

Jewish Topographies

5th International Congress on Jewish Architecture
Braunschweig, Technische Universität, September 21 – 23, 2020

Call for Papers

From September 21 to 23, 2020, Bet Tfila – Research Unit for Jewish Architecture in Europe will organize the conference “Jewish Topographies – 5th International Congress on Jewish Architecture” at the Technische Universität Braunschweig.

The conference will focus on the meaning of the term “Jewish topography” and also on how historical phenomena can be categorized both socially and culturally. Jewish residential areas and settlements, facilities of Jewish communities (such as synagogues, cemeteries, schools or hospitals), or locations of companies and shops can form significant topographical networks in cities and landscapes. Jewish topographies stand in a spatial and social context with corresponding places of the non-Jewish population, in which different cultural, religious or ethnic groups find their own spaces. Conflicts and cooperations, exclusions and limitations emerge in the spatial relationships between these locations and their respective urban and architectural design reflect the possibilities and expectations of the respective and related groups.

The conference aims at examining different levels of Jewish topographies: the spectrum of possible contributions ranges from macro studies to cross-region networks of Jewish communities or Jewish institutions and people (e. g., commercial networks, Verbandsfriedhöfe (association cemeteries)), to locations and facilities of the individual communities (e. g., Judengassen (Jews Lanes), eruv, DP-Camps), to micro studies of residential areas or individual facilities and buildings. Topographies of forced housing (such as ghettos, concentration camps, and Judenhäuser (Jewish houses)) may also be discussed. Religious and profane places and objects will be viewed; synchronous and diachronic perspectives will also be welcomed. The focus of the conference is on developments after the Middle Ages. However, comparative studies on earlier epochs are as welcome as general theoretical and systematic studies, e. g., on symbolic, religious, and literary topographies. Ideas on how Jewish topographies can be appropriately researched, represented and later conveyed, may also be further subjects of discussion.

The conference will be held in English.

Please send your abstract (max. 2,400 characters) and your CV (max. 1,200 characters) including your academic affiliation by February 27, 2020, to Dipl.-Ing. Mirko Przystawik (m.przystawik@tu-bs.de).

The academic board and the organizers will decide on acceptance by March 12, 2020. The publication of selected articles in the Bet Tfila’s Series of Publications is planned.

The organizers endeavor to cover travel and accommodation costs for the speakers; this depends, however, on the approval of corresponding funding applications.

For any questions, please contact

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