

GENIZAH FRAGMENTS

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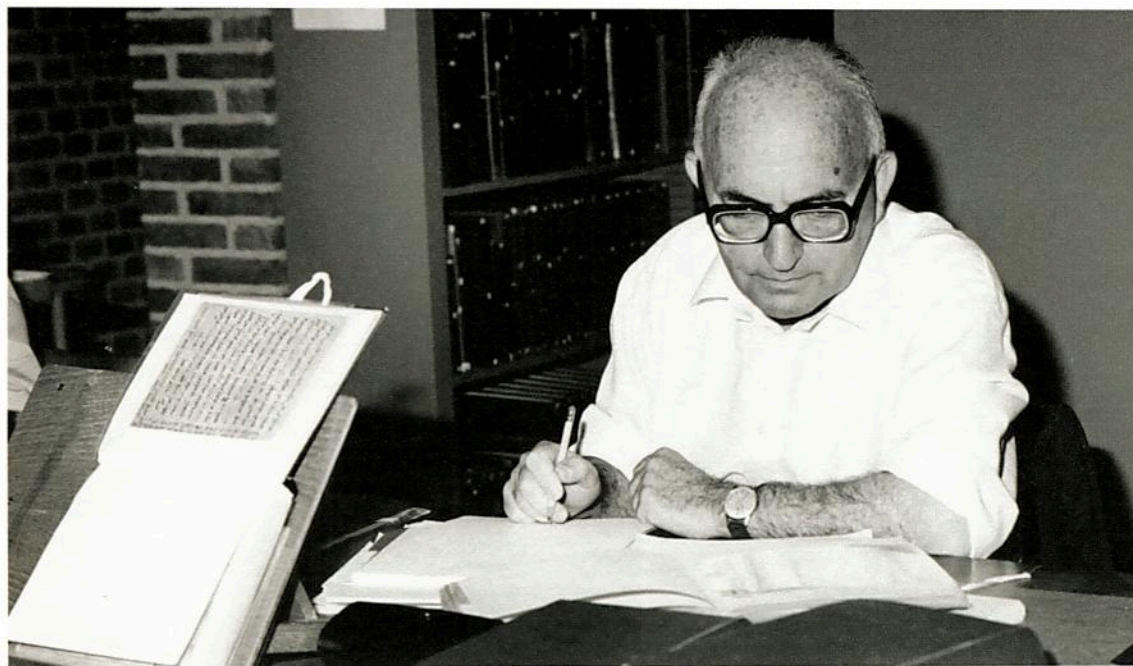
Prof. Moshe Gil (8 February 1921 – 23 January 2014)

Words on my teacher

The community of Genizah researchers lost one of their leading lights in January when Professor Moshe Gil passed away at the age of 92 years. Born in Bialystock, Poland, he grew up in Romania, where he was a leader in the Zionist underground movement Ha-shomer ha-tsa'ir and was imprisoned for his activities. Gil emigrated to Eretz Israel in 1945, and became a founding member of Kibbutz Reshafim. He began his academic career in 1965, at the age of 44, and went on to gain a Masters degree on Roman Palestine from Tel Aviv University. He would eventually serve there in a number of public positions, including as the Head of the Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, and as the Dean. He held the Joseph and Ceil Mazer Chair in the History of Jews in Muslim Lands, and in 1998 he was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for his work on the Cairo Genizah manuscripts.

Prof. Gil's research dealt with three major issues, and what follows is based on his writings (*naṣṣ*) and conversations with him (*ḥadīth*).

In his early days at Tel Aviv University, Gil devoted himself



Moshe Gil examining manuscripts in Cambridge University Library in the 1980s.

to the study of ancient Jewish history, in particular economics, halakha and theology. He never abandoned this interest, and in 2008 published his book *והרומאי אז בארץ* (*And the Roman Was Then in the Land*). Prof. Gil studied with Prof. S. Safrai, but saw Prof. Y. Efron as his primary mentor. As a student of Efron, Gil viewed the Dead Sea Scrolls (as well as the Enoch literature) as late, non-Jewish literature. These views are not widely accepted, and many researchers of the Second Temple Period have ignored them, as they ignored the works of Efron.

In his final years, Gil was occupied with research on the tribe of Kinda. In numerous publications he attempted to identify the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muhammad, and focused on

the early relationship between the Jews and the first Muslims. He believed that the Enoch literature and the Manichaeans were important influences on early Islam. Both Gil and his mentor, Prof. M. Y. Kister, held

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