

**Call for Applications: 2-year post-doctoral position in the history of Alfonsine astronomy in Europe**

**ALFA** is an ERC funded project (2017-2022, 60 month, Consolidator grant 2016 agreement 723085) dedicated to the study of Alfonsine astronomy which flourished in Europe from the second half of the 13th to the mid-16th century.

Employing approaches from the history of astronomy, history of mathematics, and history of manuscript cultures to study astronomical tables, instruments, theoretical and mathematical texts, *ALFA*'s main objectives are to:

- Retrace the development of the corpus of Alfonsine texts from its origin in the second half of the 13th century in Toledo, Spain to the end of the 15th century by following, on the manuscript level, the milieus producing and using these codices;
- Analyse Alfonsine astronomers' practices, their relations to mathematics, to the natural world, to proofs and justification, and their intellectual and social contexts and audiences;
- Build a meaningful narrative showing how astronomers in different milieus with diverse practices shaped, also from Arabic and Hebrew materials, an original scientific scene in Europe.

*ALFA* works in a deeply collaborative manner. [Matthieu Husson](#) (PI, CNRS- Observatoire de Paris), José Chabás (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona) and Richard Kremer (Dartmouth College, USA) constitute its advisory board. Around them a local team of 3 post-docs, 3 PhD students and a digital humanities IT expert, based at the Paris Observatory, will work with a team of international scholars comprised of 10 specialists of the history of late medieval astronomy in Europe. Finally a team of external experts from neighbouring fields will consult with *ALFA* in order to enrich its methodological and theoretical dimensions and to help design the digital tools.

*ALFA* invites **application for a 2-year post-doctoral position** expected to start on **January 1, 2019** or as soon as possible thereafter (CNRS-contract, salary according to experience following CNRS policy). This position will be hosted at the Observatoire de Paris in the history of astronomy team (dir. Michela Malpangotto) of the SYRTE Laboratory (UMR 8630).

**The successful candidate** will work as part of the local team and will spend most of his/her working time on his/her research project in the context of this collective, international project. He/she is expected to participate in the publications of the project and will be encouraged to take part in the conception of scientific events relevant to his/her research (workshops and seminars). He/she will have also dedicated research funds especially for travel to relevant European libraries.

In line with *ALFA*'s objectives the candidate research project should enhance our understanding of the formation and development of Alfonsine astronomy. Different approaches are possible to achieve this aim. They rely on a range of competences and we thus encourage candidates with different skills and training background to apply. These potential approaches include by order of priority for this call:

1. Candidates with a strong background in Latin, codicology and palaeography might choose to edit key works of Alfonsine astronomy (like the various Canons written on the Alfonsine or related tables or texts on planetary theory). Such a research would make new texts available and enhance our understanding of the perceptions of Alfonsine astronomy held by late medieval actors.



2. Candidates with a more scientific background could choose to analyse and edit other kinds of documents in the Alfonsine corpus such as texts on instruments or specific sets of tables. These types of research would bring new sources into discussion and would enhance our understanding of the mathematical and astronomical practices of the actors.
3. Candidates with a background in medieval history could analyse and study from a range of potential sources specific milieus or individuals that fostered Alfonsine astronomy or were particularly relevant for its development. Such research would produce new sources and contribute to an understanding of the social and intellectual contexts in which Alfonsine astronomy was embedded.

While preparing their application, candidates are encouraged to contact Matthieu Husson ([Mathieu.husson@obspm.fr](mailto:Mathieu.husson@obspm.fr)) to discuss the shape of their proposed project. After the appointment, the ALFA advisory board will work with the successful candidate to further refine the research project.

**To qualify for the position**, candidates are required to have completed their PhD in either history of sciences, medieval history or scientific disciplines such as astronomy and exact sciences. Acquired competences in Latin philology, codicology, palaeography, history of astronomy and history of mathematics will be appreciated. The will to work with and contribute to the development of digital humanities tools will be a positive element. A good control of spoken and written English is also important in order to be able to interact fruitfully with the international team of the project.

**Applications should be sent no later than September 22, 2018** to Matthieu Husson ([matthieu.husson@obspm.fr](mailto:matthieu.husson@obspm.fr)). They shall include: a short CV (2 p. max), contact information for two possible external referees (name, institution, email contact), a short research proposal (3-4 p. max), a written sample of academic work (e.g. thesis and/or a recent paper).

Review of applications will start on September 25, 2018 and the **result will be published on October 26, 2018**.

For further information please contact: [alfa.admin@obspm.fr](mailto:alfa.admin@obspm.fr)

