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Press Release

DFG backs new Tübingen humanities research center

€2.7m for interdisciplinary research into early mankind, studying words, bones, genes, and tools from 30,000 to 3,000 years ago.

Tübingen, 11 December 2014

The German Research Foundation (DFG) has approved a new humanities center for advanced studies at the University of Tübingen. Professor Gerhard Jäger of the Linguistics institute and Professor Katerina Harvati of the Senckenberg Center for Human Evolution and Palaeoecology will receive some €2.7m over four years for the center, entitled "Words, Bones, Genes, Tools."

The unit will seek to fill a gap in our knowledge of early human history. The early phase of modern humans, 100,000 to 40,000 years ago, has been studied in detail in the fields of archaeology, paleoanthropology and genetics. Yet historical linguistic studies have so far examined a period of 5,000 to 10,000 years ago at most. How did humans develop in the intervening time – from 30,000 to 3,000 years ago? The new research center aims to shed light on this period via interdisciplinary collaboration between the fields of linguistics, paleoanthropology, archaeology and genetics. New developments in each of these disciplines now make it possible to work together effectively in this area.

Humanities Centers for Advanced Studies are a special type of funding instrument specifically tailored to the working methods used in these particular fields. They may achieve their specific profiles and attractiveness by deliberately adopting comparatively open-ended approaches or a decidedly experimental character. No thematic or interdisciplinary direction is prescribed.

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Professor Gerhard Jäger

Photo: Friedhelm Albrecht/University of Tübingen



Professor Katerina Harvati

Photo: Friedhelm Albrecht/University of Tübingen