

From the Department Chair, Prof. Kimmy Caplan:

Dear Students, Administrative and Academic Staff, and Readers,



We are well into the academic year and many thoughts run through my mind. Successes, failures, challenges, and lost opportunities during the past year; dreams and expectations for the year we just started. There is one aspect I am grateful for every day: the privilege of working with the administrative and academic staff of the department and to serve them, the privilege to learn with you, our dear students, and to try and provide a friendly and challenging atmosphere of learning.

The recognition of our department as one that offers quality studies in Jewish History is evident in the continuing increase in the quality of our students and of those who wish to join in and study with us. Three of our doctoral students received President's Scholarships, one who completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in our department, one who studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and another who joined us from Berlin's Humboldt University. In addition, several graduate students from the United States and from Europe joined us this year – welcome to all!

Another aspect of the high academic and scholarly profile of our department is the achievements and presence of our faculty members on the academic scene. Dear students, you should know that members of our faculty are present and active in the full and wide range of academic activities, and they have a professional reputation both in Israel and internationally. For a few of many examples, several have received sizeable research grants and awards of excellence for books they published, many lecture regularly in international scholarly forums, and some have served and continue to serve as members of national and international committees, as well as editorial boards of scientific journals and academic presses.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to the Koschitzky family who founded the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Fund that enables us to support a wide range of scholarly activities, and to assist graduate students in many different ways.

We work on a daily basis with the Dean, Professor Elie Assis, and with his team at the Dean's office, with the School for Advanced Studies, with the Research Authority, and with many other offices throughout the university. We thank them all for their cooperation and assistance. This work is carried out by the administrative staff of our department that is led by Cohava Akrabi, and assisted by Maria Eniukhina and, until recently, by Nicole Messika. They conduct this intensive work mostly behind the scenes, and it is to their credit that we can promote academic activities. Nicole retired at the end of the year, and I wish to thank her for her many years of service to the department, and to welcome Pazit Goldstein to the team. Aliza Heiman continues to devote time and energies to our website and Facebook page, and thanks to her efforts, they are active and up to date.

Three of our faculty members retired this year, and we sadly bid them farewell: Gershon Bacon and Moshe Rosman who taught Jewish History for several decades, and Zvi Zohar who taught in the Contemporary Jewry Program. We wish them many years of good health and happiness. We held an international conference in honor of Profs. Bacon and Rosman on November 7-9, and on January 1 there will be a conference honoring Zvi Zohar. All the details are available on the department website and Facebook page.

We are living in an era of decline in the humanities, that are subject to criticism, at times severe, from within universities and beyond them. Dear students, your choice in us is of special significance and is obligating. I am committed to doing what I can so that your studies will be a challenging, interesting, meaningful, and enlightening experience.

Finally, I thank Yigal Levin for producing this newsletter, and wish us all a happy and blessed year!

Kimmy Caplan

Retiring Faculty

This year our department bade farewell to three retiring faculty members: Professors Gershon Bacon and Moshe Rosman, both long-time members of the department and both experts on Eastern European Jewry, and Prof. Zvi Zohar, an expert on Middle Eastern Jewry and on the legal aspects of Jewish communal life, who joined our department as part of the program for Contemporary Jewry. As the department chair wrote in his greetings, the department will hold conferences in their honor. In this issue, we chose to interview Professors Bacon and Rosman. We hope to include an interview with Prof. Zohar in the next issue.

Interview with Professor Gershon Bacon in honor of his retirement:



Prof. Bacon, could you please tell us something about your family background?

I was born in Philadelphia, a third generation American whose grandparents came to the US before World War I from what is today Ukraine. My childhood was very typical of American Jews of the postwar baby boom generation, my father a veteran of World War II and a businessman, my mother a housewife and active volunteer in our local synagogue. My education was in public schools, supplemented by Hebrew school and Hebrew high school. In my entire extended family on both sides, only one uncle graduated college, and thus I and my sisters and cousins were the first generation to go to college. Thinking back, already at the age of twelve or so I had thoughts of becoming a historian, although there was a period in high school when I seriously considered a career in medicine. I was even accepted to a five-year medical program, but (to the disappointment of many relatives) I decided in the end to pursue a career in academia and in the humanities.

You began your academic studies at the University of Pennsylvania in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, and when you moved to New York, studying at Columbia and simultaneously at JTS, you moved into the study of Polish Jewry. How did this occur?

I was extremely fortunate to study at Penn with Prof. Moshe Greenberg, a master of Biblical studies and a pedagogue of the highest order (a year after I graduated and right before he made Aliyah, Greenberg won an award as one of the best college teachers in the US). I had no intention of going into Biblical studies or Assyriology, but with the great staff at Penn I received a wonderful grounding in textual studies, as well as rigorous training in Hebrew and Arabic. Some years later, when the Encyclopedia Judaica was being written, Greenberg recommended me to the editors, and I even wrote several entries on Biblical subjects towards the end of the project. I studied with several professors in the Religious Thought department at Penn, and also took many courses in European and American history. My ultimate intention was to go to Columbia for

graduate school in Jewish history to study with Prof. Gerson Cohen, and to specialize in medieval Jewry under Islam, which was Cohen's field of expertise. It was Cohen who, in his very persuasive manner and practically from our first meeting, influenced me to change direction and study East European Jewry, which he felt was a generally neglected field and for which he thought I was eminently suited. Evidently, he saw something in me that I did not yet realize. Thus I made the switch early in my graduate studies, and have never regretted it since, although it meant learning Yiddish, Polish and Russian.

Who were the teachers who most influenced you academically?

In every institution in which I studied, I was fortunate to find mentors who influenced me greatly, beginning with my high school history teacher, and several Jewish educators who instilled in me a love for the Hebrew language. As mentioned before, at Penn, there was Moshe Greenberg. In my studies in those same years at Gratz College, I managed to study with some of the best of the last generation of Maskilim in America, and had the experience of studying Bible, history, Talmud and Jewish thought, all taught in Hebrew. When I later came on Aliyah, people were a bit surprised when I had no problem going into the classroom at Bar-Ilan and teaching in Hebrew, but I had been used to it from years of studying at Gratz and later teaching at JTS, which also had a tradition in undergraduate courses of *ivrit-be-ivrit*. At Columbia, Gerson Cohen was my mentor. He taught me the meaning of reading an historical text in depth, and gave his students the courage to ask any question and raise any theory, as long as they could back it up with evidence. I was also blessed with a fine teacher and mentor in Polish history, Prof. Andrzej Kaminski, who had just come to the States, and who gave me the best possible introduction to general Polish history. At the same time, I was also exposed to the excellent faculty at JTS, and developed a particularly close relationship with Prof. David Weiss Halivni, a relationship that continues to this day. In addition to my formal doctoral studies, I also had the advantage of working with several of the scholars connected to the Yivo Institute, most notably Prof. Lucjan Dobroszycki, who gave me an introduction to archival work on Polish Jewry. It was

at Yivo that I also had the opportunity to study with some of the previous generation's greatest scholars of East European Jewry: Raphael Mahler, Dov Sadan and Chone Shmeruk.

I assume that the decision to make Aliyah stemmed from a number of reasons. How did that decision influence your academic career? How did you get to Bar-Ilan?

My wife and I had been to Israel many times in the past, and the idea of Aliyah was on our "radar", but did not seem realistic. I was finishing up my doctorate and teaching at JTS, and had even had an offer to move over to Yeshiva University. Serious thought about Aliyah began when we were on a sabbatical in Israel in the 1980-1981 academic year, when I made a series of inquiries with the history departments at the various universities in Israel about the possibility of joining their faculty. To my good fortune, Prof. Mordecai Eliav of Bar-Ilan met with me and within a very short time after our initial meeting offered me a job. I had known Prof. Eliav earlier from our participation in the faculty forum sponsored by the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. Now for my wife and myself the opportunity for making Aliyah and having an academic career in Israel was a real option, and with some hesitation but general enthusiasm we accepted his kind offer. The rest, as we say, is history. We have both been privileged to make our careers in Israeli academia and raise our family in Israel. We may have been first generation holders of university degrees, but between our children and sons and daughters-in-law we have three MAs and five PhDs. In my 36 years of work at Bar-Ilan, I have found in Bar-Ilan's Jewish History Department a congenial place to teach, do research and interact with colleagues on matters of common interest. The friendships that I have formed with them will last even after my retirement.

What do you see as the major differences between the academic culture at Penn, Columbia and JTS and that of Israel?

The thing that stands out in my mind is the tradition of liberal arts in the American universities, where my BA studies included, among other things, physics and math, sociology and anthropology, as well as courses in Indian civilization and Greek literature in translation, in addition to a large number of courses in history and Ancient Near East. The Israeli system of taking basically two subjects has always seemed too narrow to me. It used to be argued that *bagrut* (matriculation) studies in Israel provided that broader exposure to different subjects, but I don't think this is still the case, if I recall the education of my children. I believe that having such an intellectual background

profoundly affects the way I view Jewish history. One other important difference: the question of learning languages. At Columbia, every graduate student in history had to pass exams in French and German, as well as the major languages of their field of specialization, which in my case meant Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. On the other hand, being in Israel and being able to teach texts in Hebrew without worrying if students can deal with the language has always been a distinct advantage. Also the fact that we have a relatively large department enables us to teach courses closely related to our research fields of interest, and we have never had to do what colleagues in other countries must do, namely teaching the classic "From Abraham to Ben-Gurion" course, or, as we would say it here, "From the Tanakh to the Palmah."



Prof. Bacon's last class at Bar-Ilan

What do you think is the contribution that you and those of your generation have made to the study of Jewish history in general and to the study of Polish Jewry in particular?

I think that my generation of Jewish historians has advanced the field by contextualizing Jewish history in wider frameworks and by making use of cutting-edge techniques in historical research a regular part of research in Jewish history as well. In the case of Polish Jewish history, this has meant making the history of Poland part of Jewish history, making Jewish history part of Polish history, and adopting critical tools from general history and from auxiliary disciplines such as sociology or gender studies. My generation is no longer fighting the ideological wars between Zionists, Bundists and assimilationists that characterized much of the writing of Polish Jewish history from its beginnings until the first decades after the Holocaust. The fall of Communism in Poland has facilitated the growth of a new generation of historians of Polish Jewry in Poland itself, no longer limited by ideological and political blinders. The study

of Polish Jewry is a true international conversation between scholars in Israel, Poland, Western Europe and North America. With the rise, however, of a right-wing nationalist trend in Polish historiography, politics and history writing have unfortunately become intertwined once again, and historians in Poland and abroad have on occasion protested attempts by the Polish government to interfere with academic freedom by threatening prosecution of historians for opinions not to its liking. Despite that, though, the future of research on Polish Jewry looks bright and encouraging.

I regard my own contributions to the historiography of Polish Jewry and Jewish history in general in a number of areas: mapping and summarizing the field in several publications; widening the historical purview of analyzing Polish Jewish politics; developing an overview and synthetic view of 19th and 20th century Polish Jewish history; helping to bring gender issues into the discussion of Polish Jewish society; contributing important studies to research on Orthodox Judaism.

What do you think has been your major contribution to our department, including the years you served as department chair?

Since my arrival at Bar-Ilan in 1981, I have always tried to be a cooperative and supportive colleague both in the department and in the university. As chair of the department and at other times I have worked to bring the best talent to our department, and I am proud to have been a part of building the fine faculty that we have today. Together with my dear friend and colleague, Prof. Moshe Rosman, I have made the study of East European Jewish history a major element of the course offerings by our department. In addition, from the very beginning of my work at Bar-Ilan I have also taught courses on American Jewish history. With the merging of our department with the program on Contemporary Jewry, this field has expanded greatly. I can also say that I was the first person in the department to offer courses dealing with the post-Holocaust period, out of a realization that the post-1945 period was by now very much "history", and deserved formal treatment in courses, though I was aware of the problems of teaching as history the period of one's own life.

What changes have you seen in the department and in the university during your career here, both positive and negative?

I was always inspired by the vision of Bar-Ilan as a religious university, and I still believe that this vision is important for Israeli society and World Jewry. Over the last three and a half decades, however,

I have witnessed the decline of enrollment in our department and others, reflecting a more general decline in humanities studies both in Israel and abroad. I still remember the department meetings where we regarded with dismay registration figures of "only" 100 students in the first year of the BA. Now such figures seem a distant echo from the past. I am also disturbed by the phenomenon of students from national religious backgrounds, who would have been natural candidates to study with us, instead utilizing study programs offered by various teachers' colleges to avoid university studies altogether and still receive bachelors and masters degrees, something I regard as a loss both for them and for us. The fact that in one course I taught this year there were no history students at all, just students taking the class for their general studies credits, means that in the future we will have to reorient our teaching a bit in order to take this phenomenon into account. I have always regarded the Basic Jewish Studies courses as an opportunity to bring some of our approaches to the larger university community, and that will continue. With all the changes, some things have remained constant in our department, and in these words of summary they deserve special mention. First is the skill and devotion of our office staff, led so ably for all these years by Cohava and Nicole. They have always provided the friendly face of our department to students and faculty alike, and for which we should all be grateful. Second is the recruitment for our department of the best of Bar-Ilan's own graduates (many of whom I had to pleasure to teach) and the best of scholars from other Israeli universities and from abroad. Some years ago a noted Jewish historian from the States stated that Bar-Ilan is one of the best places in the world to study modern Jewish history (his own field). I am inspired by the recent additions to our department during the tenures of Yaron Harel and Kimmy Caplan, and can retire with the feeling that our future as a department in all periods is assured.

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

Although I will miss the encounters with students in the classroom on a weekly basis, my research and writing continues, and I am working on two book manuscripts. I have also taken on the major task of the editorship of the journal Gal-Ed, which is devoted to the history and culture of Polish Jewry. I look forward to continuing my work as a historian and also being able to devote more time to our children and grandchildren.

Professor Bacon, we thank you for this interview, and wish you much success.

Interview with Professor Moshe Rosman in honor of his retirement:



Prof. Rosman, could you tell us a little about your life before you began your academic studies?

I grew up in Chicago and was educated along the seam between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism. I attended Orthodox schools and a Conservative synagogue. I was also active in the Conservative youth movement. I

doubt if such a mixture would be possible in today's American Jewish Community. In my time it was quite common, and for me it was foundational. To quote a metaphor, we imagine Shabbat as both a queen and as a bride. A queen is to be honored and obeyed; a bride is to be beautified and made joyful. You could say that in school I was taught about Judaism as a queen, while in the synagogue and in the youth movement I learned about Judaism as a bride. Both were vital, and both made me who I am.

You received all of your education in the United States: your BA concurrently at Columbia and at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS), and then you continued at JTS. What fields did you specialize in? Who were the teachers who had the most influence on your academic career?

As an undergraduate I attended a number of institutions: Boston University, the University of Chicago, Columbia and JTS. Altogether I accumulated 240 credits, when a typical BA at the time was 120 credits and a double major was 180. My degree in Columbia was in psychology and at JTS it was in Talmud.

I remained at JTS for my MA, for Rabbinical School and for my doctorate in history. I took Jewish history classes at JTS, and courses on Polish, Russian and general European history, as well as language courses, at Columbia. My advisors were Prof. Ismar Schorsch at JTS and Prof. Andrzej Kaminski at Columbia. I'm still in contact with both of them. Schorsch made me a professional Jewish historian. Kaminski introduced me to the world of Poland, Polishness and Polish history, and sent me to do research in Poland. I was also influenced by the Talmudists Profs. Saul Lieberman and Moshe Zucker, with whom I studied for several years, the famous historian Prof. Gerson Cohen, and (at the time young) historian Dr. Lee Levine, and the literary scholars Prof. Shmuel Leiter and Prof. Avraham Holtz. I also spent two years (1972-3 and 1977-8) in Israel while working on my doctorate, and studied with some of the leading scholars of the Jerusalem School, such as Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson, Shmuel Ettinger, Yaakov Katz and Yehudah Bauer. Especially, from 1978 I worked with Prof. Jakub Goldberg, who

became my additional doctoral advisor.

You made Aliyah before completing your PhD. Did you get any teaching experience before arriving in Israel?

First of all, I taught at the Park Avenue Synagogue Hebrew School and at the JTS high school "Prozdor" while I was a student there. I also taught one academic class as a TA at JTS before making Aliyah.

What role did Poland have in your academic training?

I spent the months between Sukkot and Pesah of 1978-9 in the archives of Warsaw and Krakow, and I worked with Prof. Jozef Gierowski, who had been the mentor of my mentor, Kaminski. In Communist Poland I collected material for my doctorate and also first learned about the Polish sources that refer to the Baal Shem Tov. That time I spent in Poland set the path of my academic career.

I assume that your decision to make Aliyah was influenced by a number of factors. How did that decision influence your academic career?

Only for the best. After making Aliyah I discovered that I, with my American passport, could do what no Sabra Israeli could do at the time: research in archives in Poland. This was just at the time that the generation of professors who had been born in Eastern Europe were about to retire. Because of this good fortune – actually miracle – I received offers from four Israeli universities. In the end, I had the privilege to teach and to research in a field that was considered central in Israel, attracts a comparatively large number of students, and can demand significant support. My teaching and my research constantly strengthened each other.

So what brought you to Bar Ilan and to the Department of Jewish History?

In 1982 I completed my PhD and was teaching as an adjunct instructor at Bar Ilan, and as a post-doctoral fellow at Tel Aviv University. I had to decide between Bar Ilan, the Hebrew University or Tel Aviv University. One day, while on the bus home to Jerusalem, I sat next to Prof. Daniel Sperber, who inquired about my situation. I told him about the various offers that I had, and he explained why, in his opinion, Bar Ilan and the Department of Jewish History were the best choice for me. I listened to his counsel, and he was proven right. Bar Ilan gave me the freedom, the resources and the support to achieve what I could. If I fell short in some way, it was my own responsibility.

What do you think that you and the members of your generation contributed to the study of Jewish History, which had been lacking previously?

Mostly, we integrated Jewish History into History. We knew how to utilize Jewish and non-Jewish sources equally and to combine them. To borrow and to adapt the saying of Prof. Jakub Goldberg, we proved that there is no Jewish History without what is called in Israel “general” history, and that no “general” history is complete without the history of the Jews. Not that our predecessors ignored “external” sources, but we emphasized maximal integration.

And what do you consider your own most significant contribution?

I discovered new archival sources and managed to cross-reference them with existing literary sources. I showed the importance of Polish archival sources to the study of Jewish history, even for topics that are considered “inside-Jewish” such as Hasidism. On the other hand, my studies have been recognized in Poland as a part of Polish historiography. On a different level, I proposed the “reformed positivism” approach as a method for historiography in the post-modernist era.

And what do you consider to have been your main contribution to our department at Bar-Ilan?

In 1990 I created the first course ever offered on the history of Jewish women, and I have been integrating women’s history and history of gender in my classes ever since. I also re-designed the historiography course. I always tried to serve as an example of someone who considers teaching to be an important part of his job as a faculty member.

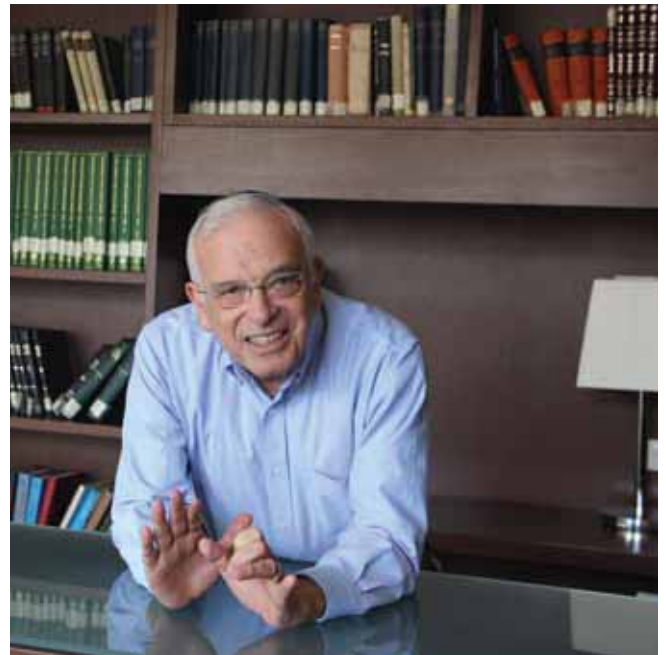
I also helped foil attempts that were made, for various

unjustified reasons, to damage the promotion and tenure processes of three worthy department members.

Finally, what are your plans for the future?

To continue my research and writing. I have three books that are in various stages of preparation. I pray that my new status will give me the time – and that God will give me the strength – to complete them.

Professor Moshe Rosman, thank you for this conversation, and much success for the future.



In Memoriam: Professor Elliot Horowitz (1953-2017)

Our department mourns the untimely loss of Prof. Elliott Horowitz, at the age of 64. Prof. Horowitz was a cultural historian whose research in early modern Jewry took him well beyond the early modern period. His research covered diverse fields, including travel, religious confraternities, Jewish art, and food. Among his most famous articles was a study of the impact of coffee on nocturnal rituals in early modern Europe. His monograph, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton University Press, 2006), explored Jewish violence surrounding Purim.

Prof. Horowitz served as the co-editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for almost fifteen years. He taught in our department for 25 years, and in the years before his death, taught at Johns Hopkins University and at Balliol College in Oxford. His bibliophilia, wide-ranging knowledge, and witticisms will be missed.

The University President's Stipend for Doctoral Students

Three new PhD candidates were awarded the University President's Stipend, which is meant to enable "full-time" doctoral students to focus on their research and to complete their dissertations within four years. We spoke briefly with them:

Lea Wagner:

I grew up in Bremen in northern Germany. After volunteering in a youth center in Kalamata, Greece, I started my studies in history and Jewish studies at the University of Cologne and University of Düsseldorf. I did my Masters in history at the Humboldt University of Berlin and as a part of this degree I studied a year abroad at the Hebrew University. I decided to stay in Israel and make Aliyah, so I looked into possibilities that would allow me to continue my studies here. Members of the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at Bar-Ilan conduct a lot of research that suit my interests and that would give me the possibility to pursue new academic challenges. My fields of interests include Jewish history of the 19th and 20th century (mostly in Germany), gender history of that period, Jewish gender studies, Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism, Shoah and (religious) Zionism.



Naama Jager-Fluss:

I graduated (*cum laude*) from the departments of Jewish History and General History here at Bar-Ilan and completed my MA in the Department of Jewish History. My Master's thesis, on "Public Controversy in the Early 19th Century over Religious Reforms in Central Europe" was written under the



supervision of Prof. Shmuel Feiner. My doctoral dissertation, which will also be written under the supervision of Prof. Feiner, will be dedicated to the study of the foundations of the Reform movement and its expansion in Germany during the nineteenth century. I have been studying German for several years and have been to Germany several times in order to study the language.

For more than two years, I worked as a research assistant for Prof. Kimmy Caplan and helped him gather sources for his research on Haredi society. I now work as a research assistant in the Samuel Braun Chair for the History of the Jews in Prussia, headed by Prof. Feiner, and as a group facilitator and a guide at "Beit Hatfutsot - the Museum of the Jewish People".

Rhona Burns:

I was born in Haifa in 1987, and received my BA and MA (both in Hebrew Literature) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My thesis, written under the supervision of Dr. Tamar Hess, focused on Shalom Yaakov Abramovitch (Mendele Mocher Sforim)'s novel "My Mare". For my doctoral studies, I hope to examine the relations between Jewish bourgeois society and nationalism in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. I also edit the literary collection 'Eyravin' (in Hebrew) the third volume of which will be published in December 2017, with the support of Mif'al Ha'pais and The Sholem Aleichem Institute in Tel Aviv. Before I was accepted to the scholarship's program at Bar Ilan I served as the editor of The Jerusalem Post Magazine (weekly supplement). My poems, stories and articles were published in various Hebrew and English publications. My Hebrew poetry book, *Rubble of the Earth* was published recently, and I am working on two others – poetry and fiction. I live in Jerusalem with my husband.



New department room opened

In January the department dedicated its new facility, made possible through the generosity of the Koschitzky Fund and matching university funding. The room will be used by department doctoral students and faculty for meeting in small groups and for individual study. The dedication ceremony was attended by Mr. Sol Koschitzky, by university president Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, and by department members and students.



Mr. Sol Koschitzky at dedication of new department room.

Outstanding Students:

Shir Georgi received an award of excellence from the rector. The certificate was awarded in a ceremony that took place in May, and was attended by the university president, the rector, the dean and the chair of the department.



Shir Georgi with her certificate of excellence, together with Rector Prof. Miri Faust, Dean Prof. Elie Assis and President Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz

Aliza Haiman, graduate of our department who is now a doctoral student in Information Science, received a prize from the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism for a paper she wrote on "Bereaved Mothers Commemorating their Sons" as part of a seminar taught by Prof. Judy Baumel-Schwartz.

Merav Sagi, who is writing her doctoral dissertation under the guidance of Prof. Weitz on "Women Write in the Telz Izkor Book" received a prize from the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism.

Pnina Rotem, who is writing her doctoral dissertation on Jewish education in Holland during the Holocaust under the guidance of Prof. Dan Michman, received the Orbach prize for students writing on Holocaust-related subjects.

Judith Levin, who wrote her MA thesis on "From Restriction of Freedom of Occupation to Denial of Civil Rights and Human Rights: The Process of Economic and Social Deterioration of the State of the Jews in Hungary in the Countryside Cities, 1939-1944, Through the Eyes of One Family" under the guidance of Prof. Dan Michman, received the Orbach prize for students writing on Holocaust-related subjects.

Miri Levi, a doctoral candidate, received an award from the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism. Her dissertation, which is being written under the guidance of Dr. Orly Meron, deals with "Jewish Feminism among Muslim Societies during the Age of Colonialism: Jewish Women in Urban Morocco, 1912-1956."

Parry Moshe, who wrote her MA thesis on "Law Enforcement in Israel and Judah during the Israelite Monarchy" under the guidance of Prof. Yigal Levin, received a grant from the Zipporah and Avraham Yitzhak Triwaks fund, in a ceremony held in July. At the ceremony, attended by members of the Triwaks family, Parry presented her work by showing a short film.



Parry Moshe with her parents at Triwaks Award ceremony

Three former students receive prizes from the Begin Heritage Center

In December of 2016, three of our former students received prizes from the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem, in recognition of outstanding papers that they wrote:

Dr. Moshe Uriel wrote his doctoral dissertation on "From the Park Hotel to the 'Jewish Underground' – The Role of the Settlers of Kiryat Arba Hebron in the Formation of the Ideological Path of the Yesha Settler's Movement, 1967-1984", under the guidance of Prof. Gershon Bacon. Dr. Chen-Tzion Nayot wrote his dissertation on "Etsel's Legal Front during 'The Rebellion' – 1944-1948" under the supervision of Prof. Meir Hildesheimer.

Yael Nahari, a department graduate who is now completing her MA in the Department of Land of Israel Studies received a prize for an outstanding seminar paper.

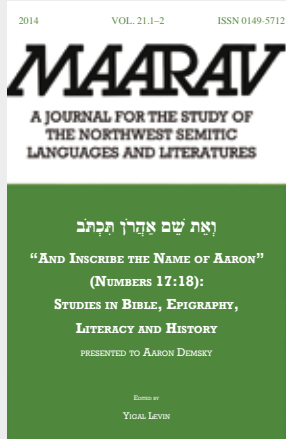
We are proud of our graduates' accomplishments.



The three prize winners at the Begin Heritage Center

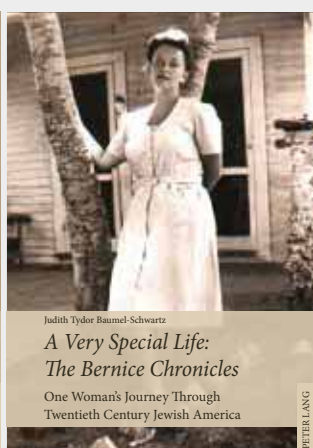
A Festschrift honoring Professor Aaron Demsky

In a ceremony held on March 5 2017, Prof. Aaron Demsky was presented with a Festschrift published in his honor, *"And Inscribe the Name of Aaron": Studies in Bible, Epigraphy, Literacy and History*, published as a special issue of *MAARAV: A Journal for the Study of the Northwest Semitic Languages and Literature*. The volume, edited by Professors Yigal Levin and Ber Kotlerman, includes 19 articles in the fields of history, Bible, rabbinic literature, language and epigraphy, historical geography and onomastics. The ceremony included greetings by Dean Prof. Elie Assis and Department Chair Prof. Kimmy Caplan, as well as lectures by the editors, by Dr. Avshalom Kor, Dr. Idan Breier, Prof. Ed Greenstein and Prof. Christopher Rollston of George Washington University, editor of *MAARAV*.



Conference held in Honor of Prof. Ben-Zion Rosenfeld

On February 1, 2017, the department held an international conference in honor of Prof. Ben-Zion Rosenfeld, who retired last year. The conference dealt with the social, cultural and economic life of the Jews in the Land of Israel and in Babylon during the time of the Second Temple, the Mishna and the Talmud. The conference featured 13 papers given by colleagues and former students of Prof. Rosenfeld from Israel and abroad. Among the topics discussed were the history of the Samaritans, the economy of the Land of Israel, the influence of Judaism on early Christianity, the relationship between the sages of the Land of Israel and those in Babylon, and the study of Rabbinic literature as a historical source. The conference was well-attended by scholars, students and other interested people throughout the day. The conference was organized by Prof. Emmanuel Friedheim, with the capable help of the department administrative staff.



Jewish Women in America: Two new books by Prof. Judy Baumel-Schwartz

In two books that were published over the past year, Prof. Baumel-Schwartz tells the story of two women. The first is her grandmother, Frieda Sima, a young woman who emigrated on her own from the Bukovina to the US in 1911, at the age of 15. The second is her mother-in-law, Bernice Cohen Schwartz, who grew up in New York in the 1920's. Using archival material, interviews and family documents, Prof. Baumel-Schwartz turned these two family stories into a work of research on the experience of Jewish-American women through the entire 20th century.



Churgin Prize awarded to Dr. Einat Libel-Hass

In a ceremony held as part of the department seminar, the prize honoring university founder Prof. Pinchos Churgin was awarded by Professor Emerita Batya Churgin. The prize winner Dr. Einat Libel-Hass wrote her dissertation on "The Development of Liberal (Reform/Mitkademet and Conservative/Masorti) Judaism in Tel Aviv: Organizational Patterns and Identities in the Congregations Beit-Daniel and Tiferet-Shalom (1991-2015)", under the supervision of Prof. Adam Ferziger.

Dr. Uriel Gellman: Outstanding Lecturer



In a ceremony held on May 29, 2017, Dr. Uriel Gellman was awarded a certificate for excellence in teaching.

Dr. Uriel Gellman with certificate of excellence in teaching, together with Prof. Kimmy Caplan, the Dean Prof. Elie Assis, Rector Prof. Miri Faust, President Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz and Vice Rector Prof. Amnon Albeck.

The annual lecture sponsored by the Samuel Braun Chair for the History of the Jews in Prussia

was delivered on March 29, 2017. Prof. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum of the Technical University of Berlin spoke on "The Challenge of Ambivalence: Antisemitism in Germany Today".



Farewell to Nicole

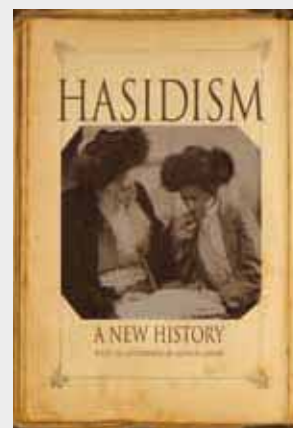
At the end of June, the department held a short ceremony marking the retirement of our longtime department secretary Nicole Messika, and to thank for her dedicated work. As part of the ceremony, attended by department members, students, co-workers and family members, Nicole was presented with a gift from the department.



Nicole and Cohava at ceremony

New Book on the History of Hasidism

Hasidism: A New History was published by Princeton University Press in October of 2017. This volume is the culmination of the decade-long work of an eight-member research team, which included Prof. Moshe Rosman and Dr. Uriel Gellman.



Faculty News

Dr. Dotan Arad received a grant from the Ben Zvi Institute, in support of his research on the Karaite Jewish communities of Egypt, the Land of Israel and Syria during the Ottoman Period. This project also received support from the world organization of Karaite Jews.

In September, Dr. Arad participated in a workshop for young Geniza scholars organized by the European Association of Jewish Studies in Munich, at which he spoke about "The Late Genizah - Historical Background and Main Characters".

Dr. Arad was also elected as a member of the forum for young scholars in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, which operates under the auspices of the Israel National Academy of Sciences.

Additionally, Dr. Arad continues to write a daily piece on the Bible chapter of the day, as part of "Project 929". His pieces are read by singer Kobi Oz, and broadcast on the local radio channels.

Prof. Meir Bar-Ilan was awarded the Aminoah Prize by the Hapoel Hamizrahi organization for his book *The Words of Gad the Seer*. The ceremony was held at the ZOA House in Tel Aviv on April 4, 2017.

Dr. Guy Bracha received a Felix Posen Post-Doctoral Fellowship at The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His study "Jews, Anti-Semitism, and Nation Building in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, 1908-1948", examines the impact of the rise of Anti-Semitism in the Middle East on the local Jewish communities and their reaction.

Prof. Kimmy Caplan's biography, *Amram Blau: The World of Neturei Karta's Leader* was published by Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi and the Ben Gurion Institute for the study of Israel and Zionism. The book follows this leader, the small and extremely active anti-Zionist group, and their mark on Israeli society, between the 1930s and the 1970s.

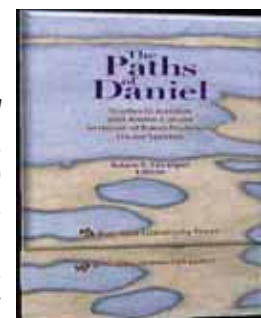


Dr. Yossef Charvit was invited to present his proposals for teaching on Algerian Jewry to the Bitton Commission for the teaching of Middle-Eastern Jewish Heritage. He was also invited to advise the producers of the new version of "The Pillar of Fire". Following his efforts and his research on his grandfather, Rabbi Joseph Renassia of Algeria, Rabbi Renassia was added to the list of important figures in modern Jewry, about which all Israeli students will learn.

Prof. Shmuel Feiner is the author of *A New Age: Eighteenth-Century European Jewry 1700-1750*, published by the Zalman Shazar Center. The first of two volumes, the book tells the story of Eastern European Jewry during the first half of the 18th century. The book was launched at a ceremony held at the Shazar Center on November 23, 2017.



Prof. Adam Ferziger edited *The Paths of Daniel: Studies in Judaism and Jewish Culture in Honor of Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber*, published by BIU Press. The volume includes about 40 articles in Hebrew and in English, written by leading scholars in the areas of Talmud and Realia, Jewish Law and Custom, History and Philosophy and Jewish Art.



Prof. Ferziger also received a grant from the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism for his study on "Gender and the Evolution of the American Orthodox Rabbi".

During the Spring Semester 2017, Professor Ferziger was invited to serve as the Yaschik/Arnold Distinguished Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies, College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. In addition to teaching a course on the history of Jewish Denominations in the United States, he presented numerous public lectures to various sectors of the Jewish and general populations, and had the opportunity to get a first-hand impression of contemporary Jewish life in the American South. During this period, he was also invited to deliver guest lectures at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee), Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia), and Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts).



In July 2017, Professor Ferziger co-convened the fourth annual Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism (OSIMCJ) at University of Oxford. This advanced international academic framework, which was founded by Ferziger together

with his Oxford colleague Dr. Miri Freud-Kandel, brings together 15 outstanding academics from around the world for an intensive 10 day program focused each year on a specific theme. The topic for 2017 was "Judaism, Authority, and Technology". This past year also saw the publication of two volumes of the journal *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, edited by Professor Ferziger and Dr. Freud-Kandel and based on papers first presented at the second annual OSIMCJ, which addressed the topic of "State and Spirit: The Impact of Sovereignty in Judaism."

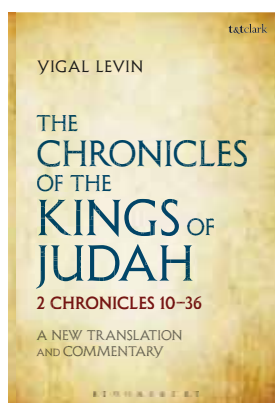
Dr. Uriel Gellman was awarded the first-ever prize for excellence in the area of Eastern European Jewish History by the Israel Historical Society. The prize was awarded in memory of the late Professors Ezra Mendelsohn and Jonathan Frankel, at the opening session of a conference on the centennial of the Russian Revolution held at Tel Aviv University on March 20, 2017.



Dr. Gellman was also the organizer of the fifth conference for young scholars of the Israeli inter-University Academic Partnership in Russian and East European Studies (IUAP) that took place on December 7, 2016, and was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc. Over the past year, Dr. Gellman served as advisor to Dr. Elena Keidosiute, a post-doctoral fellow from the IUAP. Dr. Keidosiute is studying the religious conversions of Jews in Eastern Europe, and presented her findings to the department seminar.

In June of 2017, Dr. Gellman gave the keynote lecture at the first-ever international conference on the history of Galician Jews, which was held at the University of Rzeszow in Poland.

Dr. Yigal Levin was promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure. His new book, *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*, was published by Bloomsbury T&T Clark. This is a new translation and commentary on 2 Chronicles 10-36, bringing together the latest textual, historical and archaeological research on



Chronicles' presentation of the history of the kingdom of Judah, from the division of the monarchy to its destruction. This is the first of three expected volumes.

Prof. David Malkiel

taught an undergraduate seminar at the Moscow State University from 11.9-18.9, entitled "Jewish Culture in Italy between East and West." The course was given under the auspices of SEFER--Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization. Professor Malkiel was the only lecturer who was asked to lecture in



Hebrew. He also delivered a public lecture entitled "The Roots of the Modern Jewish Diaspora", which was given under the auspices of the "Nativ" program of the Prime Minister's Office.

In December 2016, Professor Malkiel participated in an international conference held at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, together with participants from Italy, Germany, Holland, Israel and the United States. The title of the conference was "Serenissima and Ashkenaz: The Venetian Ghetto in European History and Culture," and the title of his paper was: "Gentile Wine in Renaissance Venice."

Prof. Moises Orfali was co-organizer of an international conference on "Heterodoxies and Dissidences" that was held in May in Toledo, Spain. Prof. Orfali's partner in organizing the conference was Dr. Paulina Numhauser of the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, north of Madrid.



Dr. Yitzhak Recanati published a book about his grandfather Abraham S. Recanati. The book, entitled, *I am a Hebrew: Abraham S. Recanati, From Salonika to Tel-Aviv* (Herzog College - Tevunot), traces the life of this leader of the Jewish Community of Salonica, Greece. For nearly a decade in the early 20th century he was the head of the "Mizrachi" and the Revisionist Zionist movements in the city. After immigrating to Israel, he remained involved with public affairs and represented the "Herut" party in the first Knesset. The book situates his life in the context of contemporary events and the cities in which he lived.



Prof. Moshe Rosman served during 2017 as the head of a research group at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, devoted to the topic of "Jewish Women's Cultural Capital from the Late Middle Ages until the Early 20th Century". As head of this group Prof. Rosman organized an international conference on "Jewish Women's Cultural Capital under Islam", which was held in June.



On November 15, 2016, Prof. Rosman was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Wroslaw, in recognition of his academic achievements. This is an honor given to one person each year, and this was the first time in the university's 300 year history, that the judges' decision was read in Hebrew.

During the past year, Prof. Rosman also served as a research fellow at Brandies University and at Harvard University.

Prof. Zvi Zohar was promoted to the rank of full professor with tenure.

Prof. Zohar received a grant from the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism for his study, "Woman of Valor" – women in *Halakha* in the thought of Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Algazi, who served as *Hakham Bashi* and *Rishon LeZion* (Chief Rabbi) in the mid 18th century.



Prof. Yigal Levin and friend at Ein Gedi



Coffee, anyone? Students keep warm on field trip to north