

Call for applications for 5 one-year postdoctoral fellowships (2016-2017)

The Research Centre “Religions and Societies in the Mediterranean world” (RESMED), a laboratory of excellence affiliated to Sorbonne University (Paris) offers five (5) one-year RESMED postdoctoral fellowships, starting July 2016. Deadline for applications: 15 March 2016.

Eligibility

The project will have clearly to fit in [the scientific program of the Labex RESMED](#).

Candidates will have defended their doctorates in France or abroad less than 5 years ago, or less than 10 years if they can justify research experience in other academic institutions. Candidates holding a PhD from our founding institutions are not allowed to apply (Universities of Paris-Sorbonne, Panthéon- Sorbonne, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes).

Application documents

[Application form to download](#)

Application letter

Curriculum vitae

Postdoctoral project description (up to 5 pages)

Two recommendation letters

Electronic copy of the thesis if not published at the time of application

A significant paper in electronic format

The application may be submitted in French or English.

Submission

The application will be sent in pdf format before **March 15, 2016** at midnight (Paris) to the Director (beatrice.caseau@college-de-france.fr) and the Secretaries of the Labex RESMED (julie.masquelier-loorius@labex-resmed.fr and stavros.lazaris@labex-resmed.fr). Decisions will be taken at the end of May 2016.

Starting date of the contract

1st July 2016

Net salary

About 2000 €/month

A final report has to be provided at the end of the contract.

Profiles

List of post-doctoral profiles submitted to the councils on November 12 2015.
5 candidates will be financed out of 10 profiles.

- **Profile 1 (research axis: A1)**

Conversions and controversy: Christian culture of the late-ancient and medieval Near East in Muslim lands

Recent work in comparative codicology, particularly in the context of the European program COMST, revealed a delay in the study of manuscripts written in Syriac and Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script). The study of these manuscripts is fundamental for editing texts, to further our knowledge of literary circles and the transmission of Christian culture in Muslim lands. To provide a basis for such a study, the database e-ktobé was developed in collaboration between Orient & Méditerranée, IRHT and the Centre de conservation du livre. It is now hosted by IRHT's online platform.

The recruited postdoctoral fellow will devote part of the year (30%) to the enrichment of the above-mentioned database. He / she will receive training and help to work on the database. The studied manuscripts for the database can match the research topic chosen by the postdoctoral fellow. Wherever possible, the description will be based on an autoptic review of manuscripts. According to his/her interest, the post-doctoral fellow will participate and be an essential actor in the preparation of the 15th Syriac studies Roundtable.

The candidate shall offer a personal research project in order to produce within one year either a critical edition of a Christian Arabic or Syriac text or the translation and annotation in French of a text already published (with a possible publication in the collection "Library of the Christian East" published by the Belles-Lettres), or a study of manuscripts, whether from a material point of view (codicology) or as a witness to the life of a literate circle. Whichever the candidate chooses to undertake, the work must be completed within a year.

The / candidate (s) must have some experience in working on manuscripts and a solid knowledge of Syriac and Garshuni.

- **Profile 2 (research axis: A1)**

The situation of the Manicheans in the intellectual, social and political context of the Roman and Byzantine Empires

In order to properly illustrate the actual situation of Manicheans in the society of their time, the candidate's project will need to focus on various research themes such as the stories of forced conversions, the Greek and Latin abjuration formulas, the study of anti-Manichaean legislation through various edicts. The role played by bishops and even popes, in the implementation of laws against the Manicheans may also be the topic of innovative research.

The post-doctoral fellow is expected to produce, in a year, a publishable research work, such as an annotated translation of one or more texts or a thematic study and he/she should actively participate in the organization of a workshop.

The / candidate (s) should demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the sources in their original language, present a draft outlining their project's objectives, methodology and propose a timetable for his/her research.

- **Profile 3 (research axes: A1, C2)**

Comparative religious law (Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Zoroastrianism)

Each of the monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as Zoroastrianism developed its own legal tradition that rules over not only ritual but also a great many aspects of individuals' and family's daily life, inheritance, relationships with neighbours, or agriculture. Most often, these aspects are studied separately in a single tradition. But to give just one example, comparisons, contrasts, influences and possible reactions between the ecclesiastical laws of Syriac churches and Islamic law or Jewish law are very interesting and relatively little studied.

He/she can propose a personal research project in comparative Law. He/she shall be free to choose a specific theme to study. He/she should expect to help in publishing research work produced by the Labex or organize a round-table.

The candidate must have very good command of at least one of these traditions and notions of another one and should present a research project on comparative law between at least two religions.

- **Profile 4 (research axis: A2)**

Shrines and deities of pre-Islamic Arabia in ancient Semitic inscriptions (South Arabian, Nabataean, dedanite, taymanite, thamoudean, etc.). Analysis and distribution maps.

The recruited post-doctoral researcher will record in a database the divine names attested in inscriptions and graffiti and, whenever possible, divine names used in compound theophorous names. Using relevant criteria, the post-doctoral fellow will then focus on mapping them, in a geographical information system (GIS), to obtain distribution maps which will eventually be analysed and interpreted. The aim is to highlight the dissemination areas of deities attested in the Arabian Peninsula and thereby show potential overlap of these areas, their limits, disparities in the concentration of mentions, in order to produce a spatial picture of the pre-Islamic Arabic pantheon. The candidate can count on the collaboration of the UMR 8167 Semitic World's team of researchers, as well as the existing databases, already available online for South Arabia and North Arabia (Dedanite and Safaitic). The aim is the publication of a commentary of one or more maps, at the end of the post-doctoral period.

The candidate should already be familiar with at least one of the intended corpus to be studied. He / she will be proficient in at least one database software and acquire the basics of GIS (ArcGIS or free software if that solution is preferred), if it is not already the case.

- **Profile 5 (research axis: B2)**

"The doctor equal to a god": religion, ethics and medical practices in the ethical treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus and their Galenic reading

The great ethical and bioethical questions that upset and often divide our contemporary societies were already partly addressed in ancient medical science. In particular, issues such as abortion, the origin of life or, on the contrary, the end of life, did not leave the first doctors indifferent. Within the Hippocratic Corpus, a group of treatises, called ethical, specifically addresses these issues. Besides the famous Oath, other treatises entitled Laws, Precepts and Propriety, dating from the early imperial period, ought to be mentioned. Although envisaged as rational medicine, in the Hippocratic tradition the physician who was called a philosopher was sometimes even compared to a god (ἰητρὸς γὰρ φιλόσοφος ἰσόθεος). Galen himself, in the second century AD, did not hesitate to call Hippocrates divine. Taking in account the timely discovery by the UMR 8167 Greek medicine team of an manuscript in Arabic from the Great Mosque of Damascus that preserved several fragments of the commentary on the Oath (lost in Greek) attributed to Galen, it seems highly desirable to revisit this group of ethical treatises mentioned above and study their relation with contemporary philosophical movements, and look at this figure of the doctor equal to a god, as heralding Christ the doctor.

As bioethical issues are almost ubiquitous in today's society, a new approach and a new reading of the ethical treatises of the ancient medical literature are much needed.

The / candidate (s) must demonstrate a research expertise on ethics treatises in Greek.

- **Profile 6 (research axes: B2, C1)**

"Oracles and individual destinies." Anthropological approach of Pharaonic Egyptian sources: identification of consulted deities and their fields of action, characteristics of divination practices and content analysis in the light of Near Eastern, Greco-Roman and Byzantine sources

Magic in Ancient Egypt is an integral part of everyday life and is inseparable from religion. The terminology and the instruments used reveal a close relationship between divination and magic; a magician operated as a soothsayer. The oracles were interrogation techniques for gods and divination rituals materialized responses of the deities to questions put to them. These practices that involved interpretations sometimes had therapeutic applications too, produced objects called "spells" or implied the observation of natural phenomena.

The objective of this project is to highlight the cultural permanence in the expression of these magical-religious practices in the different mentioned (open list) civilized areas.

This profile thus forms part of B2 research programs (magic and medicine are closely related in that period, therapeutic scope of some divine answers) and C1 (individual or family destinies, closely related to the evolution of the individual and place of these magical-religious practices within the community).

The candidate is expected to have a thorough knowledge of the documentation relating to the magical-religious sphere. This implies that he / she has mastered the language and Egyptian writings of the Pharaonic era, prior to the Hellenistic and Roman period, especially hieratic writing.

- **Profile 7 (research axis: C1)**

Musical iconography: uploading and analysing medieval music images from the Mediterranean to the portal MUSICOMED

Under the new MUSICOMED program, the recruited postdoctoral fellow will enter data in the database hosted by the portal MUSICOMED (ANR 2011-2015) and analyse medieval musical images in the Mediterranean, with the collaboration of Tunisian researchers associated with the project.

Its main mission is to identify, catalogue, analyse and index in the portal MUSICOMED-IREMus-ResMed images of the ancient Mediterranean world and medieval ritual representing musical practices and signs of sound from the evidence provided by members of MUSICOMED. The fellow will ensure the promotion of MUSICOMED programs, work on its scientific coordination and help prepare collective publications.

The fellow will also contribute to the program's research effort and exploitation of indexing results in view of the MUSICOMED collective publication planned in 2018.

The candidate must be an expert in image analysis (all media), and hold a PhD in ancient or medieval art history or in medieval musicology. He / she should master iconographic indexing techniques.

He / she must also know the field of Western and Eastern musical iconography, ancient or medieval, and have notions of organology and musicology related to the representation of music and sound in images. He / she will also have a solid background in the fields of anthropology, theology, music theory and liturgy that will allow him / her to complete the organological approach with a contextual and historical-cultural vision of visual representations.

- **Profile 8 (research axis: C1)**

Religious life in Byzantium from the end of the Dark Ages until 1204: hagiography, homiletic literature and religious poetry

In recent years, Labex RESMED has shown an interest in Byzantine religious literature. Symposia (such as the one entitled Worship of saints and hagiographical literature, September 2015), invited professors like Stephanos Efthymiadis and Theodora Antonopoulou, the project by Flusin Bernard on the first Eastern Christian synaxaries (SynaxOr), the recruitment in 2015 / 2016 of a specialist in homiletics of the late Byzantine period (postdoctoral fellow Marco Fanelli) and the support given to the construction of research tools (Greek hagiographic database BHGms) amounts to only some of the support given towards this research.

However, a postdoctoral fellow working religious literature of the middle byzantine period is still needed, particularly of the tenth and eleventh century, when hagiography was no longer limited to the genre of the Vitae, but took different forms with a greater social role (ceremonial speeches, poetry). This profile is relatively wide: the candidate, trained in ancient and medieval Greek and connoisseur of this religious literature, will strengthen our team and would be likely to participate in collective tasks in the service of Labex RESMED projects.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of possible topics for a postdoc fellow:

- A study of the Life Pancratius of Taormina, a long debated text because it was understood as

a plea in favour of images dating from the iconoclastic period (8th - mid 9th centuries) an unpublished Oxford thesis (due to the premature death of its author), dates the text to the late 7th century. It could be a document recording the worship of images before iconoclasm, a topic that deserves to be looked at again.

- The establishment of Synaxarion of the Church of Constantinople in the 10th century is being studied, but the subject is so broad that a study of any of its aspects could advance research.
- The reevaluation of Byzantine poetry in philological studies in the last twenty years could be extended to the poetry of the 12th century, especially in what it reveals about sponsors and promotional strategies or manipulation of cults.

The candidate (s) must have a good level of Greek and be able to publish quickly the results of his / her research at the end of the postdoctoral year.

- **Profile 9 (research axes: A1, B1, C1)**

The notion of influence in the studies of interactions between religions in late antiquity: Judaism, Christianity, Hellenism

In recent years, the concept of "interaction" has become one of the prominent concepts to think through the relationship between religious groups in antiquity, especially but not only the relations between Jews and Christians. Often taken for granted, this concept has historical and epistemological implications that deserve to be evaluated: religious groups are not necessarily in relation with one another; not all relationships are "interactions", a concept which implies a set of reciprocal influences and which suggests that the history of doctrines should be written in terms of reactions to one another.

To reverse a present trend which identifies any form of relationship as an "interaction", this profile calls for a critical look at the concept of interaction, through a case study (an author, a work or a religious group), a methodological reflection, or an historiographical study. The periods considered for this profile are the ancient and the Byzantine period, in their different languages, in so far as its focus is on religions of the Mediterranean region.

The candidate (s) should demonstrate a sound knowledge of the history of religions in late antiquity.

- **Profile 10 (research axes: A1, C1, C2)**

Religious practices and constitution of ecclesiastical patrimony in the Italo-Greek acts of the High Middle Ages

The archives of southern Italy, monastic or public, still preserve significant amounts of unpublished literature from the High Middle Ages. The Italian-Greek notarized documentation is indeed, after the archives of Athos, the second largest medieval trove in Greek - and even the first one for the Central Middle Ages. This material is particularly interesting because it documents the main contact zone between Greek and Latin Christendom, characterized by specific hybrid forms. Yet, at best, old editions are the only means of access to these sources, despite the fact that they are major sources. They deserve better than poor editions, when they

exist.

Of course, this documentary manna primarily concerns ecclesiastical property, its formation, extent and management. But beyond that, their study proves very instructive on the evolution of the legal systems of ecclesiastical property in this area where the influences of Byzantine law of Roman tradition and Germanic codification overlap. This rich documentation also allows to approach concretely many forms of piety related to the perpetuation of private assets, such as pro anima donations, foundations of private churches, legacies in favour of icons etc. Finally, religious structures to guide the population are reflected in real terms, as well as the slow process of acculturation of Greek communities after the withdrawal of the imperial power. The quantitative importance of the documentation allows for a systematic confrontation of legal requirements and daily practices by the faithful and the clergy.

Unpublished archives benefited from campaigns of systematic scanning which means they can be published. There is an opportunity to promote the publication of sources of exceptional importance. However, this work requires a rare set of skills, including, in addition to mastering Latin and Greek, a good experience of palaeography, reading various Greek and Latin handwritings, (script from Benevento, curial Neapolitan script etc.) in use in southern Italy and a solid training in the fields of medieval law, especially canon law, and South Italian notarial practices.

The candidate must be able to read all Latin scripts. All photographs related to the project are available.