

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)  
announces a Lecture  
by

**Prof. Dr. Emile Schrijver**  
University of Amsterdam

**Hebrew Manuscripts since the Invention of Printing:  
the Status Quaestionis**

In the past half century the study of the Jewish book has developed from a traditional, descriptive bibliographical discipline into an independent field of research in which the book is studied as an expression of Jewish culture and as an instrument for the transmission of Jewish and non-Jewish knowledge. The foundations for this new field of Jewish Book History were laid in medieval book research. In particular Malachi Beit-Arié and Colette Sirat have defined new fundamental research questions, which are closely related to and often anticipate the current research agenda into non-Jewish medieval books.

For the study of the Jewish book, handwritten and printed, in the centuries since the invention of printing a comparable development may be observed, but the results are not as definitive yet. Part of the reason for this may be the fact that many questions asked by modern researchers of Jewish Book History were taken from the broader field of Book History and do not take the peculiarities of the Jewish book into full account. The singularity of the Jewish book can only be understood in full if it is studied in its own cultural and intercultural context. This goes further than a mere application of research questions from the general field of Book History to the Jewish book or a comparison of certain phenomena found in non-Jewish, usually Christian, books with their Jewish counterparts.

In older literature the Jewish book has almost always been sub-classified into separate entities, defined by a number of modifiers, handwritten or printed, chronological, geographical, decorated, illustrated, etc. A true understanding of the Jewish book, however, involves a permanent awareness of the complex interrelations between the various techniques, carriers, localities, manufacturers, etc.

This lecture will discuss the results of the most recent research into Hebrew manuscripts since the invention of printing within this methodological framework and will try to outline future developments, opportunities and problems.

**Wednesday, 22 October 2014 at 7 pm**

**The Hamburg State and University Library, Lecture room 1<sup>st</sup> floor**