



Call for applications

3 Post-doc positions at the Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium) as part of the Advanced ERC project “The origin and early development of philosophy in tenth-century al-Andalus: the impact of ill-defined materials and channels of transmission” (PhilAnd) conducted by Prof. Godefroid de Callataÿ.

PhilAnd is a five-year Advanced ERC project to start in October 2017 at the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) under the supervision of Prof. Godefroid de Callataÿ. The objective of PhilAnd is to conduct a large-scale exploration of how, and under which form, philosophy appeared for the first time in al-Andalus. At the crossroads of several major lines of enquiries in modern scholarship and in line with recent discoveries having important chronological implications, PhilAnd focuses on the 10th century, a period usually disregarded by historians on the assumption that philosophy as such was not cultivated in the Iberian Peninsula before the 11th-12th centuries. Its originality is also to put emphasis on ‘ill-defined’ materials and channels of transmission, a field which remains largely unexplored. PhilAnd will be conducted in partnership with the Warburg Institute (University of London).

As part of this project, three post-doc positions of three years each (to start from 2 January 2018) are offered at the UCL in relation with the three following sub-projects (SP):

1) **the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’**: This SP will aim at producing a comprehensive survey of all the elements which are likely to inform us about the chronology of redaction and – where applicable – of introduction into al-Andalus of the three works that have commonly been ascribed in sources to this most influential group of thinkers known as *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (‘The Brethren of Purity’), namely: a) the *Rasā’il* (‘the Epistles’); b) the *Risāla Jāmi’a* (‘The Comprehensive Epistle’) and, c) the *Risāla Jāmi’at al-Jāmi’a* (‘The Super-Comprehensive Epistle’). This chronology is currently far from clear.

2) **Ibn Waḥshiyya and the Nabatean Corpus**: This SP aims to evaluate the impact of the *Filāḥa Nabatiyya* (‘The Nabatean Agriculture’), a complex and enigmatic Arabic treatise on agriculture written in the Orient, on the development of both Islamic and Jewish Neoplatonism in al-Andalus from the 10th to the 12th century. The focus will be on the reception of the ‘philosophical’ and bāṭinī (rather than agronomical) aspects of the work, with the aim of understanding why this notoriously esoteric work remained so influential even to Jewish thinkers like Judah Halevi and Maimonides.

3) **Ibn Masarra**: This SP will lead to the first monograph entirely devoted to Ibn Masarra’s *Kitāb khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf* (‘The Book of the Properties of Letters’), consisting of an extensively

annotated translation of this mystical treatise, together with an in-depth exploration of its place in the history of *‘ilm al-ḥurūf*, the Islamic science of letters – including its links with the Jewish Kabbala – up to the time of Ibn ‘Arabī. This will fill an important gap and provide a valuable resource for the study of Islamic mysticism in al-Andalus.

The qualifications required for any of these sub-projects are:

- a PhD in Islamic Studies, in Middle Eastern Studies, or related fields;
- an excellent command of Classical Arabic (the knowledge of additional languages such as ancient Greek, Latin and in particular Hebrew is considered an advantage);
- a first-rate track record and research experience;
- publications of articles in peer-reviewed international journals or monographs with recognized academic publishers;
- academic writing and presentation skills in English (the working language of the project);
- the ability to work both individually and as part of a team.

These three post-doc positions are full-time equivalent. They are offered for a period of 12 months, renewable twice (three years in total) upon good performance. The post-docs retained will be required to reside in Belgium for the whole period of their fellowship. They will be asked to contribute to the intellectual life of the ERC project and of the UCL.

How to apply?

Applications should be made via pdf files and contain the following:

- (1) a cover letter setting out the candidate’s qualifications and motivation for applying for one of the three positions offered (maximum 2 pages);
- (2) a curriculum vitae (maximum 3 pages);
- (3) a list of publications;
- (4) two samples of published work (articles, chapters) in pdf (preferably in English);
- (5) a transcript of grades and/or copy of the PhD certificate;
- (6) the name (with title, affiliation and email) of four people who have accepted to be contacted as potential referees.

Applications should be made electronically and sent to the following address:

godefroid.decaltay@uclouvain.be

The application deadline is 10 November 2017

Interviews will be arranged between 4 and 6 December 2017.

Candidates selected for the interviews will be contacted by mid-November 2017, and asked to write a short research design on a topic to be announced at that moment.

Employment should become effective from 2 January 2018.