



CEU Jewish Studies Program Annual Newsletter 2025/26

In 5786 (תשפ"ו), we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the CEU Jewish Studies Program with a three-day conference in Vienna, bringing together friends, colleagues and stakeholders from across Europe, Israel and the United States and showcasing thirteen alumni who have made academic careers in Belgrade, Berlin, Bucharest, Budapest, Munich, Olomouc, Prague, Sheffield, Urbana-Champaign, and even in the Arctic Circle.

The anniversary conference was not only a testament to CEU's pivotal role in rejuvenating Jewish Studies in Central Europe but also a celebration of the remarkable community of scholars in the region. In Vienna, we regularly organize public lectures with the Jewish Museum, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute, the University of Vienna, the Center for Israel Studies, Yung YiDiSh Wien and others; and each year, we take our students on walking tours, excursions and field trips to sites of Jewish heritage and Jewish life in the region, in partnership with colleagues in Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. As I like to say, "Vienna is our classroom, Central Europe is our campus."

I would like to thank the generous funders who make these activities possible, especially the Salo W. and Jeanette M. Baron Foundation, the Knapp Family Foundation, and the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe. For years, they have also supported our remarkable students, whose amazing achievements you can read about in the following pages. Additional thanks to the European Association for Jewish Studies and the City of Vienna (cultural department) for supporting this past year's conferences.

This year, we celebrate another milestone: the CEU administration has just approved our transformation into the CEU Center for Jewish Studies, an advanced hub for teaching, research and public outreach. I will keep you posted regarding this exciting development.

In the meantime, a hearty welcome to our 26th cohort of MA students and wishes to all for a year of discovery, understanding and enlightenment.

Michael L. Miller
Academic Director
CEU Center for Jewish Studies
וינה ובודפשט
ד' תשרי תשפ"ז

CEU Jewish Studies Courses in 2025/26

Schisms and Divisions in Jewish History | Carsten Wilke and Michael L. Miller

This class approached Jewish history from the point of view of its fragmentation into conflicting groups (parties, sects, movements, denominations, or sub-ethnicities), and it examined the dynamics of opposition and coexistence in different historical periods. Observers of the contemporary Jewish world, and of Israel in particular, often describe the political and cultural situation as a deep schism, with divisions between left and right, secular and religious, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi. Scholars often compare the contemporary situation with past moments of ideological and social division, and this course showed the ways in which the latter have served as models to interpret the present. By focusing on the central schism in each period of Jewish history, the class presented a narrative that is both pluralistic and coherent. Students learned to problematize generalizations about Jewish identity but also to understand that the different “Judaisms” (a plural introduced by Jacob Neusner) hardly ever produced unbridgeable rifts: while strongly rejecting each other's convictions, the parties ultimately recognized each other as necessary partners in a common collective destiny that would be incomplete without these internal oppositions.

The Holocaust and Its Aftermath | Ines Koeltzsch

For a long time, the historiography of the Holocaust focused on the perpetrators and the Nazi state. The analytical perspectives have fundamentally changed in recent decades and transnational, regional and local approaches with a focus on Jewish and other victim groups and thus on other source genres have brought new knowledge in terms of time and space of the Holocaust. With this shift, early Holocaust scholarship carried out by survivors themselves also came to the fore as well as the question of why it was neglected for so long. In the seminar, dealt with these newer approaches and topics (e.g. geographies of the Holocaust, Jewish responses, the Holocaust of Sinti and Roma, gender and queer history of the Holocaust, Holocaust literature and testimonies) and methods (e.g. digital humanities, oral history). Students went on several excursions to visit places, institutions, researchers and curators in Vienna dealing with the history and memory of the Holocaust.

Jews of the Habsburg Lands | Michael L. Miller and Susanne Korbel

This course explored the history of Europe's second largest Jewish community in the modern era, with a focus on the major political, social and cultural trends that shaped Habsburg Jewry from the Josephinian reforms of the late eighteenth century until the dissolution of Austria-Hungary after World War I. The Habsburg Empire encompassed highly diverse lands and populations, and the common political framework allows for an in-depth comparison of Jewish communities in Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, Galicia, Lower Austria and the other territories ruled by the House of Habsburg. The course addressed the enlightened absolutism of Joseph II; the emerging national movements and their impact on Jewish identity; the major religious conflicts and schisms; Jewish cultural creativity in Vienna, Budapest and Prague; and the impact of antisemitism on Jewish political and cultural choices.

Jews and Roma in Comparative Perspective | Michael L. Miller and Angela Kóczé

The course is a cooperation between Jewish Studies and the CEU Romani Studies Program. It compared Jews and Roma in Europe from a variety of perspectives and experiences, focusing on identity and boundary formation, mobilization patterns, as well as larger discourses about authority and authenticity. It examined forms of exclusion and hatred directed at Jews and Roma, focusing on antisemitism and antigypsyism prior to World War II, during the Holocaust and Samudaripen, and in the post-war period. Special attention was paid to the ways in which Jews and Roma have been categorized as European “others,” especially in the populist politics of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and also the ways in which these groups interface with one another, especially with regard to the memory and memorialization of genocide and questions of broader social and political mobilization.

CEU Jewish Studies Courses in 2025/26

Antisemitism: Theories, Debates, and Definitions | Jan Rybak

“It is impossible to establish with [...] certainty, whether an incident, commonly regarded as antisemitic, really deserves that designation or not.” Dutch Jewish journalist Fritz Bernstein wrote in 1926. He continued, stating that “whenever an occurrence is characterized as antisemitic, someone can be found to deny it that character.” What puzzled Bernstein in the 1920s continues to be hotly debated. Sociologists, historians, theologians, political scientists, psychologists, activists, and many more have long tried to understand the origins and nature of antisemitism, and thought about how it could be defined and combatted. This course explored the different theories, approaches, and explanations for antisemitism from the late 19th century to the present. Students studied different perspectives, engaged closely with sources and case studies, and familiarized themselves with the main theories, the debates over definitions, and how people have proposed to combat antisemitism.

Hasidism: Key Questions | Marcin Wodziński

The course brought Prof. Marcin Wodziński (University of Wrocław) to CEU, so that students could learn from one of the leading experts in the field. The seminar offered an overview of central research questions in the study of Hasidism: from definition and gender, through spacial and economic characteristics, to ideology and cultural creativity. It investigated how the changing types of sources used in the study of Hasidism alter the very perception of Hasidism and the methodologies applied. By the critical analysis of several cases and application of new research methods, including the spatial turn and social network analysis, it demonstrated possible ways out of cognitive stereotypes, and, more generally, towards research creativity in the study of Hasidism and beyond. The course also included a walking tour of Hasidic Vienna.



Course Highlight

Course in Jewish Heritage | Carsten Wilke

During the Winter Term 2026, the Jewish Studies Program offered a Course in Jewish Heritage, in which Professor Carsten Wilke and guest lecturers gave a comprehensive introduction to Jewish sites and objects in Europe, discussing current methods of rehabilitation, documentation, and display. Held for the second time in a hybrid format, the course addressed CEU students on the MA level as well as professionals working in the field of Jewish heritage and visiting students contemplating a career in this sector.

We explored a broad choice of concrete examples and best practices of heritage preservation, partly through research literature, online sources, and student presentations, partly through direct observation in Vienna and its surroundings. The seminar started on 11–13 January 2026 with an excursion to Austrian Jewish heritage institutions and sites, guided by local experts. The classroom seminar included sessions on the history of Jewish heritage concerns, on institutional frameworks such as archives, libraries, museums, and memorial sites, on Jewish cityscapes and rural routes, on written, oral, intangible, and digital heritage, with a final discussion on the place of Jewish heritage in European politics and culture. The international visiting students benefitted from externally funded stipends and concluded the course with a certificate issued by the CEU Jewish Studies Program.

Field Trips and Walking Tours



Walking Tour: Jewish History along the *Ring* | September 15, 2025

In the first week of the new Academic Year, we invited students from all departments and programs to join the Jewish Studies Walking Tour highlighting Jewish life and culture along Vienna's most prominent street – the *Ring*. Among other places, we stopped at the State Opera to learn about cultural greats like Gustav Mahler but also the persecution of Jewish artists under the Nazis; the great palace of the Epstein banking family; and the University of Vienna, where we talked about historic Jewish university life and student antisemitism there.



Walking Tour: Jewish Vienna – Leopoldstadt | November 3, 2025

Our walking tour led through the historic and current heart of the Jewish community in Vienna, the Second District, Leopoldstadt. We visited former major religious sites, places of social life, spaces of persecution, and sites of social and political activism.



Excursion: Jewish Heritage in Austria | January 11–13, 2026

Professor Carsten Wilke taught an MA course on “Jewish heritage” in the Winter term, which brought together students and professionals working in the field of Jewish heritage. The course included a three-day excursion in Vienna. Students visited the Jewish Museum, the Währing Jewish Cemetery, the Wien Museum, and the Sigmund Freud Museum; they walked along Vienna's Ringstraße, explored Alsergrund, and visited the memorial sites at Vienna University and in its vicinity. Guided tours and meetings with professionals helped students to engage with the sites. On the last day of the course, students took an excursion to Eisenstadt, where they visited the Austrian Jewish Museum, the Jewish quarter, and the two Jewish cemeteries.



One-Day Excursion: Bratislava | January 25, 2026

We weathered the cold and rainy weather to visit Jewish sites, many of which have left only a trace: the medieval Jewish synagogue, the Jewish Museum on Jewish street (Židovská ulica), the Neolog synagogue on Rybné námestie, and the tiny sliver of the old Orthodox cemetery with the Chatam Sofer Memorial.



Jewish Studies Excursion: Prague | April 13–16, 2026

This year's “big” Jewish Studies field trip led us to Prague. Students and faculty traveled to the city of Kafka and the Maharal to learn about its rich Jewish history. On the first evening, Yom Ha-Shoah, we attended a moving memorial concert at Maisel Synagogue. The following day included an extensive tour of the many historical sites of Prague's Jewish museum, lunch with Rabbi Rosenberg at the Jewish Town Hall, and visits to Jewish cemeteries. Throughout the excursion, students met with their peers and faculty from Charles University's Jewish Studies Program, visited synagogues and museums, met with the curator of the forthcoming Holocaust memorial, and learned about the history and present life of the Jewish community in Prague.



Walking Tour: Hasidic Vienna | May 29, 2026

As part of the “Hasidism: Key Questions” course, taught by Prof. Marcin Wodziński (University of Wrocław), Eidel Malowicki, a researcher at the University of Vienna, gave us a fascinating tour about the rich and largely unknown history and presence of the Hasidic community in Vienna's Second District (Leopoldstadt).

Meet our Newest Graduates



Dania Lemmer

Two-Year MA Nationalism Studies

Looking back on the last two years, I think about the familiarity and openness within our Jewish Studies cohort. Seminars and lecturers that made it easy to ask questions, think out loud, and learn from people with different research focuses and perspectives. From debates over definitions of antisemitism, a bit of Hebrew, and schisms in Jewish history to Israel and Palestine – the combination of carefully chosen readings and genuinely engaging seminar discussions taught me a great deal, and many of those conversations have stayed with me. The walking tour through Hasidic Vienna and the field trips to Olomouc and Prague were highlights for me. Visiting cemeteries, museums, synagogues, and other Jewish everyday sites gave me a much richer sense of places nearby and further afield.

My MA thesis examined how German-Jewish soldiers narrate their decision to serve in the IDF. Through narrative-biographical interviews, I explored questions of belonging, memory, and responsibility, including how the attacks of October 7, 2023, and experiences of antisemitism shaped the participants' narratives. I enjoyed bringing together my interests in sociology, nationalism studies, and Jewish studies. I am now developing a PhD project comparing transnational military volunteers across different historical and contemporary cases. I'm excited for what comes next and feel well prepared by my time at CEU. I'm also very happy to stay connected to the Jewish Studies community through my current work as a research assistant.

Niki Kende

Two-Year MA Historical Studies

What was your experience in Jewish Studies?

At the CEU's Jewish Studies Program, theory was always accompanied by practice. During a field trip to Brno, in the "*Jews and Roma in Comparative Perspective*" course taught by professors Michael L. Miller and Angéla Kóczé, I was fortunate to gain critical insights on the depiction and comparison of intersecting ethnic/social groups through museum visits and with the help of local experts. Professors and guests also broadened my knowledge on Jewish communities, specifically, the course by Professor Ines Koeltzsch titled "*The Holocaust and Its Aftermath*". This added analytical lenses, such as geography and gender, to my understanding of the Holocaust's diversity, enriching my thesis.

My MA thesis examined the participation of the Jewish Holocaust survivors as victims and witnesses in the Hungarian People's Court trials (1945–46). Comparing the courts of Székesfehérvár and Miskolc, the thesis mapped out geographical attributes that influenced the courts and their agents' positions. Applying qualitative analysis mainly on trial testimonies, I emphasized the similar ways of the Jewish attempts to introduce the injustice that happened beyond the implemented anti-Jewish measures. With this, I further elaborated on the tension between legal and personal remembrance.

What are your future plans?

I look forward to following the future of the program through the book presentations, news, and conferences. I plan to continue my work in Jewish and Holocaust studies, and I hope that, whether as a PhD student, an archivist, or in another position, I can contribute to the field and provide opportunities to the public to get to know the past and to remember it.





Hannah Szabó | One-Year MA Historical Studies

CEU's Jewish Studies Program introduced me to Jewish history as an ongoing conversation structured by schisms and reinterpretations. In it, I came to see some of the most interesting moments in Jewish history as those in which competing visions of collectivity emerge and contend in ways that themselves structurally resemble older divisions. CEU was also the ideal place to gain a better understanding of the ways Jews played a central part in both constructing and critiquing European modernity.

My MA thesis grew out of this approach. I examined the constructed language Esperanto, invented in the 1880s by the polyglot Jewish ophthalmologist L. L. Zamenhof, as an intellectual project embedded in post-Haskalah discourses on language and collective identity. Challenging the prevailing reading of Esperanto as a utopian project disengaged from politics, I framed it as a direct response to Zamenhof's engagement with Jewish cultural projects like Yiddish reform, Hebrew revitalization, and cultural assimilation. Making extensive use of archives in Hungary, Austria, and the Czech Republic, I examined the ways Esperanto was later mobilized for various competing goals in the Czech- and Hungarian-speaking lands of the late Habsburg empire and its successor states. After spending the forthcoming year as an editor for a magazine in Berlin, I hope to pursue a PhD to continue studying modern European-Jewish intellectual and literary history.

Meet our PhD Candidates



Olga Petrova | PhD Candidate in Comparative History

This year Olga has been focusing on finalizing her dissertation titled *Crossing the Great Chasm: Ukrainian and Jewish National Ideas in the Ukrainian Revolution*, which she will be submitting in the fall 2026. In the academic year 2025/26, Olga was a fellow in the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture's Doctoral Seminar and presented her research at the Dmytro Shtohryn International Ukrainian Studies Conference at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the AJS 57th Annual Convention 2025 in Washington D.C., and the First Annual Yiddish Studies Forum at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. This summer she also participated in the Twelfth Session of the International Forum of Young Scholars on East European Jewry in Warsaw, Poland, between June 22 and 25. Her article on [Joseph Schechtman \(1891–1970\) and Ukrainian Zionists](#) was published in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*.



Péter Buchmüller | PhD Candidate in Comparative History

Péter Buchmüller's research focuses on antisemitism among lawyers in interwar Budapest. He examines the process of radicalization and the role of the far-right lawyers' association in the persecution of their Jewish colleagues. Between 2024 and 2026, he was awarded the Claims Conference Saul Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Studies. Péter co-edited a volume on the Holocaust in Hungary, published by De Gruyter in July 2026 ([Hungarian Holocaust Revisited: New Discoveries and Insights](#)). Péter will defend his dissertation in the Fall term. He is currently a project researcher at the ELTE Center for Social Sciences, where he analyzes interviews conducted with the second generation of Holocaust survivors.

Meet some of Our Alumni



Anastasiia Strakhova | MA in History, 2013

Anastasiia Strakhova is Associate Director of the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She specializes in modern Jewish history with a concentration on Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, and migration. Before joining the University of Illinois, Anastasiia received her PhD in history and Jewish studies from Emory University in 2022 and held postdocs at Duke and Harvard. She is currently working on a book, *Agents of Mobility: Jews, Border Control, and Unauthorized Border Crossing in the Russian Empire, 1880s–1917*, that challenges the narrative of state power in regulating the mobility of its subjects in the era of the Great Migration and explains the ubiquity and utility of clandestine border crossings. While Jewish philanthropic associations assumed formal leadership positions in advocating for Jewish emigrants to the imperial authorities, the latter perceived representatives of the aid organizations more as state proxies than as fellow Jews. Consequently, they found creative and extra-legal pathways to leave the empire on their own terms, entrusting their fates to clandestine agents despite being maligned by both the imperial authorities and the Jewish press. Therefore, *Agents of Mobility* argues that the striving of ordinary Jews for free movement proved stronger than the imperial Russian government’s restrictions and border control on the one hand, and the paternalistic attitudes of wealthy Jewish philanthropists on the other.

Anastasiia is proud to bring to Central Illinois the expertise she acquired during her two MA years at CEU, drawing on its strength in nationalism studies. In Fall 2026, she teaches an upper-level undergraduate course, “Making of the Jewish Nation,” the development of which was supported by a Faculty Development Grant at the Israel Institute. Building on the theories of nationalism by Miroslav Hroch, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm, this class traces the development of different forms of Jewish nationalism (diaspora nationalism, Zionism, territorialism, etc.) and the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The course also explores what a CEU professor, Jan Rybak, describes as “everyday Zionism”: how Zionist ideas permeated various spheres of Jewish daily life in fin-de-siècle Eastern Europe, including school education and youth organizations. Anastasiia hopes to continue collaboration with the CEU Jewish Studies Program.



Ștefan Ionescu | MA in History, 2005

Ștefan Cristian Ionescu is currently the Director of the [Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education](#), Stern Chair in Holocaust Education, and Associate Professor of History at Chapman University. Ionescu earned his doctoral degree in European history and Holocaust and genocide studies at Clark University. He held teaching and research positions at several academic institutions, including Northwestern University and Uppsala University. He is the author of numerous book chapters and journal articles and of two books: “[Jewish Resistance to ‘Romanianization,’ 1940–44](#)” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and “[Justice and Restitution in Post-Nazi Romania: Rebuilding Jewish Lives and Communities, 1944–1950](#)” (Cambridge University Press, 2024). Ionescu developed his research ideas about Jewish-non-Jewish relations in 20th century Central Eastern Europe during the MA program in history (with a Jewish studies specialization) pursued at Central European University, where he benefited from the seminar-style conversations facilitated by remarkable professors such as Shlomo Avineri, Michael Brenner, Victor Karady, John Klier, András Kovács, and Michael Miller.



Lukáš Příbyl | MA in History, 2007

After a wonderful year at CEU, I followed a winding professional path—difficult to explain at family gatherings (“What will he do when he grows up?”) and, I imagine, later causing headaches to security-clearance officers (“This will take forever; the guy has been all over the place”).

While in Budapest, I was already producing and directing *Forgotten Transports*, a four-part documentary series about little-known destinations to which Czech Jews were deported during the Holocaust. It took ten years, hundreds of interview hours and filming in more than twenty countries across five continents. Commercial lesson: don’t produce your own films. Otherwise, they were a success, travelling worldwide and winning awards, including Czech Film Academy statuettes. I later directed the European Shoah Legacy Institute, curated exhibitions for Prague’s Jewish Museum, travelled a lot and did some scriptwriting.

Eventually I returned to diplomacy: first as Director of the Czech Centre in Tel Aviv, then as Counsellor and Head of Public Diplomacy at the Czech Embassy in Washington. Since September 2023, having arrived days before the Hamas-led attack, I have served in Israel as one of the Czech foreign service’s three diplomats for science, research and innovation. I connect the Israeli innovation ecosystem, universities, hospitals, start-ups and investors with Czech partners. This can involve AI, quantum, cybersecurity, medicine, climate, archaeology or space research. Occasionally all in one day, with air-raid sirens in the background.

During the 2025/26 academic year, much of my work focused on transforming academic and technological contacts into lasting institutional partnerships. War demanded much improvisation, with cancelled visits, closed airspace and evacuating Czech citizens through Egypt and Jordan. Innovation diplomacy during wartime means connecting ecosystems—but sometimes also checking which airlines still fly.

CEU remains central to how I work: crossing disciplinary and national boundaries, questioning familiar narratives, reading context and translating among institutional cultures. Its environment reinforced my belief that differences, approached with curiosity and respect, can become foundations for cooperation. My sources may now be start-up pitches and government strategies rather than archives, but the historian’s habits acquired at CEU—asking many questions and spotting hidden connections—remain unexpectedly useful.



Some CEU Jewish Studies alumni at our 25th anniversary conference, June 2026.

From left to right: Marie Crhová, Ksenia Krimer-Poluektova, Camelia Crăciun, Kata Bohus, István Pál Ádám, Ágnes Kende, Ágnes Kelemen, Željka Oparnica, Ilya Yablokov, Máté Rigó, Péter Buchmüller, Olga Petrova

Conference: 25 Years of Jewish Studies



Jewish Studies at a Crossroads:

Central Europe and Beyond | May 31–June 2, 2026

The May/June 2026 conference marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Jewish Studies Program at Central European University. Created in Budapest, it has now found its home in Vienna as a place of research and teaching about the historic and contemporary Jewish experience. Over the past 25 years, the CEU Jewish Studies Program has offered a Specialization in Jewish Studies for students in different MA programs and today looks at an impressive list of 128 alumni.



Celebrating these achievements, the conference brought together many of the alumni who have made their way in higher education and came to play important roles in the field of Jewish Studies and invited them to share their current research. At the same time, the conference aimed to look forward, to take stock of the challenges Jewish Studies as an academic discipline faces, to learn from colleagues in different areas and institutions, and to discuss steps forward for the wider field.



The conference, which was made possible with the generous support by the European Association for Jewish Studies, as well as Stadt Wien Kultur (the cultural department of the City of Vienna), and the Knapp Family and the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundations, was not only an important milestone for us as we are transitioning to become the Center for Jewish Studies but was also an important moment for the wider field of Jewish Studies. Alumni and friends attended from Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Israel, the United States, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom to discuss current research. Key thematic questions focused on Jews and the legacies of Empire – highlighted by Pieter M. Judson's keynote lecture on the centrality of Jewish history for understanding European history – transnational Jewish connections and activism, communism's "Jewish question", and the politics of memory in Central and Eastern Europe. We further brought together leading representatives from Jewish museums in Vienna, Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest, and representatives of Jewish philanthropies who all shared their experiences and perspectives about the situation, priorities, and futures of their fields.



The conference was a place for vital discussions about the future of Jewish Studies. Marcin Wodziński, in his keynote, provided an overview of the state of the field in the year 2026 – its institutions, research, student numbers, publications, and many of the major questions that are at the heart of our field and profession. Together with heads of Jewish Studies programs in Vienna, Tel Aviv, and London conference participants then discussed the challenges and the future of the field.

The conference, everyone agreed, was an important milestone and a vital step forward for Jewish Studies – at CEU and internationally, preparing us for the sometimes difficult but certainly exciting times ahead.

See the program and photos here: <https://jewishstudies.ceu.edu/article/2026-06-26/25th-anniversary-conference-jewish-studies-crossroads-central-europe-and-beyond>

**The Salo W. and Jeannette
M. Baron Foundation**

**The Knapp
Family
Foundation**



Conference: Parallel Paths, Shared Past

CEU and CEJHG Bring Jewish History and Genealogy Together

In May 2026, the CEU Jewish Studies Program partnered with the newly established Association for Central European Jewish History and Genealogy (CEJHG) to host the association's inaugural international conference, *Parallel Paths, Shared Past: Jewish History and Genealogy in Central Europe*. The three-day event brought together more than 100 historians, genealogists, archivists, museum professionals, and independent researchers from across Europe, Israel, North America, and beyond to the CEU Vienna campus.

The conference addressed a long-standing divide between two fields that often investigate the same people, communities, and sources from different perspectives. While historians traditionally emphasize broader social, political, and cultural developments, genealogists frequently reconstruct individual lives, families, and networks from the bottom up. The conference demonstrated the considerable potential of bringing these approaches together.

Over three days and across 33 presentations, participants explored topics including migration, Jewish communities, commercial and family networks, military service, rabbinical history, Jewish cemeteries, archival sources, and digital genealogy. The diversity of methodologies and sources highlighted the importance of genealogical research as an interdisciplinary research method that can contribute to broader historical questions, while historical scholarship can provide essential context for reconstructing individual and family histories.

For CEU Jewish Studies students, the conference offered a particularly valuable opportunity. Participation was free for students in the program, allowing them to attend the full event and become directly involved. Moreover, some of them volunteered in the operational side of the conference and contributed to its success. Students had the opportunity not only to listen to leading international researchers but also to meet them informally during discussions, breaks, receptions, tours, and a dinner party at Vienna's Rathauskeller, hosted by the office of mayor Dr. Michael Ludwig.

This environment of openness and exchange was one of the conference's greatest strengths. Researchers from universities, archives, museums, genealogical societies, and heritage organizations were highly accessible and willing to discuss research questions, methodologies, potential collaborations, and professional opportunities. For students developing their own academic interests, such encounters can provide inspiration and demonstrate the many possible paths connecting Jewish Studies scholarship with genealogy, archival research, digital humanities, and heritage work.

The collaboration between the CEU Jewish Studies Program and CEJHG therefore extended beyond providing a venue. It created a space where students, established scholars, and independent researchers could encounter one another as members of a shared intellectual community. The success of the conference demonstrated the value of this kind of interdisciplinary and international exchange. The organizers hope this inaugural collaboration will be the first of many. Following the Vienna conference's success, CEJHG and the CEU Jewish Studies Program, together with the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, are planning the next conference, *Counting Families, Controlling Lives: Jewish Demography, Family, and State Policy in Central Europe*, at CEU's Budapest campus in May 2027. The Vienna experience provided a strong foundation for continued cooperation and new opportunities for students to engage with the evolving field of Central European Jewish history and genealogy.

Watch the conference video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMn-T73sqT0>

by Mattan Segev-Frank, MA



Public Lectures and Events



Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe | **Polish Mayors and the Holocaust.** November 12, 2025, organized with the Institute for East European History, University of Vienna

Noam Zadoff | **Whose Culture is it? Controversies and Debates in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s.** December 1, 2025, with the Center for Israel Studies, Vienna

Martin Clemens Winter | **Nationalsozialistische Unternehmenskultur, Zwangsarbeit und Holocaust: Die HASAG und ihre Nachgeschichte.** February 16, 2026; the first in the new “Alfred Landecker Lecture Series”, organized with the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance

Kateřina Čapková | **(Dis)entangled Holocaust Experiences of Roma and Jews.** February 17, 2026, organized with the CEU Romani Studies Program

Derek Penslar | **“They will be with their own, and we will know where they are:” German reactions to the establishment of the state of Israel, 1947–1949.** March 9, 2026, organized with the Center for Israel Studies, Vienna

Lisa Silverman | **The Postwar Antisemite. Culture and Complicity after the Holocaust.** June 9, 2026, with the Jewish Museum Vienna and Vienna Wiesenthal Institute



Lectures and Events as Part of the Vienna Jewish Studies Colloquium

Péter Buchmüller | **Jews in the Bar Association – Inclusion and Exclusion from the Legal Profession in Budapest (1867–1945).** January 13, 2026

Olga Petrova | **Ukrainians and Jews: The Revolutionary Encounter, 1917–1920.** February 24, 2026

Elias Berner | **The “Victim-thesis”: Music and Antisemitism in Austrian Broadcasting after 1945.** March 24, 2026

Olga Kartashova | **Hunting Nazis in Vienna: Jewish Agency Investigations and the Limits of Postwar Justice.** May 12, 2026

Frances Tanzer | **Vanishing Vienna: Modernism, Philosemitism, and Jews in a Postwar City.** May 26, 2026



International Workshop: From Dissertation to Book: Jewish Studies Publishing in East and East Central Europe | March 4–6, 2026

The CEU Jewish Studies Program and The Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, and Central European University Press, welcomed PhD candidates and recent PhDs for an intensive workshop at CEU’s Budapest campus, focused on how to turn a dissertation into a book.



EAJS Nahmanides Forum “7 October 2023 and its aftermath, and European Jewish Studies” | May 14, 2026

CEU Jewish Studies was honored to host many members of the European Association for Jewish Studies and to participate in the vitally important discussions of the impact of the attacks of 7 October and their aftermath on the field of Jewish Studies.

Updates from Faculty and Staff



Michael L. Miller

Michael L. Miller is the Academic Director of the CEU Jewish Studies Program and oversaw its recent transformation into the CEU Center for Jewish Studies. In the 2025–26 academic year, he joined the Department of Historical Studies (following the closure of the Nationalism Studies Program), and he also served as the acting director of CEU’s Museum Studies MA Program. He is currently putting the finishing touches on his biography of Alfred Manovill (1880–1944), a Hungarian-Jewish banker and philanthropist whose life story serves as a window into Hungarian Jewish history from the 19th century to the Shoah. Michael recently published [“Dueling Days of Mourning: 20 Sivan vs. 24 Adar and Holocaust Commemoration in Hungary,”](#) which appeared in a Festschrift in honor of Tamás Turan, as well as [“‘He Who Grants Dominion to Rulers’: The Habsburg Monarchy in Jewish Sermons, 1848–1916,”](#) which appeared in [The Making of Modern Atlantic Monarchies. Vol. 1: The Invention and Establishment of Conservative Monarchism, 1770–1900](#) (London: Bloomsbury, 2026). In December, Berghahn Books will publish [Jewish Cultures of Rest and Recreation: Encounters in Spa Towns and Resorts](#), edited by Michael L. Miller and Susanne Korbel, a volume that traces its origins back to a conference held in Bad Aussee, Austria, in 2023. Michael’s chapter, “Scandal at Szárszó: Morality, Modesty, and ‘Jewish’ Mores in Interwar Hungary,” explores the trope of Jewish “immorality” in 1920s Hungary. In 2025, Michael co-founded the Association for the [Central European Jewish History and Genealogy](#), which organized its first conference at CEU Vienna in May 2026. (Next year’s conference will be held at CEU’s Budapest campus.) Michael also co-organized a conference on “Jewish Experiences and Post-Socialist Transitions, 1980s–1990s” (Dubrovnik, Croatia) as well as the [25th anniversary conference of CEU Jewish Studies](#), held in Vienna in May/June 2026. Over the summer, Michael taught at the [“Jewish Studies ‘On Edge’ Summer School](#) at the University of Antwerp and at the [European Summer University for Jewish Studies](#) at the Jewish Museum in Hohenems, Austria.



Susanne Korbel

In the academic year 2025/26, Susanne Korbel remained affiliated with CEU’s Jewish Studies Program, contributing to its research and teaching activities while bringing several major publication projects to completion. She is currently finalizing her FWF project (“Entanglements of Jews and non-Jews in ‘Private’ Spaces”, ESP120) and preparing the book manuscript *Intimacy in a Splendid Metropolis: Versatile Encounters between Jews and non-Jews in Budapest and Vienna*. Together with Michael L. Miller, she co-edited [Jewish Cultures of Rest and Recreation: Encounters in Spa Towns and Resorts](#) (Berghahn 2026), a new comparative project on leisure, health, and sociability in Central European Jewish history. Her publications also included the volume [Jewish History and Culture Beyond Borders: Essays in Honour of Professor Joachim Schlör](#), co-edited with Maja Hultman, Claire Le Foll, and Johanna Rolshoven and published by Bloomsbury Academic (London/New York, 2026), to which she contributed her own chapter, “Migrating Objects and Their Containers: Reflections on European Jewish Refugees’ Arrival in the United States.” Her article “The Bed Lodger’s Treat? Shared Housing’s Impact on Sexual Socialization in Habsburg Central Europe, 1880–1930” appeared in the *Journal of Social History*, further developing the questions of intimacy and shared domestic space that have anchored her research on Jewish and non-Jewish urban encounters.



Carsten Wilke

Returning to teaching duties after his sabbatical leave, Prof. Carsten Wilke became the Director of the [CEU Center for Religious Studies](#), the Jewish Studies Program's younger sister unit, which celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. Among his Jewish Studies classes was an externally funded "Course in Jewish Heritage" for CEU students and European heritage professionals. He also gave the keynote lecture at the inauguration of "[Intangible Jewish Heritage](#)", a new initiative of the AEPJ and the World Jewish Congress. As a member of the "EurAsian Transformations" Cluster of Excellence at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Wilke obtained two grants: one for a conference "Eurasian Jewish Places," which he will co-organize with Constanza Cordoni (University of Vienna) on 1–3 March 2027, and the other for his [online database of Hebrew inscriptions from South India](#), which he launched in October 2025. The Austrian daily [Der Standard](#) invited [him to communicate this project](#) to a larger audience.

Prof. Wilke presented his recent research on early modern Sephardic literature in lectures at the universities of Munich, Lisbon and Antwerp. In December, working at the State Archives in Venice, he found an inventory of the multi-lingual library owned by Chief Rabbi Samuel Aboab (1610–1694). He lectured on this discovery at the CSIC in Madrid and at the Conference of the European Academy of Religion in Rome.

He has published articles in [Jewish Culture and History](#) (26/3, 2025) on emotions among pre-modern German countryside Jews, and in [Seizième siècle](#) (27, 2025) on the documentary trail of crypto-Jewish merchants in France. He contributed to the jubilee volumes for [Tamás Turán](#) (ELTE Budapest) and [Moisés Orfali](#) (Bar-Ilan University). In the former essay, he studies the cultural policy of Jewish Orthodoxy in nineteenth-century Pressburg (Bratislava); in the latter, he searched for the author of three anonymous anti-Christian satires that circulated in early modern Amsterdam. He made a case for Joseph Carreras, a Catalan priest converted to Judaism, who was excommunicated jointly with Spinoza for his subversive free-thought.



Ines Koeltzsch

Prof. Koeltzsch started a postdoctoral project at the University of Vienna in April 2026, at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research. The project explores the biography of Rahel Straus, a Jewish gynaecologist and paediatrician, women's rights and peace activist, social worker, author, refugee and *Jecke*. The project aims to shed new light on the history of German-speaking Jewry in Central Europe and, later, in Palestine/Israel through the perspective of women ([Rahel Straus. A Jewish Life in the 20th Century](#)).

Before taking up her new position at the University of Vienna, Prof. Koeltzsch worked at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) on a project of EHRI-ERIC. In the fall term of 2025, she taught the course *The Holocaust and its Aftermath*. As part of the course, the students visited the permanent exhibitions at the Wien Museum and the Steinhof Memorial, as well as the VWI archive. They discussed how recent methodological shifts in Holocaust studies are reflected in these sites.

One of the highlights in 2025/26 was an invited talk at Oxford University, where Prof. Koeltzsch spoke about her latest book on the construction of Kafka's posthumous fame ([Koeltzsch, Before World Fame: Commemorating Franz Kafka in 1920s Central Europe](#)).

Other research trips took her to Caen, Munich, Graz, Salzburg, and Bratislava.

Prof. Koeltzsch published the peer-reviewed article "Literatur als transkulturelle Zeitgeschichtsschreibung *avant la lettre*? Die Romane *Das Slawenlied* von F. C. Weiskopf und *Jahrestage* von Uwe Johnson parallel gelesen" in *Chilufim. Zeitschrift für jüdische Kulturgeschichte*, 32 (2025), 115–130.



Jan Rybak

Jan Rybak continues to work on his project on Jewish armed self-organization and self-defense from the late 18th century to the Holocaust. In the past academic year, he taught a course on “Antisemitism: Theories, Debates, and Definitions” as well as an introductory course to “Austrian History, Society, and Culture” for new CEU students, and presented his ongoing research at the conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, the “Between State, Society, and the Sacred: Jewish Life in Central Europe, 1789–1914” conference at the University of Wrocław, and taught at the Graduate Winter School on Galicia at the University of Haifa. He also gave lectures at the University of Basel, the University of Vienna, and continued to occasionally teach at the Vienna *Volkshochschule*. He published, among other things: “[Gendered Mobilisation: The Jews of Galicia and the Outbreak of WW1](#)” (*Polin* 38, 2026), “[Jewish Militias as a Factor in post-WW1 State Building in Galicia](#)” (*Central European History* 58/4, 2025), “Central European History Convention (CEHC). Vienna, Austria. July 17–19 2025: Comments and Reflections” (*East Central Europe* 53/1, 2026), “[The Jews of Galicia and Bukovina Between Empire and Nation States 1918/19](#)” in the *Historical Atlas of Jewish Galicia and Bukovina*, edited by Israel Bartal, David Rechter, and Larry Wolff, and “[Nationale Zugehörigkeit\(en\) und nationalistische Praxis: Transnationale Erfahrungen der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Posen/Poznań, 1918–1920](#)” in *Entgrenzte Deutsche: Deutsche Identitätskonstruktionen in transnationalen Kontexten*, edited by Christian Cercel and James Koranyi.



András Kovács

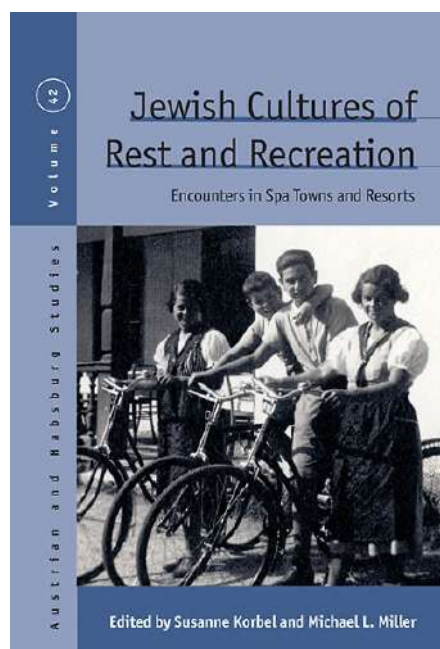
András Kovács is Professor emeritus at the CEU Center for Jewish Studies. He is currently conducting research on the Slánský Trial and the Jewish Issue in Party Documents, 1952–1955. In October 2026, he will deliver the keynote address at the conference “The 1956 Revolution and the Jews” organized by the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary-Jewish University on the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.



Dora Ivanišević

An alumna of CEU’s Medieval Studies Department, Dora has held a few postdoctoral positions in the US and in Croatia, her home country. She has returned to CEU as a part-time coordinator and is concurrently teaching world history courses as an adjunct at Webster University. Her research focuses on the society and culture of the Roman Empire, and has more recently ventured into the literary culture of late medieval and early modern Dubrovnik and the eastern Adriatic coast. Dora is currently the coordinator of the Jewish Studies Program at CEU.

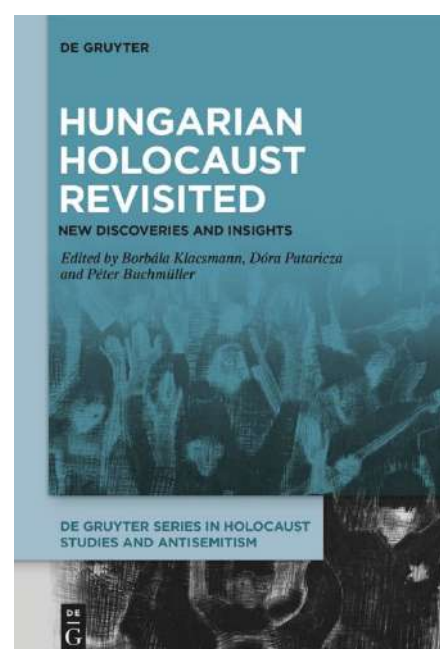
New Books by Faculty, Alumni & Students



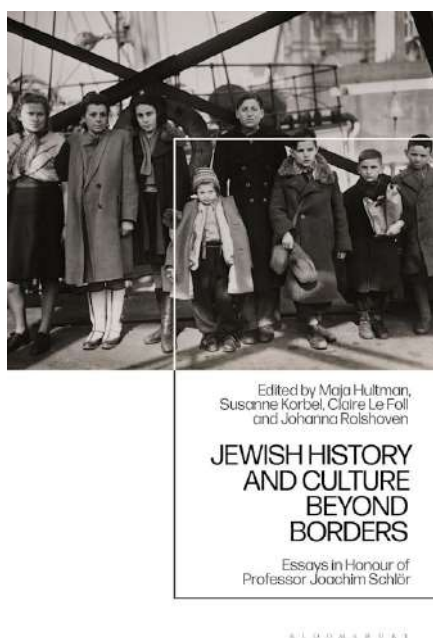
Susanne Korbel, Michael Miller (eds.), *Jewish Cultures of Rest and Recreation: Encounters in Spa Towns and Resorts* (New York: Berghahn, 2026).



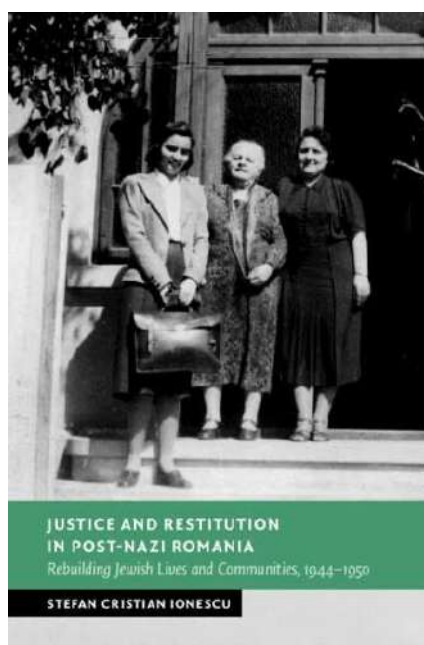
Daniela F. Eisenstein and Carsten L. Wilke (eds.), *Mayer Bretzfeld (1747-1823) – der letzte bayerische Landesrabbiner* (Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2025).



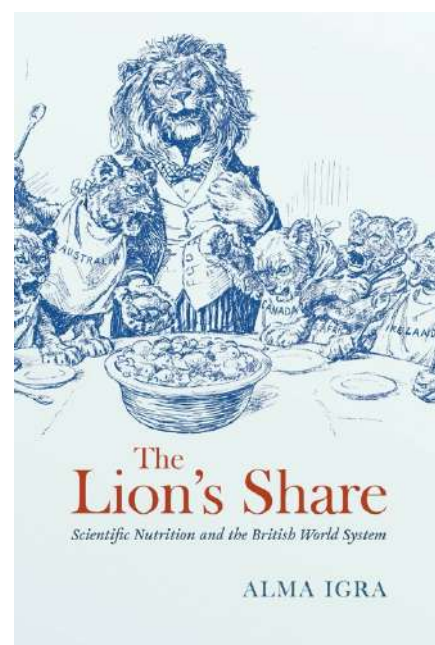
Borbála Klacsmann, Dóra Pataricza, Péter Buchmüller (eds.), *Hungarian Holocaust Revisited: New Discoveries and Insights* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2026).



Maja Hultman, Susanne Korbel, Claire Le Foll, Johanna Rolshoven (eds.), *Jewish History and Culture Beyond Borders: Essays in Honour of Professor Joachim Schlör* (London: Bloomsbury, 2026).



Stefan Cristian Ionescu, *Justice and Restitution in Post-Nazi Romania: Rebuilding Jewish Lives and Communities, 1944-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025).



Alma Igra, *The Lion's Share Scientific Nutrition and the British World System* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2026).

Looking Forward



New Researcher: **Dania Lemmer**

We are very excited to welcome Dania Lemmer as a new researcher at the Center for Jewish Studies. Dania, who recently graduated with distinction from the Nationalism Studies master's program with a specialization in Jewish Studies, will be working on a project on the responses by academic Jewish Studies to the attack of October 7, 2023 and its aftermath.



New Coordinator: **Anastasia Theologou**

We are very happy to welcome Anastasia Theologou as the new coordinator for the Center for Jewish Studies from October 2026. Anastasia first joined CEU in 2014 as an MA student and later as an employee, focusing on civic engagement and academic program coordination. Her previous experience includes coordinating the CEU Source Language Teaching Group unit and the Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, serving as a Research and Event Assistant of the CEU Medieval Studies Department, and collaborating with the Greek Roma Coalition on the CIVIL ROMA MONITOR project.



New Hebrew Language Teacher: **Asaf Segal Doron**

Asaf Doron is a PhD candidate at the University of Vienna's Department of East European History. From the 2026/27 academic year, he will be offering Hebrew language courses for CEU students.

Call for Papers: **"Counting Families, Controlling Lives: Jewish Demography, Family and State Policy in Central Europe"**

May 4–6, 2027 | Central European University Budapest

The Association for Central European Jewish History and Genealogy (CEJHG), in cooperation with the **CEU Center for Jewish Studies** and the **Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives**, invites paper proposals for its second international conference on Jewish History and Genealogy in Central Europe, to be held at CEU's Budapest Campus on May 4–6, 2027.

The conference will explore Jewish demography, family life, and state policies governing Jewish population growth across the Habsburg lands and their successor states. It will examine the long-term effects of restrictions on marriage and family formation, as well as migration, persecution, exile, cross-border family networks, community structures, and Jewish life across changing political borders. The conference takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining historical and genealogical research with digital tools and methodologies. We particularly welcome research on Holocaust-era family histories, Judaica provenance, genealogical databases and AI, and genealogy as an educational tool.

Following a successful inaugural conference in Vienna in May 2026, the 2027 conference aims to further develop the CEJHG's international scholarly community connecting history, genealogy, archives, and digital research.

Paper proposals of 200–300 words, together with **CVs**, should be **submitted by November 15, 2026**.

Read more and submit your proposal: <https://cejhg.org/en/call-for-papers-cejhg/>

Conference language: English **Proposals:** Peer reviewed **Speakers:** CEJHG membership required; reduced participation fee **Publication:** Selected papers are planned for publication in a peer-reviewed journal **Recording:** Lectures and panels will be recorded and shared.

Apply now for the **MA Jewish Studies Specialization** and the **PhD in History**

CEU's Center for Jewish Studies is one of a kind. It is place for teaching and research on premodern, modern and contemporary Jewish history, culture and society in Central and Eastern Europe with a global perspective. For 25 years, students from all over the world have been studying together with English as the language of instruction, exploring together the fascinating past, present and future of Jewish life in the heart of Europe.

Jewish Studies Specialization

The Jewish Studies Specialization is part of the Department of Historical Studies. This unique combination allows you to anchor your learning and research in a specific field of Jewish Studies while earning both an American and Austrian MA degree in Historical Studies or Museum Studies. Courses explore a broad range of historical periods, world regions and methodologies to approach the past and the ways in which it shapes our present and future. Taking the Jewish Studies specialization provides you with wide expertise beyond your MA degree in Historical Studies or Museum Studies, not only focusing on the broader Jewish experience but also providing a Jewish prism through which to view European history and society.

jewishstudies.ceu.edu/specialization

Grants for Master's Students

Jewish Studies at CEU offers generous grants for master's students, in addition to the university's financial aid, covering tuition and basic living expenses in Vienna.

Find out more and apply: jewishstudies.ceu.edu

Any questions? jewishstudies@ceu.edu

Main Application Deadlines for the 2027/28 Academic Year

[MA in Historical Studies](#) (one year or two years): February 2, 2027

[MA in Museum Studies](#) (two years): February 2, 2027

[PhD in Comparative History](#): January 15, 2027

[PhD in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies](#): January 15, 2027



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● EUROPEAN
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Website: jewishstudies.ceu.edu **Instagram:** [@ceu_jewish_studies](https://www.instagram.com/ceu_jewish_studies)

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