This summer (2012) several HUC-JIR graduate students including myself worked at the Tel Dan excavations in northern Israel. This excavation is run by the HUC-JIR's Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology under the direction of Dr. David Ilan. Digging at Dan was a memorable and very informative experience for all of us. Working with a smaller group of staff and volunteers, we all participated in many aspects of the excavation including: digging, drawing area plans, taking levels, pottery washing, pottery reading, and giving evening lectures to the other volunteers.

The first two weeks of the excavation we dug in Area A (the Israelite Gate Area) and Area B (located just inside the Israelite Gate complex). We worked hard with pickaxes in Area A, moving a lot of dirt of Roman occupation to reach the level of an earlier gate tower. Lots of badly worn Early Bronze pottery was an interesting feature of this area, along with a few beautiful pieces of Roman glass showing later settlement. In area B we excavated Iron Age II levels between two previously exposed sections in an effort to reach Iron Age I settlement levels of the early Israelites. This area contained very dense domestic structures, a plethora of stinging wasps, scorpions and biting ants that slowed our work! One of the highlights from this Area was finding a beautiful plaque figurine from the Israelite period depicting a nude goddess. In the final two weeks of the dig we opened a new section of excavation in Area L, where evidence of the 8th century earthquake mentioned by the prophet Amos (1:1) had been uncovered in a previous season. Again we found evidence of destruction (possibly from the earthquake?) with whole broken vessels, handfuls of charred seeds, white chalky floors, and many bones.

Overall, the excavation was very hard work but a wonderful learning experience for all of us. We are so delighted to have had this opportunity which provided each of us a better picture of the work and value of archaeology in Israel and its crucial connections to the study of the Bible.
From the President of the SGS Alumni

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the School of Graduate Studies Alumni Association. I hope your summer has been productive and relaxing. With the summer comes the changing of the Alumni Association officers. I transitioned from vice president to president, replacing Dr. Karla Suomala (’02), who served as officer for four years. During her tenure she represented us at SBL and the annual HUC Council of Alumni Associations meeting at HUC New York. She raised money for the SGS and early in the recession she advocated strongly for the HUC Cincinnati campus and the SGS. Thank you, Karla, for your contribution. Karla will serve as the Alumna-in-Residence for this academic year at HUC Cincinnati.

Welcome to Dr. Jeffrey Cooley (’06), our new Alumni Association vice president. Jeff brings several years of higher education experience from Xavier University and most recently Boston College, where he is an Assistant Professor in the Theology Department. Along with his New England wit, he also has vast knowledge of and fondness for HUC. I look forward to serving with him. Next summer he will replace me, so please consider contacting either of us if you are interested in a two-year term of service leading our association.

In June it was my pleasure to address our newest Ph.D. graduates at commencement. Some have secured permanent teaching positions; others are still on the market. I have learned over the summer that a number of them and other recent graduates completed their studies without HUC student loan debt. What a blessing it is for these scholars to start their careers free of the encumbrance of graduate school loans. Your financial gifts to the SGS helped facilitate this. Thank you. We are again hoping to raise $5,000 from our alumni ranks this year. Any gift you give will fund graduate student scholarships on our Cincinnati campus. Even if you have been out of touch with us for a while, we would like to hear from you. Last year only about 10% of our members gave a gift and we hope this percentage increases considerably this fiscal year. Help us send even more future graduates into their careers debt free.

On a very sad note, shortly after the publication of Qol Hadash’s inaugural issue the SGS and the entire HUC community said goodbye to Dr. David Weisberg, Professor of Bible and Semitic Languages. Professor Weisberg passed in late February. He was Doktorvater to me and several of us. Indeed, he was a superb scholar and a true gentleman. It seems the world is less bright with his absence. I miss him.

In closing, I will be in New York this autumn for this year’s Council of Alumni Associations meeting. Shortly thereafter I hope to see you in Chicago for the SBL annual meeting.

Until then,
Andrew Riley (’10)
Xavier University

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Student and Alumni News

The W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem has endowed the Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professorship in honor of Dr. Seymour (Sy) Gitin for his more than three decades of serving as the Albright’s Director and Professor of Archaeology.

Dr. Ruth Langer was just promoted to full professor at Boston College.

Birth Announcements:

Andrew and Cheryl Pfeiffer gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Wyatt Isaac, on May 19, 2012.

Ben and Jenn Noonan gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Katherine Jessica Lynn, on March 15, 2012.

Alex and Irene Bolotnikov gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Jacob Alexander, on March 30, 2012.

Oshrat and Claudio Morag gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Abigail Hodaya, sister to Noam and Itamar, on March 12, 2012.

Vadim and Federica Putzu gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ester, on February 4, 2012.
Warm Greetings to our students, faculty, alumni, and friends of the School of Graduate Studies! As we begin an exciting new academic year let me fill you in on some recent happenings at the College Institute and keep you posted on upcoming events.

Graduation 2012
It is always a delight to award degree certificates to students who have completed the Ph.D. journey. Six students: Brian Bompiani, Donald Carlson, Brian Gault, Benjamin Noonan, Sung Jin Park, and Justin Rogers received their Ph.D. at graduation on June 3, 2012. Brian Gault and Justin Rogers hold tenure track teaching positions – Brian at Columbia International University and Justin at Freed-Hardeman University. The other newly minted Ph.D.s teach as adjuncts at local colleges such as Xavier University.

Another five students received the Master of Philosophy, marking a key accomplishment in the Ph.D. process; two students were awarded an M.A. in Bible and Cognate Studies. Congratulations and best wishes to all our graduates.

Admission to the School of Graduate Studies for 2012-2013
We welcome eight newly admitted students to the SGS for this academic year. Six are entering the Ph.D. Program – three in Bible/History of Biblical Interpretation, one in Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period, and two in Rabbinic Literature. Two students are pursuing an M.A. in Jewish Studies – one focusing on Rabbinic Literature, the other on the American Jewish Experience. These students come to us from colleges and universities in the U.S and Israel, including the University of Virginia, Rhodes College, HUC-JIR, Amridge University, and Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary.

Graduate Summer-in-Israel Program
The Graduate Summer-in-Israel Program offers a unique opportunity for graduate students to engage in an HUC Israel experience. Since its inception in 2000, several dozen students have engaged in archaeological excavations, studied in Jerusalem, toured ancient sites throughout Israel, and experienced the modern land and people through this program. This past June-July nine students participated in one or more aspects of the program. The archaeological component included four weeks of excavation at Tel Dan directed by David Ilan, Director of the NGSBA. Three of these students held staff positions on the dig. An alumnus of the SGS participated in the excavation with his own students.

New Museum Exhibits
Beginning September 10 the Skirball Museum HUC, Cincinnati will display the first of its kind exhibit A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People. The exhibit was created to commemorate the legacy of Pope John Paul II who sought conciliatory relations with Jews and the State of Israel. Inaugurated in Cincinnati at Xavier University in 2005 it has since traveled to numerous U.S. cities. Check HUCinci.org for museum dates and times.

A spectacular exhibit, Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Ancient Times will open November 16 at the Cincinnati Museum Center. The exhibit, created by the Israel Antiquities Authority, includes scrolls and ceramic and stone artifacts from the collections of the Israel National Treasures. It has already had successful runs in New York City and Philadelphia. Notably, HUC will have a special display of objects from the Skirball Museum and Klau Library, some of which relate to the history of the publication of the scrolls by the late HUC Professor Ben Zion Wachholder and his student Martin Abegg, now professor at Trinity Western University. As a member of the advisory committee for the exhibit, I help plan activities to run in concert with the exhibit. Several of our faculty and students will serve as docents, offer study sessions, and give lectures on DSS topics. This exhibit is a must see!

Faculty Openings at HUC-JIR, Cincinnati
In the past two years our campus has lost three Bible faculty. Professors Samuel Greengus and Stephen Kaufman retired in 2010; Professor David Weisberg z”l sadly passed away this spring, 2012. In addition, Professor Susan Einbinder recently accepted a teaching position outside HUC-JIR. Clearly these are grave losses for our programs. I am therefore very pleased to announce two faculty openings for 2013-2014: Hebrew Bible and Cognate Languages and Jewish Medieval History and Culture. See the job listings on the SBL/AAR and AJS websites.
Greetings! My name is Paul Elliott, and I am a fourth-year graduate student at the Cincinnati campus of HUC-JIR, studying biblical interpretation in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. As the Graduate Student Association President for 2012-13, I have the privilege to represent the graduate students, and I take great pride in our student body and our institution. Some of the finest strengths of studying at HUC include the outstanding resources that are available to students, a well-respected faculty which works closely with the students, strong partnerships with other institutions, and a close-knit collegial student body.

Several of our students have recently returned from an archaeological excavation at Tel Dan in northern Israel. Having been part of the excavation at Tel es-Safi two years previously, I can attest to the value of gaining practical experience in this exciting and useful field. Learning the methodology of modern scientific archaeology is extremely important in order to interact with the scholarly literature in a meaningful way. Another exciting opportunity for the graduate students has come through the arrival of a new exhibition on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Cincinnati Museum Center. Several of the students will be able to become involved by giving lectures on the topic to interested groups.

We are now beginning a new academic year and welcoming a new cadre of graduate students. Some of us are preparing to take a wide array of classes on topics such as the Book of Numbers or the 3rd century CE biblical interpreter Origen or the Philosophy of History. Others of us are preparing for examinations or writing dissertations. The rhythm of academic life continues, and the eager desire for wisdom provides the beat. It reminds me of Proverbs 1:2, which serves as a motto for the School of Graduate Studies and is featured on the new logo of the SGS: “For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight.”