

TOEBI*Newsletter*

2018 | Volume XXXV

The Year in Review

It's that time of year when a tree must lose its leaves on earth, the branches mourn,¹ and the **TOEBI***Newsletter* must arrive. It has been an exciting year, with the announcement of our new president (by unanimous decision), Prof. Susan Irvine (UCL).

'I am delighted to become the new president of TOEBI,' writes Susan. 'I have always found it to be a welcoming and supportive group, enthusiastically promoting the teaching of such a rich and diverse subject. Please let me know of any ideas you may have to help TOEBI develop further or branch out in new directions.'

There are other changes, too. Francis Leneghan (Oxford) has joined the committee; Margaret Tedford (QUB) was elected as postgraduate representative; and Thijs Porck (Leiden) has taken on the role of webmaster (see p. 13 for information about website updates he has made already).

We are delighted to have received so many book reviews this year, from both postgraduate students and established scholars, as well as articles on the teaching of Old English in North America and the Netherlands. In addition, we have updates about research projects, collaborative interdisciplinary efforts, and conferences. We have also included, at the suggestion of the TOEBI Committee, summaries of several papers from the 2017 conference in Cork (see pp. 3–5). With heartfelt thanks to all our contributors, we hope that you enjoy this year's newsletter.



Susan Irvine, incoming TOEBI president

Eleni Ponirakis
University of Nottingham

Katrina Wilkins
McNeese State University

In This Issue ...

2017 CONFERENCE
REPORT

GETTING MEDIEVAL
WITH COMICS

ANGLO-SAXON STUD-
IES IN THE US

CLASP: AN INTER-
VIEW WITH COLLEEN
CURRAN

BRIDGING THE GAP
WITH SCIENCE (PG
REP REPORT)

THE LEIDEN UNIVER-
SITY OLD ENGLISH
COLLOQUEST

N/EMICS 2018 REPORT

AWARD REPORTS

BOOK REVIEWS

RECENT PUBLICA-
TIONS



¹ beam sceal on eorðan leafum līpan, leomu gnornian (Maxims I).

TOEBI Annual Meeting 2017

21 October, University College Cork
'Old English Across Borders'

The 2017 TOEBI conference took place on a very stormy Saturday at University College Cork. Despite some travel delays, most delegates managed to reach the conference venue, and we attracted a healthy gathering of some 45 Anglo-Saxonists. It was particularly heartening to see so many students and early career scholars from British and Irish universities attending and presenting, and to host Anglo-Saxonists from further afield. It was also great to welcome Elizabeth Boyle, lecturer in Early Irish at Maynooth, to talk about 'Old English in a University without Old English.' This was exactly what the organisers had in mind for the theme of 'Old English Across Borders': learning from the different approaches taken in universities with quite different traditions of Old English teaching, from different disciplines, and from new technologies and methodologies.

The first panel was rooted in teaching across disciplines. Thijs Porck and Krista A. Murchison updated us on the Old English ColloQuest Digital Teaching Edition with its 'adaptive glosses'; Boyle discussed how she brings medieval Irish studies into contact with Old English in the classroom at Maynooth; Colleen Curran and Daniel Thomas presented on the CLASP (Consolidated Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry) Project at the University of Oxford, and how it could be used as a teaching tool; and Jacqueline Cordell and Katrina Wilkins (Nottingham) delivered a paper on the potential for using literary linguistics in teaching Old English.

After a coffee break we moved to literary boundaries, with papers from Robin Norris on the potential for hagiography to move us away from Anglo-Saxon white-male dominated syllabi; Frances McCormack (NUI Galway) on displays of compunction in OE poetry; and Caroline Batten (Oxford) on bodily boundaries in the metrical charms. Again, the focus was very much on moving outside traditional paradigms for the study and teaching of these genres.

After lunch, physical borders took centre stage. We had a discussion of the boundary term *meorcland* from Neville Mogford (Royal Holloway), a negotiation of boundaries on the Cot-

ton world map from Margaret Tedford (QUB), and Richard North's (UCL) relocating of King Cynewulf's death in s.a. 755 to the border country between Wessex and Mercia. The final panel of the day saw a pair of papers battling across interdisciplinary boundaries: Helen McKee (Royal Holloway) on the potential of reading *The Battle of Brunanburh* alongside the 10th-century Welsh poem *Armes Prydein* in the classroom, and Carl Phelpstead (Cardiff) on the evocation of Mercian 'borderland' identity by 20th-century writers and his collaboration with his brother to photograph Mercian sites.

In the round-table discussion that closed the conference, Christine Rauer (St Andrews) and Laura Creedon (UCC) addressed two issues facing the discipline today: the re-drawing of the landscape of academic collaboration through Britain's exit from the EU, and the barriers that unfortunately still face female scholars entering the discipline. There were many constructive responses to both these discussion points and it is very much in the spirit of TOEBI that these difficult topics were dealt with openly and collectively.

In the closing address, TOEBI Chair Christina Lee welcomed our new president Susan Irvine (UCL), who has a long association with TOEBI, as well as several new members of the committee: Francis Leneghan (Oxford) and Jennifer Neville (Royal Holloway); Katrina Wilkins (Nottingham) as co-editor of the newsletter; Helen Appleton (Oxford) as Awards Co-ordinator; and Thijs Porck (Leiden) as webmaster. New membership fees were announced (with the fee remaining low for students and early career scholars), as well as TOEBI's plans for the coming years, with the next conference to be held at the University of Oxford in October 2018.

The conference dinner was held at La Dolce Vita restaurant, and we escaped the tail end of the storm in the nearby Abbey Tavern. Thank you to everyone who travelled in difficult conditions and contributed to a packed day of talks, discussion and debate.

Tom Birkett
University College Cork

Conference *Papers*

At the suggestion of the committee, we have included below summaries of several papers from the 2017 TOEBI Conference, for the benefit of those who were unable to attend. Many thanks to the conference presenters for taking the time to write up these summaries and submit them. **The Editors**

Old English in a University without Old English

There is now no Old or Middle English taught at Maynooth University. Indeed, the undergraduate curriculum for English has been reworked such that it covers nothing before the age of Shakespeare. As Head of the Department of Early Irish, responsible for the teaching of early medieval Celtic languages, literatures and culture, I have sought to explore ways in which Old English can be incorporated into our curriculum at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. At the TOEBI meeting, I presented three case studies where texts and scholarship from Anglo-Saxon studies are being used in Early Irish modules at Maynooth:

Heroic Literature

Our undergraduate module on 'heroic' literature enables our students to read medieval Irish heroic literature within its wider intellectual and literary context. We begin by looking back – to Biblical and Classical literature – for models and sources which influenced medieval Irish authors to varying extents. We then look outward to neighbouring cultures which were also producing heroic literature in the early Middle Ages. Thus the students read examples

of medieval Welsh, Latin and Old English heroic literature – the Old English sample text is *Beowulf*. In the lesson on *Beowulf*, extracts are read in translation side by side with passages of Old Testament narrative (usually the David and Goliath episode) and sections of the first recension of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

Poetry

Professor David Stifter's undergraduate lectures on the metrics of medieval Irish poetry include a lecture in which the students are asked to define poetry and identify whether certain texts should be categorised as poetic. This is particularly important given that many instances of medieval Irish poetry – such as pedagogic, didactic, historic and hortatory verse – do not conform to modern students' preconceived ideas of what constitutes poetry. As part of this, students are given sections of *Beowulf*, from Seamus Heaney's translation, first written out anonymously in long lines, then as printed in Heaney's translation, and then with the translator identified. This leads into interesting discussions of poetic authority, identity and translation. Incidentally, the other example that is used in this lecture is the lyrics to the song 'Atomic' by Blondie!

Learned Literature

Our MA students take a module on 'learned literature' which includes grammatical, legal, computistical and cosmological texts. Key contributions to the study of medieval European intellectual culture, such as Martin Irvine's *Making of Textual Culture: Grammatica and Literary Theory 350-1100*, are read as part of this course, even though they do not discuss Irish evidence *per se*. Dr Deborah Hayden gives a seminar on early medieval Irish medical texts: as part of this, the Old English *Leechbooks* are used as a comparandum, and medicine is studied within its broader Insular context.

We are acutely aware that studying Celtic languages and history in isolation can leave students with a very incomplete picture of early medieval culture. As such, we have incorporated texts, sources and scholarship from the broader Insular – and indeed global – medieval world in order to place the literature of early medieval Ireland in its wider context. We welcome any further ideas about how Celtic Studies can be inclusive of Old English and other medieval cultures, and are always keen to collaborate with col-

leagues in cognate disciplines.

Elizabeth Boyle
Maynooth University, Ireland

Crossing Borders in Old English Hagiography

Hagiography is finally finding its rightful place as a locus of research by early medievalists, but lives of saints are also useful teaching texts. The corpus of Old English saints' lives forms the earliest body of narrative prose literature written in English. Narrative texts offer plots, characters, and excerptable vignettes more accessible to students than many commonly taught texts which, while more canonical, may be difficult for beginners to understand in terms of both verse grammar and abstruse content.

An even more pressing reason to turn to hagiography is that these imported texts, long neglected because they lacked the Englishness of Germanic verse, were a window through which the Anglo-Saxons viewed the wider world. Their continental Latin sources feature desert landscapes, exotic animals, and Mediterranean cultures far removed from medieval England. Thus, their translations into Old English introduced foreign peoples, both individuals and communities, to a wider audience.

Similarly, if we want to present to our students an Anglo-Saxon England that is not a space of pure whiteness or convoluted grammar, hagiography offers a selection of texts that contain

simple grammar and complex identities. This paper will present a selection of less commonly taught texts both appropriate for teaching to beginning readers and ripe for analysis by students interested in literature and culture. These include Ælfrian accounts of Indians in his lives of Bartholomew and Thomas, as well as the Persian kings Abdon and Sennes, and anonymous texts featuring the Egyptians Chrysanthus, Euphrosyne, and Mary of Egypt.

Robin Norris
Carleton University, Canada

The Contours of Compunction in Old English Poetry

When is a smile a smile and when is it a grimace of fear? When do tears originate from deep sorrow, when awe, when joy? How do we describe emotions for which we have no words? Do we only experience those emotions that we can express linguistically? Do emotions have distinctive contours or do they blend into one another, blurring at the edges? And how are all of these questions bound up with the context in which such expression takes place and the function it serves?

These are questions I'm addressing as part of a monograph project, in which I attempt to understand, define, and analyse the limits and contours of compunction in Old English poetry through reflecting on compunction as a doctrine, a mode of piety, and an emotion or emotional

range. Much of the literature on compunction either focuses on either isolating one of these three elements at the expense of the others or blurs the distinctions between them.

In my paper, I focused how to determine the emotional contours of compunction, and I explored some of the methodological difficulties of such a project: the difficulties of reading literary emotions of other periods, the insufficiency of historical, taxonomic, and lexical approaches, and the unhelpfulness of somatovisceral signs as keys to understanding. I briefly explored the expansiveness of the emotional range of compunction in early Christian writings, and, most frustratingly, the obliqueness of references to the doctrine in Old English poetry.

I explained how compunction may best be understood, in the poetic corpus, through a set of literary tropes and images that draw on the theological doctrine and that interplay across texts to create a map of both the expression and suppression of the emotional response.

I concluded that compunction encompasses many often-competing emotions, is linked to the simultaneous presence and absence of certain somatovisceral signs, and that it is, therefore, best seen not in the product of holy tears but as a complex emotional process that weaves its way through an affectively sophisticated body of work.

Frances McCormack
National University of Ireland,
Galway

South of the Border: King Cynewulf's Death in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (s.a. 755)

The location of Merton in the annal of 755 is one of our subject's many imponderables, but in this lecture I try to correlate the fate there of King Cynewulf of Wessex, historically in 786, with his presence in Mercia probably just beforehand in the Southumbrian Legatine Council of that year as a guest of King Offa. I argue on the strength of this correlation that 'Merton', the manor where his younger cousin Cyneheard surprised him, was not the other recorded West Saxon Merton in Surrey but rather a better known Merton 4 miles south of Bicester in what is now northern Oxfordshire and what was then a part of Mercia which had recently been part of Wessex. So this area looks like border country between Wessex and Mercia. In the case of Cynewulf's acquaintances, of his girlfriend at Merton and of his conspiring cousin, the border lay to the north, where it had been before 777, and the country was still Wessex.

Richard North
University College, London

'On Both Sides': Anglo-Saxonism, Autobiography, and Offa's Dyke

In a letter written in 1942, J. R. R. Tolkien assured his son Christopher that his family history meant that 'you are a Mercian or Hwiccian [. . .] on both sides'. The Mierce were

'people of the borderland' and, as I argued in my book on Tolkien and Wales (2011), Tolkien's identification with Mercia was inseparable from his love of Wales and Welsh. I am currently writing a book about twentieth-century writers who lived in the West Midlands and evoked the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Mercia in their work, including Francis Brett Young, Tolkien, Geoffrey Hill, and David Rudkin. The project also involves a collaboration with my brother, Ben, who is taking photographs of Mercia today (Anglo-Saxon sites, places named after Mercians, and locations associated with modern writers inspired by the region's Anglo-Saxon past). We are exhibiting these photographs in various venues and plan to use them to engage members of the public in reflecting on local and national identity. The project has a strong personal dimension for us as, like Christopher Tolkien, our ancestors on both sides have lived in what was once Mercia for many generations.

In this paper, illustrated with some of my brother's photographs, I reflected on the relationship between personal identity, Anglo-Saxonism, and the Anglo-Welsh border, both in the writers I am researching and in my own experience as an Anglo-Saxonist of West Midlands ancestry who was born and now lives on the



In Memoriam Professor Eric Stanley

Professor Eric Stanley passed away on 21 June 2018. Prof. Stanley was an outstanding lexicographer, largely responsible for the Old English etymological references in the *OED*, a leading figure in *Beowulf* scholarship, and a much loved medievalist. Though we (the editors) did not have the honour of meeting Prof. Stanley personally, we know that for many of you he was also an inspiring mentor and a staunch friend. Read Pembroke College Oxford's obituary online at <https://www.pmb.ox.ac.uk/news/professor-eric-stanley>.

Welsh side of Offa's Dyke. I argued that for modern Mercian writers like Tolkien and Rudkin the connection between ancestry and Anglo-Saxonism, between belonging to a place and identifying with its past, is neither simple nor always the same. Being 'at home in the counties upon the Welsh Marches', to use Tolkien's phrase, was and is a border identity: it involves appreciating and celebrating the difference that the border marks, and being aware that borders are there to be crossed.

Carl Phelpstead
Cardiff University

Join us for the 2018 TOEBI Annual Meeting:

Contacts

20 October 2018, St Peter's College, Oxford

10.00–11.15 Registration; Tea, coffee, and biscuits

11.15–11.30: Welcome and Announcements

11.30–1.00: *Teaching Old English* (chair: Amy Faulkner)

Jacob Runner (Nottingham), 'Scholarly Detachment and Reattachment: Old English and Comparative Literature'

Göran Wolf (Göttingen), 'Teaching Old English in Germany'

Mark Atherton (Oxford), 'How to Teach Yourself Old English'

1.00–2.30: Lunch Break

1.15–2.00: TOEBI Committee Meeting

2.30–4.00 *Public Engagement* (chair: Matthew Coker)

Fran Allfrey, Carl Kears, and Beth Whalley (King's College London), 'Re-imagining the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the Primary School Classroom'

Jo George (Dundee), 'Performance as Pedagogy in the Old English Elegies'

Rachel Burns (Oxford), 'Contact between Students and Artefacts'

4.00–4.30 Tea, coffee, and biscuits

4.30–6.00: *Literary Contacts* (chair: Caroline Batten)

Charlotte Liebelt (Canterbury Christ Church), 'Havelock the Dane: Imagining Anglo-Saxon Ideals in a Thirteenth-Century Text'

Susanna Niskanen (Dundee), 'Old English Elegies in Finnish Translation'

Richard North (University College London), 'The Geatish *meowle* at the End of *Beowulf*'

6.00–6.30: Final Discussion; Announcements

6.30: Drinks Reception

8.00: Conference Dinner at Al Shami restaurant, 25 Walton Crescent, OX1 2JG

For any queries, please contact francis.leneghan@ell.ox.ac.uk



Getting Medieval with Comics

The art and literature of the Middle Ages and modern comics may seem worlds apart, but what happens if they are brought into contact? For *Medieval Comics*, a project funded by the Cultural Institute at King's in collaboration with the Department of English at King's College London, I asked comic creator Karrie Fransman to interpret and respond to manuscripts, images, and literature of the medieval period, recreating the wonderful creatures of those stories in new and informative ways.

Both medieval art and literature and modern comic books question what it means to be human, sharing a fascination with superheroes (the super-human), robotics and artificial intelligence (the non-human), and fantasy (human-like creatures that are familiar and yet uncomfortably 'other'). A group of medievalists (Francesca Allfrey, Carl Kears, Charlotte Knight, Kathryn Maude, Victoria Walker, Sophia Wilson, Lydia Zeldensrust, and myself) composed literary prompts to inspire Karrie's exploration of what it means to be human in the Middle Ages and today. The prompts, or 'snapshots', consisted of narratives and imagery from medieval

manuscripts, both poetry and prose. Several snapshots came from Anglo-Saxon texts: *Christ III*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Seafarer*, *Genesis B*, and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.

We purposely selected texts that aren't as widely known in popular culture. (*Beowulf*, for instance, has already been made into several different comics, not to mention films).

Karrie created eight original works of art based on these snapshots, a series of 'medieval comics'. These were displayed at the British Library during two workshops for year nines. The students came from two different elementary schools, one in Gloucestershire and a local school in Camden. I explained what 'comics' were like in the Middle Ages and took the students on a scavenger hunt among the medieval manuscripts of the Treasures Gallery. Karrie gave the students an artist's brief and in groups they created their own comics based on medieval stories, imitating techniques found in illuminated manuscripts and even experimenting



Bleeding Trees. © 2017 by Karrie Fransman. Used by permission.

with gold leaf.

When I asked the students what they had learned about the Middle Ages at the end of



Above: *Æthelburg*. Right: *Satan's Emissary*.
Both images © 2017 by Karrie Fransman. Used
by permission.

the workshop, their answers included: 'they made beautiful texts that lasted hundreds of years', 'they had forms of comics and unique art ideas', 'it was full of art and weird stories', and 'they had a bit of an obsession with tiny bibles'. (For the sake of comparison, their answers to 'What is medieval?' *before* the workshop included *peasants, castles, kings, death, and dirt.*)

After the workshops Karrie's artwork moved to Orbital Comics in Soho for a free, six-week public exhibition. Its launch party attracted medieval academics as well as comic artists and readers. (Occasionally – but not often – there was overlap between these groups.)

Visit the *Medieval Comics* blog to learn more

about the project and see the artwork by Karrie and the students. I plan to add more articles in the future about the ways in which we can – in the words of Carolyn Dinshaw – 'get medieval' with comics. Please contact me via the blog if you'd like to write something for us.

Hana Videen
Independent Scholar

Old English and Anglo-Saxon Studies in the United States

Since a recent special issue on teaching Old English in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching*, edited by Haruko Momma and Heide Estes, presents a range of creative pedagogies for teaching Old English and contexts for them in the United States, we would like to take some liberties with the brief we have been offered in writing about Old English pedagogy in the United States. We want to consider the opportunities for both expanding audiences for Old English and Anglo-Saxon literature and the seemingly contradictory future of Old English.¹

Old English, if it is taught in the United States, tends to be restricted to postgraduate or mixed postgraduate/undergraduate courses at Research 1 (R1) universities. This has largely to do with available audiences and the number of students required to fill a class. Smaller liberal arts colleges and small to mid-size public colleges and universities often lack enough students interested in studying early medieval literature or medieval languages to fill such classes, even if they have a faculty member trained in these fields. Thus,

¹ *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching* 22.2 (2015).

Anglo-Saxon literature and Old English language must find their way into the curriculum along other routes. Yet, since the overwhelming majority of students in the United States attend institutions other than R1s, we are interested in how faculty outside of (comparatively well-funded) research institutions develop students' interest in the study of Old English, Anglo-Saxon Studies, and Medieval Studies more broadly.²

Importantly, our concerns rest not only with drawing students into the academic study of Old English, but in developing a wider lay interest in our area of study as well. After all, the wider the audience and the greater the belief in the value of Anglo-Saxon Studies and related fields, the more likely it is that we will be able to maintain a vibrant and inclusive

² We have organized the roundtable "Teaching the Middle Ages of the North Atlantic Outside the R1" on this topic for the 2019 IONA: Seafaring conference, hosted by Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, and hope to follow up with a report on that. Also see David Leonhardt, "America's Great Working-Class Colleges," *New York Times*, 18 January 2017 (accessed 23 July 2018, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/18/opinion/sunday/americas-great-working-class-colleges.html>).

field.

The most common way that Anglo-Saxon literature makes it into the US curriculum is in translation. Although far from being the only press to publish Old English literature in translation, W.W. Norton gives a sense of the different ways that this is done. Capitalizing on interest in Seamus Heaney, they published a number of different editions of his translation of *Beowulf*, drawing on different audiences' potential interests: they adopted Heaney's translation for inclusion in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (first in the 2000 7th ed. and again in each subsequent edition, through the most recent, 2018 10th ed.), a text still widely used in survey courses; this is complemented by a bilingual facing-page edition for those who want access to the Old English (2000); a critical edition, edited by Daniel Donoghue (2002) including relevant medieval intertexts and modern criticism, appropriate for advanced undergraduates; and for those with an interest in historical and material context—or just in attractive images to accompany the poem—an illustrated edition of the translation (2008). Yet,

we all know that, despite *Beowulf*'s name recognition, it is hardly representative of the Old English corpus. Therefore, it is to Norton's credit that they also published *The Word Exchange* by Greg Delanty and Michael Matto (2011), a selection of Old English poetry translated by various living poets of varying competencies. These poets, several of whom discuss their approaches to translation (*Word Exchange*, 523-40) do not restrict themselves to Old English poetic forms, but explore the poetry through a range of poetic forms. The outcome is a readable collection of poems with distinctive, if not necessarily Anglo-Saxon, voices.

Although reading in translation is a far cry from really understanding the Anglo-Saxons as they expressed themselves, as John D. Niles argues we should when reading the riddles,³ good, modern translations are certainly less daunting to students than material that they may feel they need to value, but do not fully understand or enjoy, such as Shakespeare. Indeed, we should not underestimate students' surprise or joy when they finally get their heads around the weird and the wonderful in Old English literature. As such, the riddles (or enigmatic poetry more generally) prove fruitful in getting students to consider culture, knowledge,

3 John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Brepols, 2006), 101-48.

and ways of thinking. In fact, systematic approaches to solving riddles also prove a useful model for any kind of literary interpretation and connect their experiences puzzling through Old English literature to their subsequent readings and thus encourage them to see a through-line between them.⁴ Moreover, many faculty employ translation comparisons in some way to get students closer to understanding the benefits and limitations of translation, and to encourage students to read for the Anglo-Saxon voice in the interstices between translations.⁵

As is suggested by the range of texts that Norton produces, Anglo-Saxon and early medieval culture and history are brought to students through a variety of materials. Some teachers focus on material culture, for instance, showing students manuscript images along with the text that they are reading. While students may not feel that they have full command

4 E.g., Niles, 26-31.

5 Michael Matto, "Remainders: Reading an Old English Poem through Multiple Translations," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching* 22.2 (2015): 81-90; Michael R. Kightly, "Teaching Old English through Translations: The Triangulation Method" (presentation, 53rd Medieval Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 11 May 2018).

over the foreign culture that they (mostly) experience in translation, instructors help them to understand images (such as the depictions of the ark in the Junius 11 Genesis) and read the text against them.⁶ Such material culture approaches also invite students to complicate their assumptions that text was valued over image. Similarly,

The greater the belief in the value of Anglo-Saxon Studies and related fields, the more likely it is that we will be able to maintain a vibrant and inclusive field.

in a course on methods of literary criticism, Jay Gates has taught *The Dream of the Rood* in its material context, taking into account the Ruthwell and Brussels crosses as well as the Vercelli manuscript, as a means of getting students to think about how medium might affect meaning.⁷

Others, going somewhat

6 Jay Paul Gates, "Reading for Audience Assumptions: The Old English *Genesis* and MS Junius 11" (presentation, "Anglo-Saxon Studies Colloquium," Columbia University, New York, NY, 17 November 2017).

7 This approach followed on the examples of various scholars,

further afield, turn to modern texts and medievalism, often drawing the Old English roots into the discussion. Most obvious among these may be the plethora of courses on J.R.R. Tolkien. However, others make use of speculative fiction (e.g., fantasy and science fiction), in text or film, as a means of getting students to think about medieval culture and mentalities. For example, Brian O’Camb teaches *A Canticle for Liebowitz*, a speculative fiction novel that imagines a post-apocalyptic world in which a monastic order has developed around the incompletely understood remnants of pre-apocalypse scientific knowledge but resist new scientific developments. Combining the novel with the Old English Metrical Calendar (better known by George Hickes’s title *The Menologium*),⁸ he gets them thinking about medieval monastic mentalities. Although not focused on Anglo-Saxon material, the historian Nicole

Lopez-Jantzen introduces students to the context of Christianity in Late Antiquity, with a particular focus on gender and sanctity, through the graphic novel *Perpetua’s Journey: Faith, Gender, and Power in the Roman Empire*, by Jennifer A. Rea and Liz Clarke.⁹ Such approaches focus on genres and media that students are already comfortable with to connect them to new material and to bring their existing competencies to bear on early material.

Perhaps the most common place to introduce students to and cultivate their interest in Old English is in History of the English Language (HEL). Some instructors bring Old English grammar into courses on the history of the English language. For instance, teaching even rudimentary grammar and providing students with a chart of Old English grammatical inflections—such as that in Moore and Marckwardt’s *Historical Outlines of English Sounds and Inflections* or Peter Baker’s “Magic Sheet” or the pull-out chart in Hasenfratz and Jambeck’s *Reading Old English*—and a glossary gives students sufficient grounding to do translations of their own. Other faculty emphasize etymology and the transmis-

sion and development of Old English vocabulary, often to demonstrate students’ familiarity and competence in a deep historical core of English. Whatever the approach adopted, HEL often provides faculty with an audience because courses of study in English Education or Linguistics have some kind of historical linguistics requirement. To that end, Brian O’Camb has been working with Michael Adams on a syllabus for Indiana University’s online graduate certificate aimed at high school teachers seeking to keep up with ever-changing accreditation requirements in the US. To help satisfy the program’s HEL requirement, they are designing a course in which students collaboratively build a glossary of (a) vocational jargon based on sociolinguistic principles and organized according to the “Style Sheet for Glossaries” published in *American Speech* 45 (1970): 141–51. Providing future secondary school instructors with at least a rudimentary understanding of Old English and its place in the development of the English language, in our view, increases the likelihood that students will reach college with some interest in studying earlier Englishes through its oldest forms.

Jay Paul Gates

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, USA

Brian T. O’Camb

Indiana University Northwest, USA

including Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London: British Library, 2005); idem. “The Vercelli Book as a Context for *The Dream of the Rood*,” in *Transformations in Anglo-Saxon Culture: Toller Lectures on Art, Archaeology and Text*, ed. by Charles Insley and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017), 105–25; G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., *Tree of Salvation: Yggdrasil and the Cross in the North* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸ *The Old English Metrical Calendar (Menologium)*, ed. and trans. Kazutomo Karasawa (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015).

⁹ Nicole Lopez-Jantzen, “New Approaches to Hagiographic Texts: Teaching Gender and Sanctity” (presentation, Teaching the Saints: Hagiography in the Classroom, CUNY Graduate Center, New York, NY, 20 April 2018).

CLASP: A Consolidated Library of Anglo-Latin Poetry

An Interview with Colleen Curran

On a bright day in early summer, I headed to Oxford to meet Colleen Curran and find out a little more about Andy Orchard's CLASP project. I first heard about CLASP in Spring 2017 as I was preparing for my viva. I had the sense then that this was an exciting project that had the potential to change the way we think about, and study, Old English poetry. Indeed the first and perhaps most important impact will be to think in terms of Anglo-Saxon rather than Old English poetry. Those readers who were fortunate enough to attend last year's conference in Cork will remember the talk given by Colleen Curran and Daniel Thomas of the University of Oxford to introduce us to the principles and approaches of the team. Colleen very kindly agreed to meet up to tell us more about the project; the following is a summary of our conversation.

There have been some changes to the team since last October. The PI for the CLASP project is, of course, Andy Orchard; he is shouldered by Colleen Curran, an expert in Latin paleography; Rafael Pascual, an expert in Old English metre who has taken over from Daniel Thomas; Nick White, IT specialist; and new on the team, Rachel Burns.

Colleen points out that for a long time poetry in the Old English vernacular has been the overwhelming focus in the study of literature produced in the Anglo-Saxon period. CLASP aims to offer a more cohesive idea of Anglo-Saxon poetry, giving more emphasis to the Latin side. One of the reasons for this

imbalance is that whilst the 30,000 or so lines of Old English poetry have been collated in the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records as well as various other easily accessible and reliable editions both paper and digital, the Anglo-Latin poetry is scattered in a wide variety of disparate editions, many of which are outdated. CLASP will offer a one-stop platform from which the student or scholar can access all the poetry, both Old English and Anglo-Latin.

So, what is CLASP? CLASP, or the Consolidated Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry will be a comprehensive and interactive online library of all poetry written in English or Latin by Anglo-Saxons living in England or abroad roughly between 670-1100 CE. The

poems will all be marked up using TEI P5 XML in order to make it possible to identify and compare a broad range of features. Currently the list of features is divided into twelve categories: Rhythm and metre, alliteration, rhyme and assonance, poetic vocabulary, hapax legomena, syntax and structure, formulas, themes, parallels and echo-words, direct sources, emendations and scribal corrections,

and editorial variants. This is an impressive task when you consider there are more than 60,000 lines of poetry to mark up in addition to publications on the implications of the teams' findings by August 2021.

I asked Colleen how CLASP could be used as a pedagogical tool. One of the distinguishing aspects of this digital library, in addi-

CLASP will show students the range of different things to explore, opening up the field for younger scholars and showing that this is not a dead field

tion to its cohesive nature, will be links to digitised manuscripts, showing manuscript variants directly. This is particularly important for Anglo-Latin poetry where, to take Aldhelm as an example, there can be up to twenty manuscripts for one poem. There will be an unbiased overview of the major critical debates in the field and a normalised mirror corpus, which will facilitate the cross referencing and make searches easily accessible for students. Most importantly, Colleen explained, CLASP will show students the range of different things to explore, opening up the field for younger scholars and showing that this is not a dead field. Rafael's work, for example, involves breaking down the metre for each poem and showing different ways to look at metre. Colleen stresses that the project does not offer an authority or final word on the elements highlighted, but rather provides a tool for users to see for themselves.

I asked what some of the more challenging aspects of the project were. Colleen's answer showed just how complex a project like this can be. One of the difficulties is projecting into the future. How does one ensure that a digital library will still be readable in the not-too distant future as information technology changes, leaving certain databases unreadable and obsolete? Another difficulty is server space. The team want to include audio versions, for example, to demonstrate how dactylic hexameter might sound and how the Latin is pronounced, but server space may well dictate just how much can be done. Other difficulties range from ways of presenting various elements visually. The most obvious answer is colour, but what about colour-blind users? What is the best way to optimise the Library's use as student-friendly whilst maintaining the complexity required of a cutting-edge research tool? Anglo-Latin provides its own challenges, being at times like a distinct dialect with Latinised Old English words. There is even the question of what constitutes poetry, with some of the Old English charters hovering stylistically between forms. Time, of course,

New features on the TOEBI website

A number of changes have been made this year to the TOEBI website:

- The website now makes available a partial archive of the TOEBI Newsletter (2011–2018), in PDF format.
- A new tab 'Resources' has been added, providing an overview of online resources in the field of Old English studies. The overview includes links to course material, dictionaries, digital text editions, manuscript collections, databases, blogs and video material.
- Under 'Grants for Graduates', a list of previous grant holders (2013–2018) has now been added.

Additions and suggestions for any part of the website (including notices for conferences, links to online resources and PDF-files of pre-2011 TOEBI Newsletters) are welcome and should be directed to the webmaster, Thijs Porck (m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

will be the greatest challenge.

The most significant aspect of the project and the one the team are most excited about is the the links that this combined corpus will throw up. It is to be expected that the identification of the various elements marked up across the corpus will demonstrate what Andy Orchard calls 'chains of influence both within and between the two literary languages of Anglo-Saxon England'. We may discover evidence that will assist with dating, show shared sources, perhaps even indicate authorship. Who knows? We will have to wait and see, reigning our curiosity as the CLASP library will not go live until it is complete. But when it is, we can expect to see some exciting new discoveries and have a tool at our disposition that will enable us to make new discoveries of our own.

Eleni Ponirakis
University of Nottingham

Bridging the Gap Between Medieval Studies and Science

A report from our postgraduate representative

In the past several years, we've been hearing a lot about the need for impact, collaboration and public engagement in academic research. Cross-disciplinary research has been strongly encouraged by research councils and funding bodies, and for early career scholars this emphasis can be both an exciting opportunity and an uncertain prospect as we attempt to situate our research in a changing field. A project I have been involved with recently has afforded me the opportunity to learn more about the realities of cross-disciplinary collaboration and how scholars across disciplines can engage the public in research.

For the past few months I have been assisting on a project funded by the British Academy Rising Star Public Engagement Awards. Led by Dr Mari-lina Cesario, the project aims to develop a research network for collaboration between scholars in medieval studies and science. The focus is particularly on bringing together and supporting early career and

postgraduate researchers in order to promote new collaborative projects in this area. It comes out of a larger APEX project headed by Dr Cesario and Dr Pedro Lacerda, 'Before and After Halley: Medieval Visions of Modern Science', funded by The British Academy, The Royal Society, The Royal Academy of Engineering and the Leverhulme Trust.

In May 2018, myself and a fellow QUB postgraduate student, Irene Tenchini, were brought on board to assist with the planning and organization of a museum exhibition as part of the project. The exhibition was held at the Ulster Museum in Belfast in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast from 1 May to 3 June. Titled 'Marvelling at the Skies: Comets Through the Eyes of the Anglo-Saxons', this photographic exhibition combined records of comets from Anglo-Saxon sources with contemporary images from astronomers. It took visitors on a journey from the earliest contemporary description of a comet in England in 891 CE in the period of Alfred the Great,

to the sighting of the hazy green-hued comet Lovejoy in 2013. The exhibition opened with a public lecture, which was hugely successful and attended by a large crowd of patrons from historians to astrophysicists to amateur astronomers and members of the general public. In June 2018 the exhibition was featured in the British Academy's first Summer Showcase in London.

While the first event may be over, the network is continuing to develop. We are currently planning a workshop on cross-disciplinary research that will bring together scholars from medieval studies and the sciences in an environment where we can promote discussion and the exchange of ideas. Our intention is for this workshop to be particularly helpful for postgraduate and early career researchers in facilitating open and inclusive discussion that will hopefully spark new ideas and new projects for study. For anyone interested in the project's development and upcoming workshop, you can follow our updates on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/medievalscience>).

facebook.com/crossing-frontiersnetwork/) and Twitter ([@mvms_frontiers](https://twitter.com/mvms_frontiers)), or send us an email at crossingfrontiers.mvms@gmail.com.

We are always happy to hear news on exciting research, ideas, and suggestions for future development!

Working on this project has been an incredible opportunity that has opened my eyes to the possibilities of research across disciplines and traditional periodic boundaries. Having the chance to talk about Anglo-Saxon studies with people from so many backgrounds makes the idea of ‘public engagement’ something real, challenging and, ultimately, very rewarding. Certainly, as a scholar at the beginning of my career I have learned a lot about how research themes and current terminology play out in practice, and how we can find ways to develop the field in new and exciting directions.

Margaret Tedford
Queen's University Belfast
TOEBI Postgraduate Rep

To join, visit www.toebi.org.uk/joinus



From left: Lexie Sutherland, Lisa Matveeva, Nicola Lilley, Melissa Venables, Jacob Runner, Paul Cavill, Rebecca Gregory

The above photo was taken in the crypt at St Wystan's Church, Repton, which Sir John Betjamen famously called ‘holy air encased in stone’. The crypt was one of the locations visited by University of Nottingham medievalists during their annual day out to visit stone-work from the Anglo-Saxon period in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

The second photo is the Breedon Angel from the Church of St Mary and St Hardulph, Breedon-on-the-Hill. There is a replica of the angel on display in the church, but the group was allowed special access to the bell tower to see the original this year. Special thanks to Paul Cavill for organizing the trip and to Eleni Ponirakis for submitting the photos. Eleni says, ‘This trip is one of the high-spots of the year and is always immense fun, but also at times quite moving. Sometimes, standing on ancient hallowed ground, the stones really do seem to speak.’



If you have photos from Old English-related trips, conferences, or meetings, please consider sharing them with the TOEBI community by sending them to the editors for publication in the next newsletter.

The Breedon Angel

The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest is a digital, dynamic edition that adapts to each individual learner to offer an appropriate level of challenge. In particular, the type and frequency of the glosses are determined by diagnostic questions, which allows for effective adaptation to the learning needs of an individual user. As such, each user is challenged at an appropriate level. This unique tool for teaching and studying Old English is now available online, for free.



Figure 1: The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

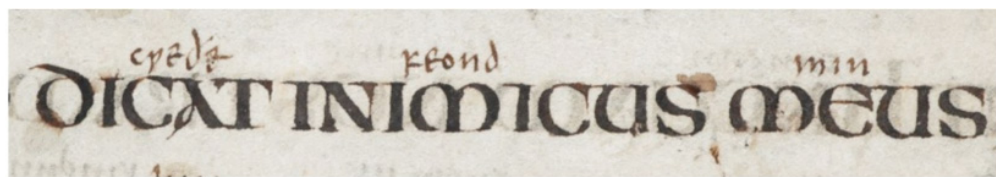
Drawing Inspiration from Old English Glosses

As anyone who has made a student edition of a text knows, there are various aspects to consider when it comes to providing glosses: Where should a gloss be placed? What information should be included in the gloss itself? And how complete and consistent should the textual apparatus be? These questions, which lie at the heart of our project, are not new. Indeed, they find a parallel in

the Anglo-Saxon world; the 200 or so surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts with glosses exhibit a great variety of didactic glossing methods.

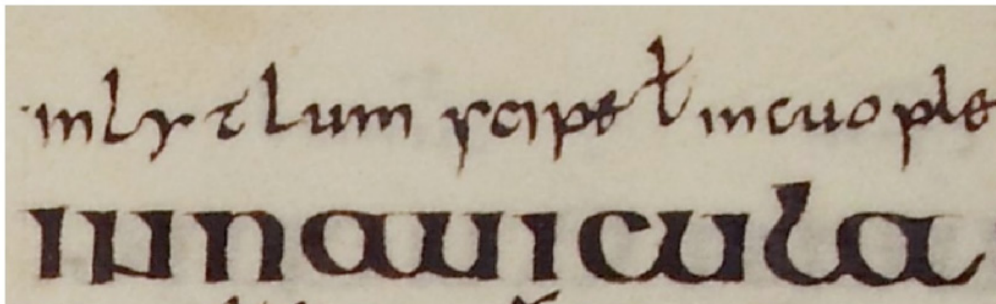
The most frequently attested way of glossing is through a simple word-for-word interlinear translation, as found in the Vespasian Psalter. But not every glossator was satisfied with providing just one translation for each

A



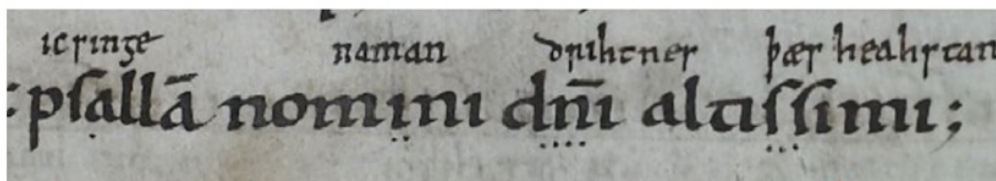
London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.i, fol. 18v

B



London, British Library, Cotton Nero D.iv, fol. 41v

C



London, Lambeth Palace 427, fol. 17r

Figure 2: Various glossing methods. A: Word-for-word interlinear gloss in the Vespasian Psalter ("cweða feond min" for "dicat inimicus meus"); B: A double gloss in the Lindisfarne Gospels ("in lytlum scipe [ve]l in cuowle" for "in nauicula"); C: Dot glosses in the Lambeth Psalter ("ic singe naman þæs heahstan drihtnes" for "psallam nomini d[omi]ni altissimi").

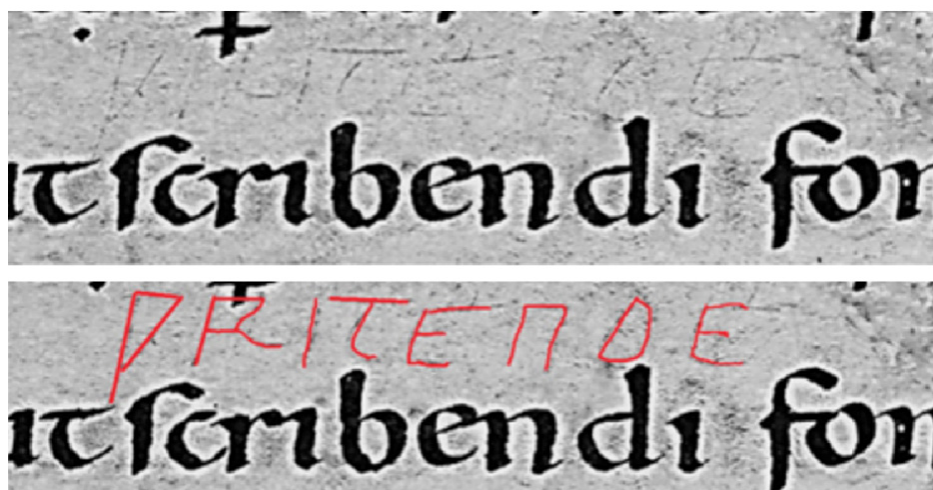
word; Aldred's gloss to *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, for instance, features 'multiple glosses', which provide a number of semantic alternatives. Some Anglo-Saxon glossators also included syntactical information; in the Lambeth Psalter, for example, an extra line of glossing in the form of dots underneath the Latin text helps the reader make sense of the word order. These different glossing methods accommodated different learning situations.

While some types of glosses thus provide more guidance than merely a word-for-word translation, other types prove more challenging for their readers. The so-called scratched glosses are a case in point. These are written without ink and many are only visible if you look at the manuscript from a certain angle.

Scratched glosses in particular have been associated with language teaching; Scott Gwara has hypothesized that they were designed to be visible to the teacher but not the student.¹ But, of course, the students themselves could decide to tilt the manuscript in order to see the gloss; in other words, this practice could be viewed as representing a very early form of adaptive glossing.

In producing our digital text edition, we have drawn inspiration from these medieval glossing practices. Using digital tools, we have designed the glosses in our edition to adapt to the needs of the individual user. As a result, our glosses provide more grammati-

1 Scott Gwara, 'Further Old English Scratched Glosses and Merographs from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 326 (Aldhelm's *Prosa de virginitate*)', *English Studies* 78:3 (1997), 202.



London, British Library, Royal MS 5 E XI, fol. 117r

Figure 3: Scratched gloss “writende” for “scribendi”.

cal information for those who need it, and less for those who require more of a challenge. The latter group also need to click on individual words to make the glosses visible – our digital version of a manuscript tilt.

The Structure of the Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

Our digital learning edition is based on Ælfric’s *Colloquy*. The *Colloquy* seemed like the perfect choice since, like our edition, Ælfric’s text was created for language teaching and its Latin original was supplied with Old English glosses.

The edition, which was designed using the e-learning platform Storyline 360, adapts after each pre-determined section of text—about

three lines of Old English. After a learner has read one section of text, built-in sets of questions evaluate both comprehension and grammatical understanding of the text in order to identify how much glossing is suitable for the learner. The user then receives instant feedback with strategies for understanding the grammar and structure of the text.

A typical set contains three multiple-choice questions. Three correct answers result in less glossing information in the next section of text. Two correct answers result in the same amount of information, and one or no correct answers result in more glossing information.² In particular, answers determine

² The set of questions for the first section works differ-

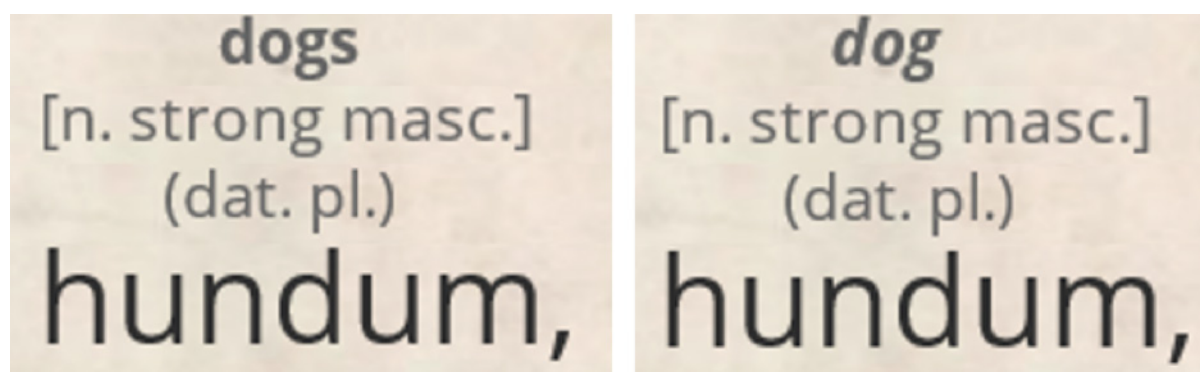


Figure 4: Gloss for “hundum” in the Leiden University Old English ColloQuest, showing a context-dependent translation and a context-independent translation.



Figure 5: The same section of text with different amounts of glossing information for different users.

the number of visible layers of glossing. The ColloQuest glosses are formatted as interlinear glosses with three layers: 1) the semantic gloss 2) grammatical information that is independent of the word's function in the sentence and 3) occurrence-specific information. Layers appear or disappear based on a user's abilities.

The final version of the ColloQuest contains fifteen sections of text and is available in two formats:

'Clerk' version of *The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest*

A fun way to test and improve your skills in Old English, with grammati-

entally. Here, users are asked four questions and if they answer all questions correctly, more glossing information is removed than would be at any other section of text. This 'sorting hat section' ensures that advanced users are given their appropriate challenge relatively quickly.

cal feedback. Recommended for those who have anywhere from a basic to advanced understanding of Old English grammar. This version is available here: http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest/story_html5.html

'Oblate' version of *The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest*

A fun reading experience for anyone, without grammatical feedback. Recommended for those who have no or limited experience with Old English. This version is available here: http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest-NF/story_html5.html

Acknowledgement

This project was made possible through funding from Leiden University's Expertise-

Centrum Online Leren (ECOLe).

More Information

If you would like to know more about *The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest*, feel free to contact Krista A. Murchison (k.a.murchison@hum.leidenuniv.nl) and / or Thijs Porck (m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

Amos van Baalen
Jennifer Jansen
Krista A. Murchison
Thijs Porck
Leiden University

Seeking Contributions

- articles on teaching methods & resources
- articles about teaching OE in countries outside the UK and Ireland
- book reviews
- new book announcements
- reports on conferences
- photos related to OE, AS Studies, and its teaching
- announcements of upcoming events and conferences

To contribute, please contact the editors.

N/EMICS 2018: 'Down There: Uncovering the Infernal in the Early Middle Ages'

Conference Report

The Northern / Early Medieval Interdisciplinary Conference Series (N/EMICS) aims to bring together students and researchers from various backgrounds and institutions to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, share methodologies, and discuss new ideas and interpretations of the early medieval period. The series has been running for nearly ten years, with a total of seventeen conferences held at institutions including University College London, York, Canterbury Christ Church and Ruhr-Universität Bochum, with these in turn producing six publications between them. One of this year's conferences took place at UCL on 8 and 9 June, and was

co-organised by myself, Dr Mike Bintley (Canterbury Christ Church), Karel Fraaije (UCL), and Dana Key (UCL) and generously supported by UCL's Octagon Small Grants Fund. The title of this event was 'Down There: Uncovering the Infernal in the Early Middle Ages'. The organisers invited new perspectives on the representation, significance, and development of Hell and other underworlds in the late antique and early medieval period, and encouraged papers presenting new readings of the infernal, its features, creatures, and iconographies, seeking to interrogate Hell's origins and shifting role in medi-

eval Christian doctrine.

Central to the ethos of N/EMICS is the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere for graduate students to present their research (often for the first time). Panels are deliberately made up of mixtures of MAs, PhDs, and ECRs, as well as established academics. Conference badges avoid titles, only including names, institutions, and pronouns. There is less of a formal question-and-answer session at the end of each panel, but more a free-flowing and extended discussion between speakers, chairs, and the audience, providing some fascinating insights and constructive criticism on the papers presented. And

this year we also decided to hold a graduate training workshop and coffee morning, where speakers from a number of institutions came together to talk about their different experiences of pursuing academic careers, considering careers outside academia, and how, as medievalists, we can effectively incorporate public engagement into our own research.

The conference's keynote paper was delivered by Professor Jane Hawkes (York), on '(Re)inventing Hell on Stone in Anglo-Saxon England', which tackled the surprising rarity of representations of the infernal and damnation in the extant corpus of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture. Her discussion was complemented by Dr Meg Boulton's (York) examination of the use of space and architectural structures in the Rothbury Cross Shaft and Last Judgement Ivory, and Dr Heidi Stoner (Durham), who spoke on the militarised vision of the fight against the Devil in insular culture and a potential representation of this on the Repton Stone.

Considering the place of Hell in the landscape of early medieval Europe, Dr Helen Appleton (Oxford) looked to the representation of the grave in 12th-century Middle English texts and the continuation of the Body and Soul tradition

It was important that we created a varied programme, situating academic papers alongside performance.

beyond the Anglo-Saxon period. Meanwhile, Dr Michael Baker (Durham) considered the narratives of the life of St Guthlac alongside Nordic volcano imagery, and Lily Hawker-Yates (Canterbury Christ Church) pointed to early medieval associations between barrows and Hell and how these persisted in England beyond the Norman Conquest.

Unsurprisingly, the Old English poem *Genesis B* and the Junius 11 manuscript were popular subjects for discussion. Professor Richard North (UCL) presented a new reading of the poem, considering Satan's emissary devil with his feathered helm as a representation of the Norse god Loki. My own paper looked at the two hell-mouths in the manuscript's illustrative programme in relation to the importance of speech in both *Genesis A* and *B*, and Dr Eleni Ponirakis (Nottingham) examined parallels between the mental states of the characters in these texts and illustrations and the infernal landscape they appear to inhabit.

In approaching the subject

of Hell in the early Middle Ages, it was important to the organisers that we created a varied programme, situating academic papers and discussions alongside performance. At the end of the first day's proceedings, we were treated to a stunning staged reading of *Genesis B*, performed in Old English with a full cast, the poem reimagined by Dana Key as a piece of early medieval liturgical drama. On the second day of the conference, meanwhile, we held a screening and discussion of *The Devil's Country*, a film produced by Dr Juanita Ruys for the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions. This documentary examines how early European settlers and explorers understood the natural landscape of Australia in terms of the medieval demonic and the gothic while posing questions about colonialism and the effacement of the Indigenous that are entailed in telling European medieval stories in colonial contexts.

For more information on N/EMICS events and publications, particularly the upcoming celebration of the series' tenth anniversary, readers can consult our website: <https://northernemics.wordpress.com/>.

Calum Cockburn
University College London

Genesis B A Performance

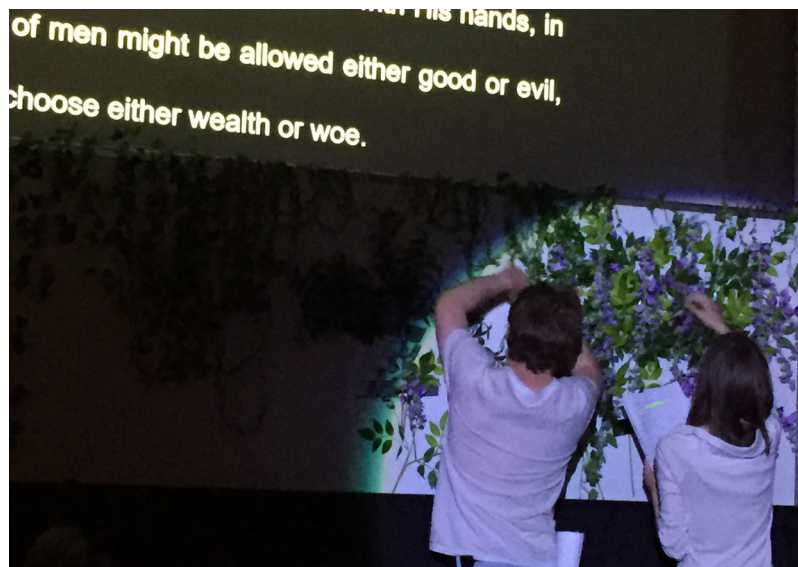


**Above: Satan before his fall
Left: The tempter talks to Adam
Below: Adam and Eve in Eden**

Students at University College London presented a staged reading of *Genesis B* during the 2018 N/EMICS Conference, which focused on the infernal in early medieval society (see pgs. 19–20).

All photos courtesy of Eleni Ponirakis; used by permission.

Narrator: Jack Barry
Adam: Eoin Bentick
Eve: Kate Thomas
Lucifer: Brian McMahon
Serpent: Angahard Mair Davies
Scripted and Directed by:
Dana L. Key
Student Producers: John Peatfield and Iris Wang
Translation provided by Prof Richard North



AwardReports

Reports from TOEBI Conference Award holders 2017–18

53rd International Congress on Medieval Studies

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, 10–13 May 2018

Arendse Lund, University College London

Thanks to support from the TOEBI award, I attended the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo this past May. While there, I presented my paper “Framing Law: Building Authority through the Anglo-Saxon Prologues.” I argued that the role of the legal prologue was to provide attribution and the justification for establishing and promulgating additional laws – an articulation of authority that the rest of the legal code did not allow. I focused on the mid-Anglo-Saxon trend of personalizing the prologues to justify the promulgation of new law codes and increase the perception of royal authority in the eyes of their subjects.

The paper generated an excellent discussion of Anglo-Saxon and canon law; due to this, I was able to meet other scholars working on early medieval law. I also participated in the mentor-match programme at Kalamazoo. Overall this was an invaluable opportunity to meet colleagues in the field and advance my scholarship.

4th Late Antique and Medieval Postgraduate Society

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 4 June 2018

Charlotte Liebelt, Royal Holloway University

The grant from TOEBI has funded my trip to Edinburgh, where I gave a paper at the LAMPS conference on the 4th of June this year. The title of my paper was ‘Transforming Kingship: the Alfredian Canon and its Predecessors’, and focussed on one of the four case studies of my PhD thesis, which as a whole explores continuities and discontinuities in notions of kingship in medieval English literature, from the eighth to the thirteenth century. In this paper I looked at the image of royal authority present in the Canon by highlighting its versatility in combining secular and religious ideals. For instance, I discussed the representation of the exile in the *Soliloquies* compared to Old English poetry, to argue how the former reinterprets the ‘traditional’ idea of the exile within a Christian framework.

25th International Medieval Congress

Leeds University, Leeds, 2–5 July 2018

Neville Mogford, Royal Holloway University

It is impossible to argue with the gnomic truth. When the Exeter Book poem ‘Maxims I’ confidently states that ‘weder [sceal] eft cuman / sumor swegle hat’ (‘the hot, sunny summer will always return’), the truth expressed is generic, and even tautological. But some summers are hotter than others, and the *summor þe cwom* to West Yorkshire for this year’s International Medieval Congress (IMC) was certainly *swegle hattra* than most. At times, Leeds University Square almost resembled a music festival rather than an academic conference—albeit more ‘jazz festival’ than ‘Leeds rock festival’—and there was an unusual number of sunglasses, sunscreen bottles, handheld fans, and even the occasional Panama hat on show.

It is a testament to the quality of the papers, the dedication of their presenters, and the enthusiasm of their audiences that every single session I saw was extremely well-attended, even in the balmiest and most tropical of rooms. Mercifully, my session (‘The Politics of Time in Anglo-Saxon England’) was blessed with both an early-morning start and functioning air conditioning. The idea behind this session was to bring together several different approaches to the poetic representation of time, all of which addressed time as a cultural or political entity.

Joana Blanquer (TCD) discussed the fascinating subject of temporality in *Beowulf* from the perspective of consciousness, perception, and memory. Dr Francis Leneghan (Oxford) gave a very convincing account of a newly identified trope in *Andreas* and *Beowulf*. And my own paper focused on the representation of quotidian time in OE elegy. It made three arguments: that 'oft' in OE elegy is litotes for

'all the time,' that 'longe' is litotes for 'all day long,' and that all of this can be understood from the perspective of monastic *meditatio* and *oratio sine intermissione*. All three papers were very well received, and I was given a good deal of encouraging and useful feedback. I left the conference confident that time and temporality is an increasingly important theme in Anglo-Saxon literary studies.

I would like to thank my two co-presenters and the chair, Rebecca Stevenson, for participating in such an enjoyable and thought-provoking session. Most of all, I would like to thank the TOEBI committee and membership for their kind and generous award, without which I could not have attended the sprawling, sweltering, and very important IMC 2018.

BookReviews

Recent publications review by TOEBI members.

The Complete Old English Poems

Craig Williamson (trans.), Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. lvii + 1189 pages. Hardcover £48.00 / US\$59.95.

ISBN: 978-0-8122-4847-9

In this very substantial volume the scholar-poet Craig Williamson presents translations in modern English verse of the entire surviving corpus of Old English poetry; that is, all the poems edited in the six volumes of the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records collection of Krapp and Dobbie (ASPR), plus thirty-four additional pieces, which are fragments, inscriptions and other texts discovered or identified as poetry more recently than ASPR. Williamson is best known to Anglo-Saxonists for his translation (and edition) of the *Riddles* of the Exeter Book but he also has a distinguished record as a writer of original verse. In the present book he is able to reprint his riddle translations (with very minor editorial changes, usually involving the treatment of runes) and to incorporate his more recent translations of *Beowulf* and other poems, but in tackling the whole corpus he had set himself a truly daunting task, which must have taken years to complete; there are more lines (31,000 or so) of surviving Old

English poetry than in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together. It is a task that Williamson carries out with flair, producing verse that is consistently interesting and, like Old English poetry itself, often arresting, surprising and indeed enchanting. It can also occasionally be uninspiring, but only where the originals are themselves uninspiring, as Old English verse can sometimes be – not least among Williamson's 'additional poems' (though even undistinguished poetry can have its interest).

Williamson's approach to Old English poetry is firmly in the 'sense for sense', as opposed to 'word for word', tradition. His translation will not serve well those readers seeking an aid to the literal meaning of a text; such readers should stick with (for instance) S.A.J. Bradley's (not-quite-comprehensive) *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* or the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library volumes. Instead Williamson makes Old English poetry into modern English poetry, taking liberties, where deemed necessary, based on his feeling (as poet and as scholar) for the subtleties of the original. Rather than confining himself to ostensible primary meaning, he picks up also on suggestions, associations, and overtones arising from the complexities of the language employed by the Old English poets, often paraphrasing to obtain something of an

equivalent effect in modern English.

Aiming at a broad audience of general readers, students and specialists (p. liii), Williamson sets out as his goal 'to recreate faithfully the Old English and to shape modern poems as beautiful, startling, and compelling as the originals – to bring across the bridge of time something of that original grace' (p. 7). 'Recreate' and 'faithfully' are the operative words here: Williamson *recreates* the Old English poems, while remaining *faithful* to the essence of the originals, as he perceives it. As in all poetic interpretations, there is an element of subjectivity. This book represents one scholar-poet's take on Old English poetry but it is a remarkably informed and thoughtful one, the product of deep engagement with the source material.

Reflecting Williamson's aim, the translations are accessible, with explanatory amplifications and clarifications unobtrusively inserted (for example, substituting a proper name for an ambiguous pronoun), textually deficient passages imaginatively expanded, and strands of dense imagery teased out, so that there are usually more lines in the translations than the originals. The translation adopts a four-stress metre loosely based on that of Old English but with modern English speech rhythms, including iambic measures, also incorporated, and as well as light structural alliteration it makes use of internal rhyme, non-structural alliteration and other types of sound patterning.

There are more than a thousand pages of translation in *The Complete Old English Poems* and so I can't hope to do justice to the extent of Williamson's achievement in this short review. But I can at least focus briefly on one poem, a relatively short one, as representative of his handling of his source material, *The Husband's Message*. The translation of this poem begins with the first-person introduction of the speaker:

Now I can speak secretly to you,
Pass on my message, sing of my lineage,
Tell you what kind of childhood I had,
What kind of tree I was taken from,
How I was shaped into silent song. (ll. 1–5)

This is a tantalizing opening, with the mysterious nature of the speaker being suggested. In the three lines of the original poem corresponding to it the speaker approaches the 'husband' *onsundran*, 'apart', wishing to speak to him, and refers to *treocyn*, 'tree-kind', and to growing up from childhood (*ic tudre aweox*). The Old English text (ASPR III, 225–7) is seriously deficient here, however, as are the subsequent lines, and so Williamson, teasing out the sense of this self-introduction, working with the understanding that the speaker is a piece of wood bearing a message. The detail about being shaped into silent song is completely absent in the original but is part of the poetic amplification of the Old English that Williamson boldly engages in.

Later this speaker conveys the message it has been given, asking the addressee to join the husband:

Go down to the cliff's edge, the sea-wall,
And listen for the spring-sad cuckoo's call
Wafting from the woods, plaintive, persistent. (ll. 23–5)

Here Williamson reworks the syntax of the original (lines 21–3), substitutes going down to the sea-wall for stirring the sea (*lagu drefde*), which would sound odd in modern English, and expands the reference to the cuckoo singing mournfully (*galan geomorne*) in the woods, with 'wafting', 'plaintive', and 'persistent' supplied, and spring mentioned explicitly where it is implicit in the Old English. Williamson treats these lines with freedom but he is responding imaginatively to the haunting tone of the original. In developing the imagery he makes use of rhyme and rhetorical alliteration, the alliterative pairs occurring within half lines rather than across them.

His treatment of the rune passage at the end of the poem is particularly noteworthy:

Let my runes remind you of your vows together:
I hear **S** and **R**, Sigel-Rad, the Sun-Road,
The sail's pathway; **EA** and **W**, Ear-Wynn,
The Sea-Joy; and **M** for Mon –

All of them inviting you to set sail
Under the sun, across the sea to your lord.
(ll. 48–53)

In this insistently sibilant passage, Williamson transliterates the rune letters into roman script and then supplies the Old English words that they stand for (in italics) and their modern English equivalents, and finally, in the last two lines, he interprets them, thereby giving the reader immediate access to the meaning of the runes in a way that reads naturally in modern English. The ‘sail’s pathway’, a kenning invented by Williamson, provides further clarification of *Sigel-Rad* and anticipates ‘to set sail’ a few lines later. ‘[T]o your lord’ spells out the meaning of *Mon* while also suggesting the relationship that the husband wishes the addressee to embrace, as brought out too in line 48, where the speaker reminds the addressee of the vows they once made; ‘remind’, not in the original, conveys a sense of persuasiveness on the part of the messenger. Overall, the translation of *The Husband’s Message* deftly brings out the intensity of the husband’s feeling while also capturing his uncertainty about how his message will be received. The translation works as poetry and is essentially ‘faithful’ to the original, even though it is far from a literal rendering.

The Complete Old English Poems is a beautifully presented book with high production values. It has a thoughtful fifty-one-page introduction by Tom Shippey (highlighting such themes as orality, modes of expressing truth(s), and the subtlety and ‘riddlic’ quality of Old English poetic language) and a fascinating essay on translating Old English poetry by Williamson, as well as headnotes on the manuscripts and individual poems. Shippey recommends that readers, rather than concentrating on particular poems in the collection, should make their way through the whole book (p. li), thereby experiencing the wealth that Old English poetry has to offer. Good advice, though in this age of closely targeted study this recommendation may not be followed by everyone. But the more of the collection readers have time for the more they will get out of it. For me, reading Williamson’s translations has been an engaging and pleasurable aesthetic experience, and,

as with Old English poetry itself, I see these translations as ones that will merit revisiting.

Hugh Magennis
Queen’s University Belfast

Medievalism: A Critical History

David Matthews, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015, xv + 229 pages, 13 bw illustrations. Hardcover £50.00

ISBN: 978-1-8438-4392-4

Medievalism: A Critical History is a well-researched guide to the field of medievalism studies that combines cultural components of the field such as *Game of Thrones* with broader questions concerning the social, political, and disciplinary aspects of its multiple domains. Countless case studies across artistic, literary, and historical genres provide a fund of ideas that offer a foundational understanding of what medievalism has been in the past, is currently, and what it can be.

In the introduction, Matthews foregrounds the complex, often tenuous familial relationship between medieval studies and medievalism studies. Indeed, his aim is to ‘attempt to establish the basis for a discipline of medievalism studies and articulate its relation to medieval studies’ (10). These questions are addressed throughout the entirety of the study by looking at meta-themes of the field divided into three broad sections: taxonomies, then a broad section encompassing space, time, self, and society, and finally one on history and discipline. Matthews is aware of the scope of this study and ultimately achieves his aim to provide a concise meta-guide of medievalism over a comprehensive history.

The first half of Chapter One examines the taxonomic approaches used in the disparate field of Medievalism. Matthews convincingly critiques other scholars’ methodological approaches notably Umberto Eco’s (1998) taxonomy of the ten different kinds of medievalisms that is ‘perhaps the best known intervention in the field’ (17). Eco’s versions of medievalism range across several areas including treating the Middle Ages as a pretext, as a site of ironic visitation, or a place of national identities (17-

18). Matthews rejects Eco's approach finding it too academic and too ironic to effectively draw on the cultural components of medievalism. Taking these cultural aspects into consideration, Matthews proposes two contemporary modes of understanding the Middle Ages: the *gothic* or *grotesque* Middle Ages and the *romantic* Middle Ages. The *grotesque* connoting 'darkness, obscurity, the hidden and repressed' whereas the *romantic* Middle Ages emerging in the late eighteenth century gives images of 'romance, of chivalric deeds, [and] also of simple communitarian living' as well as other positive aspects of the Middle Ages (20, 24). These forms are well-defined within the context of the etymology and history of the term 'medieval' and are used throughout the monograph to explain the constantly changing perceptions of the Middle Ages.

The second half of Chapter One deals with the representation of the Middle Ages in cultural phenomena and scholarship spanning from the creation of the medieval in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries to modernity. Here, Matthews introduces some of the inherent problems of the field which include comparing the different medievalisms and reconciling the sheer diversity of material. His solution is to 'regard Medievalism as a *discourse*, which can appear to greater or lesser degrees in cultural works' (pp. 37). To promote discourse, he supplies his own working taxonomy on medieval reception that includes three modes: The Middle Ages "as it was", "as it might have been", and "as it never was" (pp 37-38). In addition, he mentions the two ways that the Middle Ages are apprehended

either as 'a cultural production based largely on medieval elements incorporating modern references or motifs' or as a 'cultural production, essentially of its own time, [that] looks back to the Middle Ages with greater or lesser explicitness' (pp. 38-39). The simplicity of this taxonomy allows for flexibility when placing medievalisms along a spectrum and achieves its intended goal of permitting discourse.

Chapter Two briefly traces the impulses for inventing the Middle Ages from the sixteenth century to modernity highlighting the Medieval Revival of the second half of the eighteenth century. These impulses are precisely linked to Matthews' hypothesis of 'Asynchronous Medievalism'. Matthews asserts that the Middle Ages was '*never* simply a chronological concept, never simply a past time fixed in the past. It was an ideological state of being, a state of historical development that might return' (46). He attributes the strange temporality of the Middle Ages to its 'middleness' as a chronological period between antiquity and the 'modern' sixteenth century. Additionally, this 'middleness' attributes to 'a residual fear that the medieval is a place not too far away, whose inhabitants might not stay in that place' (60). Matthews demonstrates that this fear is still relevant in modernity by mentioning the current wave of anti-immigration sentiment in western European countries because people from Africa, Central Europe or the Islamic world are not viewed as 'coeval with us' (60).

Chapter Three expands on the theme of the medieval occupying space, albeit more concretely using architectural case studies to

Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War

A new exhibition at the British Library

19 Oct 2018 - 19 Feb 2019

This exhibition brings together treasures from the British Library's collection, including the Lindisfarne Gospels, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, pieces from the Sutton Hoo and Staffordshire hoards, the Domesday Book, and the Codex Amiatinus. Don't miss this once-in-a-generation experience!

For more information, visit <https://www.bl.uk/events/anglo-saxon-kingdoms>

demonstrate how multiple groups including tourists and scholars perceive medieval places in modernity. The locations selected are eclectic ranging from the medieval city of Oxford, the Langudoc region of France, Tintagel Castle in Cornwall, St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia, and the city of Katine, Uganda. Yet, they are strung together with Matthews' trajectory of exploring the 'real to the hyperreal, the authentic to the invented' nature of these so-called 'medieval' places (69). The comparison of the sites and discussion of aforementioned terms supports Matthew's contention that 'the real medieval can never be visited. We can only go to historical palimpsests' (91).

Chapter Four investigates whether medievalism can be a liberating force by examining medievalist societies and selves through the lens of 'experiential medievalisms'. In a survey of 67 reenactors from the UK, US, and continental Europe, Matthews finds that 'reenactors draw a clear line between the imagined medieval persona and their everyday selves and tend not to see much potential for full identification with their period' (108). This indicates that medievalism can be liberating because many reenactors partake in reenacting for leisurely or scholarly pursuits, without the actual desire to return to the Middle Ages. Matthews also calls for more academics to make spaces for reenactors in academia as they can perhaps help remove elements of the colonial and repressive forms of medievalism often presented in academic scholarship.

Chapter Five 'reexamine[s] the standard account in order to describe the *limits* of medievalism'. Here Matthews relates medievalism to broader interests in history particularly to the Medieval Revival of the late eighteenth century. Matthews argues that the Medieval Revival is in reality an anomaly that is treated as the norm in the field; however, it cannot fully be eschewed because 'outside of the limits of the Medieval Revival, medievalism is only a minor key, one theme among many' (122). The second part of the chapter takes a close look at medievalist art and the English literary canon as well as comparing Anglophone traditions to those elsewhere. In Matthew's view medievalism vanishes from the canon after the mid-Victorian period whereas other cultures

are more comfortable with their relationship with the Middle Ages. Matthews suggests a few alternatives to explain why the Anglo-American fascination with medievalism was brief, but the one he favors is that the Middle Ages have been

presented as a form of childhood in the Anglo-sphere since the Tudors.

Chapter Six argues that the residual forms of the medieval are more impactful and persuasive than the canonical, dominant forms of the Medieval Revival. To demonstrate the reach of medievalism in its 'fugitive forms', Matthews uses the novel. Different elements of medievalism are explored in selected case studies ranging from the gothic foundations in Defoe, Bronte, and Collins, to queer medievalism in Alan Hollinghurst's works. The commonality in all of these studies is that the medieval often hides in the most unlikely of places especially in novels 'which are otherwise thoroughly invested in their own contemporary moments' (141).

The Conclusion returns to meta-questions on the disciplinarity of the field of medievalism and its relationship with medieval studies. Matthews argues that the most fruitful way forward for medievalism studies is 'to embrace its cultural studies identity' and accept what John Frow calls 'productive uncertainty' (178). Arthurian studies and Robin Hood studies are cited as fields that have transitioned to new landscapes with conjoined medieval-medievalism studies. In particular, Matthews views Robin Hood studies as the exemplar that medievalism studies could follow while establishing its future. Despite the multitudes of medievalisms that presently seem to be fracturing the field, Matthews views this diversity

Remember to Recycle

by sharing this newsletter with students and colleagues.



as a strength and feels that medievalism can 'specialise while acknowledging the enormous diversity of the field of medievalism studies and its multifold possibilities (181).

Overall, this book is a highly informative, accessible, and occasionally humorous guide for anyone interested in learning about medievalism on a macro-scale. Even medievalists like myself will find themselves questioning their relationship with medievalism.

Cassidy Croci

University of Nottingham

Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England

Allen Frantzen, Cambridge: Boydell Press, 2014, xi + 304 pages, 7 bw illustrations. Hardcover £60.00

ISBN: 978-1-8438-3908-8

Frantzen's *Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England* represents a worthy contribution for any student of archaeology or history's canon of research. The Early Medieval textual professor succeeds for the most part in combining both the rich deposits of archaeological data with that of the equally abundant textual evidence of the period.

The book itself is in three parts. The first 'Food Words', covers the multiple occurrences of many food related words in textual documents from the period, as well as discussing the importance of these documents themselves. One salient argument that Frantzen puts forward is the over importance put on the *Colloquy* and the *Gerefa* (translated here as *Concerning the Discriminating Reeve*), which he sees as a limited source of information regarding food culture. Frantzen chooses instead to promote the *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* and *Monasteriales Indicia* for showing a clearer picture of daily life and the interwoven web that food related words create.

The second part covers 'Food Objects'. Here Frantzen examines objects associated with food production and consumption first through their archaeological remains and then integrating these with the textual evidence.

Quernstones are given a distinct chapter within this section as Frantzen sees these as significant. The rest of the section is split between the common material fabrics of pottery, iron and wooden objects. Here the frequency of recovery from archaeological sites to their recurrence in the major and minor texts are examined, and it is here that Frantzen emphasises on the true usefulness of certain texts comes into play. This, I believe is where readers will find some of the most interesting results as Frantzen shines a light on the frequency of which named objects turn up in documents and builds his arguments on this and the origin and use of those texts.

As strong as this part is it is also the one that begs to have had more coverage of the subtler evidence available through environmental archaeological sources which are only briefly alluded to. Frantzen himself in his introduction states that these forms of evidence have been omitted. It is this omission that is hard to reconcile as it feels like part of the picture is missing.

The third section covers the 'Food Offices' and focuses heavily on the influence of the church and to a lesser extent the reeves. It is also here that we find a chapter on the 'fish horizon'; a transition period where the eating of fish increased dramatically from the late 10th century. Frantzen's seems to have saved this for last as it carries one of his strongest arguments; that of the assumption that fish consumption was related to fasting. This Frantzen refutes brilliantly using an array of textual evidence. As intriguing as this penultimate chapter is it feels slightly out of place in this section despite being heavily reliant on ecclesiastical evidence and may have been better placed earlier.

What Frantzen has accomplished in 'Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England' has been to attempt to clarify and consolidate our understanding of the role food, its related objects, customs and vocabulary plays in Medieval England by unifying the archaeological and textual evidence. It would have been impossible to create a definitive guide in this volume, but what Frantzen has succeeded in is highlighting many of the crucial elements of the field. The overall success of this has created

a useful overview that students of medieval history and archaeology will find a valuable resource in their studies.

Robert Francis
University of Nottingham

The Transmission of Beowulf

Leonard Neidorf, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017, xix + 224 pages. Hardcover US\$49.95

ISBN: 978-1-5017-0511-3

Leonard Neidorf's monograph is a thorough, detailed analysis of scribal error in the *Beowulf* text, an argument for the early date and Mercian origin of the poem, and a passionate defense of traditional philological research and textual emendation. Neidorf's work is often persuasive and draws on a detailed data set, and – though his argument includes some generalizations, disregards issues of audience reception, and verges at times on the uncomfortably polemical – this work will certainly provide a jumping-off point for future discussions of *Beowulf* as a copied text.

The first chapter ('Introduction', pp. 1–29) outlines Neidorf's methodology, introduces the conceptual underpinnings of the book, and provides examples of the kind of analysis performed in Chapters 2 and 3. Neidorf covers the philological arguments for an early date (c. 700) for *Beowulf*, reiterates and defends R. D. Fulk's linguistic dating of Old English poetry, and explains the methods used for distinguishing scribal error from the 'authorial' reading. He also argues on behalf of the lexemic theory of scribal behavior, discussed below, and zealously defends textual emendation criticism. Neidorf's initial examples are persuasive ones, though their tone is strident and Neidorf veers toward ad hominem attacks on previous scholars. In his defense of his method of scholarship, too, Neidorf occasionally makes generalizations about the corpus of Old English poetry that do not hold for all its texts – suggesting, for example, that metrical irregularity is a certain sign of corruption and that there is no evidence that a poet would deliberately compose an unmetrical line. Late texts, including *The Battle of Maldon*, and

unusual texts, like the metrical charms, may well include deliberately unmetrical verses. These works feature irregular lines that have no deficiencies of sense or syntax and in many cases are highly ornamented. Neidorf argues that the idea of an Old English poet composing a deliberately unmetrical line is anachronistic; he suggests scholars have incorrectly applied a modern concept of the poet as an individual with unique literary sensibilities to Anglo-Saxons who may have composed in a different mode. The existence of grammatically clear, stylistically ornamented irregular lines in poems like *Maldon* is not necessarily attributable to the whims of artistically-inclined, iconoclastic individuals, but these kinds of lines do suggest that different poets may have adhered to different stylistic requirements. Alternatively, the metrical charms become irregular when employing traditional formulae much older than the texts themselves, suggesting that their metrical differences are not errors but signs of accommodation of particular incantations. Irregularities in these texts do not lend themselves to emendation in the way that metrical deficiencies in *Beowulf* do.

Neidorf himself notes that the kind of textual criticism propounded in this book is best suited to obvious errors, where a given corruption obscures sense and spoils metre, and that other scribal changes may go undetected. It is not possible to identify what Neidorf refers to as 'aberrations' from a poem's norms – and thus opportunities to correct corruption – until we have determined what a poem's norms may be. *Beowulf* is a strongly metrically consistent poem, in part because scholars of Old English metre derive their understanding of Old English poetic norms from *Beowulf* itself. Other poems, like *Maldon*, may not adhere to these rules in the same way or to the same degree. In addition, as Paul Cavill has recently noted in his review of this book for *Modern Philology* (May 2018), texts with a potential history of oral transmission, such as *Cædmon's Hymn* or, again, the metrical charms, may well be what Neidorf calls 'heterogenous accretions' and thus require a modified approach. Neidorf's conclusions are appropriate to *Beowulf*; future scholarship can investigate whether these conclusions hold true for other texts.

Chapters 2 ('Language History', pp. 31–71) and 3 ('Cultural Change', pp. 73–101) deal with the meat of Neidorf's close discussion of the various scribal errors found in the *Beowulf* manuscript. His body of evidence is uncontroversial – indeed, many of these errors have been noted by previous editors and commentators – but Neidorf provides a clear, thorough, and thoughtful synthesis of the manuscript data and discusses its implications with lucid argumentation. In Chapter 2, Neidorf notes and explores those scribal corruptions in the manuscript attributable to language change, and has amassed significant orthographic and scribal evidence suggesting that *Beowulf* was composed or first copied in the early eighth century and is of Mercian origin. Neidorf focuses throughout on errors of trivialization, in which scribes substitute a prosaic or familiar – though syntactically, semantically, or metrically deficient – word for an archaic or poetic one, and with corruptions caused by an apparent scribal desire to bring the text into line with West Saxon orthographic standards. Neidorf has a significant body of evidence for his argument about *Beowulf*'s early date and Mercian origin, and his discussion in this chapter and the chapter that follows offer innovative and persuasive solutions to a number of longstanding cruxes in the poem.

Neidorf also argues that these corruptions, in which orthographic concerns take precedence over sense, support the hypothesis that the two final scribes of *Beowulf* did not seek to comprehend the continuous narrative of the poem and were concerned with correcting form rather than content. This assertion of scribal methodology is certainly backed up by Neidorf's collected evidence; he does not, however, address whether such scribal changes – unintentional though they may be – could still be considered to constitute a form of textual revision in addition to textual corruption. Neidorf notes, for example, the transformation of the poetic word *scynscaþa* 'spectral enemy' into *synscaþa* 'sinful enemy' describing Grendel in line 707a; the change seems to be, as Neidorf argues, a trivialization

on the part of a scribe who did not recognize the unusual poetic compound *scynscaþa*. But the word *synscaþa* still makes sense, and would likely have contributed to an eleventh-century audience's perception of Grendel as a monster in a different way than *scynscaþa* would have contributed to an eighth-century audience's understanding of the same character. The change is certainly a corruption, but still affects the audience's understanding of the poem in a way that is worthy of further examination.

Chapter 3 examines those errors which suggest that cultural change made aspects of the *Beowulf* narrative incomprehensible to its eleventh-century scribes. Neidorf focuses on the obliteration and trivialization of personal names and ethnonyms; the sheer number of these errors, and their egregiousness, provides persuasive evidence for Neidorf's claim that the scribes of *Beowulf* knew little about legendary figures like Unferð or Eomer, about the stories attached to those figures, or about the geopolitical groups of the Migration Era. Neidorf argues that the *Beowulf* poet, by contrast, expected his readers to be familiar with this cultural knowledge, and indeed Neidorf's thorough evidence for the early date of the poem suggests that the text may provide genuine insight into the literary culture, social values, and cultural self-perception of at least one audience of early Anglo-Saxons. Neidorf goes on to argue that the evident lack of knowledge of the heroic tradition displayed by the *Beowulf* scribes suggests that circulation of those narratives had ceased by the eleventh century and was declining in the ninth and tenth. As Neidorf himself notes, however, it is difficult to conclusively date several Old English poems which refer to Germanic legend but appear in late codices, such as *Deor*, *Waldere*, and *Finnsburh*, making the circulation of such legendary material difficult to date in turn. Several names in *Genesis A* have similarly been corrupted by

scribes, which cannot be taken to indicate that late Anglo-Saxons knew little about the Old Testament. Nor would a given scribe have necessarily been representative of a poem's intended audience.

TOEBI offers Grants for Graduates

Find more information at
[http://www.toebi.org.uk/
grants-for-graduates/](http://www.toebi.org.uk/grants-for-graduates/)

These considerations invite future scholarship addressing the question of whether the *Beowulf* scribes' ignorance of Germanic legend was characteristic of their time period, or whether heroic legend was merely an area in which these two individuals were ill-versed.

Chapter 4 ('Scribal Behavior', pp. 103–32) constitutes a defense of the lexemic theory of scribal behavior. Neidorf argues that the quantity and quality of the errors found in *Beowulf* suggest that its scribes did not read the text for sense or content when copying, but proceeded lexeme by lexeme, seeking to correct orthographic form while disregarding sense. Neidorf addresses other theories of scribal behavior – which, collectively, posit that scribes reshaped a given text while copying it, to the point of being 'collaborators' with the author rather than simply copyists – and dismisses them on various grounds. Neidorf examines instances of variation in parallel texts and argues for each one that the variation is not a result of scribal improvisation or composition. He returns consistently to the large volume of evidence provided by scribal corruptions in *Beowulf* which evidently prioritize form over meaning. Again, Neidorf is zealous in his argumentation, suggesting, for example, that 'competing theories of scribal behavior threaten to retard the advancement of knowledge' (110). Neidorf's evidence for the lexemic theory is compelling, though there is room in future scholarship to explore grey areas in scribal practice. The poet who revised *Soul and Body II* to produce *Soul and Body I* – both of which Neidorf discusses in some detail as examples of parallel texts – was in some ways both a poet and a copyist, while a scribe who offers 'a competent response to a lacunous manuscript', as Neidorf describes the *Azarias* scribe, is certainly a poetic composer, and is perhaps producing the 'spontaneous revisions of antecedent forms' which Neidorf argues scribes do not perform. Neidorf refers to scribal additions as 'inauthentic' throughout the chapter, and indeed many of these corruptions are a detriment to the meaning or aesthetic soundness of the Old English texts. If a variant version of a text is metrically or grammatically sound, however, such variations are hard to pinpoint as interpolations – and the question of audience reception of a given text,

emendations and all, remains a valid area of exploration. The form in which a text is copied is at least 'authentic' to the time and context of its transmission, and was received and interacted with by an 'authentic' audience in that context, even if it was originally intended for another audience entirely.

The work's concluding chapter ('Conclusion', pp. 133–62) argues that *Beowulf* is not a composite text, but the unified work of a single poet composing in the late seventh or early eighth century. Neidorf traces the presence of textual archaisms in *Beowulf* and demonstrates that they occur throughout the poem. He suggests that the consistency with which the *Beowulf* poet uses archaic words and structures, and the accuracy with which he adheres to metrical archaisms like Kaluza's Law, demonstrate that the poem in its entirety is an early work. Neidorf also points out linguistic and syntactic features which show semantic and stylistic unity in the text, though a thorough stylistic analysis is beyond the scope of this present work. Again, Neidorf is polemic in his defense of his argument, and suggests that the field of Anglo-Saxon studies is engaged in a concerted effort to erase or ignore philological research, and that scholars within it have a 'desire to undermine' such endeavours (152). 'If obscurantist argumentation persuades scholars to withhold credence from the conclusions of philological scholarship, research will be vitiated and the advancement of knowledge will be impeded', he writes (150). Neidorf then concludes the work with an appendix thoroughly examining Tolkien's textual commentary on *Beowulf*, defending many of the latter's emendations, dismissing others, and concluding that the present work 'vindicates' a tradition of *Beowulf* scholarship galvanized by Tolkien (173), before offering a glossary of terms, bibliography, and indices of verses and topics.

Neidorf's conclusion – that *Beowulf* is substantially the work of a single eighth-century poet, and that it was not adapted or recomposed for an eleventh-century audience by its scribes in any meaningful way – is well supported by the detailed analysis that precedes it. He argues, however, that the poem should be divorced from its manuscript context, and that 'it is methodologically suspect to interpret the poem

in the eleventh century' (161). The weight of evidence behind the early dating of *Beowulf* and the substantial survival of the apparently archaic text claimed by Neidorf prohibit us from considering the eleventh century to be the poem's compositional context, or an eleventh-century audience to be the composer's intended audience. Thinking about eleventh-century reception of this eighth-century poem, however, will be an excellent question for future scholarship, now that Neidorf has demonstrated the poem's early origin. Such exploration is already underway with the publication of Simon Thomson's major study of the Nowell Codex (*Communal Creativity in the Making of the Beowulf Manuscript: Towards a History of Reception for the Nowell Codex*, Leiden: Brill, 2018). The question of why two scribes were asked to copy this particular text – to dedicate a significant amount of labour and resources to a poem which they evidently struggled to understand – is a worthy one. It is an essential scholarly endeavour to consider what an eleventh-century West Saxon audience could get out of an eighth-century Mercian poem, and, specifically, why two eleventh-century scribes would recopy *Beowulf* alongside the *Passion of St. Christopher*, the *Letter to Aristotle*, *Wonders of the East*, and *Judith*. Neidorf correctly notes that we do not think of Catullus as a fourteenth-century poet, though his work first appears in fourteenth-century manuscripts – but scholars can engage in meaningful analysis of fourteenth-century reception of Catullus, and explore what those audiences might have found meaningful in his work. An eleventh-century audience may or may not have understood the references to Germanic legend in *Beowulf*, but still found the poem valuable enough, meaningful enough, to copy. We can hope that future scholarship, building on Neidorf's demonstration of the poem's archaic date and unified composition, seeks to explore what that meaning might have been.

Caroline Batten
University of Oxford

Abortion in the Early Middle Ages, c. 500–900

Zubin Mistry, York: York Medieval Press,

2017, xiii + 342 pages. Paperback £25.00
ISBN: 978-1-90315-375-8

Zubin Mistry is currently a lecturer in early Medieval European history at the University of Edinburgh. This work stems from his PhD thesis, entitled “Alienated from the Womb: Abortion in the Early Medieval West.” The book is a wide examination of the history of abortion from late antiquity to early medieval thought, which focuses on the differing viewpoints of writers on abortion. Mistry employs a wide variety of sources to his study including Latin hagiography, canon and secular law codes, religious penitentials and treaties. The chapters follow a chronological order from late antique authors and the beginning of Christianity through the Gauls, Visigoths, and Carolingians amongst others. In the very beginning Mistry outlines his central aim of the book, which is to add to the scholarship of this topic, as there are too few works pertaining to this area of study. Mistry sets his work within the Latin works of the early medieval period, stating he will not attempt to cover any vernacular works regarding abortion. As such, Mistry uses translations in the main body of the text with the untranslated Latin source material in his footnotes, which creates a very comprehensible and accessible academic style. Therefore, this book could be used by someone versed in these sources, and someone very new to Latin texts. Furthermore, Mistry's prologue addresses the problem of using the Modern English terminology of abortion, as many terms have certain connotations within the modern abortion debate. While almost impossible to separate modern and contemporary biases, it is highly important to interrogate the terminology used in the original Latin texts in terms of the context and the literal meaning. Therefore, instead of using the modern term ‘abortion’ when speaking of early medieval texts, Mistry employs the Latin term *abortio*, meaning either abortion or miscarriage.

A central theme to Mistry's work is the gendered connotation which abortion received from late antique Latin texts, stating that these works ultimately concluded that: “women aborted, men and women exposed [their infants]” (p. 40). Mistry sees this gendered perspective on abortion from many writers

from the late antique period and suggests that abortion was not seen as a sexual sin, and writers wrote about the act itself as reason for punishment. In early Christianity, the move from abortion as 'tort' to 'murder' stemmed from interpretations of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, a Greek description of Hell from the first century from Methodius and Clement of Alexandria. Moreover, the book examines the link between abortion and the topic of female transgression. Late antique writers often infer that abortion and infanticide arise from sexual misconduct, such as adultery and conceiving with someone undesirable. This understanding continues throughout the work, looking at the rhetoric which religious works and medieval writers use against the women who undergo abortion either willingly or unwillingly.

Moreover, Mistry also gives consideration to lesser-known Latin writers who, in their sermons and writings on abortion, did not conform to gendering abortion as a purely female offense. For example, Chrysostom explains how the drunkenness of men results in the pregnancy of women in brothels, which inevitably leads to these women undergoing abortions out of necessity. Mistry claims "too few [historians] have noticed that his direct addresses here were men" (p. 53). Although Chrysostom may have been "unique" in his attitude toward the women who preform abortion, it shows the varied opinions present at the time which Mistry is attempting to contrast against the more prevailing attitude of abortion as a female sin.

Mistry also includes a chapter on early medieval Irish, Anglo-Saxon, and Merovingian Gaulish penitentials. Although the penitentials have often been overlooked due to their blatant plagiarism of earlier works and muddled provenance, Mistry examines how the church members may have seen ideology pertaining to abortion and the penalties it would incur. The early Irish *Vinniani* composed ca. 570–590 focuses on clerical sins, and therefore places abortion within the section regarding clerical sexual sins. Mistry also references the curious Irish miracle stories, in this case Cogitosus's *Life of Brigit* which details Saint Brigit assisting young women and preforming a miracle whereby the child disappears from the womb.

Mistry clarifies that the apparent leniency of these texts perhaps do not mean that clerics thought abortion permissible, but were seen rather in the light of 'healing' the pregnant woman of her burden. These texts are examined in view of how the issue of abortion is perceived by the writer, and the context in which these works are composed. Although the inclusion of early Irish and Anglo-Saxon penitentials appears at odds with the other material which Mistry covers, his overall aim to give voice to differing views certainly is proven in this chapter.

Mistry also includes a chapter on the divorce of Theutberga and Lothgar II in Merovingian Gaul, which attempts to uncover the public humiliation of abortion rumours. Theutberga is also rumoured to have committed incest with her brother, which leads the king to divorce her speedily. Of all the accounts that detail her confession, only one contains the crime of abortion. Mistry concludes that Theutberga's confession does not contain an abortion crime as the future compilers were not including the vicious rumours around that time. Moreover, the accusation of abortion may have been dropped once the charge was not useful to the king and his supporters. The crime of abortion was used in this way as it carried with it the commutation of concealing sexual sin. Although Lothgar's accusations seem weak upon close inspection, the inference of abortion is clear: to accuse a woman of grave sexual sin. Mistry concludes by saying the divorce case shows how elusive these accusations appear, and how finding written experience from early medieval writers on the reason these women may have had abortions is impossible.

Mistry's work illuminates the complexities of an overarching moral stance against abortion and the realities of early western Christian practise. Moreover, the book's structure and sources reinforce the nuanced aspect of abortion in early Christianity and undermine the simplification of such a topic. Instead of focusing on the predominant views on abortion in the early Middle Ages, this book addresses the over-stated impact certain works have on differing cultures and the differing viewpoints found even within the patristic works regarding abortion. Mistry gives a comprehensive

and illuminating study on the historical representations of abortion in the early Middle Ages without overly simplifying the range of material and viewpoints which occur.

Lauren O'Brien
University of Nottingham

Building Anglo-Saxon England

John Blair, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018, xxiv + 471 pages. Hardcover £40.00.

ISBN: 978-0-69116-298-0

A significant expansion on the work Blair presented at the Ford Lectures delivered at the University of Oxford in 2013, *Building Anglo-Saxon England* furthers his work on the landscape of Anglo-Saxon England into a systemic exploration of man's use of space from 600 to 1100. It draws on an impressive range of sources: place names, charters, laws, topography, literature, conversations with local experts, analogues from a wide range of times and places, as well as labour-intensive 'grey literature', evidence from contract archaeology excavations frequently difficult to access in print. As Blair acknowledges, this work sits at the cusp of what should be a fruitful and informative series of studies making use of this data as it is consolidated into more accessible databases in the future. A notable feature is its willingness to search for explanatory analogues across time and space, making illustrative comparisons ranging from nineteenth century Russian farming villages, to modern-day Khanty feasts, to late medieval Scandinavian halls. Blair's study on the whole challenges any sense of exceptionalism: above all, it draws increasing attention to the fact that referring to Anglo-Saxon England as an isolated, homogenous and seemingly monolithic entity is simply inaccurate.

The work's twelve chapters are divided into five sections, each with a focus on the use of space, whether theoretically, as in the first part, or as constructed space such as the great timber halls of the seventh century, or as settlement patterns and planning, or transport links. In the first section, Blair lays down the foundations for his work, situating it within the

scholarly field and exploring some of the more dogged theoretical questions, such as how the early Anglo-Saxons (to the extent that they can be identified) interacted with the landscape they encountered in Britain, to the nature of the pre-Christian religion and how that manifested within the landscape, to the question of to what extent material culture might be a reliable indication of identity. Blair largely leaves the history of the migratory period to the side, as comprehensive works covering the migration period already exist.

In the second section, 'The First Transformation', Blair explores man's use of space circa 600–700, which he identifies as the era of great timber-frame halls, overlapping with the major wave of early monastic foundations. One of his more interesting, and in my view, convincing hypotheses, is that these two phenomena are interrelated: in his view, the majority of great timber halls, a feature largely confined to this period, were intended to have a limited lifespan (pp. 84–86), and therefore, the donation of royal estates to monastic foundations may have been linked to the planned redundancy of these sites, as well as traditional sacral roles for the royal families (p. 135). He also suggests that monastic learning may have introduced grid-planning – a technology associated with the Romans and thought to be lost to the early Anglo-Saxons – into certain settlements in this period (p. 154), a theory explored further in later chapters, and supported by numerous figures illustrating the possibility of grid planning.

Part 3 is perhaps this book's most substantial achievement, offering one of the most concrete sets of evidence for the 'curiously invisible decades of the ninth century.' Looking principally at place name evidence, topography and archaeology, Blair advances the thesis that he first proposed in 2013: that Mercian administrative organisation planned and organised a system of economic exchange and landscape division that included specialised centres for defence, market activity, farming and animal husbandry, and industry (p. 193), beyond the documented obligations of food-rents, bridge-building and fortress upkeep (pp. 183–85). Blair is very aware that his choice to situate this development in, and under, Mercian

Scholars of Early Medieval England (SchEME) Mentoring

Formerly known as the Anglo-Saxon Mentoring Initiative, SchEME Mentoring aims to encourage a positive sense of community among scholars of early medieval England by connecting PG students and ECRs with established scholars. Mentoring may take place in person (at ISAS, Kalamazoo, and Leeds) or online.

To learn more or sign up, visit the website at schemementoring.wordpress.com

bureaucracy, rather than West Saxon, is unconventional, but the hypothesis serves to explain both periods and regions, especially considering the geopolitics of the late ninth and tenth centuries, in which Wessex may be seen to adopt and adapt the practices of its neighbour and rival. He also explores the landscape, laws and social classes across the regions as they develop and impact the use of the land.

Blair finds himself on more traditional ground in the final parts of *Building Anglo-Saxon England*. 'The Second Transformation, 920–1000', Blair's Part IV, covers the period of the Benedictine Reform and the consolidation of the West Saxon power. Corresponding to cellularisation observed in contemporary France, Anglo-Saxon England in this period also exhibits a more intense system of heavy agricultural land use, increasing specialisation as well as urbanisation. This in turn has impacts on the social structure, in which Blair asserts a largely egalitarian society (aside from the extremes of the warrior 'aristocracy' and slaves), stratified further based on obligations of labour to land holders. He looks increasingly at the question of the development of what would eventually become the 'manor house' and its economy, as well as contemporary parallels on the continent. In Part V, which examines the eleventh century and immediately beyond the Norman Conquest, he goes on to suggest that a number of features typically associated with Norman culture and administration had extant local parallels, such as castle-like fortifications (pp. 387–99), the building of churches (in stone, now including features typical of timber construction, pp. 402–05), and the locations of

administrative meetings.

As a work of history, *Building Anglo-Saxon England* is an impressive achievement. It was at times frustrating that several of the references for his more ambitious statements gesture to a forthcoming volume with which Blair is also involved, Blair, Rippon and Smart's *Planning in the Early Medieval Landscape*, which promises to explore further the continental analogues and connections made in this volume. While some may find Blair's use of modern material as analogues strange, or question his identifications of radially- or grid-planned settlements, or of the *-tun* system of land administration (one of his more radical claims), his approach offers serious benefits. For one, the presentation of the work is impeccable: the copious illustrations provide the material necessary for his readers to make up their own minds regarding the patterns he identifies. Secondly, his theories regarding Anglo-Saxon history and culture usefully and, to my mind, convincingly, explain a broad range of phenomena over a substantial time frame and geographic scope, from a truly breath-taking range of sources.

This book should also reinvigorate the way in which any contextually grounded study of Old English literature is undertaken. Blair situates several literary works within the body of his evidence, whether the early medieval Welsh *Gododdin*, the early Old English heroic poem *Widsith*, the cryptic elegy *The Wife's Lament*, or the fiercely-debated *Beowulf* (which Blair fits into his narrative of the eighth-century, following Patrick Wormald's views). His observations about the society that produced these works should be taken on board by literary scholars. For one, the Anglo-Saxon preference for itinerant courts and for timber construction means its visibility in the landscape today, as well as archaeologicality, is negligible, but that this absence should not be mistaken for evidence of absence. Second, Anglo-Saxon England cannot be taken as a homogenous culture: significant variations by region, as well as over time, demand that context be considered when forming our own theories about Old English literature and its audiences. Third, Anglo-Saxon England should be considered as both socially and economically complex. Finally, although there were significant differ-

ences over period, region and among social classes, developments in Anglo-Saxon England tend towards continuity, and to connections with northern Europe: the culture was insular, but not isolationist. Even as medieval studies today confronts the appropriation of history and Old English literature by white supremacists, as well as the issue of the lack of diversity within the field, Blair's work offers some useful discussion points: regional diversity, continuity over time, connection despite distances. As much as we do not know about Old English literature and its audiences, we would do well to consider what we do know of its producers and original consumers when studying it ourselves, and Blair's book is a substantial contribution to that knowledge.

Stefany Wragg
Independent Scholar

The Sutton Hoo Story: Encounters with Early England

Martin Carver, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017, xiii + 241 pages. Paperback £19.99.

ISBN: 978-1-78327-204-4

The Sutton Hoo Story is a book about narratives, as the title suggests: both the story of the burial mounds and how the site, and its treasures, were discovered. It is concerned, then, with how the early medieval past and a series of post-medieval presents were put into contact in this corner of East Anglia and what these encounters can teach us about early English history.

Not a revised edition of the author's former account, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?*, which was first published in 1998, but a new version, this latest book includes recent research as well as a summary of the archaeological campaigns and their findings, material and intellectual. It is intended also to address the queries raised by visitors to Sutton Hoo since the opening of the National Trust Visitor Centre in 2002. As Martin Carver points out in his preface, Sutton Hoo's audience is 'dynamic, changing and ever increasing' (p. x) and meeting their diverse wants and needs is a challenge. Rather than drawing a distinction between specialists and non-specialists (a deci-

sion that I shall gladly uphold here), Carver concedes that there are some who simply want facts and some who want critically-informed stories that indulge the imagination. This book caters to the latter and in doing so, it remains accessible, affordable and pitched to a wide audience. Readers who want to deal with facts alone are directed towards the British Museum's research report, published in 2005, and the open-access Sutton Hoo Online Archive (SHOLA). There are also lists of archaeological records at the back of the book, following the bibliography.

There are two main parts to *The Sutton Hoo Story*: chapters 1–3 are focused on the archaeological campaigns of the 1930s, 60s and 80s in turn; chapters 4–6 are a sketch of the history of the site from 3000 BC to 1938. Chapter 7 is both a conclusion that ties together these parts and a standalone piece that synthesizes current theories and evidence to hypothesize about the provenance of the burial ground and its connection to the kingdom of East Anglia and King Raedwald.

The chapters on the campaigns are not revelatory but they serve as an important reminder that our knowledge of the burial mounds and their contents – and public access to the same – are not to be taken for granted. As Carver documents in these chapters, the Second World War interrupted early excavations and threatened the survival of the mounds and their treasures; each campaign required careful negotiation and diplomacy as responsibility for the site was passed between institutions and hands; and recognition of Sutton Hoo's historical value and public interest was far from inevitable. Carver duly celebrates the contributions of his predecessors, Basil Brown, Charles Phillips and Rupert Bruce-Mitford, who led the campaigns before he took on the mantle in 1983. Carver's considerable expertise and first-hand knowledge of the site are the real strengths of this book. He writes engagingly and clearly, so that those without a background in archaeology can develop a picture of the processes involved in the excavations; in Carver's own words, the book offers 'a history in miniature of the science of archaeology itself' (p. ix). His accounts are also colourful and about people as much as things. Charm-

ing details bring the campaigns into vivid life: the description of Brown's 'disreputable trilby' and 'bubbling pipe' (p. 4); how married couple, the Piggotts, interrupted a painting holiday to help Phillips make some of the most significant finds in European archaeology (pp. 16–20); and how a game of makeshift golf led to the discovery of Mounds 17 and 18 (p. 67). Readers are invited to relive the moments treasures so familiar and synonymous with Sutton Hoo – the shield, the gold buckles inlaid with garnets, the Coptic bowl – were pulled from the ground for the very first time.

Many objects were discovered as fragments and required careful analysis and experimentation. Carver attributes 'the form of most of the objects now displayed' to Bruce-Mitford and his team (p. 31) but explains that these forms went through a few iterations. For example, the stag was thought to be part of a helmet, then a standard before it was finally attached to the sceptre and the famous helmet was assembled differently first time around (pp. 31–33). These are useful case studies to share with our students as we encourage them to think critically and creatively about interpretations of the past, not only in terms of material culture but also in terms of translation.

Throughout the book, Carver frequently stresses the instability of knowledge and the gaps in our understanding of Sutton Hoo. These are caveats to the historical narratives of Chapters 4–6. Here the burial ground is contextualised: within distant history (chapter 4 begins with the Neolithic period); within more contemporary history, including the arrival in the fifth century of those whom Carver refers to as the 'early English'; and within post-medieval history – chapter 6 looks at the post-Reformation interest in the mounds by grave-robbers and antiquarians alike and nineteenth-century archaeological curiosity. The burial mounds are given the greatest focus and the (at times, overly-sentimental) discussion of how they were established and by and for whom occupies the entirety of chapter 5. Whilst it is good to see them as part of a bigger picture, this approach contracts centuries of history and expands the early seventh century in time. The resistance of the idea that Sutton Hoo exists within a temporal and spatial vacuum is countered therefore

by the implication of a linear master narrative with the burial mounds at the centre.

In my opinion, some of the most moving and interesting descriptions of early medieval burials are those of the sand-bodies in chapter 6: that is, the executions clustered in two groups around the site, their contorted bodies displaced by time and witnessed only by the soil. In the absence of grave goods and pomp and ceremony, the sand-bodies resist identification and must speak for themselves. Take, for example, burial 42: 'a mature male lay on his back, decapitated, and on top of him lay two women, face down' (p. 159). These sand-bodies present an opportunity to enquire critically into issues of presence and absence, identity and anonymity, and belonging and exclusion, and could be put into productive dialogue with the missing body and the ghost-ship in Mound 1. It is not in the scope of *The Sutton Hoo Story* to make these connections, but learning about the sand-bodies in this context has encouraged me to think further about them, especially since the executions represent 300 or more years of early medieval burial and are so often overshadowed by the mounds of Sutton Hoo.

The book also got me thinking more about women and Sutton Hoo, not only in terms of the burials (Could there really be so few women buried in the Tranmer House cemetery and under the mounds? Are grave-goods always adequate signifiers of gender?) but also in terms of the campaigns. The archaeological discovery of Sutton Hoo is very often associated with Brown, Phillips, Bruce-Mitford and Carver; it is refreshing to see a strong contingent of women acknowledged throughout the book. I would like to learn more of these women as well as Mrs Pretty, whose significance is well-documented. There is another story to tell here.

Carver reflects on the role of women in early English society in general in his final chapter. Here he also considers Sutton Hoo in relation to the practice of burial mounds elsewhere. In this way, Sutton Hoo can be viewed as part of a (not necessarily cohesive) narrative that includes not only Scandinavian ship burials but also the mound city of Cahokia in

the present-day US, which was constructed by the people of the Mississippi culture, and *kofungen* mounds in Japan (pp. 203–04). This chapter is especially important for the field of early medieval studies at this time, therefore, and its ‘envoi’ bears an important message for the audience of Sutton Hoo, who learn much about early medieval English history from the site: Sutton Hoo ‘belongs to a larger world’ (p. 205).

If *The Sutton Hoo Story* feels too conjectural and imaginative at times, Carver has a response: those who want narratives deserve to be given them, since ‘Sutton Hoo belongs to everyone’ (p. 175). He is right.

Victoria E. H. Walker
King’s College London

Translating Early Medieval Poetry: Transformation, Reception, Interpretation

Tom Birkett and Kristy March-Lyons (eds.),
Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017, 250 pages.
Hardcover £60.00 / US\$99.00.

ISBN: 978-1-8438-4473-0

This collection of articles, arising from the University College Cork conference *From Eald to New: Translating Early Medieval Poetry for the 21st Century*, is in many ways a very “new” book, and it is deeply aware of it. Even for a reader who is not exactly concerned with the subject matter, the way this work is structured and presented provides an insight into modern methodologies that allows scholars and translators from different backgrounds to work together and produce truly interdisciplinary pieces of research, which together form a concise and complex picture. The project is ripe with implications for new ways of thinking about the sociology of translation and Medieval Studies: does the future belong to interdisciplinary projects involving both esteemed scholars, such as Carolyn Larrington and Rory McTurk, and professional translators, such as Bernard O’Donoghue and Bertha Rogers?

According to the editors Tom Birkett and Kirsty March-Lyons, who have also led the

From Eald to New project and organised the conference, this is inevitably the case: even without an organised project, the wide fields of Medieval Studies and literary translation now overlap much more than they did before. Addressing an Old English text, they rightfully claim, is a problematic thing in its own, and therefore requires self-reflection and a multitude of focal points. Old English literature, according to the editors, exists outside the usual models of influence where “Chaucer can influence Spenser, can influence Keats, can influence Tennyson, can influence Eliot and so on.” Instead, the recipient will rely on background information, such as archaeological tropes, and it goes without saying that our comprehension of the past forges ahead in scholarly circles as much as in creative writing and mass culture.

The collection aims to look at this process from every possible angle. It starts with Hugh Magennis’ article on a relatively familiar early translation of *Beowulf*; we are almost immediately presented, however, with an overview of Jorge Luis Borges’s influential but idiosyncratic views on medieval Germanic tradition. It is written, by way of exception, by the Old Icelandic literature heavyweight Rory McTurk rather than a Borges scholar – which is usually the case with commentaries on Borges’s controversial texts like *Kenningar*. McTurk’s article is preceded by a subject rarely discussed in English-speaking circles but vital for hundreds of scholars and millions of readers – Vladimir Tikhomirov’s popular translations of alliterative poetry into the non-Germanic Russian language. How should *The Wanderer* and *Beowulf* be rendered in a language that, unlike English or German, does not have a strong alliterative tradition? How does one deal with the richness of Old English vocabulary that characterises these texts in a target language that lacks straightforward parallels, while the use of wider modern Russian vocabulary will immediately invoke associations with medieval Russian history? Inna Matyushina provides the English-speaking reader with insights on how Tikhomirov approaches these problems, but even more importantly, her article stimulates the reader to ask these kinds of global questions themselves. After digesting the cultural challenges of conveying Old English and Old Norse literature in Argentinian journalism

and Russian literary translation, the reader is thrown into a sea of Irish material in three successive articles by Elizabeth Boyle, Lahney Preston-Matto and Tagh Ó Síocháin, with the difficulty of material incrementally increased. Tagh Ó Síocháin's text, the last of the three, gets the deepest into the difficulties of translating a specific text, and provides the reader with Modern Irish and Modern English translations of *Find and the Phantoms*. At this point, approximately halfway through the book, it becomes apparent that its structure conveys on itself an important statement, which is not just edited into the collection but clearly shared by the twelve contributors: reception is a diverse, complicated and profound process, and should be viewed as a living whole. For any reader, and specifically for an English-speaking student of Old English, the journey will be not only meaningful but educational in terms of methodology, as after a thorough consideration of non-English translations and Medieval Irish material – both sadly underrepresented in most curricula – the collection returns to the more familiar Old Norse poetry. This last Old Norse part of the book reiterates the wide spectrum approach: we get a comparative analysis of the many translations of *The Waking of Angantýr*, which all reflect the anxieties of its time, by Hannah Burrows; Carolyne Larrington's commentary on her now-standard translation of the *Poetic Edda*; a focus on the Victorian reception of Old Norse literature by the specialist on the topic Heather O'Donoghue. By

the time Gareth Lloyd Evans returns us to the mass culture of today with a study of the use of Old Norse poetry in the *Vikings* TV series, we are able to do that with all the knowledge and research tools accumulated throughout the work.

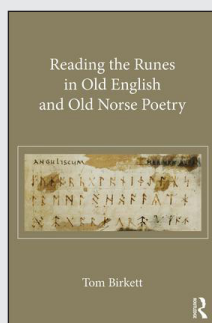
The collection is closed by the text of Bertha Roger's translation of the *Exeter Book Riddle* 15, the illustration to which, also by Rogers, decorates the cover of the book. Riddle 15 is definitely one the most beloved texts among the students of Old English that has generated many blog posts and started many coffee-break conversations, and the endearing meta-textual gesture of wrapping the book into Riddle 15 will surely be appreciated by many.

While the collection pays its tribute to the scholarly community by its content, editing and presentation, it is by no means niche and will be very useful to anyone interested in the subject matter of individual articles (e.g., Victorian literature and its treatment of the *Brynhildr* myth, Jorge Luis Borges and his brand of medievalism, medieval literature translations in the late Soviet era, etc.). High quality scholarship that has such a wide potential audience, far beyond the borders of academia, is rare, and definitely very welcome.

Lisa Matveeva
University of Nottingham

Recent Publications

Recent and upcoming titles by TOEBI members:



Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry

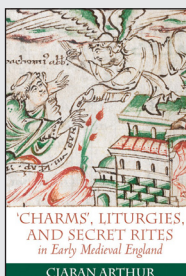
Tom Birkett, Routledge, 2017, 214 pages, hardcover £85.00 / US\$140.00
ISBN: 978-1-4724-4626-8

Old Age in Early Medieval England

Thijs Porck, Boydell Press, 2019, 288 pages, 8 bw illustrations, hardcover £60.00 / US\$99.00
ISBN: 978-1-7

Books Available for Review

The following titles have recently been published and may be of interest to TOEBI members. If you would like to review one for the next newsletter, please contact the editors and we will endeavour to obtain a review copy for you.



'Charms', Liturgies, and Secret Rites in Early Medieval England

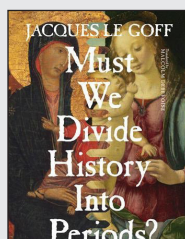
Ciaran Arthur, Boydell Press, 2018, 362 pages, 3 bw illustrations, hardcover £60.00 / US\$99.00
ISBN: 978-1-7832-7313-3

Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary: An English Translation

William of Malmesbury, ed. by Michael Winterbottom and R.M. Thomson, Boydell Press, 2017, 214 pages, hardcover £60.00 / US\$25.95
ISBN: 978-1-7832-7196-2

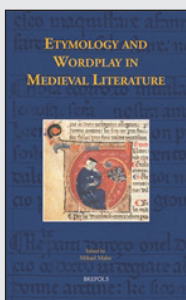
Must We Divide History into Periods?

Jacques Le Goff, trans. by Malcolm DeBevoise, Columbia University Press, 2017, 184 pages, hardcover £24.00 / US\$30.00
ISBN: 978-0-2311-7300-1



Water and the Environment in the Anglo-Saxon World

Maren Clegg Hyer and Della Hooke (eds.), Liverpool University Press, 2017, 280 pages, 40 bw illustrations, hardcover £80.00
ISBN: 978-1-7869-4028-5



Etymology and Wordplay in Medieval Literature

Mikael Males, Brepols, 2018, approx. 300 pages, hardcover €80.00
ISBN: 978-2-503-57575-9

Referential Null Subjects in Early English

Kristian A. Rusten, Oxford University Press, 2019, 288 pages, hardcover £65.00 / US\$85.00
ISBN: 978-0-1988-0823-7

Digitised Manuscripts

from the British Library

<https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/>

Special Offer

TOEBI members enjoy a special 30% discount on all Boydell & Brewer titles. Find them online at www.boydellandbrewer.com. Add your selections to the basket and enter the offer code **BB434** when prompted. P&P will apply: £3.70 UK, £12.75 Europe, £14.96 RoW, \$5.95 + \$2 each additional book in North America. Any queries, just email marketing@boydell.co.uk.

Inspection Copies

To help teachers assess the suitability of our publications for course adoption or background reading, Boydell & Brewer make paperback editions available as inspection copies. Simply email courseadoption@boydell.co.uk with details of the book and the course you teach. We'll arrange for your free inspection copy and ask you to complete a short questionnaire once you have had the chance to gauge the book's suitability.

**BOYDELL
& BREWER**

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 Oxford University on Saturday, 20 October 2018, with the theme 'Contacts'. Please contact the meeting organiser, Dr Francis Leneghan, for further information: francis.leneghan@ell.ox.ac.uk.

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 Helen Appleton: helen.appleton@ell.ox.ac.uk.

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 select academic publications. They not need be teachers to join!

TOEBI Committee

President

Prof Susan Irvine

Chair

Prof Christina Lee

Deputy Chair

Dr Philip Shaw

Committee Members

Dr Tom Birkett

Dr Chris Jones

Dr Francis Leneghan

Dr Jennifer Neville

Prof Richard North

Dr James Paz

Secretary

Dr Marilina Cesario

Awards Coordinator

Dr Helen Appleton

Webmaster

Dr Thijs Porck

Newsletter Editors

Dr Eleni Ponirakis

Dr Katrina Wilkins

PG Representative

Margaret Tedford

Woruld-Hord

Free online educational resources for the teaching and study of the Anglo-Saxons and Old English.

<http://poppy.nsms.ox.ac.uk/woruldhord/>