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A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITORS

This edition of our Newsletter has a number of heartening pieces with subjects ranging from digitization to word play. They have been a pleasure to read – and edit, of course. Further, news from alumni has brought temporary relief to our undergraduate worries about the future after the world of academia.

When presented with the opportunity to edit the Newsletter, both of us jumped at it seeing that as second year students, we will both be spending the next academic year abroad, and soon we will be saying להתראות to the department. Upon our return in September 2013, we hope to undertake this challenge yet again and to provide you all with tales of our adventures abroad.

We hope that you enjoy this Newsletter, Purim and the rest of the year.

Ze’ev Duckworth and Maria Woncisz
DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

New 3-Year Degree

As from the beginning of the new academic year 2012/13, the department will welcome students onto its new 3-year BA in Jewish Studies. This degree will follow the same structure as the current 4-year BA in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, minus the Year Abroad in Israel. The BA in Jewish Studies will aim to develop students’ knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Jewish culture, including its languages, literature and history.

CONGRATULATIONS

• To Justine Isserles, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Professor Sacha Stern’s Leverhulme-funded project, ‘Medieval Christian and Jewish calendar texts from England and Franco-Germany’, who has been awarded her doctorate from the École pratique des hautes études (EPHE) and the University of Geneva with ‘very honourable mention and unanimous congratulations from the Jury’ (the highest distinction awardable).

• To new ‘departmental Bube’ Dr. Helen Beer on the arrival of her first grandchild, Max, born on 19th December 2011, weighing in at a healthy 9lb 7oz. Best wishes to Helen and family.

• To Dr Lily Kahn who also has a new arrival, albeit of the furry kind! King Charles Spaniel puppy Tails was also born on 19th December, and is a cute new addition to the Kahn-Holz household.
A word from an alumnus – Daniel Farkas

I graduated with a BA in Hebrew from the department in summer 2004.

Following my BA in Hebrew and my MA in Intelligence and International Security at King’s College, I made Aliyah and served for almost 2 years in the IDF’s International Military Cooperation Unit of the Planning Branch.

After years of working at various fun places (such as a high tech firm in Tel Aviv specialising in patient care monitoring equipment) and in less fun places (our national airline - the route planning department - seriously, after I have worked there....I am scared to go near another LY plane again. The pilots may be brilliant...the equipment and maintenance is something totally different)...I am finally back in a field that is much more closely related to a PhD: I am a researcher in Yad Vashem.

The daily journey between TLV and Jerusalem isn’t easy (I cannot see myself live in Jerusalem YET, even formerly secular areas like Kiryat HaYovel are turning Orthodox), but the job is fascinating and interesting. Our team is attempting to reconstruct each and every transport that left Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland. We do this by means of survivors’ testimonies, the archives of Bad Arolsen, documents the Germans did not destroy and other sources. We also use Google Earth to illustrate the exact route each train took, and we attach a list of people who were on the various transports. Our work (at least all the transports we have completed) can be seen on the Yad Vashem webpage, where one can enter, for example, Vienna as a point of departure and all the transports leaving Vienna will appear, each of them with plenty of information regarding its route, its schedule, the average age of deportees, the organisers of that transport, etc.)

A word from an alumna – Charlotte Kirkham

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life. Confucius

When I was a little girl, I regularly wrote to the Prime Minister with helpful advice on how to run the country. Often included in my plans for a better England were illustrations to emphasise the point.

My family have a reputation for being eccentric. Our family tree dates back more than 1270 years and includes a host of colourful characters such as St. Gilbert of Sempringham (1083-1190), a hunchback who infamously included women in the Gilbertine order he founded, through to Sion Gwilt the Welsh pirate, and Sir Joseph Beete Jukes (1811-69) who directed the Geographical Survey of Ireland and travelled with Darwin on the Beagle. On my father’s side we have the Kirkham Martyrs, who fought for Catholicism in the Papist pockets of Lancaster until it was legalised, when they became non-Conformists.

In short, when having read Jewish History at UCL followed by an MA in Comparative Ethnic Conflict at Queen’s Belfast, I announced that I was going to move to Israel and become an artist my parents just smiled.

My four years in Israel were the most amazing experience of my life. To begin with my Hebrew was so bad that I hardly interacted with anyone outside the Anglo bubble of Jerusalem. Thankfully it rapidly improved!

Studying Fine Art at Bezalel, Jerusalem, was fantastic! Where else can you take your lunch break in an amphitheatre overlooking the desert? I was lucky enough to be able to produce portraits from a variety of sitters. From an Orthodox rabbi to a rabidly secular army officer, the attitudes were wonderful to capture. I have an Artist Residency (July 2012, Barston Institute) and exhibitions coming up this summer (Knowle Village, SAF Art Trail).
Cluster of life

What is this a photo of? What does it look like to you, what comes to mind?

Read on as you hold that thought.

It’s time to harvest the grapes and I’m out in the vineyard early on this sunny September morning. I have my little clippers with me and I’m making my way through the rows, liberating one cluster of grapes after another, letting them fall ripe and juicy into the bright yellow bucket at my feet. Dispersed among the vines are other ‘clippers’ like me, friends and family, gathering in the bounty of grapes that have been growing and maturing for months, the offspring of the golden sunshine and the quiet, cool nights. I stand up straight, rubbing my aching back and wiping the sweat off my brow. I look down into the bucket and they’re irresistible, I have to take a picture.

At home again, the harvest all completed, the grapes picked, crushed and now bottled up as their new tangy and fresh selves, I look at this photograph. It pulls me in. The grapes are all so close together, so it’s so dense and yet they manage, not one bursting or tearing, all different sizes with differing placements on the vine.

Is this how our lives are? Clusters of many elements all diverse and wonderful (hopefully), all tightly packed into our daily and weekly schedules? School, study, work, commuting, traveling, piano practice, football training, rehearsals, meetings, deadlines, time with the kids, social dinners, birthdays, weddings... Late nights, headaches, coffees, pushing today’s till tomorrow, always catching up, at times there seem to be so many we struggle to keep them all together!

So what does keep them all together? Determination, a strenuous exertion, balance? Is your vine healthy and flexible or stretched so tight it’s about to snap?

As long as the vine can support and sustain all the elements in our lives, they have their place, they shuffle and jostle around a little but they find a way to move together.

The question is, can your vine take the weight of the cluster you are carrying at the moment?

Does your cluster need assessing? Does your vine? What is the vine in your life? – Belinda Stojanovic
‘New Broom’ Ten Years On

In the December 2002 issue of the Departmental Newsletter I published a piece entitled ‘New Broom’, my first contribution as Head of Department. In it I reviewed the Department’s recent past and outlined some of my hopes and ambitions for its future. Now that my decade at the helm is approaching its end, I thought it might be useful to revisit that piece, to refresh my memory of how things were then, and to take stock of where we are now.

In 2002 my predecessor, John Klier, was still very much alive. He had been a universally loved and much admired long-standing Head of Department, and I was all too aware that it would be difficult to fill his shoes. In my ‘New Broom’ piece I acknowledged that by contrast with his proverbial charm and sunny personality, I was liable – especially when faced with bureaucratic conundrums – to shed off the thin veneer of civility I had acquired through decades of residence in the UK, allowing “the impatient, blunt, often abrasive Israeli in me to rear its ugly head”. Over the years I have learnt to rely on Lia to tone down my language when I erupt in response to seemingly ludicrous Health and Safety decrees, obstructive directives from Human Resources, or unintelligible sets of figures from Finance. We should all be grateful to Lia for steering me clear of potentially explosive confrontations that might have worked against the Department’s interests.

When I wrote my 2002 piece, Foster Court was still a slum: the roof leaked, the walls were pox-marked, the lino on the floors was filthy and torn, the rotten windows wouldn’t open or shut, the central heating was hopelessly inadequate, and the lift broke down at least every other day. Our department, like most others in the building, was scattered all over the three floors, and we suffered more than others from the inequitable distribution of departmental “estate”: while English, for example, enjoyed any number of large, albeit tatty, teaching spaces and common rooms, we did not have even one seminar room we could call our own. But major refurbishments were in the offing. They began in the spring of 2005, with the “decanting” of one department after another to Torrington Place, and by the end of the 2007 autumn term, when work on the third floor of the building was completed, we were installed in our present premises. All staff are now located in close departmental proximity to each other, we have a seminar room of our own, and we share a student common room (for the improved recreational facilities of which we have just put in a joint bid with the Spanish Department). Admittedly, the central heating continues to be inadequate, there is no ventilation on hot days, the windows still won’t open or shut as they rot beneath the coat of paint, which is all they were given at the time of the refurbishment, and the chronic shortage of space is as acute as ever, but there is no denying that we now operate in a brighter and much more pleasant physical environment.

In my 2002 piece I noted what had been recent staff changes: the retirements of Hugh Denman, our first Yiddish lecturer, and Leon Yudkin, who had shared responsibilities for Modern Hebrew with Tsila Ratner. Helen Beer duly succeeded Hugh to the Margulies Yiddish Lectureship, and Tsila took full charge of Modern Hebrew literature, with the help of a succession of highly competent Israeli Hebrew language teachers. But there were more changes to come. By September 2005, following a successful departmental fund raising campaign, a new and much needed post in Rabbinic Judaism was created in the Department, bringing us Sacha Stern from SOAS. Two years later, however, we lost John Klier, who died suddenly and prematurely just before the start of term –
a shock from which the Department took a very long time to recover, and by 2009, through the continued support of the Corob Trust, we were able to bring François Guesnet from Oxford to succeed John as our East European specialist. More recently we managed to create yet another new tenured post in the Department, one which is yet to take its full effect. This is Lily Kahn’s ‘proleptic’ appointment to a Lectureship in Hebrew, which will begin just as soon as her current Post-Doctoral Fellowship comes to an end in September 2013. This is also the date on which I plan to retire from UCL, after taking a year’s sabbatical leave in 2012-13. The balance of all these losses and gains is that we are set to maintain our current numerical strength of 9 full-time permanent academic staff—a more robust state of health than we have ever enjoyed, which is no mean feat given our all too ‘favourable’ student-staff ratios.

During my decade as Head of Department we began to attract major research grants, which also brought us a growing numbers of Post-Doctoral Fellows. This was the result of successful applications, in a highly competitive environment, to various academic funding bodies, and above all to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). In 2004-5 it awarded us simultaneously our first two 5-year project grants, one – led by me as Principal Investigator (PI) with Mark Geller and Willem Smelik as Co-Investigators (CIs) – explored the literary and linguistic context of the Zohar, and the other – with me as CI and Susanne Marten-Finnis of Portsmouth University as PI – focused on the Jewish press – Yiddish, German, and Hebrew – that appeared in Czernowitz during the interwar period. These projects were followed by Sacha Stern’s 4.5-year AHRC grant for a major research project on medieval Jewish calendar monographs, and this in turn was augmented by two further grants from the Leverhulme Trust, expanding the scope of the project to cover Islamic and Christian sources on the calendar. Other externally-funded research currently being conducted in the Department includes François Guesnet’s digitization and analysis of the ‘Testimonials’ sent to Moses Montefiore from individuals and communities all over the Jewish world; Mark Geller’s Welcome Trust grant for a 2-year Post-Doctoral Fellow who is working on the history of Mesopotamian medicine, and Lily Kahn’s British Academy 3-year Post-Doctoral Fellowship grant for a project investigating the Hebrew grammar of the 19th century Hasidic tale.

There is little doubt that the Department’s research orientation and practice have changed dramatically in the course of the last decade. While individuals continue to conduct their research as it has always been conducted in the Humanities, namely without much more resource than the occasional travel grant and free time for research, we have moved much more in the now privileged direction of externally-funded major-project research, which creates collaborative frameworks and fosters team work. Our timely success at making this switch was evident in the results of the last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE2008), where we achieved our highest scores ever—among the best in UCL as a whole and ranking joint second nationally alongside Oxford and Cambridge. This has raised our UCL profile and saved us from being swallowed up by the newly established School of European Languages and Cultures, in which six formerly autonomous departments, including French, German and Italian, were subsumed apparently in order to stimulate a more dynamic research culture.

I concluded my 2002 piece by proclaiming the inauguration of a new regime of terror, where the departmental Graduate Seminar—up until then an occasional and rather casual platform for upgrade from MPhil to PhD, so poorly attended as at times to attract no more than the upgrading student and his or her supervisor—was to become strictly compulsory on all graduate students and
staff, “with severe penalties imposed on anyone who misses more than 25% of the meetings”. I justified this with the observation that since the intellectual life of a researcher can be very lonely, it was crucial for all our graduate students to get to know each other and all members of staff, while also acquainting themselves with the full range of research activities in the Department. I realised that the diversity of disciplinary and subject specialization, which is inherent in Jewish Studies, would make it difficult to persuade a student who was working on, say, ancient Babylonian magic to come to a seminar presentation by a fellow-student researching the history of the Israeli armaments industry. Nevertheless, I argued, quite apart from the helpful social networking and moral support, which the graduate student body can, and should, generate for itself, methodological issues can be discussed profitably in the context of any research topic, and it is useful for all researchers, new and old, to subject their findings and their conclusions to critical peer scrutiny. I still believe in all this and am happy to note that we did manage to turn the fortnightly Graduate Seminar into a regular fixture in departmental life, attended by most if not quite all of our graduate students and staff, though I must admit that in recent years, the rigour of my initial penal regime of terror has slackened somewhat.

At the end of the piece I threatened not only to sweep vigorously with my new broom but actually to ride it. The warning was accompanied by a snapshot of my maiden broom flight, caught and kindly provided by Willem Smelik. I now present you with a complementary image of my final take off, as I soar up to hover above Bloomsbury, bidding you all farewell.

Prof. Ada Rapoport-Albert
The case for Digital Humanities

‘…so what exactly is that thing that you study?’
I have lost count of how many times I faced this question since the beginning of last autumn. At first, I was getting away with a short ‘I have no idea yet, I will tell you when I find out,’ but four months into the course I have to take up the gauntlet at last, and attempt an answer. It is not going to be an academic piece of writing, rather an impression of what I have learnt for the last few months about ‘that thing’ called Digital Humanities.

How it all began
Everybody has their myth of origins, haven’t they? Just as Jewish Studies as a scholarly discipline points to the Wissenschaft des Judentums as its ancestor, DH likes to see itself as a descendant of the project of father Roberto Busa, an Italian Jesuit, who in collaboration with IBM created an index and a lemmatized concordance of all the works of Thomas Aquinas. The result of the 1949 project has been available online since 2005.

What’s in the name…?
I have to admit that no name I come across, be it Digital Humanities, Humanities Computing or Digital Resources in the Humanities, sounds very revealing. Seemingly, it is because the area is so broad that particular branches of it cannot have much in common. But is it not reminiscent of a more familiar territory? What does examining an Aramaic incantation bowl have to do with a medieval chronicle, which describes morally questionable Jewish martyrdom during the second Crusade or with perusing Bundist documents from Odessa? Time? Language? Geography? Even the religious denomination of the author would be questionable as a common denominator. Nonetheless I am sure you could find a sound justification to speak of Jewish Studies as a separate field of studies. Like traditional ‘analog’ humanities, DH includes a variety of disciplines: history and archaeology, literary studies, art history, musicology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy and logic, linguistics, pedagogical and educational research and the history and philosophy of Science – you name it. Although the terms ‘multidisciplinary’ and ‘holistic’ tend to be used so often that they have lost their true meaning, DH cannot escape them. In order to be successful, any DH project has to involve representatives of different branches of the humanities and information technology who work with project managers and legal advisers. Not all humanists and computer geeks are good at planning budgets and scheduling group work, and they are even less likely to know about copyrights or, for example, privacy protection of the living members of Nazi soldiers’ families, if the project is to digitize Holocaust documents.

A definition, please
If I were to attempt a definition of ‘that thing that I study,’ it would be something along these lines: DH is an umbrella term, which refers to 1) a type of research, whose main interest is in the humanities and whose methodology consists of using digital media 2) the products thereof 3) tools and methods used (which often are the result of such research) 4) the community of people who conduct DH.
Will Digital Humanists change the world…?

Preservation

Arguably, preservation is the most important of the DH objectives. This does not mean only scanning and encoding medieval manuscripts, which fall apart, although it certainly includes that. Digital reassembling of fragments of a piece of art, the fragments of which are in Berlin, London, Egypt and perhaps Turkey, is a way of reconstructing and preserving the ‘original’ form which cannot be reached otherwise. 3D scanning helps to preserve a prehistoric stone-cut art piece which, due to natural processes, cannot be fully protected in its natural environment.

Accessibility

DH understands accessibility as trying to eliminate limitations in order to avail data to as many users as possible. This can mean at least two things. First, we are defying time and space (to all those who remember Rosa’s comic… well, I guess DH could learn a lot from Hebrew and Jewish Studies here) by digitization of a text, image, item, event or anything that we digitize and putting it online so that many people across the globe could access it at the same moment. Second, DH is trying to make sure that people with physical disabilities or outdated technology can take advantage of the material as fully as possible. This is why a faulty web design (the use of red and green combination, invisible to the colour-blind, failure to provide alternative text to images which slows screen-readers used by visually impaired users, or restricting choice options to mouse/keyboard only which causes problems for people who can use only one of the two) is a DH equivalent to political incorrectness.

Education and outreach

This, again, means sharing the data, availing it preferably as an open-source material, but also allowing those who might be interested in it to know where to find the information. I particularly like the example of a project wherein historical data were made available online. In order to promote the initiative and to ensure that it meets the expectations of the users, the project’s creators contacted all schools in the regions which had relevant courses in their curriculum. The students could learn history using the online database and the project creators would receive feedback allowing them to improve their work. Making the data accessible in a new way, and indeed, in various ways through different media, helps to free artefacts from ideological bias or at least helps to study a subject matter from many perspectives. Recognition of this fact is the rationale for such projects as 'Virtual Berlin,' with which a user can wander through a digital model of a city made of a number of maps from different periods, or an artistic, socially engaged piece called 'Public Secrets,' which presents the American justice system through interviews with American female prisoners.

Research

Apart from creating a better world, the DH people have their own research interests. These can vary, too. One of my friends conducts ‘traditional’ research using ‘digital’ methodology: she analyses corpora of texts using computational methods in order to find ‘hard data’ for the use of homophobic imagery in literature. Professor Warwick, the head of UCLDH, focuses on a ‘meta-DH’ theme of technology affecting readers’ practices in physical and digital environments. Since new projects often require new software, some DH researchers work specifically on developing new
applications and adapting technology to humanity’s needs, for example, perfecting optical text recognition (OTR) tools, or international standards for decoding text documents (such as TEI).

**Technologies and Tools (or what you learn as a DH student)**

Last September, when I looked at the course descriptions, I understood maybe twenty per cent of the words used (including the ‘and’s and ‘or’s). I remember that in my first HTML class I braved a question to which my lecturer answered: ‘have you heard of CSS?’ Of course, I had not the slightest idea of what CSS was (Cascading Style Sheets, a language used to apply different styles to a website, typically written separately from the basic structure of the page encoded in HTML), even worse, I forgot the acronym and had to look it up later, when nobody could see me.

Now I have to remind myself that normal people can get irritated when I start with HTML/SQL/PHP jargon and, sadly, I am not humanist enough to speak of DH tools without using it. In short, at DH we learn what technologies (programming languages, software and hardware) are necessary to plan, design and implement our projects and... we learn what these technologies are called.

**Digital Jewish Historian**

So, have I sold my soul to the Digital Devil forsaking Jewish Studies? No, I have not. There are proofs that the two disciplines can be successfully combined, for example Judaica Europeana, the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure – a project I hope to be involved in, or, closer to home ground, the Montefiori Project, and I am sure there are more to come.

Magdalena Luszczynska

Orthodox Rabbi – Charlotte Kirkham

Currently expanding her portraiture portfolio, any volunteer models contact kirkham88@gmail.com.
The story of Esther in *Shushan* has a good historical core. Ahasuerus (=Achashversosh) is Xerxes I, in Persian *Chashavarsha*, who spent his first years subduing Egypt and failing to conquer Greece. Thus he could only marry Esther in his seventh year, perhaps to console himself for his defeat in Greece. He spent the rest of his reign building palaces and for that he needed money. With Haman’s help he tried to raise cash from the Jews, which Haman promised to get out of them within the year, which was the term of his *limmu*, or Chancellorship for, under the Persian system, each courtier took it in turns to rule the cabinet for one year and raise the money for the Persian budget.

Why was Haman anti-Semitic when the Persian Empire as a whole showed tolerance and acceptance of other cultures? The Empire was so large, from India (Hodu) to Nubia (Kush), that conformity was impossible and political correctness unknown. But Xerxes and his father Darius had imported many foreign craftsmen to build their palaces in Susa (Persian *Shush*) and these ‘gastarbeiter’, including many Jewish gold and silversmiths, lived well, better than the local peasants. The Jewish element probably joined with the many Jews who had remained behind from the Exile, who had become wealthy merchants and even bankers, living in the mighty Persian cities. They kept themselves to themselves in business as well as in religion, and their success must have attracted envy and even hatred in such centres as the royal Persian summer capital of *Shush*.

Chancellor Haman planned to exploit this and made his move, to raise money under threat of death from the hated Jews of Susa. Haman was a foreigner, an *Agagite*, but he had had the sense to make his name attractive to the ruling class, as he had adopted one that was the core of *Hachamanish*, founder of the royal Persian dynasty of the Achaemenids. He had also had the good sense to marry a local girl called Goldie. Her name Zeresh in Persian means ‘the golden one’. Haman in fact had made himself more Persian than the Persians.

As Chancellor he now promised to boost the royal revenues before the end of his term, at the end of Adar, the Persian monarchical year starting, like ours, in Nisan. He used the tool of anti-Semitism to fuel his dastardly plan, but thanks to his exposure by the Queen it failed. However, the hatred engendered in the royal summer capital of *Shush* outlasted his own death, and the Jews had to fight for their lives, particularly in *Shushan*.

Purim is Purim but it has played itself out, over and over again. It happened in Ptolemaic Egypt, according to the Third Book of Maccabees, when Ptolemy IV Philopator turned against the Jews. After his stunning victory over the forces of Antiochus III at Rafiah in 217 BCE, he visited Jerusalem in triumph and requested to enter the Temple and the Holy of Holies as a mark of power and gratitude. To his astonishment he was refused by the priests. Such an insult was not to be borne and Ptolemy took his revenge on the Jews of
Alexandria by concentrating them all in the Hippodrome and forcing them to stay there until he had mustered his army and their elephants to trample them to death.

Came the auspicious day and the troops plied their elephants with drink to egg them on to charge into the crowd of defenseless Jews, men, women and children. As the order to advance was given, the drunken elephants hesitated, turned and stampeded over their tormentors, crushing the Egyptian army underfoot and leaving the Jews standing in wonder.

It was Frankfurt-on-the-Main in 1612. The good citizens and artisans petitioned against the Jews of the Ghetto, to whom they were in debt, to have the standard rates of interest reduced on their loans. The local Senate did not agree and hatred of the Jews festered, enabling the local guild master, Vinzenz Fettmilch, to send a petition to the Emperor accusing the Senate of protecting the Jews. The petition was rejected but Fettmilch incited the rabble to attack the ghetto. The gates were torn down, and for their own protection the Jews were herded into the cemetery while the rabble went on the rampage and ransacked every house in the Jewish quarter. Eventually the mayor and his troops evacuated most of the Jews out of the city, but not until two of their number had been killed. The matter came to the Court, the Emperor sided with the Jews, had Fettmilch and four accomplices tried and beheaded, and ordered the Jews to be brought back to their ghetto to the sound of pipes and drums. That was in March 1616, five days after the festival of Purim.

Haman was a foreigner who tried to be more Persian than the Persians, and he failed. Ptolemy tried to be too close to the Jews, was rejected by the priests, turned against the Jews, and he failed. Fettmilch tried to be more anti-Semitic than his Emperor, could not carry the establishment with him, and he failed. Ahmadinejad is a Persian who tries to be more Arabic than the Arabs, will he also fail?

Stephen Gabriel Rosenberg, Senior Fellow of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem

March, 2007. Teheran is less than 500 km. from Shush. Its present ruler Ahmadinejad is aiming “to wipe Israel off the map”. It is not clear why he maintains this mantra, but it seems to be to keep himself in power without having the bother of helping his own people to better living conditions. He denies the Holocaust, which killed millions of Jews, and he seeks nuclear weapons to make it a reality anew, even if only by threats. He works to achieve this in order to become champion of the Arab world. But he is no Arab. He is a Persian, a Farsi, age-old enemies of the Arabs. So he has adopted an Islamic name, meaning ‘Most praiseworthy’ in Arabic, plus ‘son of’ in Persian. He is a Persian who is thriving on a manufactured anti-Semitism that is foreign to the history of his own people. However hard he tries, he cannot deny his own roots, which are not the roots of Islam, and thus he is likely to fail in his ambition to lead the Arab world. Pretending to be an Arab, his people will reject him and will seek to divert the enormous funds destined for nuclear advancement to social projects and the rebuilding of the Persian cities like ancient Bam, devastated by earthquake and other natural disasters.
Purim around the World

King Achashverosh was Finnish with his disobedient wife Vashti. He had (more) Jordan fifty wives. "Albania from the palace" he ordered her. He Austriasized her completely. After she had Ghana way, the king sent messengers Togo throughout his empire and to Senegal back to him who was worthy of being queen.

One messenger asked "Canada Rapoport-Albert go?" "No" replied the king. "She has too many meetings to attend. But Lily Congo as long as she has finished her paper on the 'Rabbinic Elements in the Verbal System of Maskilic Hebrew Prose Fiction and their effect on Outer Mongolian slang’. One messenger even went as far as Hell 'n Birobidjian.

But India end, the beautiful Jewish girl Esther won the crown. She asked the king to Singapore Jewish girl a song. "Burma bist du schein" sang the king and Esther became the Carla Brunei of her time. “You will Romania as my queen”.

Mordechai blessed Esther – “A Lebanon you!”

Meanwhile, Mordechai sat outside the palace, where the Chile Haman would Czech up on him daily. "I Haiti you because you refuse to bow down to me!” Haman scolded Mordechai. «USA very stubborn man. You Jews are such Bahamas! If you keep this up, Denmark my words, I will have all your people killed! Just Kuwait and see, you Laos, you Turkey, Ukraine!” So Haman decided to put in the Bhutan kill the Jews.

"Norway!” shouted Mordechai.

“Ireland you in jail” cried Haman.

“You want Tibet on it” replied Mordechai.

Mordechai went into mourning and tore his clothes - a Jewish custom known as Korea. He urged Esther to plead with the king. The Jews fasted for three days and grew very Hungary. Esther approached the king and said, 'Iran to see you. Kenya Belize come to a banquet I've prepared for you and Haman?" She invited her guests to a second banquet to Nepal on Samoa food cooked in Greece. There was Cuba libre and Curacao to drink as well as Madeira cake, Malta loaf, Brazil nuts and Guinea fowl to eat. The king asked, "Esther, why Jamaica big meal like this? Just tell me what you want. There is no limit to Vatican do for you. Unto half my United Kingdom will I give you."
Esther replied, "Spain full for me to say this, but, Armenia Prime Minister Haman is Russian to kill my people. Just like the Faroes wanted to". (The position of Prime Minister is something like David Cameroons). The king was so angry he threw his cutlery at Haman and the Falklands right on Haman’s hand.

Haman’s loud Wales could be heard as he carried Honduran this scene.

"Oman!" Haman cried bitterly. "Iraq my brains in an effort to destroy the Jews. But that sneaky Mordechai - Egypt me!" He tried to make a Sudan escape but was caught by the guards. So Achashverosh who was a kind and Benin man issued a decree and put his royal Ceylon it that, Bahrain, on the next morn Haman and his ten sons would be hanged and go immediately to the Netherlands. And to Sweden the deal, the Jews were allowed to Polish off the rest of their foes as well. "You lost your enemies and Uganda friend," the king smiled. This was the origin of the motto "Honi soit qui Mali pense".

And that is why the Purim story Israel and a true miracle. It was a time for celebrations and they had a grand Reunion. Everybody was there – Mauritania, Georgia, Belarus, Andorra and all the Stans. Becky was there but Mordechai did not know her. He asked Kurdi Stan "Uzbekistan?" Mordechai himself Cayman dressed up in a Panama hat, Bermuda shorts and wore a string of Seychelles around his neck. Esther splashed on some Fiji by Guy Laroche, put some Tonga on her feet and played on her Qatar.

In the Shushan Times there was a cartoon of Mr. Tchad who asks “Wot no mishloach manot?”

G-d decided to China light on His chosen people. They would now move back to their ancient home with New Zealand hope. It would become a Greenland - an Iceland. He told them “Libya life as free people”.

And as it says in Exodus 1 v.7 “U’bne yisroel Peru ve’yishretzu! ”.

So Bolivia traditions! Forget all your Syria’s business and just be happy! Serbia friends some wine, Dubai hamentashen and Taiwan on!

_Kenny Miller_
Cambridge and me

Do any of us really stop to think about what is important in life? This is a question that I have been asking myself recently. What IS important? My family, my friends, our health and wellbeing. Would you say that your working life is important? I am not asking whether you enjoy your work (that is a given!) but do you believe in what you actually do? Does it have a purpose? Does it contribute to, and impact on, the wider world?

There are many ways to impact on the wider community. At the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, we are dedicated to studying relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims throughout the ages and to providing a stimulating learning environment for a diverse student body. Given all the problems facing humankind, it is essential to understand what history can teach us, what we can learn from each other, and how we can move forward together. What happens if a Jew, a Muslim, and a Christian sit round the table together? This is not the start of an awful joke. What is the answer? Around the table, there can be dialogue, mutual appreciation and understanding, even dispute – there is nothing wrong with the latter, but the point is that we actually have to sit down together and talk. We need to find ways to communicate, to unravel misconceptions and be forward thinking – our shared histories and our diversity can bring us closer together. In December 2011, the Chief Rabbi’s papal audience was organised by the Woolf Institute and the Vatican’s Cardinal Bea Centre. How incredibly honoured was the Woolf Institute to be involved in such an historic event enabling Jewish-Catholic relations to regain its momentum positively.

The Woolf Institute offers a range of educational programmes residentially in Cambridge and via e-learning through its three centres: the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations (CJCR), the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations (CMJR) and the Centre for Public Education (CPE).
I have been working at the Woolf Institute for almost a year now. My role is varied and very interesting. I am involved with the **MSt degree in The Study of Jewish-Christian Relations**, and two e-learning courses, *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges*, and *Bridging the Great Divide: The Jewish-Muslim Encounter*. We also have many exciting seminars, lectures, plenaries and have recently welcomed colleagues from UCL, Manchester, Edinburgh to name but a few. No two weeks are the same! My diary entries for one week in November 2011 prove this very point:

- **Monday 21 November 2011**: the week began as we celebrated Interfaith Week with a lecture by Professor Guy Stroumsa, the first Oxford Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions. He deliberated on ‘Teaching the Abrahamic religions: a subversive enterprise?’
- **Tuesday 22 November 2011**: I was delighted to meet and then listen to the Revd. Dr. Toby Howarth, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs, who delivered a reflection on ‘Perspectives on Mission in 21st Century Britain’. This seminar helped to launch the document, *Jews and Christians: Perspectives on Mission*, produced jointly by the Woolf Institute and the Lambeth-Jewish Forum. (The document is available to download at: [http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Woolf%20Mission%202011%20print%20version.pdf](http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Woolf%20Mission%202011%20print%20version.pdf))
- **Wednesday 23 November 2011**: I attended the book launch for Anna Abulafia’s *Christian-Jewish Relations, 1000-1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom*. This event included an exchange of ideas between Anna herself, Anthony Bale (Birkbeck) and Miri Rubin (Queen Mary, University of London).

Most recently, I have been introduced to one of our esteemed patrons, The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, who gave a Woolf Institute lecture entitled ‘G-d in the city’. Well-attended by a diverse audience that, in itself, is evidence of the significance of what we do. Jews, Christians and Muslims together listening and learning from one another.

I am particularly enthused about a forthcoming conference, *Tradition and Transition in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Cultures*, that we will be holding jointly with the Centre for the Study of Jews, Christians, Muslims at The Open University of Israel. We will be entertained with a programme of Sephardic Songs from Muslim lands with members of *The Burning Bush* and Hilary Pomeroy and I am so
excited that Ada Rapoport-Albert will be giving the keynote lecture. Details of the conference at http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/events/

On a map of the world, the city of Cambridge is fairly tiny and insignificant and yet what lies within the city is the Woolf Institute and our huge contribution to interfaith relations which shines brightly throughout the world. So what IS important to you? Join us at the Woolf Institute as we celebrate diversity and learn from each other.

Dr. Emma Harris

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Moses Gaster (1856-1939) was a Jewish communal leader, prominent Zionist and prolific scholar of Rumanian literature, folklore, and Samaritan history and literature, as well as Jewish subjects. Born in Bucharest, he was expelled from Romania in 1885 because of his political activities. He settled in Britain and was appointed Haham (spiritual head) of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community, and later also Principal of the Judith Lady Montefiore College in Ramsgate. He was a founder and president of the English Zionist Federation, and played an important role in the talks resulting in the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

His personal papers, consisting of some 170,000 items, were given to UCL in 1974. Among them is a large collection of ‘ephemera’, dating from the 1880s to 1930s, including invitations, menus, visiting cards, greetings cards, and programmes. Correspondence relating to Moses Gaster’s estate reveals that his heirs considered throwing all of this away, but luckily for present day researchers, the items were preserved and included in the papers given to UCL. They shed a fascinating light on Gaster’s social and communal activities and on Anglo-Jewish life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the individuals and families mentioned corresponded with Gaster and these letters are also held at UCL Special Collections.

Thanks to a grant from the Rothschild Foundation we have been able to digitise and conserve some 400 items from the ephemera collection, creating around 700 images. This will make photographs of the items freely accessible to researchers around the world and to the general public, and will protect the originals, some of which are very fragile.

Selecting items to be digitised from the thousands of pieces of ephemera was a great challenge – we chose a range of dates and types of material to reflect the breadth of the collection, as well as including well-known names from many walks of life, such as British Chief Rabbis Adler and Hertz; the Chief Rabbi of pre-state Palestine Abraham Isaac Kook; founders of Liberal Judaism Lily Montagu and Claude Montefiore; Zionist leader Herbert Bentwich; historian Cecil Roth; novelist Israel Zangwill; and birth control campaigner Marie Stopes; as well as those with UCL connections such as Albert Hyamson, Frederic Mocatta and Gustave Tuck.

At the time of writing over 350 images have been uploaded to the library website, and more are being added all the time: they can be browsed or searched through our digital archive at http://digitool-b.lib.ucl.ac.uk (click on the Gaster Papers link); records for each item are also being added to our archival database at http://archives.ucl.ac.uk. Future plans include adding an element of crowdsourcing, where visitors to the website will be invited to share their knowledge of the individuals and institutions concerned. We also hope to obtain funding to digitise additional items from this remarkable collection.

Vanessa Freedman
In or out?
Is this window barred up to prevent things from coming in or from going out?

I'm walking around this charming area of Buenos Aires and I stop to stare. How bizarre. Here is this beautiful building in an arresting bright azure and ruining my view is this thing (window?) - barred, suffocated, disjointed from the whole scene in front of me. Not only are there what seem to be wooden planks nailed up on the inside, there are these rusty (albeit pretty) orange bars on the outside.

I wonder: does anyone live here? Who? How did this happen? And more importantly, why?

The thought crosses my mind - what does my window look like? Whatever I'm doing, however I'm living, I'm creating a window that will look this way or that.

Am I too preoccupied with preventing things from coming in? Am I perhaps clutching onto things that were meant to have flown out the window a long time ago, that I don't even realize I might be ruining a perfectly gorgeous scene?

Inhale, exhale, let in, let out. Why not?

Derelict, neglected, brand-spanking-new, vintage, squeaky-clean, __________ (fill in the blank)

What does your window look like?

Belinda Stojanovic