

Press Release

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Strengthening Jewish Studies in Leipzig DFG Funding for German-Israeli Research Training Group

8 November 2023
2023/15

The German Research Foundation (DFG) today announced the establishment of the first German-Israeli Research Training Group in the humanities. Its funding will raise the collaborative promotion of early career scholars by the three partner institutions, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Leipzig University, and the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow, to a new level. The approved Research Training Group will focus on Jewish material culture in modernity.

The Research Training Group will be led by Prof. Yfaat Weiss, Director of the Dubnow Institute in Leipzig, together with Prof. Benjamin Pollock at the Faculty of Humanities of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It will enable doctoral candidates to pursue a scholarly degree in both locations and foster the establishment of transnational networks. Beginning in August 2024, 22 doctoral candidates and two postdocs will work together in two cohorts in Jerusalem and Leipzig in a structured program, during which they will be co-supervised by professors from both universities. This will lead to a visible strengthening of Jewish studies at German institutes of higher education, particularly in Leipzig. The planned program includes a comprehensive qualification as well as the acquisition of Jewish languages. The doctoral candidates will also be introduced to the work of museums, archives, and libraries.

The International Research Training Group “Belongings: Jewish Material Culture in Twentieth-Century Europe and Beyond” will explore objects and materiality in order to implement new instruments of analysis and improve our understanding of Jewish life in Europe and its entanglements with the non-Jewish environment. A team of 13 scholars from the three partner institutions, whose expertise includes history, philosophy, literature, cultural studies, and art history, will ensure that the research on Jewish material culture will be undertaken from a broad spatial and methodological perspective.

The approval of the Research Training Group was preceded by several workshops that were held in Germany and Israel. In May 2023, the Rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Tamir Scheafer, visited Leipzig for preparatory meetings with Prof. Eva Inés Obergfell, Rector of Leipzig University, and Prof. Yfaat Weiss, Director of the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow.



Prof. Dr. Tamir Sheaffer, Prof. Dr. Eva Inés Obergfell, and Prof. Dr. Yfaat Weiss in May 2023 in Leipzig
Photo: Swen Reichhold

Funding

This Project was financed by the Saxon State government out of the State budget approved by the Saxon State Parliament.

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