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„Fritz Steppat Prize 2026“

Young researchers' award by the Association for the Advancement of the ZMO e.V.

The Association for the Advancement of the ZMO e.V., founded in 2007, invites submissions for the Fritz Steppat Prize for the year 2026. The award recognizes two outstanding academic dissertations by young scholars working in fields that are at the focal point of research at the ZMO, the Leibniz Institute for Modern Oriental Studies in Berlin. Fritz Steppat (1923-2006) was a leading scholar of interdisciplinary and practice-oriented research on the Modern Middle East, which was called “Modern Oriental Studies” in the Federal Republic of Germany, in the parlance of the time. From 1992 to 1993, he was the first Interim Director of the Research Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, the precursor institution of today's ZMO. In 1998, the ZMO received Fritz Steppat's private research library in the framework of the Fritz and Gertraud Steppat Donation.

The prize is usually awarded every other year and carries a prize money of 500 Euro in each of the two categories of doctoral dissertation and MA thesis. We accept studies in German, English, or French in the disciplines and world regions represented at the ZMO, supervised by members of the Association for the Advancement of the ZMO, by ZMO Alumni, or by researchers currently working at the ZMO. Nominations will only be accepted from dissertation and thesis advisors. Authors cannot nominate themselves. The deadline is February 28, 2026. A brief explanatory statement (max. one page) by the advisor, and a copy of the degree certificate have to be included with the full text of the thesis or dissertation (published or unpublished). Submissions will be considered only if the respective degrees were awarded no longer than two years before the deadline (as per the date marked on the degree certificate). They should be the result of archival or field-based research and should make an original contribution to a scholarly debate on an empirical and/or theoretical level. The Association offers to publish the winning MA thesis in the ZMO Working Paper series (online), and the winning PhD dissertation in its revised form in ZMO Studien (Walter de Gruyter).

The Association for the Advancement of the ZMO will form a selection committee consisting of three members of the society, including at least one member of the executive board, who have not been part of the examination processes yielding the dissertations and theses under review. MA-theses and PhD dissertations will be considered separately. The selection of the prize winners will take place until mid-2026. The committee's decision is final. Each of the prize winners will present the results of their work in a public lecture at the ZMO in 2026. The general public will be informed about the prize, the winners, and their work.

Bettina Gräf, Achim von Oppen, Peter Wien

Members of the Selection Committee