



The *Empires of Faith* project (University of Oxford/ British Museum), in partnership with TORCH, invites applications for *Talking Religion*.

*Talking Religion* is a new research group, running in Trinity and Michaelmas of 2017, that will look at the importance of material culture for the study of religion. *Talking Religion* will combine a series of interdisciplinary workshops, hands-on experience at both the Ashmolean and the British Museum, and the opportunity to present findings in both academic and public contexts. The research group is organised to coincide with the forthcoming *Empires of Faith* exhibition on Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Hindu art of the first millennium AD in the Ashmolean running from October 2017 to February 2018. *Talking Religion* aims to encourage collaborative work by students from across a range of departments, and to foster long-term relationships between students and the Ashmolean. This is the first time that the University of Oxford, the Ashmolean and the British Museum have been brought together to run a programme aimed at students. *Talking Religion* is organised and conducted by the *Empires of Faith* research project (<https://empiresoffait.com>), and has been made possible thanks to the AHRC-TORCH graduate fund (<http://torch.ox.ac.uk/graduatefund>).

### **Call for applications**

The ten successful applicants will become associate members of the *Empires of Faith* research project. They must be available for **both** a series of workshops in Trinity Term, **and** public engagement activities related to the forthcoming exhibition in the Ashmolean in Michaelmas and Hilary term. The workshops will focus on issues relating to the use of material evidence for the study of religion; on what makes objects and images religiously charged; and on the comparisons between different forms of religion in light of the use of material culture. Following these workshops, participants will develop presentations suitable for public audiences in the form of gallery talks to be given over the course of the exhibition, and a presentation for a graduate conference to be held in conjunction with the *Empires of Faith* project conference in January 2018. In addition, as part of the *Visual Conversation* series (OUP), participants will be welcome to submit ideas for possible book collaborations in the future, the first of which, *Images of Mithra*, will be published in March 2017: <https://goo.gl/4WWxLP>.

## **Applicants**

Applicants should be in the first or second years of the D.Phil., and be able to demonstrate a strong interest in aspects of religion and material culture (please note that it is not necessary for applicants to be specialists in this area). We welcome applications from those working on any periods and places, who are keen to work on these topics, and interested in collaborating. Applications are particularly welcome from the faculties and schools of Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Classics, History, Oriental Studies and Theology.

For further details on the workshops, and on involvement in the Ashmolean exhibition, see the attached document. Applicants should note that attendance of all four workshops in Trinity Term, as well as a further workshop in October, and any gallery tours will be compulsory, and they should therefore have the permission of their supervisors to take on this additional work. Exact dates will be circulated before the start of *Talking Religion*.

## **Application process**

All application material should be sent to [talkingreligioneof@gmail.com](mailto:talkingreligioneof@gmail.com). This should include confirmation of their supervisor's permission to participate (proof not necessary), academic CV, and a covering letter of no more than a page including details of their research interests, provisional thesis title, and any information that they believe to be relevant for their participation in the programme.

The deadline for expressing interest is **February 22<sup>nd</sup>** (Wednesday of 6<sup>th</sup> Week). Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to a meeting with the organisers on **March 3<sup>rd</sup>** (Friday of 7<sup>th</sup> Week), and will be notified whether their application has been successful before the Easter vacation.

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For queries and questions, please email Philippa Adrych, Dominic Dalglish, and Stefanie Lenk at: [talkingreligioneof@gmail.com](mailto:talkingreligioneof@gmail.com)