

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Bard Graduate Center Announces Jewish Material Culture Project

New York, NY, July 15, 2017—Bard Graduate Center is pleased to announce its pilot project dedicated to the study of Jewish Material Culture, which will launch in fall semester of 2017 with major funding from the Leon Levy Foundation and additional funding from the David Berg Foundation.

“The study of the Jewish past is probably the first ‘area studies program,’ and it began in the first decades of the nineteenth century. But it has been almost entirely focused on textual sources. With this project we hope to make an intervention in a large, thriving literature,” said Dean Peter N. Miller. “As a think tank for material culture, Bard Graduate Center has the intellectual and institutional resources to successfully launch this line of inquiry.”

Jewish Material Culture at Bard Graduate Center will incorporate a one-semester visiting professorship in Jewish material culture with the field rotating between ancient, medieval, and modern. The Leon Levy Foundation Professor will teach a graduate seminar, and deliver a series of public lectures which will be the focus of subsequent workshop meetings and eventually be published in BGC’s Cultural Histories of the Material World book series.

Andrea M. Berlin, James R. Wiseman Chair in Classical Archaeology and director of Graduate Studies at Boston University, will inaugurate the visiting professorship in fall 2017. Berlin’s area of expertise is the archaeology of Hellenistic and Roman Judea and Palestine, and her graduate seminar will explore a range of quotidian material remains, such as jewelry, dishes, cooking pots, and lamps, found at various ancient sites, including Troy and Jerusalem. Her public lecture series is tentatively titled “Beyond the Temple: Jewish Households from the Maccabees to the Great Revolt against Rome.”

In spring 2018, Laura Leibman, professor of English and Humanities at Reed College, will join the faculty as the second visiting professor. Leibman, a scholar of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American Jewish material culture and the Jewish diaspora, will focus her seminar on the radical transformation of Jewish American identity during the early Republic as the Jewish people struggled to gain full civil rights. Her public lecture series, tentatively titled “The Art of the Jewish Family: Material Culture in Early New York,” will complement BGC’s long-time research and teaching commitment to the material culture of New York City.

#### About Bard Graduate Center

Bard Graduate Center is a teaching and research institute, located in New York City, devoted to the cultural history of the material world. Our distinguished faculty draw on methodologies and approaches from art history, archaeology, anthropology, social and cultural history, philosophy, and the history of science and technology. Our world-renowned library supports research and study throughout the institution. We offer MA and PhD degrees that prepare students to become scholars, curators, and museum professionals; promote innovative research through visiting fellowships and institutional partnerships; organize academic lectures, seminars, and symposia; and publish scholarly journals and monographs. Learn more at [www.bgc.bard.edu](http://www.bgc.bard.edu).

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