

THE TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

In Memorium

Sister Abraham, Kirsten Pedersen-Stoffregen, PhD.
1932-2017



It was with great sadness that Tantur Ecumenical Institute learned of the passing of Sister Abraham Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen on May 30th, 2017. Sister Abraham, born Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1932, was a beloved ecumenical figure in Jerusalem as a pilgrim, student, educator, iconographer, and monastic. Beginning her monastic life as a Bridgettine sister, she is best remembered for her contributions to the study of the Ethiopian Coptic presence in the Holy Land and her distinctive Coptic icons, mounted and framed copies of which Sister Abraham presented to Tantur as a gift to the Institute, and are still kept on display at the Tantur Library. Sister Abraham's relationship with Tantur Ecumenical Institute spanned decades and multi-faceted; not least of which included publishing her substantial work, *The History of Ethiopian Community in the Holy Land from the time of Emperor Tewodoros II till 1974*, published in 1983 by Tantur Ecumenical Institute. Sr. Abraham last visited Tantur when she attended our 40th Anniversary Tantur Conference in 2012, returning to her native Denmark in 2015, ending fifty years in the city of Jerusalem that she dearly loved. May her memory be eternal.

Tantur at a Glance

Summer 2017 Visit to His Beatitude Patriarch
Theophilos III of Jerusalem



In June of 2017, Rev. Russ McDougall, rector of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Rev. Robert Smith, Director of the Notre Dame Jerusalem Global Gateway and Frederic Mason, Director of the Tantur Program Office met His Most Godly Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem. During the meeting the representatives of Tantur and the University briefed His Beatitude on the various programs and initiatives that were taking place at Tantur, and discussed possibilities for future cooperation. His Beatitude articulated his experiences on ecumenical, interfaith and social concerns in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. At the conclusion of the meeting, a mutual exchange of icons occurred along with a blessing from His Beatitude.

Tantur Ecumenical Institute has greatly valued its continued relationship with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which has existed since the founding of the Institute in the 1960s, and wishes His Beatitude "Many Blessed Years" as per the traditional and Orthodox expression of good health.

Left to right: Tantur Program Director Frederic Masson, Tantur Rector Rev. Russ McDougall, CSC, His Most Godly Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, and UND Jerusalem Global Gateway Director Rev. Robert O. Smith, PhD.

The Mystery of the Magdala Stone

Rev. Donald D. Binder, PhD

In 2013, my wife, daughter and I were privileged to spend a summer residency at Tantur as part of my sabbatical from Historic Pohick Church, near Mt. Vernon, Virginia, where I serve as Rector. I spent my three months there working on a Festschrift in honor of my mentor, Professor James F. Strange, who served as one of the leading archaeologists of the Galilean region for the past four decades, most notably as Director of the University of South Florida's excavations at Sepphoris for twenty-seven years.

In addition to editing the contributions of nearly two dozen scholars for that volume, I also did research for an included essay of my own. Because my expertise is in the area of ancient synagogues, I wrote about the sensational discovery in 2009 of a monumental stone found in the midst of a first-century A.D. synagogue in the Galilean city of Magdala, perhaps best known as the hometown of Mary Magdalene. This stone is carved with cryptic religious symbols, the most identifiable of which is the menorah, the seven-branched lamp used in the Holy Place of the Jerusalem Temple. That now stands as one of the earliest depictions of that ancient instrument.

My examination of the larger ensemble of symbols concluded that each, like the menorah itself, was an artistic representation of either a Temple appurtenance, ornamentation, or even the Divine Presence of God. In this overall conclusion, I

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Rev. Donald D. Binder with family having a break during his 2013 excavation at Magdala in Tiberias. Rev. Donald D. Binder has been involved in archaeological research and excavation in the Holy Land since the 1990s, and is also a full-time pastor of Pohick Episcopal Church in Lorton, Virginia of the United States.

UND Jerusalem Global Gateway Alumni named 2017 Valedictorian

Caleb "CJ" Pine was a 2015 spring semester student of the University of Notre Dame Jerusalem Global Gateway.

This May, Caleb "CJ" Pine was named valedictorian of the 2017 University of Notre Dame graduation class, bestowing on him the honor of presenting the valedictory address of the 172nd Commencement Ceremony.

CJ was raised in Tianjin, China and spent two semesters in the Middle East, the first of which was spent at Tantur as a student of the 2015 Spring Semester Jerusalem Global Program. A global citizen, CJ quickly fit into Tantur's internationally-oriented community and was well received by all. Having graduated from UND with degrees in Arabic and Peace Studies and a minor philosophy, politics and economics, CJ is next planning to work at an internship at the Bureau of International Organization Affairs within the US State Department.

With a good command of Arabic and such an interest in the Middle East, we have no doubt that we will soon see CJ back at Tantur once again – either as a visitor, scholar, group leader, colleague, or all of the above!



Caleb "CJ" Pine on a tour of the Judean Desert in the spring of 2015, while a student with the UND Jerusalem Global Gateway. For more information about the program CJ was a part of, visit <http://international.nd.edu/global-gateways/jerusalem/>



Tuesdays at Tantur in the Spring of 2017

Raanan Mallek, M. Ed.
Tantur Events Coordinator

The spring session of Tuesdays at Tantur spanned from mid-January to May and had thirteen sessions. We first welcomed Sir Vincent Fean who worked for thirty nine years in the British Diplomatic Service, serving as High Commissioner to Malta, Ambassador to Libya and Consul General in Jerusalem. Sir Vincent spoke about how viable the Two State Solution is today and how it can be saved. Many in the audience took up the opportunity during the open discussion period to challenge the speaker and discuss other possible solutions to the conflict.

Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem, Dr. Nadim Sheiban, spoke about how a museum can act as a community development tool. During the vibrant discussion after the lecture, challenging questions were asked of Dr. Sheiban such as how Palestinian children from East Jerusalem can have easier access to the Museum to improve their artistic education suppressed by the current situation. Dr. Sheiban explained the intricate relationship that is formed between the museum and the artists.

Lenk is a Shalom Hartman Institute research fellow and the Institute's Director of Christian Leadership Programs. Dr. Lenk spoke next about whether Paul misread Genesis in the context of his Letter to the Galatians (4:21-31). The topic was very relevant due to the narrative of Hagar and her son Ishmael in relationship to Abraham and his progeny. Various Biblical and Rabbinic texts were explored to discover the context in which Paul understood the story.

Renowned poet Niall McDevitt spoke about the Jerusalem tradition in English literature. He introduced the crowd to a new vocabulary for combining poetry and geography: poetopographical and psychogeographical. He read selections from his third book, *Firing Slits: Jerusalem Colportage*, a collection of prose poems, lyrics, epigrams and journals documenting his walks in Jerusalem/Al-Quds in late 2014. McDevitt delved into the idea of Theopolis Americana – how New England became the New Jerusalem and used a distinct Judeo-Christian centric ideology to create a distinct American consciousness.

Wassim Razzouk comes from a seven hundred year legacy of pilgrim tattoo artists. He arrived with his tattooing kit in mid-March and spoke about the history of his illustrious family. Their family introduced pilgrim tattoos to Palestine centuries ago. Wassim spoke about different types of pilgrim tattoos and how Christian Copts would get a small cross tattooed on the inside of their wrists to grant them access to churches. At the end of the presentation, a volunteer from the audience received a beautiful tattoo of angels around his wrist.

We continued with Dr. Lena Salaymeh, Associate Professor in Law at Tel Aviv University looking at whether or not we should be comparing Jewish and Islamic legal traditions. This lecture related to her recent published book, *The Beginnings of Islamic Law: Late Antique Islamic Legal Traditions* which explores how critical historiography can illuminate Islamic legal beginnings. Dr. Salaymeh focused not on how much influence Jewish legal tradition had on the beginnings of Islamic Law but whether it did at all.

Sheikh Ghassan Manasra is the International Executive Director and founder of the Abrahamic Reunion, an organization which brings together all Abrahamic religions to share, learn and celebrate with one another. He is an ordained Sheikh in the Qadiri Sufi Order in the Holy Land which his father presently leads. He spoke at Tuesdays at Tantur about the Qadiri Sufi Tradition of religious peacebuilding by sharing personal stories of his spiritual journey and the journey of his teachers who came before him. Our next session brought together for the first time two additional partners: the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and the Palestine Exploration Fund. The speaker for the evening was Felicity Cobbing, the executive secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund. In an entertaining way she spoke of the early beginnings of the fund in the context of the different travellers who recorded their ancient discoveries buried in the land.

Tuesdays at Tantur (Continued from Page 3)

One of the most promising and inspiring leaders of Palestinian social change joined us for Tuesdays at Tantur in May. Daniel Bannoura is currently an instructor in Comparative Religion and Church History at Bethlehem Bible College. Daniel spoke about what it is like introducing and teaching Aristotle in Palestine. Muslim philosophers were integral in bringing Aristotle to the West through St. Thomas Aquinas. To help determine what the value of Eudaimonia or the 'good life' means for 21st century Palestine, he opened the L'Avri Coffeehouse in 2014. This educational coffee shop is located in Beit Sahour and has become a cultural hub for musicians and internationals.

The last session was by Rabbi Dr. David Frankel, lecturer at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem. He spoke about what a Jewish Biblical Hermeneutic in favor of territorial compromise would look like. Many topics from the evening were taken from his latest book, *The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel: Territorial Theologies in the Hebrew Bible* (2011). The evening was charged with participants engaging in a detailed text study from across the Bible. Rabbi Frankel showed how to embrace theological diversity and the implications of this for the historical development of the Bible.

Other guests included: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, Dr. Victoria Rue and Shachar Yannai.

Tuesdays at Tantur is a weekly event that seeks to establish a community of conversation. Co-hosted by the Tantur Ecumenical Institute and Jerusalem Global Gateway of the University of Notre Dame, the series nurtures open discussion on theological and other topics relevant to the life of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

The Mystery of the Magdala Stone (Continued from Page 2)

generally agreed with the verdict of archaeologist Mordechai Aviam, though my specific interpretations significantly differed from his. Despite these differences, the fact that such a monumental stone was found in the midst of a first-century Galilean synagogue suggests that there was a symbiotic relationship between the synagogues and the Jerusalem Temple, something I had argued in my 1999 book, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period*.

Beginning this spring, the Magdala Stone will be on public display for the first time in the Vatican Museum from May 15 – July 23 before returning again to Israel. This high-profile platform is certain to raise public interest in synagogues from the time of Jesus and so I am grateful for Tantur's support in helping me to contribute to our scholarly understanding of that important institution.

*To learn more about the Magdala Stone and Rev. Donald Binder's work related to it, read "The Mystery of the Magdala Stone," found in the volume, *A City Set on A Hill: Essays in Honor of James F. Strange* (2014).*

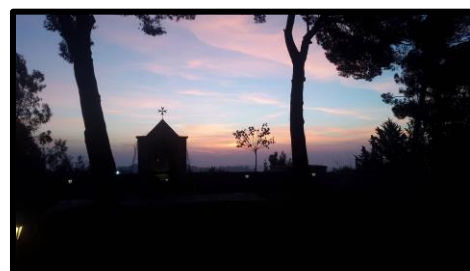


Staff Shot

Elias Khoury



Elias Khoury of Jerusalem has been appointed our new Kitchen Steward. Responsible for many tasks in both the kitchen and the dining hall, Elias also assists with catering for programs, events and other guests. Just starting his career in culinary arts, this is Elias's first full-time position as a kitchen steward. With Tantur's kitchen open for three meals a day, seven days a week almost throughout the entire year, we are grateful to have such a promising new addition to our kitchen staff such as Elias. Welcome Elias!





PROF. ASHER KAUFMAN APPOINTED NEW DIRECTOR OF KROC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES

Dr. Kaufman and family have been regular summer community members at Tantur for many years.

Dr. Asher Kaufman has been appointed the John M. Regan, Jr. Director of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, effective July 1, 2017. UND Keough School for Global Affairs Dean Scott Appleby described Dr. Kaufman as "an extraordinary scholar, teacher and colleague who brings sophisticated and nuanced thinking to some of the most challenging and complex issues of our time." Dr. Kaufman and his family have been a regular fixture of Tantur's summer community for many years, with Dr. Kaufman frequently providing lectures to undergraduate student programs and hosting a "Tuesdays at Tantur" event in the summer of 2016. Tantur community members are also familiar with the KROC Institute For International Peace Studies through fall semester interns that have resided at Tantur for several years as they complete local internships and conduct research. Tantur Ecumenical Institute congratulates Dr. Kaufman on his appointment, and looks forward to seeing him and his family make many happy summer returns to our community!



Dr. Asher Kaufman, pictured with one of his children during a Tuesdays at Tantur lecture in the summer of 2016. For more information on Dr. Asher's appointment, please visit <http://keough.nd.edu/asher-kaufman-appointed-director-kroc-institute-international-peace-studies/>

Tantur is an institute for ecumenical and theological studies, situated on a beautiful hill in Jerusalem near Bethlehem. It serves as a welcoming place in the Holy Land for visitors who come from all over the world seeking an oasis of learning, community, and hospitality.

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Tantur has begun the process of transitioning its e-list for events and the newsletter to an automated email system. Our local event announcements will now be distributed through the e-service "My Emma," with the possibility of the newsletter list also being delivered as such in the near future.

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Please note: Tantur Ecumenical Institute will be open through early August of 2017, with minimal staff through mid to late August. Visits to the Tantur with the exception of the courtyard must be made by appointment only during this time.

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