

LIBRARY LATES MINI TALKS

DESIGNING English

7.00–7.15pm

Parchment: from wonder sheet material of the Middle Ages to 21st-century book conservation

Andrew Honey, Book Conservator, research and teaching, Bodleian Libraries

“Is not parchment made of sheepskins? Ay, my lord, and of calfskins too” – parchment is an amazing sheet material made by working and drying skins of domesticated animals under tension. It is ideally suited for many uses in books and was the common support for writing throughout the Middle Ages, as well as being used to bind some books. It has lasted exceptionally well to this day and our talk will explore this remarkable material from its production and use, to the methods we now use for its conservation at the Bodleian Library.

This talk will be repeated at 9pm by the Head of Book Conservation, Nicole Gilroy.

7.30–7.45pm

The Lollard Bible: the Greatest Medieval English Best-Seller

Dr Elizabeth Solopova, Lecturer in English Literature, Faculty of English, University of Oxford

The Wycliffite Bible is the first complete translation of the Bible in English produced in the last quarter of the 14th century by the followers of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif. In spite of being condemned and banned about 20 years after its appearance, it survives in over 250 manuscripts, many more than any other medieval English text. This talk will introduce this major achievement of medieval biblical scholarship and outline what we know about the origin and manuscript tradition of the translation.

8.00–8.15pm

Pisspots and hunting traps: curating “Designing English”

Professor Daniel Wakelin, Faculty of English, University of Oxford

The curator of “Designing English” will talk about how he selected exhibits of medieval manuscripts in English. Which books are worth our attention? Are they really marvels of graphic design?

8.30–8.45pm

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: The Layouts of Illuminations in Junius 11

Dr Colleen Curran, Faculty of English, University of Oxford

Of the four surviving Old English poetic manuscripts, Junius 11 remains the only one with planned illustrations to accompany the text.

The manuscript contains five poems related to the fall and redemption of mankind and forty-eight accompanying illustrations.

The relationship between the poetic narrative and illustrations, however, has been questioned. Do the illustrations match the text?

What can the layout of Junius 11 tell us about the harmony between the poetic and illustrative narratives?

Did the makers of this book intend for the illustrations to play a major role in a reader's understanding of the text?

9.00–9.15pm

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Nicole Gilroy, Head of Book Conservation, Bodleian Libraries