**Call for Applications**

**Two Doctoral, Post-Doctoral,
Study Engineering or Research Engineering Contracts
in Computational Literary Criticism**

**ERC Synergy MiDRASH (Grant N° 101071829)**

**Application deadline: 10 July 2025 Midnight, Central European Summer Time**

The **École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL**-University in Paris, France, is inviting candidates for **two Doctoral / Post-Doctoral scholarships / Research Engineers** positions in the field(s) of **Digital Humanities and Jewish Studies, more precisely Computational Literary Criticism of Classical Hebrew Texts**. The positions are opened in the framework of the **ERC Synergy project MiDRASH** (Migrations of Textual and Scribal Traditions via Large-Scale Computational Analysis of Medieval Manuscripts in Hebrew Script) at the team of Professor Daniel Stökl-Ben Ezra.

We look for candidates for the two case-study projects mentioned below. Candidates need to position themselves with regard to the case-studies and their knowledge in Hebrew and Jewish studies and in DH / Computer Science. We will select from among the candidates the team of people most suited to fulfil both tasks and therefore look for complementarity of expertise of different candidates as well as interdisciplinarity of individual applicants. So it is equally possible for people with outstanding knowledge in only either Jewish Studies or Computer Science to apply (and then work on the as well as for candidates combining knowledge in both fields, e.g. very good in NLP (with good Hebrew) but less knowledge in Rabbinics. Depending on the level of recruitment and salary (PhD vs Postdoc / Research Engineer) the length of the contracts will be 3 years or 2 years. It is also possible to apply for less than a full position. The successful candidates on a doctoral level will prepare their doctorate at the EPHE, PSL, under the supervision of Professor Daniel Stökl-Ben Ezra. On a post-doctoral level, candidates will work on a monograph on the topic jointly authored with other team-members.

**Context:** The ERC Synergy project MiDRASH (Migrations of Textual and Scribal Traditions via Large-Scale Computational Analysis of Medieval Manuscripts in Hebrew Script) combines teams led by Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra (EPHE, PSL), Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (EPHE, PSL), Nachum Dershowitz (Tel Aviv-University), Avi Shmidman (Bar Ilan University), as well as the National Library of Israel and Haifa University. With a total budget of over 10 million euros, this is the largest publicly funded project in Jewish Studies. It aims to revolutionize our understanding of the literary process, text and manuscript production in Ancient and Medieval Judaism by striving to automatically transcribe ca. 30.000 manuscripts in Hebrew characters until the 16th century, annotate them linguistically, calculate the intertextuality graph and perform a series of case-studies as well as improving or developing the algorithms necessary for that. For a brief presentation of the project please check <https://escripta.hypotheses.org/500> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqAWSw-vtn0>

**Project A: Prehistory of Tannaitic Texts**: Classical Rabbinic literature consists of collections of Rabbinic sayings woven together into discussions and expanded by different layers of anonymous redactors. The texts preserved in medieval manuscripts are widely thought to have passed through a much more fluid, perhaps oral, phase of transmission before the creation of the surviving “works.” Advised by Daniel Stökl and Hayim Lapin (U Maryland) and in collaboration with the team members in Paris and elsewhere, large scale intertextual analyses of the corpus of manuscripts of Rabbinic literature will be performed in order to investigate the possibility of reconstructing textual layers earlier than the classical tannaitic and amoraic works currently before us. Alignment of matching strings from across the corpus will allow us to recover “similar but different” units of traditions, while tracking their placement and differences as singletons (microforms) and in clusters (macroforms) will allow us to recover the paths these traditional materials took. Graph models have barely been applied to our material, although there has been some interest in graph representations of individual texts (Dekker, Birnbaum 2016) and corpora (Jänike et al. 2016), and some preliminary work on networks of citations within our corpora (Satlow, Sperling, forthcoming) A database of the major complete manuscripts of the complete Tannaitic works (*Mishnah, Tosefta, Mekhilta deRabbi Yishmael, Sifra, Sifre Numeri, Sifre Deuteronomy* (under creation by D. Stökl and H. Lapin) will serve as part of the raw material.

**Project B: Modeling Textual Fluidity in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Literature**: Advised by Daniel Stökl and in collaboration with his team members in Paris and the other teams, the researcher(s) in this project will be responsible for developing a typology for textual variances of late antique and early medieval Jewish literature. Each manuscript differs from all others not only with regard to layout but also with regard to text. The proponents of the New Philology stress the impact of individual scribes and readers in the fluid transmission of the text, and consider ‘variance’ as an intrinsic characteristic of medieval writings (Cerquiglini). The degree of scribal deliberate interventions (as distinct from mechanical lapsus calami) vary according to the text’s status, the book’s quality and destination. Some texts are copied very faithfully. Manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, for instance, only differ in minute details, spelling variants or unintentional mistakes, very rarely alternative words. Talmud and exegetical, liturgical or mystical texts show a far greater fluidity in their transmission with regard to order, content and / or language. Relating text, genre as well as status with the materiality (layout, paleography) and provenance, we want to map these fluidities for a sample of texts in order to develop a typology of mouvance (Zumthor) for late antique/early medieval Judaism literature using computational text criticism and phylogenetics (e.g. Roelli 2020, Camps 2021). The comparative investigation will include important texts for which we have large amounts of excellent etexts (e.g. Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Halakhic Midrashim) as well as newly transcribed Medieval Midrashic texts and the Seder Rav Amram Gaon, but the precise choice of texts will depend on the candidate filling the position.

**Place:** Paris, France. The researchers will benefit from shared MiDRASH office space at the Campus Condorcet. They are expected to be physically present in the office for at least two days a week.

**Interview date:** 14-30 July 2025

**Starting date of the contract:** By preference 1 September, 1 October or 1 November 2025

**Length of the contract:** On the PhD Level: 3 years. On the Postdoc Level: 2 years. Study or Research Engineering depending on salary and previous working experience in the frame of our budget, probably 2 years.

**Gross Salary:**Conditions of remuneration for doctoral students’ contract are defined by the decree of 26 December 2022, which can be consulted at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000046820745> and for post-doctoral researchers by the decree of 4 November 2021, which can be consulted at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000044293348> and for Study Engineers by this information sheet: <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/ingenieur-d-etudes-46241> and for Research Engineers by this information sheet: <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/ingenieur-de-recherche-46388>

**Mandatory qualifications (for any level):**

If coming from Computer Sciences at least a basic knowledge of Hebrew

If coming from Biblical or Jewish studies at least basic programming or data modeling (XML and or SQL skills)

Very good written and spoken English

Team-person

**On a doctoral level:**

M.A. in Biblical Studies, Jewish Studies or M.Sc. in Computer Sciences

**On a postdoctoral level:**

PhD in Jewish Studies or Computer Sciences

**Plus a selection of the following (for any level):**

Excellent Hebrew

Good Knowledge of Rabbinic literature

Good Knowledge of Jewish literature of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Experience in textual or redactional criticism

Programming skills, preferably in python.

Expertise in data modeling (XML and/or SQL)

Good communication skills

Experience in working with NLP

Experience in Machine Learning

Aramaic

French

**The application should include the following**

* Letter of motivation (1 page maximum)
* A project how you would fulfill your role in the case study (3 pages maximum)
* CV
* Writing Sample (M.A. or Ph.D. thesis, relevant article)
* If extant: list of publications
* If extant: link to github repo and links to digital publications of data and/or code
* Official transcript of Master results / a proof of a doctoral degree
* Two recommendation letters

**Applications and / or inquiries for further information should be sent to:** Daniel.stoekl@ephe.psl.eu and athina.boleti@ephe.psl.eu by 10 July 2025 Midnight CEST.

