



# **Jewish Country Houses**

## **Report of Activities 2022**

[www.jch.history.ox.ac.uk](http://www.jch.history.ox.ac.uk)

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## OVERVIEW

This has been a packed year for the Jewish Country Houses (JCH) project, as we make up for time and opportunities lost due to the pandemic.

Two-thirds of the way through our funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, we are excited to announce the launch of our mobile exhibition *Country Houses, Jewish Homes* at Limmud Festival this December, and an exciting programme of further displays around the country.

We are making good progress towards other AHRC-funded outputs, including no fewer than four JCH volumes. In addition, our established partnership with the arts consultancy *urKultur* led to a highly successful collaboration with the artist Sophie von Hellermann, who marked the centenary of Walter Rathenau's assassination with a new art installation at Schloss Freienwalde near Berlin. This initiative, which was supported by TORCH and Oxford in Berlin, has done much to raise our profile in Germany.

2022 was notable for the much-awaited return to in-person events. We began with a one-day workshop at the National Gallery in April for graduate students connected to the project, followed by two hugely successful international conferences in Paris and Belgium. In-person events like these are so important for promoting the cross-fertilisation between the academic and heritage strands of our project, and for engaging with specific – sometimes neglected – national contexts. Many thanks are due to our tireless project administrator, Briony Truscott, and to our friends and partners in France and Belgium for making all this possible.

It is exciting to see this research agenda begin to gather real momentum beyond our core team of researchers. We now have a small group of affiliated graduate students, mostly based in the UK but with connections to

contexts like Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Meanwhile, the work of the Collecting Culture strand has generated a new research network focused on art collecting led from and about Scandinavia, and an autonomous research initiative mapping the JCH landscape in Sweden.

Happily, the project continues to attract publicity - not all of it self-generated! The year opened with a special issue of the German-language magazine *Aufbau* inspired by our project, and a major feature by Tom Stammers for *Apollo* magazine. The art project at Schloss Freienwalde was enthusiastically covered by the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Ha-aretz* (English edition), *Weltkunst* and the *Jewish Chronicle*, which also published a shorter feature on our work at Ightham Mote in Kent. In addition, Marcus Roberts (J-Trails) took members of Cheshire B'nai B'rith on an inaugural JCH tour around the English home counties.

As we move into the last 18 months of our AHRC grant, we are beginning to turn our mind to further activities, and to new research directions and funding opportunities.



The 'Country Houses, Jewish Homes' exhibition at Limmud Festival, December 2022

## RESEARCH

Principal Investigator **Abigail Green's** efforts have focused on editing our flagship book project with Juliet Carey; on finalising the content of the mobile exhibition in collaboration with Marcus Roberts (J-Trails) and Tate Greenhalgh (NT); on *Artists to Fill the Gap: Commemorating Walter Rathenau at Schloss Freienwalde* (in partnership with Ruth Ur of *urKultur*); and on the paper she presented with Co-I Jaclyn Granick at the 'Jewish Business Dynasties' conference in Belgium, entitled "Jewish Business Dynasties or a Jewish aristocracy?", for which she was a co-organiser.

Abigail continues to work collaboratively with Co-I Tom Stammers on a journal article provisionally entitled "Hunting with Dogs: a Jewish Past-time" (which they presented at Yale (virtually) and Oxford in November). She has also embarked on a new collaboration with Prof Cyril Grange (CNRS) exploring the role of financiers in international Jewish philanthropy. A preliminary version of this paper was presented to the *Society for the Study of French History* at Oxford, entitled "Jewish internationalism in France and the Haute Banque: une étude à partir des dirigeants de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle".

This year, Abigail also completed several collaborative publications: a Special Issue of the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* edited with Jaclyn Granick, including her article "Reading International Jewish History Through a Jewish Country House: Vera Salomons and the Kotel" (co-written with Peter Bergamin); and "A Jewish Landed Interest?" (co-written with Marcus Roberts) for publication by the British Academy in a volume on *The British Aristocracy in the Modern World*, edited by Christopher Ridgeway and Miles Taylor. She continues to produce high-profile book reviews and shorter pieces related to the project.

Co-Investigator **Tom Stammers** continues to co-ordinate the strand of the project related to collections, art and cultural history.

As he is on sabbatical in 2022-23, he has started research in earnest for his new monograph on Anglo-Jewish elites in early 20th century Britain. He is keen to use some of the collections produced by important Jewish families in this era as a way of reconstructing their social and cultural horizons. This has led him to undertake substantial research in the Mocatta library archives (UCL), the Parkes Library in Southampton, London Metropolitan Archives, the John Rylands Library in Manchester (for the Moses Gaster papers), and the Marcus Samuel scrapbooks at Upton House (NT). In January, he is travelling to the United States to follow up on Anglo-Jewish collections now housed in New York and Cincinnati. He intends to write the monograph over the course of 2023.

With Silvia Davoli, Tom will be editing the volumes arising from our workshops on Jewish dealers, and the major conference held this summer on Jewish collectors. Both volumes will offer a critical interrogation of existing scholarship and key concepts, bringing together scholars working in a range of different geographical contexts, and using different methodologies, to map the extent of Jewish participation in the art market and collecting cultures across modern Europe.

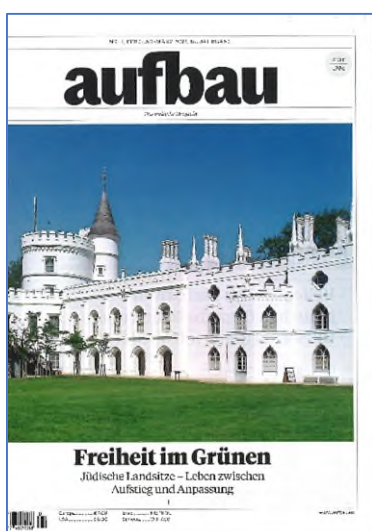
In September 2022, the special issue he co-edited with John Hilary on 'German-Jewish Collectors beyond Germany' appeared in definitive print form for the *Journal of the History of Collections*.

With Abigail Green, Tom has continued to explore the connection between Jews and hunting in modern Europe. Together they have begun to write a chapter on the Salomons estate and the general introduction to the flagship book of the project. With Jaclyn Granick, he has worked up a new paper

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on cultural philanthropy, which reflects on how the two halves of the project fit together, and they are due to present it to colleagues working on Jewish history in Czechia.

In the past year Tom has helped disseminate some of the project's work through writing features in *Aufbau* and in *Apollo* magazines, as well as reviewing relevant publications (such as the Charles Dellheim book on Jewish dealers for *Arts Judaica*).



Through Durham University, Tom continues to supervise the doctoral theses of Isobel Muir (a CDA shared with the National Gallery, London) and Frederike Schwelle.

Co-Investigator **Jaclyn Granick** and Tom Stammers are developing a joint paper on Cousinhood philanthropy in all its forms, which will inform a 2024 JCH conference on philanthropy. They look forward to invitations to present this new research in 2023.

Jaclyn has otherwise been busy preparing and participating in two international JCH conferences. Jaclyn and Abigail gave a joint paper on at our conference on Jewish business dynasties in Belgium. She is now beginning work to edit a volume derived from the conference along with Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah and Rebecca Kobrin. Jaclyn is developing the Holocaust and memory dimensions of the project through planning our upcoming conference in Brno, hoping to

take the JCH project further eastward in Europe as she does.

Jaclyn and Abigail's special issue [Gendering Jewish Inter/Nationalism](#) is now published, and includes JCH-relevant pieces including by Luisa Levi d'Ancona Modena, Abigail Green and Peter Bergamin, Michele Klein and Rebecca Kobrin. Jaclyn's work on gender has continued as she made progress on her monograph on human rights and Jewish women's activism, giving new papers at the new Jacob Robinson Institute at Hebrew University's inaugural conference in May and at the BIAJS annual conference in July which featured several JCH panels.

Project Researcher and Strawberry Hill House Curator **Silvia Davoli's** article "I shall now go on selling as I can to these people": Joseph Duveen and the Making of the Stern-Michelham Collection", was published online in October 2022 in the Journal of the History of Collections as part of the special issue *Bildung Beyond Borders: German–Jewish Collectors Outside Germany, C.1870–1940* (vol. 34 issue 3).

Silvia is currently working with Tom Stammers on the publication of the proceedings of the two conferences in the Collecting strand. The second volume, in the section on transnational collecting, will include her essay on Ernesta Stern and her collecting activities between Trieste, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin and Paris. During 2022, research in the Stern family archive revealed very interesting material about Ernesta and her interest in Byzantine archaeology and the Mediterranean world.

Silvia is also reworking the Trail dedicated to Jewish Orientalist Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner (1840-1899), written in collaboration with Marcus Roberts, with a view to submitting it in an academic journal in 2023.

Project Researcher and Curator, **Juliet Carey** gave a paper titled 'Waddesdon Manor and Antisemitism: Curating a "Rich Jewish" House' at the Jewish Business Dynasties conference, in September 2022. She gave a lecture 'Storing and Staging: Edmond de Rothschild's storage boxes' at the seminar 'On Collecting' at Leiden University in April, which is part of a strand of her research that is increasingly informed by the Jewish Country House project, and took the opportunity to visit the Dutch Rothschild house, Kasteel de Haar. A visit to the Ca d'Oro in Venice, with its Franchetti history, together with Maichol Clemente's new discoveries of Venetian sculpture at Waddesdon and new thinking about the presence of works by or in homage to Tiepolo and other Venetian artists in Jewish country houses are laying a foundation for further research. With Abigail Green, Juliet continued editing chapters for the Jewish Country Houses book from other contributors and has begun writing her own chapter about Waddesdon. She worked with H  l  ne Binet on the process of selecting photographs for the book and with Profile Books on the book design. For the book chapter and for Digital Ferdinand, Juliet has been revisiting albums of Ferdinand de Rothschild's obituaries and some of his own writings.

### Affiliated Researchers

Dr. Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah, Assistant Professor in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Groningen, has been working on a mapping project of Jewish country houses, and gave a paper on the marriage market of the global Jewish elite at the September conference on Jewish Business Dynasties. John Hilary has completed his case-study chapter for our book project *Jewish Country Houses*, gave a paper at the conference on Jewish collecting and is now developing a new book project. Dr. Luisa Levi D'Ancona Modena has been working with Silvia to develop the Italian dimension of the project. She presented a paper at the conference on

Jewish Business Dynasties and is contributing an article to the proceedings. She has also completed a chapter on Villa Montesca for *Jewish Country Houses*. Dr. Alice Leg   has also completed a case study chapter for *Jewish Country Houses*. Dr. Mia Kuritz  n L  wengart (Uppsala University) is undertaking a pilot project on Jewish country houses in Sweden (which is to be finished in June 2023), building on the research project she is leading on "Jewish Economic Activity and Stockholm's Transformation into a Modern Capital, 1860s-1920s". She too presented at Jewish Business Dynasties in September.

### Supporting the Work of Doctoral Students

The JCH project now acts as a focus for a small group of doctoral students: *Cynthia Cheloff*, now entering her 4<sup>th</sup> year; *Isobel Muir* (AHRC-funded CDA at the National Gallery), now entering her 3<sup>rd</sup> year; *Colette Bellingham-Kennedy* (AHRC-funded CDA at Waddesdon) and *Frederike Schwelle* (AHRC-funded CDA with the Egypt Exploration Society), both in their second year, and *Sietske van der Veen* (Utrecht) who visited Oxford as an affiliated student in Trinity Term. This academic year, we welcome *Matilda Eriksson*, who is starting a CDA in partnership with the Liebermann-Villa Berlin, and we are advertising for a CDA at Oxford in partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust to start in October 2023.



The graduate workshop April 2022

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It is very exciting to see a new generation of scholars embrace different aspects of our research agenda.

The one-day graduate workshop held at the National Gallery was a really stimulating and rewarding experience –for many of these students it was the first time they had presented to a “live” audience. To the core group meanwhile, this workshop underlined the value of cross-fertilisation between the two “Philanthropy” and “Collecting” strands of the project. We are grateful to Monica Böhm-Duchen and David Feldman for joining us – both valued friends of the project.

## PROJECT EVENTS

In June 2022 we held a three-day conference on **'Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste (c.1850-1930)'** in association with our partners in Paris: the Sorbonne, the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, the Musée Nissim de Camondo, and the Château de Champs-sur-Marne. The three keynotes were delivered by Dominique Jarrassé, Caroline Weber and Fredric Bedoire, and the panels featured talks by scholars from Britain, Europe, the US and Israel, with a mix of academics and heritage professionals. We were delighted to have the evening lecture on the first day in the auditorium at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, followed by a tour of the wonderful Proust exhibition.

At the end of the second day of the conference, delegates had the opportunity for a private visit to the Musée Nissim de Camondo, whilst the entirety of the third day was held at the Château of Champs-sur-Marne, the former home of the Cahen d'Anvers family. For a conference concerned with Jewish collectors and tastemakers, it was wonderful to explore these museums and historic houses.

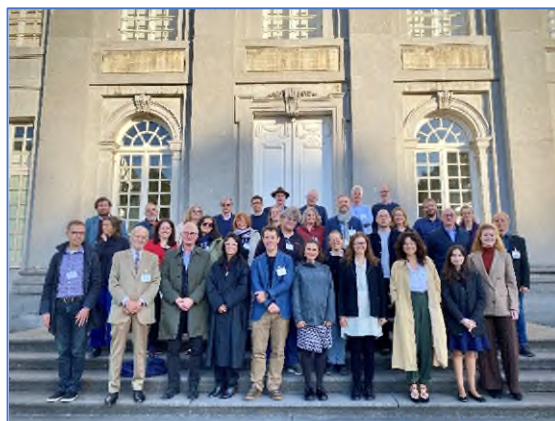
The organisers, Tom Stammers and Silvia Davoli, were especially grateful to Briony

Truscott for her outstanding logistical support, as well as to Cyril Grange and his colleagues at the Sorbonne for their hospitality.



Caterina di Sonnino presenting at the Château de Champs-sur-Marne

In September, Jaclyn Granick and Abigail Green, with Chris McKenna (Oxford) and Rebecca Kobrin (Columbia), held a two-day conference, **'Jewish Business Dynasties, 1850-1950: Family, Power, and Vulnerability'** at the Château de Seneffe, owned by the Philippson business dynasty before World War II, in the Wallonia region of Belgium.



The conference delegates at the Château de Seneffe

The conference brought together Jewish historians, business historians, a historian of dynasties, and heritage professionals to explore various facets of the people who inhabited Jewish country houses and their business and social milieux.

Today a silverware museum, Seneffe launched its first public exhibition on the Philippson family to coincide with our conference, which was also attended by Philippson descendants living in the region. We are now beginning work towards publishing an edited volume. We would like to thank our partners at the Château de Seneffe, Brasenose College, the Global History of Capitalism project, the Fondation Wiener- Anspach and the Philippson family for their enthusiastic embrace of this event.

Several researchers associated with the project, including Cyril Grange and many of our postgraduates, made a coordinated effort to present at the annual July conference of the **British and Irish Association for Jewish Studies** in London. Laura Leibman (Reed College) travelled from Oregon to provide feedback at two of three JCH-associated panels: thank you Laura!

## PUBLICATIONS

*Jewish Country Houses*, eds. Juliet Carey and Abigail Green, Profile Books/National Trust (UK), and Brandeis University Press (US).

Editorial work on this volume is progressing well. All contributing authors have submitted draft chapters, and in most cases these chapters have already been revised. The JCH team are now hard at work on their own contributions: two further case study chapters, and the introduction.

Hélène Binet's new JCH photographs will be one of the most exciting features of this book, and we are delighted that Hélène has now completed all her work for the project. We are hugely grateful to the Martin J. Gross Family Foundation for providing critical funding to support this aspect of the book: these photographs are extraordinary and revelatory – country house photography will never look the same again.

## Journal Articles

*Journal of the History of Collections* Volume 34, Issue 3, October 2022. Special Issue: **Bildung Beyond Borders: German–Jewish Collectors Outside Germany, C.1870–1940.**

Articles include:

John Hilary, Tom Stammers, Introduction: *Bildung* beyond borders: German–Jewish collectors outside Germany, c.1870–1940. Pages 375 – 386, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhab059>

Silvia Davoli, 'I shall now go on selling as much as I can to these people': Duveen Brothers and the making of the Stern–Michelham collection. Pages 413 - 426, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhac005>

Tom Stammers, Jewishness, antiquity and civilization: Alfred Mond, Lord Melchett (1868-1930) and the renewal of a collecting legacy, Pages 427–440 <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhac006>

*Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 2 (2022). Special Issue: **Gendering Jewish Inter/Nationalism (edited by Jaclyn Granick and Abigail Green)**. [Journal of Modern Jewish Studies: Vol 21, No 2 \(tandfonline.com\)](https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhac005)

Articles include:

Jaclyn Granick (2022) Gendering Jewish inter/nationalism: introduction to the special issue, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 21:2, Pages 133 – 142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2022.2057216>

Abigail Green & Peter Bergamin (2022) Vera Salomons and the Kotel: reading international Jewish history through a Jewish country house. Pages 261-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2021.2008795>

Luisa Levi D'Ancona Modena (2022) *Baronesses and revolutionaries: the activism of foreign-born Jewish women in Liberal Italy*, Pages 148-171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2021.1984836>

Michele Klein (2022) *Nineteenth-century Jewish portrait albums*. Pages 253-260.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2021.1988545>

## WORK WITH PROJECT PARTNERS

### *National Trust*

This year has enabled us to renew our partnership with the National Trust with the support of Nancy Bell and Lucy Porten, building on the NT awayday we held in October 2021. New stories are constantly emerging, most recently at Ightham Mote – which was the subject of an article by Abigail Green in the *Jewish Chronicle* - and Croft Castle.

We were delighted that so many representatives of the National Trust were able to join us for our first major in-person conference in Paris, which was supported by NT funding: SallyAnne Huxtable (Head Curator), George Roberts (Curator, London and South East) and Lucy Porten (Senior National Curator).

We are also indebted to Tate Greenhalgh (Senior National Consultant: Interpretation) for her invaluable support of the PI and Marcus Roberts during the design phase of the mobile exhibition: it is exciting that so many NT properties have committed to showing the exhibition (in different variants), and we hope this will provide us with an opportunity to revive other aspects of our work together, such as the involvement of core properties in the UK Jewish Heritage Days.

### *Strawberry Hill House*

During 2022, Strawberry Hill continued to collaborate with the JCH project in different ways. In October, Silvia Davoli, Senior Curator at Strawberry Hill, presented an online lecture dedicated to the Stern family and their collecting activities at Strawberry Hill to celebrate the European Days of Jewish Culture 2022.

As a result of the online exhibition *The Unexpected Jewish Past of Strawberry Hill*, Silvia tutored a student from Buckingham University's MA in Decorative Arts who researched the Stern family at Strawberry Hill and discovered in a private archive in Geneva previously unknown historic photographic materials, illustrating their presence in the villa.

Strawberry Hill has received generous sponsorship that will enable the overall interpretation of the Museum to be implemented, including a new guidebook to be published in 2023 (Scala Publishers). In the new interpretation, the research carried out so far on the Jewish presence at Strawberry Hill will finally be permanently consolidated.

Strawberry Hill is preparing to welcome the launch of *Jewish Country Houses* (eds. Carey and Green), which will be accompanied by an exhibition dedicated to the international photographer H el ene Binet in autumn 2024. Parallel to Binet's photo exhibition, Strawberry Hill will display the mobile exhibition '*Country Houses, Jewish Homes*'.

### *Waddesdon Manor*

Waddesdon continues to benefit from all aspects of the JCH project, for example, from specific contacts with related heritage sites and museums, such as Kasteel de Haar in the Netherlands and the Jewish Museum, Berlin, to new ways of interpreting the collection. Work on antisemitism and Waddesdon conducted this year provides new impetus for



new displays and interpretation about the Jewishness of Waddesdon.

Hélène Binet completed her photography of Waddesdon and planning is now underway for an exhibition of Binet's photographs at Waddesdon in 2025. Pablo Bronstein's drawings, in response to Waddesdon as a Jewish country house, will also be shown in 2025, along with Bronstein's related selection of works of art from the permanent collection. The mobile exhibition, whose location in the grounds or Coach House is being considered, will provide a broader, historical JCH context for these two displays of contemporary art.

The Digital Ferdinand project is progressing. Material including personal notebooks and accounts, unpublished manuscripts, essays and catalogues have been digitised. Discussions are underway to plan the editorial strategy and to define the nature of the digital functionality that will ensure it is as accessible and engaging as possible.

Colette Bellingham-Kennedy continues work on a Collaborative Doctoral Award supervised by Geoffrey Batchen (Oxford), Abigail Green (Oxford) and Juliet Carey (Waddesdon Manor) that will focus on the Red Book and the little-known photographic archive at Waddesdon.

*AEPJ (The European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage)*

Phase 1 of the "Palaces, Villas and Country Houses" route is complete, and we hope to expand the route to include a more complete range of properties in 2023-4. In 2022 the "Palaces, Villas and Country Houses" route received nearly 1,000-page views and was amongst the top 10 most visited pages on <https://jewishheritage.org>.

## WORK WITH UK HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS

### *Crawley Museum/ Worth Park History Society*

Work on a dress inspired by Lady Louisa Montefiore and made by members of the Worth Park Costume Group is now complete. It was displayed at the launch of the mobile exhibition at Limmud 2022 this December. We are so pleased that Crawley Museum is planning to show the exhibition in early 2024.

### *Gunnersbury Park and Museum*

We visited Gunnersbury for the first time this Spring, and we are delighted that it will be the first public venue for our mobile exhibition.

### *Holocaust Educational Trust*

We are currently recruiting for a CDA at Oxford in partnership with the HET.

### *J-Trails*

This year saw the completion of our major joint output, the mobile exhibition *Country Houses: Jewish Homes*, curated by the PI and Marcus Roberts, Director of J-Trails, who also attended the conference at Seneffe. We are now entering a new phase of our collaboration with a renewed focus on volunteer and educator training.

### *Victoria & Albert Museum*

The arrival of our longstanding collaborator Oliver Cox as head of academic partnerships heralds a new phase in our partnership with the V&A. Olly joined us at the conference in Seneffe to chair the Heritage panel, and we are beginning to explore new ways of working together.

### *Salomons*

The partnership between the JCH project and the Salomons Museum this year resulted in the publication of an entry in the Jewish

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Women's Archive for Vera Salomons, founder of the museum.

### *Trent Park*

We have held initial meetings with the Trent Park House project as it develops into a heritage institution within the housing development surrounding it—and will hopefully open to the public in 2024. The ground floor will be restored to reflect the life of Philip Sassoon, while the basement will display the story of the WWII listeners who collected intelligence. We hope to visit the site soon and partner with the heritage team via conferences and training.

### *Jewish Country Houses online presence*

The [jch.history.ox.ac.uk](http://jch.history.ox.ac.uk) website has emerged as a useful forum for engaging with local heritage initiatives and publicising their work. Our 'Stories' continued to attract a high level of interest: John Hilary on writing the Messel family history and Sarah Montagu on the story behind Ewen Montagu and Operation Mincemeat were some of the most viewed pages in the year. Our user and session numbers for the website grew by 20% in 2022. The twitter feed (@JCHJewishHouses) now has nearly 700 followers (again a 20% increase).

## **WORK WITH HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS ACROSS EUROPE**

### *Centre des Monuments Nationaux*

The whole JCH team is delighted that Bernard le Magayrou has joined the international advisory board and thereby cemented our relationship with the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, who have been such generous partners. It is very exciting that Hélène Binet has been able to photograph the beautiful Villa Kerylos for the flagship JCH book.

### *Domaine du Château de Seneffe*

We were grateful to our colleagues at the Château de Seneffe for hosting the Jewish

Business Dynasties conference in September, a result of our long-standing partnership. Florian Medici also curated and launched a new exhibition at the Château which highlights the Philippson family and their business dynasty as well as the property's Nazi past: he gave conference delegates both a fascinating talk and tour of the exhibit.

### *Liebermann-Villa*

We are now working with Dr. Lucy Wasensteiner, the director of the Liebermann-Villa on a number of different projects, including a CDA based at the Villa. Lucy has contributed a case study chapter to *Jewish Country Houses*, and will present at the conference in Brno in May 2023. The Villa is a focus for the Hélène Binet photography project. An exhibition drawing on her work on Freienwalde, Nymans and the Rathenau Tomb as well as her photographs of the Villa is now planned for Spring 2025.

### *Hirschsprung Collection*

Among heritage professionals and curators who took part in the June 2022 conference on 'Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste', we were very pleased to welcome colleagues from Scandinavia, especially Rasmus Kjarboe from the Hirschsprung Collection (Copenhagen) who is co-ordinating a bigger research project on Jewish art patrons and museums in Denmark and Sweden. Rasmus joined us again at the Château de Seneffe, where he contributed to a panel exploring the challenges of telling the Jewish business dynasty story in a variety of heritage contexts.

### *Museo Ebraico di Roma*

In the area of studies dedicated to Italy and cultural philanthropy, the collaboration with the Jewish Museum in Rome has strengthened. Together we plan to hold a conference in Rome in 2026 dedicated to Jewish collectors of classical and non-classical archaeology. We are currently working towards encouraging other institutions to join

this initiative including the British School of Rome, The Sapienza University, the Warburg Institute in London and the Hertziana Library in Rome.

*National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic*

We are delighted to be working in close partnership with The National Heritage Institute on the development and delivery of the international conference on “Jewish Country House and the Holocaust in History and Memory” event scheduled for May 2023 and funded by the Claims Conference. The NHI is a sponsor of the Hélène Binet photography project, which includes her revelatory new photographs of the Villa Tugendhat.



Villa Tugendhat

*Schloss Freienwalde*

This year we welcomed Schloss Freienwalde to our AEPJ-sponsored route, and as one of our European heritage partners. The support of Museumsdirektor Reinhard Schmook was crucial in realising our collaboration with the artist Sophie von Hellermann, curated by urKultur.

Read more:

[The country home of an assassinated Jewish German politician is transformed by art - The Jewish Chronicle \(thejc.com\)](#)

*Villa Montesca*

Over the past two years, thanks to the collaboration between Dr Silvia Davoli and Dr Luisa Levi D'Ancona Modena, research into Jewish Country Houses and Jewish cultural philanthropy in Italy has proved to be a particularly interesting field of study.

In this context the JCH project is preparing an international conference on 'Jews, Liberalism and the Land', organised by PI Prof Abigail Green in collaboration with Professor Tobias Brinkmann, Pennsylvania State University, and the Hallgarten-Franchetti Foundation, at Villa Montesca (05/2025). Villa Montesca is one of the houses featuring in the Hélène Binet photography project, and this event will serve to launch the book in Italy.

The Jewish Country Houses team would like to thank the funders who provided valuable support during 2022: the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/S006656/1], the Martin J. Gross Family Foundation, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, Brasenose College, Oxford in Berlin, and The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. Further conference support was gratefully received from the National Trust, the Château de Seneffe, the Château de Champs sur Marne, the Fondation Wiener- Anspach, The Global History of Capitalism, and Sorbonne Université.

## Appendices

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1. Conference Reports: 'Jewish Business Dynasties: Family, Power, and Vulnerability', by Tova Benjamin and 'Collectionneurs juifs et tendances du goût / Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste (ca 1850-1930)', by Isobel Muir

## **Conference Report: Jewish Business Dynasties: Family, Power, and Vulnerability**

**September 19-20, 2022**

**Tova Benjamin, New York University**

The Madoff docuseries released on Netflix this month, covering the rise and fall of the man behind the largest Ponzi scheme in history, reveals a discomfiting theme. Nearly all the protagonists, from Madoff to his biggest investors, are Jews. More than that, Madoff's offices were staffed with family members: his father-in-law, brother, and sons. From the very first days of Madoff's money managing business, it's clear that ethnic and family networks were crucial to his operations—trust and tribal feeling that Madoff exploited in his fraud. First, when his father-in-law corralled a feeder fund of his friends and family, gathering cash for Madoff to 'invest,' and later, when Madoff courted clients at Jewish country clubs in Palm Beach Florida, where he "was like their Jewish son," as one victim put it. In a deposition after his arrest and imprisonment, Madoff reflected on the importance of trust in his business. "I learned very quickly in this business that all you have is your word," he remarked. The story of Bernie Madoff, then, is a story of family, ethnic networks, and reputation. The very same foundations of capitalism, [one might say](#). What's surprising, watching in 2023, is the role Jewishness plays in building that trust. In the age of steamships and telegrams, we could understand why tribalism and ethnic affiliation might drive investing decisions. But in the era of credit rating agencies, online trading, and litigation, it's striking that ethnic networks might still be a decisive factor in business decision making and success.

Last September, an international group of researchers gathered outside of Brussels to consider these questions of trust and family, and the relationship between Jewish business dynasties and modern capitalism. The two-day conference, "Jewish Business Dynasties: Family, Power, and Vulnerability," was organized by the Jewish Country Houses research project and convened a diverse group of historians and curators. Burdened by longstanding and tragically consequential associations between Jews and capitalism, it is understandable that 21st century researchers are hesitant to assess the relationship between these categories. The supposed link between Jews and modern capitalism has been the trough antisemites feed at, whether or not the Jews behind any business endeavor are honest, cheating, or in fact, poor. But more than antisemitism,

understanding Jews and family dynasties matters for business history because it mattered to the individuals who made business decisions with family and ethnicity in mind.

So, how should we understand the Jews in business dynasties past and present, and the business dynasties in Jewish history? Organizers Professors Abigail Green, Chris McKenna, Rebecca Kobrin, and Dr. Jaclyn Granick proposed an interdisciplinary conversation, in which scholars of business history brought their expertise to bear on subjects of Jewishness, while scholars of Jewish history considered themes of political economy. The conference was appropriately held at the Domaine du Château de Seneffe, a beautifully preserved, 18th century country home acquired by Franz Philippson, a Jewish banker of the Philippson family dynasty. In attendance were also a few descendants of the Philippson family, one of whom still carried memories of an early childhood in the neoclassical castle and manicured parks. This was in the postwar period, when the family briefly regained ownership of the castle after the Nazis invaded and forced them out during World War II. The themes of power and vulnerability—incidents of Jewish wealth in a century and continent where Jewish rights and lives were under attack—shaped the conference panels and was the explicit subject of the final panel.

The six panels were thoughtfully organized by categories that encouraged researchers to consider the importance of industry, place, and family. Researchers focused primarily on Western Europe, with some comparative attention to Eastern and Central Europe. The first panel focused on sectors, asking whether Jews in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe were attracted to certain industries over others, and if so, why. Papers looked at railroads (Tobias Brinkmann, Penn State University), art dealers (Tom Stammers, Durham University), and grain (myself). Risk, mobility, and pooled credit were common themes across these discussions. In a panel focused on family, Cyril Grange (CNRS, Sorbonne) shared an ambitious new technology mapping the marriage strategies of Jewish banking families in Western Europe from 1800 until 1940, with attention to family and international alliances. The presentation sparked a lively discussion about using a gendered approach in the study of Jewish family business dynasties, given that Judaism has traditionally prized matrilineal descent.

These themes of gender were revisited in a panel on place, where Tullia Catalan (University of Trieste) turned to ships and the seas in her presentation of the port city, Trieste during the Habsburg period. Here, women proved to be important cultural mediators as elite Jewish families developed roots in the city. Paired with Lida-Maria Dodou (University of Vienna) and her study of Jewish business families in fin-de-siecle Salonica, the two considered how a cluster of well-connected Jewish families shaped the economy of these two port cities. But lest one get carried away, Youssef Cassis shared his findings on Jewish city bankers in London, concluding that Jews were not an anomaly or even a significant presence among them. Along the way, Cassis gave a master class in historical finance, demonstrating the different kinds of banks, credits, and bills of exchange bankers in these major financial points were juggling.

One standout panel analyzed the three categories in the conference title, particularly the meaning of the word “dynasty” in a business and family context. In a fascinating presentation that pulled together the different papers’ threads, Jeroen Duindam (Leiden University), applied categories employed in studies of global political dynasties to modern family businesses. Nearly all the panel’s papers touched on strategic marriages, conflicts between fathers and sons, and anxieties about succession, all of which Duindam helpfully contrasted with political strategies of kings, queens, dowagers, and princes. Susie Pak (St. John’s) and Rebecca Kobrin (Columbia University) offered an analysis of family firms and antisemitism in American finance. If studies of family firms are crucial for understanding the history of capitalism, and if the family is an important site for Jewish cultural transmission, does the Jewish family have a special place in business history? Pak and Kobrin argued that Jewish firms had a more expansive notion of family, highlighting the importance of an approach that centers the two categories.

Joining the historians were museum curators from Brno (Petr Svoboda, National Heritage Institute), Berlin (Michal Friedlander, Berlin Jewish Museum), and Copenhagen (Rasmus Kjærboe, Hirschsprung Collection), among others, who asked how current conversations about Jews and wealth should be brought into their exhibitions. The stakes of these discussions were highlighted in an entertaining and poignant talk about the centrality of the Rothschild family collections to contemporary antisemitic conspiracy theories (Juliet Carey, Waddesdon Manor).

Both body, mind, and soul must be fed, and the conference organizers took care of our nourishment on all fronts. Participants were treated to a tour of the Château, with its elaborate (and original!) mosaic wood floors, and a guide to the rare silverware collection. Thanks to the Jewish Country Houses research project, the tour included remarks on Franz Phillipson and the Phillipson family's Jewishness, asking what their ethnic identity signified among Belgium's countryside elite, both before and after World War II. Conversations continued over a three-course dinner in the Orangery. Participants were also lavished with an 18th century themed chocolate tasting in one of the Château's grand halls.

By the time we concluded the final panel and our last dinner, I felt that a new field of inquiry across these disciplines was taking shape. In a provocative joint paper by Jaclyn Granick (Cardiff University) and Abigail Green (University of Oxford), argued that national histories of Jewish bourgeoisie are aplenty, but as an international group, Jewish business dynasties are less understood. Sensitive to the antisemitic myths that cloud the term, they put forth the category of "Jewish business dynasties" as it relates to what they called an "international Jewish aristocracy." That is, a short lived wealthy Jewish elite who claimed to speak for, and was referred to, by Jews across Europe. A group that gained its power at the moment the European aristocracy began to decline. Across papers, certain themes reappeared: decline, newness, outsider advantage, networks, and risk. It seems that European Jews of the 20th century were well positioned to enter the social elite during periods of political uncertainty and change, and to enter business sectors at moments of economic insecurity or transition.

Bernie Madoff entered New York's Wall Street during the 'wild west' of the 1960s and 70s, trading in little understood, over the counter stocks. He grew his business during a transitional period, when traders were just beginning to reckon with computer-based trading. Madoff's competitive ability depended on the trust of his primarily Jewish network, which he relied on to raise capital. Yet if Jewishness proved crucial to Madoff's start, it is not a contradiction to assert that his Jewishness had no bearing on his fraud. That the larger Jewish population was not held as responsible for a single man's fraud, is a testament to the security Jews have historically experienced in the US. Similarly, perhaps the most interesting aspect of September's conference was that it happened at all. A hundred years ago, it would have been impossible to discuss such



subjects—in Europe!—with the academic neutrality of historical distance. The fact that we are only just beginning to seriously research the history of the Jewish business elite speaks to how new this phenomenon is. More than 70 years after the genocide of Jews in Europe, this social and economic aspect of Jewish history is only just unfolding. New as it is, it promises to rethink the way we approach the history of modern capitalism, both in Europe, and the United States.

## **Workshop report:**

### **Collectionneurs juifs et tendances du goût / Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste (ca 1850-1930)**

**June 27-29, 2022**

**Isobel Muir**

In late June, we were delighted to be able to gather with colleagues from across Europe, Israel and America for a three-day workshop in Paris. It was an opportunity to engage with some new research on the topic of Jewish collectors and their contribution to wider trends in taste between 1850 and 1930, and to hear from heritage professionals who have been restoring Jewish narratives to their interpretation of historic buildings and collections.

Organised by our colleagues responsible for the 'Collecting' strand of the Jewish Country Houses research project, Silvia Davoli and Tom Stammers, in association with Professor Cyril Grange (Centre Roland Mousnier), who kindly hosted us at the Sorbonne, the bi-lingual workshop also presented an important opportunity to work closely with two of our formal partners, the National Trust and the Centre des Monuments Nationaux.

The first session of Monday 27 June was introduced by Philippe Bélaval, President of the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, who welcomed delegates to Paris (in French and superb English) and expressed his organisation's commitment to promoting research into the collections and historic houses associated with important Jewish families, like the Cahen d'Anvers and the Reinachs. He welcomed this sequel to our 2019 conference with the Centre des Monuments Nationaux at Kerylos, and applauded the development of the recently launched AEJP European Jewish heritage route, 'Palaces, Villas and Country Houses'.

The first keynote was given by Professor Dominique Jarrassé (Université Bordeaux-Montagne), whose paper introduced three of France's most significant Jewish patrons of art, Isaac Strauss (1806–1888), Daniel Iffla "Osiris" (1825–1907), and René Weiner (1855–1939). Professor Jarrassé problematised the category of a 'Jewish' collector and 'Jewish' taste, warning against essentialism and toxic generalisations; he also reflected on the specifically French cultural model of integration in which Jewish collections were displayed in a national museum (in the case of the Strauss collection, the Musée de Cluny). Panel One, chaired by Jaclyn Granick (Cardiff University) was concerned with trends in Jewish collecting across various European cultural contexts, as we heard from Maddelena Alvi (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) on the German art market during the First World War. John Hilary (University of Nottingham) discussed many of the JCH-owning German Jewish collectors who established their collections in Edwardian Britain, while Mia Laufer of the Des Moines Art Center presented a paper remotely on Jewish patrons of French artist Gustave Moreau, and why his work came to be seen as appealing to their taste.

After lunch at the atmospheric Polidor restaurant, Veronique Gerard Powell (Sorbonne), Lizzie A. Pergam (Independent Scholar, Society for the History of Collecting) and Neta Peretz (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) discussed three significant 19th century Jewish collecting families in Britain and France (namely Lewis, Mendel and Pereire), in a session on 'Jewish patronage of Contemporary Artists', chaired by Lindsay Macnaughton (University of Buckingham). A small change to the programme meant Elana Shapira's (University of Vienna / University of Applied Arts Vienna), paper on Viennese modernist art collectors will be circulated to delegates at the close of the workshop. The afternoon ended with Panel Three, chaired by Cyril Grange, exploring how Jewish collectors and patrons mobilised transnational networks to display and store their works of art. Emily Bilski

(Library Fellow, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute) shared new findings on the Berlin-based collectors Carl and Felicite Bernstein, Christel H. Force (Independent Scholar) discussed the efforts of Marianne de Goldschmidt-Rothschild to 'roll canvases' across increasingly hostile national borders, while Martine Sitt (Universität Kassel) highlighted the difficulty of working on Jewish art dealers, who like many in their trade, may have operated under pseudonyms. We also heard from colleagues Merel van Erp and Mara Lagerweill of the Rijksmuseum about their plans to recognise the Dutch Jewish art dealer Fritz Mannheimer in an upcoming display in Amsterdam.

We then relocated to the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme (MAHJ) in the Marais, taking our seats in the lecture theatre located below an extraordinary 17th century hôtel particulier. Here we were introduced to France's largest bibliographic collection on the history of French Jews by the museum's director, Paul Salmona. After his introduction, we were treated to our second keynote of the day, delivered by Caroline Weber (Barnard College, Columbia University), author of *Proust's Duchess* (Knopf, 2018). In her talk Professor Weber vividly reconstructed Proust's cultural milieu and the influence exerted on his imagination by attendance at salons run by Jewish women. It was the ideal prelude to our guided tour the current exhibition, 'Marcel Proust, du côté de la mère', an exploration of the author's varied and oblique references to his own Jewish heritage. We were also able to view some of the star pieces from the Strauss collection, mentioned by Professor Jarassé in his talk that morning.

Tuesday 28th June also began at the Sorbonne, with a keynote paper by architectural historian Frederic Bedoire (The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm) on the Rothschild family's European homes, and their influence on American collectors. Professor Bedoire is the author of the important monograph *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830-1930* (Ktav, 2004). After this keynote Dr Oliver Cox (University of Oxford) and Sylvie Legrand-Rossi (Conservatrice générale du Patrimoine, Musée Nissim de Camondo) jointly chaired a discussion of élite French Jewish families the Camondos, Reinachs, and Dorvilles, with bilingual papers presented by Nora Seni (Université Paris-8), Hervé Duchêne (Université de Bourgogne) and Nathalie Neumann (University of Mainz), respectively. We were delighted that David Zivie, appointed by President Macron to oversee research into looted cultural property between 1933-45, was able to join us to reflect on recent restitution initiatives by the French government, and the moral importance of such work.

The afternoon was no less fruitful, with Panel Five, chaired by Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah (Groningen University), hosting a colloquium on Jewish collectors of various types of 'Oriental' artwork, at which we heard papers from Ayse Aldemir on Jewish dealers in the late Ottoman Empire (Sabanci University, Sakip Sabanci Museum, Istanbul), Yuka Kadoi on the market for Persian art (University of Vienna) Laura-Marijke Hecker on Chinese art in interwar Berlin (Independent Researcher) and Nick Pearce on the underrated female collector of Chinese porcelain Brenda Seligman (University of Glasgow). The closing session was chaired by Luisa Levi D'Ancona Modena (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and examined the idea of collecting as an intellectual pursuit. Tobias Kämpf (FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg/ Germanic National Museum, Nuremberg) discussed Scandinavian Ernest Thiel's 'Nietzschean Gallery', Stefano Cracolici (Durham University) drew from Bernard Berenson's autobiographical writings to explore how his Jewish heritage shaped his conversion to Christian and Renaissance art, and finally Milena Woźniak-Koch (Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Berlin) examined collector Bronisław Krystall's aesthetic ideals. The evening came to a celebratory close in the courtyard of the Musée Nissim de Camondo, where we could explore the exquisite collections and raise a glass courtesy to the kind welcome of Sylvie Legrand-Rossi and her colleagues.

The final day of the workshop, focusing on museums and heritage sites with Jewish patrons, took place in the sunny dairy located in the gardens of the Château Champs sur Marne (CMN), former home of the Cahen d'Anvers family, and the subject of Alice Legé's doctoral research, which she

introduced over breakfast. Silvia Davoli chaired the first 'Heritage Perspectives' panel, which was opened by Sally-Anne Huxtable (Head Curator, National Trust) who outlined the Trust's collaboration within the Jewish Country Houses project, and explored the enigmatic figure of Hannah Gubbay. George Roberts (National Trust) told us about Mottisfont Abbey's doyenne Maud Russell, a champion of modern art who also sheltered her German Jewish family members. Olga Melasecchi (Director, Jewish Museum of Rome) and Gaia Fiorentino introduced the exceptional collections of the Jewish museum in Rome, and explored how some twentieth-century Italian Jewish collectors navigated the crisis of Fascism. Caterina de Renzis Sonnino (Founder, Castello Sonnino international education center) demonstrated how her own family's thriving vineyard and learning programming seeks to renew the progressive Jewish heritage of the site.

Sally-Anne Huxtable (NT) chaired the final panel of the workshop, which looked at the recent turn toward Jewish house museums in Scandinavia. Patrik Steorn (Director, Gothenburg Museum of Art), presented on the Ernest Thiel Gallery, a Gesamtkunstwerk celebrating Nordic art and ideals. The final papers, given by Charlotta Nordström (remotely) and Rasmus Kjaerboe of the Hirschsprung Collection, examined the impact of the 'Fürstenberg Gallery', a gift to the Danish people. They announced an exciting-sounding digital initiative to fully catalogue its holdings - a fitting way to end the workshop as it reflects the widening interest in provenance research among both audiences and heritage professionals alike.

After a light lunch in the grounds, curator Mathias Le Galic (CMN) invited us to tour the Chateau and gardens, which featured spot-lit displays of some of the most significant of the recently restored items of furniture and boiseries owned by the Cahen d'Anvers. A highlight for many was the former bathroom of Madame de Pompadour, one of the earliest to be fitted with modern conveniences. In the late nineteenth century it served as a dining room for the Cahen d'Anvers children, located adjacent to the formal entertaining spaces used to host diplomatic and social functions by their parents Louis and Louise.

On behalf of all the attendees I would like to extend my thanks to Briony Truscott, Research Projects Administrator (University of Oxford) for the extraordinary care and attention to detail which resulted in a wonderful conference, an opportunity to generate and share ideas, and build what will no doubt be highly-rewarding and fruitful partnerships across borders.

Isobel Muir

AHRC-supported CDA candidate (University of Durham / the National Gallery)

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