

Scholars Corner – Issue 6
News, Reviews & Publications

Prof. Mary Grey, *Liberation Theologian*
and her work for peace & justice



Prof. Gil Klein on *his research on spatial as well as symbolic boundaries in Talmudic and Midrashic literature and introducing students to the political and religious history of Jews, Christians & Muslims in Israel/Palestine*



Timothy Clark on *his PhD dissertation, research and interest fields.*



**Tantur Ecumenical Institute for
Theological Studies**

PO Box 11381
91113 Jerusalem
Israel

Ph: int +972 2 676 09 11
Fax: int +972 2 676 09 14

e-mail: tantur@netvision.net.il
Website: www.tantur.org



Scholars Corner – July 2012
Issue 6



Prof. Mary Grey

Visiting Professor, St. Mary's University,
Twickenham, London, UK.

I first came to Tantur in February 2008 to work on my book *The Advent of Peace- a Gospel Journey to Christmas* (London: SPCK 2010). I am a Liberation theologian and a patron of Friends of Sabeel UK. It has been the experience of the international conferences of Sabeel Jerusalem that have changed and involved me deeply in the quest for justice in Israel/Palestine. I was deeply grateful for the time at Tantur- and returned briefly in 2011 after Sabeel's

Conference in Bethlehem, Challenging Empire. (My husband Nicholas came too and painted in the garden!) I found the mixture of freedom to explore so many places, the wonderful Library, the friendly community fellowship and the prayer life were all tremendous blessings. I would dearly love to have stayed longer. Since then my commitment has deepened. I'm still attached to St Mary's

University, Twickenham, London, as Visiting Professor, but far more time is spent researching justice and peace dimensions of the Middle East. I now Chair the Theology Group of "Living Stones" in London – which studies the position of Christians in the Middle East in general- and is about to launch a Journal, *Living Stones*, publishing our papers. I am also part of a new project, The Balfour Declaration Project. (See www.balfourproject.org.) Because the centenary of the Balfour declaration will occur in 2017, we are trying to encourage a series of seminars/colloquia/conferences to examine what led to the Declaration and what are its consequences for the people of Israel/Palestine. We will involve Churches and eventually politicians and hope that there may be liturgies of penitence at some of the betrayals which occurred. I am also working on the companion book to *The Advent of Peace* - this is

The Resurrection of Peace- a Gospel journey to Easter and beyond –which will appear in November.

Prof. Gil Klein

Assistant Professor of Theological Studies, Loyola
Marymount University. Los Angeles, California, USA

Gil Klein is an Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He is a scholar of late antique Judaism and an architectural historian. Gil has earned his PhD from Cambridge University and has published several articles on space and architecture in rabbinic literature. He is currently working on a book about urban architecture and the topography of rabbinic Torah culture. Having developed his career in Judaism in correspondence with architectural history and theory has allowed him to examine Talmudic and Midrashic literature through the prism of the critical categories of space and place. These categories have recently gained a significant position among scholars interested in rabbinic literature and culture. Furthermore, the work produced in this field has emerged as part of a growing exchange between scholars in rabbinics and scholars in patristics. These scholars have consequently come to the realization that spatial practices were often crucial in the negotiations of religious boundaries and theological differences between rabbinic Jews and early Christians, precisely because such boundaries and differences were often fluid and undefined. Gil's examination of spatial as well as symbolic boundaries in Talmudic and Midrashic literature has led him to a similar realization. In this regard, the works of church fathers and Palestinian rabbis of late antiquity suggest comparable engagement with and conceptualization of sacred space.

Gil's stay at Tantur was part of an educational trip he led together with his colleague at LMU - Professor Amir Hussain. The trip, which was organized by the Center for Service and Action at their university, provided ten students with the opportunity to learn through first-hand experience about the religious and political history of Christians, Jews and Muslims in the area. The visit to Jerusalem, as well as to cities such as Bethlehem and Tel Aviv, also gave the students a unique perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Staying in Tantur, with its particular location and diverse staff and guests, was significant for their understanding of both the tension between these two communities and the potential for their coexistence.

Timothy Clark

Doctoral Student at Emory University, Atlanta,
Georgia, USA

Timothy Clark has taught Biblical Languages, Old Testament, and Scriptural Exegesis at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Westchester County, New York. He is currently nearing completion of his dissertation at Emory University, which is investigating firstfruit and tithe offerings in the Hebrew Bible, most particularly as they are presented in the Deuteronomistic and Priestly traditions.

Timothy's professional research interests have been formed by the liturgical practices of both Western and Eastern churches, first by Lutheran variants of the Roman rite and later by the Byzantine liturgical practices of the Eastern Orthodox Church. His dissertation research fuses together two powerful streams of tradition: the complex and often competing literatures of the Bible itself, and the cultic offering rites that helped create the religion and literature of Israel and which today continue to represent biblical texts and connect them to living communities through liturgical practice. While the historical development of firstfruit and tithe rites has been explored before, Timothy's work focuses not on their reconstructed historical forms and past performance practices, but on their employment as textual rituals in the Hebrew Bible. Biblical authors have utilized these rites as textual presentations both to advance their literary narratives and to provide rhetorical support for their institutional and ideological agendas. In certain cases, these firstfruit and tithe rites are central to the overall literary construction of major books. In Deuteronomy, for example, the firstfruit rite represented in 26:1-11 operates as the audience's "signature" affirming their acceptance of the Deuteronomistic law code. The rite and its accompanying confession play a role in Deuteronomy similar to the Eucharist's ritual function in Christian liturgical traditions.

Timothy can be contacted at timo.theos.clark@gmail.com.