

Testamentary practices at the periphery of the ius commune tradition: **freedom and oppression** (C. 1420–1620)

Study in Jena (DC4)

**Doctoral Candidate position within the MSCA Doctoral Network
TESTAMENT.**

About the location

In the centre of Germany, at a turning point of history in the chamber of the heart of the Protestant Reformation the University Jena and its Faculty of Law launched their ongoing project of understanding and teaching law as the proper means of solving conflicts by the power of thought and argument. Since then the Faculty has gained a prominent stake in jurisprudence. The Faculty raises her voice for liberty and equal rights and offers best conditions for study and research.

Jena nowadays is a Republic of Letters in one of Germanys most lovely quarters, surrounded by smooth hills carrying the ruins of medieval castles and fortresses over small vineyards along the banks of the river Saale. It is a vivid and modern city – together with Weimar and Erfurt it builds the so called „Thuringian axis of blessedness” only a stone’s throw away from Leipzig.

Keen on a cup of coffee in Goethe’s Summerhouse in Weimar or a glass of fruitful wine in Schiller’s in Jena? Curious about the „Thuringian Pentagon”, about the most beautiful noblewoman of the Middle Ages in the Naumburg Cathedral or looking for challenging Mountainbike-trails along the „Saale-Horizontal”? Anyway: Jena will give you a warm welcome in Paradise.

Description of the project

You will be based at the Lecture for Civil Law, German and European Legal History and Medical Law and the Research Unit East German Law at the Faculty of Law of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena which is a dynamic and innovation-driven university centrally located in Germany. With a broad range of disciplines, it shapes the future through excellent research and teaching. Its scientific excellence is reflected in the profile areas Light – Life – Liberty, which provide pioneering insights and sustainable solutions for the society of tomorrow.

The Lecture and the Research Unit is a vivid centre of Legal History in Thuringia and Saxony and hosts a network of Ph.D. students which you are invited to. Medieval Civil Law and Socialist Law are the research axes of both. The Faculty in general is strong in Legal History and Philosophy and Methodology of Law.

You will be supervised by prof. dr. Adrian Schmidt-Recla (legal history, Uni Jena) and co-supervised by prof. dr. Wouter Druwé (legal history, KU Leuven). In the course of this fellowship, you will work in Jena and six months in Leuven, two months at the Thuringian State Archive in Weimar and two months at the Saxonian State Archive in Leipzig.

You will deal with the role of jurists and interest groups in the preparation of and lobbying for particular stipulations in manorial regulations, especially through a study of the Kursächsische Konstitutionen from 1572, on inter alia testamentary law in the Electorate and the Duchy of Saxony. Thus, the research consortium will study different actors which determined policy making in this field of law and practice, and the extent to which they were able to use their power and influence to either widen or limit the degree of testamentary freedom.

You will examine this legislative process driven by interfering or contradictory perspectives and aims, in order to study whether *ius commune* has driven the regulations and practices into a special (Roman or Romanesque) direction or not. Archives, universities and libraries in Saxonia and Thuringia host plenty of material that has never been examined before to answer these questions.

Responsibilities

In the framework of the MSCA Doctoral Network TESTAMENT, you will have the following responsibilities:

- Researching the role of jurists and interest groups in the preparation of and lobbying for particular stipulations concerning last wills in manorial regulations in Saxony (16th-17th centuries), and preparing a doctoral dissertation on this topic.
- Actively participate in the activities of the TESTAMENT-network (summer and winter schools, monthly online meetings, concluding conference).
- Presenting the research at at least one international conference.
- Writing at least one peer-reviewed scientific article.
- Actively participate in the activities of the Lecture, the Research Unit and of the Doctoral School of Uni Jena.

- Conducting a six-month research stay at the KU Leuven.
- Conducting a two-month internship at the Thuringian State Archive in Weimar and another two-month internship at the Saxonian State Archive in Leipzig, where you will be involved in the registration of documents (concerning last wills).

Profile

You are creative and ambitious, hard-working, and persistent. We are looking for a candidate who meets the following requirements:

- You have a master's degree in law or you will have it by August 2026.
- You have good communicative skills, and the attitude to partake successfully in the work of a research team.
- You have a good command of the English language (spoken and written).
- You have a good passive command of German (written); active command of German (spoken) is an advantage.
- You have a passive command of Latin.

Eligibility criteria

Supported researchers must be doctoral candidates, i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment.

Recruited researchers can be of any nationality and must comply with the following mobility rule: they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary (Germany) for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date.

Offer

A meaningful job in a dynamic and ambitious university, in an interdisciplinary setting and within an international network. In addition, we offer you:

- Full-time employment for three years, with an intermediate evaluation (go/no-go) after the first year.
- The MSCA contributions - consisting of a living allowance of €4.010 (*1,012), a mobility allowance of €710 and, if applicable, a family allowance of €660 – grant you a gross salary of €3.920 or €4.460 (including family allowance).
- High-quality training programs and other support to grow into a self-aware, autonomous scientific researcher.

Application process

Do you recognize yourself in this profile and would you like to know more? Please contact prof. dr. Adrian Schmidt-Recla: adrian.schmidt-recla@uni-jena.de.

We invite you to submit a complete application by using the online application tool. Only applications that are submitted in this way are taken into account.

Your application should include a motivation letter (including the topic of your master thesis project), a curriculum vitae (including contact details of at least two references) and a list of your bachelor and master courses and grades (and ranking, if available).

Promising candidates will be contacted by email. Deadline for applications is Monday 20 April. After a first selection, candidates will be invited for a first round of interviews (online) on Wednesday 6 May 2026. A second round at the location of employment (FSU Jena) will be organized a few weeks later. The successful Doctoral Candidate will be employed from 1 September 2026.

Important Dates

- **Deadline:** Monday 20 April
- **First round of interviews** (online): Wednesday 6 May 2026
- **Second round:** at the location of employment (FSU Jena), a few weeks later
- **Start date:** 1 September 2026

Contact & Application

Contact: prof. dr. Adrian Schmidt-Recla: adrian.schmidt-recla@uni-jena.de

Where to apply: Until April 20, 2026:

- **via the University portal:** PhD Candidate within the MSCA - Doctoral Network TESTAMENT (Testamentary practices in the periphery of the ius commune tradition: freedom and oppression (c. 1420-1620))
- **via EURAXESS:** <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu>