

**PhD studentship, University of Birmingham (3 years, from September 2013; AHRC-funded) (ref: PhD2)**

The early-modern letter – its generic codes; the material circumstances of composition, dispatch, receipt, and circulation; and epistolary habits of thought – is a flourishing field. Thomas Browne's large epistolary corpus – personal, familial, professional, and natural-philosophical – gives an unparalleled picture of 17th-century intellectual exchange, and of the development of his own ideas and styles. Based in this rich material, the PhD will be grounded in some of the following questions: how does Browne's correspondence inform or challenge our understanding of his major works? how did epistolary exchanges affect scientific knowledge and its circulation in this period? did their material conditions and constraints shape the genesis and communication of Browne's ideas? what can be learned from the epistolary corpora of other early-modern correspondents (eg, Spenser, Bacon, Oldenburg, Boyle)? The student will master palaeographical and other textual skills, a command of antiquarian, medical, geological, botanical, theological, and other discourses, and techniques within the dynamic field of digital humanities to produce a doctoral project with great interdisciplinary scope.

Co-supervised by Prof Claire Preston (Birmingham), the general editor of the AHRC-funded Browne edition, and Dr Andrew Zurcher (Cambridge), co-editor of Browne's correspondence, the student will be formally attached to the Birmingham Department of English and additionally supported by the Centre for Reformation and Early-Modern Studies, and by Cambridge's Centre for Material Texts. As part of the AHRC-funded edition of *The Complete Works of Sir Thomas Browne* (8 vols, OUP 2015-2019), the student will interact extensively with the eleven editors, two post-doctoral researchers, and a second doctoral student in contributing to its intellectual, analytical, and textual framework. The student may be expected to contribute, as directed, to background research on the volume of Browne's letters that forms part of the edition.

Enquiries are welcome. Please contact either Prof Claire Preston ([c.e.preston@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.e.preston@bham.ac.uk)) or Dr Andrew Zurcher ([aez20@cam.ac.uk](mailto:aez20@cam.ac.uk)), specifying 'PhD2'.

**Applications (ref 'PhD2')** should be made directly to Professor Preston via email. The successful candidate will be asked to apply formally to the university.

**Qualifications:** you will have very good undergraduate and master's degrees in English Literature or a closely related subject such as intellectual history or comparative literature. Only **UK home students** not already reading for a PhD are eligible.

**Application:**

-- **cv** including your undergraduate and MA/M.Phil educational history with degree and exam results, and any awards; special skills or experience (eg, language proficiency, other relevant expertise); and publications (if any).

– **covering letter** one A4 side only, describing your preparation and qualification for, and interest in, this post.

– **two letters of reference**, one of which should be from your post-graduate supervisor.

– a **sample of your post-graduate academic writing** (up to 3000 words), or a short academic publication.

**Submission of material:**

Send hard and electronic copies to Professor Preston, Department of English, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston B15 2TT by **18 March, 2013**. Ask your referees to send their letters directly by email to [c.e.preston@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.e.preston@bham.ac.uk) by that date.