

The Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
A Recognized Independent Centre of the University of Oxford

NEWSLETTER 1 - May 2009

Welcome to the first issue of our re-styled newsletter which heralds a new era for the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. We hope you find it both informative and useful. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and to keeping you well informed.

The Editor

New President David Ariel joins the Centre

David Ariel, formerly President of Siegal College of Jewish Studies in Cleveland (Ohio), became the new President of the Centre on 1 October 2008. He succeeded Peter Oppenheimer who retired after eight years at the helm. Dr Ariel, author of four books including *What Do Jews Believe?* and *Kabbalah*, is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and received his doctorate at Brandeis University (Boston, MA) in Jewish Studies. He has been a pioneer in developing new initiatives for Jewish education in North America, including professional development and distance-learning videoconferencing programmes. He has been a consultant to universities, foundations, and higher-education accrediting agencies. His priorities are increasing the Centre's visibility, fundraising, and programme innovation.

Board of Governors adopts a new Mission Statement

The mission of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies is to:
provide an outstanding Hebrew and Jewish Studies curriculum at one of the world's leading universities;
generate knowledge about Jewish civilization, its interaction with other religions and its contribution to other cultures;
contribute to the betterment of society through promoting greater understanding of Jewish civilization and the legacy of inter-religious pluralism among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Six centuries of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Oxford

Oxford University has one of the world's longest continuous histories of teaching Hebrew and Jewish Studies. The University of Oxford's Bodleian Library holds the world's most important collection of materials from medieval European Jewish civilization and testifies to the legacy of inter-religious pluralism and multiculturalism among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

If you want to learn about Jewish civilization, you have to go to Oxford either actually or, at least, virtually. Today, the responsibility for continuing this legacy rests with the Oxford Centre. To learn more about Jewish Studies at Oxford read the President's recent lecture "Objectivity and Engagement" given at Yarnton within the David Patterson Seminars.

Student profile: Islam Dayeh from Jordan and Germany

Islam Dayeh from Jordan completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Amman where his interest in Jewish-Muslim relations germinated. He continued his Islamic Studies at the universities of Leiden and Berlin and then applied for the MSt in Jewish Studies in order to strengthen the Jewish dimension of his subject. "While this is a relatively small and highly specialized programme, there is much diversity of research undertaken here ... that results in an incredibly stimulating working environment. All this makes the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies a unique institution within British academia. I recommend this programme to any student who wishes to specialize in Jewish studies or enhance their own related research." More details...

European Seminar on Advanced Jewish Studies

The Oxford Centre is delighted to announce that it will host the European Seminar on Advanced Jewish Studies. Leading academics and junior scholars will participate in a series of residential workshops taking place from January to June 2010 and from January to June 2011. Weekly seminars will be arranged, to which members of the Oxford academic community will be invited. The first two projects will focus on the reading of Hebrew and Jewish texts in the early modern period, and Greek Scripture and the Rabbis. Participants will be working with eminent scholars in the same field.

Editor:

Dr Jeremy Schonfield