

New faculty!

Olga Lavinda has joined the Chemistry Department. She earned her Ph.D. at NYU and has since taught there and at CUNY, while also working on drug design projects. Her research focuses on small molecules and enzymatic mechanisms, particularly protein-ligand interactions and molecular design. She has published several recent studies on pigments, including *Tyrosinase*, an enzyme influencing skin, hair, and eye color, as well as on *Tyrian purple* and *tekhelet*, the ancient blue dye of historical and biochemical significance. Her approach, blending computational and experimental chemistry, complements the department's existing strengths. This semester, she is teaching General Chemistry at YC. Welcome, Olga!



Images from Olga's research on dyes and Tyrian purple

USDA Grant

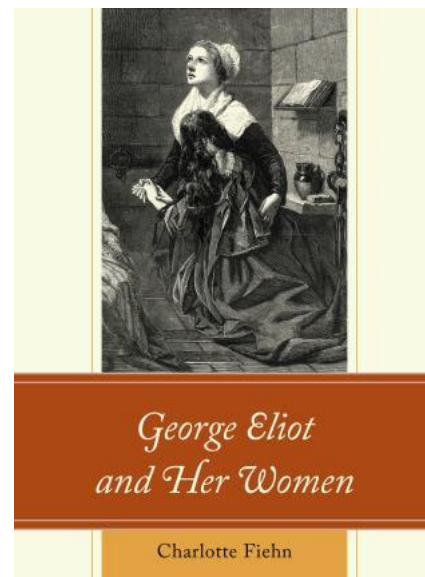
Also in the Chemistry Department, **Ran Drori** and colleagues from the University of Tennessee have been awarded a 3-year, \$595,000 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, part of the US Department of Agriculture. The major goal of this proposal is to understand and improve the freezing process (ice nucleation, ice growth) and storage (ice recrystallization) of frozen beef products. More details of the project [here](#). Many congratulations, Ran!

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Publications

Charlotte Fiehn (English) published her first book in December, *George Eliot and her Women* (Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington Books), in which she shows that although readers have overlooked the complexity of her female characters, Eliot was very much engaged with women's rights, especially access to education.

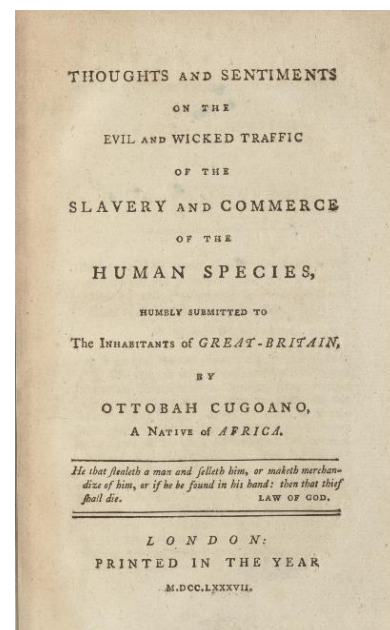
Rebecca Cypess served as guest co-editor for two peer-reviewed journal issues that appeared in December/January: A special issue of *Aphra Behn Online: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830* titled "The Salon and the Senses in Eighteenth-Century France," which includes Rebecca's article, "Playing Proverbs with Madame de Genlis"; and a special issue of *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology* titled "New Directions in the Study of Music and European Jewish Culture, ca. 1600-1800," with Rebecca's article, "The Wandering Jew in the Drawing Room: Harriett Abrams's Gothic Songbook of 1803."



Parmigianino's Self-Portrait (c. 1524), now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Jacob Wisse (Art History) wrote an appreciation of the Italian Renaissance painter Parmigianino's small "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" for the *Wall Street Journal's* Masterpiece Column (Jan 24, [here](#)).

Carrie Shanafelt (English) published "Ottobah Cugoano on British Slavery, National Debt, and Speculative Finance" [was published](#) in the *Journal of Modern Philosophy*. In her connection with her research on slavery and economics in the eighteenth century, in December Carrie invited her colleague Matthew David Mitchell (University of the South) to give a fascinating talk to students and faculty on the slave trader, Bank of England governor, and fraudster, Humphry Morice.





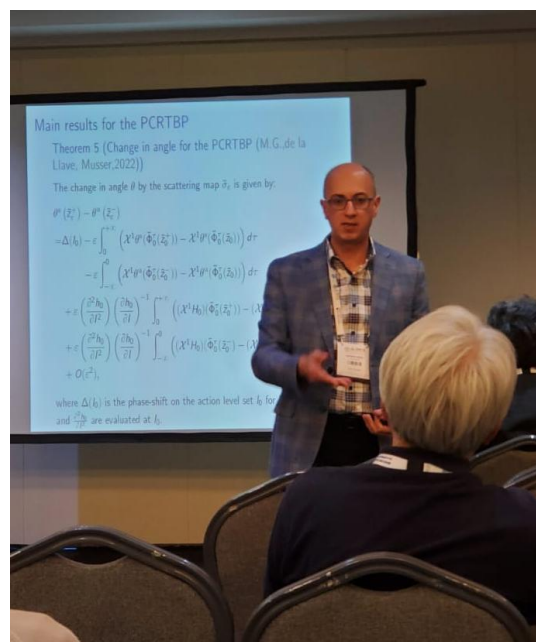
While working in the Cambridge University Library on sabbatical two years ago, **Aaron Koller** (Bible and Near Eastern Studies) came across an entry in a catalogue that caught his eye: one page of a Mishnah manuscript extracted from a fourteenth-century book binding. When he looked at the manuscript itself, he found that parts of the writing had faded beyond legibility. With a small grant from Yeshiva College, the Library was able to take multispectral photographs that revealed the ink still in the parchment! It became clear that the new fragment was actually a Talmud manuscript, the first page of Bavli Avodah Zarah. Careful study of the text showed that it contributed to our understanding of the textual transmission of the Mishnah and its language. Koller's results were published early in 2025 in [Oqimta](#).

A multi-spectral image of Cambridge University Libraries MS Add.1207.2 (m. Avodah Zarah 1:1-8)

Lectures, Talks, and Performances

Marian Gidea (Math, right) co-organized a special session on Hamiltonian Dynamics and Celestial Mechanics at the 14th AIMS Conference on Differential Equations, Dynamical Systems and Applications, Abu Dhabi (UAE), in December. He also gave two talks: “Geometric properties of normally hyperbolic invariant manifolds for conformally symplectic systems” and “Melnikov Method for Non-Conservative Perturbations of the Restricted Three-Body Problem”.

Carrie Shanafelt was invited to talk about her work on Cugoano at the Eastern American Philosophical Association conference in New York (“Ottobah Cugoano on National Debt and Disaster Capitalism,”) and spoke on a panel hosted by the Centre Bentham at Sciences Po Law School in Paris on editing her special issue of *Revue d'études benthamiennes* last year.



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In September, **Daniel Beliaevsky** (Music) accompanied the New York International Vocal Ensemble on piano for a two-week tour of Canada's Northwest Territories, including a [concert](#) at Inuvik, north of the Arctic Circle. More recently, he has performed solo in Milwaukee and San Diego in January (the latter reviewed in the San Diego reader [here!](#)).

Ronnie Perelis (History, right) gave a talk on "The World That Was: The Jews of Arab Lands" at an event organized by the Israeli Consulate and Beth Rambam in Houston to commemorate the day of the expulsion of Jews from Arab countries and Iran (November 30).



And more!

Paul Glassman (Art History, formerly Director of Scholarly and Cultural Resources and Librarian) has been chosen as a research proposal evaluator for the Partnership on University Plagiarism Prevention (PUPP), who organized the conference on Ethics and Integrity in Academia that he and **Lauren Fitzgerald** spoke at in October. PUPP team members have conducted focus groups with YU undergraduates as part of an international undertaking to gather data on information-seeking behavior among students.

Seamus O'Malley (English) was asked to peer review for *PMLA* (*Publications of the Modern Language Association*), *MLQ* (*Modern Language Quarterly*), and *ELH* (*English Literary History*). He has also been invited to Stockholm University to oversee a dissertation defense later in the spring.



Israel Benporat (History) took his YC students on a tour of the Met Cloisters museum and his Beren students to the NYPL Map Division (left) as part of his Emergence of Europe class. The course was featured in a post on *YUNews* [here](#). Israel was also [interviewed](#) by the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America's Founding Principles and History to discuss his research on Puritan New England and his current book project. He has published short pieces in [RealClear History](#) and [The Lehrhaus](#).