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Laudation
on the Occasion of the Award of the
Arsen-Djurović-Prize for Historical Research on Textbooks
to Dr. Evita Wiecki

Dr. Evita Wiecki has been Lecturer for Yiddish at the Department of Jewish History and Culture at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München [Munich] since 2010. The preservation and passing-on of the Yiddish language and culture are an affair of her heart. Thus, as scholar of the Trainee Program for Careers in International Organizations by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, she already carried out a project for the development of a catalog of measures to preserve the Yiddish language in Poland in 1998/99. The accidental discovery of a textbook for Yiddish in the Bibliothèque Medem in Paris led to the research topic for her doctoral thesis. In 2017, Mrs. Wiecki was awarded a doctorate in Yiddish Studies at the Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf for the thesis "Ein Jude spricht Jiddisch' – Geschichte des säkularen Jiddisch-Lehrbuchs im Polen des 20. Jahrhunderts" ["A Jew Speaks Yiddish' – History of the Secular Textbook for Yiddish in Poland in the 20th Century"]. The first edition of her doctoral thesis was published in 2018, the second one – which is very remarkable for a dissertation! – already in 2019 under the title "Ein Jude spricht Jiddisch'. Jiddisch-Lehrbücher in Polen – ein Beitrag zur jüdischen Bildungs- und Kulturgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert" [„A Jew Speaks Yiddish.' Textbooks for Yiddish in Poland – a Contribution to the Jewish Educational and Cultural History in the 20th Century"] in the renowned series "Jewish Religion, History and Culture" at the publishing-house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

For this publication, the International Society for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media e.V. (IGSBI) awards to Dr. Evita Wiecki the Arsen-Djurović-Prize for Historical Research on Textbooks 2019.

The research subject of Mrs. Wiecki's study are about ninety textbooks for Yiddish from the Polish territories between 1886 and 1964. In this period several and radical changes took place; the most disastrous one was the Holocaust. These profound changes are reflected in these textbooks. They are a first-tier cultural-historical testimony.

For the following reasons, the jury regards the submitted publication as praiseworthy:

First, the study brings the mostly neglected or even unknown source of textbooks for Yiddish and their highly committed authors to light, thus opening a new field for the research on educational media. In doing so, Mrs. Wiecki refutes the hitherto common academic view that this type of books only existed in the interwar years.

Second, the awardee conducts a contextualizing research on educational media on the basis of a remarkable knowledge about the social and educational history of the Jewish population in the Polish territories; thus she makes vividly clear what important kind of cultural-historical sources these textbooks are.

Third, the study shows convincingly the necessity of an inter-disciplinary and multi-methodical research on educational media, which Mrs. Wiecki has explicitly committed to.

We express our warm congratulations to Dr. Wiecki for her innovative achievements in the field of historical research on textbooks and the therefore bestowed Arsen-Djurović-Prize!