STUDY OF RELIGIONS:
DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

Report of the Review Committee

December 2010

Presented to Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, Rector
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Summary Evaluation:

From an early stage of the Committee’s work it became clear that the Department review had to entail a comprehensive discussion of the place of religion in the Hebrew University as a whole and not only of the Department of Comparative Religion. Consequentially, there are a number of observations that can be safely made on the basis of our review.

The two groups of Early Christianity and Indian Studies in the Department do not match; the focus in the Department is too much on earlier periods and too exclusively historical-philological; the staff of the ‘Christianity’ group is better in teaching than in research, and the Department lacks the driving force of a scholar who might be capable of raising the standing of the Department in the Hebrew University and beyond. The Department must therefore undergo drastic reconstruction.

A satisfactory implementation of the Committee’s views will entail long-range strategic planning that will involve the immediate appointment of a scholar with theoretical skills and interests in the world of religion at large and, subsequently, the gradual filling in of new positions in Christianity and new joint positions in contemporary Islam and Judaism (possibly to be combined with a post for a scholar interested in theoretical and methodological issues) as current members of the Department retire.

The newly reconstructed Department will thus be able to articulate for its students, the university and the wider academic community the relevance of religious studies for the early twenty-first century. With the strengths of the existing Department in its two fields, the additional strategic appointments of faculty strongly committed to a social-scientific approach and the foundation of a new Center for the study of religion and society, the Department and the Hebrew University will re-emerge as a
leading centre in the study of religion in Jerusalem, Israel and the world at large.

Summary of our recommendations:

1. We recommend an extensive overhaul of the current Department of Comparative Religion, as this is the best way to guarantee the teaching and continuing research in religion at HU.

2. To avoid misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations about the contents and outcome of teaching and research as regards comparisons between religions, we also recommend changing its English name into ‘Department of Religious Studies’.

3. Given the current composition of the Department (basically a combination of Early Christianity and Indian Studies) and its focus on early periods of Christianity and India, we recommend a widening of its staff by joint appointments in contemporary Islam and Judaism, preferably with a demonstrable anthropological interest.

4. Before any restructuring of the Department takes place, it is essential that a new appointment is made of a charismatic and leading figure in religious studies with methodological and theoretical interests and a wide view of religion, preferably in the study of contemporary religion.

5. Given the impending retirement of current staff in the teaching of Christianity, we recommend maintaining at all times at least two positions
in Early Christianity and, possibly, also one in Eastern (Byzantine or Syriac) Christianity.

6. In the immediate future, after the recent losses of two full positions in the study of Christianity, it is necessary to replace at least one of these positions with a position in Christianity. Notwithstanding the importance of the study of the New Testament in Jerusalem, it is also crucial to study later forms of Christianity, in particular modern or contemporary ones in Jerusalem.

7. We recognize that the current expertise in the Department in Late Antiquity would gain greatly by a specialist in Greek and Roman religion, but we do not see this as a priority. Such a specialist, if appointed, should be a joint appointment with the Department of Classical Studies.

8. Given the approaching retirement of most members of the Department, the new configuration of the Department we advocate will be partially realized by redefining the positions left vacant by staff as they retire.

9. In due time, the part of Indian Studies that focuses on Indian culture and literature should be moved to a different department.

10. Regarding the curriculum we strongly commend the move already made by the Department to incorporate Judaism and Islam in the B.A., but the incremental progress of the different tracks, in particular, the proper integration of language teaching into the courses for Islam, Judaism and Christianity needs to be ensured.
11. The curriculum must be presented in such a way to potential students that they can immediately see the wide range of teaching of Judaism and Islam available to them in the university.

12. In the B.A., proper attention should be paid to method and theory throughout the curriculum, but the comparative element should be kept to a minimum, as students first have to acquire a satisfactory grasp of individual religions. This is different in the M.A., where comparisons should be an essential element of the study of religions.

13. In order to coordinate, facilitate and stimulate seminars, conferences and research projects in the study of religion within the university across the full gamut of the disciplines and, furthermore, to take full advantage of the unique position of Jerusalem within Islam, Judaism and Christianity, we strongly recommend the foundation of a new body to be called The Jerusalem Center for the Study of Religion and Society. Its head must be a charismatic, leading person in the fields of Islam, Judaism or Religious Anthropology, firmly based in the Department, academically but also administratively highly competent and willing to cooperate with scholars of varying disciplinary backgrounds; moreover, we strongly recommend that the selection of this crucial post be made by a specially appointed selection committee of international experts in religious studies. We expect that the proposed Center will greatly promote Jerusalem as an important center for the study of religion within the wider scholarly world.
COMMITTEE’S REPORT
The Department of Comparative Religion, hereinafter "the Department,” was established in 1956 and designed as a graduate department within the Faculty of Humanities. In 2010, the Rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem appointed a review committee to advise the University on ways “to address the entire spectrum of Study of Religions teaching and research at the HU, and not only the current composition of the Department of Comparative Religion, concerning itself with matters of undergraduate and graduate programs, addressing fields of coverage and areas of strength and weakness, and advise on ways to improve and develop the Study of Religions at the University.” The members of the review committee were Professor (Emeritus) Jan N. Bremmer, University of Groningen, The Netherlands (Chair), Professor Martin Goodman, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Professor (Emeritus) Shaul Shaked, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor (Emeritus) Harvey Goldberg, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The review committee convened for four days from November 28 – December 2, 2010. It read and discussed material prepared by the Head of the School of Philosophy and Religion, Prof. Carl Posy and by Dr. Yael
Ben-Tor, Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies. Although very helpful, this material was in some respects not wholly clear or complete but it was supplemented by further written materials requested and received by the Committee in the course of its visit.

Our evaluation of the Department is based on the material provided in the Self Evaluation Report and these further written materials, and complemented by an extensive number of interviews with staff and students. The committee met with the deans of the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Head of the School of Philosophy and Religion, the Chairperson of the Department, the members of the Department, the chairs and members of relevant departments and institutes, the Vice-Rector, the Rector and the President. The committee also met separately with delegates of the Department’s students, graduates, and PhD students (see Appendix B for a list of people interviewed).
Introduction - The Hebrew University, the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Comparative Religion:

The growing importance of religion in the contemporary world has contributed to a great increase in interest in religious studies in universities across the world. In many areas of religious studies, the contribution of scholars at the Hebrew University has been, and remains, exceptional. The challenge faced by the University is how best to harness such talented scholars as exist at the University to the benefit of the University at large and its students, to the wider society in Israel and to the international academic community.

The greatest strength of the Hebrew University in religious studies has always been in the study of Judaism (in which the university remains at the forefront of scholarship worldwide) and Islam (which has suffered from some attrition in recent years). In both cases the strong emphasis on the study of texts which has been traditional at the university has produced scholarship of unrivalled excellence, but there has also been a distinguished tradition of study (of these religions and others) within the social sciences (particularly in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the Faculty of Social Sciences). Many other aspects of religion (such as art, archaeology, law, music and politics) are studied at a high level in other parts of the university.
The impact of the religious studies carried on at the University on the wider academic and general public has been smaller than might have been expected from the wealth of available expertise, primarily because of a lack of coordination of all these efforts within the university. Moreover, in the Faculty of Humanities the study of the religions that are so prominently present in and important for Jerusalem – Islam, Judaism and Christianity – is spread over several departments. Although the 2006 Gager Report has led to the reduction of the number of departments, the present number of 22 departments, often with a strong sense of territoriality, is not really conducive to the study of religion across disciplinary lines and historical periods. The role of the Department of Comparative Religion (as it has been named in English until now) in promoting such studies has been less central than might have been expected from its name. In part this has been precisely because of the excellence of the work in individual areas in other parts of the Faculty of Humanities, which has often enabled study of specific religions and approaches to be carried on in isolation. It is clear that there are strong arguments for seeking a mechanism for encouraging, coordinating, facilitating and stimulating such studies in Jerusalem, and for taking advantage of the unique position of Jerusalem as a focus of religious interest, even fervor, in three of the major world religions.
The Committee considered carefully other options for the reorganization of the study of religions within the Faculty of Humanities to counter the existing fragmentation but concluded that it is of paramount importance that one department be made responsible for providing focus and stimulus for the study of religion as a general human phenomenon as against the study of individual religions. Ideally, this should be the task of a Department of Religious Studies. At the Hebrew University the current Department has ended up, for historical reasons, as being not so much a Department of Religious Studies as a Department of Early Christianity and Indian Studies (the latter dealing primarily with language and literature, and only marginally with religion). This is an unfortunate development that should be rectified. It is the aim of the Committee to make a number of recommendations to that effect.

The Department’s Goals and Their Implementation:

The Department’s Self Evaluation Report describes its initial objective in the following terms:

“to provide students with a broad basis in research on religious and cultural phenomena with systematic study of specific religions and comparisons between different religions. The method of the study is, in the main, historical-philological, which
means focusing on the religions and their literatures and languages. Special attention is given to the methodological issues involved in comparative studies, familiarizing students with approaches that include the phenomenological, psychological, sociological and anthropological.”

However, the Committee must regretfully observe that the actual reality falls short of this ideal. At the same time it is only fair to observe that this is not only the fault of the Department. Historical developments have meant that most members of the Department prefer to teach their own specialities instead of giving sufficient training in the methodological issues that they describe in the mission statement quoted above. This situation has to change. In addition, the growing student population means that, perhaps in contrast to previous decades, many students no longer go to the Hebrew University to become scholars but, instead, to receive a good general education that will equip them for positions in all walks of life. It is time that their university training reflects this reality.

The Committee thinks that it is possible to remedy the present situation by focusing on changes in the staffing of the Department and the further restructuring of the curriculum. The Committee firmly concluded that one alternative solution put to it, to transfer teaching in the study of religions to a new interdepartmental Program in place of the current
Department, would not provide the answer to the current problems, as emerged from a number of interviews conducted by the Committee: if Programs which are taught by a number of departments are to be successful, the participating departments themselves must be strong.

For the changes in the staffing of the Department, we recommend creating a number of posts focusing on the study of contemporary religion. Until now, this side of the study of religion has been, on the whole, neglected in the Faculty of Humanities. This has meant that the Department has not been able to make a noteworthy contribution to the study of the modern problems that are of vital concern to a wide spectrum of society, such as fundamentalism, the resurgence of religion in many parts of the globe and the changing nature of religion in the Western world. By adding modern and contemporary concerns to the curriculum, the university will be promoting the acquisition of important perspectives and skills derived from the social sciences.

As the result of the changes recommended by the Committee, the Faculty will end up with, in effect, a completely new Department of Religious Studies, which will be much better equipped to undertake the role of its present mission statement.
Department Faculty:

The Department was founded in 1956 by two brilliant scholars, David Flusser and R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, who had distinct personalities and separate interests in the study of religious traditions, but complemented each other in several ways. Zwi Werblowsky held leading positions in the international organization for the study of religions and on the board of the journal of that organization, *Numen*, and was very much sought after as a speaker and writer by different scholarly bodies. David Flusser left his mark on the study of Christianity and in particular the study of Jesus and on the interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and its relation to the formation of Christianity. The shape and the traditions of the Department were largely determined by these two founding fathers. The Department later included Michael E. Stone, who is working on the Armenian tradition, especially in relation to the Jewish Apocrypha, and Shaul Shaked, whose work is mainly in the field of Iranian Studies as well as in that of Jewish and general magical traditions in Late Antiquity in the Near East. Both have retired some years ago. It also included David Shulman, who is still a member of the Department, but who has never felt that his main vocation was the study of religious phenomena. Shulman deals with Indian languages and literatures, with particular interest in the South Indian literary traditions. Each of the three last-named scholars held a joint appointment with the
Department of Indian, Iranian and Armenian Studies, which no longer exists.

Currently the Department consists of two groups of instructors, in line with the dual composition of the Department in general: a group of people working on Christianity, mostly on early Christianity, and another group working on Indian languages and literatures, mostly on earlier periods. There seems to be little or no intellectual interaction between the two groups.

The full-time members of staff working on early Christianity currently consist of three people: Dr. David Satran, Dr. Bruria Biton-Ashkeloni and Dr. Serge Ruzer. Professor Paula Fredriksen, a very eminent scholar in the fields of New Testament studies and Patristics, is a distinguished visiting professor attached to the Department. Up to about a year ago there were two additional members of this section in the Department: Professor Guy Stroumsa and Dr. Sergio La Porta, who left the Department for different reasons. With the departure of these scholars the Department has not only been considerably depleted in number in relation to its overall staffing level, but it has also been deprived of two persons who made unique contributions to its curriculum and endowed it with dimensions that it lacks at the moment. The former is a highly regarded scholar with an interest in the religion of Late Antiquity, in the study of
religion in general and in the history of modern scholarship of religion. Dr. La Porta was the only member of the Department to deal with Eastern Christianity (Dr. Ruzer contributes partly to this field, but chiefly from the point of view of the study of the Gospels), and he was a major driving force in organizing international conferences on problems of religion and culture in general.

Professor Steven Kaplan, who is a specialist in African culture, with particular emphasis on Ethiopia (and thus having a particular interest in Ethiopian Christianity and Judaism), is also the one person in the current composition of the Department who is interested in the methodology of the study of religion in general. As he has held and is still holding important central positions in the academic administration of the university, currently as director of the Truman Institute for Peace, his attention has inevitably not been wholly directed to the Department.

In looking at the composition of the Christianity section of the Department, one cannot fail to notice that practically all full-time faculty members are beyond the point of their mid-career and are approaching the age of retirement. Within approximately ten years the whole of this section of the Department will retire.

It is clear that the strength of the remaining full-time staff in early Christianity does not lie primarily in their research output. They are widely
recognized as competent scholars, but most of them do not hold a particularly prominent position in their field either in the Hebrew University or internationally. On the other hand, one should take into account the very high esteem they enjoy as teachers. The Committee has read the ranking given to them by the student body and this was confirmed by the frank talks with student representatives, who had only praise for the dedication, openness, willingness to help and erudition of the instructors in the Department, far above what one usually gets from students in a similar department. Most students on all levels also claimed that their learning experience in this Department is more satisfactory than in other departments, and this is confirmed by the formal student evaluations.

It is also clear that the very good atmosphere that reigns in the Department, an atmosphere that is conducive to good learning experience, derives from the dedication of the staff to teaching rather than from the research culture. What is missing in the Department in its present composition is an outstanding scholar, who could lift the prestige of the Department, override reservations from colleagues in other departments, and create a new spirit of intensive and innovative research that is lacking at this moment in the Department.

Considering these factors the Committee considers it necessary to take radical measures in order to repair the standing of the Department. The
Committee is of the opinion that the profound changes that need to be implemented in the Department can be brought about by appointing as soon as it is feasible a leading scholar in a major field of religious studies, and then, gradually, by making several new appointments to compensate for the impending retirement of most members of the Christianity section. It is of course absolutely necessary to see to it that the new appointments fulfill not only the needs of the Department in the years to come as far as fields of study are concerned, but also contribute to the standing of the Department as a center for the general study of religion within the university and beyond. The proper order of new appointments should therefore be, first, the appointment of a senior, but preferably relatively young scholar, who should be a driving force in the Department.

The other major section in the Department of Religious Studies is that of Indian Studies, which in its present constitution is the result of the decision to dissolve the Department of Indian, Iranian and Armenian Studies by doing away with its Iranian component. The members of the Indian section of that department preferred not to join the Department of East Asian Studies. Notwithstanding, the natural place for those aspects of Indian Studies that do not deal with religion should be in a department different from that of Religious Studies. The existing combination of the study of Christianity with that of a general section on Indian languages and
literatures does not make for an acceptable and well-balanced Department of Religious Studies.

As far as the composition of the Indian section is concerned, the leadership of David Shulman, who is a highly-regarded expert in the field and a skilled moderator of people, has assured this section of the Department a respected position not only in Israel but also globally. The younger people in the group are all gifted scholars with a very good reputation.

**Department Curriculum:**

The Department has for many years taught an M.A. syllabus in which students are trained to an impressively high level in the study and analysis of specific religious texts in Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism. A number of these students go on to doctoral studies in specific religious traditions, again generally through analysis of specific texts. The current B.A. degree has recently been restructured and divided into four tracks (Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the religions and cultures of India and Tibet); teaching for the B.A. is also in general text-based, and the provision of the teaching in Judaism and Islam is for the most part provided through courses offered by other departments within the Faculty of Humanities.
B.A. course

Full evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the B.A. curriculum is restricted by the novelty of the degree in its present form and its continuing evolution – some aspects of the curriculum were only implemented for the first time at the beginning of the current academic year, and some other planned aspects have yet to be implemented. The current syllabus shows signs of having been created out of existing resources without the time and capacity for creative innovation which would be desirable in designing such a syllabus from scratch.

Nonetheless, the general rationale and distinctive features of the teaching methods and delivery of the current course are by now clear, and some comment is possible.

The course is already attracting, and keeping, an impressive number of students, so there is clearly a market for a course such as is being offered, but delivery (perhaps inevitably, in light of the current stress on staffing within the Department) is imperfect in the following ways:

a. There is considerable imbalance between the study of Indian religions and the study of Christianity in the degree to which language acquisition is required and the concentration on analysis of texts in the original language: students of Indian religions study
Sanskrit or other relevant languages from the first year and from early in the course read Sanskrit texts, whereas the requirement to learn Latin or Greek is deferred for students concentrating on Christianity until the second and third years of the course, and the texts are in practice studied in translation, so that the relevance of the language study to the course is less obvious. The rhetoric of the Department strongly emphasizes philological studies, and the students we interviewed expressed a desire for more, not less, language study, but it may be that substitution of other skills for the study of religion, such as field work (not currently available in the syllabus), would be more appropriate for a number of students. It is in any case clear that all language study that is retained needs to be properly integrated into the teaching of the course as a whole.

b. The current syllabus envisages that the teaching of Islam and Judaism will be achieved primarily through courses already provided by other departments within the Faculty of Humanities. This is unavoidable in light of the current staffing profile of the Department, but it was noted by some of the teachers from those other departments when they gave evidence to the Committee that much of that teaching is text-based and requires a level of linguistic and other
expertise which cannot be taken for granted in the case of B.A. students from the Religions department.

c. Teaching of methodological and comparative issues is effectively confined to a single course on ‘Introduction to the Study of Religions’ (by all accounts excellently delivered, although it was noted by some that the emphasis in the course was on western religions and that additional emphasis on methods in the study of eastern religions would be desirable). A number of students stressed the need to expand teaching on method and to integrate such teaching into the rest of the syllabus.

d. Comparative religion features very little in the current B.A. program; it is essentially confined to a seminar examining a single issue in two religions in the third year. Once the Judaism and Islam tracks are more firmly established, it would seem desirable to include teaching on Jewish-Muslim, Muslim-Christian and Jewish-Christian relations and interactions, which would add a distinctive flavor (along with the emphasis on method noted in the paragraph above) to the teaching of Judaism and Islam in this Department compared to elsewhere in the faculty.
e. A number of students voiced their frustration at the sparse offerings on contemporary religions in the syllabus. The field study to religious communities in Jerusalem was much praised by the students, but they noted that it left them with only a very patchy understanding of Christianity since Late Antiquity. There were not as yet any students on the course studying Judaism or Islam for us to interview, but we would expect the same criticism to apply to them.

f. If the B.A. is to attract students in Judaism and Islam taking full advantage of appropriate teaching in these two religions elsewhere in the Faculty, it is desirable to advertise in the academic catalogue, in an accessible and effective manner, the nature and variety of the elective courses available to prospective students.

g. Last but not least: once the new position of a scholar with a social-science interest in the theory and methodology of religion is in place, the curriculum should be drastically revised into two tracks of equal value. The first track should retain the historical-philological approach with languages. The second track should focus on theory and social-science methods for the understanding of contemporary religion. (Of course, there should be a requirement for students in
one track to gain some exposure to the emphases of the other track.)

In this way we will have two tracks of different orientation but of equally valuable skills and challenges. It should be possible for students of either of these two tracks to be of the caliber that is required for an honors track.

*M.A. course*

The M.A. students we saw declared themselves very pleased with the teaching they were receiving, but a number stated that they were frustrated by the lack of relevant courses in modern and contemporary religion, especially on contemporary Christianity and on modern India. They also raised two other general issues about the structure of the course:

a. There are insufficient courses on comparisons between religions.

b. A student who has failed to study a religion other than that in which she or he is concentrating before reaching the M.A. level is not permitted to count an introductory course to that second religion as part of the M.A. curriculum.

In both cases, the students seemed to us to point to a weakness in the M.A. program in that insufficient attention is paid to enabling students to benefit from approaches comparing different religions.
Ph.D. course

The doctoral students expressed themselves highly satisfied with the wealth of scholarly expertise made available to them by the Department. It was clear that comparative studies were seen by some as very important and by others as essentially a distraction from completion of their theses. The committee noted that the Department had been supportive of a student-led initiative to hold a seminar for M.A. and Ph.D. students but that a forum for such comparisons is not provided for doctoral students unless there are students who take the initiative, and that as a result much doctoral study is carried on in isolation.

Department Students:

Currently (Fall 2010), the new B.A. program within the Department, has begun its third year. The following table shows the present distribution of students at the B.A., M.A. and doctoral levels, and also the breakdown into years.
Department of Comparative Religion  
Student Enrollment – Academic Year 2010-2011  
[accurate as of October 28, 2010]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>Ph.D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>22 (registered in classes)</td>
<td>5 + 2 (supplementary studies preparatory to M.A. program)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7 [+ 2 on leave of absence from studies]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total number of students in 2010-2011:** 82

Several points are noteworthy: the positive response to the new program in which 51 students are now enrolled, and the encouraging high proportion (18/22) of the students continuing from the first to the second years. The most recent innovation is the ability to choose a concentration in Islam or Judaism, in addition to the earlier tracks of Christianity and India, but it is
too early to assess the impact of these new possibilities on the number of students.

We had the opportunity of interviewing students from the three degree levels. Those who agreed to sit with the committee were self-selected. Six B.A. students appeared. They included students focusing on India (2) and those emphasizing Christianity (4). The general feeling about the Department and the evaluation of the program was definitely positive, and the students articulated themselves well. It is worth noting a remark by a member of adjunct faculty, who has had experience in teaching B.A. students in other universities in Israel. He stated that he could immediately sense that the level and the commitment of the students in Jerusalem were significantly higher than what he had experienced elsewhere. The students, who expressed a range of points of view, also voiced what they felt was missing in the program.

One was a lack of teaching about contemporary religious phenomena. The students appreciated the importance of classical texts, and some were enthusiastic about studying them, but they felt they should be studying modern aspects of religion as well, including the contributions of sociology, anthropology and political science. Others, while relating positively to the text-based study, thought that it was not always integrated with the idea of studying religion. The issue of "integration," or not being
sure about where the program as a whole was headed, came up in other contexts as well.

This feeling of lack of clarity of direction was expressed by the students, even while individual courses were said to be interesting and the teaching was highly evaluated. Parallel to this, the one (first-year) course devoted to general concepts and methods ("Approaches to the Study of Religion") was viewed as standing by itself, and its link to the materials and texts featured in other courses was not made explicit. This critique was formulated in terms of wanting more instruction, and not as signaling a general discouragement with what they were learning.

Seven M.A. students were interviewed, representing the following concentrations: Christianity – 4, India – 2, Tibetan religion – 1. Their sense of identification with the Department was palpable, and they expressed praise for the opening of the B.A. program even though it did not affect them directly. They made special mention of the course based on tours of Christian sites and meeting of communities, which gave them a sense of contemporary Jerusalem. Like the B.A. students, they wished that there were more teachers in the Department, and had to look to other departments (including classes in the Rothberg school) to cover their interests. Even though they reported that the teachers were helpful in guiding them in this search, it was the Committee's impression that the
interdepartmental resources were under-utilized. The M.A. students also were disappointed by the fact that they could not take advantage of the recent incorporation of Islamic studies because they had not taken the necessary language courses.

Four doctoral students appeared at the Committee interview, most of them well-advanced in their dissertation writing. They were happy with the teaching staff, but felt the lack of institutional support at several levels. First was a lack of physical space where they might study, leave their books (they had to work at both the Mt. Scopus and National libraries), and interact with other graduate students. Parallel to this was the lack of graduate-student seminars that could expand horizons and enrich their own work. Also, they expressed eagerness for opportunities to teach during part of their research-student careers. In addition, while they had received support from the Authority of Research Students for one trip abroad, they felt that in the current academic atmosphere there should be more support for presenting papers at conferences. The picture emerging at all the levels appeared consistent: satisfaction at the ability for in-depth study of specific topics and religious traditions, but criticism of the isolation of their work from other directions and disciplines within the university.
The Jerusalem Center for the Study of Religion and Society:

The Committee's deliberations on the study of religion at the Hebrew University were carried out on two planes. One focused on the specific department within the Faculty of Humanities, and the other concerned ways of taking greater advantage of excellent scholars in the university, in all the faculties, who work on topics that involved religion. In particular, the engagement of the Faculty of Social Sciences (e.g. the departments of Sociology and Anthropology, or Political Science), presents the possibility of interdisciplinary research, while other units such as the School of Education or the Law School are also relevant. It is the Committee’s strong opinion that the best way to energize the study of religion is by the creation of a formal Center that would encourage cooperation across disciplinary boundaries, and emphasize the critical place of religion in a variety of social (political, economic, and so forth) processes along with further exploration of its cultural and spiritual dimensions. Such a Center would coordinate, facilitate and stimulate a range of activities including seminars, conferences, and innovative research projects, taking advantage of the unique position of Jerusalem within Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. We thus recommend the foundation of a body to be called The Jerusalem Center for the Study of Religion and Society. It should be headed by a charismatic, leading person in a field relating to the study of religion who
must be firmly based in the Department of Religious Studies, be highly competent academically but also possessing administrative skills, and be willing to cooperate with scholars of varying disciplinary backgrounds. We expect that such a Center will greatly promote Jerusalem as an important center for the study of religion within the wider scholarly world. Given the prime importance of this position, it is absolutely necessary that the selection of this crucial post be made by a specially appointed selection committee of, mainly, international experts in religious studies. Members of such a committee, of course, would first familiarize themselves with the range of research, teaching, and personnel related to the study of religion at the university. The creation of such a Center necessitates a commitment by the University administration to set this as a high-priority goal in its fundraising activity. It may be assumed that given the resonance of Jerusalem with the major religions this should not prove too difficult a task.

**Summary Evaluation:**

From an early stage of the Committee’s work it became clear that the Department review had to entail a comprehensive discussion of the place of religion in the Hebrew University as a whole and not only of the Department of Comparative Religion. Consequentially, there are a number of observations that can be safely made on the basis of our review.
The two groups of Early Christianity and Indian Studies in the Department do not match; the focus in the Department is too much on earlier periods and too exclusively historical-philological; the staff of the ‘Christianity’ group is better in teaching than in research, and the Department lacks the driving force of a scholar who might be capable of raising the standing of the Department in the Hebrew University and beyond. The Department must therefore undergo drastic reconstruction.

A satisfactory implementation of the Committee’s views will entail long-range strategic planning that will involve the immediate appointment of a scholar with theoretical skills and interests in the world of religion at large and, subsequently, the gradual filling in of new positions in Christianity and new joint positions in contemporary Islam and Judaism (possibly to be combined with a post for a scholar interested in theoretical and methodological issues) as current members of the Department retire.

The newly reconstructed Department will thus be able to articulate for its students, the university and the wider academic community the relevance of religious studies for the early twenty-first century. With the strengths of the existing Department in its two fields, the additional strategic appointments of faculty strongly committed to a social-scientific approach and the foundation of a new Center for the study of religion and society, the Department and the Hebrew University will re-emerge as a
leading centre in the study of religion in Jerusalem, Israel and the world at large.

Summary of our recommendations:

1. We recommend an extensive overhaul of the current Department of Comparative Religion, as this is the best way to guarantee the teaching and continuing research in religion at HU.

2. To avoid misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations about the contents and outcome of teaching and research as regards comparisons between religions, we also recommend changing its English name into ‘Department of Religious Studies’.

3. Given the current composition of the Department (basically a combination of Early Christianity and Indian Studies) and its focus on early periods of Christianity and India, we recommend a widening of its staff by joint appointments in contemporary Islam and Judaism, preferably with a demonstrable anthropological interest.

4. Before any restructuring of the Department takes place, it is essential that a new appointment is made of a charismatic and leading figure in
religious studies with methodological and theoretical interests and a wide view of religion, preferably in the study of contemporary religion.

5. Given the impending retirement of current staff in the teaching of Christianity, we recommend maintaining at all times at least two positions in Early Christianity and, possibly, also one in Eastern (Byzantine or Syriac) Christianity.

6. In the immediate future, after the recent losses of two full positions in the study of Christianity, it is necessary to replace at least one of these positions with a position in Christianity. Notwithstanding the importance of the study of the New Testament in Jerusalem, it is also crucial to study later forms of Christianity, in particular modern or contemporary ones in Jerusalem.

7. We recognize that the current expertise in the Department in Late Antiquity would gain greatly by a specialist in Greek and Roman religion, but we do not see this as a priority. Such a specialist, if appointed, should be a joint appointment with the Department of Classical Studies.
8. Given the approaching retirement of most members of the Department, the new configuration of the Department we advocate will be partially realized by redefining the positions left vacant by staff as they retire.

9. In due time, the part of Indian Studies that focuses on Indian culture and literature should be moved to a different department.

10. Regarding the curriculum we strongly commend the move already made by the Department to incorporate Judaism and Islam in the B.A., but the incremental progress of the different tracks, in particular, the proper integration of language teaching into the courses for Islam, Judaism and Christianity needs to be ensured.

11. The curriculum must be presented in such a way to potential students that they can immediately see the wide range of teaching of Judaism and Islam available to them in the university.

12. In the B.A., proper attention should be paid to method and theory throughout the curriculum, but the comparative element should be kept to a minimum, as students first have to acquire a satisfactory grasp of individual
religions. This is different in the M.A., where comparisons should be an essential element of the study of religions.

13. In order to coordinate, facilitate and stimulate seminars, conferences and research projects in the study of religion within the university across the full gamut of the disciplines and, furthermore, to take full advantage of the unique position of Jerusalem within Islam, Judaism and Christianity, we strongly recommend the foundation of a new body to be called The Jerusalem Center for the Study of Religion and Society. Its head must be a charismatic, leading person in the fields of Islam, Judaism or Religious Anthropology, firmly based in the Department, academically but also administratively highly competent and willing to cooperate with scholars of varying disciplinary backgrounds; moreover, we strongly recommend that the selection of this crucial post be made by a specially appointed selection committee of international experts in religious studies. We expect that the proposed Center will greatly promote Jerusalem as an important center for the study of religion within the wider scholarly world.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

RESUMES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1) Professor Jan N. Bremmer, Chair (University of Groningen)

2) Professor Harvey Goldberg (Hebrew University)

3) Professor Martin Goodman (Oxford)

4) Professor Shaul Shaked (Hebrew University)
CURRICULUM VITAE

Jan Nicolaas Bremmer (b. December 18th, 1944)  
Professor Emeritus Religious Studies  
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies  
University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands

December 2010

SPECIALITIES:
Greek, Roman, Early Christian, and Contemporary Religion,  
Social History, History of Scholarship

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION:
Free University, Amsterdam, 1962 - 1970 (Classics and Spanish)  
Bristol University, 1969 - 1970

DISSERTATION:
The Early Greek Conception of the Soul (Free University Amsterdam: 1979)

EMPLOYMENT:
Military Service (Intelligence: Russian), 1970 -1972  
Local high-school teacher, Classics, 1972 - 1974  
Utrecht University: Assistant Professor of Ancient History, 1974-1978; Associate Professor of Ancient History, 1978 - 1990  
University of Groningen: Chair, Religious Studies, 1990-2009

FELLOWSHIPS AND VISITING PROFESSORSHIPS:
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, Fall 2000  
Visiting Canterbury Fellowship, Christchurch (NZ), March 2002  
Inaugural Getty Villa Professor, Malibu, 2006-2007  
Visiting Leventis Professor, Edinburgh, Autumn 2007  
Senior Onassis Fellow, Autumn 2008

FORMAL LECTURES:
Heuscheuervortrag, Heidelberg, 1996
Loeb Lecture, Harvard, 1997
Samson Eitrem Memorial Lecture, Oslo, 1998
4 lectures on conversion, Graduiertenkolleg ‘Das antike Christentum’, Bremen, October 2004

EDITORIAL ACTIVITIES:
*Iconography of Religion*, Leiden: Brill, editor-in-chief, 1990-
*Kerk en Theologie*, member Editorial Board, 1990-2006
*Feit & Fictie*, member Advisory Board, 1993-2005
*Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha*, Leuven: Peeters, editor-in-chief, 1995-
*Acta Antiqua Hungarica*, member Advisory Board, 2000-
*Ancient Narrative*, member Editorial Board, 2002-
*Groningen Studies in Cultural Change*, Leuven: Peeters, member Editorial Board, 2003-
*Studies in the History and Anthropology of Religion*, Leuven: Peeters, editor, 2007-

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:
Teaching Committee, Faculty of Letters, University Utrecht, Chairman 1985 - 1987
Rudolf Agricola Institute for the Study of the Humanities, Chairman, 1994 - 2002
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, Dean, 1996 - 2000, 2001-2005
The Future of the Religious Past, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research Programme, vice-chairperson, 2003-

REFEREERING
Cambridge University Press, Cornell University, Hebrew University, Jacobs University Bremen, Ohio State University, Oxford University Press, Universität Erfurt, University of Cincinnati, University of North Carolina, Yale University, Yale University Press

HOMEPAGE:
http://www.rug.nl/staff/j.n.bremmer/index

MANY PUBLICATIONS:
http://www.creamofscience.org/nl/page/keur.view/11.keur
ROYAL DISTINCTION
Officer in the Order of Oranje-Nassau (2006)

BOOKS
(in preparation, Co-editor with Marco Formisano)
Perpetua’s Passions, Oxford: Oxford University Press

1983 The Early Greek Concept of the Soul

1987 (Editor)
Interpretations of Greek Mythology, London: Croom Helm

(Co-author, with N. Horsfall)
Roman Myth and Mythography
London: Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Supplements no 52

1988 (Co-author, with J. den Boeft)
Martelaren van de Oude Kerk (a translation into Dutch of the oldest Christian Acta Martyrum), Kampen: Kok

(Emailor, with Herman Roodenburg)
Gebaren en lichaamshouding van de oudheid tot heden, Nijmegen: SUN, 1993
O istorie culturala a gesturilor, Bukarest: Editura Polimark, 2000

1992 (Co-editor, with F. García Martínez)
Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism: a symposium in honour of A.S. van der Woude, Kampen: Kok Pharos

1994 Greek Religion (Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 24)
translated as Götter, Mythen und Heiligtümer im antiken Griechenland
Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996
La religione greca, Cosenza: Giordano, 2002
Goden en mensen in het oude Griekenland, Kampen: Ten Have, 2004
La religion griega, Cordoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 2006

1995 (Co-editor, with Lourens P. van den Bosch)
Between Poverty and the Pyre. Moments in the History of Widowhood
London: Routledge
(Editor)
The Apocryphal Acts of John, Kampen: Kok Pharos

1996 (Editor)
The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, Kampen: Kok Pharos

1997 (Co-editor, with Herman Roodenburg)
A Cultural History of Humour, Cambridge: Polity Press,
translated as Kulturgeschichte des Humors: von der Antike bis heute
Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999
Homo ridens, Amsterdam: Boom, 1999
Una historia cultural del humor, Madrid: Sequitur, 1999
Una história cultural do humor
Rio de Janeiro and Sáo Paulo: Editora Record, 2000

1998 (Editor)
The Apocryphal Acts of Peter: Magic, Miracles and Gnosticism,
Leuven: Peeters
2000  (Editor)
_The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew_, Leuven: Peeters

2001  (Editor)
_The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas_, Leuven: Peeters

2002  _The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife_, London: Routledge

2003  (Co-editor, with J. Veenstra)
_The Metamorphosis of Magic from Antiquity to the Middle Ages_, Leuven: Peeters

(Co-editor, with I. Czachesz)
_The Apocalypse of Peter_, Leuven: Peeters

2005  _Van zendelingen, zuilen en zaprelije_, Delft: Eburon

2006  (Co-editor, with W.J. van Bekkum and A.L. Molendijk)
_Cultures of Conversions_, Leuven: Peeters

(Co-editor, with W.J. van Bekkum and A.L. Molendijk)
_Paradigms, Poetics and Politics of Conversion_, Leuven: Peeters

2007  (Editor)
_The Strange World of Human Sacrifice_, Leuven: Peeters

(Co-editor, with I. Czachesz)
_The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul_, Leuven: Peeters

2008  _Greek Religion & Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East_, Leiden: Brill


(Co-editor with Andrew Erskine)

(Editor)
_The Pseudo-Clementines_, Leuven: Peeters
CURRICULUM VITAE

Harvey E. Goldberg

May 16, 1939

EDUCATION
1961 Columbia College, A.B.
1963 Harvard University, M.A.
1967 Harvard University, Ph.D.
1961 Jewish Theological Seminary of America

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT (REGULAR APPOINTMENTS)
Spring, 1966 Harvard University Teaching Fellow
Fall, 1966 University of Iowa Instructor
1967-1969 University of Iowa Assistant Professor
1969-1972 University of Iowa Associate Professor
Curator of Human Relations Area Files
1972-1979 Hebrew University Senior Lecturer
1979-1987 Hebrew University Associate Professor
1984-1987 Chairperson
1987- Hebrew University Professor
Spring, 2004 Co-organizer of Group at
Winter, 2005 Sarah Allen Shaine Chair in
Fall, 2007 Sociology and Anthropology Emeritus

VISITING APPOINTMENTS
1968-1969 Columbia University Research Associate
Summer, 1975; Jewish Theological Seminary Visiting Lecturer
1989; 1991; 1994 University of Texas Visiting Professor
Summer, 1977 University of Cambridge: St. Johns College Visiting Scholar
1977-1978 University of Cambridge: New Hall College Fellow
Fall, 1987 University of California at Berkeley Visiting Professor
Spring, 1988; Brown University Visiting Professor
1994 Annenberg Research Institute Fellow
Fall, 1989 Ecole des Hautes Etudes
Winter, 1994
Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
Visiting Lecturer

Winter, 1995
Rockefeller Study Center, Bellagio
Skirball Fellow

Spring, 1995
Dartmouth College
Visiting Professor

Spring, 1999
Boğaziçi University, Istanbul
Rockefeller Study Center, Bellagio Fellow

Fall, 1999;
Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania
Visiting Professor

2002-2003
Indiana University
Distinguished Visiting Professor

2007-2008
University of Florida
Visiting Professor

EDITORSHIPS
Corresponding editor for Israel, Current Anthropology, 1977-1983.
International Editorial Board, Wayne State University Press series on Jewish Ethnography
International Editorial Board, Jewish Cultural Studies series, Littman Library
Editor (with Matthias Lehmann), Indiana University Press series in Sephardi and Mizrahi Studies

BOOKS AND EDITED VOLUMES


Antropologia: Adam, Hevrah Ve-Tarbut [Introduction to Anthropology]. Tel Aviv, "Gome" (Tcherikover), 1978. (In collaboration with Orit Ziv and Eileen Basker, Hebrew)


Orit Abuhav, Esther Hertzog, Harvey Goldberg and Emanuel Marx, ed. Yisrael: Antropologia Meqomit [A Reader in Israeli Anthropology]. Tel Aviv, Tcherikover, 1998. (Hebrew)


SOME RECENT ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS


The Oriental and the Orientalist: The Meeting of Mordecai Ha-Cohen and Nahum Slouschz. Jewish Culture and History 7:1-30, 2004


CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME
Martin David Goodman, M.A., D.Phil., D.Litt., F.B.A.

CURRENT POST
Professor of Jewish Studies, University of Oxford

DATE OF BIRTH
1 August 1953

EDUCATION
1971 (January-July) Hebrew University of Jerusalem: One Year Programme

1971-80 Trinity College, Oxford: B.A. in Literae Humaniores 1971-75

D.Phil. 1975-80: Thesis in the Sub-Faculty of Ancient History on State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132-212.

CURRENT POSITIONS

1991 - Reader in Jewish Studies in the University of Oxford and Professorial Fellow of Wolfson College. (Title of Professor of Jewish Studies conferred in 1996)

1986 - Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

1988 - Lecturer in Roman History at Christ Church, Oxford.

PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS HELD


1977 - 86 Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Birmingham
1986 - 91  Senior Research Fellow of St. Cross College.

1990 - 91  Hebrew Centre Lecturer in Ancient History, University of Oxford.

1993  (March-September) Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.


2003-5  British Academy Research Reader

2005-7  Chairman of the Faculty Board of Oriental Studies

PUBLICATIONS (books)

Books authored:


The Essenes according to the Classical Sources (with Geza Vermes). JSOT Press, Sheffield. 1989.


Books edited:


Martin Goodman and Philip Alexander, eds., *Rabbinic texts and the History of Late-Roman Palestine*, British Academy, Oxford, 2010

HONOURS:

President, British Association for Jewish Studies (1995).

Elected Fellow of the British Academy (1996).

National Jewish Book Award for Scholarship (2003).

Patron of the Parkes Institute (2007).
Shaul Shaked
CURRICULUM VITAE

1933, Born Debrecen, Hungary; has lived in Israel since 1934.
B.A., M.A. in Arabic Language and Literature, Semitic Philology and Comparative Religion, at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Ph.D. in Iranian Languages, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

1964/5, Assistant Lecturer, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

From 1965, Lecturer, subsequently Professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

At various periods: Chairman, Department of Indian, Iranian and Armenian Studies, Hebrew University; Chairman, Department of Comparative Religion, Hebrew University; Chairman, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University.

Over the years, Visiting Professor or Fellow at various institutions, among which: University of California, Berkeley; Harvard University; Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem; New York University and Columbia University; Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg, and Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg; Wolfson College, Cambridge; The Annenberg Research Institute, Philadelphia; Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des Sciences Religieuses, Paris; Collège de France, Paris; the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS).

Member of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Past Chairman of the Section of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Israel Academy. 2000-2003, President of the International Academic Union/Union Académique Internationale, and since 2003, Honorary President of the UAI. Member of the Council of Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum.


Member of the editorial boards of Israel Oriental Studies, vols. 1-7; Bulletin of the Asia Institute; Pe’amim; Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies; Archiv für Religionsgeschichte; Acta Iranica. Chairman of the editorial board, Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam.
Selected Publications

BOOKS
2. *Irano-Judaica*. Studies relating to Jewish contacts with Persian culture throughout the ages, ed. by S. Shaked (with A. Netzer). vols. 1-6, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

ARTICLES


35 "*Dramatis personae* in the Jewish magic texts: some differences between incantation bowls and Geniza magic”, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 13 (2006), 363-387.


APPENDIX B

List of People who Met with the Committee

The President, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson
The Rector, Prof. Sarah Stroumsa
The Vice-Rector, Prof. Yaacov Schul

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Prof. Reuven Amitai
Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Avner De-Shalit

Chairman, Department of Religion Dr. Yael Ben-Tor
Head of School of Philosophy & Religion Prof. Carl Posy

Department Faculty (and former members of the Department):
Prof. Steven Kaplan
Prof. David Shulman
Prof. Michael Stone (emeritus)
Prof. Guy Stroumsa (emeritus)
Prof. Sara Sviri
Dr. Bruria Biton-Ashkelony
Dr. Ophira Gamliel
Dr. Yohanan Grinshpon
Dr. Amnon Ramon
Dr. Sharon Roubach
Dr. Serge Ruzer
Dr. David Satran
Dr. Eviatar Shulman
Ms. Dana Marzel

Other Faculty:
Prof. Haggai Ben Shammai
Prof. Yohanan Friedmann (emeritus)
Prof. Isaiah Gafni
Prof. Zeev Harvey
Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem
Prof. Michael Heyd
Prof. Menahem Kister
Prof. Shlomo Naeh
Prof. Avigdor Shinan
Prof. Ella Landau-Tasseron
Prof. Shira Wolosky
Prof. Yair Zakovitch

Dr. Jonathan Garb
Dr. Miriam Goldstein
Dr. Ronnie Goldstein
Dr. Yehuda Goodman
Dr. Meir Hatina
Dr. Oded Irshai
Dr. Raymond Leicht
Dr. Maren Niehoff
Dr. Michael Segal
Dr. Moshe Sluhovsky
Dr. Nurit Stadler
Dr. Rina Talgam
Dr. Ofra Tirosh-Becker

Meeting with BA students (6)
Meeting with MA students (7)
Meeting with PhD students (4)