



In this issue we are starting an occasional series of personal reflections about the Institute, its mission and what it means to different people. Between now and our 25th anniversary next year we will include the voices of many current and past members of the Institute. This week, Robert Tombs, member of the Woolf Research Committee talks about his early experience of being a Catholic in a predominantly protestant England, and reflects on how the

Dear Woolf Friends,

I was born and brought up a Roman Catholic in England. We then felt ourselves to be an embattled minority. We were not allowed to attend Protestant churches – which had of course been ‘stolen’ from us. We learned the harrowing stories of our martyrs, tortured and killed by Protestant rulers. We sang stirring hymns at school about keeping the faith ‘in spite of dungeon, fire and sword’. We prayed for the Conversion of England. If we wanted to marry a Protestant we had to get permission, and our future spouse had to promise in writing to bring up children as Catholics. We were, in short, a sect, living in what we saw as a sectarian community.

Today we live in another world, not merely a world of tolerance, but of mutual respect and a feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood within the community of faith. Within living memory, a world has changed. Leaders – Popes and Archbishops – wanted this change. People wanted it too. Ignorance and suspicion were replaced by understanding and sympathy.

I am proud to be part of the Woolf community today, because the Woolf is helping to bring about precisely this growth in understanding between religious communities parts of which are still enemies. But

enmity is not eternal. At the Woolf Institute we can enjoy Iftars together, and Passover Seders, and Christmas dinners, because we feel part of one community which not divided but enriched by its diversity.

Best wishes,

Robert Tombs

Member of the Woolf Institute Research Committee

Upcoming Events

9 May @17:00

The Five Pillars of
Islam – A Jewish
Perspective



10 May @18:00

Reading Group:
Qur'an and Bible
(By invitation only)



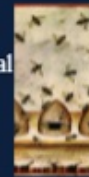
12 May

London Research
Day
(By invitation only)



17 May @17:00

Bees in the Medieval
Mediterranean



23 May @17:00

Book Launch:
Dr Nadya Pohran,
Visiting Fellow



1 – 5 June

Patrons' Tour -
Istanbul
(By invitation only)



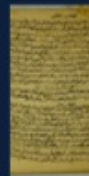
7 June @14:00

Jubilee Garden
Party
(By invitation only)



7 June @17:00

Archives and
record-keeping in
medieval Eastern
Mediterranean



12 June @14:00

The Written Word:
Timeless Arabic &
Hebrew Calligraphy



**THE WOOLF INSTITUTE
WELCOMES**

ASHLEY DAVIS
INTERN



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WEBINAR 9 MAY @17:00

**THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM
A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE**

RICK SOPHER



THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM - A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE
MONDAY 9 MAY @17:00

We are delighted to share an event presented by one of our affiliates and long-standing friend of the Woolf Institute, Rick Sopher

The ASF Institute of Jewish Experience presents:

Rick Sopher will explain the so-called “Five Pillars of Islam” (declaration of faith, prayer, giving, fasting and pilgrimage) and look at connections, similarities and differences with Jewish Practice. He will explore the basis of these practices and how one might have influenced the other.

Bonus: Rick will also look at the basis of the very close practices of Jewish and Muslim dietary laws and explain the history of this connection, which was first stated explicitly in the Qur’an.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

WEBINAR 17 MAY @17:00

Woolf Institute and the Society for the Medieval
Mediterranean present:

Bees in the Medieval Mediterranean



BEES IN THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN: ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

TUESDAY 17 MAY @17:00

Bees and bee products were of tremendous cultural significance in the later Middle Ages. Wax was necessary for many aspects of Christian religious devotion, while honey held a particular importance in medieval Islam. In this session we will examine how these cultural preferences drove a lucrative and far-reaching trade in beeswax, combining the products of domestic apiculture and large-scale imports to support increasingly costly and spectacular forms of Christian devotion, demonstrating interconnections of economy, environment and culture in the pre-modern world.

The speakers are: Dr Alexandra Sapoznik (King's College London) and Lluís Sales Fava (Bee Project) (IEM-Universidade Nova de Lisboa).

The session will be chaired by Dr Roser Salicrú.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

SUMMER SCHOOL 2022

**TWO SPACES
STILL AVAILABLE!**



WOOLF INSTITUTE SUMMER SCHOOL 18 - 29 JULY 2022

The world is changing and there are growing opportunities to make a difference. We hope that our Summer School 2022 will motivate and inspire you!

The Summer School aims to increase tolerance and interdependence through the design of a curriculum and a learning environment conducive to academic study and fostering understanding of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and

perspectives.

The Woolf Institute Summer School offers a programme of study for students that will draw on the research and teaching expertise of academics and doctoral scholars at the Woolf Institute, as well as academics within Cambridge. Given the remit of our work at the Woolf Institute, the curriculum will include an interdisciplinary approach to the study of interreligious and interfaith relations.

"Only through the study of the past, of cause and of circumstance, we can thoroughly understand present issues, attitudes and actions. "

Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner (Executive Director)

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THE GREAT AWAKE-NING

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

FOR AN ADJECTIVE WHICH IS DEFINED
SIMPLY AS "ALERT TO RACIAL PREJUDICE",
WOKE SEEMS TO ATTRACT A LOT OF
CONTROVERSY...



PODCAST: THE GREAT AWAKE-NING

For an adjective which is defined simply as “alert to racial prejudice”, WOKE seems to attract a lot of controversy...

The phrase “stay woke” first emerged in America in the 1930s. Black singer-songwriter Huddie Ledbetter used the phrase in the song "Scottsboro Boys", about a miscarriage of justice in the Deep South. For him, “stay woke” meant “keep your eyes open”. The term has since been appropriated to connote wider forms of perceived injustice beyond the racial – sometimes it feels as if it applies to everything from LGBT rights to soft drinks and razors. Robert Tombs, Tobias Müller and Aliya Ali join the fray...

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

COMING SOON

Naked Reflections Podcast x The Woolf Institute

THE F WORD: FORGIVENESS

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