

AEJM Curatorial Education Programme 2013

Report by Michal Grünwald, Jewish Museum Frankfurt

As this year was my first time attending the AEJM Curatorial Education Programme, I was very curious to see what I would learn and who I would meet in Munich. The overall theme of the workshop tied in with the question of “Fake and Forgeries” of Judaica objects, a topic, which is relevant for all Jewish museums with Judaica collections.

The introduction into the temporary exhibition *A time for everything. Rituals against forgetting* was presented by its curator Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek herself. This was a great privilege as all the participants received a deeper understanding of the exhibition’s concept as well as the objects’ contextualization. The following day was filled with individual presentations by all curators of various museums in Europe. Each participant was asked to share an object with all its different dimensions. This sharpened our conscience for details, such as an object’s personal story, or its comparison with non-Jewish ritual objects of the same time and region. We then continued to ask ourselves, how Judaica can be included in temporary exhibitions and how it can be contextualized within a certain narrative.

Dr Otto Lohr from the Bavarian Museum Service gave us the chance to discuss the options and need for restoring Jewish built heritage and museums. This was just the beginning of a series of hands-on lectures. Visiting a private collector in the area offered all of us the opportunity to examine precious Judaica objects and to categorize them by time, region, silversmith and even possible fakes. Bernhard Purin gave us the tools to identify fakes and forgeries, while presenting some examples. This did not only help us during the workshop, but will definitely be a tool reused in Jewish museums all over Europe.

The last day consisted of a field trip to the Jewish Museum of Augsburg, where our host Dr Benigna Schönhagen gave us a tour of its permanent exhibition as well as of the very impressive Augsburg synagogue. Afterwards, she presented us multiple Judaica objects from the Augsburg collection, and with all of the previously gathered information we were able to look for all the necessary evidence to make a professional statement about the pieces at hand.

So what did I take home? Aside from connecting with wonderful people from all over Europe I got a deeper understanding into the various dimensions of Judaica. I learned what to look for, what reference books to use, and most importantly, whom to contact, if I’m confronted with a questions in the field of Judaica.