

OBITUARIES

Uri (Lucien) Poznanski

(1946-2014)

Uri (Lucien) Poznanski unhappily died in Paris on October 23, 2014, less than a month after he had retired from the Department of History at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He was one of the rare academicians who are not merely experts in their chosen discipline, but also intellectuals actively engaged in critical thought concerning the realities of society and culture. He was a great connoisseur of the arts — from opera and painting to poetry and cinema — as well as a passionate reader on diverse fields of knowledge — from philosophy and political science to world history. Above all, he was interested in people, not merely texts and works of art, but also their creators — not only their ideas, but also the human beings behind them. Uri's political and social views never remained theoretical issues for him: as a senior faculty member, and especially during his four terms as the Head of the Department of History, he was one of the most resolute defenders of the rights of the underprivileged, be that on behalf of adjunct and junior lecturers, or of students coming from minority communities.

Born on May 11, 1946, Lucien Poznanski's world view was shaped in Paris, where he grew up and was a member of the Zionist Youth and Marxist movements. As a B.A. student at the Sorbonne and an ardent Trotskyist, he participated in the events of 1968. All of his academic training was completed at the Sorbonne, receiving a BA in History (1969), and an M.A. in Ancient History (1970) with a thesis on: *L'onomastique gallo-romaine* under the supervision of J. Le Gall. In 1973, he completed his doctoral dissertation: *Contribution à l'étude de l'onomastique théophorique dans le Bassin Méditerranéen*, under the supervision of J. Le Gall. In the year preceding the formal award of his Ph.D. (1974), he immigrated to Israel as Uri Poznanski. Almost immediately he began teaching at Ben-Gurion University: first Latin and Greek, and, since 1976, ancient history, focusing mainly on Hellenistic and Roman political and military history. He was the founding father of the study of Classical languages and history at Ben-Gurion University. Several generations of graduate students now engaged in various fields of Classical Studies, owe the beginnings of their career to him. During the restrictive period of severe cuts in the curriculum, he insisted that his students still acquire the language skills considered indispensable, volunteering to teach Latin reading courses himself. Although living in Israel, he periodically taught in France, which remained a second home for him. He was invited as a Professor of Greek and Roman History to Paris X, Paris I, the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales*, and elsewhere.

His scholarly interests encompassed a wide range of subjects, as among them: onomastics, Roman literature and its role in politics and society, historiography (particularly, Polybius), as well as the theory and practice of ancient warfare. Lucien Poznanski contributed a critical edition of *'Traité de Tactique' attribué à Asclépiodote le Philosophe* (Budé, 1992), accompanied by an extensive philological and historical commentary. His engagement with military history and reception studies resulted in *La chute du temple de Jérusalem*, published in 1991 (reprinted: Brussels, 1997). The latter comprises an overarching examination of military, political, and cultural aspects of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, including a discussion of the memory of this historical event and its construal by the Jews, Muslims and Christians, its representation in visual arts and literature, as well as a succinct analysis of its modern historiography. Uri Poznanski was fascinated by the themes of 'the use and abuse of history' and the modification and reception of the Classical tradition, to all of which he returned in several compositions.

Uri's generosity and kindness to his colleagues and friends were limitless, as was his willingness to share his enormous knowledge and experience with anyone in need of advice. His

vast scholarship, humour — sometimes self-deprecating — and loyalty to his convictions and friends were well known to his colleagues at Ben-Gurion University, as well as to members of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, to which he contributed continuously throughout the years. His students, colleagues and friends will remember Uri Poznanski as a dedicated teacher, insightful scholar and intellectual, and above all, a man of great humanity.

Yulia Ustinova

Samuel (Shmuel) Scolnicov

(1941-2014)

Samuel Scolnicov, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Philosophy of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who died last August, had Greek philosophy, and especially Plato and the Presocratics, at the centre of his wide ranging interests. These included not only all branches of philosophy, but the entire range of the arts and humanities and even the natural sciences — in his first year at the Hebrew University he studied chemistry before turning to Philosophy and Hebrew Language. A polyglot perfectly at ease in half a dozen languages he was a widely read humanist who enjoyed teaching and saw education as his foremost brief. Among the projects he was actively involved in for many years was advancing the teaching of philosophy in high schools, and for a number of years he headed teacher training in the Hebrew University School of Education. He was a much loved and appreciated teacher both by undergraduates and even more so by his graduate students who could more accurately evaluate not only his dedication but also his wide ranging erudition. Students of Greek philosophy abroad will not be aware of the time and effort Shmuel invested in textbooks and other aids to students, including *Heraclitus and Parmenides: Testimonia and Fragments*, Introduction, Hebrew translation and notes (1988).

His interest in Greek philosophy was awakened gradually: first attracted to continental philosophy he eventually wrote his M.A. thesis *On the Epistemological Significance of Plato's Theory of Ideal Numbers* under the direction of Shlomo Pines, and his Ph.D. dissertation on *Plato's Method of Hypothesis in the Middle Dialogues* was supervised in Cambridge by Bernard Williams. His major contributions included *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* (1988), *Plato's Parmenides* (2003), and his co-edited volumes *New Images of Plato: Dialogues on the Idea of the Good* (2002) and *Plato's Laws: From Theory into Practice* (2003). In the words of one critic, *Plato's Metaphysics of Education* "fills a major hiatus in scholarship on Plato and to a lesser extent, on Socrates. In the best tradition of recent classical scholarship, Scolnicov carefully delineates the parameters of his study, "how Plato developed his metaphysics with a view to supporting his deepest educational convictions" (p. vii).¹ In all his studies of Plato he insisted on the importance of the dialogic method and on the different forms of irony as well as on the significance of a sound ontological basis.²

In 1989 he became a founding member of the International Plato Society and was elected as its president in 1998-2001. He was also a very active member of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies and a regular contributor to this journal (see vols. 1, 6, 7 [bis], 12, 16). His visiting appointments included Toronto, California at Irvine, São Paulo, Catania, Mexico City, and Paris. But above all he was a private person and a happy and proud family man. Born in

¹ B.A. Sichel, *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 13 (1994), 141.

² For a full list of his publications see <http://pluto.huji.ac.il/~mshpuss/Publications2.html>