

Online-Workshop (via Zoom):

Christian Hebraism and the Beginning of Jewish Studies

September 26, 2025, 9–12 a.m.



Organization: **Prof. Dr. Sina Rauschenbach**, University of Potsdam

Special Guest: **Dr. Yaacov Deutsch**, Hebrew University/ David Yellin College, Jerusalem

Schedule

9:00-9:15 Welcome (Sina Rauschenbach)

9:15-10:00 Introductory Lecture (Yaacov Deutsch)

10:00-10:45 Close Reading 1: Excerpts from Antonius Margaritha's "Der gantz jüdisch Glaub" (Yaacov Deutsch)

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-11:45 Close Reading 2: Excerpts from Johann Buxtorf's "Synagoga Judaica" (Yaacov Deutsch)

11:45-12:00 Final Discussion (Sina Rauschenbach)



In this workshop, we will highlight the central – yet largely neglected – contributions of Christian Hebraists to the foundations of modern Jewish Studies. Figures such as Johannes Reuchlin, Sebastian Münster, Johann Buxtorf d.Ä., and Johann Christoph Wagenseil, to mention only a few, collaborated in pioneering diverse fields and paving the way for later Jewish Studies scholars. Their extensive work included Hebrew bibliography, the preservation and publication of manuscripts, the creation of lexica and manuals, and the documentation of Jewish customs and ceremonies. They also addressed subjects such as Jewish history, women's roles, demography, and many others. This vast corpus contains insights that remain relevant today but are still largely overlooked by modern scholarship. We will argue that the development of Jewish Studies cannot be fully understood without engaging with this rich, largely unexplored body of work by Christians whose position towards Judaism and the Jews was often ambiguous if not openly anti-Jewish. The workshop will start with an introductory lecture and will continue with two sessions of close reading of excerpts from Antonius Margaritha's and Johann Buxtorf's ethnographic descriptions of Jews and Judaism.

Recommended Readings

Deutsch, Yaacov, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Deutsch, Yaacov, "A View of the Jewish Religion: Conceptions of Jewish Practice and Ritual in Early Modern Europe", *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2001): 273–95.

Please register via email to henning.krakow@uni-potsdam.de by September 21, 2025.