

# **The Codex Sinaiticus Seminar**

**8 July 2009**

Codex Sinaiticus is a 4th century manuscript of the Christian Bible, containing the earliest complete copy of the New Testament. The seminar presented the conservation work done on the Codex Sinaiticus by the four partner institutions: British Library, National Library of Russia, St Catherine's Monastery and Leipzig University Library.

The seminar followed the Codex Sinaiticus Conference 6-7 July and the launch of the exhibition From Parchment to Pixel: The Virtual reunification of Codex Sinaiticus which runs 6 July - 7 September, 2009 in the Folio Society Gallery at the British Library's St Pancras building. The exhibition includes a video of conservators at work and access to the Codex Sinaiticus innovative website where visitors can view detailed records of the manuscript for example, physical characteristics as recorded by conservators. In addition, for the very first time, visitors can see both volumes of Codex Sinaiticus held at the British Library in the Treasures Gallery.

Chaired by British Library Director of Scholarship & Collections Ronald Milne, the morning session began with talks by British Library colleagues. Head of Collection Care Helen Shenton gave an overview of the remarkable collaborative work involved in the Codex Sinaiticus Project and Project Manager Juan Garces gave an insightful presentation of the innovative website. Conservator Gavin Moorhead gave an overview of the conservation documentation and physical features of the parchment followed by an analysis of the condition of inks by conservator Sara Mazzarino and conservation treatment and codicological findings by conservator Flavio Marzo. Head of Conservation Research Barry Knight wrapped up the morning session with a presentation on multi-spectral imaging and its advantages for future projects.

The afternoon session was chaired by British Library Head of Conservation Cordelia Rogerson and comprised talks by René Larsen, Rector at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Conservation on the Identification of Animal Source and Specific Deterioration Phenomena; Conservation of the leaves and fragments at St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai by University of the Arts London Professor Nicholas Pickwoad; and Conservation of the leaves at Leipzig University Library by Head of Conservation & Preservation Ute Feller and her translator Sophie Manns.

The seminar attracted an international audience of students, specialists and professionals. Stimulating discussions covered topics such as ink loss, sewing sequence, repairs and scribal features. Suggestions were made for further research and analysis. Presentations will be available on the British Library Collection Care website in August.