

# Microscopy AND Microanalysis

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<http://journals.cambridge.org/MAM>

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## Dear Abbe

Humor

### Dear Abbe,

*There has been a lot of discussion on the microscopy listserver about the proper care and cleaning of lenses. Some people suggest using 100% Egyptian cotton, 400-thread weave cloths. Others insist one must use a special lens paper from Peruvian shamans made from partially chewed cocoa leaves. Can you tell us what you recommend?*  
**Filthy in Phoenix**

### Dear Filthy,

Gott in Himmel! Forgive me if I tire of these weak-kneed pansies always worrying about the “delicate nature” of their optics. In my day we made our own lenses by stripping to the waist, beating ourselves with birch branches and wading into the Baltic in mid-February to select sand grains of a specific clarity. Then we would polish them against our burly arms until all imperfections were removed and we had perfect achromatic and aspheric lenses. If they ever got dirty a healthy gob of spit and quick rub against the front of one’s shirt was all that was needed to set things right. Ask yourself this question. Would you rather have lens cleaning material made in Peru or from Deutschland? I thought so.

### Dear Abbe,

*We are moving our multi-photon system into temporary quarters and need a temporary light barrier for our space. Everyone in the lab wants to put up black, fireproof fabric, but I want to brighten up the room. I am a big fan of Dominique Daguerre and would like this opportunity to try out some of the ideas from his London work. I found lots of fancy curtains and room dividers and such on the web, but my lab mates don’t like the bright, color-coordinated fabric I keep choosing.*  
**M. Stuart in Soho**

### Dear Martha,

I’m afraid the days of culture and refinement are long gone for laboratories today. And don’t get me started on the trend of “temporary” quarters! Today, there is only utilitarianism and austere budgetary concerns. I miss the days of actually hiring a fine Parisian weichling to spruce up the labs. Dominique frequently dropped in on my grandfather Delmer’s lab in Essen, who then would promptly toss him out with a stream of epithets. I would suggest to your co-workers that if they don’t acquiesce to your demands to decorate, you’ll do a “Jackson Pollock” on the walls.

*Herr Abbe is always interested in affairs of state and the state of affairs. If you have some conundrum causing you sleepless nights, please forward them to his able assistant at [jpsields@cb.uga.edu](mailto:jpsields@cb.uga.edu).*