

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

NEWSLETTER 3 - February 2010

Welcome to the third issue of our electronic newsletter! We hope you will take a few minutes to view the new video (LINK) which provides a glimpse of day-to-day life at the Centre, giving further insight into the Fellows, their work, and our academic strategy. Also featured are some of our former students, reflecting on the programme of study they undertook while here, and the effect it has had on their careers.

With every good wish for the new decade.
The Editor

The Geniza Collection: Digitization Project

The Cairo Geniza is an accumulation of almost 200,000 Jewish manuscripts - mainly fragments - that were found in the geniza or store room of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo). The importance of these fragments for reconstructing the socio-religious and economic history of the Jews cannot be overemphasized. The fragments enable us to reconstruct in detail the religious, economic and cultural life of the Jews in the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean region from the 9th to the 14th centuries, an era previously not well-known in Jewish history.

The Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies is proud to be involved with the Bodleian Library in creating a worldwide Geniza database. When the project is complete, scholars anywhere in the world will have access to the Bodleian Library's Geniza treasures. Read more here...

'Crossing Borders': Hebrew Manuscript Exhibition

The Bodleian Library's special winter exhibition opened on 7 December. 'Crossing Borders: Hebrew Manuscripts as a Meeting-place of Cultures' was organized by Dr Piet van Boxel, and is based on the Hebrew, Arabic and Western holdings of the Bodleian. Together these manuscripts tell the often forgotten story of intellectual transmission, cultural exchange and practical cooperation, social interaction, and even religious toleration between Jews and non-Jews in the Muslim and the Christian worlds during the late Middle Ages. It is a story that runs counter to many of the popular conceptions of Jewish civilization. Read more here...

New Research Fellow - and Jewish Visual Culture

Dr Aaron Rosen joined the Centre in October 2009 as the new Albert and Rachel Lehmann Junior Research Fellow in Jewish History, a post also associated with St Peter's College. His area of research is Jewish visual culture, with special interests in modern Jewish art and aesthetics, and Jewish-Christian dialogue. Dr Rosen was awarded a PhD from Pembroke College, Cambridge, in July 2008. Dr Rosen has been a visiting scholar at the University of California Berkeley and a post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University. He has published articles and reviews on religion and the arts in publications including *Jewish Quarterly*, *Art and Christianity*, *Religion and the Arts* and the *Journal of Jewish Studies*. His first book, *Imagining Jewish Art: Encounters with the Masters in Chagall, Guston, and Kitaj*, was published in the summer of 2009 by Legenda Press in Oxford. Read more here...

Fundraising News

The target for this year's Annual Campaign at the Oxford Centre is £720,000. We are halfway through the campaign and have so far received, through the generosity of our loyal supporters, £526,000.

Every gift received by the Centre through this annual campaign will go directly towards fellowships, student scholarships and core operations. It supports the journey our students undertake to increase their knowledge of Jewish civilization. It also helps us to provide the highest calibre of teaching, which attracts the best students and scholars, and to maintain a well-managed institution with a clear vision and strategy. In doing so, we continue the

tradition of Jewish studies at Oxford, dating back over six centuries. Your help is highly valued and vital to this mission; please give generously.

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