

We honor our Emeritus Faculty for their distin-

HUC - JIR'S

guished service to the College-Institute and years

ESTEEMED

of teaching, scholarship, and mentorship. They

EMERITUS

share their reminiscences with *The Chronicle*

FACULTY

Ruth Friedman and Leah Kaplan

### DR. AVRAHAM BIRAN

Director Emeritus, Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology (NGSBA); Adjunct Professor Emeritus of Biblical Archaeology, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem



Professor Avraham Biran has stood in the footprints of Jewish kings and forefathers in his archaeological work unearthing ruins from nearly 4000 years ago. At the site of the 3700-year-old Cannanite Triple Arched Gate at Tel Dan, which he discovered in 1979, he can visualize Abraham walking up the steps leading to the Gate when he came to rescue his nephew Lot, and being greeted by the elders of Laish, as the place was then called. King David's legacy materialized for the world in 1993, when Biran found the first archaeological evidence supporting the

existence of the House of David – a stele inscription in Aramic paleo-Hebrew dating from the 9th century B.C.E, a discovery that was featured on the front page of the New York Times.

Biran was a member of HUC-JIR faculty for 28 years (1974-2002), and served as Director of HUC-JIR's Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology (NGSBA) in Jerusalem. He received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1935, and returned to Palestine as the Thayer Fellow at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. From 1937 to 1945, he served as District Officer of the Government of Palestine for the Beth-Shean Valley, and in 1946 became the District Officer of Jerusalem. After the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948 he became Deputy Military Governor of Jerusalem and soon after served as District Commissioner of the city. In the

late 1950s he lived in Los Angeles, where he served as the Consul-General of Israel for 11 western states. Upon his return, he became Director of Armistice Affairs of the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, and from 1961 to 1974, before joining the HUC-JIR faculty, he was Director of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums.

Biran participated in excavations throughout the Middle East, including those of the University of Pennsylvania in Iraq—at Tepe Gawra near Mosul and Khafaje near Baghdad, and in the American Schools of Oriental Research excavations near Irbid in Jordan. He accompanied Nelson Glueck in his epoch-making discoveries at Tel el-Kheleifeh at the head of the Gulf of Eilat. Biran directed the excavations of Anathoth, Tel Zippor, Ira, Aroer, the synagogue of Yesud Hama'alah, and the longest ongoing excavations in Israel at Tel Dan, from 1966 to the present day.

He has documented his Tel Dan excavations in numerous articles and books, including *Dan, 25 Years of Excavation* (in Hebrew, Hameuchad Publishing House/Israel Exploration Society, 1992), *Biblical Dan* (Israel Exploration Society/HUC-JIR, Jerusalem, 1994), *Dan I* (with David Ilan and Raphael Greenberg, HUC-JIR Annual Series, 1995), and *Dan II* (with Rachel Ben-Dov, HUC-JIR Annual Series, 2002). He presented numerous papers in Israel and abroad, and was one of the most popular lecturers at the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) annual meetings in the United States. Dr. Biran received Israel's highest honor, the Israel Prize, in 2002.

Biran tells of the origins of the Tel Dan dig, a year before the Six Day War. He explains that "we didn't go there because it was the site of Biblical Dan or even because that's where we thought it was. It was near the border with Syria and Lebanon, at the source of the Jordan River. The army had been digging trenches and putting up gun emplacements facing the Syrian positions. Some kibbutzniks from Kibbutz Dan came and told me that the army was destroying the tel." Led to this 'rescue dig' by necessity, he had found the site of some of the most

important biblical archaeological discoveries in history.

Dr. Biran envisions an expanding presence for HUC-JIR in Israeli society, to advance the cause of pluralistic Judaism and to maintain and strengthen the bridges between Diaspora Judaism and Israel. He feels that biblical archaeology has a great deal to contribute towards these goals, and that the work that the NGSBA produces – scholarly publications, research, and community and youth development, helps build strong foundations for Jewish identity and Jewish literacy.

### PRO. GERALD BUBIS

Founding Director, School of Jewish Communal Service; Alfred Gottschalk Professor Emeritus of Jewish Communal Service, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles



When Professor Gerald Bubis first came to HUC-JIR after 18 years of service as a Jewish communal professional working at Jewish centers, camps, and Hillels, he believed that his foray into academia would be temporary. However, as Founding Director of HUC-JIR's School of Jewish Communal Service (SJCS) – established in 1968 – and a member of the HUC-JIR faculty, Bubis served the College-Institute for 21 years until his retirement in 1989, training a generation of Jewish communal service professionals. “The SJCS's graduates would accomplish much more in the field than I would myself had I returned to a professional setting,” he says of his students with pride.

Bubis points to the establishment of the SJCS as the fruit of his life's work, and he expresses his gratitude to Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, then Dean of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, for offering him a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build the school of his dreams. Gottschalk allocated one year to Bubis for research and development, during which he traveled to seventeen cities, examining potential curricula and program plans. His brainchild began with a two-summer certificate program and then in 1971 grew to incorporate double Master's degree programs

with the University of Southern California and a joint degree program with the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis.

Bubis's legacy today is a multi-track program that offers a certificate and master's degree in Jewish Communal Service (MAJCS), a joint masters for students enrolled in the Rhea Hirsch School of Jewish Education and the SJCS, and several dual degree programs offered in coordination with the University of Southern California (USC). Students have the option to pursue the MAJCS with a USC Master's degree in Social Work, Public Administration, Business Administration, Public Arts Studies, or Communications Management. The program also offers learning tracks in Synagogue Management and Youth Services that can be combined with any other HUC-JIR degree.

Professor Bubis's reach extends from academia to Israeli causes. He has taught at the University of Southern California, the Council of Jewish Federations' Continuing Education Program, and the Wexner Graduate Fellows Program. He has served as Vice President of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, as a board member and officer of MAZON, the New Israel Fund, American Zionist Youth Foundation, Friends of Labor Israel, and United Israel Appeal, and as national Co-President of Americans for Peace Now. He is past president of the Jewish Communal Service Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation and the Brandeis-Bardin Institute, among many others.

Bubis has served as Milender Fellow at Brandeis University and Arnulf Pins Visiting Professor at The Hebrew University. He is the recipient of numerous awards from the AZA, Los Angeles Jewish Federation, Hebrew University, and the University of Judaism, and an honorary doctorate from the College-Institute.

He has authored, co-authored and edited more than 180 articles, which have appeared in publications ranging from *Moment* and the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* to

the *Journal of Reform Judaism* and *Judaism and Psychology*. Bubis has been a trainer, lecturer, and consultant for many national and international organizations in over 125 communities throughout the world. At HUC-JIR he taught about family, Jewish identity, organizational theory, and management. He recently published a book on board-staff relations, entitled *The Director Had a Heart Attack and the President Resigned* and *From Predictability to Chaos?* – a study with Dr. Steven Windmueller on the formation of the United Jewish Communities. His 2005 memoir, *Guide Yourself Accordingly* (Lighting Source), the proceeds of which support the scholarship fund of the SJCS, describes his 55-year journey of leadership in the Jewish community and academia.

Bubis speaks fondly of his years at HUC-JIR and the professional and personal relationships he formed and still maintains with former students and colleagues. His tenure was one of warmth and informal connection, where students felt as comfortable in his classroom as in his home. Bubis and his wife Ruby, a retired Jewish communal professional, are happy to report that both of their children, Deena Libman (MAJCS, '78) and David Bubis (MAJCS/MSW '82) attended the School of Jewish Communal Service.

### PROFESSOR LOWELL McCoy

Professor Emeritus of Speech, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



Professor Lowell McCoy, Professor Emeritus of Speech at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati and an ordained Methodist minister, has the distinction of having been the first full-time non-Jewish faculty member at HUC-JIR. Throughout his five decades of service at the College-Institute, McCoy has sustained the belief that “it is more important to communicate values and ideas than particular denominational and theological practices.” His years at HUC-JIR allowed him the opportunity to interpret Judaism

# HUC-JIR'S ESTEEMED EMERITUS FACULTY *(continued)*

to the Christian community and vice versa. "The liberal attitude of the College-Institute completely suited my particular religious philosophy," he explains, and praises the intellectual aspect of Reform as very important for the enduring significance of religion. "I couldn't have found anything that would have been better than my 50-year relationship with HUC-JIR."

McCoy recalls a memorable incident which highlights the open attitude of HUC-JIR and its former President, Dr. Nelson Glueck: "Soon after I joined the faculty, one of our students preached a sermon on proselytizing (as far as I can remember it was the only sermon on this subject in my tenure here, although a number have alluded to outreach). His thesis was that 'if we believe that Reform is so great we should attempt to win converts.' As we made our way to the dormitory dining room for an *Oneg Shabbat* following the service, a group of students, in a jocular vein, suggested that I should be the first candidate. Whereupon President Glueck placed his arm protectively around my shoulder and said: 'We just want Professor McCoy to remain a good Christian.'"

As Professor of Speech, McCoy shaped the way rabbinical students would transmit their own religious and academic views to their communities. He came to the College-Institute in 1949 as part of a joint program in Communications with the University of Cincinnati, and in 1954 began teaching full-time at HUC-JIR. He taught public address, oral interpretation, religious broadcasting and telecasting, and homiletics, served as Associate Dean, Associate Editor of the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, and was a founder and board member of the Academy for Adult Interfaith Studies. He officially retired and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the College-Institute in 1989, but continued to teach part-time until 2000. The Rabbinical Alumni Association honored him recently as a Distinguished Professor.

Before coming to HUC-JIR, McCoy served as a chaplain during World War II and taught at Ohio State University. While at the

College-Institute he held a chaplaincy at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and taught at the Chaplain School during the Korean War. His scholarly work includes articles and reviews on public address and oral interpretation, and contributions to the book *Recent Homiletical Thought* (Abington Press, 1967), among other publications.

After his retirement, Professor McCoy continued to teach for ten years at the Institute for Learning in Retirement in Cincinnati, where he also served on the board of directors. Founded by Aaron Levine, z"l, former member of HUC-JIR's Cincinnati Board of Overseers, and coordinated by the University of Cincinnati, the program grew from 13 courses with 130 students to over 100 courses and 1000 students during his tenure there. He continues to teach, lecture, and preach as invited by Jewish and Christian communities.

## DR. HERBERT H. PAPER

Professor Emeritus of Linguistics and Near Eastern Languages, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



Professor Herbert Paper's lifetime love of languages was kindled in his twenties, when he studied Latin and Greek as an undergraduate. Soon after, as a young serviceman during World War II, he was enrolled in an intensive year-long course in Chinese in preparation for overseas service. The native English and Yiddish speaker rapidly became fluent in his fifth language, and knew then that he had a calling. His passion for Persian, which would become his life's work, grew in Iran in 1951, where Paper was living on a post-doctoral Fulbright Scholarship after receiving his Ph.D. in Linguistics and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at the University of Chicago after the war. With no English-speaking companions in the city of Susa, where he lived with a French archaeologist, he learned a good deal of Persian in five months. It was during that time that he discovered Judeo-Persian text, spoken in pure Persian, but written in Hebrew script. Paper explains

that the unusual phenomenon developed because "for hundreds of years, Jews in Iran could only read and write in Hebrew characters." Persian Studies became the major focus of his career, which would include work on the history of the Persian language and on the ancient languages of Iran, as well as Yiddish literature. Of his numerous publications, he points to his work on a Judeo-Persian manuscript of the Pentateuch from 1319, which now resides in the British Museum in London, as the most memorable. His 125-page edition of the document was published in Israel.

Before coming to HUC-JIR in 1977, Paper taught Near Eastern languages for 24 years at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and was instrumental in founding their Jewish Studies program. Over his 22-year tenure at the College-Institute, he helped to build its reputation in languages and linguistics and introduced several languages that had not been taught at HUC-JIR before, such as Yiddish, Sanskrit, and modern Persian. He served as Dean of Graduate Studies and Editor of the *Hebrew Union College Annual*.

Over the course of his career, Paper has seen the resurgence of interest in once-declining languages such as Yiddish. He marvels at the phenomenon that "the language once passed down verbally is now being studied at universities by people who did not learn it at home, and even by non-Jews, who are interested in it for its inherent literary and historic value." He is proud to have been integral to the rebirth of "an aspect of Judaic studies that used to be neglected."

Paper has lectured in both Yiddish and English, presenting papers and generating public interest in Jewish languages. His topics include "The History of Yiddish Literature," "The Languages of the Jews Throughout History," and "Sholem Aleichem as a Social Critic."

He served as President of the Association of Judaic Studies and, since retiring in 1999, continues to stay current in his field by reading voraciously and keeping up with recent research on the Yiddish language and Judeo-Persian texts. He is always available to his former students to answer their linguistic questions.

## DR. ELLIS RIVKIN

Adolph S. Ochs Professor  
Emeritus of Jewish History  
HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



Professor Ellis Rivkin's career as a historian of Jewish history grew out of an intense personal, theological search. Rivkin was born in 1918 into an ultra-Orthodox Jewish family in Baltimore. He was nurtured on the belief that every word in the Torah is the word of God. "I was the very model of a promising *Talmid Chacham* and an exemplar of piety, keenly eager to become a defender of the true faith against even the most intrepid challengers." He led a fervently Orthodox life until his teenage years, when he encountered the New Testament and was exposed to Biblical criticism for the first time, a theory that he found equally compelling and troubling. As a student at Baltimore Hebrew College, Rivkin had a deep crisis of faith, but it took him not away from Judaism as he feared, but toward a new rational theology of Jewish history. He calls this transformation that would thereafter underly his life and scholarship as a religious trajectory "from God to God."

Of his most influential teachers at that time, Harry M. Orlinsky, Frederick Lane, and Solomon Zeitlin stand out. Rivkin says that "through these scholars I was exposed to the ubiquity of historical change, to things becoming other than they had previously been. Ideas that had predominated once upon a time declined in appeal as vibrant new ideas emerged." Confronted with the certainty of historical change, Rivkin wondered "how can I sustain the claim that change does not occur in a supernatural Torah? Do not the same laws apply to Jewish history as to non-Jewish history?"

Rivkin's seminal theory, the "Unity Principle," sought to reconcile the problem. In it he identifies a oneness in Judaism that has endured as the beliefs, practices, and circumstances of the Jewish people have

evolved over time. His 1971 book, *The Shaping of Jewish History* (the second edition was renamed *The Unity Principle* in 2003), presents Jewish development as a dynamic process acting on an inherently flexible people. Rivkin argues that Judaism's core was able to survive the pressure of historical forces from Biblical to modern times because rather than cling to an unchanging faith, Jews have adapted their practices and relationship to God, retaining their "oneness" in a constantly changing world.

He explains that "the distinctive significance of Jewish history and of the Jewish people is that Judaism commits itself not to God-finding as much as to God-searching. Modern Jewish identity is the freedom to think, to seek God rather than to accept the claim that God's will is fully known. If we have already found God, why not be satisfied with Abraham's God or the God of the First Temple or the God of the *Shulhan Arukh*? The concept of a completely known God defies the notion of historical progression that makes the 'unity principle' a paradigm for Jews – and for humankind."

Rivkin lives out his historical theories in personal practice. After a great personal struggle with his family's history and beliefs, he came to Reform Judaism, attracted to the movement for its ability to look at the past critically, "allowing for a future that has a goal but no end."

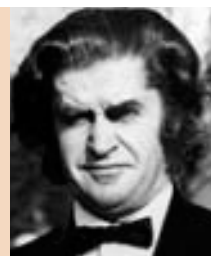
Rivkin came to HUC-JIR early in his career, and would remain with the institution until his retirement (1949-1985). After receiving his Ph.D. in History from Johns Hopkins University he began publishing his first papers as a post-doctoral student at Dropsie University in Philadelphia. He recalls that Joseph Rader Marcus, the founder of the American Jewish Archives at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, noticed him and persuaded President Nelson Glueck to invite him to join the faculty as Assistant Professor of Jewish and World History. Rivkin agreed, but only under the condition that he "be free to teach Jewish history exactly the way it would be taught at Harvard or Yale, that is, as objectively as possible, to which Dr.

Glueck responded "We would not want you otherwise." Rivkin's other published books include *Leon de Modena and the Kol Sakhal* (HUC Press 1952); *The Hidden Revolution: The Pharisees' Search for the Kingdom Within* (Abingdon Press, 1978); and *What Crucified Jesus* (Abingdon Press, 1984). Each overturned prevailing beliefs and probed new and uncharted territory of scholarship. In addition, Rivkin has written more than 200 articles and monographs, many of which, in economic brevity, solved problems that beset scholars for centuries.

During his 36-year tenure at the College-Institute Rivkin transformed the worldviews of his students with his inimitable teaching style and radical ideas. He is currently working on a book loosely titled *A God for the Perplexed in an Age of Religious Terrorism*, prompted by the period of global unrest that followed the fall of the Soviet Union. Observing the myriad ways that God has been invoked throughout history to justify violence, he turns to his own theology. "It is not God but human beings who declare war, spread terror, exercise torture, bomb cities, and threaten to nucleate life. What we need today is a God that we can believe in with all our reason and love for the good, the true, and the beautiful. That is the vision of God to which my life has led me."

## BONIA SHUR

Director Emeritus of  
Liturgical Arts,  
HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



Composer Bonia Shur transformed Reform Jewish music during his 26 years at HUC-JIR (1974-2000) as Director of Liturgical Arts, a position created especially for Shur. Under its aegis, he taught generations of rabbinical students to perform and create liturgy, composed music for HUC-JIR celebrations and events, and established a choir at the College-Institute that became the HUC-Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music Vocal Instrumental

# HUC-JIR'S ESTEEMED EMERITUS FACULTY *(continued)*

Ensemble, then “the only known vocal instrumental ensemble in the Jewish world that enhances the music at *Shabbat* Services.” It has been said of Shur that during his tenure, he turned the College-Institute around spiritually, generating a house of prayer and celebration.

Shur taught students to internalize and express themselves creatively through *tefilah*. He emphasized the importance of a meditative “transition from nothingness to prayer,” and encouraged students to vocalize their spontaneous and emotional prayers without a *siddur* before turning to standardized liturgy, a tool that would help them to find meaning in unique situations throughout their lives. His courses included cantillation, creativity in prayer and leading services, and traditional and contemporary liturgical music.

A versatile composer, Shur has published over 300 original compositions for the synagogue and the stage, theater, television, and film. He collaborated with Johnny Mandel on the vocal score to the motion picture “The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming” (1966). In 1968, he received a National Television Academy Award for his music for the TV special, “Revolt in Modi’in.” His orchestral music has been performed by the Israeli Radio Orchestra, Minneapolis Chamber Symphony, and Cincinnati Chamber symphony, and his choral works have been performed and recorded by the Sarasota Chorale Symphonic Chorus, the Nova Singers of Florida, Oshkosh Chamber Singers, The Rinat Choir of Israel, and the Chicago Children’s Choir, among others.

Shur believes that he composed some of his best music while at HUC-JIR, particularly *Hallel Psalms*, which has been performed at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati’s S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer Chapel every year for the last 30 years, during Passover, *Sukkot*, and *Hanukkah*. Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel was moved to tears when he heard *Never Again*, a piece which Shur composed for Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1980.

Shur’s music integrates and reflects the many

diverse cultural heritages in which he has lived. He escaped the Nazi invasion of Latvia, fought in the Russian Army, and performed in its orchestra. After the war, in 1947-49, he performed in displaced persons camps in Germany and encouraged Holocaust survivors to go to Israel. He immigrated to Israel in 1949, where he lived and worked on Kibbutz Netzer Sereni for eleven years, wrote music, and established its choir. He immigrated to the United States in 1960. In 1964 he created the Mediterranean Art Chorale, with 35 graduate students at UCLA, which performed mainly Israeli music and his compositions. He then served as Musical Director at Temple DeHirsch Sinai in Seattle prior to coming to HUC-JIR in 1974. Although he officially retired in 1993, Shur continued to work with students until 2000, conducting and composing for *Shabbat* morning services.

Currently, Shur is writing music and collaborating with Fanchon Shur, his choreographer wife of 45 years. The couple created and performed *Lebedike Neshoma* (Vibrant Soul), *Akedah*, and *Tallit Prayer Shawl*, to considerable public acclaim.

## DR. EZRA SPICEHANDLER

Distinguished Service  
Professor Emeritus of  
Hebrew Literature,  
HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



**B**orn in 1921, Dr. Ezra Spicehandler’s love of Israel and Hebrew Literature was instilled during his childhood while growing up in Brooklyn, New York in a family where “Palestine was central.” His father, a major supporter of the Modern Hebrew Language Movement in America, taught himself to speak Modern Hebrew in the days of the language’s infancy and cultivated a vast library of Hebrew literature. Spicehandler recalls the moment when Hebrew became his own passion. He became enamored with a volume from among his father’s stacks. When he proudly pronounced the author’s name to his father – *Merek Twayen* – he was

met with laughter at the realization that the ‘Hebrew’ book that he read – and loved – was a translation of Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*.

Spicehandler’s relationship with Hebrew Union College began when he was admitted in 1939 as a rabbinical student. He was ordained in 1946 and pursued a Ph.D. in Hebrew Literature at HUC-JIR, which he earned in 1952.

During his graduate studies, he spent a year in Jerusalem at The Hebrew University. The year was 1948, and on the eve of the War of Independence, one month before the U.N. voted for the partition plan, he, along with several other American students, was recruited by the *Hagganah* to serve as a machine gunner in a hastily-enlisted ‘support company.’

Spicehandler returned to his studies in the United States after the war, but his passion for the promise of the Jewish State informed the role he would later play at HUC-JIR, developing the Year-In-Israel Program and the Israeli Rabbinical Program. After completing his degree, he became an instructor in Modern Hebrew Literature at HUC-JIR/ New York before being appointed to a full professorship track in Cincinnati in 1955.

In 1966 Spicehandler returned to Israel to serve as Director and Dean of HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, where he would remain for fourteen years. At the time, the institution was primarily an archaeology school, and under Spicehandler’s leadership, it grew to include a mandatory Year-in-Israel Program for first-year HUC-JIR students and the Israel Rabbinical Program, which to date has ordained 39 rabbis (26 men and 13 women). Spicehandler recalls that there had been stateside support for some time to incorporate the Jerusalem campus into the American rabbinical program, but it wasn’t until after the Six Day War in 1967 that President Nelson Glueck and the Board of Governors approved the idea. “Glueck had a good sense of timing and this was an opportune time,” he says.

During his 41 years on the faculty, Spicehandler saw the Reform Movement,

and then HUC-JIR, embrace Zionism and Israel. Spicehandler developed the Israeli Rabbinical Program “to teach Reform ideology and theology in Israel and provide a pragmatic liberal option for aspiring Israeli rabbinical students.” The Year-In-Israel program fulfilled the need for further Hebrew training, exposure to world Jewry, and the incorporation of newly-accessible biblical sites into a rabbinical education.

Spicehandler’s memories of his time in Israel are full of the grandiose plans, personalities, and quirks of the State’s architects – Golda Meir, David Ben Gurion, and Yitzhak Rabin. He caught his first glimpse of the newly-captured Sinai desert from the windows of a helicopter with Nelson Glueck. He served on the Committee of the World Zionist Organization throughout his tenure in Jerusalem, and was eventually appointed to the organization’s National Committee, which at that time was called ‘Avodah.’ He was once offered a seat in the Knesset, which he turned down to devote his time to the rapidly growing Jerusalem programs.

Spicehandler has made major contributions to the fields of Modern Hebrew Literature, Israel and Zionism, Judeo-Persian studies, and Talmudic history. His anthology, *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself*, written with T. Carmi and Stanley Burnshaw, is used as the standard textbook in advanced studies in Modern Hebrew Literature in the United States and Israel; his article on Hebrew Literature was included in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Spicehandler served as an editor of Modern Hebrew for the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, and has published widely in academic journals.

On sabbaticals from the College-Institute, Spicehandler served as a visiting professor at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand; University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; Oriental Institute at Oxford University; Logos Theological Seminary, Kyoto, Japan; and Hebrew University. He spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar in Teheran (1962-63), during which he taught Persian history at Teheran University, lectured on Persian history to the communi-

ty, and collected many Persian manuscripts and Judeo-Persian materials, which are now housed in HUC-JIR’s collections.

He is currently working on a translation of the works of Yosef Hayim Brenner, an early 20th-century Zionist novelist, which he started with Professor David Patterson, z”l, of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. His translation of Haim Nachman Bialik’s short stories, also written with Patterson, in the book *Random Harvest & Other Novellas*, received a laudatory first page review in the *London Times Supplement* and was included in *The New York Times Literary Review*. Supporting and encouraging him throughout these numerous accomplishments are his wife Shirley, and his daughters Rabbi Reena Spicehandler and Rabbi Judith Spicehandler, C ’99.

#### DR. MATTIAHU TSEVAT

Julian Morgenstern  
Professor Emeritus of Bible,  
HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



**B**orn in Germany and raised in Breslav after World War I, Dr. Matitiah Tsevat inherited his parents’ strong background in Judaism and Modern Hebrew culture, and commitment to Zionism. He learned Hebrew from his mother before he learned to read German in school, and grew up reading Chaim Nachman Bialik and Mendele Mocher Sforim in his father’s collection of Modern Hebrew literature. Tsevat was active in the Zionist youth organization in Germany during the years of Hitler’s rise, and worked in agricultural *hachshara* – vocational training for young Jews anticipating immigration to Palestine. He writes that “in my late teens I spoke Hebrew fluently and I knew chapters of the Bible by heart (just as I knew scores of Mozart and Beethoven).”

In 1938, at the age of 25, with a teacher’s diploma from the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, Tsevat immigrated to Palestine with his family. He continued

his studies at Hebrew Teachers College in Jerusalem and at The Hebrew University, where he earned an M.A. in Bible in 1948. In 1949 he moved to the United States to study, first at Dropsie College in Philadelphia and then from 1950 to 1953 at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, where he earned his Ph.D. in Bible.

Tsevat began his more than 35-year-long career with the College-Institute in 1954 when he joined the library staff. In 1958 he was asked to join the faculty, and in 1966 was appointed Professor of Bible, later becoming the Julian Morgenstern Professor of Bible. In addition to his Bible courses, Tsevat taught electives on the religious poetry of Judah Halevi, the world of the Old Testament, and graduate courses on extinct Near Eastern languages – Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Hittite.

During 1964-66 Tsevat returned to Israel as Director of Jewish Studies at HUC-JIR/ Jerusalem. He led the program during its formative years, and was instrumental in its development. In his courses on both continents, Tsevat believed in lecturing in Hebrew, providing important continuity and reinforcement of the speaking skills that his students developed during their year of studies in Israel. He said “one cannot overestimate the experience of spending a year in Jerusalem.”

A prolific writer, Tsevat has published and presented his work widely. His publications include *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms* (1955 and reprints) and *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Studies* (Ktav, 1980), in addition to numerous articles, reviews, and encyclopedia entries on the topics of Bible, the Ancient Near East, Judah Halevi, methodology, and the philosophy of science. He has been well sought-after in the larger academic community, and spent sabbatical leaves from HUC-JIR as a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies at The Hebrew University (1978-79 and summer 1982), the University of California, Berkeley (1987), and at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg, Germany (1983), where he aided in the reestablish-

# HUC-JIR'S ESTEEMED EMERITUS FACULTY *(continued)*

ment and support of Jewish studies and culture in Germany.

In addition to his teaching and scholarship, Tsevat served as Chairman of the Committee on Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate, as a member of the Publications Committee, and as Editor of the *Hebrew Union College Annual*.

Tsevat and his wife Miriam Tsevat celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the College-Institute. He recalls her moving speech on that occasion, when she spoke about her memories of *Kristallnacht*. After coming to Cincinnati so that he could work on his Ph.D. for a year or two, they have stayed for 54 years, and are now enjoying his retirement together.

## DR. BEN ZION WACHOLDER

Solomon Freehof  
Professor Emeritus of  
Talmud and Rabbinics,  
HUC-JIR/Cincinnati



Professor Ben Zion Wacholder, scholar of Talmud and Rabbinics, began his career at HUC-JIR as the Los Angeles School's first librarian in 1956. His early work in the burgeoning library collection helped usher the new school into accreditation – the committee that came to evaluate the campus cited his presence in the library as their reason for support.

Born in Ozarow, Poland in 1924, Wacholder studied in European *yeshivot* and was recognized as a scholar in Europe before World War II began. In October 1942, the Nazis liquidated his town, but Wacholder survived the *Shoah*, living as a Christian under an Aryan name and working in a Polish labor camp until liberation. After the war, he moved to Paris and later Bogota, Colombia, and finally immigrated to the United States in 1947 with the goal of resuming his education. Wacholder received his rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva University in 1951 and his Ph.D. from UCLA in 1960. Soon after joining the HUC-JIR staff, he became

a permanent member of the College-Institute's faculty, ultimately being named the Solomon Freehof Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics in Cincinnati, where he taught until his retirement.

Wacholder's students speak of the warmth and magnetism that drew them to their teacher, a brilliant Talmudist who knew scripture and rabbinic texts by heart. When his eyesight deteriorated in the 1970s, dozens of his rabbinical and graduate students flocked to assist him with his research. Martin Abegg (now co-director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute at Trinity Western University in British Columbia) describes the experience of working "knee to knee" with his mentor: "I have often thought that my 5 years with Ben Zion Wacholder – in the hands of a gifted writer – would rival Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Only with me it was Tuesdays and Thursdays with Ben Zion. I, in the rich company of a dozen other HUC-JIR grad students over the years, was Ben's eyes."

The students would open mail from scholars around the world seeking his input on scores of topics and would lend their sight to Wacholder's study of secondary sources in multiple languages. They were constantly awed by their teacher's flawless knowledge of primary text. Wacholder imbued his students with the lesson that as helpful as modern technology might be, a computer search engine can never replace personal knowledge of the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, and all of the commentaries that create our layered text.

Abegg co-authored Wacholder's seminal work, an unauthorized edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, titled *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls* (Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991). Together they developed a computer program that reconstructed fragmented sections of the scrolls from a concordance, thereby making the full content of the scrolls accessible and leading to the release of the original manuscripts, which had been withheld from the public for years. The work opened wide the study of the scrolls to new scholars, leading to the estab-

lishment of the Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation to raise funds for research and preservation.

Abegg notes that the legal writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls "provide a critical window into the shape of Judaism before the Mishna and the [Jerusalem and Babylonian] Talmuds." Professor Wacholder "realized this potential" and made it accessible to the academic community.

Abegg and another former Ph.D. student, Tim Undheim, are currently putting the finishing touches on Wacholder's latest work, *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Brill 2006). Abegg concludes: "My adventure with Ben Zion was priceless. This is the kind of education that all of us hope for from our schooling but few of us actually experience." ■

For additional information on these honored Emeritus Faculty members, please go to <http://www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty>. Thank you to Hanni Hirsch, Dr. David Ilan, David Tsevat, and Nina Wacholder for their contributions to this article.

Arriving January 2007 on the HUC-JIR Website

לשמה  
Lishmah\*

[www.huc.edu/Lishmah](http://www.huc.edu/Lishmah)

A JEWISH SCHOLARSHIP NEWSLETTER

**Editor:** Eugene B. Borowitz, HUC-JIR/NY

**Associate Editor:** Alyssa Gray, HUC-JIR/NY

**Faculty Representatives:**

Adam Kamesar, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati;

Yehoyada Amir, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem;

David Kaufman, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles

Aimed at narrowing the communication gap between Jewish studies academics and the Reform Movement's serious and thoughtful lay readers, this electronic newsletter will feature timely and significant scholarly activities in accessible prose, drawing on the widespread expertise of HUC-JIR's distinguished faculty.

\*Lishmah - learning for its own sake, is a joint project of HUC-JIR and the Union for Reform Judaism.

