

FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Assistant: Editing the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary
Division	Humanities
Department	Faculty of English Language and Literature
Location	Faculty of English, St Cross Building, Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UL
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £31,076-34,956
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed-term (12 months)
Reporting to	Dr Elizabeth Solopova
Vacancy reference	128551
Additional information	

Research topic	Middle English literature
Principal Investigator / supervisor	Dr Elizabeth Solopova
Project team	Dr Elizabeth Solopova (Principal Investigator) Professor Anne Hudson (Consultant) Dr Daniel Sawyer (Co-Investigator)
Funding partner	The funds supporting this research project are provided by the John Fell Fund and New College, Oxford



The role

Following the award of research grants from the John Fell Fund and the Ludwig Humanities Research Fund, New College, Oxford, to Dr Elizabeth Solopova, the Faculty of English Language and Literature invites applications for the post of Research Assistant to work on all aspects of the 'Editing the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary' project. The post will be fixed term for 12 months, and it is anticipated that the appointee will start on 1 September, 2017. The post will be based at the English Faculty at Oxford working with Dr Solopova (Principal Investigator), Professor Anne Hudson (Consultant) and Dr Daniel Sawyer (Co-Investigator).

The aim of the project is to study and produce an edition of the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary (OTL). The OTL, so far almost entirely unexplored, is likely to be vitally important in understanding the textual tradition of the Wycliffite Bible and illuminating the organisation, methods and motivation behind this major fourteenth-century scholarly and literary enterprise.

The Wycliffite Bible is the first complete translation of the Vulgate in English, produced probably in Oxford at the end of the fourteenth century. It survives in over 250 manuscripts whose textual affiliations are at present largely unclear. The study of the textual history of the Bible is complicated by the shortage of evidence relating to the first stages of the translators' work. Editing the OTL should reveal more information about these earliest stages.

The OTL is a liturgically organised set of passages (readings used at Mass), derived mostly from the Old Testament books of the Wycliffite Bible. It might be the work of the translators themselves or of individuals close to them who had biblical and liturgical expertise as well as access to the translators' texts. It might therefore preserve a version of the Wycliffite translation that is earlier or considerably different from the one surviving in biblical manuscripts proper, making it the most important piece of currently unstudied evidence known to textual critics of the Wycliffite Bible.

The Research Assistant employed on the project will produce an edition of two versions of OTL based on manuscripts currently in Oxford and London. The postholder will also make observations on the Lectionary's affiliations, language, manuscript presentation and likely contemporary use. The postholder will collaborate with the scholars working on the AHRC-funded project 'Towards a New Edition of the Wycliffite Bible' currently underway in the English Faculty, benefitting from their expertise, resources and advice.

The Research Assistant will be expected to travel to libraries and to present the results of research at UK and international conferences. They will be a member of the English Faculty and will receive the support of a Faculty mentor.

Further information on the project is given in Appendix 1.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the post will include the following:

- Producing an edition, including transcription and collation, of the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary for publication in print.
- Undertaking original research to be reported in the introduction to the edition and in articles.

- Contributing to the running and management of the project, including helping to acquire photographic reproductions of manuscripts required by the project and applying for funding for additional or future project activities.
- Presenting the results of research at UK and international conferences, as agreed with the Principal Investigator.
- Other project-related work as requested by the Principal Investigator, commensurate with the level of the post.

Selection criteria

Essential

- A post-graduate qualification, complete or near completion, in Middle English language or literature or a related field. A completed PhD would be an advantage.
- Experience of work with Middle English manuscripts, including accurate transcription.
- Some knowledge of Latin.
- The ability to work flexibly, and in a team.
- Willingness to participate in the overall running of the project.
- A high level of communication skills, including the ability to address a range of audiences.
- A high level of organisational skills and an ability to meet deadlines.
- Excellent computer skills.

Desirable selection criteria

- Publications in related areas.
- Experience or understanding of the editing of Middle English texts.
- Experience of researching the language of Middle English texts.

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. Income from external research contracts in 2014/15 exceeded £522.9m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-

outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

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For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

English Faculty

The Faculty of English Language and Literature is by far the largest English Department in the UK, and has a very distinguished research record (awarded the top grade in the last two research assessment exercises). We were voted the top university for English in the *QS World University* rankings in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017, and our teaching has been graded 'Excellent' in every Quality Assurance review.

The Faculty currently has 80 permanent members of academic staff, including 9 statutory Professors. This is in addition to a further 100 or so members teaching in the colleges and temporary members of staff. A list of Faculty members and their research interests is available on the website. For more information, please visit: www.english.ox.ac.uk. There are currently approximately 900 undergraduate students (with roughly 260 admitted each year to the single honours school and a further 20 to joint honours school programmes). The Oxford English Faculty has the largest graduate school in the country, with approximately 100 Masters students, and a further 150 graduate research students.

Medieval Literature in the Faculty

The Oxford English Faculty has the largest concentration of scholars working in the medieval period in the UK. The Faculty has nineteen permanent postholders in the period up to 1550; a sizeable number of other Faculty members working in this area hold college-only posts. Permanent postholders include: Laura Ashe; Helen Barr; Mishtooni Bose; Charlotte Brewer; Kantik Ghosh; Vincent Gillespie; Mark Griffith; Jane Griffiths; Sian Gronlie; Simon Horobin; Carolyne Larrington; Francis Leneghan; Heather O'Donoghue; Andy Orchard; Nicholas Perkins; Helen Leith Spencer; Annie Sutherland; Marion Turner; and Daniel Wakelin. The Faculty has strong representation and very lively research communities in Old English, Old Norse, and Older Scots. It also has particular research and teaching strengths in Chaucer, religious literature, book history, and late medieval literature and early Tudor literature generally. It has emerging strengths in Romance, Early Middle English and Anglo-Norman, early humanism, and literary language. For more information, see <http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/about-faculty/our-research/medieval>

The University also has a substantial cadre of medievalists in other Humanities faculties, and the interdisciplinary MSt in Medieval Studies is now recruiting excellent students who wish to work across disciplinary boundaries. The richness of the university's wider research culture in medieval studies is revealed by the stream of seminars and lectures listed at the Medieval Studies at Oxford webpage (<http://www.medieval.ox.ac.uk/>).

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously.

You will also be asked to upload:

- a CV (to include a list of publications);
- a supporting statement which explains how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

Please ask your two referees to send their letters of reference directly to the English Faculty at english.office@ell.ox.ac.uk by the closing date of 26 May 2017.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date.

Candidates shortlisted for interview will be asked to submit a sample of written work in advance of the interviews.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing departments.

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments)

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Further help and support is available from www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/.

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at:

www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an employer justified retirement age for all academic and academic-related posts (grade 6 and above), for which the retirement date is the 30 September immediately preceding the 68th birthday. The justification for this is explained at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revaim/.

For **existing** employees any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/revisedejra/revproc/

There is no normal or fixed age at which **support staff** in posts at **grades 1–5** have to retire. Support staff may retire once they reach the minimum pension age stipulated in the Rules of the pension scheme to which they belong.

Equality of Opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Training and Development

A range of training and development opportunities are available at the University. Further details can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/staff/working_at_oxford/training_development/index.html.

For research staff only: Support for Research Staff

There is a particularly wide range of support for career development for research staff. Please visit: www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers to find out more.

Pensions

The University offers generous occupational pension schemes for eligible staff members. Further details can be found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/pensionspolicy/.

Information for international staff *(or those relocating from another part of the UK)*

A wealth of information is available on the University's International Staff website for staff who are relocating to Oxford from abroad, at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/international/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The Newcomers' Club is aimed at helping partners of newly-arrived visiting scholars, graduate students and academic members of the University to settle in and to meet people in Oxford.

Transport schemes

The University offers a range of travel schemes and public transport travel discounts to staff. Full details are available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/ourservices/travel/.

University Club and University Sports Facilities

The University Club provides social, sporting and hospitality facilities. It incorporates a Club bar, a cafe and sporting facilities, including a gym. See www.club.ox.ac.uk for all further details.

University staff can use the University Sports Centre at discounted rates, and have the chance to join sports clubs. Please visit www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Childcare and Childcare Vouchers

The University offers quality childcare provision services at affordable prices to its employees. For full details about the services offered, please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/. **NB: Due to the high demand for the University's nursery places there is a long waiting list.**

The University also offers nursery fee payment schemes to eligible staff as an opportunity to save tax and national insurance on childcare costs. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Disabled staff

The University is committed to supporting members of staff with a disability or long-term health condition and has a dedicated Staff Disability Advisor. Please visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff for further details.

BUPA - Eduhealth

Bupa Eduhealth Essentials private medical insurance offers special rates for University of Oxford staff and their families www.eduhealth.co.uk/mini-site/.

All other benefits

For other benefits, such as free entry to colleges, the Botanic Gardens and staff discounts offered by third party companies, please see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/.

Appendix 1

Editing the Wycliffite Old Testament Lectionary

Outline of the Project

The Wycliffite Bible (WB) is the first complete translation of the Vulgate in English, produced at the end of the fourteenth century by the followers of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif. It is also the most successful medieval English text: despite being condemned and banned within 25 years of its appearance, it was disseminated much more widely than any other Old or Middle English work, reaching a diverse audience comprising all classes of society – kings, nobility, tradesmen, scholars, clerics, nuns and middle class women. The Wycliffite translation achieved an unprecedented standard of biblical scholarship, textual criticism, precision and diversity of language. It was a huge academic undertaking, unmatched in the scale and range of textual and editorial activities it initiated in the vernacular, as well as the level of organisation and strategic control evident in many of its aspects.

Most surviving copies of WB do not contain a complete biblical text and a majority include the New Testament only. However, twenty five of the New Testaments contain the OTL: selected passages (liturgical readings), rather than the complete texts of Old Testament books. The OTL is not just a collection of extracts from the Bible but a continuous structured text. The readings are presented in the order of the liturgical year with rubrics, running titles indicating liturgical seasons, and cross-references replacing readings used for more than one occasion. The OTL seems to have been edited and adapted by book producers who experimented with different ways of presenting the text and occasionally altered the inventory of feasts. The surviving copies fall into two closely related textual types.

The OTL has never been studied because it was of no interest to past editors of WB who focused on copies containing a complete Bible. Our preliminary investigation shows that it clearly has a textual relationship with WB but in the absence of an edition that relationship remains unclear. A close connection with WB is evident in the presence of scholarly features characteristic of the manuscripts of WB in general, such as the practice of underlining words and expressions that have no exact equivalents in the Latin biblical text. And yet all OTL manuscripts include a troped lesson for the first Mass at Christmas that does not derive from WB because it is based on the *Vetus Latina*, rather than the Vulgate text, and must have been translated independently. The authorship of OTL is unknown but it might be the work of the original translators or members of their circle. The OTL might, then, preserve a translation that is earlier than the text found in surviving WB manuscripts. The postholder's investigation of OTL will therefore throw light on a previously ignored text which deserves study for its own sake, and help to answer questions raised by research into the textual history of WB.

The project will produce an edition of two types of OTL based on a manageable number of witnesses. The postholder will create a base text of both types of OTL with a record of variants from seven additional manuscripts in the British and Bodleian libraries. This work can be done largely from digitised microfilms and checked against the originals in London and Oxford. In addition to visits to London the postholder will be able to visit libraries in Cambridge to get a broader view of OTL's textual tradition by consulting other manuscripts, and use this supplementary evidence wherever necessary. The postholder will then describe research

findings in an introduction to the edition, including observations on textual affiliations, language, manuscript presentation and likely contemporary use of the two versions of the Lectionary.

Oxford, where the original Wycliffite translation probably took place, offers unique resources and expertise for the project. Wycliffite studies has consistently been a major research strength in Oxford and continues to be central to the interests of several English Faculty members. Oxford is also uniquely placed to provide easy access to relevant manuscripts, solving a crucial issue that hindered research on WB in the past. The Bodleian and Oxford college libraries host the world's largest and most important collection of manuscripts of WB, and Oxford is within easy reach of the second and third largest collections in London and Cambridge.

The postholder will be able to work in association with the team of the AHRC-funded project ('Towards a New Edition of the Wycliffite Bible'), sharing their office space, accessing their unique collection of relevant digital and microfilm images and exchanging ideas with them. The postholder is likely to benefit particularly from an opportunity to work with Prof. Anne Hudson (Co-Investigator of the AHRC project) whose research has been foundational in the field of Wycliffite studies. The proposed project will therefore provide a career development opportunity culminating in a substantial publication for a young scholar in what is now a rapidly expanding research field.

Research objectives

- to investigate the nature of the text of OTL and its relationship to WB
- to draw preliminary conclusions about OTL's origin, circulation, use and place within the Wycliffite vernacular textual project
- to develop a methodology for editing OTL and formulate a strategy for further research on texts circulated with WB

Research outcomes

- an edition of OTL, comprising an edited text and an introduction describing editorial approach and research findings, submitted to a publisher for consideration
- conference papers relating to the project
- work towards articles reporting research results