BC PROF. MAXIM D. SHRAYER WINS NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARD
FOR ANTHOLOGY OF JEWISH-RUSSIAN LITERATURE

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (1-15-08) -- Boston College Professor of Russian and English Maxim D. Shrayer has won the 2007 National Jewish Book Award in Eastern European Studies -- the Ronald S. Lauder Award -- for An Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature: Two Centuries of Dual Identity in Prose and Poetry (M.E. Sharpe), the Jewish Book Council has announced.

The anthology also was a runner-up for the 2007 National Jewish Book Award in Anthologies and Collections.

The prestigious National Jewish Book Awards honor some of the best and most exciting authors in the field of Jewish literature. The 2007 winners will be presented at the 57th Annual National Jewish Book Awards ceremony in New York in March.

Shrayer’s winning work, An Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature, introduces readers for the first time to the full range of the Jewish-Russian literary canon. Shrayer gathers stories, excerpts from novels, essays, memoirs and poems by more than 130 Jewish writers of the past two centuries who worked in the Russian language. The definitive two-volume set features writers of the tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet periods, both in Russia and in the great emigrations, representing styles and artistic movements from Romantic to Postmodern. Most appear for the first time in English or in new translations.

The anthologized authors include such famous Jewish-Russian writers as Isaac Babel, Ilya Ehrenburg, Vassily Grossman and Osip Mandelstam, as well as many great writers who had yet to be discovered in English translation.

The selections were chosen both for their literary quality and because they illuminate questions of Jewish history, status and identity, according to Shrayer, who also is founding co-director of BC’s Jewish Studies Program. He wrote a book-length introduction, as well as all the individual introductory essays and commentary to all the texts, translated and co-translated about one third of the materials in the anthology, and also worked with a team of some forty literary translators from the US and Great Britain.

"The anthology is both a labor of love and a fruit of many years of research," said Shrayer. "I hope very much that it will introduce readers the world over to the treasures of Jewish-Russian literary culture."

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