

# CV

## PROF. DR. JÜRGEN RENN



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Born 11.07.1956  
married, three children

Jürgen Renn's research concerns the long-term developments of knowledge in consideration of processes of globalization and the historical dynamics that led to the Anthropocene. In over two decades at the MPIWG, his numerous research projects in knowledge development in relation to different cultures and historical periods have opened up new approaches, especially in the digital humanities. His central research topics include the origins of science in Europe and China, and the development of mechanics from antiquity to the twentieth century, including knowledge exchanges between Arabic and Latin language areas as well as between Europe and China in the early modern period. Additional research interests include the history of architectural knowledge and the history of modern physics, particularly the theory of relativity and quantum theory. On the basis of this research, a theory of knowledge evolution has emerged that incorporates cognitive dynamics as well as social contexts. Jürgen Renn has promoted the communication of scientific knowledge through a multitude of exhibitions, newspaper articles, television reports, and interviews and is deeply engaged in sustainability discussions at the intersection of science and politics.

## Academic and Professional Experience

- Since 2022 Founding Director of the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology in Jena ([MPIGEA](#)).
- Since 2021 Member of the Board of the Leopoldina Centre for Science Studies
- Since 2021 Chair of the Selection Committee for the Minerva Centers Programme of the Minerva Foundation
- 2019–2021 Deputy Chair of the Human Sciences Section, Max Planck Society
- 2017–2021 Member of the Steering Committee of the Science Platform Sustainability 2030
- 2016–2019 Chair of the Human Sciences Section, Max Planck Society
- Since 2019 Member of the Board of Directors for Energy Systems of the Future (ESYS)
- Since 2017 Vice-President of the International Academy for the History of Science
- Since 2014 Member of the Programme Council of Futurium (formerly House of Futures)
- Since 2012 Member of the General Assembly of the IASS Potsdam (on delegation of the President of the Max Planck Society)
- Since 2011 Member of the Board of Directors of the Berliner Antike Kollegs
- Since 2009 Chair Scientific Board of the Minerva Humanities Center at Tel Aviv University
- 2007–2019 Member of the Board of the Excellence Cluster Topoi
- Since 2006 Honorary Professor for the History of Science, Freie Universität Berlin
- Since 1995 Honorary Professor for the History of Science, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
- Since 1994 Director at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin (Founding Director)
- 1993–1994 Visiting Professor of Philosophy of Science (Chair substitution Paul Feyerabend), ETH Zurich
- 1991–1996 Co-director, Arbeitsstelle Albert Einstein, Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Educational Research (together with Peter Damerow)
- 1991 Co-founder of the international project group for the introduction of new technologies of the History of Science supported by the National Science Foundation and the Italian Ministry of Research
- 1990–1992 Associate of the Department of Physics, Harvard University
- 1989–1992 Assistant, then Associate Professor for Philosophy, Physics, the History of Science, and the Philosophy of Science, Boston University
- 1986–1992 Assistant, then Associate Editor of the *Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Boston University

## Education

- 1987 Ph.D. in Mathematical Physics, Technische Universität Berlin
- 1983–1986 Study and Research in Rome, Princeton, Paris, Boston
- 1983 Diploma (M.S.) in Physics, Freie Universität Berlin

## Languages

German, English, Italian, French, Spanish, Latin, Ancient Greek

## Distinctions

### Awards

Foreign Associate in the Class of Physical, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences at the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arte in Venedig (2021)

Corresponding Member Deutsches Archäologisches Institut DAI (2019)

Medaglia Comandiniiana (2018)

Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science AAAS (2018)

Premio Internazionale Marco & Alberto Ippolito (2014)

Francis Bacon Award (2014)

Max Planck Communitas Prize (2014)

ESHS Gustav Neuenschwander Preis (2014)

Premio Anassilaos International (2011)

PIRELLI International Award (1998)

### Fellowships and Guest Professorships

Guest Professorship, University of Bergamo (2020)

Zeeman Fellow, Vossius Center, University of Amsterdam (2019)

NOMIS Scholar (2019)

Francis Bacon Visiting Professor, CalTech (2015)

Visiting Scholar, University of Vienna (2013)

Visiting Scholar, University of Pavia (2004)

Silverman Chair, Cohen Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Ideas at the University of Tel Aviv (1993)

Visiting Scholar, Forschungsschwerpunkt Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Wissenschaftstheorie der Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Neuvorhaben of the Max Planck Society in Berlin (1992)

Fellow, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (1988–1989)

Fellow, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome (1988)

Fellow, Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Berlin (1988)

Fellow, Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes (1983–1986)

## Memberships (Selection)

American Association for the Advancement of Science AAAS (since 2015)

History of Science Society HSS (since 2014)

European Society for the History of Science ESHS (since 2012)

Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina (since 2003)

Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft DPG (since 1998)

## Editorial Work (Selection)

## Books

Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science (Springer Books / Series Editor, with Lydia Patton)

Edition Open Access (Founding Editor)

Einstein Studies (Birkhäuser-Springer / Editorial Advisory Board)

History of Modern Science (Brill / Series editor, with Massimiliano Badino und Alexander Blum)

Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Physics (Oxford University Press / Advisory Board)

The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein (Princeton University Press, Former Editor)

## Journals

*Chinese Annals of History of Science and Technology* (Chinese Academy of Science / Editor-in-Chief, with Zhang Baichun)

*Archive for the History of Exact Sciences* (Springer / Editorial Board)

*Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* (Brepols / Vice-President, Academy Council)

*The European Physical Journal, H* (Springer / Editorial Board)

*Science in Context* (Cambridge / Editor, with Moritz Epple and Yossef Schwartz)

*Living Reviews in Relativity* (Springer / Former Editor)

*Substantia*. An International journal on History of Chemistry (Firenze University Press / Scientific committee)

## Funded Research Projects (Selection)

2019–2021 Leonardos Intellectual Cosmos (*Exhibition, NOMIS Foundation, MPG*)

2019– Einstein-Zentrum Chronoi (*Founding Member, Einstein Foundation*)

2018–2021 BIFOLD – Berlin Center for Machine Learning (*PI, BMBF*)

2015–2020 Convivencia – Iberian to Global Dynamics (500 – 1750) (*PI, MPG*)

2014–2022 Research Program on the History of the Max Planck Society (*Mitglied des Kollegiums, MPG*)

- 2013–2014 Archimedes. Art and Invention – Science, in cooperation with the Museo Galileo Florenz (*Exhibition, several Italian Sponsors, MPG*)
- 2012–2024 CRC 980 Epistemes in Motion, in cooperation with Freien Universität Berlin (*Project Leader, DFG*)
- 2010–2014 Probability in classical and quantum mechanics (*German Israeli Foundation*)
- 2010–2011 Weltwissen (*Exhibition, Co-organizer within the framework of the MPG, several Sponsors*)
- 2008–2018 Excellence Cluster TOPOI–The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations, in cooperation with Freien Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, BBAW, DAI and SPK (*PI, DFG*)
- 2008 Max Planck – Revolutionär wider Willen (*Exhibition, Deutsches Technikmuseum, MPG*)
- 2006–2012 History and Foundations of Quantum Physics, in cooperation with Fritz-Haber-Institute of the MPG (*Innovation Fund of the President of the Max Planck Society*)
- 2006–2010 Knowledge and Belief in Early Modern Science – Jesuits on Statics, Dynamics, Mathematics and Astronomy between Galileo and Newton (*German Israeli Foundation*)
- 2005–2016 SFB 644 Transformations of Antiquity, in cooperation with Freien Universität and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (*Project Leader, DFG*)
- 2002–2009 Epistemic History of Architecture, in cooperation with Bibliotheca Hertziana Rome (*Innovation Fund of the President of the Max Planck Society*)
- 2002–2005 Albert Einstein–Ingenieur des Universums, and Einsteinjahr 2005 (*Exhibition and Public relations project, Siemens-Stiftung, BMBF, Kulturstiftung des Bundes, MPG, et al.*)
- 2002–2004 European Heritage Online Project ECHO (*PI, EU, MPG*)
- 2000– Digitale Edition of the sources for the dome in Florence: The Years of the Cupola (*PI, Opera del Duomo, Florence, MPG*)
- 2000 Pompeji – Natur, Wissenschaft und Technik in einer römischen Stadt, in cooperation with Deutschen Museum München (*Exhibition, DM München, MPG*)
- 1998– The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative CDLI (*Co-Director, UCLA, Mellon Foundation, IMLS, NSF, NEH, MPG*)
- 1998–2003 Development of Mechanical Knowledge in China. Joint research project of the partner group at the MPIWG and the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Science (*PI, MPG*)
- 1998 – 2005 ARCHIMEDES. Realizing the vision of an open digital research library for the study of long-term developments in the history of mechanics, (*PI, DFG, NSF*)

## Publications (Selection)

(full list: <https://pure.mpg.de/cone/persons/resource/persons194294>)

- Albert Einstein / Moritz Schlick: Briefwechsel.* Philosophische Bibliothek, vol. 754. Hamburg: Meiner. Co-editors Fynn Ole Engler, Mathias Iven, 2022.
- How Einstein Found His Field Equations: Sources and Interpretation.* Heidelberg: Springer, 2022. Co-author: Michel Janssen
- Leonardo's Intellectual Cosmos: An Exhibition of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Dietrich Bonhoeffer-Saal 10 May to 28 June 2021.* Florence: Giunti, 2021. Co-editors: Matteo Valleriani, Sabine Hoffmann, and Antonio Becchi, 2021.
- The Evolution of Knowledge: Rethinking Science for the Anthropocene.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020 (Paperback, French, German, and Italian editions 2022; Chinese and Vietnamese editions in production).
- Einstein on Einstein: Autobiographical and Scientific Reflections.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020. Co-author: Hanoch Gutfreund (Polish, German, and Italian editions 2022; Chinese, Slovakien, and Vietnamese editions in production).
- Science in Court Society: Giovanni Battista Benedetti's Diversarum speculationum mathematicarum et physicarum liber (Turin, 1585).* Sources: Max Planck Research Library in the History and Development of Knowledge. Berlin: Edition Open Access, 2019. Co-author: Pietro D. Omodeo.
- Emergence and Expansion of Pre-Classical Mechanics.* Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science, vol. 333. Cham: Springer, 2018. Co-editors: Rivka Feldhay, Jürgen Renn, Matthias Schemmel, Matteo Valleriani
- Gespaltene Vernunft. Einstein–Fleck–Schlick.* Berlin, Matthes & Seitz, 2018. Co-author: Olaf Engler.
- The Formative Years of Relativity: The History and Meaning of Einstein's Princeton Lectures.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Co-author: Hanoch Gutfreund (Chinese edition in production).
- Das Anthropozän. Zum Stand der Dinge.* Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2015. Co-editor: Bernd Scherer.
- Relativity: the Special and the General Theory, 100th Anniversary Edition.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. Co-author: Hanoch Gutfreund (Paperback and Chinese editions 2019; Russian edition in production.)
- Globalization of Knowledge in the Post-Antique Mediterranean, 700–1500.* New York: Routledge, 2016. Co-editor: Sonja Brentjes.
- The Road to Relativity: The History and Meaning of Einstein's "The Foundation of General Relativity."* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. Co-author: Hanoch Gutfreund (Spanish edition Tusquets Editores, 2017; Chinese edition, 2019).
- Das Anthropozän. Zum Stand der Dinge.* Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2015. Co-editor: Bernd Scherer.
- Wissensgeschichte der Architektur (3 Bände):*  
*Max Planck Research Library in the History and Development of Knowledge.* Berlin: Edition Open Access, 2014. Co-editors: Wilhelm Osthues, Hermann Schlimme  
<https://mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/3/index.html>

## Participation in science policy statements

Akademienprojekt “Energiesysteme der Zukunft” (ESYS). Erlach, Berit, Sabine Fuss, Oliver Geden, Ulrich Glotzbach, Hans-Martin Henning, Karen Pittel, Jürgen Renn, Simona Rens, Dirk Uwe Sauer, Christoph M. Schmidt, Indra Spiecker genannt Döhmann, Christoph Stemmler, Cyril Stephanos, Jessica Strefler. “Was sind negative Emissionen, und warum brauchen wir sie?(Kurz Erklärt!)”. Nationale Akademie der Wissenschaften Leopoldina / acatech – Deutsche Akademie der Technikwissenschaften / Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften, Mai 2022: [http://doi.org/10.48669/ESYS\\_2022-2](http://doi.org/10.48669/ESYS_2022-2).

Akademienprojekt “Energiesysteme der Zukunft” (ESYS). Bett, Andreas W., Berit Erlach, Ulrich Glotzbach, Justus Haucap, Hans-Martin Henning, Jürgen Kühling, Anja Lapac, Ellen Matthies, Karen Pittel, Mario Ragwitz, Jürgen Renn, Dirk Uwe Sauer, Christoph M. Schmidt, Indra Spiecker genannt Döhmann, Frithjof Staiß, Annika Seiler, Cyril Stephanos, Eberhard Umbach, Anke Weidlich. 2021. *Wenn nicht jetzt, wann dann – wie die Energiewende gelingt.*: <https://www.acatech.de/publikation/neustart/>.

COVID-19 heralds a new epistemology of science for the public good. Caniglia, Guido, Carlo Jaeger, Eva Schernhammer, Gerald Steiner, Federica Russo, Jürgen Renn, Peter Schlosser, and Manfred D. Laubichler. *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 43/2 (2021):59. doi: 10.1007/s40656-021-00413-7.

Leopoldina Working Group (Ad-hoc-Stellungnahme). Happe, Kathrin et al. 2019. *Klimaziele 2030: Wege zu einer nachhaltigen Reduktion der CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissionen*. Halle (Saale): Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina e.V., Nationale Akademie der Wissenschaften: <https://www.leopoldina.org/publikationen/detailansicht/publication/klimaziele-2030-wege-zu-einer-nachhaltigen-reduktion-der-co2-emissionen-2019/>.

Leopoldina Working Group (Ad-hoc-Stellungnahme). 2020. *Coronavirus-Pandemie – Die Krise nachhaltig überwinden* (13. April 2020). Halle (Saale): Nationale Akademie der Wissenschaften Leopoldina: <https://www.leopoldina.org/publikationen/detailansicht/publication/coronavirus-pandemie-die-krise-nachhaltig-ueberwinden-13-april-2020/>.

Leopoldina Working Group (Ad-hoc-Stellungnahme). 2020. *Energiewende 2030: Europas Weg zur Klimaneutralität*. Deutschen Akademie der Technikwissenschaften und der Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften Herausgegeben von der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften Leopoldina: <https://www.leopoldina.org/publikationen/detailansicht/publication/energiewende-2030-europas-weg-zur-klimaneutralitaet-2020/>.