

OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN NO 35 : MAY 2008

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PRESIDENTIAL MATTERS

Having shamefully allowed five months to elapse since our last e-bulletin, the least we can now do is to report some significant news. Dr David Ariel, currently Acting Head of Baltimore Hebrew University and previously for twenty-five years President of Siegal College in Cleveland, Ohio, is to succeed Peter Oppenheimer as the Centre's President on 1st October 2008. And not before time, insists Peter, - what with the Centre's celebration of his 70th birthday on 16th April.

This was a mid-morning affair. Academic, administrative, domestic and maintenance staff, as well as students and visiting scholars gathered in the festively decorated Common Room. Peter provided champagne. The toast was proposed by Maureen Peacock, his P.A. The Academic Director also spoke in congratulation and presented Peter with a monograph by Bodleian map librarian Nick Millea on one of Bodley's great treasures, *The Gough Map*, thought to be the earliest road map of Great Britain. (For cake, see photograph on the website!)

VISITING FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS

We have a rich variety of visiting academics this term. Professor Avraham Faust of Bar-Ilan University has been researching the social structure of Yehud province in the Persian period, using mainly archaeological evidence. Dr Javier Del Barco and Dr Esperanza Alfonso are both from the Universidad Complutense, Madrid. Dr Del Barco's research focuses on Ibn Ezra's commentary to the minor prophets. Dr Alfonso is working on a project concerned with late medieval Hebrew commentaries on the book of Proverbs. A most welcome return visitor is Dr Michael Wenthe, of the American University, Washington DC, a former Diploma student who completed the course here in 1998. Dr Wenthe, the first of the Victor and Sylvia Blank Visiting Fellows at the Centre, is studying unique versions of the Old Yiddish Arthurian romance *Ritr Vidvilt* (Sir Vidvilt). The Bodleian Library holds the only extant copy of the 16th-century ottava rima version of this work. Dr Marie Turner is a visiting scholar from the Catholic Theological College, South Australia. Her research covers Ben Sira, masoretic text and the Septuagint.

HEBREW CODICOLOGY and MASTER CLASSES

And there are more. Professor Malachi Beit-Arié of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is happily once again in residence as a Kennedy Leigh Visiting Fellow. He is delivering a course on Hebrew Codicology throughout term in the New Bodleian library. The course outlines the history, social environment and production of medieval manuscripts in Hebrew script, with manuscripts from the Bodleian as examples. The course has been facilitated by the Academic Director Piet van Boxel in his dual capacity as Hebraica and Judaica Curator of the Bodleian.

Another fresh initiative this term is a series of Master Classes entitled *Between Early Judaism and Christianity*, given by Professor Peter Schäfer of Princeton. Four classes were held at the Examination Schools in weeks two and three.

NEW PRODUCTIONS!

Dr Tali Argov's book, *The Poetics of Yair Hurvitz's Poetry* (in Hebrew) was published earlier in the year and provided the subject of a seminar by the author at the Oriental Institute.

Literature aside, belated congratulations and good wishes go to Miri Freud-Kandel (our Lecturer in Modern Judaism) and her husband Jonathan on the arrival of their baby son Judah Marley Freud-Kandel on 6 January, a brother for Livia.

Best wishes also to current MSt student Avram Shannon and his wife Thora on the recent safe arrival of their second daughter, Elisheva.

GOODWILL AND SADNESS

The staff lunch in December 2007 was the occasion for three presentations. Roy Cohen, who had worked in the library as a Hebrew cataloguer for over three years, left the Centre at Christmas to take up appointment as library manager of Ohalo College in the Golan (Israel). We wish him every success in his new post. Accountant Sheila Phillips was congratulated on attaining her tenth anniversary at the Centre. Pat Cox, a cheerful and warm-hearted member of the housekeeping team for the past twenty-five years, was presented with a leaving gift and with everyone's good wishes for a long and happy retirement.

We commemorate Richard Judd, one-time Librarian at the Centre and Hebrew Curator of the Bodleian Library for 22 years, who passed away on 21 October last year. He had taken early retirement from the Bodleian in July 2006. In the words of Piet van Boxel, his successor, Richard Judd will be remembered "as a highly qualified Hebrew Curator of the Bodleian library by all those who turned to him for scholarly advice, and as a kind and modest human being."

We also have to report the tragic death of our former student Isaac Meyers on 17 March 2008 as the result of a road accident in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Isaac was an MSt student in 2003-04, affiliated to St Peter's College. We extend our sincere condolences to Isaac's family on their immeasurable loss.

Peter Oppenheimer - President
Sue Forteach - Bulletin Compiler