers and stories. In addition, Efraim researched the history of Sephardic and Yemenite Jews worldwide, the history of science among Middle-Eastern Jews, and the writings of the Hida – Rabbi Haim Yosef David Azulai, a leading 18th century Jerusalem rabbi, Kabbalist and historian. Efraim wrote and edited over 15 books on various subjects, was an advisor to the Ministry of Education and an editor on Israel Radio, and taught at the Hebrew University, the Open University and the colleges of Moreshet Yaakov, Ashkelon and Ariel.

During his years at our department, Efraim was known as one of the more popular instructors, with classes that were always full, attracting students from all over the university. He also continued to produce academic works, and was often first to enter the building in the morning and last to leave in the evening.

On Wednesday, June 10, 2015, a special session of the departmental seminar was dedicated to Efraim's memory. The session was chaired by Prof. Yaron Harel, who spoke for the department. These opening remarks were followed by Prof. Moshe Idel, Prof. Meir Bar-Asher and Dr. Avraham Elkayam, each of whom presented a different aspect of Efraim Ya'akov's life and work.

May his memory be blessed and may he serve as an inspiration for us all.

Outstanding Students

Anatoly Mishaev

is writing his PhD dissertation on "The Ideological Motives Behind Claims of an Ethnic and Cultural Relationship between Turks and Jews", under the guidance of Prof. Yaron Harel and Prof. Dan Shapira. This year he received the rector's prize for excellence.

Maayan Ben-Meir and Gavriel Cohen

received the rector's prize for excellence, in a ceremony held on June 10, 2015.

Moriah Herman

received the Nathan and Brachah Shmuelovich prize, and lectured at the Department Seminar on "The Role of Youth among Polish Hasidim between the Two World Wars".

Moriah Herman at the Shmuelovich Prize ceremony



Gaon Prize to PhD Student Lilach Turjeman

In a ceremony held on 28.4.2015 at Ben-Gurion University, Lilach received the award from the Sentro



Moshe David Gaon de Kultura Djudeo-Espanyola. The prize was awarded to Lilach in recognition of her dissertation on Rabbi Natan Amram, a 19th century descendant of Spanish Jews, who was an emissary of the Jewish community of Hebron and later served as chief rabbi of Alexandria. Rabbi Amram's life is representative of the changes that occurred in the Jewish communities of Eretz Yisrael and worldwide during this period. This paper, written under the supervision of Prof. Aharon Gaimani, is the first to deal with the life of Rabbi Amram.

Field Trips to Biblical Sites

The students in Dr. Yigal Levin's classes continued to tour biblical-period sites throughout the country. This year they visited the Philistine cities of Ashdod and Ekron, the sites of Shiloh and the Benjamin region, Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley and the Negev sites of Arad and Beer-Sheva. These trips bring alive the material learned in class, and add a learning and social experience to our department's curriculum.



A visit to Tel Azekah, overlooking the Elah Valley.

Publications by Department Graduates

Many of our graduates continue with their research after completing their degrees. The following books have been published by department graduates:

Dr. Ilan Fuchs

completed his dissertation on "Torah Study and Women's Role in the Halachic-Legal Process" under the guidance of Professor Kimmy Caplan and Professor Amichai Radzyner. He is currently a Visiting Scholar in the Frankel Institute for Jewish Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. His book, *Jewish Women's Torah Study: Orthodox Religious Education and Modernity*, was published this year by Routledge. The book surveys the entire array of Orthodox responses to women's Torah study.



Dr. Ilan Fuchs

Dr. Aryeh Rona

who is also a brigadier general (res.) in the Israeli navy, completed his dissertation on "Maritime perception of the Jews in the Land of Israel and Diaspora from the Hasmonean period to the Talmudic era" under the guidance of Prof. Emmanuel Friedheim. His book *To the Sea: The Jews and the Mare Nostrum* was published by "Hotsa'at Hasfarim" in 2015.



Brig. Gen. (res.) Dr. Aryeh Rona

Dr. Michal Shaul's

book *Beauty for Ashes: Holocaust Memory and the Rehabilitation of the Ultraorthodox Society in Israel, 1945–1961* was published this year by Yad Ben-Zvi and Yad Vashem. The book follows the Haredi Holocaust survivors in Israel and examines their part in the formation of Haredi society after the Holocaust. The book is based on a dissertation written under the guidance of Prof. Dan Michman and Prof. Kimmy Caplan and which was awarded several prestigious prizes, including the Halpern Award for Best Dissertation in Israel Studies and the Lvinger Award for Best Dissertation in Holocaust Studies. After completing her dissertation Dr. Shaul founded the Amital Center for the Study of the Holocaust at the Herzog College of Education.



Beauty for Ashes by Dr. Michal Shaul

Faculty News

Prof. David Malkiel

was promoted to the rank of Full Professor.



Dr. Dotan Arad

gave several presentations at international conferences: on Jerusalem at King's College in London, on the Mamelukes in Bonn, on domestic devotions at Cambridge and on the Geniza at Haifa.

Prof. Yehi'am Vaitz

In a ceremony that took place in Tel Aviv in May, Prof. Yehi'am Vaitz received the Jabotinsky Prize for Research for his book *From Zeev Jabotinsky to Menahem Begin: A Collection of Articles on the Revisionist Movement*, published in 2012 by Magnes.

Prof. Shmuel Feiner

as head of the Leo Baeck Institute, participated in events held in Jerusalem and in Berlin to mark the institute's sixtieth anniversary, and was re-elected as the institute's international vice president. This year also saw the publication of *The Library of the Haskalah, The Creation of a Modern Republic of Letters in Jewish Society in the German-Speaking Sphere*, edited by Shmuel Feiner, Zohar Shavit et al., which summarizes a wide-ranging research project funded by the German-Israel Fund (GIF) and the Leo Baeck Institute.



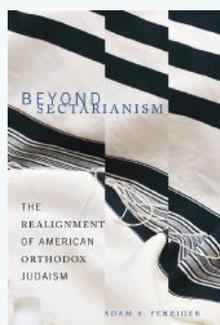
Prof. Shmuel Feiner, Prof. Kimmy Caplan and Prof. Yaron Harel

were elected this year as members of the board of the Israel Historical Society, making up one quarter of the members of the board.



Prof. Adam Ferziger

was named to the S.R. Hirsch Chair for Research of the Torah with Derekh Erez Movement. Additionally, 2015 saw the publication of his new book, *Beyond Sectarianism: The Realignment of American Orthodox Judaism*, Wayne State University Press.



Dr. Uriel Gelman

won a research grant from the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) for the research project: "The Belz-Munkatsh Controversy: Jewish Orthodox Fundamentalism in the Inter-War Period". The study will focus on the ideological and political struggle that has developed between these two Hasidic courts after the First World War. The detailed description of this dispute is a test case for understanding the development of Jewish Ultraorthodox ideology in the interwar period.

Dr. Debra Kaplan

was awarded a three-year ISF grant to support her work on charity and communities in Germany. Analyzing diverse sources about Jewish charity as a window into Jewish communal life, she is writing about power, gender, and class in the early modern Jewish communities of Frankfurt am Main, Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbeck, and Worms. Her work looks comparatively at Jewish and Christian donation patterns.

Dr. Yigal Levin

is one of the founding members of "The Minerva Center for the Relations between Israel and Aram in Biblical Times" (RIAB), headed jointly by Prof. Aren Maeir of Bar-Ilan and Prof. Angelika Berlejung of the University of Leipzig, and including several additional members from Israel and Germany. An initial conference was held in Leipzig in October 2014, with another conference planned for June of 2016. Several workshops are planned for the 2015/16 academic year, and four outstanding doctoral students have received the Bar-Ilan President's stipend through the center.

Prof. Dan Michman

became a member of the academic board of the New-York based ISGAP - Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy. He also chaired the organizing committee of and international conference on "All of Israel are Responsible for One Another? Ideals and Reality During the Shoah" as well as a workshop on "Non-Jewish Jews During the Shoah", both held at Yad Vashem.

Prof. Moises Orfali

was appointed a member of the Spanish Royal Academy.

Prof. Moshe Rosman

was chosen as one of the editors of the journal "Zion", and ended an 11-year term as member of the Rothschild Scholarship committee. His proposal for a research group on the cultural wealth of Jewish Woman was accepted by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem and will commence in 2017. Prof. Rosman was invited this year to lecture at universities in Halle, Toronto and Warsaw.