

THE FIFTH ALFRED LEHMANN
MEMORIAL LECTURE
Trinity Term, Week 1

Professor Yaacob Dweck
Princeton University

Wealth and Learning in the Early
Modern Sephardic Diaspora

Yaacob Dweck is an historian of early modern Judaism. He has written two books, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* and *Dissident Rabbi: The Life of Jacob Sasportas*. He is currently preparing a new Hebrew edition and an English translation of Leon Modena's *Ari Nohem*. Since 2008 he has taught modern Jewish history at Princeton University where he is currently the Philip and Beulah Rollins Professor of History.

Abstract: 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'who is to be master – that's all.'

Thus Lewis Carroll. Money is power, but not all power takes the form of money. Who was to be master in the urban centers – London, Livorno, Hamburg, Amsterdam – of the early modern Sephardic Diaspora in Western Europe? What did it mean to be a rabbi in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Who decided and why? In this lecture we will look at these contentious and vexed questions in the lives of Hezekiah da Silva, Jacob Sasportas, and Hayim Joseph David Azulai.

Week 1, Tuesday, 29 April 2025
5 pm (UK time)

This lecture will be a hybrid session which will be accessible both online
(see below) and in person in the Catherine Lewis Lecture Room

No need to register if attending in person.

In order to participate in this lecture online, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/EgB1K1bLQ96SykP9dq6nDA>

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Refreshments to follow