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## Activities Report

**Kurt and Ursula Schubert Center for Jewish Studies**

**Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc**

**Academic year 2020/2021**





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Ladies and gentlemen, dear supporters of the Kurt and Ursula Schubert Center for Jewish Studies (CJS), Faculty of Arts (FoA), Palacký University in Olomouc (UPOL),

It has been two years since the global pandemic forced us to look for new ways in both teaching and science. The time we spend is not easy. She faced a number of challenges that seemed threatening at first, but thanks to goodwill, support and determination, we were able not only to adapt to them, but in many ways also to use them for further development and growth. Let me acquaint you with the activities of our institution in the academic year 2020/2021. Despite the fact that the whole de facto took place in a non-standard mode, we managed to keep teaching in hybrid or online mode, we completed several existing and started several new projects and we also carried out a number of extracurricular events for professionals and the general public. This would not be possible without the extraordinary commitment of CJS members, whose professional activities but also human approach I greatly appreciate. This combination continues to make CJS a unique institution not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad and is one of the basic motivations for applicants.

### **Teaching Wintersemester 2020 / Summersemester 2021**

Despite the fact that the pandemic moved teaching to the online environment from mid-October, based on the experience of the previous academic year, we were able to react flexibly and fully implement teaching without major problems. With the first-year students, for whom personal contact in the new academic environment is most important, we completed traditional **two-day excursions around the Jewish monuments of Moravia and Bohemia** in the early autumn of 2020. We visited places connected with the history of big and important Jewish communities in South Moravia, e.g., Mikulov (Nicholsburg) and Brno. The excursion was - as usual - attended by senior students who act as tutors of the newly enrolled colleagues. Even after the introduction of online teaching the communication with students remained lively and thanks to the use of online tools, we were able to provide not only traditional lectures and seminars, but also film screenings and celebrations of Jewish holidays. The fact that we managed to maintain quality teaching is proved by positive student evaluations, which have been conducted online for several years at Palacký University.



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Photo: CJS archive

CJS traditionally opens not only courses for students of its own study programs, but also courses for those interested in Jewish Studies from all over the university. In the last few years, language courses have attracted the most interest, especially **Arabic courses as well as modern Hebrew**. Thanks to the Academic Jewish Studies - Jewish Language Teaching Fellowship project (The Rothschild Foundation Europe, 2020-2023), we have been able to expand our teaching of modern Hebrew so that we can offer courses including conversation with a native speaker for three levels of language proficiency - beginners, intermediate and advanced students of bachelor's, master's and doctoral study programs. Thanks to the project, an experienced lecturer with excellent knowledge of Czech, Mgr. Peer Friedmann. CJS currently also offers modern Hebrew courses to the public as part of a lifelong learning program.



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CJS teachers also guarantee and teach courses with Jewish topics, integrated into the study plans of related study programs (Religion Studies, German Studies, Czech Studies).

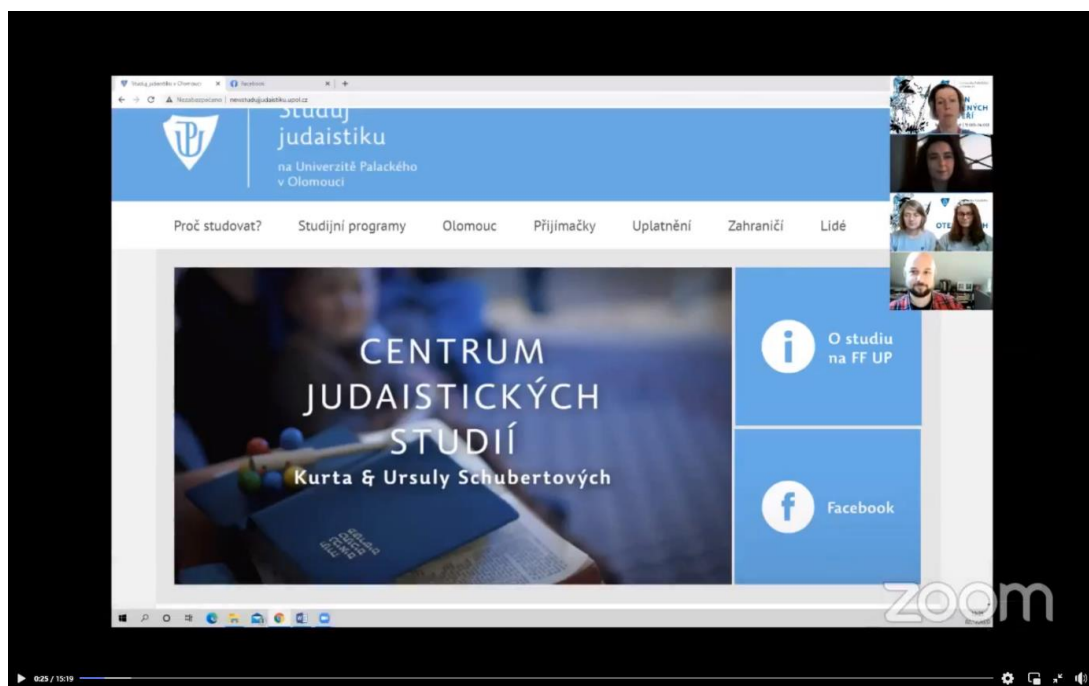


Photo: CJS archive

The **Public Lectures Series**, which the CJS organizes in cooperation with experts from domestic and foreign collaborating institutions, has traditionally enjoyed great interest. Thanks to the online broadcast, interesting topics and discussions were also managed to reach an even larger number of followers. Following lectures were delivered during the winter and summer semester: Terezie Dubinová: "Civic, Artistic and Spiritual Activism in Israel: What You Will Not Learn from the Media" (12.10.2020); Ingeborg Fialová (FF UPOL): „Hugo Bettauer“ (14.10.2020); Hana Nováková (FF UPOL): "Islamic Art" (21.10.2020); Pavel Sládek (FF UK): „Jehuda Leva Ben Besal’el - Maharal“ (11.11.2020); Štěpán Zbytovský (FF UK): „Die Wahrheit Magazine“ (18.11.2020); Štěpán Menaše Kliment (ŽOB): "Contemporary Life of the Jewish Community" (7.4.2021); Marcela Sulak (BIU): "Mother, Bible, and the Nation — in the poetry of Orit Gidali" (14.4.2021); Irena Kalhousová (FF UK): "Palestinian-Israeli conflict" (21.4.2021); Přemek Zbončák: "Reflections of the Nakba in Palestinian Literature" (28.4.2021); Jakub Szánto (FF UK): "From Izrastina with love" (28.4.2021).



## **Research and projects**

CJS members continued their research projects supported by foreign and domestic grant institutions:

**"Averroes Edition"** (Thomas Institute, University of Cologne, Germany, Tamas Visi)

**"Revitalization of the Moravian Jewish Heritage Research"** (Excellence Research Project, UPOL, 2017-2022). Within the project, a number of extremely beneficial studies were created and published in renowned professional periodicals and collective monographs:

- VISI, Tamas. "Jewish Physicians in Late Medieval Ashkenaz," *Social History of Medicine* 32 (2019): 670-690
- VISI, Tamas. "The Chronology of John the Baptist and the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 18 (2020): 3-34
- CRHOVA, Marie. „State-sponsored anti-Semitism in Communist Czechoslovakia.“ In: *Perceptions and Prejudice*, Michal Miller and Luca Varadi (eds.), Central European University Press, Budapest, 2021.

In addition to this project, other extremely beneficial studies by Lenka Uličná on the findings in the Moravian genizot were prepared and published:

- ULIČNÁ, L. „Genizy venkovských synagogu“. Lhoták, J. *Vlastivědný sborník Muzea Šumavy*. Sušice: Šumava Museum Sušice, 2020, pp. 297-305. ISBN 978-80-87235-12-6
- ULIČNÁ, L. „Amulets Found in Bohemian Genizot - A First Approach“. Denz, R. Rudolf, G. *Genisa-Blätter III*. Potsdam: Universitätsverlag Potsdam, 2020, pp. 69-80. ISBN 978-3-86956-470-8.

Project **"Support of small strategically important fields"** (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016-2021), focused on interuniversity cooperation. Within this project, CJS developed joint activities especially with the Prague Center for Jewish Studies (PCJS; Charles University in Prague).

Important project **"Academic Jewish Studies Research Consortia. Hebrew Science in a European Context: Research Collaboration Olomouc-Cologne"** (The Rotschild Foundation Europe, 2019-2023), under the leadership of Tamas Visi, which is the result of cooperation with the partner institution Thomas Institute of the University of Cologne.

Within the second phase of the IGA project (FF UPOL 2020/2021) **"Jewish cultural and intellectual history of Olomouc - specialized printed map"** a specialized interactive map was made available in printed form, accompanying the history of the Olomouc Jewish community and its cultural and artistic heritage in a mobile application, created in the previous pilot phase of the project. However, the main goal of the project was to create a **specialized map** on the basis of archival research of source materials and databases on the history of Olomouc Jews and subsequent geoinformatics and cartographic



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analysis using geographic information systems (GIS) tools (in digital and printed form), with the preliminary title **Geoinformatics mapping of basic patterns of settlement of the Jewish community in individual zones of the city of Olomouc and its surroundings due to historical and political developments.**



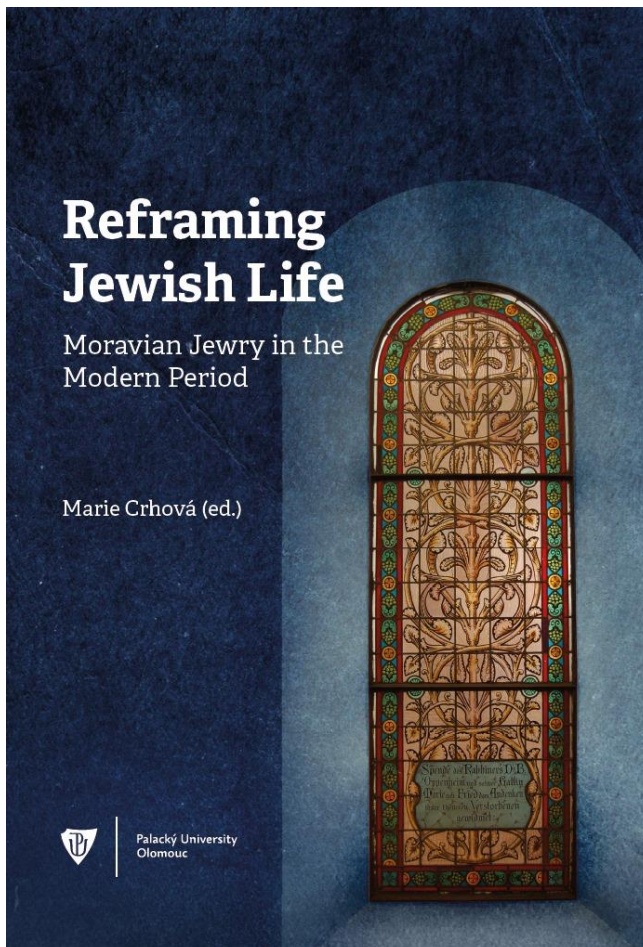
The output of the first phase of the project, the **“Jewish Olomouc” mobile application**, which was created in cooperation with the Education Department of the Olomouc Museum of Art, received a great response from the general public during the first months after its launch. The statutory city of Olomouc has become the first customer of an interactive specialized map for use in the field of tourism, and the interest of other cities is already noticeable. The map was presented at several international forums (International Student Conference Students Voice Olomouc 2020 and Paideia Stockholm Alumni Conference 2021). It was ceremoniously presented to the public by the online presentation of the Olomouc Museum of Art on June 10, 2021, and can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/yCn7mq-UfK8>. Reports on the application were broadcast by several stations of Czech public radio (ČR Plus, ČRO Proglas, ČR - show Šalom Alejchem) and television (ČT 24, ČT 2 - Křesťanský magazín). **You can**



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download the app to your Android and iOS mobile devices at [actionbound.com/bounds](https://actionbound.com/bounds). The application must then search for bound "Jewish Olomouc" for the English version.

In 2020, the **collective monograph *Reframing Jewish Life. Moravian Jewry in the Modern Period* was published**. The monograph was prepared by Marie Crhová and the authors of the individual chapters were members of the CJS (Ivana Cahová, Marie Krappmann, Daniel Soukup, Lenka Uličná) and several domestic and foreign researchers (Daniel Baránek, Karl E. Grözinger, Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska). The book in seven essays represents a complex transformation of the closed world of Moravian Jews into an open society of modern times. It shows the tension between tradition, secular culture and modern societal changes, the pitfalls and benefits of integration into mainstream society, all on the border of integration and exclusivity.





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In 2020, the Grada publishing house published the **photo book *Seven blessings***, which contains photographs by Jindřich Buxbaum, documenting meetings of traditional Jews in various directions at the graves of important scholars, rabbis and cadiks, about which Daniel Soukup from CJS tells accompanying texts. Foreword and afterword to the publication were written by Rabbi Efraim K. Sidon, and the introductory text by Marcin Wodzinski, a unique expert on Hasidism.



### Conferences, workshops

**The 9th International Student Workshop on *Judaism and Jewish Studies in the Modern World. The Students Voice*** took place online on November 27, 2020. CJS, in cooperation with the Prague Center for Jewish Studies, welcomed master's students from both institutions to the online space, who presented their final or project theses. The thematic scope was relatively broad, from the profile of the Prague rabbinate at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, through the history of the institution of the Israeli embassy in the Czechoslovak Republic to the images of childhood and the perception of children in Sefer Hasidim. The presented papers were always commented reciprocally by teachers from FoA UP and FoA UK.





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### International mobility

Despite significantly limited travel opportunities in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, student mobility in particular continued. As part of the Erasmus + project, a total of 4 CJS students completed a semester at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) and Bar Ilan University (BIU) in Ramat Gan.



Despite significant restrictions to the possibilities of travel due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, student mobility continued. Within the Erasmus+ program, a total of four CJS students completed a semester at the **Hebrew University of Jerusalem** and at **Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan**. One student of the doctoral study program from Bar Ilan University completed a study stay at CJS where she conducted research into art (comics) in the Terezín Ghetto.

Despite the failure of international academic mobility, we managed to implement the long-planned **interinstitutional workshop *Olomouc-Jerusalem Week 2021***, which CJS hosted in its vital space in the



week between May 24-28, 2021. It was one of the outputs of several years of cooperation between the CJS and the Mandel Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, deepened not only within the Erasmus + International Mobility Program. Jewish Studies experts from both institutions, Eli Lederhendler, Benjamin Brown, Reimund Leicht, Tamas Visi and Marie Chrová, spoke in a series of commented lectures followed by a lively discussion. The measures in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, due to which it was not possible to carry out the planned international mobility in person, ultimately led to the emergence of a new format of international learning, which opened up to students in both institutions and the general public. The open forum, attended by prominent international academics such as Sarah Stroums, Yehuda Halper and others, provided space for new topics and perspectives to study older and modern Jewish history. It pointed to the pitfalls of new interpretations of the history of Jewish nationalism and Zionism, the overlaps of Judeo-Christian thought, and the hitherto unexplored field of research into the forms of Eastern European Jewish mysticism. Students thus gained the benefits of lectures by foreign experts, a workshop and an international conference in a concentrated form. At the same time, the extremely friendly atmosphere motivated them to engage in constructive confrontations during the discussions.

We have managed to develop interinstitutional relations with foreign partners, especially in Israel (BIU and HUJI), on a long-term basis thanks to good working and collegial relations between academics of individual institutions and also thanks to Eva Kalousová from CJS. Cooperation with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem should achieve one of its goals, due to Covid, the twice-postponed **International Summer School "Schismatics, Heretics, and Religious Crisis: Frankism and the Turbulent 18th Century in East Central European Jewry"** in August 2022.

### **Internship**

As part of professional internships and internships, CJS students participated in the cataloging of Judaica from the library of Professor Gad Freudenthal, which was ceremoniously stored in the Research Library in Olomouc thanks to the intervention of Tamas Visi. CJS continues to successfully cooperate with partner customer institutions: Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, Centropa in Vienna, Jewish Museum in Prague, Lostice Synagogue - Respect and Tolerance Association, regional Museums in the Czech Republic. Cooperation with the Museum With No Frontiers in Vienna is being prepared.



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## Cultural and educational events for the public



The situation around COVID-19, representing a fundamental silence in all aspects of public life, also affected the multi-genre festival Days of Jewish Culture Olomouc, which CJS organizes every year. Despite a number of difficulties, its 13th year with the subtitle Re: START took place on October 12-20, 2020. The festival responded flexibly to the current situation in order to interpret this caesura, affecting all aspects of public

life, as an opportunity and a challenge. An opportunity to focus on what surrounds us, on homework. Introduce domestic authors and wish their production plenty of space. The challenge to look at the crisis from different perspectives, to present works that grow out of the crisis and show how not only to survive in the crisis, but really to LIVE and to bring this topic into the space of professional discussion. Lecturer Theresie Dubinová (lecture "Civic, Artistic and Spiritual Activism in Israel: What You Won't Learn from the Media") introduced herself in online lectures and streams; Ingeborg Fialová (lecture "Hugo Bettauer); Ivana Cahová (lecture on " Stalags "and moderated interview with Israeli director Ari Libsker), Daniel Soukup (moderated interview with photographer Jindřich Buxbaum on the exhibition Sedmero blessing), music by David Dorůžek Trio and Mishigas The film section focused on the reflection of the biggest crisis of not only European Jewry - the Shoah and followed the different approaches and perspectives and ways of artistic representation of this historical event in the Czech environment, especially in Israeli society, literature and film (*Stalags*, Ari Liebsker, IZR 2008; *Pizza in Auschwitz*, Moshe Zimmermann, IZR, 2008; *Ein Apartment in Berlin*, Alice Agneskirchner, GER-IZR, 2014; *City without Jews*, Karl Bresslauer, AUS 1924, accompanied by Petr Wajsar Orchestra BERG). The festival was organized in cooperation with the Olomouc Museum of Art and the Jewish Community, under the auspices of the Ambassador of the State of Israel, HE Daniel Meron and the City of Olomouc.



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You can find more detailed information on:

- Website: <https://judaistika.upol.cz/en>
- Facebook profile: <https://www.facebook.com/CJSFFUP>
- Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/judaistika\\_upol/](https://www.instagram.com/judaistika_upol/)

Thank you for your attention, cooperation and kindness and we look forward to sharing our activities in the next academic year not only with students and colleagues from CJS and other UPOL institutions, with interested Czech and foreign experts, but also with supporters from the general public. We are convinced that the so-called third role of the university, the relation to society in addition to the role of education and research, should continue to gain in importance and we focus on communicating research results to the general public in a high-quality and comprehensible form.

For CJS

Ivana Cahová, Head of the department