



UNIL | Université de Lausanne
 Section d'anglais
 Denis Renevey
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Fully Funded Doctoral Studentship in Medieval English Hagiography

We are seeking a student to undertake a fully funded doctoral thesis as part of the project team for the new major research project 'Region and Nation in Late Medieval Devotion to Northern English Saints', funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The project will be directed by Professor Denis Renevey at the University of Lausanne, and will also involve the research collaboration of Dr Christiania Whitehead. The successful student will be supervised by Professor Renevey, and will undertake a thesis on a suitable topic related to the research project. He/she will receive funding for three years, including an annual maintenance grant of approx. SFr. 50'000. The doctorate will commence on **1 March 2017**. Doctoral fees at UNIL are SFr. 200.- for the first semester, SFr. 80.- per semester after that.

Project outline

The North of England is noted for its high number of celebrated Anglo Saxon saints: Cuthbert, Oswald, Wilfrid of York, John of Beverley, Aebbe of Coldingham, Bega and others, and for further twelfth-century episcopal, monastic and eremitic saints, modelled on these earlier figures. This project will investigate the extent to which devotion to these northern saints persists in late medieval England, and will explore the implications of such devotions for regional and national cultures, acknowledging that the two may exercise contending pulls. It will draw upon a range of textual materials: fourteenth and fifteenth-century saints' lives and legends in Middle English, Latin, and Anglo-Norman, and manuscript collections of northern hagiographies, as well some evidence from the material culture of that period: stained glass programmes, statuary, revisions to shrine architecture etc. In the course of the project, in addition to other outputs, an online database will be created mapping the various cults and cataloguing their main textual and material productions.

Doctoral Student

Applicants should hold or be in the process of completing an MA, MSt, MPhil or equivalent in Medieval English literature or Medieval History. An overall merit or distinction grade is highly desirable. They should have some postgraduate experience in one or more of the following:

- Medieval English language and literature
- Medieval Latin
- Anglo-Norman language and literature
- Anglo-Saxon and medieval hagiography
- Medieval ecclesiastical architecture and art
- Codicology and palaeography
- Database design and website management

Doctoral Study at the University of Lausanne

The University of Lausanne is situated on the outskirts of the international city of Lausanne, on the shores of Lake Lemman opposite the Alps, 45 minutes by train from Geneva. Its English department houses a thriving community of medievalist staff and postgraduate students, who regularly organise conferences and welcome international guest speakers in the field. It has recently hosted another SNSF-funded, major research project 'The Evidence of Late Medieval Devotional Compilations', also directed by Professor Renevey. Interdisciplinary links with other departments are facilitated by the University of Lausanne Centre for Medieval and Post-Medieval Studies which runs regular study days and workshops for doctoral students in the humanities, while further afield, Lausanne is an active participant in the Swiss Association of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, currently chaired by Professor Renevey, which hosts an annual conference and associated publications. The University of Lausanne has a well-stocked medieval literature library, and doctoral researchers are also welcome to use the bibliographical resources at the Universities of Geneva, Fribourg and Neuchâtel.

Application Process

Applicants should send via email a single pdf document titled 'lastname.first name.pdf' containing their CV, names and contact details of two academic referees, a copy of their most recent degree certificate, and a one-page cover letter in English, explaining how their postgraduate experience fits the parameters of the research project, and providing a brief outline of a hypothetical doctoral project relevant to it. The application should be addressed to Prof. Denis Renevey and sent to: secretariat-anglais@unil.ch.

If shortlisted, the applicant will be asked to supply a sample of written work of 5000-8000 words, and will be invited to participate in an interview in early November, possibly by Skype.

Closing date for applications: **30th September 2016**.

Faculté des lettres
 Section d'anglais



Region and Nation in Late Medieval Devotion to Northern English Saints Summary

This project explores the extent to which devotion to northern early English saints (pre 1200) persists in late medieval England, and investigates the implications of such devotions for regional and national culture. It will publish its output in the form of a monograph and an edited collection of essays, and will also create a database mapping northern shrines and cults extant in the late middle ages. The project comprises a project leader, Professor Denis Renevey, a research fellow, Dr Christiania Whitehead, and a doctoral student, whose position will be advertised.

The role of religion in shaping the boundaries and character of local and national communities remains vitally important in many parts of the world today. In the Middle Ages this was often carried out via devotion toward a local holy man or woman who was used to embody the homogeneity and best interests of the region in question. The late Middle Ages in England witnessed an upsurge of interest in the lives of the holy men and women of the Anglo-Saxon era (Cuthbert, John of Beverley, Hilda, Aebbe etc.), together with 12th-century holy English bishops, abbots and hermits (William of York, Robert of Newminster, Godric of Finchale etc.), themselves often modelled on pre-conquest examples. Initially composed in Latin, the 'lives' of these early English holy men and women were translated into Anglo-Norman and Middle English and added to vernacular legends (collections of lives of the Christian saints) from the late 13th century onwards. In addition, from the early 14th century, they were deliberately and selectively gathered together to form a new kind of Latin legend: one wholly dedicated to showcasing *English* holy lives.

Using these textual hagiographical resources together with evidence from material culture (stained glass and statuary, relics, church dedications etc.), this project studies the contending pulls of region and nation in the late middle ages, and questions whether regionalism outweighed nationalism within the northern counties (Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland, Westmorland, Yorkshire, and the Isle of Man). These counties were particularly associated with distance from the political centre, with strong traditions of local independence inherited from the Anglo-Saxon era, and with a complex response to the Scottish border, which itself remained a very unstable boundary late into the medieval period. As far as regionalism is concerned, northern Anglo-Saxon saints whose cults continued into the late middle ages were invariably associated with a distinct locale, and often viewed as the spiritual embodiment of the county or cathedral city in question. Thus St Cuthbert stands for Durham diocese; St William is closely identified with the city of York. As such, their *vitae* and miracle stories are frequently fashioned to demonstrate the saint defending local interests against external ecclesial or secular exploitation. Yet, as we have seen, these northern saints' lives are also shepherded into national and broader pan-European legends, where they are collectively meant to convey an idea of 'Englishness', idealised as exemplary living, and to contribute to various formulations of spiritual nationalism, often linked with the promotion of the English vernacular. How do these two, seemingly oppositional, functionalities play out in the late 14th and 15th centuries, and in what directions are they resolved?

Drawing upon a fund of little-studied, primary source material, much of it still only extant in manuscript form, this project will redress the scholarly imbalance which has thus far favoured southern legends, and saints' cults centred in East Anglia, London and the south (Thomas of Canterbury, Edmund of Bury, Edward the Confessor, Alban etc.), by focusing on the north of England and the Scottish borders, in its search for constructions of strong regionality refracted through hagiographical devotion. The project makes the theoretical proposition that the textual and material output of local saints' cults offer a previously overlooked, archive for assessing the character and strength of regional autonomy and resistance to national political authority, in late medieval Europe. The insights gained from this case study of the North of England will be used to formulate a more general theoretical model regarding the strengths and limitations of local hagiographical materials as indicators for the strength of regionalism, which can then be applied to other regions with strong traditions of local autonomy grounded upon ancient stories of local holy men/women.

The doctoral candidate:

- will produce a doctoral thesis possibly focused on either the cult of a single northern saint, or a single type of saints' legend (northern vernacular/ dedicated to English saints) in relation to the axes of region and nation.
- will contribute information on the number and location of northern Anglo-Saxon/ early English saints' cults still active in the late Middle Ages, and will catalogue the principal texts, manuscripts, religious artefacts and church dedications, exemplifying continued activity within these cults, for the online database.
- will present interim results from the thesis and the database at national graduate workshops and international conferences.
- will help with the organisation of an international conference in the third year of the project.
- will maintain the project webpage and blog, and enter regular news updates.