

Professor MAURO PERANI (University of Bologna)

“What is the ‘European Genizah’? A Survey of Hebrew Manuscript Discoveries in Italy and Spain and their Importance for Jewish Studies”

OCTOBER 27th 4:00 PM
Cathedral of Learning
Room 501

Professor Perani is currently Padnos Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Frankel Institute for Judaic Studies (University of Michigan). He was Director of The Italian Genizah Project since 1992, and his recent publications include *Talmudic and Midrashic Fragments from the ‘Italian Genizah’: Reunification of Manuscripts and Catalogue* (Giuntina, 2004)

In the last twenty-five years a growing interest has been aroused in the academic and scientific world by the discovery of thousands of medieval Hebrew manuscript fragments re-used to bind books and registers in European archives and libraries, particularly in Italy and Spain. A true Genizah preserves sacred texts from profanation, while this “European Genizah” emerges from the destruction of books without regard for their content, yet both practices return old Hebrew manuscripts or printed books to our hands. This lecture offers an updated survey of the quantity, content and quality of these materials, and describes the most important discoveries among these fragments, including important texts by Joseph ben Shimon Kara, a contemporary of Rashi, and fragments testifying to 160 manuscripts of the *Talmud bavli* and *Yerushalmi* otherwise lost.

The presentation is co-Sponsored by the Program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies and the Departments of Religious Studies and French and Italian Languages and Literatures