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Preface by the editors-in-chief

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Preface by the editors-in-chief

Relaunching Studia Rosenthaliana

For many years, *Studia Rosenthaliana* has been a household name for anyone working on the history and culture of the Jews in the Netherlands. Since its start in 1967 the journal has served as a platform that has enabled researchers in the Netherlands, Europe, Israel and North America to publish their findings and engage in academic debate. After half a century of appearing in print, we now embark on a new chapter in the journal's history: we proudly relaunch the venerable *Studia Rosenthaliana* as a 'diamond open access,' double-blind peer reviewed journal. By opting for full open access, we aim to broaden its readership, enable scholars to generously share their results with all those interested, and boost the journal's impact in the fields of Jewish studies and Dutch history.

A 'showpiece of Dutch Jewish history'

From the start, *Studia Rosenthaliana* has held a central role in the infrastructure of the study of Jewish history in the Netherlands. Its cradle was the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, the renowned Hebraica and Judaica collection that was donated to the city of Amsterdam in 1880 by the heirs of book collector Leeser Rosenthal. It was incorporated as a distinct part of the special collections of the University Library, recently renamed Allard Pierson. Until the founding of a Hebrew and Jewish studies department in the late 1960s, the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana was the university's major Jewish studies hub. From its inception, the library functioned as a meeting place for Jewish intellectuals and as a treasure trove for scholars around the world. In 1967 *Studia Rosenthaliana* was born, initiated by the energetic curator Lajb (Leo) Fuks, who saw the journal as medium for sharing the riches of Dutch Jewish history with the wider academic community.

The founding of *Studia Rosenthaliana* coincided with a growing scholarly interest in the history of Dutch Jewry. In 1968, the year in which

the University of Amsterdam's chair in Hebrew and Jewish studies was founded, a 'Center for Research on Dutch Jewry' was established at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Simultaneously, scholars in the United Kingdom, France, North America and elsewhere also began researching centuries of Jewish social and intellectual history in the Low Countries. *Studia Rosenthaliana* became the natural forum for this scholarly community, which included well-established names as well as aspiring junior researchers. Among the many articles, especially those on the early history of the Portuguese community stand out. Yet the journal's scope was not limited to the early modern period or to local Sephardi history; its subjects ranged from Hebrew literature, via Yiddish booklore to art history, and from eighteenth-century rabbis to twentieth-century socialists. Anticipating the principles of Open Science by many years, the journal also published the Amsterdam City Archives' notary deeds pertaining to the city's Portuguese Jews before 1639.

In the early decades of the journal, though setting a high academic standard, *Studia Rosenthaliana* was also widely read outside academia. Its issues were extensively reviewed in the major Dutch newspapers. Mozes Heiman (Max) Gans, a scholar of Dutch Jewry in his own right, wrote that with the new *Studia*, Dutch Jewry had gained something to be proud of, 'a showpiece of Dutch Jewish history' for the international world. The journal was published twice a year, yet Gans tried to make a case for switching to monthly issues, arguing there was much research to be done and published.¹

Studia Rosenthaliana was initially published with Van Gorcum Publishers in Assen, which guaranteed a wide distribution among academic institutions and university libraries. In 1998 the journal moved to Amsterdam University Press, to stress its affiliation with the University of Amsterdam. Several years later it was decided to rebrand *Studia Rosenthaliana* as a thematic yearbook published by Peeters Publishers (Louvain), and to open up its exclusive focus on the Dutch context. This resulted in a series of yearbooks on broader topics such as Jewish multilingualism, book history, art, cultural dynamics and ceremonial objects.

1 Mozes Heiman Gans, 'Een belangrijk tijdschrift: Studia Rosenthaliana', *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad*, 13 January 1967.

Open Access relaunch

In the course of these successive transformations a vacuum was created: the journal lost its role as a forum for research on Dutch Jewry. Articles on the history of Jews in the Netherlands did find their way into other journals, but the field as such lacked an epicentre, its ‘showpiece,’ to borrow Gans’s expression. Over the years, many colleagues have emphasised the need for a full-fledged journal devoted to the history and culture of the Jews in the Netherlands. We are therefore extremely happy to be able to reintroduce *Studia Rosenthaliana* as a twice-yearly journal, open to contributions on all aspects of Jewish history and culture in the Netherlands, in the broadest possible definition, i.e. from medieval to contemporary history, from the study of manuscripts and books to music and the arts, from analytic articles to annotated sources. We take the generic term ‘the Netherlands’ as referring to *all* geographic locations connected to the series of political entities that preceded the present Kingdom of the Netherlands. It emphatically includes its former colonies and the present Caribbean parts of the Kingdom, as well as the diasporas of Dutch Jews throughout time and across the world.

In line with the new publication policies of Dutch and European funding bodies, shared by a growing number of universities worldwide, we have succeeded in ‘flipping’ *Studia* from a printed subscription-based yearbook to a fully open access digital journal. This answers our heartfelt wish as editors to disseminate the results of research on Dutch Jewry as widely as possible, both within and outside the academic community. Thanks to a generous subsidy from the municipality of Amsterdam as part of its restitution of wartime Jewish ground lease taxes, we were able to opt for ‘diamond open access.’ Both authors and readers will have free access to the journal, which means they can publish their articles or read its contents without paying production or subscription costs.

Amsterdam University Press was eager to resume publishing and had all the necessary technical tools in place to facilitate the flipping of *Studia Rosenthaliana*. We would like to extend our thanks Uitgeverij Peeters for the fruitful collaboration over the past decade, and look forward to working together with AUP’s staff in producing two issues every year. *Studia Rosenthaliana* will remain closely related to the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, and we are grateful that Allard Pierson will continue to support the journal. From now on, *Studia Rosenthaliana* is also affiliated with the Menasseh ben Israel Institute for Jewish Studies, thus connecting it not just to the University of Amsterdam and its library, but also to Amsterdam’s Jewish

Cultural Quarter, which consists of the Jewish Historical Museum, the Portuguese Synagogue, the Hollandsche Schouwburg and the National Holocaust Museum.

Editors past and present

As part of the relaunch of *Studia* the composition of its editorial board underwent a number of changes. Having long been involved in the journal's daily operations, Emile Schrijver became its editor-in-chief in 2004. As the curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, he used his extensive network, intellectual creativity and editorial skills for the best of the journal. In his current capacity of director of the Amsterdam Jewish Cultural Quarter, he will continue to further the study, research and valorization of Dutch Jewish history in another capacity. We owe him a big debt of gratitude and look forward to continuing our collaboration. We would also wholeheartedly like to thank Julie-Marthe Cohen and Resianne Smidt van Gelder-Fontaine, two colleagues who have served on our board for many years. Both have demonstrated their dedication to *Studia Rosenthaliana* in numerous ways, and we are happy that they will continue to research and publish in the field of Jewish Studies.

Until the last printed issue of *Studia Rosenthaliana*, Shlomo Berger ז"ל was one of its most prominent editors. He played a key role in many of the yearbooks and published numerous important essays in Yiddish booklore and Ashkenazi literacy. We will remember him with feelings of deep gratitude for his tireless promotion of the study of Amsterdam Jewish history and Yiddish as an expression of Ashkenazi culture. And for his friendship. His presence is sorely missed.

Likewise, we respectfully remember Emile Schrijver's predecessor as editor-in-chief, Adri Offenbergh, who passed away on 29 December 2019. Working as curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana from 1973, he was deeply committed to the quality and continuity of the journal. Few were as familiar with the intimate details of early modern Jewish booklore as Adri Offenbergh was. In one of our upcoming issues he will be duly commemorated.

From this issue onward, *Studia Rosenthaliana* will be run by a team of four editors-in-chief, who will closely collaborate on day-to-day affairs: Rachel Boertjens, curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana; Bart Wallet, historian at the Vrije Universiteit and the University of Amsterdam;

David Wertheim, director of the Menasseh ben Israel Institute; and Irene E. Zwiep, professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Together we represent the major Amsterdam institutions and centres of research on Dutch Jewry. Alexander van der Haven, professor of Religious Studies at the University of Bergen, has agreed to take on the role of review editor. An editorial board, composed of internationally renowned colleagues in our field of research, will assist us in identifying relevant topics and authors. Finally, we are honoured that several of the most senior scholars in Jewish Studies and Dutch history have agreed to join the journal's advisory board.

We herewith present the first issue of the renewed, yet no doubt strikingly familiar *Studia Rosenthaliana*. We are most fortunate to have found a guest editor for both this year's issues in the person of Theodor Dunkelgrün, senior research associate at CRASSH, University of Cambridge, senior post-doctoral researcher at Trinity College, Cambridge, and a renowned expert in the history of the Jewish book. Throughout the editorial process, he has demonstrated his dedication to innovative scholarship and academic rigour. His introduction to this volume presents all articles gathered in both this year's issues, setting them against the interconnected backgrounds of recent trends in the history of the Jewish book and the history of the book more generally, and identifying numerous common themes and issues and avenues for future research. We plan to make many more scholarly robust and intellectually inspiring issues, and welcome submissions from senior and junior scholars alike. *Studia Rosenthaliana*, as 'showpiece', platform and forum of Dutch Jewish history, is back.

