

## Call for Abstracts

Unit for Judaic Studies (LMU, Munich) is seeking abstracts for the workshop:

Auctor – Auctoritas – Authorship  
Claiming authorial agency in rabbinic literature and medieval midrash

5-6 December 2024 at Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Organization: Annabelle Fuchs

Application Deadline: 31 July 2024

The modern concept of the individual author as a creative genius plays an eminent role in literary studies. Its omnipresence and applicability to medieval texts have been questioned under the influence of Roland Barthes' essay 'La mort de l'auteur' (1968) and Michel Foucault's 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?' (1969). Being foremostly anonymously and collectively created works, many rabbinic and medieval texts display multiform textual states resulting in manifold manuscript variants rooted in their respective creative production and transmission processes involving different agents. This assertion also applies to Jewish and Arabic or Eastern literary cultural contexts which mingle authorship with transmission processes. Also, Alistair Minnis who studied Western medieval authorship negates the accuracy of this overarching concept of the individual author when it comes to medieval texts claiming that this anachronistic conception 'has no historical validity as far as medieval literature is concerned' (Minnis 1984:1).

Despite these structuralist and post-structuralist attempts to dethrone the modern notion of the author diverting the focus of research to the texts themselves (and their readers), the author concept returned in the early 1990s and continues to haunt scholars ever since.

Both views, the overemphasizing of the modern concept of the author as well as the claim of his absence in rabbinic and early-medieval literature, oversimplify authorship. With this workshop, we intend to challenge/question both these views by drawing attention to overlooked notions of rabbinic and medieval authorship. By studying the consciously applied mechanisms of *auctores* and their attempts to exert *auctoritas* we focus on methods of authorial agency that claim ownership in pre-modern literary production and transmission. To date these aspects have been largely ignored when investigating pre-modern literary creation in the Near East and beyond.

The workshop thus focuses on different aspects of authoriality, authorial agency, and new more nuanced concepts of medieval authorship in rabbinic literature early medieval midrashic texts (2<sup>nd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). It approaches them also with a comparative perspective to Judaeo-Arabic literary production, in which novel notions of authorship emerge.

We invite abstracts that set out to explore one or several of the following aspects on a textual, material or/and structural level

- Functions of authorship
- manifestations of the author-figure or authorial voice
- constructing rabbinic and early-medieval authorship
- author function, role of the author for the designation of a text in compositional structures, such as auctorial prefaces, epilogues, arrangement of chapters, authorial colophons
- manifestations of the author's social and intellectual networks
- text authority and ways of authorial agency

Please send your abstract of up to 300 words to [Annabelle.Fuchs@lmu.de](mailto:Annabelle.Fuchs@lmu.de) by 31 July 2024