The British Library and The University of Leicester

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship

England and France 700–1200:

FRANCO-SAXON MANUSCRIPTS
IN THE NINTH CENTURY

The British Library and the University of Leicester are pleased to invite applications for a three-year AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership PhD Studentship, available from 1 October 2017 and tenable at The British Library in London. This doctoral award is funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) under its Collaborative Doctoral Programme. The thesis will be jointly supervised by Professor Joanna Story at Leicester and by Dr Kathleen Doyle, Lead Curator of Illuminated Manuscripts, at the British Library.

The successful candidate will undertake a thesis on *Franco-Saxon Manuscripts in the Ninth Century* that centres on analysis of manuscripts that were produced in North-Eastern Francia in the later ninth century. There is ample scope for the successful student to develop this project in ways that complement and extend the student’s existing skills-set and interests.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

In the later ninth century monasteries in the Pas de Calais, at Saint-Amand, Saint-Bertin (Saint-Omer), Corbie, and Saint-Riquier produced distinctive manuscripts which are characterised by the use of a highly distinctive style of ‘Franco-Saxon’ illumination. These monasteries were places of great power, wealth, and patronage in the ninth century, and were ruled by abbots who had close links to the Carolingian court. Proximity to the Channel coast, and to the trading emporium of Quentovic (Étaples) – which lay not more than a day’s ride from both Saint-Riquier and Saint-Bertin – meant that there were also longstanding political, cultural, economic, and religious connections with Anglo-Saxon England. These links to places and people of power are made manifest in the deluxe manuscripts that were produced in these monasteries in the later ninth century, which combined the measured aesthetic of Carolingian epigraphic display scripts with an idiomatic use of Insular decoration.
The development of a distinctive ‘Franco-Saxon’ school of illumination in these monasteries in the second half of the ninth century balanced the aesthetics of the art of epigraphic lettering with the interlace and animal ornamentation of Insular art, familiar from manuscripts made in Anglo-Saxon England or Ireland a century or more before. The unifying aesthetic in the Franco-Saxon books is the generous use of space and symmetry in contradistinction to the horror vacui of earlier Insular art, and the classicising style of Charlemagne’s Court School. The Franco-Saxon style used the white space of the parchment as a key element of the mise-en-page in a way not seen in earlier Insular or Carolingian book production. The clean lines of the epigraphic display capitals juxtapose the complexity of the illuminated initials. But this contrast is neutralised by the white space, which renders the two parent styles a coherent whole. This unity is enhanced by the exaggerated symmetry of the Insular-style ornament. The generous use of space around and within the text block, as well as the application of gold to the lettering, underlines the wealth and resources of the patrons of these books, some of which were destined for Carolingian kings.

**THE PROJECT**

This PhD project will centre on ninth-century manuscripts held in the British Library, complementing analysis of codices held in other locations, especially the BnF. The successful student will shape the approach and content of the project, and it may evolve an art historical or cultural history focus depending on the student’s expertise and interests. It is also a topic that could support a student with expertise in material culture and archaeological science, and in that case the conservation resources (personnel and equipment) of the British Library would provide essential support, and unique access. What is special is the opportunity for codicological research, examining books at first hand to study methods of making, choices of parchment production and use, and the colour palette as well as details of script and page layout.

Applicants are encouraged to consider ways in which they would like to develop the project. Avenues for research include: the history of the ‘Channel monasteries’ through the ninth century, and the personnel networks and the networks of texts, scribes and artisans revealed by the extant manuscripts; the art of script and lettering in the ninth century; connections with earlier Court School books from Charlemagne’s time; the influence of the Franco-Saxon style on book production in monasteries on the Loire or in Frankish monasteries in Germany; the influence on script, decoration, and methods of making manuscripts that were produced in southern England in the tenth century; and the use of Insular script and Insular ornament in Frankish monasteries.

This AHRC collaborative studentship arises from a new international digitisation initiative, funded by the Polonsky Foundation, to digitise 800 illuminated manuscripts relating to ‘England and France, 700–1200’ that are held at the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris. That digitisation project creates unique opportunities for the successful candidate to this studentship competition, via training and outreach opportunities (e.g.: writing catalogue entries, manuscript descriptions, blog-posts), and by examining aspects of the art history, codicology, palaeography, and historical context of production and patronage of relevant manuscripts held at the BL, and potentially also in Paris. In addition, this studentship also overlaps with the period of preparation and launch of the major exhibition at the British Library on Anglo-Saxon England in the autumn and winter of 2018/19. The successful applicant can expect to work with the Library’s Medieval Manuscripts team preparing this exhibition.

The project will develop the research skills and knowledge base of the successful student, and a highly trained manuscript scholar will emerge with expertise in the traditional ‘sciences’ of palaeography and codicology, as well as digital technologies. Immersion in the working environment of the British Library will provide privileged ‘in house’ training in a world-leading library and major manuscript repository. As a result, the student can make a contribution to the
knowledge base of the discipline, and be set up to make a significant contribution to the academic and curatorial profession.

The student will join the vibrant academic community at Leicester where there are many academic staff, post-doctoral researchers, and postgraduate students who work on the history and culture of the Middle Ages. History at Leicester, was ranked =12th for research outputs in the Times Higher REF2014 tables, and with the highest percentage of 3*/4* research (87.5%) among UK History departments in that evaluation; the School is home to a lively postgraduate community of around 80 doctoral candidates in history, many of whom are based in the Marc Fitch Historical Institute.

The School runs several other current collaborative doctoral projects with organisations including the British Library, The National Archives, English Heritage, the Science Museum, the Marylebone Cricket Club, and the National Maritime Museum. There are a range of postgraduate seminars and events (including the New History Lab and the annual postgraduate conference), and the University is home the Leicester Medieval Research Centre that brings together the expertise of medievalists across the University. The student will also be expected to present his or her findings in seminars and conferences beyond Leicester and, as the work progresses, to publish papers in academic books and journals. The student will automatically become part of the UK-wide CDP development scheme (http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/category/activities-for-students/), which will provide training in a range of skills needed for research within museums, archives, galleries and heritage organisations.

For further information on the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme at the British Library, please visit: http://www.bl.uk/help/ahrc-collaborative-doctoral-partnerships

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking to recruit a highly promising student who will relish the opportunity of combining academic research with the experience of working as part of a professional team of curators and researchers. This studentship is likely to appeal to individuals with a background in early medieval history, book history, literature and language, Classics, or applying interdisciplinary methods for understanding early medieval material culture. Prior experience of research using early medieval manuscripts will be an advantage, and the successful applicant will be able to demonstrate skills commensurate with career stage in relevant medieval and modern languages and palaeography. A commitment to communicating the results of research to a wider public audience is a key asset in the context of the British Library’s digitisation and exhibition programmes.

Eligibility

Residency Criteria – applicants are required to meet the RCUK residence criteria as follows:

• British nationals who have lived in the UK and Islands all their lives are eligible.
• Also eligible are non-British nationals who have settled status AND have been resident in the UK for 3 years immediately prior to the date of the start of the course.
• EU nationals who have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years immediately prior to the date of start of the course are eligible.
• EEA and Swiss nationals (EEA migrant workers) should refer to the full RCUK guidelines to check eligibility and may be eligible for a fees only award.

If you are unsure about your eligibility please email pgradmissions@le.ac.uk and we will be happy to make an assessment for you.

Academic Criteria – Applicants are required to hold a Bachelor Degree at 2:1 or better in a relevant subject and hold or are expected to hold a Master’s degree in a relevant subject (e.g.: history,
medieval history, medieval studies, art history, classics, material culture/archaeological science) by September 2017.

**FUNDING INFORMATION**

The studentship is available for full-time study (or part-time equivalent), and applicants must be able to commence their studies on 25 September 2017.

The standard tuition fees and stipend (maintenance grant) will be paid by the ARHC to the award holder subject to the eligibility criteria outlined above. The AHRC stipend for 2017/18 is £14,553 for 2017/18 (plus an additional stipend payment of £550 for Collaborative Doctoral Students (TBC)).

In addition the British Library will provide:
Up to £1,000 per annum for research-related costs and staff-level access to the British Library’s collections, expertise and facilities, plus dedicated desk space alongside the medieval manuscripts curatorial team. The student also will benefit from the dedicated programme of professional development events delivered by the British Library in tandem with the other museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the CDP scheme. Additional student development funding (equivalent to an additional 6 months of funding per studentship) is available to allow time for the student to take up further training and skills development opportunities that are agreed as part of the PhD programme.

**HOW TO APPLY**

To apply you need to complete the standard University of Leicester online application form here: [http://www2.le.ac.uk/study/research/phd/history](http://www2.le.ac.uk/study/research/phd/history). In the Funding section of the online application form select STUDENTSHIP and select AHRC from the dropdown options. Please make sure you include the project title and supervisors’ names in the proposal section of the form.

In place of the research proposal requested on this form, you should provide a statement of up to 1,000 words on:

1. How you would like to develop the project theme, how your education and experience to date has prepared you for this research position, and how you will develop the opportunities offered by working with the British Library medieval manuscripts team.
2. Your experience of working with primary source material, including medieval manuscripts.

Applicants should also submit:
A piece of scholarly writing which you think best reflects your academic abilities and aspirations (e.g.: an essay or dissertation)

**Informal Enquiries**

Informal enquiries can be sent to Professor Joanna Story: [js73@le.ac.uk](mailto:js73@le.ac.uk)

**Closing Date:** 
Monday 10 April 2017, 12:00 (midday, London time)

**Interview Date:** 
5 May 2017, at The British Library, London