

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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Contents



Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

Leonard Harvey Babby	1
Mark Robert Cohen	4
Martin C. Collcutt	6
John Horton Conway	10
Edward Charles Cox	14
Frederick Lewis Dryer	16
Thomas Jeffrey Espenshade	19
Jacques Robert Fresco	22
Charles Gordon Gross	24
András Peter Hámori	28
Marie-Hélène Huet	30
Morton Daniel Kostin	32
Heath W. Lowry	34
Richard Bryant Miles	36
Chiara Rosanna Nappi	39

Susan Naquin	42
Edward Nelson	44
John Abel Pinto	47
Albert Jordy Raboteau	49
François P. Rigolot	54
Daniel T. Rodgers	57
Gilbert Friedell Rozman	61
Peter Schäfer	64
José A. Scheinkman	68
Anne-Marie Slaughter	71
Robert Harry Socolow	74
Zoltán G. Soos	78
Eric Hector Vanmarcke	81
Maurizio Viroli	83
Frank Niels von Hippel	85
Andrew John Wiles	87
Michael George Wood	89

Mark Robert Cohen



Mark R. Cohen, the Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, has spent four decades on the Princeton faculty. Mark earned his degrees from Brandeis University (A.B.), Columbia University (M.A.), and the Jewish Theological Seminary (M.H.L. and Ph.D.).

A world-renowned historian of Jews in the medieval Islamic world and mentor to a generation of young scholars of the historical documents of the Cairo Geniza, Mark's published work includes studies of Muslim-Jewish relations, Jewish social and economic history, the structure and functioning of the Jewish community, the Cairo Geniza, and Jewish law and society, as well as a translation and edition of the autobiography of a famous seventeenth-century Venetian rabbi.

Mark's strong language skills, including knowledge of Judeo-Arabic, a language he has taught for many years, allow him to mine a wide variety of available sources. As David Wasserstein has written, Mark's arguments "are buttressed with an impressive range of evidence drawn from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources in the Islamic and Christian worlds." However, Mark does not simply summarize the available sources but applies to his material sophisticated theoretical approaches to arrive at very insightful analyses.

Mark has received numerous fellowships and has served as a visiting professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Columbia University, and New York University. Among other academic appointments, he has held fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, and the National Humanities Center. He has given seminars at Ain Shams University in Cairo, the University of Paris, the Free University in Berlin, and the Central European University in Budapest.

Mark is a member of the American Academy for Jewish Research and in 2010 was the inaugural winner of Merrimack College's Goldziher Prize for scholarship that "contributes significantly to understanding, reverence, and common moral purpose between Jews and Muslims." Mark has also promoted understanding between Jews and Muslims through lectures, public talks, and op-ed pieces.

In addition to scores of articles and reviews, Mark has written *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt* (1980), which won the National Jewish Book Award for Jewish history in 1981; *Al-Mujtama' al-Yahudi fi Misr al-Islamiyya fi al-'Usur al-Wusta* (*Jewish Life in Medieval Egypt 641–1382*), a survey translated into Arabic for readers in the Arab world (1987); *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah* (1988); *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (1994, new edition 2008), which has been translated into numerous languages; and *Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Egypt* and *The Voice of the Poor in the Middle Ages: An Anthology of Documents from the Cairo Geniza*, both published in 2005. Since its establishment in 1986, he has been the director of the Princeton Geniza Project in the Department of Near Eastern Studies, an online database of transcriptions of documents from the Cairo Geniza used by scholars worldwide.

Mark will not be idle in retirement. He has several book projects in progress and plans also to continue teaching at least one course per year as a visiting professor. He will continue his relationship with the Department of Near Eastern Studies, teaching a graduate seminar next fall and maintaining his directorship of the Princeton Geniza Project.