

International Conference (Online)

Jews Between Public and Private Through the Ages

12-13 January 2026

Filip Friedman Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Lodz

Institute for Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow

Organisers: Michaël Green (University of Lodz)

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The topic of privacy has become in the past twenty years of particular importance, due to the society's particular awareness of various attempts to jeopardize it by various stakeholders. Interest in historical privacy was sparked by a series of events and publications by the Copenhagen-based Centre for Privacy Studies that focuses on research into the early modern period. It is there that back in 2020, the seminar "Privacy in Early Modern Jewish Life" took place (online), which united several scholars of Jewish studies, focusing on the period of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. An earlier event dates to 2019, when the topic of Jewish privacy was discussed at a joint seminar of Centre for Privacy Studies and the Institute of Jewish Studies at the Jagiellonian University. A special issue of the journal *Studia Judaica* was published in 2023 on Jewish early modern notions of privacy. Nevertheless, the understanding of historical privacy concerning the Jews is still in its beginning. Many more topics and periods need to be explored to facilitate our understanding of how Jewish people and communities perceived and acted upon their privacy.

Privacy research can be conducted almost on any type of historical source. The most obvious would be various egodocuments and personal writings, such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies. But these are not the only ones - police reports, testimonies, *pinkasim*, *responsa*, Talmud, various pamphlets, newspapers, and proclamations can all reveal how privacy was constructed, perceived, and invaded.

The conference “Jews Between Public and Private Through the Ages” aims at bringing together historians of various disciplines and periods, from Antiquity to the end of the Second World War, dealing with social, cultural, religious, legal history, as well as rabbinic literature, such as *responsa*. When conducting their own research, most of the historians encounter questions of privacy, often without giving particular attention – what does it mean for a person to be at home? How does the idea of bodily integrity or accessibility for religious rituals affect the personal feeling of privacy of a given person? What was the relation between the segregation of Jewish communities and others with a sense of privacy? In the context of more recent history, how could one obtain privacy while at a concentration camp and was it even a question of importance?

The conference will be held online with the aim to allow people from different geographical locations to take part in it, though primary time-zone is that of CET.

Following the conference, selected papers will be submitted for publication in a special volume dedicated to Jewish privacy with one of the leading publishers.

The abstracts for presentations (150 words) accompanied by a brief CV are welcome for consideration by **14 November 2025** to the following emails:

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We will announce the accepted papers by **1 December 2025**.