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## INTRODUCTION

For more than twenty years, the Jewish Studies Project at Central European University has contributed to vitalize the study of Jewish history, society, and culture in East and Central Europe, gradually establishing itself as a regional hub of teaching and research. Our academic unit started in 1996 as a public lecture series with the aim of presenting outstanding specimens of regional and international research in Jewish Studies to the students and faculty of CEU as well as to an interested local audience. In 2001, we inaugurated a one-year MA teaching program, the Jewish Studies Specialization, which ever since has been offering an interdepartmental specialization track to students of the Department of History and the Nationalism Studies Program. Our internationally recruited students pursue a Jewish Studies focus in their research, receive an initiation to the specific themes and methods in the framework of their curricula, and obtain the CEU Jewish Studies diploma in addition to their departmental MA degree. A two-year MA specialization was added in 2011. In recent years, the specialization option has been extended to the MA programs of the Department of Medieval Studies and the Cultural Heritage Studies Program; the first students enrolled in these two new tracks will be graduating in 2017. Moreover, students of the PhD programs in History and Medieval Studies have realized their research under the supervision of the Jewish Studies faculty and benefitted from the infrastructure of the specialization as a source of support and synergy.

The permanent faculty of the Jewish Studies Specialization presently consists of András Kovács, Michael L. Miller, and Carsten Wilke, while Victor Karády, who retired from teaching in 2013, is affiliated with our unit as emeritus professor. We regularly invite distinguished visiting faculty, representing a variety of institutional and disciplinary traditions in our field. During the five-year span of 2011–2016, covered by the present volume, courses were taught by Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Zvi Gitelman (University of Michigan), Zsuzsa Hetényi (ELTE Budapest), Gábor Kádár (Holocaust Memorial Center Budapest), Kate Lebow (Wiesenthal Institute Vienna), Ada Rapoport-Albert (University College London), and David Ruderman (University of Pennsylvania). While maintaining over the years our focus on the modern Jewish experience in Central and Eastern Europe, we have been able to spread our teaching across a wider area of expertise, incorporating subjects as far afield as medieval Hebrew literature, Jewish philosophy and mysticism, Jewish-Christian relations, Yiddish sources, comparative diaspora studies, the Holocaust and its memory, and the history of Israel and its society. In cooperation with CEU's Source Language Teaching Unit, we have started in 2011 a regular language-teaching