



© Center "Petersburg Judaica"



© Jewish Museum London

## Editorial

Last February a group of 20 European curators gathered in London to attend the AEJM Advanced Curatorial Education Programme, where they explored and analysed the collections and displays of the Jewish Museum London. A report on the A-CEP can be found in this Newsletter.

In this edition the AEJM also announces its upcoming activities for 2015: the curatorial seminar in Budapest (September), the seminar for museum educators in Vienna (October) and the Annual Conference in Jerusalem (November). AEJM member institutions are invited to submit their applications for the Advisory Visits Grant Programme before April 1<sup>st</sup>. In 'Museum Object' new Associate Member Center "Petersburg Judaica" from Saint Petersburg, Russia, highlights one of its treasures, the photo-archive of the An-sky expeditions of 1912-1914.

## AEJM Community Manager vacancy

The AEJM is looking for a skilled Community Manager (freelance contract a 335 hours per year) who will have a pivotal role in providing members with means of online communication and networking. The Community Manager will be responsible for maintaining the new AEJM website and for publishing the AEJM Newsletter. This position aims at further strengthening the professional network and active community of Jewish museums and collections in Europe.

The Community Manager should have excellent computer, Internet and WordPress skills, as well as good relation management skills. Experience in working at or with Jewish museums or collections is essential. High-level written communication skills in English are a requirement; knowledge of other main European languages and Hebrew would be helpful. Experience in the area of

administration and public relations is also required. He/she should be highly organised and able to work independently.

A full [job description](#) can be found online. To apply for this post, applicants must send a current CV and cover letter, explaining interest in this post and relevant experience and qualifications, together with details of at least one referee, and information regarding availability. Please note that applicants should be based in Europe.

## Curatorial training in London

Since 2014 the AEJM with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office initiates the Advanced Curatorial Education Programme, a professional development programme for curators working at Jewish museums or with Jewish collections. The first 2015 edition was hosted by the Jewish Museum London and took place from 15 until 19 February.

The intensive 5-day programme was attended by an international group of 20 curators from 13 different European countries. The seminar, organised by A-CEP Programme Director Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek assisted by Michaela Feurstein-Prasser and London curator Joanne Rosenthal, focused on the collections of the Jewish Museum London.

Lectures on Anglo-Jewish silver of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century by former JML Director Edgar Samuel, on the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, and on the evolution of the JML Judaica collection offered a theoretical starting point for the hands-on workshops, wherein the participants studied silver objects and wimples from the JML collection. At the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust, where the group was welcomed by Evelyn and Ariel Friedlander, the participants could continue to research Torah binders and wimples originating from Bohemia and

Moravia. Through a lecture by curator Elizabeth Selby and a hands-on workshop the participants also learned about the JML Social History Collection.



Workshop on Judaica from the JML collection  
© Jewish Museum London

Other excursions included a visit to the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Bevis Marks Synagogue. At the V&A the group was invited for a behind-the-scenes presentation of a 17<sup>th</sup> century Sephardic Torah mantle that is planned to be part of the permanent exhibition of the museum. The tour of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in the United Kingdom, by curator Maurice Bitton gave further insight into the Sephardic heritage of London.

The museum analysis session focusing on the Judaica galleries at the JML facilitated discussion on exhibition practice. After a lecture by Ian Blair, senior archaeologist at the Museum of London Archaeology, on the excavation of the London Mikvah, the participants also analysed the presentation of the Mikvah at the museum.

“Overall the curatorial education programme gave great insight into the museum practice of the Jewish Museum London, provided the opportunity for exchange with colleagues and lastly enabled me to look at our own collection with a better understanding.” says Sara Tas, junior curator of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. Read Sara’s [report](#) of the London seminar online.



Analysis of wimples in the JML collection  
© Jewish Museum London

The AEJM would like to thank Abigail Morris, Chief Executive of the Jewish Museum London, curators Joanne Rosenthal and Elizabeth Selby, and assistant curator Alice Quine for their kind hospitality and for opening the museum collections and facilities to the AEJM and the participants of the A-CEP. The AEJM is also grateful to the German Federal Foreign Office for contributing towards the A-CEP.

## Upcoming curatorial seminar in Budapest

The next edition of the Advanced Curatorial Education Programme will take place from 30 August until 3 September in Budapest. The Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives will host the seminar. More information will be available in the next Newsletter. Staff members from AEJM member institutions working with Judaica or Jewish material culture are invited to [register](#). AEJM Members may send on delegate each.

## Museum Education Seminar in Vienna

The AEJM Museum Education Seminar aims to enhance and support professionalism in museum education at European Jewish museums. By offering training, networking

and exchange possibilities for educators, the AEJM also aims at fostering innovation and new cooperation in the field of museum education projects, policies and strategies.

The MES 2015 will take place from 11 October until 15 October in Vienna, Austria. The 5-day programme offers various hands-on workshops, lectures, presentations and discussion sessions. The different Museum Focus sessions aim at creating a framework for mutual support by offering participants a platform to present new and innovative projects and to discuss specific challenges and case studies that they are dealing with in their daily work at their respective museums. This edition the participants will work on different locations in and outside Vienna, such as the Museum Judenplatz, the Stadttempel synagogue and Bratislava (SK). The workshops will have a special focus on the development of lesson plans. See the [preliminary programme](#) for more information.



Working at the "Kosher Table" of the Oslo Jewish Museum during the MES 2014 © Elisabeth Schulte

The seminar is kindly hosted by the Jewish Museum Vienna (JMW) and is developed in

close cooperation with Hannah Landsmann and Dan Fischman of the JMW Education Department and the Museum Education Task Force. The David Berg Foundation, NY, kindly supports the Museum Education Seminar 2015.

The programme is open for museum educators from AEJM member institutions. AEJM members may send one delegate each. Participants may apply at the AEJM for a Travel Grant to partly cover the expenses for travel and accommodation. If you want to apply for a travel grant, please indicate your travel costs on the registration form. You can [register](#) until **July 1** 2015.

## **Grant Programme: Call for Applications**

AEJM member institutions are invited to apply for the Advisory Visits Grant Programme (AVGP) before 1 April. The AVGP offers custom-made consultancy visits by museum experts to AEJM members in need of expert advice and training. Applications are welcome in 3 categories: Collection Management, Museum Education, and Permanent Displays.

After the AEJM has received an application, the AEJM Board will evaluate the application. As part of the assessment process, the AEJM will consult experts familiar with the applicant museum and the references indicated by the applicant. Applications will be assessed according to their contribution to the long-term sustainability of the applying institution and its holdings. For more information see the [AVGP Brochure](#) and the [AVGP Application Form](#).

## **Vacancy Jewish museums research project**

The Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe currently recruiting a full-time researcher for a one-year fixed-term project coordination role to lead on a research project focussing on European Jewish museums. The role will encompass desk research, and the coordination, design and implementation of a pan – European baseline survey of Jewish European museums. The incumbent will analyse the results of the survey and will produce a report of summarising this analysis and the results. The role will involve some travelling to museums in Europe. The appointee will be expected to work largely from home, with regular meetings and support from the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe and the Association of European Jewish Museums. A full [job description](#) can be found online.

## **Annual Conference 2015 in Jerusalem**

From 14 until 18 November 2015 the AEJM Annual Conference will take place in Jerusalem. The programme will be hosted by The Israel Museum, which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, and will include lectures, presentations, workshops and different excursions, such as to the National Library of Israel. The AEJM offers an optional excursion programme on Wednesday 19 November. More details will be available in the next Newsletter. However, due to high demand, we recommend AEJM members to already [register](#) for the Conference. For more information please contact Project Manager Eva Koppen.

## Museum Object

Center "Petersburg Judaica"

Photo-archive of Semen An-sky's expeditions of 1912-1914



Jewish coach drivers, Korets, Volhynia Province, 1912  
© Center "Petersburg Judaica"

In 1909, the well-known Russian and Yiddish writer, the author of the famous play "Der dibek: Tsvishn tsvey veltn" (The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds), ethnographer, and revolutionary activist Semen An-sky (real name – Shloyme Zanvl Rapoport; 1863–1920) initiated an ambitious research project of Jewish historical and ethnographic expeditions. As he had mentioned in his notes, these expeditions would visit shtetls in Volhynia, Podolia, and Kiev provinces of the Pale of Jewish Settlement in the Russian empire with the purpose of collecting "folkloric and historical materials, objects of Jewish artistic heritage as well as taking photographs of [ethnographic] types, historical places, old or noteworthy buildings and so forth." As one can see from this quotation, photography was assigned fairly important role in the planned expeditions.

During the three field seasons of 1912–1914 the 19-year-old artist and expedition photographer Solomon Yudovin (1892–1954) made about 2000 photos that later were included in the collection of the Russia's first Jewish Museum opened under the aegis of the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society in

Petrograd in 1917. Ludovin's chief merit was that at the dawn of artistic photography his photographic practice united the principles of ethnographic photography with the artistic methods of pictorialism (a trend in the 19th century photography which goal was to grant photography the status of art by using techniques, or, "pictorial effects," that made photographs resemble paintings). Only few ethnographic photographs of the time can be considered within the context of art photography in Russia. The best of Ludovin's expedition photos can be undoubtedly included in this category. The conscious use of a broad arsenal of artistic devices and technical practice during the expeditions shows that Ludovin sensed himself to be not merely a photographer, but more than that, a photographic artist. He understood his task not so much as the photography of ethnographic reality, as much as in the artistic generalization of impressions of what he had seen. In occupying himself with different artistic experiments, Ludovin both departed from the primary tasks of ethnographic photography, and at the same time, came close to fulfilling the final purpose of his patron and mentor An-sky: to create a "portrait of the Jewish people." This goal could only be achieved by artistic means and Ludovin approached his work with all the tools of the photographic art that were available to him at the time.



Synagogue yard in Olyka, Volhynia Province  
© Center "Petersburg Judaica"

Unfortunately, Ludovin's photographs did not become a fact of artistic life of the early 1900s in part because An-sky's plans to publish a five-volume "Album of Jewish Artistic Heritage" –which was to include around 700 expedition photographs – were not fulfilled. Publication of the album was hindered by the outbreak of World War I and the following Russian Revolution of 1917. Although, participating in the ethnographic expeditions significantly influenced Ludovin's subsequent artistic work. The juxtaposition of his expedition photographs and graphic work, created in the 1920s and 1930s confirms that the impressions from the expeditions, preserved with the help of the photography, turned out to be extremely valuable material, which provided the artist with themes and images connected to everyday life in the shtetl for many decades. Ludovin's graphic works were exhibited on a yearly basis both in the USSR and in other countries. The Soviet press published many articles and monographs about his art.

In 1929, Soviet authorities closed the Jewish Museum and the photo collection was scattered over various museums, archives and private *assemblages* in Russia. After World War II some parts of the An-sky's photo-archive appeared in depositories of America and Israel.

In 2001, the largest known part of the expedition photo-archive (about 350 photographs) was rediscovered in the former studio of renowned Russian-Jewish artist Nathan Altman (1889–1970). Sometime after 1929 Ludovin had given to Altman these photographs that could help him in work over illustrations for *Sholem Aleichem* short stories. It is these photographs were acquired by the Center "Petersburg Judaica" for its archives.

During the next three years the photo-archive of An-sky's expeditions, which became one of the highlights of the Center, was processed



Shoemaker, Polonnnoe, Volhynia Province  
© Center "Petersburg Judaica"

and in 2005–2008 displayed in series of thematic exhibitions at the "Petersburg Judaica" demonstration hall located in the building of the European University at St. Petersburg. Later, Ludovin's expedition photos were shown at several exhibitions in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Paris. A flash-movie based on the An-sky's photo-archive was included in the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Jewish Art and History in Paris. The latest large exhibition named "The Way We Looked. Photographs of Shtetl Life from the 'Petersburg Judaica' Archives" was successfully held at the Roe Green Gallery of the Jewish Association of Cleveland, Ohio in November 2014 – March 2015.

Aleksandr Ivanov  
Curator of exhibitions  
[judaica.spb.ru](http://judaica.spb.ru)

NB: the photo on the cover of this AEJM Newsletter (left) shows an exhibition of An-sky expedition materials in Saint Petersburg, 14 (27) May 1914. From left to right: Abram Rechtman, Solomon Ludovin, Semen An-sky, Sholem Aleichem, Olga Rabinovich, (Loeva, Aleichem's wife), Mosei Ginsburg.