

The Schlindwein Family Tel Aviv University – Notre Dame Research Collaboration Grant Inaugural Project and Recipients

Interpretive Cultures in Late Antiquity: Hellenistic, Roman, Jewish and Christian Perspectives

Summary

This is a fascinating project in that its focus is not so much on ancient canonic texts as on the reception of and commentary on these texts in religious philosophical communities and how these commentaries gain a semi-independent authority. To what extent does commentary or interpretation of texts distinguish one community from another, or, on the contrary, bring different communities together? To what extent is interpretation a distinct activity, set apart from other scholastic work? Granting that the Hebrew Bible itself shows manifest evidence of reception and commentary, and one way to cast the New Testament is that it is a reception and commentary on Hebrew scripture, Qumran and the formation of Jewish law will be particular foci of investigation. In addition, second and third century reception of, and commentary on, the New Testament within Christian communities will also be of interest. This pattern of reception of, and commentary on, classic philosophical texts will also be an object of investigation of this collaborative group made up of two groups of scholars from the University of Notre Dame and from Tel Aviv University.

Researchers

Prof. Gretchen-Reydams Schils and Prof. Michael Novick (Notre Dame) and Prof. Ishay Rosen-Zvi (Tel-Aviv) sought funding for the project while the workshop participants were all planned and invited at the proposal stage. In order to fully investigate the questions, a comparative perspective was needed. Specialists of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian cultures in Late Antiquity (which in this context refers approximately to the first five centuries) were gathered from both universities.

The academic quality of both groups of scholars is nothing less than spectacular and is as follows:

On the Notre Dame side there are:

Prof. Gretchen Reydams-Schils, who is a professor in the Program of Liberal Studies and a renowned scholar of Stoicism. She has published three books with a fourth currently under contract with Cambridge University Press.

Prof. Michael (Tzvi) Novick who is from the Department of Theology is the Abrams Chair of Jewish Thought at Notre Dame. Prof. Novick specializes in Rabbinic thought and rightly enjoys an extraordinarily high reputation in the field. A prolific author, two new books are due to be published shortly.

Associated with the project on the Notre Dame side is, **Prof David Lincicum**. While still a junior scholar, Prof. Lincicum is already touted as a star in New Testament Studies having come to Notre

Dame from the University of Oxford. He has numerous publications including one book and one in preparation.

There will be 2 currently identified Notre Dame graduate students in Theology participating in the workshop

Notre Dame's Tel Aviv partners are equally distinguished.

Prof. Ishay Rosen-Zvi, Department of Hebrew Culture Studies, is a stunningly published scholar of Rabbinics who has already published eight books.

Prof. Vered Noam, Head, Department of Hebrew Culture Studies, is also a scholar of Rabbinics who has published two books with 2 further books accepted for publication.

Prof. Sharon Weisser, Department of Philosophy, is a scholar of Stoicism. She is the editor of two books and several articles.

There will also be 2 currently identified Tel Aviv University graduate students participating in the workshop

Planned Workshops

With the generosity of the funding provided by the Schindwein Family and additional funding provided by Notre Dame's Department of Theology and the Notre Dame Workshop on Ancient Philosophy, the joint research group applied to conduct two workshops.

In order to optimize their preparation, engagement and collaboration, the researchers requested the following timeframe, which was approved by both institutions: the first workshop will occur in spring 2019 while the second will take place in spring 2020.

Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes are the following:

- i. a collection of published essays
- ii. a strengthening of the research connections between Notre Dame and Tel Aviv University
- iii. a strengthening of the research of the participants
- iv. professional training of the graduate students involved, and a strengthening of their research