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**FALL PREVIEW: FROM MEDIEVAL ARK DOOR TO JEWS AND MATH,
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM UNVEILS AMBITIOUS SLATE FOR SEASON**

Blockbuster “Threshold to the Sacred: The Ark Door of Cairo’s Ben Ezra Synagogue” To Open Oct. 6

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New York City, July 30 2013 – From the cultural life of the ancient Mediterranean and Middle East to the mathematical achievement of modern German-speaking Jews, Yeshiva University Museum in Manhattan today unveiled a rich and exciting slate of fall exhibitions.

[Yeshiva University Museum](http://YeshivaUniversityMuseum) (15 West 16th Street, 212-294-8330, yumuseum.org) is dedicated to the interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life across the world and the generations. This fall it will have a revealing focus on Jewish life through its Eastern, or Sephardic roots.

One of the season’s most talked-about exhibitions promises to be *Threshold to the Sacred: The Ark Door of Cairo’s Ben Ezra Synagogue*. It will be based around a work of great beauty and historical significance: an intricately decorated and inscribed medieval wood panel from a Torah ark, which comes from the famous Ben Ezra Synagogue of Old Cairo, site of the 19th-century discovery of the Cairo Geniza. Rare treasures from the Geniza, including an original 12th-century manuscript by Moses Maimonides, the Rambam, will also be on display.

Images are available for all of Yeshiva University Museum’s fall exhibitions. The museum’s director, Dr. Jacob Wisse, is available for interviews.

Threshold to the Sacred: The Ark Door of Cairo’s Ben Ezra Synagogue
October 6’ 2013 – February 23, 2014

This joint project between Yeshiva University Museum and the Walters Art Museum, in Baltimore, focuses on a work of great beauty and historical significance: an intricately decorated and inscribed wood panel from a Torah ark, which comes from the famous Ben Ezra Synagogue of Old Cairo (Fustat). The exhibition will present sublime works of contemporaneous Islamic, Christian and Jewish art and ritual use; treasures from the synagogue’s *geniza*, the ritual depository for disused sacred books; and photographs of the Ben Ezra synagogue.

The exhibition brings to life the rich story of the ancient Egyptian Jewish community, and highlights the rich exchange among Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities across the Mediterranean region in the late Medieval and early Renaissance period. *Threshold to the Sacred* will offer the opportunity to see beautiful textiles, vessels and liturgical objects together with original Geniza manuscripts – by the Rambam and Judah

Halevi, among others – that provide a “door” into the religious, intellectual and communal life of Cairo’s fascinating Jewish neighborhood and its broad cultural context.

Light and Shadows: The Story of Iranian Jews

November 17, 2013 – April 30, 2014

Since ancient times, Iran has been a mosaic of ethnicities, religions, cultures, and languages. Through an array of over 100 original and rare objects, *Light and Shadows: The Story of Iranian Jews* tells the rich and complex history of one of the world’s oldest Jewish communities, which dates back nearly 2,700 years since the first Jews exiled from Jerusalem to Babylonia settled in the Persian sphere. This exhibition was created and organized by Beit Hatfutsot, The Museum of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv, Israel, and is co-presented with the Center for Jewish History.

Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture

July 29, 2013 – January 5, 2014

The people of the book have an illustrious legacy with numbers, as this fascinating exhibition reveals. *Transcending Tradition: Jewish Mathematicians in German-Speaking Academic Culture* showcases the astonishing contributions of Jewish thinkers to mathematical culture in Germany before the Nazis decimated their ranks. A wealth of photographs and documents traces many moving lives: Young researchers who helped shape modern mathematics and physics, scholars who went beyond mathematics and made their mark in literature or philosophy, and many others.

The museum is co-presenting the exhibition with the [Leo Baeck Institute](#) (LBI) the research library and archive that contains the most significant collection of source material relating to the history of German-speaking Jewry. A range of original manuscripts and materials from LBI’s collections will be on display.

This exhibition was designed by a group of seven historians of mathematics at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Frankfurt and the German Mathematical Society.

ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Yeshiva University Museum is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life. The Museum, founded in 1973, is distinguished by its wide-ranging and intellectually rigorous exhibitions and, as the cultural arm of Yeshiva University, by its strong educational mission. As a partner in the thriving Center for Jewish History and a participant in New York’s lively downtown cultural scene, Yeshiva University Museum makes a distinctive and important contribution to Jewish life and to the world of culture and the arts. The Museum’s rich and diverse collections preserve Jewish artifacts, art, texts and material culture for posterity, making objects accessible through exhibitions, educational programs, and research and conservational initiatives.

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