While pursuing my first two degrees, I have been studying early modern history with a dual focus.

My thesis work deals with Rabbi Moshe Isserles (d. 1572), one of the most important decisors of Jewish law. His decisions – almost without any objections – replaced the legal pluralism that had been previously practiced in Ashkenaz, and in Europe more generally. The study concerns the introduction and integration of political and theological conversations into Isserles’ legal writings, and analyzes the historical cultural context that allowed for the introduction of these topics into these works. Likewise, there is a need to examine whether this introduction created historical cultural change more broadly in early modern Ashkenaz. In the political and theological arenas during the period that preceded Isserles – meaning the end of the sixteenth century – the Jewish community of Krakow, its thinkers and its sages experienced both influence from and reaction to the thinkers of the period (i.e. Copernicus and Kepler in the scientific realm and obviously Luther in the theological realm). My work also deals with a critical junction in the formation of the most important codification of Jewish law – from then until now – in the form of the *Shulhan Arukh* of Rabbi Yosef Karo and Isserles’ *Darkhei Moshe*. This time period, its Jewish thinkers and the intellectual background that preceded this period are at the center of my academic interests.

My second area of academic focus is in the context of a research group looking at notebooks that deal with the development of power elites and of communal structures in early modern Ashkenaz, especially in the eighteenth century around the new formation of the (Jewish) burial society in Prague. The notebook upon which I am particularly focused is a collection of ordinances of the burial society. This notebook makes it possible to notice a number of classes and sectors within the Jewish community of the modern period – something which provides a microcosmic window for the more general study of Jewish history. The notebooks of Jewish communities, among which those of the Prague burial society particularly stand out – and I believe that which comes out from all of my areas of specific focus – can contribute to the deeper understanding of various modes of political interaction between the community and its sub-groups, between these groups and the local authorities, and between the community and its leaders. The burial society represents a significant center of power that stands on the most critical junction for society more generally, the gate between life and death. That being the case, the forms, systematic bylaws and ritual functions that characterize its ordinances can shed much light upon the depths of social consciousness in the Jewish community of Prague in particular, and upon parallel groups more broadly.