

Final report
made to the Chair of the
Executive Board of the
School of Arts and
Humanities

30 June 2010

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Constitution of Working Group

The Palaeography Working Group was formed during March 2010 to advise the College on the future of Palaeography at King's College. The context of the Working Group's formation was one of deepening concern among UK academics at the prospect of severe cuts in Government funding for universities and especially for Arts and Humanities, and, born of that concern, a need for creative thinking about how research can be sustained and how academic and financial priorities can be squared. The Working Group has been chaired by an Emeritus Professor of the College and past-President of the Royal Historical Society, and membership has been drawn primarily from departments in the School of Arts and Humanities, where Palaeography is an important discipline. Membership has also included a senior medievalist from the Department of English at University College London. The Group's remit was to consider structures (including funding arrangements), and not people: members agreed to serve on the understanding that the Group's work could proceed only when issues surrounding the current post-holder had been negotiated and resolved.

Membership and Terms of Reference

These were adopted at the Working Group's first meeting and were as follows.

Membership

Chair: Professor Dame Jinty Nelson DBE, FBA, FKC, Professor Emeritus of Medieval History

Secretary: Dr Trudi Darby AKC, Deputy Head of Administration & Deputy College Secretary (Arts & Sciences) and Hon. Senior Research Fellow

A senior academic having expertise in a classical language and literature: Professor Charlotte Roueché, Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies

A senior academic having expertise in a medieval and modern language and literature: Professor Simon Gaunt, Professor of French

The Head of the Department of History: Dr Paul Readman

The Director of the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies: Professor Julian Weiss, Professor of Medieval and Early Modern Spanish Studies

A senior academic from another College of the University of London having expertise in the medieval period: Professor Ardis Butterfield, Professor of English, University College London.

In attendance

A senior administrator from the College's Development Office: Ms Jennifer Garner, Deputy Development Director (Constituency Relations)

Terms of Reference

- 1 To map the existing scope of Palaeography teaching and research at King's.
- 2 To map the discipline of Palaeography internationally, in order to identify growth areas in research and teaching.
- 3 To receive information on the funding base for Palaeography at King's.
- 4 To receive information on the present relationship between Palaeography at King's and elsewhere in the University of London.
- 5 To define the future needs of King's College London for teaching and research in Palaeography, including the scope of the discipline and areas to be covered.
- 6 To consider the future relationship between Palaeography at King's and elsewhere in the University of London.
- 7 To make proposals for the academic and administrative structures to support Palaeography at King's and for the funding of Palaeography at King's.
- 8 To cost proposals.
- 9 To report in the first instance to the Chair of the Executive Board of the School of Arts and Humanities and thence to the Vice-Principal (Arts and Sciences).

Timescale

The Working Group was tasked with producing a final report no later than 30 June 2010.

Method of working

The Working Group met in four sessions, on 31 March 2010, 4 May 2010, 14 June 2010 and 28 June 2010. Ms Jennifer Garner, Deputy Development Director (Constituency Relations), joined the Group at the meetings on 4 May 2010 and 28 June 2010, and in her absence, Miss Caroline Usher, Director of External Relations, was present on 14 June 2010. The Chair and the Secretary of the Group also met with the Dean of the School of Advanced Study (SAS) in the University of London and with the Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art. Between the first and second meetings, Professor Gaunt carried out an exercise to find out how many students were registered in the University of London for medieval postgraduate programmes; and between the third and fourth meetings, the Chair of the Group had discussions with Dr Teresa Webber, University Senior Lecturer in Palaeography at Cambridge, and with other medieval historians in London and elsewhere, as well as meeting with the present Professor of Palaeography to ascertain his views on the future direction of the subject. The Working Group has also made enquiries of the College Archives and of the Finance Department, and is grateful to the staff of those departments for providing factual information.

Background

History of Chair

The history of the Palaeography Chair at King's is inextricably linked with the changes in the constitutional arrangements of the University of London. During the period that there has been a Chair of Palaeography, the University has gone from being a highly-centralised single organisation, as it was in the period immediately following the Second World War, to a loose confederation, including autonomous degree-awarding institutions, as it now is. The most significant of these changes occurred during the 1990s.

On 18 January 1949 Francis Wormald was offered by the University the 'Chair of Palaeography tenable at King's College' and took up the post on 1 January 1950. Professor Wormald in 1961 was succeeded by Professor Julian Brown, who died in post in 1987. At this point the University took the opportunity to devolve responsibility for the Chair of Palaeography to King's College London, who appointed Albinia (Tilly) de la Mare to the post. Professor de la Mare held the Chair for ten years until her retirement in 1997. Professor David Ganz took up the King's Chair of Palaeography on 1 September 1997.

Funding problems

The University of London's Chair of Palaeography at King's was funded by the Court of the University of London, which until the 1990s was the conduit through which government funding reached the Colleges. King's College, for its part, provided accommodation and one day a week of secretarial support. When the Chair was 'devolved' to King's in 1989, no funding went with it. The Wolfson Foundation generously made a grant of £50,000 over five years to assist in the costs of the transfer, but was explicit that this funding was not an endowment. Until 2000, the recurrent costs of the Chair were met from funding-council income, through a specific grant for 'minority subjects'. Between 1989 and 2000 the College had set aside sums equivalent to the income it was receiving for Palaeography and had added them to its pool of endowments, with the aim of eventually being able to generate enough interest from the capital to make the Chair effectively fully-funded. In the event this ambition was not achieved: the capital, as at the end of the last financial year (31 July 2009) stood at £967,154 and in the current financial year is yielding interest at three per cent (£29,015). The annual direct costs of the Chair are about £50,000 more than the interest has yielded, but slightly more than half of this difference can be regarded as offset by research income from HEFCE (QR).

A King's College London Commitment

The Working Group **recommends (1)** that King's College London should emphatically re-affirm its long-standing commitment to Palaeography. Palaeographical studies are at the heart of many of the disciplines in the Arts and Humanities: there are scholars using Palaeography in the Departments of Classics, English, French, German and Spanish, in the Departments of History, Music, Philosophy and Theology & Religious Studies, and in the Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH), and for research that ranges from the preparation of editions of medieval texts and early modern musical manuscripts to the study of comparative literature across Europe and the Mediterranean world. The Working Group believes that it is important to give leadership to these scholars, to maintain links with scholars in these areas in the wider academic community especially, in the first instance, in London, and to continue to develop new research techniques in Palaeography. The Working Group draws particular attention to the role of the CCH in pioneering applications of digital technology to medieval scholarship and generating both new kinds of collaborative research and new scholarly methods. The Working Group sees here considerable potential for recruiting doctoral students.

Identifying a new solution

Implicit in our recommendation that the College should re-affirm its long-standing commitment to Palaeography is the assumption that it will do this by making an appointment, and so the next question to consider is: what sort of appointment? The Working Group **recommends (2)** that the

College create a Chair in Palaeography and Manuscript Studies, to be filled from September 2012 and with a remit broadly in line with the discussion which follows.

Remit

The Working Group, while stressing the need to sustain the study of the range of languages, from persisting ancient ones to developing vernaculars, that were used to produce medieval texts, wishes to underscore the centrality of Latin writing in western European culture from antiquity to modern times. We do not equate 'Palaeography' with 'Latin Palaeography' – far from it – but we do believe that a deep knowledge of Latin is a core skill for a senior palaeographer. At the same time, we believe that the digital revolution offers Palaeography a new lease of life in both teaching and research. The essential skills required for the Chair which we envisage therefore associate the traditional tried and tested with the new and experimental. Our vision for the Chair includes:

The capacity to provenance and date scripts, and to judge the authenticity of documents

Language skills: these are a prerequisite, although increasingly under threat in the anglophone world. We would expect Latin as a given, alongside familiarity with one or more major European language(s) (including Greek)

An interdisciplinary remit, covering documentary and archival materials and medieval vernacular languages and literatures

Meeting demand from a range of constituencies, of which the largest will be history/history of art but which could embrace classical and medieval languages, music, philosophy and theology, these disciplines together providing critical mass

Engagement with the digital environment, and here we mean not only using information technologies to refine criteria of dating, provenance and authenticity, and to undertake the digitisation (including mark-up) of manuscripts, but engaging in collaborative research especially with colleagues in CCH.

The emphasis here on history and history of art results from an informal survey conducted by a member of the Working Group across eight University of London Colleges and Schools, including King's, asking how many medievalist Master's and Doctoral students they had across a range of disciplines (history, English, modern languages, archaeology, philosophy, music and history of art). This revealed that of the 343.5 students reported in this survey, 228 (66.38%) were studying history or history of art. The second biggest grouping was English, with 68 students (19.80%). The biggest grouping of medieval students was at King's (76 students), followed by Royal Holloway (74), the Courtauld (68 students), UCL (47.5 students), Birkbeck (47), Queen Mary (19 students), Goldsmiths (2 students) and the Warburg (2 students). We believe that these preponderances, which reflect recent trends fairly accurately, should be reflected in what is expected of the Chair.

The Working Party thinks that new Master's programmes could engage the new post-holder in collaborative teaching with colleagues in a number of King's departments, including CCH, and that the digital humanities dimension has particular potential to recruit strongly for postgraduate work at this level. The new post-holder should further be expected to recruit Doctoral students in the UK and from overseas.

The Working Group expects to see provision in palaeographical studies at undergraduate level, perhaps for those writing a final-year dissertation or as a specialist option available both to King's and to Study Abroad students. We recognise that this would be a course *about* Palaeography rather than *in* Palaeography, because undergraduate students will not normally have the language skills or research techniques to 'do' Palaeography. We are aware that at present Palaeography is introduced to undergraduates through modules 5AAYCL15 'The Ancient and Early Medieval Book' and 5AAYCL16 'The Medieval Book' in the Classics Department; and though we would not want to constrain or dictate what might be offered in the future, we believe that some provision should be made. One significant enhancement of the Chair's functions would be to support teaching of palaeographical elements in existing undergraduate and postgraduate courses, as appropriate, in whichever department these are taught.

Beginning in summer 2009, the College now offers a Summer School which is particularly attractive to international students, including those from the Ivy League. Lecturing staff who teach on the Summer School do so by choice, and in lieu of other teaching so that their research time is not impaired. This is a new feature of the College's academic year and is still being developed, but we would hope that it might be possible to include an offering, perhaps in the field of Manuscript Studies rather than in more technical aspects of Palaeography. The Working Group notes that the AHRC-funded week-long Palaeography courses offered under the auspices of the Institute of English Studies, in the University of London's School of Advanced Study (SAS), in the past two years have been sold out within days of being announced. The Working Group considers that Summer Schools in Palaeography have great potential for attracting not only aspiring scholars but also archivists and curators.

We suggest that for a subject as inherently interdisciplinary as Palaeography, the post-holder should have the security and structure of a single departmental home. The Working Group therefore **recommends (3)** that the Chair should be housed in whichever department is most appropriate for the person appointed, that it should be fully integrated within one department, supported by the normal administrative arrangements for that Department and reporting to the Head of Department. Palaeography historically grew out of Classics, yet as noted above, the biggest demand, currently and in the foreseeable future, is from historians; and it is likely that History would be the most appropriate department for the holder of the Chair. But we would not wish to rule out an appointment housed in another Department or Centre in which palaeographical expertise is practised. Within this structure, however, the Working Group feels that it is important for the new Chair to look outwards. We feel that it should be an explicit responsibility of the Chair to promote collaboration across disciplines and across institutions. Because medievalists in a range of disciplines make major demands on palaeographical expertise, the holder of the Chair will have both the opportunity, and the responsibility, to act as a standard-bearer.

The corollary of this expectation is that collaboration should not be hampered by the boundaries imposed by departmental budgets, and we **recommend (4)** that the School of Arts and Humanities should take account in its resource allocation processes of any special costs arising from the broad remit of the Chair.

We turn now to the funding issue. Universities have to meet their costs and to make reasonable investments so that they can carry out their business. They therefore have to be aware of how their costs are distributed and how they are covered. On the other hand, universities have charitable status; they do not have share-holders and do not pursue profit. They have to take the long view – if not the thousand-year view, at least the hundred-year view – in considering their range of activities: sometimes they will wish to support a subject which is important for academic and intellectual

reasons although it cannot cover its costs. For King's College London, Palaeography is a crucial case in point: King's does not have an endowment for a Chair of Palaeography although it does have annual income which it has chosen in recent years to earmark for the current Chair. In recent years, King's has built up energetic administrative departments of Development and Alumni Relations. King's is committed to sustaining the highest scholarly traditions while meeting new imperatives and confronting new threats. The Working Group is therefore convinced that the best way for King's to square this circle in the case of Palaeography is to seek funds to endow a Chair. The Working Group accordingly **recommends (5)** that the College look for philanthropic monies to establish the fully-endowed Chair. This will protect the future of Palaeography and, through that, of a cluster of related disciplines and of interdisciplinary research.

The Appointment Process

The constitution of the Appointments Panel is defined by the College's procedures as:

Chair	Principal or Vice-Principal
School	Head of School
Division/Department	Head of Department/Division plus one (two maximum) senior academic members of staff nominated by the School following consultation with the Head of Department
Subject Expert	Where no internal subject expert is available, an external subject expert (senior academic) will serve on the committee in place of one of the department academics
External experts	3 external experts to be nominated by the School who will be asked to provide comments by post as is currently done in promotions to senior academic posts. May attend selection proceedings, but not obligatory.

Given the range of disciplinary interests involved, it would be essential for key stakeholders to be represented on the Appointments Panel. It follows from our recommendation (3) above that at the time when the Panel is appointed, the eventual home department for the Chair will not be known. We therefore **recommend (6)** that when it comes to deciding the membership of the Appointments Panel, the three academic members of staff from the School should include the Director of the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies (CLAMS) and another senior medievalist; and also that the three external experts should be requested to attend the selection proceedings.

The distinctive role of a Palaeography Chair at King's College London

We have shown that King's College London has a historic commitment to Palaeography and we have recommended that the College should re-affirm that commitment. King's has a long-standing capacity in terms of its disciplinary coverage and teaching expertise in fields to which Palaeography is vital. King's has special strength in the medieval field, in areas such as Byzantine studies, English, modern languages and history, in the latter of which the College has recently made significant investment, and whose teachers and researchers contribute very strongly to intercollegiate seminars at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research. The new post-holder would be expected to be responsive to teaching demands for palaeographical expertise of postgraduate medievalists in the College, in whichever department they are based, though it would, naturally, be for the post-holder to determine the form and timing of such responses. With its imminent move into the East Wing of Somerset House, King's has the potential for fruitful collaboration with the Courtauld Institute of Art,

located in the North Wing: a proximity that holds even more promise given the complementary interests of King's and the Courtauld in the medieval field.

In the Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH) King's has a unique resource. Classicists and medievalists were among the earliest Humanities scholars to embrace information technology for research purposes and in CCH, this collaboration is mature and well-established, harnessing digital resources in late antique and medieval externally-funded projects in epigraphy; papyrology; prosopographical databases, of the Byzantine world, and of Anglo-Saxon England; electronic editing, of Anglo-Saxon estate-boundaries, and of the earliest records kept by the thirteenth-century English chancery; and the creation and manipulation of linguistic corpora. Huge potential exists for other collaborations and the Working Group **recommends (7)** that the new Chair should actively pursue joint-working with CCH.

CLAMS, established at King's over twenty years ago, is a focal point for medieval studies within and beyond the College. In fostering forms of interdisciplinary medieval scholarship it complements and reinforces the role of Palaeography at King's.

The metropolitan dimension

London houses rich holdings of manuscripts in its libraries, museums and archives. King's is exceptionally well-placed to benefit from, and take a lead in developing, the use of these resources, to make London more visibly a world centre of palaeographical study. Among the key factors here, we note:

- the University of London and especially SAS, whose Institute of English Studies currently supports a part-time Professor of medieval manuscript studies with special expertise in Old English and Middle English scripts. We believe that palaeographical studies at King's should continue to be open to collaboration with palaeographers in the teaching of Palaeography in other parts of the University and beyond and, as noted above, we expect that the King's Professor will take initiatives to encourage this collaboration;
- SAS's national role as a facilitator of Humanities research, rather than a teacher of research students: a role which the Palaeography Chair can therefore complement without duplicating;
- the unique special collections of the Senate House Palaeography Library and its associated seminar room constitute a key resource, bringing together *in one place* the major secondary sources necessary for teaching Palaeography: the Working Group therefore **recommends (8)** that King's College should continue to support the provision by the University of London of the Palaeography Library and seminar room as an essential element of the delivery of Palaeography in London;
- the museums, galleries and archives which are already our collaborator-institutions: the College has gained Collaborative Doctoral Awards for PhDs in the cultural sector, for example with the National Portrait Gallery, with plenty of scope for extending this trend, while collaborative links with The National Archives, the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library, and the British Museum, are all well-established or under construction;
- the crucial role of information technology in enabling e-communication: London offers a robust infrastructure and perhaps the UK's biggest conglomeration of connexions to SuperJaNET, including Access Grids, and it also has, at King's and elsewhere, expertise in digitisation projects and software development that can produce online teaching and research

materials of the highest quality, and experience of collaborating with large-scale digitisation projects such as the British Library's;

- London's location as a gateway – the fact that it is easy to get from King's to Eurostar at St Pancras is obvious but worth affirming: European collaborations, and European funding, are becoming increasingly important for research, particularly for subjects such as Palaeography which cross national boundaries. The Erasmus programme is now an important facet of the School of Arts and Humanities, in particular, and for European students, who are more likely than British students to have a grounding in Latin, Palaeography could be an attractive and distinctive option at King's. Beyond Europe lie significant constituencies in North America, Australia and New Zealand, and, notably, Japan, where interest in medieval European history and literature has long flourished.

Timeliness

Everything that we have said above points to collaboration: within King's, within the University and across the wider community of the Arts and Humanities. In the present financial crisis, universities can expect to be urged to share resources – there is nothing particularly new in this, but the recession has given an added urgency to this steer from the Funding Council. Often, when Vice-Chancellors speak of sharing research facilities, they are assumed to be thinking of expensive scientific equipment, but the point is equally valid for highly-specialist expertise in Arts and Humanities, such as Palaeography offers. In the Working Group's view, an appropriate time for an initiative which would make expertise available across institutions is as soon as may be, and an appropriate provider of leadership would be the Chair of Palaeography.

There is a broader sense in which the Working Group's vision for this Chair is timely. In a phase of economic recession, the place of the Arts is questioned by those who claim that the future lies with the new science and technologies and that the study of ancient manuscripts is a luxury that we cannot afford. At King's, where pioneers of digital humanities have strongly developed the subject as a discipline in its own right rather than a tool, there exists the potential to use highly sophisticated forensic techniques, bringing palaeographical problems to the digital humanist and using digital techniques to shine new light on manuscripts, thus driving forward collaborative research. Both disciplines are moving into a period of development where such research can yield important results, and King's is one of the very few places where such collaboration would be possible.

The historic responsibility of King's College London for Palaeography

The Working Group has recommended that King's College London should make explicit its commitment to fully funding a re-established Chair, whose holder will serve not just King's students – be they undergraduates, Master's students, Doctoral or Erasmus students – but also students (including Erasmus students) from other Schools of the University of London and, via e-technology and SAS collaboration, national and international scholarly communities.

Palaeography is simply too specialised ever to cover its costs. Yet the Working Group believes that Palaeography is a subject which is fundamental to the Arts and Humanities as practised at King's, and therefore that its future should be assured. We trust that we have demonstrated the importance of Palaeography both to the College's mission of excellence in research and also for its own sake. Without Palaeography, large tracts of human experience and the culture of the past become, quite literally, illegible.

Recommendations

- (1) that King's College London should emphatically re-affirm its long-standing commitment to Palaeography.
- (2) that the College create a Chair in Palaeography and Manuscript Studies, to be filled from September 2012.
- (3) that the Chair should be housed in whichever department is most appropriate for the person appointed, that it should be fully integrated within one department, supported by the normal administrative arrangements for that Department and reporting to the Head of Department.
- (4) that the School of Arts and Humanities should take account in its resource allocation processes of any special costs arising from the broad remit of the Chair.
- (5) that the College look for philanthropic monies to establish the fully-endowed Chair.
- (6) that when it comes to deciding the membership of the Appointments Panel, the three academic members of staff from the School should include the Director of the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies (CLAMS) and another senior medievalist; and also that the three external experts should be requested to attend the selection proceedings.
- (7) that the new Chair should actively pursue joint-working with CCH.
- (8) that King's College should continue to support the provision by the University of London of the Palaeography Library and seminar room as an essential element of the delivery of Palaeography in London.

APPENDIX

Costing

Recurrent costs per annum, 2010-11 prices:

Payroll (gross, incl. salary, NI and superannuation)	£100,000
Non-pay (incl. IT hardware, software, licences)	£10,00
Office accommodation: say, 18 sq m @ £354	£6,372
Storage for specialist materials: say, 10 sq m	£3,540
Total recurrent:	£119,912

Recruitment costs (one-off):

the field is expected to be international, so there are likely to be travel and accommodation costs for at least some of those interviewed, and possibly re-location expenses. An estimate of **£20,000** is suggested.