

Orion Center News Update

The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature
מרכז אוריון לחקר מגילות מדבר יהודה והספרות הקרובה להן

May 2009

Second Temple Hebrew at the Orion Center *by Steven Fassberg*

This past December, the Orion Center joined forces with the Hebrew University's Eliezer Ben-Yehuda Center for the Study of the History of the Hebrew Language to hold the 12th International Orion Symposium, "Hebrew in the Second Temple Period: The Language of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of Other Contemporary Sources." This symposium was also the fifth in a series of scholarly meetings on the Hebrew of the Scrolls initiated by Prof. Takamitsu Muraoka of Leiden in 1995. The Jerusalem symposium was convened by Hebrew University Professors Moshe Bar-Asher and Steven Fassberg, and was Orion's first symposium devoted to the language of the Second Temple Period.

The symposium brought together senior and junior scholars from Israel and abroad who research different aspects of the Hebrew language traditions that existed during the Second Temple Period. All the participants dealt with at least one of the following corpora: the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Book of Ben Sira, Tannaitic Hebrew, Samaritan Hebrew, and the Hebrew reflected in Greek transcriptions. Most of the talks integrated data from more than one of these areas and stressed the features of the period that were common to the different traditions. This integrative approach was highlighted throughout the symposium and enabled scholars to present a comprehensive picture of the period.

The opening session featured a keynote address by Prof. Moshe Bar-Asher on the recently published *Vision of Gabriel*. In addition, the organizers took the opportunity to present Prof. Avi Hurvitz, who has been actively involved with the Orion Center for years and has served on its academic committee, with a Festschrift in his honor.

The symposium was well-attended by students and scholars from other Israeli universities and abroad, and from across the spectrum of Qumran studies. In fact the meeting presented an unprecedented opportunity for fertile contacts between linguists and scholars from other branches of Dead Sea Scrolls research. It is to be hoped that these scholarly encounters will enrich future Orion symposia.

The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature

Director: Steven E. Fassberg
Institute of Jewish Studies
Rabin World Center of Jewish Studies
Mt. Scopus, The Hebrew University
Jerusalem, Israel 91905
Tel: 972-2-588-1966
Fax: 972-2-588-3584
E-mail: msdss@mscc.huji.ac.il
Web site: <http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il>

Tempests in Scroll Jars *by Ruth Clements*

The Scrolls are in the news—again.

Dr. Max Grossman of the University of Maryland led off her 2006 Orion Newsletter article on the Scrolls and the media with those words, and they continue to return as a refrain. The recent crop of subjects for media attention has ranged from scientific advances, to new text discoveries, to scholarly harassment, to renewed debate over the Qumran-Essene link (or not)—a diversity which invites a reconsideration of the subject.

The scientific foci have included the (now much-discussed) identification of a "latrine site" close to but outside of the main Qumran buildings (which fueled debate about identification of the site's occupants as Essenes, 2007); the sprouting of a 2000-year-old date pit found in a cache at Masada (misleadingly labeled the "Jesus tree" by one online paper, which included a photograph of the flourishing plant, 2008); and reports on a new photographic technique, polynomial texture mapping, which allows researchers to investigate the most minute details of scroll parchments (2008). In the same category is the much-heralded "Scrolls on Line Initiative" spearheaded by the IAA, which will involve placing digitalized images of the Scrolls in an online, searchable databank. Since the popular conception that the Scrolls are only accessible to the "elect" continues to surface (e.g., in many e-mails sent to the Orion Center), it is not surprising that this initiative should be hailed not only as a scientific advance but also as a step in the democratization of Scrolls scholarship ("available to all," *NYTimes*, 8/26/2008).

Recent interest in new scroll fragments was sparked by the 2007 conflict between the IAA and Prof. Hanan Eshel, surrounding his recovery by purchase of previously unknown fragments of a Leviticus scroll. Although it had been assumed that other scroll fragments were probably "out there," these were the first "new" biblical fragments to come to light since the 1960s. The very most recently recovered fragment (seized by police in a sting operation at the beginning of May from the two men trying to sell it) is a legal document, written on papyrus and dated to immediately after either the First or Second Jewish Revolt (ca. 74 or 138 CE). Over the past few years, too, reports on other materials held in private collections have begun to surface. One of the most important collections (because of its accessibility to scholars) is the Martin Schøyen Collection, the critical publication of which is now in process. Perhaps the most controversial new text discovery is not on parchment but on stone—the so-called "Vision of Gabriel" from the David Jeselsohn collection; its interpretation excited a good deal of popular media attention because of its potential connection with early Christian messianic ideas (2008).

The Qumran-Essene discussion seems, as in the past, to be the spur to the most intensive rhetoric surrounding the Scrolls, both in the media and by scholars themselves. A recent sampling can be seen in the media reports and online postings surrounding Prof. Rachel Elior's remarks on the Essenes. However, the identity of the Essenes has also had increasing

Orion Calendar, Spring, 2009

March 18. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar 12:15–14:00. Dr. Esther Eshel (Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, Bar-Ilan University): "Women in the *Genesis Apocryphon*" (in Hebrew)

April 23. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar 12:15–14:00. Prof. Menahem Kister (Department of Talmud, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem): "The Growth of a Text: Dynamics of Textual Development in *Serekh Hayahad*" (in Hebrew).

May 19. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar 12:15–14:00. Dr. Ariel Feldman (Department of Bible, University of Haifa; Jean Matlow Orion Fellowship recipient): "The Reworking of 1-2 Kings in 4Q382" (in Hebrew)

June 10. Jonas C. Greenfield Scholars' Seminar 12:15–14:00. Dr. Ronnie Goldstein (Department of Bible, The Hebrew University Jerusalem): "A New Look at Two Late Babylonian Tablets" (in Hebrew)

Please note: The Greenfield Scholars' Seminar is held in the Mandel World Center of Jewish Studies, The Rabin Building, Room 2001/2, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus.

Emanuel Tov Honored with Israel Prize

Hebrew University Professor Emanuel Tov, member of the Orion Center Academic Committee and longstanding supporter of the Orion Center, has been awarded the 2009 Israel Prize in Jewish Studies, for his research in Bible. In detailing the reasons for their decision, the awards committee cited his internationally recognized scholarship on both the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Prof. Tov emigrated from The Netherlands to Israel in 1961, pursuing studies in Bible at the Hebrew University and at Harvard, then returning to teach in Israel. He became a professor at the Hebrew University in 1986, and was appointed in 1990 to his present position as the J. L. Magnes Professor of Bible. Since 1991, he has served as the editor-in-chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project, completing the publication of the fragments from the Judean Desert in Oxford University Press series, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah*.

The Israel Prize is the highest honor awarded by the State of Israel. The Academic Committee and staff of the Orion Center wish to congratulate Prof. Tov for this well-deserved recognition of his contributions to Dead Sea Scrolls research and biblical studies.

Orion Center Research Grants

The Orion Center is now accepting applications for its research grants (up to \$1000), for the 2009/2010 academic year. The grants are for research on the Dead Sea Scrolls and associated literature in all relevant disciplines. Preference is given to Ph.D. students and post-doctoral students, for integrative projects involving the Scrolls and other aspects of Second Temple studies. Research connected with the grant must be carried out in Israel; grant recipients will be associated with the Orion Center. **The application deadline is June 1.** Please see our website for forms and details.

Tempests, cont.

play in the public arena in general over the last few years because of the continuing series of Scrolls exhibitions in the US and Canada. The exhibitions tend to follow mainstream scholarly discussion in assuming that the texts found in the caves around Qumran were linked with a community that itself utilized the settlement; most exhibition materials at some juncture make the statement that many scholars link this community with the Essenes. This (mainstream) construction has come under fire from some scholars who see the Qumran site and the texts as unrelated—on the grounds that the exhibits thereby popularize only one scholarly way of constructing the Scrolls. Media reporting on a recent spate of internet attacks on some Scrolls scholars (2009) has configured them as relating directly to "mainstream vs. minority" conflicts.

In her 2006 article, Grossman cautioned that the media drive for "both sides of the story" tends to mask the complexities of the issues surrounding interpretation of the Scrolls in the popular arena. We do well to take her caution to heart in the present, as well. All in all though, the current climate of interest in the Scrolls, positive and negative, provides Qumran scholars with a golden opportunity to educate diverse constituencies, whether through exhibition-connected lectures, university programs, or media encounters, on the nature and multifaceted significance of the Dead Sea finds.

Dead Sea Scrolls on Tour, 2009–2010

June 27, 2009 to January 3, 2010

Dead Sea Scrolls: Words that Changed the World
The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ont.

For the exhibition's home page, go to:

<http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/DeadSeaScrolls>

December 11, 2009 to June 6, 2010

Milwaukee Public Museum

For more information, go to: <http://www.mpm.edu>

April 22, 2010 to August 29, 2010

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn.

For more information, go to: <http://www.smm.org/>.

For information on upcoming exhibitions, please visit

http://www.antiquities.org.il/dda_eng.asp;

<http://www.deadseascrollsfoundation.com/exhibits.html>; or

<http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/resources/boardExhibits.shtml>

Now Published!

Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 11-13 January, 2004, edited by Ruth A. Clements and Daniel R. Schwartz. STDJ 84. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

◆We ask our colleagues to **keep checking the *On-Line Bibliography*** for your own relevant publications and to **send us additions and corrections.** *Thank you!*