

INSTITUTE *of* ADVANCED THEOLOGY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2003
Volume 3, Issue 1

Collaborative scholarship, bringing together religious leaders, believers, and those who are simply curious, in a shared enterprise of enlightened learning

A CHAT WITH THE CHAIR



Dear Fellow Members:

When we first formed the Institute of Advanced

Theology in 1996, we hoped both to present and further the study of first-century Biblical history. With the idea that many like-minded people might be interested in participating in the development and dissemination of the knowledge of this period, we began to design and offer public lectures, conferences, and publications.

With this in mind, we began to offer interested individuals a way to support the Institute and to help it grow through a variety of membership opportunities. The membership program has now grown to over 70 active members—not only from the Hudson Valley region, but also from Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, and Texas—who help support the Institute's goals.

If you have not already joined the Institute, please consider doing so. Some of the benefits of membership include:

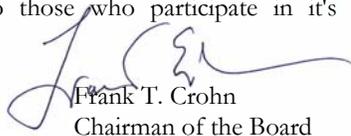
- ◆ A newsletter containing information about members, the Institute, and its activities.
- ◆ A series of Lenten lectures each spring, featuring talks that focus on Jewish influences on Christianity by Reverend Chilton, as well as a delicious lunch. Past discussions have included 'Rabbi Jesus,' 'St. Paul,' and next year, 'James, the Brother of Jesus.' (These are offered for only \$8 for members, over a 30% discount.)
- ◆ A series of fall lectures follow much the same pattern as the spring series. This fall the focus will be on Mary Magdalene.
- ◆ The opportunity to join a small member discussion group at a luncheon meeting once a month with Rev. Chilton.
- ◆ Participation in the November lecture given by a world-renowned first-century scholar as part of the Institute's annual Scholar Consultation at Bard.
- ◆ A 10% discount at Mirabai books in Woodstock.
- ◆ The opportunity to receive a recently published, author-inscribed book as part of annual membership as a patron.

The cost for the above—all of the above—is \$30 per year for basic membership or \$100 annually for patrons.

If you joined the Institute in the past, please make sure your membership is current for 2003. On receipt of your renewal this year, a membership card is sent to all current members.

If you're not already a member, won't you please fill out the application, contained in this publication, and return it to us? If you know someone with interests similar to yours, please encourage their involvement through inviting them to a lecture or luncheon.

In my opinion, this is a unique organization offering substantial rewards of personal satisfaction to those who participate in it's activities. ■


Frank T. Crohn
Chairman of the Board

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last November, members of the Institute joined me in a discussion with Professor John Painter from John Sturt University College in Australia. We all saw detailed photographs of the ossuary recently claimed as that of James, Jesus' brother. A few days after our session in Annandale, I traveled to Toronto, to view the artifact with several other scholars who have been involved in the analysis of the piece. This consultation was facilitated by the generous hospitality of Hershel Shanks of the Biblical Archaeology Society, who also gave the Institute access to the photographs.



Press coverage of the artifact up until November had been so enthusiastic, it sometimes appeared uncritical. As I said in November, if you do not know where an artifact has come from, it is not really an archaeological discovery at all -- but only an item on the collectors' market. Only context can explain what precisely an artifact was used for, the conditions it has been submitted to, its meaning for the people who deposited it, and the chain of possession that reaches from its deposit to its possession by the current owner. All those considerations are involved in the issue of authenticity, and many of them are more interesting than whether or not a given object is a forgery.

That means that whoever took this piece from its cave (if that is where it *was* found) not only looted the ossuary itself, but looted our knowledge of what the ossuary really means. We cannot completely remove the possibility we are dealing with a forgery (however improbable that may seem) until we can say where it came from. I still believe that the best service any scholar can perform in this controversy is to convince the owner, Mr. Oded Golan, and the Israeli Antiquities Authority to work together to identify where precisely (in Jerusalem, presumably) this object comes from. Success may seem a remote prospect, but all the major players are apparently alive, and we must keep in mind that they can tell us things we will never know unless they divulge what they know.

During the meeting in Toronto, the skeptics had a very good run. They emphasized our lack of knowledge of the provenance of the piece in order to cast doubt on the integrity of the owner and of the whole Biblical Archaeology Society. Some press coverage turned around on a dime, making the transition from credulous to hypercritical from one day to the next. The damage the box has sustained has not helped anyone's cause: let's hope that the thoughtless handling that has scrubbed, gouged, and cracked this item will finally cease.

One factor was opened up by the controversy that might help future discussion. I mentioned during the talk with Professor Painter that the changing shapes of some of the letters, as you read through the inscription, disturbed me. Rochelle Altman has argued that the changes attest to two completely different hands. That started the scholarly equivalent of a shouting match.

One side shouts "fraud." Meanwhile, some scholars in Toronto who had not noticed the alteration of the shapes of letters until it was pointed out to them still insisted the inscription is from a single hand. One senior epigraphist who just hates to change his mind kept repeating that the carver must have got tired. That argument is obviously lame, but both sides should take a deep breath. (Maybe that will make them sound less like Bill O'Reilly.) A change in style does not prove fraud. Grave markers are subject to emendation over time, as you can see from visiting many family tombs from antiquity until today. "James, son of Joseph," might have been inscribed when James' bones were put in the box, and "the brother of Jesus" could have been added later. It is worth remembering that the first historian of Christianity, Hegesippus, refers to a monument being set up for

INSTITUTE *of* ADVANCED THEOLOGY AT BARD COLLEGE

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BRUCE CHILTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NEWSLETTER EDITED BY NANCY LEONARD

James in Jerusalem. Was this bone box part of the memorial, built in, above or below ground? That is the kind of question that should be asked alongside the obvious ones: Is the ossuary genuine? Is it a fake?



And unless this is a fake, it is either the original ossuary of James or part of a monument to him. It could also be both. However you look at it, that makes this artifact evidence of the earliest identifiable Christian gravesite – and until we find out where the piece came from, we will be unable to say where that site is

located. Anomalies remain, on any reading. For example, why is the reference simply to "Jesus," when the titles "Messiah," "Son of Man," and "Lord" were applied to him in Aramaic from a very early period? There, too, we are up against a wall of uncertainty, until someone lets us into the place where the ossuary was found. ■

Bruce Chilton

Bruce Chilton
Executive Director

NEWS OF THE INSTITUTE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRUCE CHILTON

On Saturday, June 14, Bruce Chilton will speak at Miriam's Well in Saugerties on the topic "Rabbi Jesus and Anti-Semitism," with Susan Rosen, founder and director of Miriam's Well. They will discuss how an historically accurate understanding of the life of Jesus can influence and improve the relationship between Christians and Jews. 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., \$25 (dessert and coffee included). Reservations required, call 845-246-5805. Miriam's Well is located at 13 Simmons Street, Saugerties (www.miriamswell.com).

During Easter week 2003 the Rev. Chilton, and Institute scholars Craig Evans and John Painter appeared on the History Channel program *In the Footsteps of Jesus*.

In October 2002, Rev. Chilton's book *Redeeming Time: The Wisdom of Ancient Jewish and Christian Festal Calendars* was published by Hendrickson Publishers.

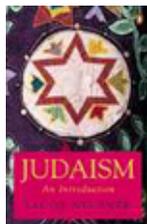
In February 2003, Brill Academic Publishers released the paperback edition of *The Missing Jesus: Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament*. Edited by Bruce Chilton, Craig Evans, and Jacob Neusner, this volume contains essays originally presented at a 1997 conference at Bard sponsored by the Institute. From the publisher: "In order for us to understand Jesus and his profound influence on global culture, we need to see him within the context of the Judaism that was his own natural environment. No one can be assessed apart from one's environment, but a variety of factors have isolated the study of Jesus from the study of Judaism. The "missing" Jesus is Jesus within Judaism."

SENIOR FELLOW, JACOB NEUSNER



instead begins by showing how Judaism is seen today in the world around us. Focusing on the religion as it forms the lives of real people, Judaism emerges as full of diversity and vitality. A lively, readable resource for students of Judaism and religious studies."

This June Jacob Neusner's book *Judaism: An Introduction*, will be available in paperback from Penquin Paperbacks. From the publisher: "In this fresh introduction to Judaism, eminent scholar Jacob Neusner rejects the traditional 'Sinai to Golders Green' approach, and



Also in June, Georgetown University Press will release *God's Rule: The Politics of World Religions*. From the publisher: "resisting the tendency to separate the study of religion and politics, editor Jacob

Neusner pulls together a collection of 10 essays in which various authors explore the relationship between the world's major religions and political power." Essays include, Jacob Neusner on Judaism, Bruce D. Chilton on historical Christianity, Charles E. Curran on Roman Catholicism, Petros Vassiliadis on Orthodox Christianity, John L. Esposito and Natana J. De Long Bas on classical and modern Islam, among others.

And, soon to be broadcast on PBS, *On Common Ground*, a documentary which includes interviews with both Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton. ■

MEMBERS' VIEWS

The Institute would like to thank the members who wrote the following essays for fellow members. If you are interested in submitting an essay, please e-mail iat@bard.edu or call the office at 845-758-7279.

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

FALL 2002

"Religious Foundations of Western Civilization" was a new offering to students at Bard College this past fall. It may well have been a first for undergraduates anywhere, with two major research scholars of international acclaim who are prolific writers at the top of their fields, as lecturers and mentors. Professor Bruce Chilton presented in expository form the points in the lecture series, Professor Jacob Neusner then questioned the students. IAT members were present as observers and could later ask questions, but not be part of the dialogue between Dr. Neusner and his students. This in itself was a learning experience for the Institute members, including teachers and ministers, who were used to getting, shaping, and giving information from their own mindset. For them, it seemed, this imposed discipline was the first step in the spiritual adventure.

The course was taught in perhaps the way Socrates intended, with the critique of student answers as the instrument of instruction. Listening and thinking were classwork for the students, not copying the professor's answers to give back on tests, another learning experience for the IAT observers. The required reading, William H. McNeill's *The Rise of the West*, a comprehensive history of world-wide vision and scholarship, was to be used as background, not as a basis for testing. The enormous scope of the course was itself most stimulating.

By the end, in intervals of about two weeks, the IAT members heard a lecture series by Professors Chilton and Neusner; saw the film *Ordet* with a lecture the following night by Professor John Pruitt; heard "The Secularization of Music," a sparkling talk by Professor and Bard President Leon Botstein—wherein he gave the audience intellectual wings to fly with this topic; and listened to Professor Emil Homerin of the University of Rochester, together with Professors Chilton and Neusner speak on the topic "Is Christianity at War with Islam?" Each of these lectures were intellectual and spiritual wonders.

Many members of the Institute had heard Dr. Chilton in his lectures, and read his books especially *Rabbi Jesus*. Many found that he expands their thinking, zeros in on follow up questions with remarkable perceptiveness, and sends listeners home anxious to read more of his books. Members often have learned of Dr. Neusner's wit and wisdom through his public appearances. They knew that it is hard to read about world religions without knowing of Dr. Neusner's writings on Judaism, in either specific books or in major compendiums, such as in *Our Religions*.

Each publication and appearance of these professors is itself an adventure.

The IAT members were able to see in the classes of the series a teaching miracle—the Bard students were alive with answers, organized, cogent answers, with real thinking in response to critique from Professor Neusner. This is the joy of teaching and learning, and for those in the IAT, a spiritual adventure.

—Jean Boyce, Saugerties, NY

**THE BEGINNING OF THE MEMBER LUNCHEON DISCUSSIONS
SPRING 2003**

After seeing a documentary on the History Channel about Mary Magdalene—that presented Mary Magdalene in a way which was vastly different than anything I had ever heard, I became very interested in what was being described. According to the sources used for this documentary, she was Jesus' most important disciple and was the person he communed with the most; it seemed she was sort of a soul mate for Jesus. The program went on to explain that when Jesus died, many of the other disciples were jealous of his relationship with Mary Magdalene and began the maligning of her as a prostitute.

I found some others interested in the topic, and Bruce agreed to some informal lunches this spring for more detailed discussion. He also proposed a book to read. The discussions were wonderful and it would have been enough if that was all that came out of it. But he has now agreed to do the fall series on Mary Magdalene and I'm thrilled, as are lots of others I've run into since we started talking about Mary Magdalene in this new light. Many people seem very excited about hearing more about the role of women 2,000 years ago, and what Mary Magdalene might really have been like.

—Andi Novick, Rhinebeck NY

DONATIONS BY MEMBERS TO THE INSTITUTE

In addition to generous monetary donations, some members have also donated paintings. The most recent donation, by Elizabeth Askue, is of *Caesarea Maritima* by her late husband William Askue. William Askue who died October 15, 2001, was a highly regarded pediatrician who "painted for the joy of it and never bother to sign his paintings," says his widow Elizabeth. She said he thoroughly enjoyed Rev. Chilton's lectures.



William Askue, "Caesarea Maritima"



Photo of Bruce Chilton in his office at Bard below the painting of *Philo* donated by Woodstock artist Meyer Lieberman. This was taken by Richard Lemmer, a scholar from South Africa. ■

**UPCOMING EVENTS
SUMMER 2003**

Wednesday, June 18, at 12:30 p.m.

"Cosmic Christ: the Inheritance of Paul," luncheon lecture by the Rev. Dr. Bruce Chilton. Paul contributed a range of innovative ideas to Christianity, but his coordinating principle was the cosmic Christ. Christ in Paul's thought animated the whole of human experience and the social and the natural world alike. In this lecture, Rev. Chilton will consider both the Rabbinic and the Stoic antecedents of Paul's central contribution, and see how they were maintained in letters written in his name after his death. Faculty Dining Room. \$15 nonmembers, \$12 members. Reservation and prepayment requested.

FALL 2003

Fridays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31

"Mary Magdalene: A Feminist Biography," fall luncheon lecture series with the Rev. Dr. Bruce Chilton. Through the history of the interpretation of the New Testament, Mary Magdalene has emerged as a pivotal figure in the discussion of gender and sexuality. Multipurpose room, Bertelsmann Campus Center, lunch at 12 noon followed by lecture at 12:30. \$12 nonmembers, \$8 members, for each lecture. Reservations and prepayment requested.

FALL 2003 COURSES

Jacob Neusner will teach the four-credit course ***Scripture, Mishnah, and Midrash*** (Religion 175) on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:50 p.m. Bruce Chilton will teach the four-credit course ***Liturgy*** (Religion 259) on Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m., and Sundays from 7: to 8:30 p.m., as well as the two-credit course ***Mary Magdalene*** (Religion 325) on Fridays, from 12 noon to 1:20 p.m. If you are interested in enrolling for these courses, contact Karen Becker in the Continuing Studies Program at **845-758-7508**, e-mail becker@bard.edu, or visit the website inside.bard.edu/csp. Tuition is \$1,384 for four credits; \$692 for two credits; and \$416 to audit a course. In addition there is a \$30 registration fee.

If you wish to purchase **video or audio tapes** of prior IAT lectures, visit the website www.theservices.org/chilton.htm, e-mail sales@theservices.org, or call **845-758-1591**.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM
January 2003 – December 2003**

NAME _____

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HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Basic Membership.....\$30.00

- Notification of all IAT events
- Receive newsletters
- Discount admission to IAT events
Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.
- 10% discount at Mirabai Woodstock

Patron Member.....\$100.00

- All the above benefits AND
- Recognition in Bard College's Annual Report
- Signed copy of the *"The Brother of Jesus,"* edited by Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner
OR
- Signed copy of *Judaism: An Introduction* by Jacob Neusner (available 06.03)
(The deductible portion of your contribution is \$80.00).
- I do not wish to receive either book (tax-deduction is \$100.00)

Additional Gift: \$ _____

Matching Funds \$ _____

(Please enclose your employer's matching funds form)

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

*Contributions to the IAT are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.
Please make checks payable to: IAT at Bard College*

OR

Please bill my VISA MasterCard or AMEX (circle one)
for the full amount.

Account number

Expiration Date

Signature

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Don't miss the
**Fall Luncheon Lecture Series
on Fridays in October at 12 noon**

For reservations, call the IAT office at
845-758-7279
e-mail iat@bard.edu
or visit the website www.bard.edu/iat



*Spring 2003 Lenten Lecture Series
with the Rev. Dr. Bruce Chilton*

Photos by The Services



***AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS FOR
A SPECIAL INSTITUTE LUNCHEON LECTURE ON JUNE 18 AT 12:30 P.M.
WITH THE REV. DR. BRUCE CHILTON
COSMIC CHRIST: THE INHERITANCE OF PAUL***

Paul contributed an immense range of concepts to Christianity, yet his central focus remained the cosmic Christ, as animating the whole human experience and the social and natural world alike.



In this lecture, Rev. Chilton will consider both the Rabbinic and the Stoic antecedents of Paul's central contribution, and see how they were maintained in letters written in his name after his death.

Faculty Dining Room. \$15 nonmembers, \$12 members. Reservation and prepayment requested. ■

Members of the Institute, and those wishing to learn more about membership, are invited to attend this luncheon lecture.

INSTITUTE of ADVANCED THEOLOGY
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON EVENTS OR MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, CONTACT THE INSTITUTE OFFICE AT **845-758-7279**,
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