

OCHJS NEWS BULLETIN NO 31 : NOVEMBER 2006

**NEW YEAR, NEW COLLEAGUES ● SEMINARS AND LECTURES
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NEW YEAR, NEW COLLEAGUES

Dr Jordan Finkin has joined us from the University of California, Berkeley, as Oxford's new Cowley Lecturer in Post-Biblical Hebrew and the Centre's Fellow in Modern Hebrew Literature. His special interests are Hebrew and Yiddish Modernist poetry and linguistics. Dr Finkin gave an admired inaugural lecture within the David Patterson seminars on Hebrew and Yiddish Poetry, with particular reference to the modernisms of Avraham Shlonsky and Perets Markish.

Dr Natan Meir of the University of Southampton's History department has also joined us this year, on a temporary basis. Dr Meir is covering Dr Rechter's university teaching whilst he is on sabbatical leave.

Nine graduate students are participating in this year's MSt course and began classes after a week's orientation activities at the Centre and in their individual colleges. We welcome Becca, Steve, Joshua, Ben, Timothy and Sunny from the United States, Milena from Poland and Al and Daniel from the UK.

SEMINARS AND LECTURES

Dr Robert Miller, a Visiting Fellow from Mount St Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, opened the David Patterson Seminar series of the new academic year on 11 October, speaking about Israel's Covenant in an Ancient Near Eastern context. The Covenant theme continued for the next three sessions, with Professor Geza Vermes speaking about the notion of Covenant in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Professor Philip Alexander about Deuteronomic theology in early Rabbinic Judaism, and the Revd Dr Robert Owens (a visiting lecturer from the General Theological Seminary in New York) on Sons and Daughters of the Covenant in the writings of Aphrahat the Persian Sage. The seminars are now being convened by Dr van Boxel in his additional capacity as Academic Director.

VISITING FELLOWSHIP DEADLINE

There is one month left before the deadline for Visiting Fellowship applications for the academic year 2007-08. Preference will be given to applicants with an expertise in the use of rabbinic texts for the history of late antiquity. Please visit the website for further details.

PROFESSORIAL PLATFORMS

BBC One's recently screened drama-documentary series *Ancient Rome, The Rise And Fall Of An Empire*, was underwritten by the scholarship of leading experts in the field. Including Professor Martin Goodman, the Centre's Fellow in Jewish History in the Graeco-Roman Period. Martin advised in particular on the episode which depicted the story of Josephus, leader of the Jewish revolt against the Romans who was forced – agonisingly – to swap sides and join the oppressors of his people. Meanwhile, Martin's latest book, *Rome and Jerusalem: the Clash of Ancient Civilizations* is due to be published by Penguin in January. There will be a launch at the Centre.

Another professorial publication already on the shelves is Hugh Williamson's magisterial *Isaiah 1-V*. This is the first of Hugh's projected three-volume commentary covering the first 27 chapters of Isaiah. It is published by T&T Clark International in the "International Critical Commentary" series. The series, established more than a century ago, seeks to bring together all the relevant aids to exegesis - linguistic, textual, archaeological, historical, literary, and theological - to help the reader comprehend as fully as possible the books both of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament. The latest commentaries continue this tradition with the incorporation of new evidence and new methods of study. Professor Williamson gave a seminar on the subject at Yarnton, jointly with Dr Alison Salvesen.

NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS

As of next month the Centre will have a new website address, switching over to the ochjs domain name which has been in use for e-mail for some time. The new, easier-to-remember address will be: www.ochjs.ac.uk
The existing address will run concurrently until the end of this academic year.

CONGRATULATIONS

A small celebration took place at Yarnton Manor on 18 October for Don Burnett's 70th birthday. A Staff collection will be used by Don to buy a topiarised bay tree – a fitting present for the Centre's ever-youthful gardener!

Congratulations also to our erstwhile Fellow Emanuele Ottolenghi on his recent marriage to Nicole. We wish them both every happiness for the future.