



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH GENEALOGY  
AND PAUL JACOBI CENTER**

AT THE JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, JERUSALEM

**The Montefiore Data and Research Center**

*Research Proposal*

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Students and the wider audience devoted to the history of Eretz Yisrael applaud the Montefiore Endowment and the Israel Genealogical Society (IGS) for their project of transliterating and data-basing the Montefiore Censuses of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael during the 19th century (1839, 1849, 1855, 1866 and 1875, plus Jews of Alexandria, Egypt, 1840). This is a scientific and public-interest project of the first order. When completed, the most important and comprehensive documentation on this population group will be available in a deciphered and searchable format. To date, the work on the first three Eretz Yisrael Censuses (1839, 1849 and 1855), as well as the 1840 Alexandria Census, has been completed and posted, on-line in both Hebrew and English versions, on the Endowment's and IGS's websites. A similar treatment is now underway for the last two Censuses from 1866 and 1875/6 (scheduled to be posted in October 2011 and 2012 respectively).

This research proposal seeks to make use of the valuable project and to take it a major step forward, by converting the transliterated Montefiore's Censuses into an empirical database. This advanced format will enable the analytical utilization of the material and result in an aggregate quantitative profile of the Jewish population of Eretz Yisrael during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, together with the contextualization thereof in the form of a scientific monograph on the demographic, genealogical and cultural characteristics of the that population.

This project will be co-sponsored by the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy (IJG) and the A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The data-files and data-bases produced will be made freely available on websites belonging to the Montefiore Endowment, IJG and the Harman Institute for social scientists worldwide to utilize within their particular areas of academic specialization, as well as for the use of wider audiences, such as genealogists and family historians with an interest in 19<sup>th</sup> century Eretz Yisrael. This will give further exposure to the Montefiore's Censuses and enrich the corpus of knowledge on the modern history of Eretz Yisrael.

It should be emphasised that the Montefiore Censuses are a significant and unique resource for studying the demographic, genealogical, socio-economic and cultural patterns of the Jewish population in Eretz Yisrael in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although few in number, those Jews ensured the continuity of the Jewish presence in the Holy Land at the time. We are extraordinarily fortunate in having comprehensive information on all the Jewish inhabitants of the country, with updates for approximately every decade between 1839 and 1875, based on similar sets of questions used in each of the five censuses.

This information has the potential to shed unique light on the Jewish community and its dynamics during this period. Among other things, the Censuses allow analysis of the backgrounds of the Jews (i.e., Sephardim and Ashkenazim), their names, areas of origin, dates of immigration, geographic distribution, affiliation with religious communities (*Kollelim* and the like), family characteristics and economic activities. In brief, it is possible to analyze the data from different, complementary perspectives, demographic, genealogical and societal. Within those frameworks, the important possibility also exists of tracing changes over time in the socio-economic status of individual people, as well as that of the entire Jewish group.

To accommodate the research data and results, it is proposed to set up a "Montefiore Data and Research Center" (MDRC), in the first instance centered around the textual information of the transliterated censuses prepared by the IGS. In order for the census material to be made available for further scientific research, it needs to be converted into numerical format, as common in quantitative social sciences and social history. Earlier scholars have used this approach, but only for specific sub-groups and narrow segments within the Montefiore Censuses. In the broader context of MDRC, all the information in the Censuses will be converted from contextual format to numerical format with the aid of a special code book that will be elaborated specifically for this project. In parallel, the data extracted from the various censuses will be merged into one master file in both Hebrew and English (while maintaining the possibility to distinguish between the Censuses). This master file will, in turn, be linked to an appropriate statistical program, thus maximalising the utilization of the data and facilitating in-depth analyses of the characteristics of the Jewish population.

Another aspect of MDRC is that it will provide new platforms for teaching at the university level. Indeed, the author of this concept paper proposes to incorporate the research results of this project into a new course to be offered at the Department of the History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewry at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This project will be carried out at the Division of Jewish Demography & Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This Division, established fifty years ago, has wide experience in conducting socio-demographic studies and in analyzing quantitative materials. Many of the projects conducted in the Division, or that the Division was involved in, have been published in the series "Jewish Population Studies" which today comprises more than 30 volumes.

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### **Timetable - 3 years**

The first two years of the project will be devoted for encoding the data and the preparation of the database of all the Montefiore Censuses. In the third year of the project, once the database is ready, we shall utilize the data and write the monograph, with a view to completing by the end of the year. The monograph can be written either in English or Hebrew.

In parallel, the author of this concept paper plans to offer a course in the framework of the teaching program of the Department of the History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University.

**Requested Budget - £18,895**

<b>Item of expenditure</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Student assistants	£6,000	£6,000	£2,400	£14,400
Scientific consultation	£750	£750	-	£1,500
Computer costs	£1,100	-	-	£1,100
Office supplies	£150	£150	£75	£375
Production of monograph	-	-	£1,500	£1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,000</b>	<b>£7,000</b>	<b>£3,975</b>	<b>£18,875</b>