

Further Particulars

The Beginnings of Reading and Writing in Scotland

As the Christian religion spread across northern Britain in the early Middle Ages, reading and writing necessarily spread along with it. The processes involved are not clearly understood and no attempt has yet been made to assess the impact of literacy in its first few centuries in northern Britain. A significant body of evidence nevertheless exists to enable such an assessment to take place; and sophisticated approaches to these material and textual sources of information allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn concerning the extensiveness of literacy, the conditions that governed its public and private use, and the economic and other factors involved in maintaining and resourcing Scotland's earliest literate cultures. These conclusions can advance scholarship some of the way towards a nuanced understanding of the beginnings of reading and writing as a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon, as well as informing other research relating (for example) to Christianisation and education.

This doctoral research project, funded by the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Scheme will commence in September 2011, based in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. It will conform to the normal pattern of doctoral projects undertaken in the School, but will be part-supervised from the National Museum of Scotland. This tried and tested partnership will provide the recruited student with an enhanced research platform featuring special access to NMS collections and facilities, relevant research and museum skills training and participation in the vibrant collaborative research relationship that already exists among the supervisory team. Following AHRC CDA practice, this pre-defined project allows scope for the student to develop their own specialist interests (see below) and a career development dimension, largely undertaken in the first year of the project.

The expected pattern of the project will be as follows:

Project advertised May 2011 (closing date June 2011).

Project begins mid-September 2011.

Year 1

The student will undertake a literature review (Semester 1) and attend relevant research training courses in the School. The student will also be taken through established NMS induction programmes covering a general introduction to the institution, its facilities and its artefact storage/handling systems. In Semester 2 the student will settle on a working methodology, **probably revolving around appropriate case studies**, and will develop a thesis proposal, chapter structure and timetable. She/he will give a presentation on their work to the School Doctoral Seminar; and an end-of-first-year review will be held in July/August.

Year 2

The schedule of case studies and thesis chapter production will begin in earnest, alongside a schedule of any further training objectives identified in the first-year review.

Year 3

The focus of student activity will shift towards the objective of producing a draft thesis by the end of this year. The student will also be encouraged to give thought to developing essays for possible separate publication or for delivery as conference papers. Thought may also be given to generating material of use to NMS in its display and outreach activities.

Year 4

Re-drafting and final thesis submission.

Supervisory Input

Consistent with Collaborative Doctoral Awards, the bulk of supervisory input throughout the project will fall on the academic supervisor, who in this instance may be supported by a second academic supervisor. Meetings with supervisors in the first year will be approximately fortnightly and probably monthly thereafter. Supervisory input from the NMS supervisor will be most intense in Year 1, in relation to NMS induction and the identification of appropriate case studies; thereafter NMS supervisory input may be provided on a semesterly basis.

Application Procedure

Applications, with a covering letter, should be sent to the address below (in hard copy OR by email attachment) and should include all of the following:

- * 1000 word research proposal
- * 300 word personal statement saying why the applicant would want to do the project
- * 300 word account of previous relevant study and experience
- * a standard academic Curriculum Vitae

Candidates must be suitably qualified, in reference particularly to archaeological and textual/historical studies in some combination, at undergraduate and masters degree level. The successful applicant will be required to undertake NMS induction courses as part of this project.

The application deadline is 15 June 2011.

Selection Procedure

A short-listing meeting will be convened in mid-June. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed (in person or via video conference) in late June. The successful candidate will be announced in July conditional upon standard acceptance to doctoral study within the School.

Applications Address

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