For decades, Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) has been a towering presence in the life of Anglo-Jewry, and for Jews (and non-Jews) in Europe and around the world. As president of the British Board of Deputies (1835-1874), he exerted a significant degree of control over the life of Jewish congregations in the United Kingdom. His appointment as Sheriff of London and the bestowing of a knighthood by Queen Victoria (1837), and later a baronetcy, seemed to hold a promise for Jewish integration into the fabric of the British elite. Combining this success in the society at large with strict observance and a lifelong commitment to the Holy Land impressed Jews and non-Jews alike. His interventions on behalf of Jewish communities under duress and his longevity further added to his larger-than-life presence.

This seminar aims to investigate the ways in which Montefiore's example encouraged Jews of the most diverse identifications to rethink – but also to re-assert – their visions of community: strictly observant communities and associations in Poland-Lithuania, ardent reformers in the United States, freemasons, secular nationalists, rabbis and intellectuals, but also followers of the secular, early Jewish nationalist movement, many of whom expressed their admiration in letters and tributes to Sir Moses.

Over the past years, a collection of hundreds of such tributes has been digitized at UCL and subsequently transcribed by volunteering students of the UCL Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies. This collection, owned by The Montefiore Endowment and on loan to UCL Special Collections, has been prepared for online presentation by UCL Library Services and is now easily accessible and fully searchable here:

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/montefiore

The organisers wish to thank The Montefiore Endowment and the UCL Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies for making this event possible.

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Front cover image:

Courtesy to UCL Media Services for the scan and to The Montefiore Endowment for the use of the testimonial.

Original picture taken from a letter sent by the Jewish community of Kalvarija (Lithuania) to Sir Moses Montefiore in 1846.

LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

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Registration required:
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UCL Department of Hebrew
and Jewish Studies
University College London

The Montefiore Endowment
London

Programme

9:30 a.m. **Registration**

10:00 a.m. **Greetings**
Sacha Stern (UCL),
Lucien Gubbay (The Montefiore Endowment)

10:15 a.m. **Opening Keynote**
Francois Guesnet (UCL):
Variations on a Theme: Visions of Judaism and Jewish Community in the Tributes to Sir Moses Montefiore

11:00 a.m. Coffee and tea break

11:20 a.m. **Panel A: Regional Perspectives**

Chair: François Guesnet (UCL)

Michael K. Silber
(Hebrew University, Jerusalem):
'Hatan Damim': Montefiore Reception in Hungary

Aylin Koçunyan
(European University Institute, Florence): *Sir Moses Montefiore and the Jewish Emancipation in the Ottoman Empire, 1856*

Rosa Reicher
(University of Heidelberg): *Moses Montefiore's commitment to "Little Jerusalem": Jewish Economic Space and Entrepreneurship in Dublin*

1:00 p.m. Lunch break
A kosher sandwich lunch will be provided

2:00 p.m. **Panel B: Archival Holdings of The Montefiore Endowment**

Chair: Lucien Gubbay
(The Montefiore Endowment)

Rose A. Feldman
(Israel Genealogy Research Association): *The Historic, Sociological, and Demographic Significance of the Montefiore Censuses of the Holy Land 1839-1875*

Sally Style
(The Montefiore Endowment):
Sir Moses Montefiore in Letters from Jews settled in the Land of Israel, c1840s

3:00 p.m. Coffee and tea break

3:15 p.m. **Panel C: Language, Style, and Tropes in the Testimonials**

Chair: Ada Rapoport-Albert (UCL)

Dvora Bregman
(Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva): *Hebrew Poetry in the Testimonials*

Noëmie Duhaut (UCL):
'Europe' and 'Civilisation' as Tropes

Abigail Green
(Brasenose College, Oxford):
An Inspiration in Her Own Right: Reflections on the Impact of Judith Montefiore

Followed by:

Concluding discussion
Future Perspectives for Research on Sir Moses Montefiore

5:30 p.m. End of seminar