



# 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 2010

## The Orion Center Welcomes the Orion Foundation to the Hebrew University Board of Governors Meeting, Jerusalem 2010!

On June 2, 2010, in advance of the HU Board of Governors meeting (June 3–9), members of the Orion Foundation will meet with Orion Center staff, board members, and grant recipients in the new Berel and Agnes Ginges–Australia Library Information Centre at Givat Ram. Academic Chair Dr. Esther Chazon and Director Prof. Menahem Kister will present an update of recent Orion Center activities and plans for the future; Drs. Guy Stiebel and Liora Goldman will speak briefly about their research as Orion Fellows; and all parties will have a chance to try out Orion's *Virtual Qumran* on the new Ginges Centre computers. We wish the Foundation a pleasant and productive visit to Jerusalem and thank them for their support!



## Meetings of the Minds: Israel

The last two months have been busy ones for the Scrolls community in Israel. In addition to a plethora of seminars and talks, at Orion and elsewhere, two significant conferences have taken place. The annual University of Haifa Workshop on the Scrolls was held on April 25, 2010. This year's Workshop commemorated the lives and academic achievements of two greatly respected Qumran scholars: Joseph Baumgarten and Hanan Eshel (see p. 2 this issue). The Haifa Workshops were begun by Professors Devorah Dimant, of the University of Haifa, and Moshe Bar-Asher, of the Hebrew University, in 2001, to provide a forum in Hebrew for Israeli scrolls scholarship. Workshop presentations form the core of the papers published in the Hebrew serial *Meghillot*. True to form, this year's presenters were drawn primarily from the University of Haifa, the Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv University, and Ben-Gurion University. This was the first workshop held under the aegis of the new *Meghillot* board: Jonathan Ben-Dov, Menahem Mor, Moshe Morgenstern, and Hillel Newman, all of Haifa. The proceedings of the April workshop, together with additional articles and short notes, will be published as *Meghillot* volume 10.

May 25–26 saw the third international meeting on Bio- and Material Cultures at Qumran, held in Jerusalem at the HU's Givat Ram Campus. The focus of the meeting, like that of the previous two (Jerusalem 2005 and Leiden 2008) was on the noninvasive scientific analysis of material remains from Qumran, as well as their preservation. The meetings are organized from the HU side by Dr. Jan Gunneweg, a founding member of the Orion Center Task Force for Science and Scrolls; this year's session was cosponsored by the EC COST Action D42 Group for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. The meetings, held with the collaboration of Orion, the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the HU Department of Archaeology, have become an avenue for the sharing of knowledge and skills between Israeli and European "archaeological scientists."

## Recent Currents in Israeli Scholarship

Prof. Elisha Qimron of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has recently published the first volume of a three-volume comprehensive edition of the Hebrew scrolls from Qumran. This first volume features the relatively intact scrolls: the *Damascus Document*, the *Community Rule*, the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, the *War Scroll*, the *Temple Scroll*, and the *Peshar on Habakkuk*. The more fragmentary texts will appear in the subsequent volumes.

The primary difference between this new edition and most prior editions of the scrolls is Qimron's commitment to creating a composite text. In previous editions, the fragments were published according to the caves in which they were found. The Qimron edition combines all the existing copies and fragments of a given text, noting variations between copies that overlap, and placing *nonoverlapping* fragments so as to get a more coherent picture of the whole. An additional feature of the new edition is the introduction of many new readings, some obtained via the use of special microscopic photography (partially funded by the Orion Center). The edition has short introductory sections in both Hebrew and English, with the critical apparatus in Hebrew. Although it will not replace the editions of discrete manuscripts and fragments such as the DJD, Qimron's edition will stand beside these to spur scholarly discussion of the transmission and meaning of the Qumran texts.

*New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism* is the title of a forthcoming study by Prof. Michael Stone of the Hebrew University. The study, funded by the Orion Center via the assistance of the Orion Foundation, raises questions about the lenses through which we tend to conceptualize Jewish and Christian origins. Stone begins by offering a critique of the constructs on which scholarly (and religious) conceptions of the Second Temple period and its aftermath are based. He suggests that both the process of transmission of texts and modern frameworks for the interpretation of these texts involve various types of "filtering." He offers a new look at a number of texts and traditions outside the Bible (so-called apocryphal or pseudepigraphical texts), seen through the lens of the Qumran discoveries rather than the "spectacles of orthodoxy," so as to place these "outside books" at the center of our picture of Second Temple Judaism. The book presents a re-examination of transmission, textual authority, and canon, and offers a broad-ranging challenge to future research.

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## Renowned Archaeologist, Hanan Eshel, Dead at 52

The Qumran scholarly community in Israel and abroad was saddened at the death of Qumran archaeologist and text scholar, Hanan Eshel, on April 8, 2010, after a nearly two-year battle with cancer. Born in 1958, Eshel earned his B.A. in archaeology in 1984 from the Hebrew University, and his M.A. (1988) and Ph.D. (1993) from the HU Department of Jewish History. He was a professor in Bar-Ilan's Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, where he served as head of the Department from 2002-2004, and as director of the University's Jeselsohn Epigraphic Center of Jewish History for more than a decade. Eshel was a world-renowned expert on the history and archaeology of the Dead Sea Sect at Qumran and in Dead Sea Scrolls research. In recent years, he had conducted a number of excavations at Qumran, as well as in some caves in the Judean Desert which had sheltered Jewish refugees in the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt. In combination with his archaeological work, he was a member of the Dead Sea Scrolls publication team, then and subsequently working either independently or with his wife, Dr. Esther Eshel. In recent years, he was able to recover and identify scroll fragments that only recently came to light.

Eshel's great gift was his ability to combine archaeological and textual insights. More than most scholars of the scrolls or the Qumran site, he was able to bring expertise from the one discipline to bear on the other, providing insights that illuminated both, and in particular, have strengthened the connection between the Qumran site and the scroll caves. Similarly, he has been able to integrate Qumran and its documents into the broader picture of Second Temple Judaism. One of his most important studies in this regard is *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State*, now published in both Hebrew and English.

Hanan was a strong presence at the Orion Center. A frequent presenter in and attender of Orion Center programs, a frequent contributor to Orion volumes, and an often-consulted advisor in matters ranging from technical questions sent in by visitors to the Orion website, to verification of facts for newsletter articles, to consultation on Orion projects such as Virtual Qumran—he was a steady supporter and encourager of the Center's work. Our deepest condolences to Esti and the rest of the family. We will all miss him.

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### Reflections in Memoriam Hanan Eshel Excerpts from a talk given by Prof. Lawrence Schiffman, Haifa, April 25, 2010

For me personally this was an especially difficult loss. . . . Halakhah determines who are the mourners and for how long they are obligated and permitted to mourn. For us, the friends, we are permitted only to mourn in our hearts, and thus we are left only to remember, to continue his work, and to give support and encouragement to the members of his family, Esti, Avshalom and Michal, to whatever extent possible.

I met Hanan for the first time in 1989/90 when I was a Fellow in a research group on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. From that time, I, and my wife Marlene as well, immediately became close friends of the Eshels. . . . I rejoiced and derived great satisfaction as a somewhat older friend in seeing his progress and the flourishing of his

research projects. I was even able to help—for years I tied the knots on his ties, both in Israel and abroad. Only a year ago he reached the top of Mt. Vesuvius easily while his “elderly” friend took another ten minutes to arrive. But suddenly, he is no longer among us!

Indeed, Hanan showed his true righteousness when he learned that he was stricken with disease. . . . He somehow overcame his own misfortune . . . and tried to live as fully as possible, to contribute as he always had done, and at the same time to ease the pain of his wife, his children and his friends. Anyone who spoke to him received a kind of consolation from his ability to continue on and to sanctify the remaining days of his life. He lived his last days as he had lived his entire life.

Forgive me for having emphasized so much the personal, but tears do not flow because of some additional article that might have been published, but rather because of the lack of a very beloved person.

I have finally reached the academic part of my words. I have a theory that a successful scholar has to bring to the field a perspective that is based on a new partnership of fields, methods, or sources. For Hanan that combination was archaeology and text. . . . But unlike most archaeologists, Hanan really was a text scholar, and his textual research was on the highest level. He worked with all kinds of texts: the Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls and Judean Desert texts, Second Temple literature, Mishnah and Talmud, always with great understanding, and he contributed greatly to our understanding in every one of his publications.

But I want to emphasize one important academic role that he played for everyone who knew him. As soon as you opened your mouth to describe an article or some research you were working on, he would immediately supply some information that you did not know or had not thought about, or some reference you had missed. This habit did not stem from arrogance but from the desire to contribute and to help. More than once I was saved from error or embarrassment because of the comments of this good friend. Hanan always, out of his love for everyone, wanted to help you, whether you were a scholar or a student did not matter.

I will conclude with a prayer that I have succeeded in some small way in expressing our feelings at the great loss of our friend and teacher.

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### Orion Center Research Grants

The Orion Center is now accepting applications for its research grants, for the 2010/2011 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. and postdoctoral 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.

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### Now Published!

*New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 9-11 January, 2005.* Edited by Esther G. Chazon & Betsy Halpern-Amaru, in collaboration with Ruth A. Clements. STDJ 88. Leiden: Brill, 2010.