

OXFORD CENTRE FOR HEBREW AND JEWISH STUDIES

**Hebrew Manuscript Studies:
Codicology, Palaeography, Art History**

SUMMER WORKSHOP

29 June to 12 July 2018

**Project Leaders: Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (Paris)
César Merchán-Hamann (OCHJS and Bodleian Library)**

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 8 APRIL 2018

Recent years have witnessed an unprecedented interest in Hebrew manuscripts in various fields of academic Jewish studies. The development of new technologies, such as the DigiPal tool to deal with medieval handwriting, online accessibility of the contents of the major European Hebrew manuscript collections (the British Library, Bodleian Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, etc.), creation of manuscripts databases including dated codices (Sfar Data), Cairo Genizah fragments (Friedberg Geniza Project), Talmud Bavli Variants (Friedberg Project), and European fragments (Books within Books), and the creation of programmes dedicated to the study and preservation of Jewish archives and libraries (Yerusha), have made and continue to make the manuscripts readily available for scholarly investigation. This readiness of access to information has already given a new impetus to 'the return to primary sources' in historical research and encouraged new editorial projects concerning medieval Hebrew texts.

Together with this renewed dynamism of historical and textual studies based on the unprecedented availability and ease with which students can consult manuscripts in good quality reproduction, there is a growing awareness of the necessity to understand the material and cognitive aspects involved in manuscript production and circulation. Indeed, the accessibility of the sources needs to go hand in hand with a focused preparation of the students and scholars to approach these handwritten medieval sources in their specificity and complexity.

Indeed, many students and scholars who are using increasingly original manuscripts in their historical or literary research feel, and often express, the inadequacy of methodological tools at their disposal in order to better comprehend and exploit this rich source material. The most frequently expressed need is to place the manuscripts in their chronological and geographical context, in order to understand their real role as a historical source or as a witness in a chain of transmission of a literary text. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of extant medieval Hebrew manuscripts and fragments (over 95%) do not bear an explicit date and place of their production.

The disciplines of codicology (the study of the material aspects of Hebrew books), diplomatics (the study of material aspects and legal formulae tradition of documents), palaeography (the study of script and handwriting), and diplomatics (the critical analysis of the conventions, formulae and usages in document production) have been developed (first,

since the late seventeenth century, for Latin and Greek writing tradition, and more recently, since the 1960s in France and Israel, also for Hebrew) and provide an answer to this evident need of historical and textual research. Taking on board new technological developments, the disciplines of codicology, palaeography and diplomatics provide specialist tools and methods of analysis of medieval Hebrew manuscripts.

The Summer Workshop in Oxford proposes a comprehensive and specialised programme in the fields of Hebrew codicology, paleography, diplomatics, art history, history of the book, and collections, conservation and digital humanities applied to Hebrew manuscripts. Several specialists will provide in-depth methodological introduction and research guidance to the fields of Hebrew manuscripts studies. The Workshop is organised in collaboration with the Bodleian Library, which will allow access to original manuscripts in situ for the teaching sessions. Lecturers will include Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, Professor Sarit Shalev-Eyni and Dr. César Merchán-Hamann.

Suitably-qualified scholars and students are invited to apply. Space for the Workshop is limited and early application is advised. Selection of participants will be on the basis of the potential benefit to their studies from attending the Workshop.

A limited number of bursaries is available. The bursaries cover travel, tuition, accommodation and maintenance costs, and will be awarded at the discretion of the organisers on the basis of financial circumstances and suitability for the Workshop.

Workshop Fee: £100

Applications should reach the Centre by 8 April 2018.

Applicants will be informed on 16 April 2018 whether their application has been successful and the Workshop Fee will be due for payment by 30 April 2018.

For more detailed information see: www.ochjs.ac.uk/

or contact:

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