TOEBI Newsletter
2017 | Volume XXXIV

The Year in Review

This has been an eventful year for TOEBI. Last year's conference saw the retirement of Hugh Magennis after many years of service as President of the TOEBI committee. Clare Lees graciously accepted the role temporarily and it is expected that the next president will be voted and announced at the upcoming TOEBI conference in October.

Hugh Magennis enjoyed a long and distinguished association with TOEBI as a founding member, chair and president.

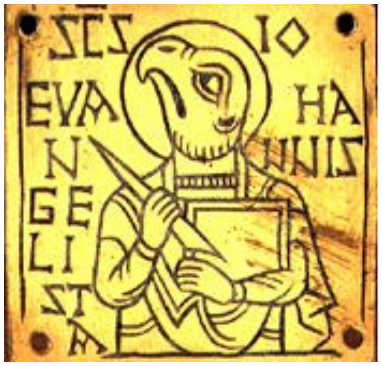
Although the year has been overshadowed by controversy, the editors hope that this issue will demonstrate just how much positive work is to be celebrated in the field of Old English studies. This issue includes news of new initiatives to make learning Old English fun, recent publications by our talented members and even a gift in the shape of a very generous discount from publishers Boydell and Brewer.

This year has also seen the retirement of David Clark and Philip Shaw from the editorial board of the newsletter. The new editors, Eleni Ponirakis and Katrina Wilkins, hope that you enjoy this issue and encourage you to send us your news and views for the next issue. We would also encourage you to contact us if you would like to write a book review for the next issue.

We would like to offer the most heart-felt thanks to all our contributors who have given up their time to write for us and a special thank you to Sean Andersson at Boydell and Brewer for working with us this year and offering such a generous discount to TOEBI members.

Eleni Ponirakis
Katrina Wilkins
University of Nottingham

In This Issue ...



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TOEBI Annual Meeting 2016

20 October, King's College London
'Performance, Pedagogy and the Profession'

The 2016 annual TOEBI conference was held in the impressive marbled halls of King's College London. Clare Lees organised and hosted an exciting day's worth of papers and discussions based around the theme of 'Performance, Pedagogy and the Profession'.

It was lovely to see the conference so well attended and to catch up with old friends and see new faces over a welcome cup of coffee. The proceedings kicked off at 10.50 with a welcome speech from Clare and was followed by a lively session chaired by Philip Shaw from Leicester. This first panel consisted of three papers: Hana Videen (KCL) introduced us to her *Dēor-Hord* project through her presentation 'Reimagining Animals with *Deor-Hord*'; Thijs Porck and Jodie Mann (Leiden University) presented 'Digital Approaches to Teaching Old English'; and Jennifer Neville (Royal Holloway London) entertained us with her presentation 'Teaching Old English Poetry with Dance and Movement'. All three of these papers showed imaginative ways of approaching Old English in the classroom and beyond. Hana Videen, Thijs Porck and Jodie Mann have kindly contributed articles to the newsletter so that those who were unable to attend last year's conference can learn about their projects (and those who were there can revisit these resources).

The TOEBI committee met during the lunch break and we met again for more papers at 2.00. Josh Davies of King's College London chaired a stimulating panel of papers. Carl Kears (KCL) presented 'Old English in the Archive: Re-Creation, Revival and Teaching'; Alice Jorgensen (Trinity College Dublin) presented her paper ''*Hwæt is þeos wundrung*': Wonder and Emotional Performance in the Advent Lyrics of the Exeter Book'; and Fran Allfrey and Fran Brooks (KCL) presented 'Playing with Medieval Visions: Exploring *The Dream of the Rood* through Images, Sound and Text'. These papers all gave much food for thought and a lively discussion ensued.

After a short coffee break, the members came together for a roundtable discussion, 'Matters, Issues, Mentors', where Mike Bintley (Canterbury Christ Church), Marilina Cesario (Queen's University Belfast), Megan Cavell (Oxford) and Kathryn Maud (Swansea) led a discussion on their experiences with the Anglo-Saxong Mentoring Initiative and some of the issues currently facing early medieval academia. Megan Cavell and Kathryn Maud have kindly submitted some reflections on the purpose and success of the mentoring scheme for this newsletter.

Discussion brought forward from the committee included a decision to encourage membership and active input from international Old English scholars, as well as encouraging more teaching of Old English internationally.

The 2017 conference is to be held at University College Cork and has for its theme 'Old English Across Borders'. This is a most apt theme in light of recent controversies and will offer opportunities for TOEBI members to discuss these issues and to reinforce our efforts to work in an atmosphere of equality of opportunity and mutual respect.

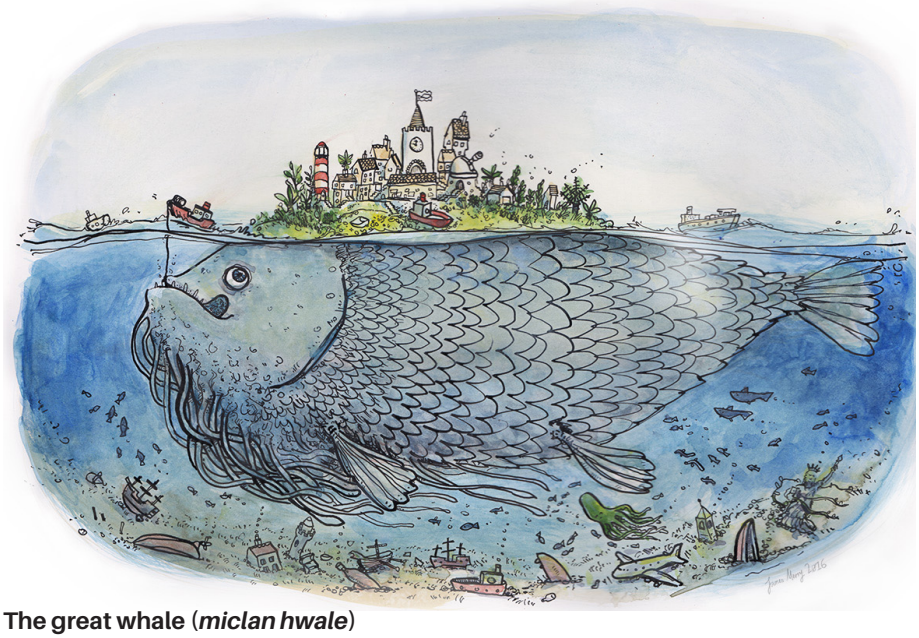
Eleni Ponirakis
University of Nottingham

Re-Imagining Medieval Animals with *Dēor-hord*

As humans we are drawn to mysterious and beautiful creatures, part real and part imagined – animals that terrify, charm, and edify all at once. Bestiaries, bestsellers of the Middle Ages, have not disappeared from the modern world. The creatures of medieval manuscripts are increasingly shared on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, and our love of bestiaries goes beyond academic and literary interest. Even iOS games like *PokémonGo* or *Plants vs Zombies* have their own 'bestiaries', which describe important attributes, evolutions, strengths, and weaknesses of their many creatures.

Dēor-hord is a blog that reimagines medieval animals. The pseudo-Old English compound plays upon the idea of the *wordhord*, the treasure trove of words of an Anglo-Saxon *scop*. The blog is the collaborative endeavour of a medievalist (myself) and an artist (James Merry).

For each blog, post I translate a description of an animal from an Old or Middle English text into Modern English. My translations incorporate words in the original language, which are translated using an interlinear gloss in modern English. When you hover the cursor over an Old or Middle English word, a bubble appears with the pronunciation, so someone who hasn't studied the language can read the whole poem aloud.



The great whale (*miclan hwale*)

Medieval illuminators didn't always have an opportunity to see the animals they had to draw; they relied on other people's (possibly unclear or inaccurate) descriptions. Rather like a medieval illuminator, James Merry doesn't have the benefit of reference images, and I don't tell him what the animal is supposed to be until after he has completed his illustration. He must use his imagination to illustrate creatures based on my mysterious descriptions.

Dēor-hord aims to teach people about early English language and medieval animals, but it also encourages people to consider how humans – in the past and present – depict the unknown.

Visit our blog medievalandmodernbestiary.com to see eight different animals and follow @Deorhord on Twitter to hear about future critters.

Hana Videen
King's College London

The Anglo-Saxon Mentoring Initiative

2016 saw the launch of a new mentoring programme – the Anglo-Saxonist Mentoring Initiative (ASMI) – which aims to encourage a positive sense of community among scholars of all areas of Anglo-Saxon studies. Mentoring, especially by mentors who have no stake in the assessment of mentees, is essential to professional development and can make a crucial difference to the careers of under-represented groups. Many mentors also report how positive the experience is for them, since such initiatives build communities that span all career levels.

ASMI, co-organised by a group of academics from the UK and USA, set up approximately forty mentor–mentee pairings at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo and the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2016. The first round had very positive feedback from both mentors and mentees, and we will be expanding to include the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists biennial conference, as well as online mentoring, in 2017. Members of the TOEBI community are encouraged to join – as mentors, mentees or both – and can follow the programme's progress at anglosaxonistmentoring.wordpress.com. We will post more information about how to sign up on the website and via a number of listservs and Facebook groups as conference season approaches.

If you have any questions, we can be reached at anglosaxonistmentoring@gmail.com. Feel free to contact us individually as well:

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Megan Cavell
Oxford University

A Mentee's Experience

The mentoring I've received through the Anglo-Saxonist Mentoring Initiative has spanned a key year in terms of my career. I met my brilliant mentor Jenny Neville at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2016 when I had not yet completed my PhD. I write this in June 2017, having passed my PhD viva in December 2016 and successfully interviewed for my first permanent academic post at the American University of Beirut in early 2017. Jenny's support made this difficult process more bearable, and I hope that writing about my mentoring experiences can encourage more people to get involved at both ends of the mentor–mentee partnership.

As I said, Jenny and I first met as mentor and mentee at the IMC, but we had met before this at conferences in London and elsewhere. However, having an official reason for meeting made all the difference. Meeting under the auspices of the mentoring initiative meant that I wasn't anxious about talking solely about myself and my career aspirations (after all, that's what we were there for!). Jenny helped me to set out a plan for my job applications and we talked through the best way to discuss the publications I already had and the ones that I needed to work towards. After this first meeting, Jenny got in touch by email every couple of months to check how the job search was going and offer words of encouragement. Before my Skype interview at the American University, we had a chat over Skype to check I didn't have any

(cont'd on 5)

strange facial expressions and I was looking in the right place. Most recently, we met for coffee in London to discuss how best to balance a first full-time job with continuing to publish.

It wasn't a huge commitment in terms of time for either of us, but it really did make a lot of difference to my confidence. Having someone to ask tricky career questions that were specific to the field was particularly useful, and the fact that Jenny kept checking in periodically meant I felt like someone further on in their career cared about how I was doing. So thank you to Megan, Peter, Damian and Mary-Kate for setting this up, and I hope to act as a mentor to someone at conferences in the future.

Kathryn Maude
American University of Beirut

ISAS 2021

Congratulations to the University of Leicester and University of Nottingham, whose joint bid was recently accepted to host ISAS 2021. The conference theme is 'Borderlands'. Christina Lee headed a team of staff and students from both universities, whose hard work and dedication won over the panel. The organising committee's message to ISAS members included the following:

> 'Our theme is based on the geography of Anglo-Saxon England, where this region was always part of a border territory [...]. We are looking forward to five days of crossing and breaking down borders: between disciplines, between people and also between academia and the wider public.'

'Blanded Leornung'

Three Digital Approaches to Teaching Old English

Ongoing digitization provides new opportunities for teaching and engaging students both inside and outside the classroom.[1] What follows is a brief report on three approaches to using new media to facilitate undergraduate teaching of Old English at Leiden University, the Netherlands. First, the use of video clips to explain basic features of Old English grammar and morphology is discussed. Next, we report on how the incorporation of student-created material (vlogs on the Norman Conquest and 'homemade' Old English proverbs) led to a better understanding of the course content. Finally, an analysis of a Facebook group for Old English students, which has run for a duration of over four years, is shown along with the best practices that have been gleaned from it.

1. Old English Grammar Videos

While some students acquire the basics of Old English grammar after one round of explanation, others require repeated explication. This varying pace of acquisition cannot always be catered to in a traditional classroom setting. If the tutor repeats the basic grammatical information too often, valuable in-class time is lost and the more advanced students will lose interest, creating a potentially hostile atmosphere for students who need extra explanation. In other words, while teachers are recommended to tailor their didactic practice to the needs of the individual learner,[2] traditional teaching may not be the most suitable environment for 'differentiated learning'. Research has shown that the incorporation of digital teaching tools can be effective in this regard.[3]

For our introductory course in Old English, a

1 For a good introduction, see, e.g., Janet MacDonald, *Blended Learning and Online Tutoring: Planning Learner Support and Activity Design*, 2nd edn (Aldershot: Routledge, 2008).

2 Carol Ann Tomlinson, *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, 2nd edn (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2014).

3 See, e.g., Carla Haelermans, Joris Ghysels and Fernao Prince, 'Increasing Performance by Differentiated Teaching? Experimental Evidence of the Student Benefits of Digital Dif-

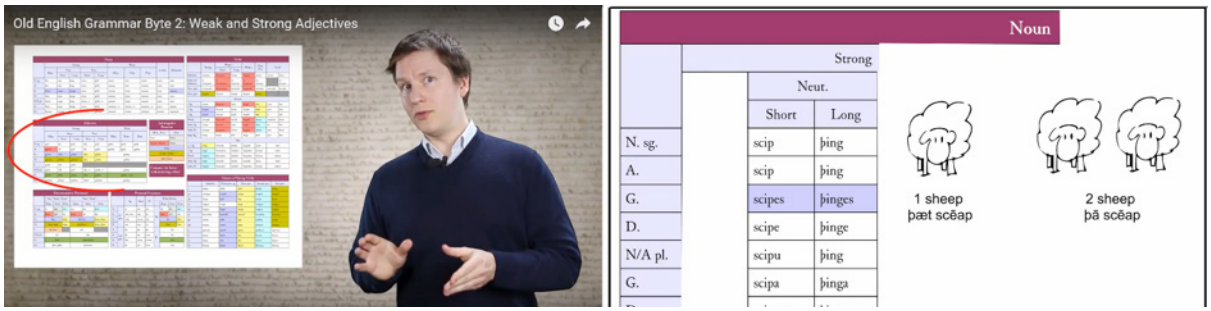

Figure 1: Stills from Old English grammar videos

number of grammar videos were developed in order to enable students to learn Old English grammar at their own pace and avoid the repetition of basic information in class. These videos could be watched in the students' own time, as often as desired, and they could be paused and rewound when necessary.[4] The videos were created using a green screen, showing the coordinator of the course and simple PowerPoint animations. Peter Baker's 'Magic Sheet' of Old English was used as a point of departure for each of the videos, since his *Introduction to Old English* (3rd edn, 2010) was used for the course.

One of the advantages of using videos to explain grammar is that it allows for a better and more dynamic visualization of information than a traditional classroom setting. For instance, we could zoom in on particular parts of the 'Magic Sheet' and indicate specific forms within paradigms. In addition, the 'dry' grammatical information could be presented in a light and attractive way by using visual material, including Old English memes – e.g., *swiga ond nim min mynet* perfectly illustrates the imperative mood and is a play on the popular 'shut up and take my money' meme (see Figure 2, below). Moreover, special effects, such as a booming voice shouting, 'Repeat after me: Whether adjectives are strong or weak is independent from the nouns they modify!' help to hammer the message home. This combination of words, pictures, animation and narration allows students to learn better than from words alone.[5] In other words, it is important to use the full visual potential of the medium, rather than merely showing text or recording a teacher in front of a whiteboard.

The videos were created two years ago and have proven their efficacy. The instructors found that they had more time during tutorials to discuss translations, literature and culture, since students no longer required in-class time to be used to repeat basic grammar. Students, too, performed better. The year-groups of students who had the advantage of the grammar videos scored better on grammar quizzes than students of previous years.[6] Furthermore, a survey among students showed that they certainly appreciated the videos: they all thought it was an effective tool for learning Old English grammar and gave the videos a score of 9 out of 10, with some reporting that they found it easier to learn with the videos than from a

ferentiation', *British Journal of Educational Technology* 46 (2015), 1161–1174.

4 On the efficacy of video-based-learning, see Sharon J. Derry, Miriam Gamoran Sherin and Bruce L.Sherin, 'Multimedia Learning with Video', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning*, ed. by R. E. Mayer, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 785–812.

5 S. K. Reed, 'Cognitive Architectures for Multimedia Learning', *Educational Psychologist* 41 (2010), 87–98, (esp. 90-91), summarizes the most effective principles for the use of multimedia in teaching.

6 Our introductory Old English course features two grammatical quizzes with ten open questions about Old English grammar. In 2015, 108 students made the first quiz (about case, gender, pronouns, adjectives and nouns) without the advantage of the grammar videos and scored an average of 6.5 out of 10. In 2016, the exact same quiz was given to a group of 112 students who did have access to the videos, and they scored an average of 6.8 out of 10. Another quiz, covering material for which no videos were available, was also given to both student populations; this time around, the quiz scores were exactly the same, suggesting that the increase of 0.3 on average for the first quiz was, indeed, mainly due to the grammar videos.

Figure 2: Still from a grammar video showing a meme to illustrate the imperative mood

book. A recurring comment of the students was that they appreciated the fact that the videos were not only enlightening but also entertaining.[7] When it comes to educational videos, a best practice certainly seems to be to intersperse the grammatical material with visual humour, including hand-drawn images, memes, pop-culture references and special effects.

To date, four videos have been created: 'Cases and Gender', 'Weak and Strong Nouns', 'Weak and Strong Adjectives' and 'Weak and Strong Verbs'. All videos are now publicly available on YouTube.[8]

2. Student-Created Content: The NormanVlogQuest and PitchProverb2Peer

In a more advanced, third-year Old English literature course, blended learning was used to stimulate 'peer-learning' (having students learn from each other), since this is known to encourage critical reflection and self-assessment.[9] A traditional way of achieving peer-learning is to have students give in-class presentations. While a great opportunity to learn essential and useful skills, in-class presentations are rarely well received by fellow students and can take up a significant amount of classroom time. By having students upload their own material to a digital environment and having their peers provide feedback online, in-class time could be spent more effectively. The move to a digital format also allowed for new kinds of assignments.

For our experiment, we used the program Pitch2Peer, a review tool that allows for online peer feedback and review. The tool was embedded in the digital learning environment of the course (BlackBoard), which ensured that the student-created material could only be accessed by the staff and students of the course. Through Pitch2Peer, students could submit 'pitches' (videos, photos, posters, text) and their fellow students would then be automatically prompted to review the material of their peers. In other words, Pitch2Peer creates a digital classroom and

7 Based on an online evaluation form, filled in by 23 students; full results available upon request.
8 For an overview, see: https://dutchanglosaxonist.com/2017/07/31/old-english-grammar-videos/
9 For an introduction to peer learning, see Nancy Falchikov, *Learning Together: Peer Tutoring in Higher Education* (London: Routledge, 2005).

facilitates peer feedback.[10]

Our first Pitch2Peer assignment, the Norman VlogQuest, required students to create a vlog of five minutes covering one aspect of the Norman Conquest. They worked in groups of three to four students and could choose a topic from a set list that included, among others, 'William the Conqueror', 'Bishop Stigand', 'The Bayeux Tapestry', 'The Harrying of the North', and so on. Taken together, the vlogs would cover all relevant aspects of the Norman Conquest and its aftermath. The students were given free rein when it came to the format of the vlogs and, as a result, the vlogs ranged from PowerPoint slides with a voice-over to animations, songs and short dramatizations.[11] In the vlogs, they had to refer to at least three secondary sources and one primary, medieval source.

On the whole, students seemed more comfortable with the vlog format than an in-class presentation. What's more, the multimodal format of making a video assignment allowed the students to experiment with a new array of techniques and skills to bring across their arguments. As such, the assignment certainly stimulated the students' creativity and gave them a chance to work together and practice new skills, such as animation and digital video editing, which may prove useful in an ever-digitizing job market.[12] Via Pitch2Peer, students next reviewed each other's work and, in watching various vlogs, learned more about the events of 1066. It also gave them valuable experience in peer reviewing other students' work from a content-based perspective.

The second assignment of this kind that we developed was 'PitchProverb2Peer'. Following a class on Old English proverbs that involved translating *The Durham Proverbs*, the students were asked to compose their own proverbs and pitch these to each other as little translation exercises. These 'proverb-pitches' were in the format of posters, consisting of a manuscript image from *The British Library Digital Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, an Old English proverb and a glossary. Three such 'proverb-pitches' are

Figure 3: Three proverb-pitches produced by third-year undergraduate students

10 For more information, see: www.pitch2peer.com/

11 One group of students uploaded their vlog to YouTube; it can be found by searching for 'Keeping up with the Godwinsons' – theirs was a spoof of the reality TV show *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*.

12 For an evaluation of using digital videos as an assessment in higher education, see Blaine E. Smith, Carita Kiili and Merja Kauppinen, 'Transmediating Argumentation: Students Composing Across Written Essays and Digital Videos in Higher Education', *Computers & Education* 102 (2016), 138–151.

reproduced below (Figure 3).

By composing their own Old English proverbs, using the *Thesaurus of Old English*, students were actively coming to terms with Old English grammar, rather than passively deciphering it from classroom editions. Naturally, not every proverb was completely flawless and students were keen to correct their fellow students via the review prompts in Pitch2Peer. For instance, the student that came up with the proverb *Betera bār in mīn bedde þonne tord on mīn setle* was duly told that *mīn* should have been inflected for the dative case: *mīnum*. The students were graded for both the proverb-pitches and the feedback they gave their fellow students, thus ensuring that all students participated actively and contributed to the peer learning environment.

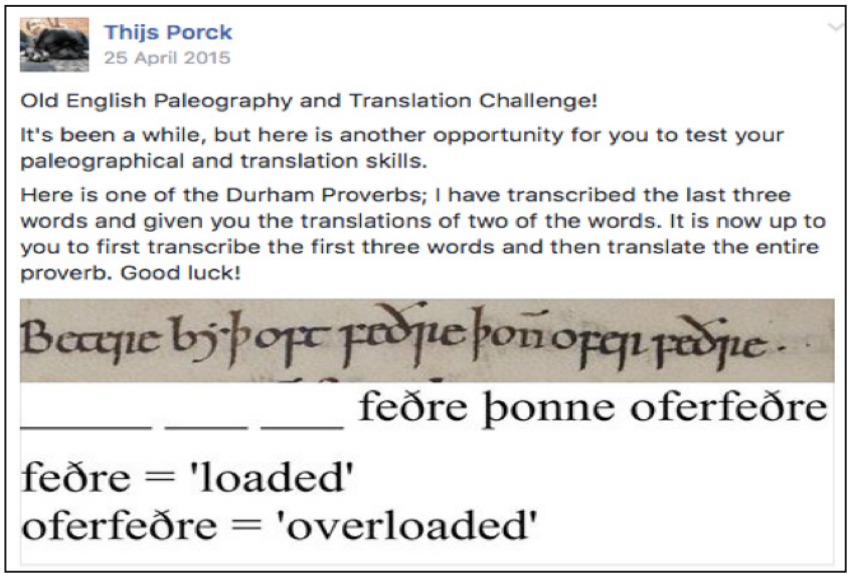

Figure 4: Example of an Old English translation challenge

Both the vlogs and the proverbs were appreciated by the students. In evaluations of the assignments, they noted that they had enjoyed watching what other students had created; they appreciated the peer feedback; and, most of all, they also were thrilled with the challenge of a new type of assignment.[13] Naturally, such new assignments also come with downsides. For one, we had the tendency of overestimating the students' digital skills – as it turned out, their digital proficiency varied quite a bit and, in the end, thorough and lengthy instructions were necessary to ensure that all students could participate. Another drawback, especially for the first assignment, was the difficulty of grading input that so heavily relies on students' artistic and creative talents, rather than merely their academic competence.

3. A Facebook Group for Students and Alumni

Social media has become a tool that can be used not only for social communication, but also for didactic purposes. Across the globe, educators are using social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, in order to engage with their students in a more comprehensive educational manner. These platforms enable instructors to increase the exposure that students receive by means of online content generation and to encourage collaboration and interaction outside of the classroom.[14] In order to complement the Old English courses at Leiden University, a Facebook group was created which has now run for over five years. This group has yielded a number of interesting didactic methods which can be utilized to increase engagement with former and current students and maintain users' interest in the subject matter.

The Facebook group was created in June 2012 as a 'closed group', which means that only users who request permission are able to access the group. Due to the close ties to Leiden University, access was granted only

13 Based on 36 written evaluations; full results available upon request.

14 For a full review of literature on using Facebook in education, see Ritesh Chugh and Umar Ruhi, 'Social Media in Higher Education: A Literature Review of Facebook', *Education and Information Technologies* (22 June 2017), 1–12, doi: 10.1007/s10639-017-9621-2

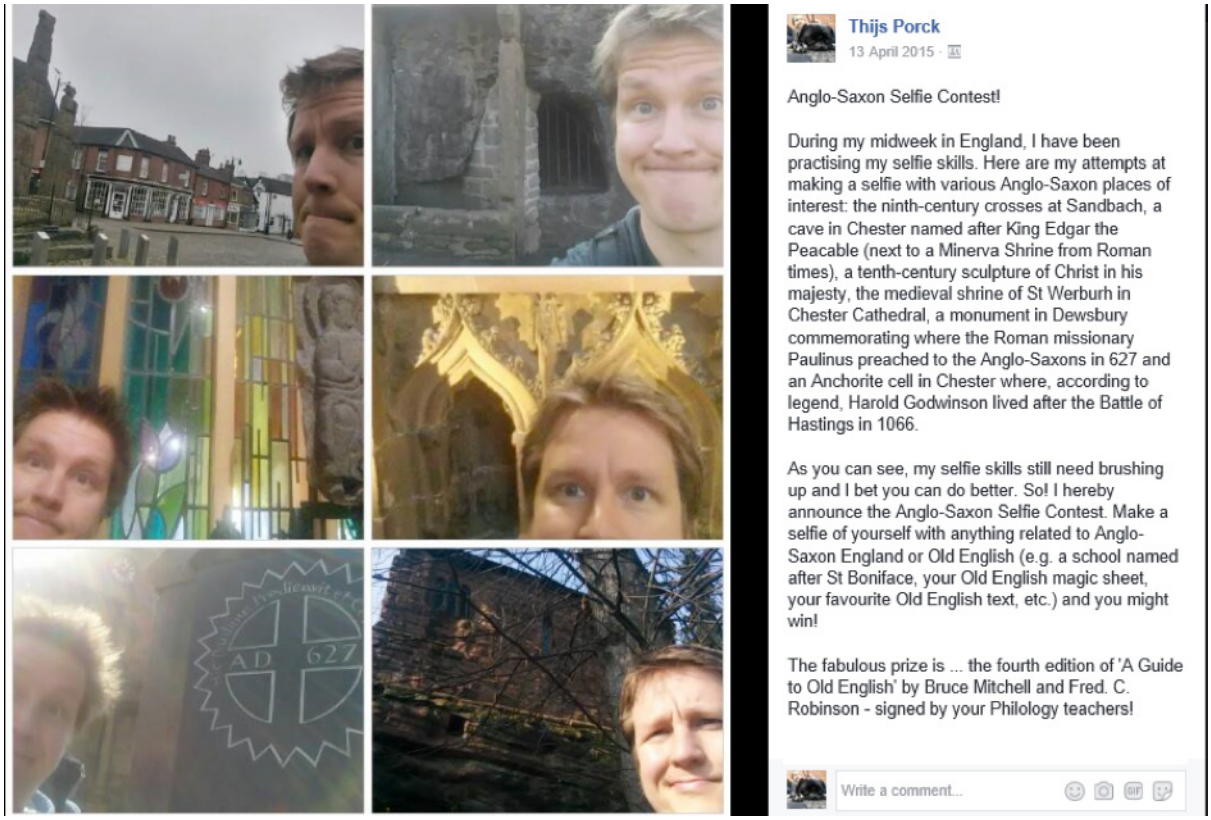

Figure 5: The most popular post to date: The Anglo-Saxon Selfie Contest

to former and current students of the Old English Philology courses offered in the BA and MA English Language and Culture degree programmes. This closed-door policy serves to keep the group fairly protected from the negative sides of online groups, including spammers, and reduces off-topic discussions, while maintaining a fairly good level of privacy to the group members.[15]

At the time of data analysis (August 2016), the group had run for four years, catered to 285 members and had amassed 1,620 posts, 13,255 likes and 4,088 comments. Compared to other online groups of its kind, the duration of this group is exceptional, since many public groups and a large number of closed groups generally do not last longer than 1.5 years.[16] In order to ascertain what the best practices are for a group such as this, all posts, likes and comments were extracted using a token provided by the Facebook developers' tool and the Python programming language,[17] which resulted in the data being exported to Excel files for data cleanup and organization. From this data file, we were able to gather insightful data, including: most popular posts, most commented on posts, and lists of post-categories and their popularity based on number of likes. What follows is based on an analysis of this data and covers the period July 2012 to August 2016.

As it turned out, one of the strengths of the group is its use of thematic posting; according to the data, a number of recurring categories of posts garner more attention than other types of post. Some of the most popu-

15 Chugh and Ruhi, p. 7; Adam Peruta and Alison B. Shields, 'Social Media in Higher Education: Understanding How Colleges and Universities Use Facebook', *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 27 (2017), 132.

16 Zara T. Wilkinson, 'Should We Be Friends? The Question of Facebook in Academic Libraries,' in *An Education in Facebook? Higher Education and the World's Largest Social Network*, ed. by Mike Kent and Tama Leaver (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 142.

17 For instructions on how to do this, see the manual provided at: https://medium.com/towards-data-science/how-to-use-facebook-graph-api-and-extract-data-using-python-1839e19d6999 [last accessed 26 August 2017].

lar categories include:

- **Old English Translation Challenge.** A short Old English text is presented with a glossary and an image and students are encouraged to supply the best translation to Modern English. In some cases, students were also invited to try their hand at filling in missing words from a manuscript image (see Figure 4).
- **Anglo-Saxon Art.** Images of medieval artworks and/or archaeological finds from the Anglo-Saxon period are posted, accompanied by some contextual information. This information helps to place the classroom material in a broader context and also allows for a discussion of visual and material culture – topics that are rarely covered in the courses that focus on literature and language.
- **Links to Modern (Popular) Culture.** Memes, jokes and links to popular television series and films that have some connection to Anglo-Saxon England (e.g., History Channel's *Vikings* and BBC's *The Last Kingdom*) provide relevant and familiar material to students.
- **Anglo-Saxon Anecdotes.** Short historical oddities from Anglo-Saxon culture are presented in the form of stories taken from chronicles and saints' lives. These can be short messages or can link to larger articles or external blog posts that provide further information.
- **'Holiday Snaps'.** Personal photos of tutors on holiday or on an excursion to an Anglo-Saxon place of interest create an informal and comfortable space for students and encourages them to follow suit.
- **Events and Activities.** The group provides an effective platform to inform students of upcoming events and activities, such as subject-related film nights, field trips and conferences that they can attend at the university. These notices increase exposure for the events, and the extracurricular activities motivate students to take a more active role in university life.

Based on our findings, we here present a list of best practices that provide a formula for a successful Facebook group of this kind:

- **Brevity.** Facebook is best suited for short posts; longer pieces of texts tend to be ignored or skipped over. It is generally advisable to present the information in one or two 'bite-size' paragraphs with a link to further information.
- **Task-based posts,** such as translation challenges and quizzes, engage the students and encourage them to practice what they have learned in the classroom.
- **Share your own passion.** When tutors demonstrate their own passion for the field, e.g., by posting pictures of themselves visiting Anglo-Saxon sites of interest, this encourages students to follow suit. One of the most popular posts on the Facebook group was the 'Anglo-Saxon Selfie Contest', which challenged students to take a selfie near an early medieval English place of interest, their favourite Old English text or anything else related to the field (see Figure 5). This contest continues to elicit new posts from current and former students.
- **Images, humour and interesting links** to other blogs also serve to stimulate interest in the subject and show users that the

> By bringing certain elements of our teaching to the digital medium, we are communicating to our students in their own terms.

world of Anglo-Saxon studies is an active one.

- **Keep the group active.** By posting a minimum of two to three posts a week, you ensure that students keep coming back to the group.
- **Encourage student postings by engaging** with them. If a student posts a link of interest or a question, be sure to like and comment on their posts.

Naturally, the upkeep of an academic Facebook group like this is time consuming, but, as the following paragraphs will outline, the time and effort is rewarded in various ways.

For instructors, a Facebook group can supplement teaching both inside and outside the classroom. As noted above, the group can prove a useful outlet for instructors to provide supplementary material in those areas that the curriculum does not cover. Since posting in the Facebook group continues even during parts of the year without course offerings on Old English, the group helps students increase and retain some of their knowledge of the field and continues to stimulate their interest in the subject. This continued exposure to Anglo-Saxon material on the Facebook group may lead to an increase in enrollment figures for optional advanced Old English courses as well as the number of BA and MA theses written on Old English-related topics. Furthermore, the group can be used as a testing ground for tutors to gauge the relevance and appeal of potential curriculum topics.[18] Those items that elicit more attention online can then be taken into the classroom and incorporated into the lesson plan to increase the link between online and offline learning. Lastly, the group provides an available network for instructors to maintain contact with alumni and increase visibility for the subject outside the university, especially when these students have gone on to follow a career at a secondary school level.

It stands to reason that the Facebook group also profits the students. In order to get their opinion on the matter, we conducted a short survey among some of members of the group.[19] More than half of the respondents stated that they visited the page at least once a week and more than 65% reported regular engagement with the posts. They further wrote that the supplementary material and opportunities to practice translation skills were among the highlights of being members of the group. From other responses, we learned that students enjoy being part of a small online community where the emphasis is on content. From an academic perspective, the current students felt encouraged to find inspiration and motivation for thesis topics, while for alumni it allows for keeping up to date with the latest research in the field.

The advantages for instructor and student notwithstanding, two potential pitfalls of using Facebook groups for education must be noted. Research has shown that if instructors become too central to the interaction on the page, this can give the impression that the emphasis in the online community is also purely didactic.[20] One way for instructors to facilitate the comfort level of students is by interspersing educational posts with humour, appealing visual material and links to the present-day. If the focus is too explicitly educational, the comfort level of the students will decrease and they will be less likely to engage with the material. A related potential pitfall to interacting with students on social media is that there is a less pronounced academic style in the manner and method of instruction, which can result in a lowering of academic standards in the classroom if this is not managed carefully by instructors.[21]

In all, a Facebook group provides an effective and informal platform that allows instructors to introduce their students to a

18 Stefania Manca and Maria Ranieri, 'Facebook and the Others. Potentials and Obstacles of Social Media for Teaching in Higher Education', *Computers & Education*, 95 (2016), p. 217.

19 Based on an online evaluation form, filled in by 28 students; full results available upon request.

20 Chugh and Ruhi, p. 6.

21 Ibid.

broader view of Anglo-Saxon culture and Old English literature. In order for a group to be successful, instructors need to maintain a constant presence in the group by posting at least two messages a week and maintain a good balance between the entertaining and the educational. Ideally, posts are brief, personal, informative and relevant to the subject matter of the group. If done well, a Facebook group is advantageous to both instructor and student.

Conclusion

In this brief article, we have reported on three approaches to using new media to facilitate undergraduate teaching of Old English. We find it important to stress that these new teaching strategies were not intended to replace traditional modes of teaching. Instead, these digital modes of teaching were implemented to enhance traditional classroom teaching by providing additional opportunities for modes of learning that would otherwise disrupt face-to-face teaching. The introduction of grammar videos, the move of peer-learning to a digital platform and the low-key interaction with students on social media ensured that in-class time could be used more effectively and allowed students to come to class better motivated and ready to learn.

By bringing certain elements of our teaching to the digital medium, we are communicating to our students in their own terms. In doing so, we follow an old technique that already surfaces in Ælfric's *Colloquy*. Ælfric's fictitious students tell their teacher, in the Old English gloss that was added later: *sprec us æfter uran gewunon* 'speak to us as we are used to' – speak to us in our own language. As we hope to have demonstrated, this Anglo-Saxon teaching tip still holds some merit.

Thijs Porck
Jodie Mann
Leiden University

Special Report on the Manuscript-Based Reading Group, University College Cork

At the 2015 TOEBI AGM in Dublin, TOEBI PhD representative, Eleni Ponirakis, opened conference proceedings with her talk 'Encouraging Undergraduates to Learn Old English'. Ponirakis' presentation outlined the various ideas that the postgraduate student body had devised to enhance the study of medieval English literature at the University of Nottingham. The success of Nottingham's Old English postgraduate and undergraduate reading groups, in particular, inspired the Cork comitatus, Alison Killilea, Niamh Kehoe and myself, to think of new ways to engage with Old English together as postgraduates as well as with our students.

Fortunately, there was already a successful Old English undergraduate reading group running in UCC, kindly hosted by our supervisor, Tom Birkett. Initially, the reading group had been held in classrooms close to campus and early in the evenings from around 5–6 pm to make it more accessible to undergraduate students. Attendance at the reading group was never compulsory, but it was mentioned in lectures and tutorials as a means for students to familiarise themselves with the language in a more relaxed setting. Similar to Nottingham's undergraduate group's attendance, the numbers of UCC's *bocgemot* featured regular appearances and casual visitors. We noticed that attendance at the reading group usually peaked whenever an exam was drawing closer. Still, there was always a sense of

fun with the reading group, especially since the texts that were chosen were often more entertaining than the exam-based material. Translating Ælfric's *Letter to Brother Edward*, for instance, drew a lot of laughs, especially as each student got to read a line each. Ælfric's description of his disgust at witnessing rural women eating and drinking while still on the toilet was made more humorous by the incredulity of the student, who couldn't quite believe what they were reading aloud!

Encouraged by the positive response to UCC's undergraduate reading group, Alison, Niamh and I started thinking of what we would like to gain from a postgraduate reading group. At the time, Niamh and I were completing a Palaeography and Manuscript-Based Research postgraduate module, which required us to select a page from a manuscript we're researching and produce a diplomatic and semi-diplomatic transcription as well as a palaeographical analysis of the text. Simultaneously, Alison had discovered and introduced us to Elaine Treharne's 'Beowulf By All' translation project, which was using Kevin Kiernan's online edition and digital facsimiles. As all three of us were now engaged in manuscript-based research, Niamh had the idea of making our manuscript studies a social event. Setting aside an hour at the end of the week, we chose to meet in The Abbey Tavern, a nearby, cosy pub, to chat, transcribe and translate Old English together.

The Manuscript-Based Postgraduate reading group quickly became the highlight of our week. The 'Beowulf By All' project was the focus of our first meetings, as each of us had a received a fifteen-line section to translate from different points in the poem. Instead of working on our lines individually in the reading group, we decided to work together on one section of fifteen lines each week. Our sessions commenced with us testing our transcription skills first by using Kiernan's digital facsimiles and checking them against his edition's transcription. When it came to translating the fifteen lines, we used the Bosworth and Toller online dictionary, the print-based Clark-Hall dictionary and Old English dictionary applications to get a sense of which translation best suited the context of the poem. After transcribing and translating the first fifteen lines in The Abbey Tavern, we confessed that we found it quite fun! We each felt that the more relaxed setting made it easier for us to unwind and have some fun together while fine-tuning our Old English transcription and translation skills.

The more relaxed setting made it easier for us to unwind and have some fun together while fine-tuning our Old English transcription and translation skills.

After we had completed our 'Beowulf By All' sections, we decided to continue the rotational basis we had adopted for Treharne's translation project. This time, however, to assist with our own research for the manuscript group we decided to take turns in transcribing a page from the manuscripts that we are researching ourselves, so: Cotton Vitellius A XV for Alison, Cotton Julius E VII from Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* for Niamh and CCCC41 for myself. We wanted the group to be both useful practice and also an opportunity for productive research! Each week one of us would either bring their

laptop to access the digital facsimile or provide photocopies of the manuscript folio to be studied.

News of the Manuscript-Based postgraduate reading group soon spread to the undergraduate Old English cohort. As the undergraduate *bocgemot* only runs during the academic term, we created a Facebook page for the Manuscript-Based reading group and invited the undergraduate members of the Old English community to partake in the postgraduate reading group during the summer months. There was a keen interest from the regular attendees and from a prospective Old English PhD student! Delighted with the level of interest, I drew up a transcription guide, which defined the Old English characters and included high-resolution images of each letter-form to help our new group members. To contextualise the various Old English scripts, I also created a handout, based on Jane Robert's *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500,* to help identify and estimate the date of Anglo-Saxon scripts. Our undergraduate members were especially excited about the transcription portion of our sessions. The dominant feeling after each meeting was that they appreciated the opportunity to engage with the text in its manuscript form and really enjoyed learning how to distinguish between the different letters.

Since then, Niamh and Alison have also happened across three lovely (and reasonably priced!) Old English translations of popular books online for our reading group: *Æðelgýðe Ellendæda on Wundorlande* by Peter Baker, *Be Siwarde þam sidfeaxan/Der Struwwelpeter* and *Be þam lytlan æþelinge* by Fritz Kemmler. Niamh personally emailed Dr Kemmler to inform him that we were using his books for our postgraduate reading group and he generously sent us some free copies for our members! So far, we have only been working with *Der Struwwelpeter,* and the feedback has been very encouraging. Our undergraduate members enjoyed translating these texts so much that they even sent him a card expressing their thanks and informing him that translating the Old English *Der Struwwelpeter* has been a source of frequent laughter!

The evident success of Nottingham's postgraduate reading group and our own undergraduate *bocgemot* effectively demonstrate that reading groups are the easiest and surest way of fostering and increasing interest in Old English. On reflection, what we as a postgraduate group are most proud of was our ability to pinpoint what we wanted from a reading group. The creation of the Manuscript-Based reading group, not only answered our own research needs for increased transcription and translation time, but also highlighted an aspect of Old English studies that undergraduate students seldom have the chance to engage with. Given our growing postgraduate student body and the enthusiasm of our undergraduates, I think the Manuscript-Based reading group will continue providing a friendly and fun forum for UCC students to talk about their research interests and love of Old English.

Patricia O Connor
Alison Killilea
Niamh Kehoe
The Cork Comitatus
University College Cork

Read up on the latest finds and developments from this summer's archaeological dig at Lindisfarne:

http://digventures.com/lindisfarne/

The Hunter

An Original Composition in the Style of Old English Elegy

Undergraduate students of English at the University of Nottingham have a wide range of interests: some wish to specialise in language, others in literature, still others in creative writing. All these interests are represented in the students of an average module cohort for 'Old English: Reflection and Lament', a second-year course focusing on the Exeter Book 'elegies'. It made sense to the teachers of the module (Eleni Ponirakis and Paul Cavill) to encourage students to engage their particular skills and interests in the assessment for this course, so we provided students with a range of writing assignments in the hope that they would choose topics that interested them.

One topic each year is an open-ended question which asks students to write a creative piece in the mode of the Old English lyrics, and accompany it with an analysis of how it relates, in similarity or difference, to the Old English tradition. We hoped for critical analysis and self-reflection, and insight into and critical engagement with scholarship on the elegies.

The poem that follows was submitted for assessment this year and shows a subtle awareness of the alliterative form, the structure and tonal development of the Old English elegies, without being derivative. This kind of work justifies the approach and we believe it might be useful for teachers as a base for accessible analysis and comparison with Old English poems.

Paul Cavill
University of Nottingham

Far from friends and forlorn I have wandered,
Daybreak to dusk I have delved the paths
Of the winterbound woods, walking near endlessly,
Fate for the lone one is long in delivery,

Often have I followed the floor of the forest,
Silently pacing, soft footed I move
towering pines entrap and encircle
Dark branches binding the sun from the sky,
The cries of songbirds sound in the trees,
Even on moorland my mind-heart is weary
Broad skies do not burst the heart-locker
Freed I am not when I wander through fens
Forward I must go from my family far
If I am not lonely my loved ones go hungry
Day after day my duty I serve

Forty days now, never returning
Forty nights too, traversing the cold,
Often have I, immutable man,
Thought of home, harkening to how
In days of old, often with noble kin,
I sat by the fire, feast-hall delighting,

Sleet-like snow strongly has fallen,
Snow-frost swirling, sight all-obscuring,
Wonder I must as I wade through the snow,
That throughout this world Winter is a trial,
Testing all men, mighty is the cold,
Therefore I suffer the summer-bane's wrath,
Sow deep my sentiment else surface-cold claims it,
Warmed by the hunger for home in my heart,
This cold will not claim me, I cannot give in

When prey is sighted, some distance hence,
My thought is of home, not how the cold howls,
I draw the bow, my breath is becalmed,
Embracing the bend-wood, body and mind,
String-tension sings, seconds are world-ages,
Frost-bound hands make the holding a hardship,
But a frozen heart cannot faint from the mark,
The arrow leaps forward, fresh to the chase
Iron sharp point piercing the air,
Once released, return it cannot,
Bursting from the breast, boldly shooting,
As lonely as I, leaving forever

(cont'd on 17)

Alas it is so with dear ones departed,
Suddenly flying, far from embrace,
If home I could fly, as fast as this bow-bolt,
Sadness would fetter my thoughts no more,

Arrowlike is the soul seeking grace of the Lord,
Straight and unwavering, winding to Him,
Once free from the feeble and faltering body,
The soul does not suffer the sting of the cold,
Leaping from this life, linger it does not,
After it had borne the best and the worst
Of life's troubles, turn It must
To the Shaper of men, minded to rest,
Although life is lingering, leaving it is instant,
A moment of tension then tirelessly soaring,
A journey beginning, the bourn is well-known.

Sam Day
University of Nottingham

Remember to Recycle
by sharing this newsletter with students and colleagues.

The Middle Ages in the Modern World 3

Conference Report

The third Middle Ages in the Modern World (MAMO) conference took place at the University of Manchester between 28 June and 1 July 2017, and was co-organised by myself and Professor David Matthews. MAMO is a biennial event which aims to explore the continued return to, and relevance of, the Middle Ages in the modern world, and why the period continues to attract audiences and scholars. MAMO was inaugurated in 2013 at the University of St Andrews, and the second MAMO conference took place in 2015 at the University of Lincoln.

Following the example of previous MAMOs, the 2017 conference situated academic papers alongside presentations and performances by creative practitioners as a way of questioning and interrogating the divide between 'professional' and 'amateur' approaches to medievalism. The first day of the conference featured a round table on the 'poetics of medievalism' with contemporary poets Jane Draycott, Matthew Francis and Sarah Law, who read aloud some of their poetic translations, transpositions and transformations of medieval literary texts and exchanged thoughts about the enduring appeal that the medieval period has for modern creative writers. The keynote on the second day of the conference was delivered by professional calligrapher Patricia Lovett MBE, who spoke about 'Illuminating Wolf Hall and Writing on Skin'. The academic keynote on the third day of the conference was given by Professor Jeffrey Jerome Cohen ('Not Wanted in the Arkive: Hope, Despair and the Afterlife of Catastrophe'), tracing the ways in which the story of Noah's Flood has been reimagined by medieval and postmedieval writers and artists in order to think through issues such as catastrophe, refuge-making and climate change. Other headline events included Daisy Black's one-woman show, *Broken Shells: A Medieval Sea Story*, staged at Manchester Cathedral and a season of medievalist film hosted by the Manchester-based arts venue, HOME.

As co-organiser, I wanted to ensure that 'Anglo-Saxonism'

was a very visible part of the conference this year. The reimaging of pre-Conquest literature and history is, of course, part of the larger phenomenon of medievalism in the modern world but, at times, Anglo-Saxonism can take on distinct forms and do different kinds of cultural work. With this in mind, the academic keynote on the first day of the conference was delivered by Dr Chris Jones (St Andrews) who spoke about 'Anglo-Saxon: "Pure English" and Fossil Poetry'. Dr Jones examined how ideas about Anglo-Saxon as a literary medium, and as the point of origin of the English language, have played out in the poetry of the nineteenth century and in more recent twentieth- and twenty-first-century culture, by groups on the far right (e.g., some of the online discussions hosted by 'Ða Engliscan Gesiðas') as well as by figures on the far left (e.g., Paul Kingsnorth, author of *The Wake*). In his lecture and during the question and answer session afterwards, Jones emphasised the need to challenge political misappropriations of Anglo-Saxonism while also creating more 'positive' narratives in public forums. A number of other papers dealt with the ways in which Old English and Anglo-Saxon themes have manifested themselves in modern and contemporary culture, ranging from Sutton Hoo in the modern archive (Fran Allfrey) to Kingsnorth's 'greening' of the Anglo-Saxons in *The Wake* (Anna Czarnowus) to the persistence of misogyny in contemporary translations of the Exeter Book Riddles (Heide Estes). Moreover, the main foyer of the Samuel Alexander Building hosted an exhibition on 'Visions of Mercia' by Carl and Ben Phelpstead. The exhibition created a contemporary vision of Mercia in visual form, capturing the ways in which the landscape of today relates both to that of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom and of its twentieth-century re-imaginings by Tolkien, Rudkin and Hill.

Overall, MAMO 3 sparked many new, important and invigorating conversations. Some of these conversations, such as the pressing need to 'decolonise' Anglo-Saxon studies, were taken up at other conferences over the summer – at English: Shared Futures and ISAS 2017, for instance. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who participated and helped to make MAMO 3 such a success. Photographs and an archive of the programme can be found at the conference website (themamo.org) and MAMO 4 will be taking place in Rome. Perhaps I will see you there!

James Paz
University of Manchester

Award*Reports*

Reports from TOEBI Conference Award holders 2016–17

19th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics

University of Essen, Essen, 22–26 August 2016

Christine Wallis, University of Sheffield

I would like to thank TOEBI for contributing to the cost of my participation in the 19th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics at the University of Essen (22–26 August 2016). This five-day conference was an excellent opportunity to share ideas, maintain and create new friendships with scholars from across Europe (and beyond) and to listen to presentations by established and upcoming researchers on many aspects of historical English. The conference was a chance to consider Old English in the wider context of historical English, and sessions covered areas such as manuscript studies, pragmatics, phonology, metre and syntax.

I presented a paper, 'Standardisation and Subjunctives: The Role of Scribal Choice in the Development of Old Eng-

lish', which was based on my PhD research. It showcased scribal corrections as a source of evidence for attitudes to grammatical and orthographical correctness in tenth- and eleventh-century texts, and received encouraging and constructive feedback from linguists working both in Old English and in other time periods. Presenting my paper as part of a panel devoted to dialect and orthography in Middle and Late Modern English was a good opportunity to consider my own research more broadly and make new connections, and it has certainly given me a lot to think about in my plans to write up this paper for publication. Among the Old English presentations were several which gave me insights into subjects and resources useful for my teaching, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of chairing a panel on stress and metre. Overall, I found the conference useful and illuminating, and I am grateful to TOEBI for helping me attend.

The Medieval Translator: Medieval Translations and Their Readership

Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaft, Vienna, 15–18 March 2017

Alison Killilea, University College Cork

On the 18th March, I gave a paper entitled 'Adaptation as Translation: *Beowulf* in the Modern Era' at The Medieval Translator conference in Vienna, funded in part by TOEBI. The paper was based on a small section of the third chapter of my PhD dissertation, and dealt specifically with two adaptations of the poem (*Grendel* by John Gardner, and the 2007 film adaptation by Robert Zemeckis) and their engagement with *Beowulf* in relation to their social context. My paper reflected on how the two very different historical contexts shaped each of these adaptations; Gardner's Vietnam War-era *Grendel* resulted in a derisive exploration of heroic culture (while also sympathising with Grendel, the Other), while Zemeckis's *Beowulf* is very much shaped by 21st-century fears of female sexuality.

25th International Medieval Congress

Leeds University, Leeds, 3–6 July 2017

Arendse Lund, University College London

Thanks to the TOEBI award, I attended my first International Medieval Congress in Leeds this July where I presented my paper on 'Expanding the Canon: Loricae Outside of Ireland.' I spoke on how the loricae, unique works on the charm-prayer spectrum, are frequently discussed as specific to early Irish Christianity, and yet they can be traced across Anglo-Saxon England and into medieval Scandinavia.

The paper generated excellent discussion and questions and gave me the chance to meet other scholars interested in the field. Thanks to this platform, my presentation sparked interest in a subsequent publication.

18th Biennial Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, 31 July – 4 August 2017

David Callander, Emmanuel College, Cambridge

I received a generous bursary from Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland to allow me to attend this year's meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists in Honolulu, Hawai'i. As part of this, I met many figures I had long admired as scholars but never had the chance to speak to in person. It was also an opportunity to contribute in the frank and honest debates among scholars about the direction the field should travel in, which were particularly prominent at this conference. I gave a paper on Old English and early Welsh eschatological poetry, which allowed me to receive excellent feedback from the audience and revise and improve my own work. Looking forward, I know that the conversations I took part in at ISAS will be of great use to me, both as a scholar and as someone profoundly interested in the vitality and diversity of medieval studies, and I am very grateful to TOEBI for helping ensure that I could take this opportunity.

Book*Reviews*

Recent publications reviewed by TOEBI members

Joinings: Compound Words in Old English Literature

Jonathan Davis-Secord, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series 20. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2016, xii + 246 pages. Hardcover, $65.00

ISBN: 978-1-4426-3739-9

The dust-jacket proclaims this to be 'the first comprehensive study of the use of compound words in Old English poetry, homilies, and philosophy', but this is misleading, for the focus is on *Beowulf*, *Juliana*, *Elene*, Wulfstan's *Homilies* and the Old English *Boethius*, with a few remarks on *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and the absence of compounds from the works of Ælfric. The first chapter appears to lay the ground for the subsequent ones: 'the following discussion therefore triangulates from three different angles' (p. 7), and these three 'angles' are 'the Latin grammatical tradition … [and] native-written handbooks on Latin grammar and style' (pp. 7–8), 'Old Icelandic treatises on Old Norse language and poetics' and 'modern theoretical perspectives' (both p. 8). In fact, the first is hardly mentioned again and the second not at all (not even Snorri Sturluson's classification of lexis and compounds in *Skáldskaparmál*), so that 'triangulation' reduces in subsequent sections to a single perspective, albeit one that remains interestingly varied, including aspects of linguistics, metrics, critical theory (from Bakhtin, Genette and others) and film theory. The ensuing chapters are said (pp. 29–32) to cover compounds as translations of Latin terms (Chapter Two), compounds as indicators of rhetorical emphasis (Chapter Three), compounds as generic markers (Chapter Four), clustering of compounds and their effect on pace in Wulfstan's homilies (Chapter Five), the same but with reference to *Beowulf* (Chapter Six), together with a conclusion which ponders the absence of compounds from the writings of Ælfric. There is a full bibliography and an index. The whole is generally presented in a scholarly way (although there are a few slips in grammatical concord).

The short initial section of Chapter Two argues that Old English poetic rules provide the only concrete evidence for an Anglo-Saxon conception of compounds *as compounds*: in the poetry, compounds must alliterate and so are not permitted to begin the final non-alliterating position of the line. No such rules govern simplexes. However, the important fact that whole-verse compounds are verse-clause non-initial and so are treated differently in the metrical-grammar from other compounds (and from simplexes too) is not mentioned. The modern binary distinction between simplexes and compounds which is central to this study, accordingly, cannot be mapped straightforwardly onto this non-binary Anglo-Saxon poetic categorisation of simple, complex and more complex lexis. The range of this chapter – entitled 'Compounds as Translation Tools' – is, however, the greater disappointment. Only a handful of compounds is considered (*anweald*, *folcagende*, *fyrnwita*, *sigebeam*, compounds in *woruld-* and *-stream*) and only in *Juliana*, *Elene* and the OE *Boethius*. The main point – that compounds as translations blend accuracy and acceptability – is reasonable enough, but the conclusion that they do not play 'a role in directly construing specific words and phrases in a source' (p. 69) wholly ignores the substantial evidence of compounds in glosses (e.g., the Aldhelm glosses and the psalter glosses) which identifiably translate specific Latin terms.

The opening section of Chapter Three surveys recent work on compounds in neuro-linguistics. This research compares the cognitive processes involved in understanding compounds by comparison with mono-morphemic words, and concludes (in the main) that the brain has to work harder to deal with compounds – and the rarer the compound, the harder the brain has to work. The author uses this to underpin the literary argument of this chapter that compounds in Old English poetry challenge the audience's understanding more than simplexes do, and by such foregrounding

possess a greater emphatic power. Much of this is, at least superficially, appealing: Old English poetry is much richer in compounds than Old English prose and the poets must surely have intended something by that richness. Yet the argument falls short of complete persuasiveness. Davis-Secord does not say which language or languages have been the object of this neuro-linguistic research, but the conclusions are presented as if they have the status of linguistic, or neuro-linguistic, universals, and can, therefore, readily be applied to Old English. So, we are asked to believe that an Anglo-Saxon brain, and presumably one accustomed to the language of poetry, had to work harder to understand, for example, the *hapax legomenon eorlweorod* 'warrior-band' (Beo 2893b) by comparison with the phrase *eorla weorod* 'band of warriors'. Despite its uniqueness, this compound is quite transparent, and this is true of very many Old English *hapax* compounds (by contrast, say, with the much more difficult kennings of Old Norse). And, even if an extra nanosecond of effort was involved in the comprehension of the compound (by comparison with the phrase), we are also asked to accept that this would have been enough to create the weight of emphasis which the author sees compounds bearing by contrast with simplexes. Readers will have to judge for themselves what to make of this challenging marriage of Mercury and Philology.

Chapter Four deals with an important literary subject: *heteroglossia* in Old English poetry, with reference to the prose and poetic versions of the *metra* of Boethius and some mixings of poetic and prosaic register in *Juliana*. The sections on the Old English *Boethius* are the weakest in the book. In the first place, the author is contradictory on the question of Anglo-Saxon knowledge of the source text. On page 62, it is stated that the use of compounds for 'sea' and 'ocean' in 'Metre 20' of the *Metres* 'brings the verse translation further in line with the interpretation of Boethius's text that the intellectual elite in its Anglo-Saxon audience would have held, given the influence of the commentary tradition', but in this chapter we are informed that 'the original audience of the Old English *Boethius* was not familiar with much of the content of the Latin original' (p. 120). Secondly, the degree of similarity between the prose and the verse versions of the *metra* is grossly exaggerated: 'the prose version seems much like poetry, and the metrical version seems much like prose' (p. 121). Whilst the presence of significant quantities of prosaic diction in the verse *metra* is well-known, there is only a very little evidence of poetic diction in the prose *metra* beside plentiful use of it in the verse metra. The prose *metra* do not scan; nor do they alliterate in any systematic fashion. On the other hand, the verse *metra* observe high-level metrical rules governing anacrusis, resolution and double alliteration in the a-verse quite regularly (which are, of course, nowhere to be discerned in the prose). Finally, without any discussion of substance, the author goes so far as to suggest that 'beyond the issue of metre, poetry and prose were barely distinctive in Alfred's time' (p. 122). No poems are here explicitly assigned to the Alfredian period beyond the *Metres*, so it not clear which texts the author has in mind. Close comparison, however, of 'Metre 1' of the Old English *Boethius* (the only part not closely versifying prose) and the various metrical prefaces and epilogues to the Alfredian translations with the prose of those translations compels a different conclusion: beyond (in the former) conformity to metrical rule, the systematic placement of alliteration, the use of Kuhn's Laws, and the frequent and rule-governed deployment of poetic diction, poetry and prose in Alfred's time were barely distinctive. Analysis of the mixing of linguistic styles requires first the proper definition of the ingredients in the mix.

Chapter Five looks at the clustering of compounds denoting vices and sins at similar points in various homilies of Wulfstan (Bethurum Xa, XIII, XX, XXI, together with parts of VII and IX, and Napier XXIV, XXVII, L, LIX, LX) that are here termed 'exhortatory'. As is well-known, much of the lexis of these lists is shared, as are devices of parallelism, alliteration and rhythm. The author argues that the homilist introduces these 'to slow the progression of argumentation in support of the exhortatory homilies' poses as arguments' (p. 166), or, to put it another way, that they masquerade rhetorically as a kind of evidence. This is plausible enough, although the inclusion of a conversation in French about Parisian traffic law in order to illustrate the nature of non-agonistic

arguments is eccentric. Problematic, however, is the assertion that Wulfstan is 'highly unlikely' (p. 160) to have known of classical rhetorical models (and so to have derived his notions of, for example, *copia* from these). Bethurum, for instance, gives some detail on the 'manuals of rhetoric that Wulfstan knew'.1 Here there was an opportunity to integrate the classical notions of style introduced in Chapter One as one of the supposed bedrocks of this study, but it is not taken up – indeed, it is denied.

Chapter Six examines clusters of compounds in *Beowulf*. The statistical basis for this examination is thinly argued. The three and a half lines of 175–78a of the poem contain four compounds, but this level of occurrence, it is stated, 'fails to reach statistical significance in comparison to the pattern of compound occurrence in the poem overall' (p. 176). Lines 320–31a, eleven and a half lines with eleven compounds, and lines 480–90, eleven lines with ten compounds, are, however, passages that contain 'the most significant clusters of compounds' (p. 180). Yet the rate of occurrence in all three is the same (one per line); and lines 178b–88, ten and a half lines, contain only two compounds, so that, contrastively, the four compounds of the preceding lines (175–78a) appear much the more prominent. The size of a cluster is taken here to be the determining factor. Nonetheless, the passages examined are certainly rich in compounds. The main thrust of the discussion is, as in the previous chapter, that compounds slow the pace of reading (or listening). However, whereas, in that chapter such clusters were felt rhetorically to support the argument, here they are viewed as undermining it. So, for example, ll. 815–23a of the poem present the death of Grendel at the hands of the hero; the cluster of compounds in them 'slows the narrative pace', but 'in fact it undercuts the celebration of violence qua violence' (p. 184). In support of this, the author refers us to the modern film director Sam Peckinpah's slow-motion presentation of violence, which he intended to 'wake viewers up to what violence is really all about' (p. 185). But, then, Peckinpah, whatever he thought he was doing, was widely criticised by many for glorifying and revelling in violence by such techniques. Medievalists may wonder whether there is any value in the anachronous importation of modern filmic technique and aesthetics (however construed) into the interpretation of an Old English poem. If Anglo-Saxon audiences could not celebrate the demise of a hellish, murderous, cannibalistic monster after twelve years of nightly attacks, what might they drink to?

The conclusion is really a new chapter in disguise. Ælfric, who has hardly been mentioned since the outset, now takes centre stage as the curtain is falling. The general absence of compounds from his works worries the author – so much so, in fact, that a new pejorative view of compounds emerges: Ælfric avoids them, apparently, because compounds 'interfere with clarity' (p. 195) and 'create imprecision in meaning' (p. 196). But Ælfric does not wholly avoid compounds and occasionally uses them to striking effect. Indeed, this book begins with the statement from his *Grammar* that *stæfcræft is seo cæg …* ('grammar is the key …'). Why would Ælfric, if he were such a devotee of clarity as this author believes, translate *grammatica* with a term that was imprecise? Why, in his Preface to Genesis, where he is so very anxious about Genesis being misunderstood, does he translate its title as *gecyndboc* if that would interfere with clarity? When, in Ælfric's 'Life of St. Edmund', the messenger of the Viking leader, Hingwar, comes to Edmund and tells him that his master intends to take up *wintersetl* in England and demands that Edmund share with him his *goldhordas*, there is not one iota of imprecision. Much more remains to be said of Ælfric's deft, but highly selective, use of compounds: almost all the other occurrences in Old English of *stæfcræft* and *gecyndboc*, for example, occur in the Aldhelm glosses, which Davis-Secord does not explore.

Overall, then, the book has an introduction that does not introduce, a conclusion that does not conclude, and middle chapters displaying some problems of coherence, development and treatment of evidence. Despite all these criticisms, however, it deals with a fascinating subject, and its author is not frightened to range beyond the confines of Old English in search of new ways of understanding it.

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1 Dorothy Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 88.

Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R. D. Fulk

Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual, and Tom Shippey (eds.), Anglo-Saxon Studies 13. Cambridge: Brewer, 2016, x + 427 pages. Hardcover, £60.00

ISBN: 978-1-84384-438-9

The term 'philology' these days has suffered some of the pejoration that has attended the term 'academic', but perhaps has suffered even more from disuse in scholarship. It has come to signify over-prescriptive and unimaginative analysis, a scientific as against humane approach that leaches poetry of its ability to delight. Yet our wider discipline is founded on philological principles. My own discipline of onomastics is a resolutely philological pursuit which illustrates the point: one can acknowledge that locals, present and past, associate the many Beestons in England with bees, but one should not imagine that the originators of the name thought of flying insects when they named the places; philology, at a very simple level, forbids it.

Old English Philology is a collection of essays written in tribute to a scholar who has, not quite *contra mundum* but certainly to an outstanding degree, approached the early languages and literatures of the north philologically. The varied essays here, sometimes quirky, sometimes challengingly complex, give the lie, overall, to the notion that philology is dry and unimaginative: every one has something intriguing, stimulating, thought-provoking or erudite to say. The result is both delightful and occasionally embarrassing as one realises that assumptions one has made over the years are perhaps slightly astray.

The volume consists of twenty essays by leading scholars on a range of philological topics. They are not grouped into sections, though the early essays focus mainly on metrics and *Beowulf*. Later essays are more broadly interpretative, including treatment of prose and manuscripts, as well as historical, source and textual studies. There is an introduction, a comprehensive list of R. D. Fulk's writings and a functional title and name index. The introduction orientates the volume by giving a brief history of Fulk's scholarship and its implications; the final essay assesses the development of *Beowulf*-studies from Tolkien to Fulk and thus the book returns to where it started and offers an overview and a prospectus for future work.

Several of the essays in the volume adopt or adapt metrical research, and indeed the first third of the volume would make a good introduction to metrical studies. Application and practical examples of a range of metrical rules are given: Fulk's law of the coda (pp.10, 43), resolution (p. 25), the rule of precedence (p. 59), Krackow's law (p. 60), Kuhn's law (p. 61), Terasawa's law (p. 65), the principle of closure (p. 82), rules relating to compounds (p. 107). The names may seem intimidating at first sight, but together and in application to *Beowulf* in particular, the rules give a rich insight into the skill and technical virtuosity of the poet.

Outstanding essays answer simple questions. What is the metrical significance of, or difference between syllable stress, length and ictus (Pascual, Cable)? How can meter help us to understand what scribes did to texts appearing in more than one copy (Neidorf)? Why does the *Beowulf* poet sometimes use indicative verb-forms when we would expect subjunctives (Terasawa)? Why does word-order vary in poetic sentences (Russom)? And why do finite verbs sometimes carry alliteration and sometimes not (Griffith)? The underlying principle in these essays is that Old English poets understood metre and deployed it coherently and consistently; errors are more likely to derive from the scribes than the poets. The results offered in these essays speak for themselves.

Minkova's essay interestingly applies Old English metrical analysis to the early Middle English text *Poema Morale*. Ecay and Pintzuk make a bold attempt to apply analysis of diachronic syntactic change in Old English using large-scale datasets from the parsed corpus to the issue of the dating of *Beowulf*: the main conclusion here is that syntactic elements should not be ignored in the consideration of the big literary issues in criticism. George Clark returns illuminatingly to a question that has preoccupied scholars, and apparently

Anglo-Saxons too, namely how to translate Latin *superbia*. Two essays, those by Liberman and Momma, explore etymological and lexical questions. Liberman enters a heart-felt plea for the return of etymology as a taught (and practised) philological discipline; Momma entertainingly explores the semantics and usage of worm/*wyrm*.

Context, style, sources and historical evidence occupy most of the remaining essays. Stefan Jurasinski discusses handbooks of penance and some unusual features of Wulfstan's *Canons of Edgar*, leading him to conclude that public penance in Anglo-Saxon England was the province of bishops. Christopher Cain discusses the often-ignored letter-form of *e*-caudata (ę) in manuscripts in an attempt to localise its scriptorial and orthographical origins and cultivation: limitations of the *Dictionary of Old English* corpus notation led to the letter being recorded as *æ* and necessitate much revisiting of manuscripts, but even with such limitations, the essay shows patterns of usage in scribes and manuscripts. Dennis Cronan revisits a different issue, one where his work has led the field, namely the study of poetic words. The emphasis here is on how words contribute stylistically and ideologically to the poetic tradition, and by statistical analysis and consideration of examples, he concludes that 'every poetic word is a minor metonym for the values of the tradition as a whole' (270).

The essays following cover a range of texts and literary issues. Daniel Donoghue returns to the puzzle of the *engel* in *The Dream of the Rood* 9b, and neatly clarifies some metrical and semantic obscurities. Charles Wright examines the curious motif of the fate of Lot's wife and locates an origin for the notion of her soul remaining in the pillar of salt until the Last Judgement in *Genesis A* in 'Canterbury School' glosses from the time of Theodore and Hadrian. Megan Hartman's essay treats *The Fortunes of Men*, discussing the distinctive style, syntax and metrical patterning of different parts of the poem, particularly the narrative and wisdom sections. Andy Orchard revisits the question of the originality of *Andreas* and, with a complex array of parallels and differences between the poem and other verse the poet might have known, shows how the poet worked creatively in the shared tradition, borrowing and reworking, sometimes remodelling his Latin source(s), sometimes innovating. Rory Naismith's essay reveals that poems and charters idealised the economic transactions that went on in Anglo-Saxon England, locating them in the sphere of courtly and heroic exchange rather than that of commerce, buying and selling. He shows nevertheless that *Beowulf* was composed when a monetary economy was in existence. The discursive part of the volume is concluded by a brief and quietly witty essay summarising developments in *Beowulf* criticism since Tolkien by Tom Shippey.

The above summary of content is aimed at persuading the reader of the breadth and quality of the essays in the book. There is occasional obscurity, and some essays are hard to take in on a single reading. There are very occasional typological or other errors: the false Latin plural *apparati* (pp. 235, 236, 237); 'which is usually the gloss, which is usually the gloss' (p. 241); and Issacs for Isaacs (p. 325). I should guess R. D. Fulk is pleased with this Festschrift. Leonard Neidorf writes in the introduction, '[t]he editors believe it would be a fitting tribute to Fulk if a volume in his honor were to become essential reading for students of Old English poetry' (p. 12). A book like this cannot be comprehensive, or articulate a fully worked-out approach to language or literature, but in this reviewer's opinion it is essential reading for students of Old English poetry and a coherent demonstration of the value of philology, in a wide range of forms, in the scholarly enterprise.

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Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature

Rebecca Stephenson and Emilly V. Thornbury (eds.), Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2016, x + 254 pages. Hardcover, $65.00

ISBN: 978-1-4426-3758-0

Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature, edited by Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury, is a recently published

edition in the Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series. At dimensions of 15.9 x 2.2 x 23.6 cm and 264 total pages, it is a compact collection of ten essays that look at a variety of texts and contexts, all of which address various aspects relating to Anglo-Latin writing practice. The overall goals of the volume, as laid out in the introduction, are to call into question the conventional and 'highly ethically charged set of binary relations' between Latin and the vernacular into which 'medieval literature has been forced by post-medieval commentators', such as Christian–Worldly, Intellectual–Creative, Masculine–Feminine, etc.

The collection begins with Michael W. Herren's consideration of Boniface's epistolary style, with particular regard to influence and familiarity with the writings of Aldhelm ('Boniface's Epistolary Prose Style: The Letters to the English'). Scott DeGregorio's contribution addresses the relationship between scriptural exegesis and construction of identity, specifically comparing and contrasting Gregory's use of Ezekiel with Bede and Ezra-Nehemiah ('*Interpretatio Monastica*: Biblical Commentary and the Forging of Monastic Identity in the Early Middle Ages'). Emily V. Thornbury offers a compelling reading of the uniqueness of Æthilwulf as a self-identified poet, amidst an Anglo-Saxon tradition where writers are not wont to refer to themselves in English or Latin as *poetae*, *vates* or *scopas* ('Æthilwulf *poeta*'). Christine Rauer highlights some of the rare items of vocabulary within the *Old English Martyrology* as having parallels mainly with glosses, and she intriguingly considers the *OEM*'s literalness in translating Latin and potential didactic functionality. ('The *Old English Martyrology* and Anglo-Saxon Glosses'). Jonathan Davis-Secord presents the blend of styles, influences and degree of autonomy seen in tenth-century Winchester sequence as exhibiting a unique identity constructed from a hybridisation of two continental traditions grafted onto a native system ('Sequences and Intellectual Identity at Winchester'). Rebecca Stephenson has scrutinised the way in which Byrhtferth invents a life for St Ecgwine, pushes to the foreground normally background *vita* elements, suggests authority by writing commentary rather than allowing its gradual accretion and weaves in elements of computus as markers of literate and Benedictine identity ('Saint Who? Building Monastic Identity through Computistical Inquiry in Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini*'). Damian Fleming triangulates the role of the distant Hebrew language with relationship to the native and learned languages of English and Latin and, by looking at Ælfric and Byrhtferth's educational texts, argues that Hebrew is not used to belittle the English audience, but rather as a means of detracting somewhat from Latin's status and placing English on a higher international and Judeo-Christian historical stage ('Hebrew Words and English Identity in Educational Texts of Ælfric and Byrhtferth'). Leslie Lockett's article analyses the work of Oswald, an author whose work is worthy of unique consideration for having been the only English writer prior to the conquest to have practiced what were distinctly Carolingian and continental techniques of composition ('Oswald's *versus retrograde*: A Forerunner of Post-Conquest Trends in Hexameter Composition'). Elizabeth M. Tyler assesses the Exeter Book and *The Cambridge Songs* as part of a literary culture common to both court and cathedral, pointing to connections between continental Latin and English vernacular poetry and calling into question not only the English-Latin binary, but also discrediting the reductive simplicity of the post-conquest English-French-Latin hierarchy ('German Imperial Bishops and Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture on the Eve of the Conquest: *The Cambridge Songs* and Leofric's Exeter Book'). Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe's essay closes out the collection with a reflection upon Osbern and the traces of Anglo-Saxon/Norman ethnic and linguistic community '*between-ness*' evident within the *Miracula S. Dunstani* ('Writing Community: Osbern and the Negotiations of Identity in the *Miracula S. Dunstani*').

As with any collection containing essays that address a range of different texts, something that must be considered is the overall unity and cohesion of the book as a whole, and upon first glance, the links between the various essays of this volume may not seem immediately manifest. In the case of this particular volume, however, this does not appear to be the fault of the individual essays nor of the collection itself, but seems rather to stem from a dearth in surrounding progressive scholarship which

similarly seeks to re-examine the validity of traditionally accepted conceptions regarding Latin and vernacular usage. The source material dealt with is quite diverse, and the methodologies and approaches that are applied vary a great deal, but by working closely with their specific text or texts, the authors of this collection have helped to open the door for future considerations relating to these and other Anglo-Latin texts. Indeed, what is perhaps most promising is that the layout of the physical volume itself seems to have been designed in such a way as to encourage the sort of future endeavours that will build upon this volume's successes and move beyond its limitations. Rather than ending up as a collection from which individual essays are extracted in isolation as part specialist surveys, the comprehensive bibliography, manuscript index, and general index included at the back of the volume make it much more navigable as a whole and go a long way towards ensuring its future utilisation as a reference point for scholars working with a variety of Anglo-Latin texts.

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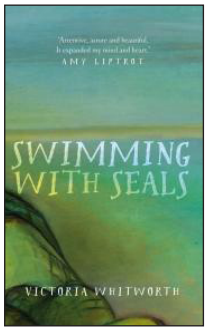
Swimming with Seals

Victoria Whitworth, Head of Zeus, 208 pages, e-book, £7.99

ISBN: 978-1-7849-7836-5

Among the books published by TOEBI members this year is Victoria Whitworth's *Swimming with Seals*. Although it is not primarily a book about Old English, I felt it was appropriate to mention it as being of potential interest to our members (as Victoria Thompson, she is the author of *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* [Woodbridge, 2004]). Victoria weaves her response to Old English texts into this intensely personal account of her love of the landscape of the Orkneys, her experiences swimming in the freezing waters off the island and her own difficult life experiences. In this way it adds a modern resonance and relevance to the Old English elegies, most especially *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. Indeed Victoria finishes with a translation of *The Wanderer* that many of you will want to read and perhaps share with your students.



Eleni Ponirakis
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Books Available for Review

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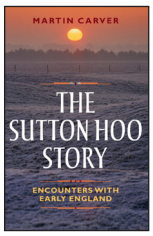
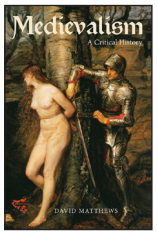


The Sutton Hoo Story: Encounters with Early England, by Martin Carver (Cambridge: Brewer, 2017)

Food, Eating and Identity in the Exeter Book of Riddles, by Allen J. Frantzen (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014)

Medievalism: A Critical History, by David Matthews (Cambridge: Brewer, 2015)



Abortion in the Early Middle Ages c. 500–900, by Zubin Mistry (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2015)

The Transmission of Beowulf: Language, Culture and Scribal Behavior, Myths and Poetics Series II, by Leonard Neidorf (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017)

Medieval Clothing and Textiles 13, ed. by Robin Netherton and Gale Owen-Crocker (Cambridge: Brewer, 2017)

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The following titles by TOEBI members have recently been made available:

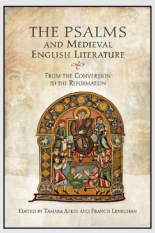
Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature
Megan Cavell, Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series, University of Toronto Press, 256 pages, hardcover, $70.00
ISBN: 978-1-4426-3722-1

Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture

James Paz, Manchester University Press, 248 pages, hardcover, £25.00
ISBN: 978-1-5261-0110-5

Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts
Victoria Symons, Walter de Gruyter, x + 226 pages, hardcover, £82.99
ISBN: 978-3-11-049474-7

Stasis in the Medieval West? Questioning Change and Continuity
Michael Bintley, Martin Locker, Victoria Symons, and Mary Wellesley (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, The New Middle Ages Series, xi + 283 pages, hardcover, $99.99
ISBN: 978-1-349-95033-1



The Psalms and Medieval English Literature: From the Conversion to the Reformation
Tamara Atkin and Francis Leneghan (eds.), D. S. Brewer, xviii + 362 pages, 18 bw illustrations, hardcover, £60.00
ISBN: 978-1-843-84435-8

TOEBI*Information*

Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland (TOEBI) aims to promote and support the teaching of Old English in British and Irish universities, and to raise the profile of the Old English language, Old English literature, and Anglo-Saxon England in the public eye.

Membership

TOEBI welcomes new members. You don't have to be currently employed in teaching Old English to become a member. If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact the Secretary, Dr Marilina Cesario: m.cesario@qub.ac.uk or consult the website: www.toebi.org.uk/joinus.

Meeting

The next TOEBI meeting will take place at University College Cork on Saturday, 21 October 2017. The theme is 'Old English Across Borders'. Please contact the meeting organizer, Dr Tom Birkett, for further information: t.birkett@ucc.ie.

Conference Awards

TOEBI regularly awards bursaries to help postgraduate students attend conferences. Applications are welcome, both from current postgraduates and those who have recently completed doctorates but do not yet have an academic post. The application form can be downloaded from the website: www.toebi.org.uk/grants-for-graduates and should be submitted to Dr Alice Jorgensen: jorgena@tcd.ie.

Spread the Word

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the **TOEBI***Newsletter* and urge you to share it with colleagues and students who may be interested. We particularly encourage you to introduce TOEBI to your postgraduate students and to internationally based colleagues. Students can join for £5 a year and, as members, they will be able to apply for funding towards conference expenses, get experience writing and publishing book reviews, and enjoy discounts on certain academic publications. They not need be teachers to join!

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