

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Egyptology Focus: Greco-Egyptian Perfumery, Medicine and Science

Alchemies of Scent – Reconstructing the Practices of Ancient Greco-Egyptian Perfumery: An Experimental Approach to the History of Science ([Alchemies of Scent](#)) is a new, 5-year interdisciplinary research project that seeks to deepen our understanding of our olfactory heritage and of the connections between art and science in the ancient world. The project is funded by the Junior Star initiative of the Czech Science Foundation and is hosted by the Institute of Philosophy, in partnership with the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. Over the next five years, the project's team of historians, Egyptologists, philologists and organic chemists will experimentally replicate the recipes of five ancient Greco-Egyptian perfumes. Through these experiments, we will explore how the quest to extract, concentrate, compound and preserve the essences of plants influenced natural philosophy, medicine, art and culture in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece from the fourth through first centuries BCE.

As part of this new initiative, we are offering a **Postdoctoral Fellowship** beginning **October 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter**. Scholars who will submit their PhD no later than 1 October 2021 are eligible to apply.

The successful candidate will be part of a novel interdisciplinary team working together to produce a historical and lexical survey of the ingredients and methods of the art and science of perfume production in Greco-Roman Egypt, and to replicate, test and analyze the techniques of ancient perfumery in a controlled laboratory setting. The candidate will focus on perfumery in Egyptian sources (hieroglyphs, Hieratic, Demotic), in particular on documentary, medical and magical papyri of the relevant period(s).

The position offers an opportunity to be part of ground-breaking research applying philosophical, philological, historical, and contemporary scientific methods (organic chemistry and experimental replication of ancient recipes), as well as offering creative opportunities for digital research dissemination and outreach. The Postdoctoral Fellow will work closely with other team members from the fields of the history and philosophy of science, classics, Egyptology, archaeology, organic and bio-chemistry, botany, and olfactory and sensory history. She / he will participate in the project's colloquium, workshops, and its other activities and is expected to contribute to the project's collaborative outputs and produce project-related publications.

The scholarship will be granted for a maximum of five years (subject to review at the end of each year). The fellow will receive a gross monthly salary of CZK 45,000 (approx. CZK 35,600 net, including health and social insurance coverage). Additional funding for travel to academic meetings abroad will be available following approval. The fellow will have office space in a site dedicated to the project in the heart of Old Town Prague and will have access to our lab facilities at the Institute of Organic and Biochemistry. COVID-19 regulations permitting, the fellow is expected to be present in the office at least 3 days per week and to work full-time on the project and their research. Teaching is not required. Knowledge of Czech is not required.

Outstanding candidates will be invited for an online interview and informal meetings, which will take place during September 2021.

Candidates must have:

- Proven academic excellence;
- Excellent skills in relevant Egyptian languages and scripts (e.g., hieroglyphs, Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic is an advantage);
- Proven experience in studying ancient documentary and medical papyri (previous work with inscriptions is an advantage);
- Ability to participate in academic discussions in English;
- An interest and ability to work in a team.

Ideal candidates will have:

- Interest in integrating experimental replications into her / his research;
- Familiarity with archaeological and archaeometric methods and techniques (GC/MS, XRF) related to perfume (spices, oils, production facilities, endemic flora);
- Familiarity with methods of perfume production in Egypt;
- Familiarity with the social context of perfumery and scented oils (seven sacred oils, mummification, offerings, festivals, everyday life);
- Knowledge of trade relationships between Egypt and other regions;
- Knowledge of Egyptian medicine.

Interested candidates are requested to submit the following documents (in one PDF file):

- **Introduction Letter** describing your academic experience and motivation for participating in the project (not more than 2 pages);
- **Curriculum vitae**;
- **Research Proposal (2–5 pages)**;
- **Abstract** of the PhD dissertation;
- A **Writing Sample**: dissertation chapter or a paper that has been published or accepted for publication (no more than 30 pages).

Please send the requested materials electronically **in one PDF file** by **14 September 2021** to Mrs. Mai Havrdová Fathi at havrdova@flu.cas.cz.

In addition, please arrange for **up to two Letters of Reference** addressed to *Search Committee, Alchemies of Scent, Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences* and sent directly to havrdova@flu.cas.cz.

For additional information about the position, the project, the application procedure, The Czech Academy of Sciences, and life in Prague, please contact havrdova@flu.cas.cz.