TOEBI *Newsletter*

2021 Volume XXXVIII

It has been another busy year since our last newsletter: many exciting changes have taken place within TOEBI, including the appointment of our new President, Professor Elaine Treharne (Stanford University). There are other changes, too: Dr Frances McCormack's term as Secretary has ended, as has Dr Helen Appleton's position as Award Coordinator, and Dr Francis Leneghan has stepped down from the Committee. In their stead we welcome Dr Neville Mogford (Secretary), Dr Daria Izdebska (Awards Coordinator), and three new committee members, Dr Hannah Bailey, Dr Lindy Brady, and Dr Megan Cavell.

Of course, this is also a year of significant loss for TOEBI and the wider Old English community as we said goodbye to Professor Don Scragg. Not only a giant in the field, Prof. Scragg convened the first TOEBI meeting in 1989 at Manchester, and over the intervening years held the positions of President and Chair. Our field, and TOEBI, owes a debt of thanks to Prof. Scragg.

While many of us have returned to the classroom this autumn, it has certainly not been 'business as usual'. We have continued to grapple with new and

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changing restrictions, with many of us still offering hybrid teaching. We would like to take this moment to thank all our contributors who have taken the time to submit their work to this year's newsletter. Given the uncertainty surrounding teaching practices during the pandemic (remote, hybrid, and in-person), we hope our readers will enjoy this year's focus on approaching the teaching of Old English both offline and online: Dr Mark Faulkner reflects upon the recent changes to the Old English course at Trinity College Dublin, and we are delighted to share with you a selection of student translations from last year's cohort. Dr Simon C. Thomson shares his experience of teaching students to transcribe, translate, and edit an Old English saint's life, and Dr. Thjis Porck introduces us to some of the memes he uses to engage students.

We are also delighted to share our members' reports on what has been going on this past year: as usual, they have been busy organising conferences and events, and we congratulate Dr Megan Cavell for winning a teaching award for the AHRC-funded website, *The Riddle Ages*. Members will also enjoy a wonderful selection of book reviews and new releases, illustrating present and forthcoming work in Old English and adjacent fields.

If you would like to contribute to next year's newsletter, please do get in touch. We are looking for reviewers (see page 58 for a list of recent publications) and feature articles on teaching practice and outreach. We also welcome proposals for articles relating to any aspect of Old English language and literature, including creative work.

<div align="right">

Rachel Burns
University of Oxford

Niamh Kehoe
Heinrich Heine Universität

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News *in Old English*

The *Riddle Ages*: a new website and a teaching award

The *Riddle Ages* team is thrilled to have been awarded the ISSEME award for best teaching aid, 2020!

Many of you will be familiar with *The Riddle Ages*, which operated as a blog from 2013-2020. It featured the steady (and sometimes not so steady!) publication of translations and commentaries about the Old English riddles of the Exeter Book. In autumn 2020, with funding from the AHRC, we relaunched *The Riddle Ages* as a professional website, and teaching and research resource: https://theriddleages.com/

The new website brings together texts, translations and commentaries of all the Exeter Book riddles and the Latin Bern and Lorsch riddles. We chose to begin with these Latin collections because fewer editions/translations of them are available, and we felt that

prioritising open-access texts, translations and commentaries would open them up for future research and study. Commentary posts include discussions of notable linguistic, textual and cultural issues, overviews of important scholarship and suggestions of further reading, all aimed at student/non-specialist audiences. These posts can be used by instructors preparing undergraduate lectures/seminars on the riddles or assigning additional reading to students, many of whom end up reading beyond the one or two riddles they are set. There are also "About" pages for each riddle collection, which provide background information on notable features, major editions / manuscripts (including links to digitisations where available), and suggestions of introductory reading, which can likewise be used by instructors in their own teaching preparation or added to student reading lists.

While the Exeter Book, Bern and Lorsch riddles are our "highlight" collections, we are also introducing texts and translations of more Latin content, without the commentaries. Boniface's riddles are now up, and more Latin riddles will join them in the future, so be sure to keep an eye on the website!

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Rethinking English Literary Culture in the Age of Alfred

At the start of 2020 plans were afoot for a major international symposium on literature in 'the Age of Alfred': that is, the period during King Alfred's reign and in its immediate wake. The aim of the symposium was to re-evaluate what we mean by 'Alfredian' literature, especially in light of the debate about the king's involvement with the translations traditionally attributed to him, which has been ongoing for well over a decade. We had put together a schedule that included speakers from all over the world, from leaders in the field to early career scholars making significant advances in reassessing the 'Alfred' question. Everything was set for June 2020.

Naturally, the symposium had to be postponed. Given the continuing uncertainty, the decision was made to turn what would have been a three-day symposium into a series of online workshops running throughout 2021. While it was obviously disappointing not to be able to meet in person with the community of Alfredians that had accumulated in the planning of the symposium, there was a real feeling of excitement at the first workshop, after what had turned into years of planning and waiting.

The workshop series was opened with a thought-provoking keynote from Professor Malcolm Godden, which invited us to consider why the English switched to prose. The keynote set the tone for the workshops which followed, all of which in some way or

another addressed the flourishing of Old English prose writing which characterised the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The workshops which followed ranged from discussions of the Mercian literature of the ninth century to continental and Latin contexts for the Alfredian translations; from fresh readings of the philosophical translations to re-evaluations of the Old English prose psalms. All the sessions have shared the same eagerness to read the literature traditionally associated with Alfred in new ways. It has been a real pleasure to be a part of this community of Alfredians at such an unsettling time, and we send our heartfelt thanks to all of our speakers and attendees for contributing.

Amy Faulkner, University College London

Francis Leneghan, University of Oxford

Repurposing Saints in Medieval English Hagiography, 26th-28th July 2021

This summer, we were delighted to finally run our online conference, "Repurposing Saints in Medieval English Hagiography", kindly hosted by Heinrich-Heine Universität, Düsseldorf. This conference emerged from three panels originally submitted in 2019 and due to be presented at Leeds IMC 2020, which aimed to bring together scholars working on hagiographic prose narratives from medieval England, in Latin and / or the vernacular. Our programme witnessed some changes over the ensuing months as we all adjusted to the impact of COVID-19. The final programme consisted of a varied and lively selection of papers on prose and verse hagiographic texts spanning the fourth to the seventeenth centuries, which

spoke to one another in thought-provoking and often unexpected ways. In an attempt to accommodate most time zones, each day consisted of a panel of three speakers followed by a roundtable discussion. The roundtables were open to all attendees, and were an opportunity to discuss any topic touched upon in the preceding papers. We found these virtual roundtables a particularly productive space for sharing our (as it became clear) various methodological approaches to saints' lives.

Over the course of three days, we heard presentations on how saints' bodies, genders, actions, identities, and burials were used – or ignored – in their narrative accounts to affect change or reinforce tradition across temporal and geographic boundaries. For example, we heard papers investigating anxiety related to gender roles in both Ælfric's and Chaucer's works; the importance of the senses in signalling spiritual authority at the expense of the saint herself in Ælfric's *Life of Saint Cecilia*; how contemporary social and political events can shape ideas about gender, as evinced with the cult of St Waltheof; how events of the seventeenth century led to at least one legendary which sought to redefine earlier conventions of female martyr lives; how humour theory can be applied to the anonymous Old English St Eustace; how, in the Old English St Christopher, the actions of the saint and the language of his text can create a community of readers / listeners in the present moment; the importance of both preaching and the idea of Rome in an oft-overlooked eleventh-century Anglo-Latin Life; Ælfric's reworking of Latin accounts of saintly burial as a way of celebrating and enforcing the idea of a communion of saints in his *Lives of Saints*; and a re-examination of hagiography as history-writing in relation to the cult of King Henry VI.

As is clear from this list, the myriad ways to approach hagiography – both in terms of methodology and how we, as modern researchers, perceive

hagiography today – strongly emerged over the course of the three days. Moreover, hearing research on texts produced, in some cases, almost one thousand years apart, by scholars from various disciplines was a potent reminder of the longevity, power, and importance of these texts throughout (and beyond) the medieval period. Tellingly, some of the most spirited discussion on the use and purpose of hagiography – and productive ways to study it today – followed a paper by one of our number on the cult of Henry VI, and the use of hagiography as history. While the study of hagiographic texts lends itself to detailed close work (and indeed, such work is necessary), a strength of the broad nature of our conference was being reminded of the generative benefits of engaging with colleagues beyond period and disciplinary-specific boundaries. We are keen to foster further networking between hagiography scholars, particularly (but not limited to) those in early stages of the career. **To this end, we are establishing an online hagiography reading group, in which scholars may network and discuss primary texts. TOEBI members who would be interested in this reading group, starting in 2022, are warmly encouraged to contact Niamh (niamh.kehoe@hhu.de) or Luisa (luisa.ostacchini@ell.ox.ac.uk).**

Niamh Kehoe, Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf

Luisa Ostacchini, University of Oxford.

Adventures in Translation

Creative translation in the undergraduate curriculum at TCD

Encouraged and to some extent necessitated by university-wide reforms, the School of English at Trinity College Dublin undertook a review of its undergraduate curriculum between 2016 and 2018, developing an entirely new set of first- and second-year courses that was taught for the first time in 2019/20. Of immediate excitement to members of TOEBI will be that my colleague Alice Jorgensen and I managed to convince our colleagues the amount of time devoted to Old English on the single-honours English degree should increase and not decrease. In the old curriculum, how to read Old English was taught on a 5 ECTS Early English Language module in the first semester of students' first year at college, before in the following term they encountered some of the most famous Old English texts on the first half of the 5 ECTS Beginnings of English Poetry course, after which it took a great leap across the centuries to the works of Chaucer. Now, they have two 5 ECTS Old English modules to enjoy in the first year of their degree, Origins of English 1 and 2, an effective increase of one third in the amount of Old English single-honours students do (joint honours students, who take 'English Literature' and not the 'English Studies' assigned to their single-honours brethren still alas do not have to read anything earlier than the Harley Lyrics).

The student work that Dr Niamh Kehoe has arranged to reproduce below was submitted as part of the second assessment for Origins of English 2. One of the benefits of having so much teaching time and credits assigned to Old English in the undergraduate single-honours curriculum is that we can set a range of assessments and try to sequence them in a way that gradually develops students' skills and allows

the intercalation of grammar work and literary and cultural discussion. For Origins of English 1, which focuses on the geographical and cultural origins of the people who in the early Middle Ages spoke English, students complete a series of five weekly online grammar tests via Blackboard around the middle of the semester, then produce a commentary on a passage from one of the texts studied that semester, working from a translation if they choose, focusing on a particular issue to do with origins – for instance, what *Deor* can tell us about the attitudes of early English people to the Germanic story world and how far they saw that as part of their cultural legacy. In Origins of English 2, the focus turns to the beginnings of (literary) writing in English. The first assessment for the module is a translation and linguistic commentary on a passage from a prose text we have covered in class, which allows the students to put to use what they have learned about the language in the eighteen preceding works of teaching: we have found the linguistic commentary a useful way of evaluating students' grasp of passages that are inevitably available to them in published translations. The second assessment allows students a choice: write a critical analysis of a passage from a published translation of *The Wanderer* or *Beowulf* or produce their own translation of their chosen passage, determining and describing their intended audience and goals and being evaluated on how far they succeed in meeting these ambitions.

I had used exercises like this earlier in my career in both Cork and Sheffield and noticed how, in forcing students to think explicitly about the interface between the themes and modes of expression of Old English texts and the kinds of stories more often found in more recent literature as well as the present-day affordances of the English language, translation often produced work that was extremely dynamic and interesting. Two of the aims for Origins of English 2 are to encourage students to consider the position of Old English literature in the canon and to help them contextualise and question some of the assumptions they might have about what it means to study English at university, and we felt that this assessment could allow

them to do this and offer the scope for some fun and a pleasurable pay-off for the grammar work they had put in over the course.

To prepare students for the task, we gave over the final five weeks of teaching to issues of translation, with a lecture on translation theory, and then two pairs of lectures on *The Wanderer* and *Beowulf*, with the first given over to the poems themselves and the second considering a range of published translations of each, including for the *Wanderer*, Greg Delanty's translation from *The Word Exchange*, Victoria Whitworth's version from *Swimming with Seals* and Bruce Gorrie's Glaswegian reimagining and for *Beowulf*, those of William Morris, Seamus Heaney and Maria Dahvana Headley, these lectures also being complemented with tutorials. We anticipated some student anxiety given the atypicity of the assessment compared to their usual diet of essays, so provided quite extensive guidance in terms of rubrics and FAQs. We would be happy to share these with anyone interested. As the examples printed below show, the students responded with some extraordinary work.

Student feedback on Origins of English 2 was in general very positive, and often expressed the confidence that the value of the hard grammatical work that had been expected in the first semester now made sense. Thus one student commented on how the opportunity to 'use the grammar learnt in the first term in a more literary context … made for a [an] enjoyable experience'. To quote another: 'I liked how it built on the grammar and language learnt in the first term. I liked how the forms of assessment changed as we got more familiar with the language and translation. There was a sense of achievement at the final assessment when we were able to create our own translation.' Interestingly, most of the suggestions for improvement students offered in their feedback actually pertained to Origins 1 and the pacing of the grammar teaching, and this is certainly something we will revisit; for Origins 2, comments centred around the balance between consideration of the technical and theoretical aspects of translation and focused literary analysis in the lectures and tutorials.

The course will therefore continue to evolve. In its first two iterations, it has been taught in decidedly unfavourable circumstances: in 2018/9, Ireland locked down and all teaching went online just as the portion of the module devoted to translation was beginning. Either Alice or I have been on leave both times the module has run, so we have not yet had the opportunity to teach it together. How far it helps us achieve the Holy Grail of better recruitment to Old English option modules in third and fourth year will only become clear in September and in the years that follow. But in terms of giving students more exposure to Old English as well as a sense of the fun and intellectual interest that come from working with it and leaving them with a positive taste of Old English in their mouths, I am convinced it is a success.

Mark Faulkner

Trinity College Dublin

Yer Wan Der*

Often a single drag queen experiences favour,

Despite "the mercy of our Lord",

He must wade through the busy, bigoted streets of Dublin,

Cocktail stirrer in hand, the ice-cold G&T

Exiled from his Catholic family. Fate won't allow us to choose who we are.

So spoke the city dweller, mind full of miseries,

Of the homophobic slurs and the friends he had lost in the 80's epidemic:

"Often until dawn, I alone

Drink away my sorrows. It seems there is now no one alive

Who'll accept me for who I am,

My heart. I know

That it is deemed an ignoble custom that a man

Should wear a brassiere with tissue filled breasts

Should openly be himself, think as he will.

Nor despite his mother's wishes, can the queer mind convert

But in 'The George' the weary mind can find help,

Therefore, those eager for the glory of the stage must often,

Cinch their waists and cake their faces to soothe their heavy hearts.

Thus, I have had to bind my hair in wigs on a Saturday night.

Often wretched and sad, separated from my Motherland."

Fionnuala Short

*Editor's note: "Yer wan der" (your woman there) is an Irish colloquial term to indicate to or refer to a particular woman; often but not always derogatory.

Cultural Translation of *The Wanderer* (lines 78–98)

The companies collapsed. The rich cried,

crestfallen. The stock market crashed

so suddenly. The Crisis took away some lives,

carried them into death: one, mortgage debts

led to his suicide. One, unemployment

left him deceased. One, depressed

trader hung himself in his own home.

Thus, the Great Recession washed over this world

until there was no revelry;

old estates of Wall Street stood empty.

By contemplating this situation wisely

and thinking through this dark life deeply

with maturity in mind, one will remember

countless calamities, then he will utter:

Where has the business gone? Where has the investor gone? Where has the loaner gone?

Where have huge houses gone? Where are the parties?

Oh, the big bills! Oh, the brave men!

Oh, the stock market! How that time departed,

decayed into the darkness of the night, as if it never existed.

Now, on the trace of lost, loved lives stands

a new building wondrously high, adorned with modern designs

Kamonnat Setpattanachai

Creative Translation of *The Wanderer* **(Lines 29b–50a)**

If you've been in the throes of it,

you know what a toxic friend depression is.

(especially if you don't have very many friends.)

You're a flâneur of Misery Ave.

"well, it's not spun gold but–"

(it freezes your soul's holding cell)

"well, it's not the majesty of the earth but–"

You think of

party-goers,

ciders in the host's fridge.

how, when you were younger,

your golden friend

would force you to go out

with her.

All that craic is gone now.

So you understand, if you've had to, for a long time,

go without those late-night chats with your best friend;

Sadness and Sleep often gang up on you.

(Both keeping a Brooding Loner in fetters.)

in your mind's eye you think you hold and kiss your

friend and lay your head and your hands in her lap as

you did before, ages ago, on her sofa–

Then you awake. Again.

(a Friendless Nobody)

You can see;

1. a heron bathing, spreading its wings,

2. idle waves

3. frost and snow falling, mixing with hail

4.

On days like that, the scars on your heart are stifling, oppressive, *heavy*.

It wouldn't be so bad if ye hadn't been so close.

Kate Olwill

Beowulf: **Lines 710-730**

(I) came   down from the moor   /   under misty slopes

                                     branded by God   Grendel

                        advanced

(I am) The VILLAIN who means to massacre   / some of man kind

                                                  In the high hall.

       Concealed under the clouds   (I clearly) knew the glimmer-hall of men

           the GRAVITY of the gin-drinking place

                                          the gold plates goading.

Nor was that the first time that he   had come to the hall of Hrothgar

                 never before,   not in his wildest dreams

                     did he imagine the fortune   or the houseboys

                                   that awaited him in the

                        hall.

(I) came then to the hall   a caricatured creature emerging

Joy BEREFT.   The bolt sprang open

Kissed by caress of hand;   metal uncoupled

He opened the mouth   wished for oblivion

Cracked it open and was claimed.   CLIFFHANGER after that

On flamboyant floor   the foreigner trod

RAGEINHEART never resisted;   his eyes glowed

like   unbeautiful light.

He saw in the hall   many warriors

An asleep band of kittenmen   congealed together

Some young warrior troop!   His heart sang.

Brídín Ní Fhearraigh-Joyce

The Wanderer (Lockdown)

Then he awakes again, this friendless man with such pain

Seeing dark waves before him, will he ever see the light again?

Watching the seabirds bathe, taking flight with wings soaring high

Falling frost, snow and hail, pouring down from the wintry sky

He sits remembering his brothers, visions racing within his mind

Smiling on happier days gone by, now he wanders, almost blind

Hoping of future times to come, when once again together they shall swim

He sits alone and wonders, are his brothers remembering him?

The seabirds bring him no comfort, nor a familiar song

He grieves for his loss of friendship and his sense of where to belong

His heart hangs heavy as he watches, the crashing of freezing waves

His loneliness surrounds him, brothers and friendships he craves

Remembering the darkness of Guinness and cooling pints of Coors

How quickly everything ceased, when the publicans closed their doors

The sadness that overcame him, reminiscing of that last call

While his brothers all raised together, as they hastily left the hall

Brave like warriors they battled, but alas some lives were lost

He knows now hasty reunions, would be a fate with an ultimate cost

Until mankind has shared winters and experienced falls and fails

Been through the wintry showers, of snow and frost and hails

They can never be truly wise, before their battles have been won

For a wise man must be patient, until they see again the rising sun.

Maria McDonnell

Editing an Old English saint's life in the undergraduate classroom

Here at Düsseldorf (and in Germany more generally), many students taking English are primarily interested in – or end up primarily studying – linguistics. Those who had taken introductory Old English courses with myself or with my historical linguist colleague Dr Greisinger were not satisfied with the knowledge of the working language, and several of them asked repeatedly for a more advanced course. Basic manuscript and language skills are now a part of our introductory module, and many of the same students had taken part in a course introducing them to Old English manuscripts. Given that, and the phenomenal digital surrogate images now available to us all, I tried to design a course that would stretch both of these skillsets, offered as "Advanced Old English: Producing an edition and translation of the Old English Life of Saint Eustace from Cotton Julius E. vii."

The structure of an undergraduate degree here is much looser than that in most British or Irish universities: more like that of a Masters programme. Students have to complete set numbers of courses at different levels (Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced), but they can pick and choose the courses that interest them. It would, in theory, be possible to complete an undergraduate degree majoring in English having taken courses almost exclusively on medieval languages and literatures – or, indeed, to look at almost none. I had intended and expected this course to be relatively small, essentially focused on those students who had agitated for its creation.
I was surprised by the popularity of the course: 45 students signed up to it from the start. That's about average for the courses I deliver here (by way of comparison, the same semester, 60 students took part in my course on postcolonial readings of

Alfredian texts and 41 in one on depression and selfhood in Old English poetry), but was more than I felt able to work with as intensively as would be necessary – to say nothing of my suspicion that many signing up would not in fact have the skills to handle the work required. To that end, I made the first session as brutal as possible, throwing students straight into transcribing, normalising, and translating the first couple of sentences of Eustace. Numbers swiftly whittled down, and by week 3 of the 15-week course, 15 students signed up to be assigned their 'own' sections to work on. Each week, I assigned a set of manuscript lines to each student for them to transcribe and attempt to normalise. I checked over their work and then they set to translating it in time for the next week's class. Once the student and I were both happy with their editing and translating, they added the section to a Google doc which gradually expanded to become a full text. In weekly classes, students shared their experiences of working on their sections, and I tried to give general feedback – noting scribal oddities that had made life difficult, or points of grammar or orthography that some students had struggled with. I also gave a brief lecture on a specific aspect of working with manuscripts, or on hagiography, or on later Old English. Towards the end of the semester, once the text and translation had been completed, different students worked on finalising different aspects of it: one worked through the translation, smoothing out the different choices made along the way; another worked through the OE text to regularise punctuation; others started to look at scribal variation and punctuation in the copying.

Courses here are assessed in two different ways. Participation is demonstrated not by compulsory attendance but by completing specific tasks or taking part in set activities, and students receive an ungraded 'BN' (Beteiligungsnachweis – 'participation certificate') for doing so. For this course, students had to contribute their sections each week, which is a heavier weight of continuous work than I would usually ask for

a BN. The second mode of assessment, the 'AP' (Abschlussprüfung – 'final exam') is graded, though students only need to take it if they want to use the course as the final part of a module (usually comprising two independent courses), and is usually either a term paper or an oral exam; in this course, students could write a term paper on any aspect of the work they had done. One, for instance, compared some sections of the OE translation with the Acta Sanctorum Eustace text; another discussed the distribution of punctuation in Julius E. vii's Eustace; another wrote a study of the hagiography itself and its presentation of authority and power.

The course took place in the first COVID-semester (6.4.20–17.7.20). That meant that all teaching went fully online from the start – so what I had envisaged as an interactive workshop became a correspondence course, with weekly video sessions and a continuous exchange of emails. One consequence of that was that it was more centralised than originally intended: each student essentially worked with me one-on-one rather than as a team together; and students were much more reluctant to talk to one another and comment on each other's work than they might have been in person. It was also significantly more work-intensive from a teaching perspective than I'd anticipated, but then that was true of all courses as I struggled to work out how to deliver them virtually. Both the virtual delivery and the challenges of the pandemic (with many students continuing their studies in challenging home environments) meant that relatively few students participated and contributed every single week – there was a core of six students, with others coming in and out as worked for them. A major challenge in teaching the course was students' variable experience of Old English. Some needed to be reminded to look at word endings to identify agreement between adjectives and nouns; others wanted to discuss finer grammatical and orthographical shifts. To some degree, the one-on-one teaching necessitated by virtual teaching made this easier: students were more prepared to admit their lack of

knowledge to me than they would have been in a class; and the more advanced students were able to ask about details that they would more often keep to themselves.

Despite the challenges, and the unending hours spent writing emails and in online conversations, the course was exciting to teach. It is a long time since I worked so closely with an Old English text unfamiliar to me, and I don't think I have ever paid such close attention to the language of an Old English prose text. Students were extremely positive about the class and the text, and very actively involved in discussion of its language and its literary ideas. For many, the reason for signing up to the course was the idea of producing something concrete, and the final text, translation, and glossary, along with a brief introduction, is available online here: https://hhumedievaltranslations.wordpress.com The same website hosts a translation from the Middle English *Sir Landevale* produced in a course last semester taught by Carina Becker, loosely based on my experience with Eustace.

As a general principle, courses are not repeated here, though there are of course often resemblances between the courses I offer from one year to the next. But the popularity of the course, ongoing student demand for a similar option, and my desire to run one in which I can talk with students face to face, means that this semester, I am running a second "Advanced Old English" course. This time, we will work with the longer text of the Legend of the Seven Sleepers, another anonymous life in Julius E. vii. In part, this serves my own research interests (into non-Ælfrician hagiography in eleventh-century England), but more pragmatically, the anonymous lives in Julius E. vii provide a neat set of texts that we can work through in successive courses while also producing a stimulating collection for future more literature-focused courses to

read and consider. Sign up has been equally strong this time around: 43 students are (currently) taking part.

Running the course again means, of course, that I can reflect on what didn't work last time. I had been significantly too ambitious about the types of information that students could gather as they went along, asking them – along with reading the manuscript and producing a decent translation of the text – to pay attention to usual and unusual letterforms used by the scribe; to punctuation; to orthography; and to syntactical structure. This was too much, and only one student focused on all of the different elements throughout. He was able to use this to identify some interesting patterns, but the datasets are hopelessly fragmented and incomplete. I had also intended to produce text and translation as a single process, and then to go back to look at the lexical choices we had collectively made in order to produce a glossary. But by the end of the course – and this is likely also a symptom of teaching and learning under Corona – we were all exhausted, and no-one had the capacity to work on the glossary. This was produced, much later, along with the introduction to the online edition, by Moritz Draschner.

This time around, then, I have narrowed the focus as we work through the text onto just straightforward language: producing a collective glossary (on a Google doc) as we work through, that will also note scribal spelling if different from the Bosworth-Toller main form. The first couple of sessions have spent more time on basic grammatical features and the processes involved in translation. I will continue to invite students to comment on scribal features they have noticed week to week, but the course will be dominated by producing text, translation, and glossary, with anything else a bonus. Late on in virtual teaching (we had three fully online semesters), I discovered the virtues of Discord for communicating with students, and I am continuing to use it for

this and other courses now we have returned to working together in person. This has already decentralised this and other courses, with students answering one another's questions and sharing resources there.

I am hopeful, then, that this course will, in different shapes and focused on different texts, become a relatively permanent staple of our offer at Düsseldorf: that many students will encounter Old English in manuscripts in their first semester; take a standard, extract-and-exercise-driven Introduction to Old English in their third semester; and move on to working with an extended prose text and the basic experience of producing an edition in their fourth or sixth semester. In its current shape, the medieval department here is quite new, and virtual teaching has delayed and complicated the development of our offer, but the study of Old English at different levels is now firmly embedded within it, and I am excited to see what our students will go on to do following the different – often faltering! – ways they have worked here.

Simon C. Thomson

Heinrich Heine Universitat Düsseldorf

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Did you know?

The TOEBI website keeps a curated collection of links to resources for teaching (and studying) Old English, including:

online courses/exercises

online dictionaries

digital editions of OE texts

digitized manuscripts

databases in OE studies

blogs

videos

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Project MEME:
Meme-ing Early Medieval English

An early medieval English teaching tip I often return to in my own didactic practice comes from Ælfric's *Colloquy*, in which students ask their teacher to speak them to them in a language they can understand: "ac sprec us æfter uran gewunon, næs swa deoplice" [but speak to us after our wont, not so profoundly]. One of the best ways to ease students into the complexities of the material that we teach is to use communicative forms that are close to what our students use themselves. Since the global pandemic forced my teaching to be moved online, I started to experiment with one of my students' most habitual forms of digital communication: memes.

Fig. 1. A meme summarizing this paper.

This short paper reports on how I have made my own memes to explain elements of Old English grammar and how I motivated students to engage with the weekly homework material by inviting them to make their own early medieval English memes.

Old English Grammar Memes

Old English grammar, with its cases, paradigms, verb forms and moods, is often considered one of the most daunting aspects of our introductory courses in Old English. Despite the availability of a variety of online grammar videos and exercises, grammar remains one of the primary stumbling blocks for many students taking a course in Old English, especially for those whose first language does not exhibit such linguistic features as grammatical case and gender. Yet, elements of Old English grammar can be made easy and comprehensible by capturing them in the format of memes. Over the last two years, I have experimented with using self-made memes to conclude more traditional explanations of grammar, to the satisfaction of my students. These memes serve a dual purpose: they are short visual summaries of the grammatical information as well as a sort of test to see if students understood the traditional explanation of the grammar, since the enjoyment of any meme relies on the understanding of the underlying reference. Some examples are provided below and a full collection of Old English grammar memes is available at www.thijsporck.com/oegrammarmemes.

These and other memes were made using the Meme Generator (https://imgflip.com/memegenerator), which helpfully provides an overview of the most popular meme templates, thus ensuring that most students will be familiar with the meme templates used.

Fig. 2. Two memes about the history of the Old English case system and its decline. On the left, the 'bike fall'-meme showing how Germanic languages 'self-sabotage' their case system with the Germanic stress rule; on the right, a simple 'Buff Doge vs. Cheems'-meme to show the difference between Old English and Middle English in terms of case.
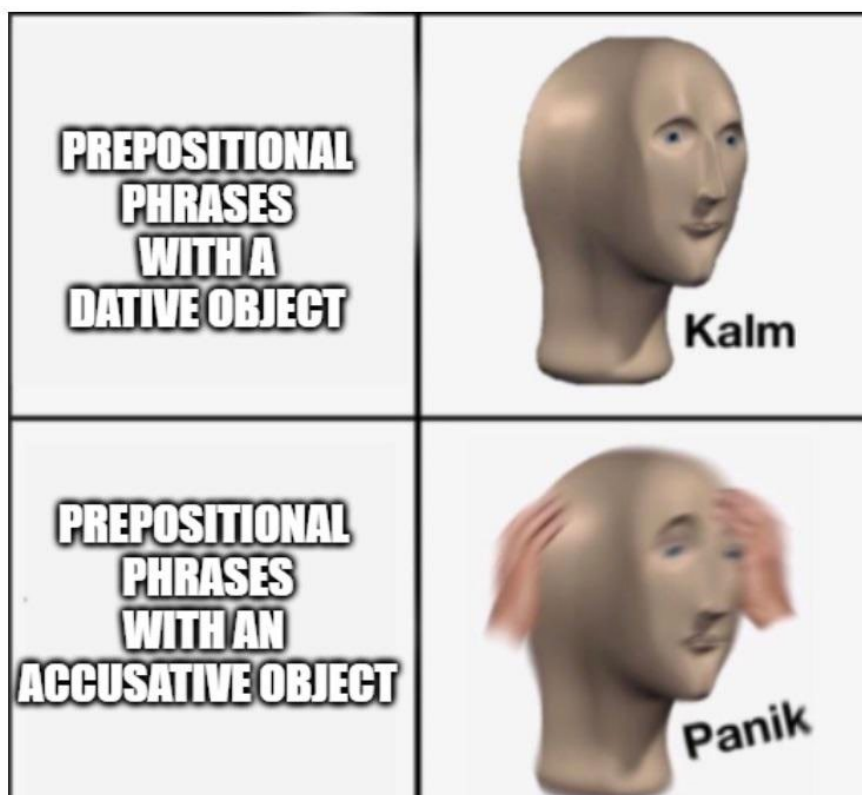

Fig. 3. A 'Kalm Panik'-meme explaining dual case prepositions, where a dative object implies 'stasis' and an accusative object implies 'movement': *in þam tūne* 'in the town'; *in þone tūn* 'into the town'
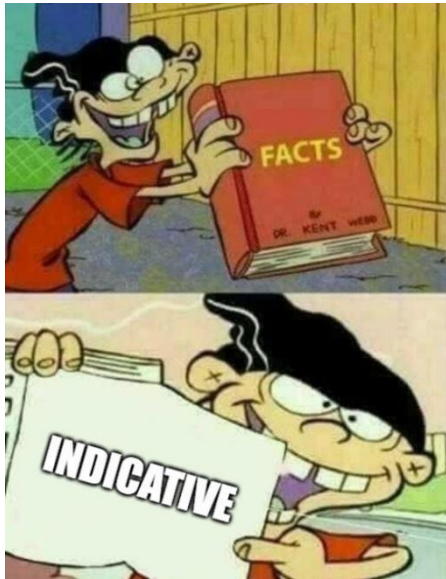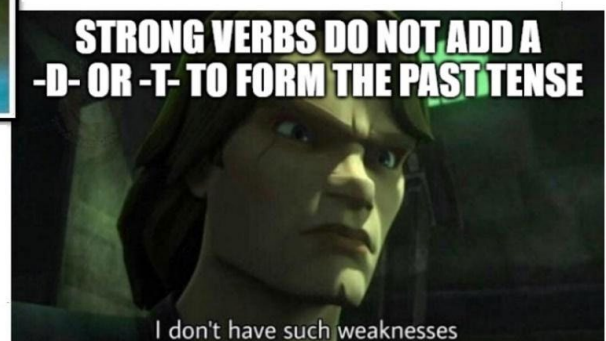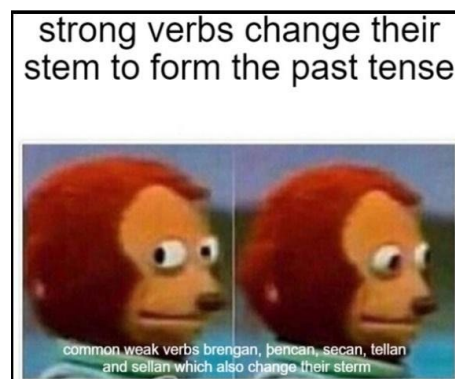Fig.
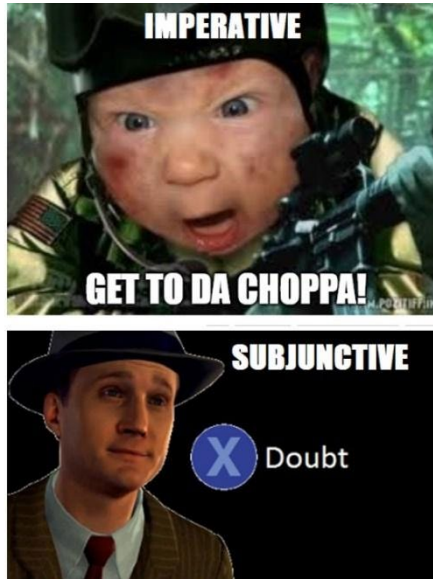
Fig. 4. Memes explaining the three verbal moods: indicative, using the 'Double D Facts Book'-meme; imperative, using the 'Get to da Choppa Baby'-meme; and subjunctive, using the 'L.A. Noire "Doubt"'-meme.

Fig. 5. Two memes on the difference between strong and weak verbs. On the left, the 'awkward look monkey puppet meme' commenting on the fact that common weak verbs *brengan*, *pencan*, *secan*, *tellan* and *sellan* change their stem in the past tense (even though this is often regarded as *the* defining feature of strong verbs); on the right, an explanation of the actual difference between strong and weak verbs: strong verbs do not add a dental suffix to mark the past tense, using the 'I Don't Have Such Weaknesses meme'.
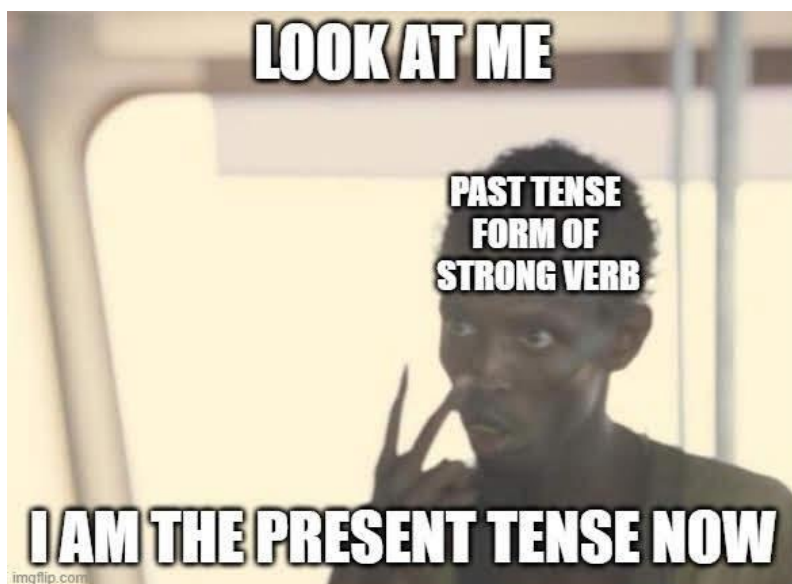
Fig. 6. An explanation of the origin of preterite-present verbs, using the 'I'm the captain now'-meme.

Fig. 7. A meme, showing footballer Giorgio Chiellini pulling back Bukayo Saka, explaining exceptions to fronting or brightening of Germanic /a/ to Old English /æ/, as reflected in, e.g., Old English *dæg* and *dagas*.

Memes Made by Students

It is a well-established pedagogical fact that students learn best by doing and, therefore, stimulating students' active and creative engagement with material is a good practice. For this reason, I invited students in a course mainly focused on Old English literature to make their own memes (or artwork) on the basis of the weekly reading material. They were asked to submit their meme along with the homework, which they had to hand in via the virtual learning environment anyway, since this was one of the ways we wanted to activate students during their online classes. As an extra incentive, I announced that I would incorporate the best memes into my lecture slides. The assignment worked like a charm! Even though it was optional, about 90% of the students submitted a weekly meme and I ended up using most of them in my lectures.
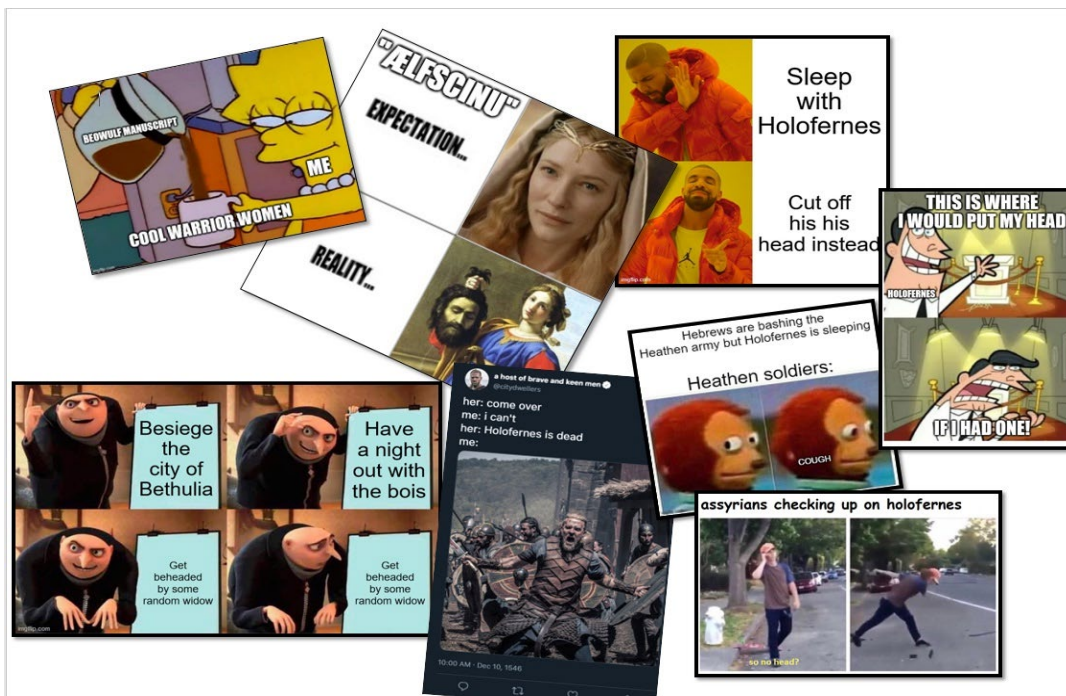
Figures 8 and 9 give an impression of the variety of memes the students submitted on the basis of their readings of the Old English *Judith* and *The Battle of Maldon*:

Fig. 9. Student-made memes inspired by *The Battle of Maldon*

The meme assignment not only provided me with visual material to enliven my lecture slides, it also pinpointed aspects of the material which, apparently, sparked an interest in the students. I would often base my discussion of the primary literature around the elements they flagged up in their memes. The meme assignment also had an interesting side-effect in that students appeared to come to class better prepared, since in order to understand the memes made by their peers, they actually had to do the homework.

Conclusion

Using memes in the Old English classroom is but one of many ways in which we can engender a more lively, open and activating atmosphere to teach the material we love. Like any didactic strategy, teaching with memes is not a one-size-fits-all method – there will always be students who are unfamiliar with the whole concept of memes and, as such, meme-based assignments may be best employed as an optional extra. When teaching Old English, one can run the risk of overwhelming one's students

with too much techno-babble or polarized discussions over controversial terms. Ælfric's advice to speak to students in ways that do not alienate them requires teachers to actively work to speak to their students "æfter [heora] gewunon", whilst being mindful of the fact that students' habits differ depending on their geographical, social and cultural contexts, and that there is no teaching method that will appeal to all students of Old English, whether globally or within a single classroom.

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Book *Reviews*

Imagining Anglo-Saxon England:
Utopia, Heterotopia, Dystopia.
Catherine E. Karkov, Woodbridge:
Boydell, 2020. 282 pp. £60. ISBN:
9781783275199.

Karkov's *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England* explores the idea of 'Anglo-Saxon England' as an imagined and, central to the book's argument, *empty* place upon which "identities and ideologies have been written" (26). These identities and ideologies are explored trans-temporally in the context of colonial violence which Karkov reads both backwards from the early medieval sources and forwards throughout a shifting world of white 'Anglo-Saxon' exceptionalism which shaped the contemporary scholarly field. The framework used for doing so takes influence from a number of approaches including spatial, postcolonial, and psychoanalytic theory.

Chapter One explores the Alfredian translation of Gregory's *Regula Patoralis* through the lenses of utopia and melancholia, how the text looks back to an imagined golden age as a basis for imagining the future. The chapter examines the text's use of shifting pronouns alongside the repetition of *Angelcynn* to establish a collective identity which blurs temporal boundaries – Karkov interprets the markers of language, land, and king (embodied in the figure of Alfred as successor to both the kings of the golden age and Gregory) as fundamental methods of establishing a collective 'English' identity in the opening of the *Preface*. Karkov then moves to discuss the verse section as mapping the geographical movement of the *Regula Pastoralis* as book from Rome to England, arguing that the book's journey and speech echoes Alfred's utopia: "the book positions itself in the same uncanny location as utopia – between past and present, there and here, somewhere and nowhere" (48). This journey narrative maps the past colonization by both Continental peoples and the Roman church, but Karkov's positioning of this analysis is, like the *Preface*, looking both backwards and forwards, seeing this as further foreshadowing "the trope of the white Anglo-Saxon saviour of a 'backwards' people" (53). Indeed this 'middle setting' is consciously done: the chapter opens with a statement of beginning in the middle (chronologically in the ninth century), while Karkov's reading of the text in terms of utopia and colonialism is

situated with a view to both the pre-ninth-century past and a post-medieval colonial future of English expansion, something which is continued throughout the book.

Chapter Two moves temporally backwards to consider the Frank's Casket as an artefact of the golden age that Alfred's *Preface* was looking back to. Karkov offers an overview of the casket's composition, imagery, and texts, before moving to discuss the casket as a heterotopia, one which embodies a multiplicity of ideas and meanings behind the formation of England. The casket's fragmentary and somewhat mysterious nature is discussed in light of the previous chapter and Karkov argues that its world is similarly an empty space "in which England creates an image of itself" (89). Karkov further interprets the casket as a crypt and cipher, encrypting a violent colonial past in both its physical whale-bone form and in the multivalent disunified narratives.

The third chapter makes a similar argument for the contents of the *Beowulf* manuscript, which Karkov argues offers an image of early medieval England as "a place divided against itself and looking to the past to retrieve a lost sense of unity" (127). Moving on from the concepts of utopia and heterotopia, this chapter is conceived through the lens of dystopia and its varying iterations in the manuscript's texts. *The Passio of St Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*, are discussed in turn as dystopias of the past encrypting cycles of violence. Karkov reads the ambivalence of these texts as revealing the divided and chaotic nature of English identity in the 11th century.

The fourth and final chapter addresses the argument that has shaped the analysis in the rest of the book: that modern colonialism, imperialism, racism in the UK and US, and the violence which they perpetrate, is born out of the "'Anglo-Saxon' past and the Anglo-Saxonism of the present" (196). This is addressed through the lens of 'retrotopia', which Karkov reads as the product of an "unacknowledged loss" for the imagined purity of an 'Anglo-Saxon' past. 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Anglo-Saxonism' inside and outside academia are discussed in light of recent acknowledgments of the racist and colonial ideologies inherent in the formation of the field. This chapter is an extensive and intersectional critique of the field at large which calls for systemic change. Karkov concludes, "the time has come to change the trajectory, to decentre the past with its exclusionary methods and paradigms,

to burn things down and start anew"
(239). The book is uncompromising in
its response to a turbulent world and
changing field and is sure to be
influential.

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Andreas: An Edition. **Richard North
and Michael D. J. Bintley. Exeter
Medieval Texts and Studies.
Liverpool University Press, 2016;
paperback edition 2019. xiv + 378
pages, £85.00 hardback / £29.95
paperback. ISBN (hardback) 978-1-
781-38271-4. ISBN (paperback) 978-
1-78962-072-6.**

This lavish edition of *Andreas*, now
available in paperback from the reliably
excellent Exeter Medieval Texts and
Studies series, is greatly to be
welcomed. The previous standalone
edition (with *The Fates of the Apostles*)
was that of Kenneth Brooks in 1961.
Much work has been done since then
and it is perhaps no wonder that North
and Bintley's edition is more than twice
as long. Rather more than a quarter of
the volume (pp. 1-115) is taken up by
the introduction, which is divided into
sections entitled 'The Poem and its
Analogues' (a plot summary and source
discussion); 'The Manuscript';

'Language and Dialect'; 'Metre and
Prosody'; 'Poetic Style'; 'Mermedonia'
(on aspects of place and landscape in
the poem); and 'Date and Authorship'.
The text follows (pp. 118–210) in split-
page format with a modern English
translation. A table (pp. 211–16) gives
the manuscript forms against Brooks's
emendations and those of Krapp for
ASPR; these can be compared with
North and Bintley's own solutions.
There is an extensive critical and textual
commentary (pp. 217–307). The
volume concludes (pp. 308–78) with
bibliography, glossary, list of proper
names, and index.

Since the edition was originally
published in hardback in 2016 and has
already been widely reviewed, and
widely praised, the present review will
focus on three respects in which North
and Bintley depart from the meat-and-
potatoes of a scholarly edition into
something a little more spicy: their
reading of *Andreas* as (in part) a parody
of *Beowulf*, their hypotheses concerning
the composition of the poem, and their
translation, which has some distinctive
features. (The section on Mermedonia
also has claims to spiciness, but I leave
it to other reviewers; enough to say I
enjoyed reading it.) Before turning to
these topics, however, let it be noted
that the editors are good cooks of meat

and potatoes. I would highlight as particularly useful the account of the physical structure of the manuscript and its incremental construction, which will be necessary reading for anyone working on the Vercelli Book.

So: the spicy parts. In the section on 'Poetic Style', the editors follow previous scholars in identifying specific borrowings from Cynewulf and from *Beowulf*, reading the relationship with *Beowulf* as often witty or indeed parodic. The poet of *Andreas* 'mocks *Beowulf* for its nostalgia for heathen values' (p. 66). I am unconvinced by some points in this section. For example, it is argued that the phrase *beaduwe heard* in *Beowulf* line 1539 is related to the name Boðvarr Bjarki in the Norse analogues (p. 64). Although this exact phrase is found in Old English poetry only here and in *Andreas* 982, the structurally similar *wiges heard* is found at *Andreas* 839, *Gifts of Men* 39, *Meters of Boethius* 26.13, *Maldon* 130, and as *ondwiges heard* in *Guthlac A* 176, while *beadu* itself is fairly common both as a simplex and in compounds. *Beaduwe heard* seems distinctive enough to support a direct link between *Beowulf* and *Andreas* but not to require invoking Boðvarr Bjarki. Again, the notorious hapax *ealuscerwen* (*Beowulf* 769) is translated 'carving of good fortune' by appeal to, on the one

hand, *alu* ('good fortune') on fourth-century bracteates and, on the other, the Norns carving fortunes on wood in *Vǫluspá* (p. 78). *Meoduscerwen* in *Andreas* 1526 is translated as 'a serving of mead' and viewed as a 'wilful misreading' of *ealuscerwen*: for the *Andreas* poet, the Beowulfian term was 'antique nonsense' (p. 79). Such a view accords with other evidence that the *Andreas* poet was prepared to repurpose the diction of *Beowulf*, but it would be simpler to assume that *ealuscerwen* and *meoduscerwen* have similar meanings. However, my quibbles chiefly relate to the question of how Norse analogues can be used to illuminate *Beowulf*. On the relationship of *Beowulf* and *Andreas*, North and Bintley add ballast to the increasingly prevalent view that *Andreas* is a witty response rather than a misjudged imitation.

The most speculative aspect of the edition, as the editors acknowledge, is their treatment of date, authorship, and transmission. The presence of both early West Saxon and Mercian forms in the poem (pp. 46-8) have implications for both date and authorship, and North and Bintley argue that the data are best explained by supposing a Mercian poet and West Saxon textual transmission. North and Bintley hypothesize that a likely candidate for

the Mercian poet is King Alfred's chaplain Æthelstan, mentioned by Asser, whom they identify with the Æthelstan who helped take Alfred's alms to Rome and to the shrines of Thomas and Bartholomew in India (ASC 883 BCDE). Borrowings from *Fates of the Apostles* into *Andreas* draw on passages concerning Thomas and Bartholomew. As North and Bintley put it, 'it seems inevitable that an 1800-line epic on St Andrew, if composed in Wessex at this time or later, was performed under the patronage of King Alfred or Edward his son' (p. 106). A church of St Andrew in Winchester is more likely to have been endowed by Alfred than by Edward (pp. 107–9) and the treatment of treasure in the poem can be compared to Alfred's in the Preface to the Old English *Pastoral Care* and as portrayed by Asser (pp. 109–114). This leads to the proposed date of c. 888–893 for the poem, associating it closely with the early stages of Alfred's translation programme and with Asser's composition of the *Life of King Alfred*. Furthermore, the editors also propose that the copy of the poem in the Vercelli Book derives from one made at Wilton by St Edith and sent by her to St Dunstan. The connection with Edith (pp. 21–26) rests on the partially erased word *eadgiþ* at the foot of folio 41, on its proximity to

instances of accented *gód*, which North and Bintley link to Edith's nickname *Bona* ('good'), and, delightfully, on the drawing of a lion (or possibly a dog) on folio 49 verso: Goscelin tells us that Edith kept a small zoo! Of these indications, the word *eadgiþ* is very much the most convincing, as it could indeed be the trace of a colophon.

None of these suggestive connections amount to anything like proof; and this reviewer must confess to a reflexive scepticism towards any claim to have identified the author of an anonymous Old English poem. However, there is a value to the effort North and Bintley expend on making their case. First, given that the broad parameters for situating *Andreas* are persuasive (probably late ninth century or early tenth century, at some kind of interface of Mercian and West Saxon intellectual activity), an Alfredian context does indeed seem fairly probable. Moreover, the number of people with the skills to handle the source material was surely not large in this period. Possibly the poet was indeed one of those whose names we happen to know. Second, over and above the merits of *this* specific identification, it is valuable to think of *Andreas* as a product of *some* specific context, and surely a context very like the one outlined. It helps

bring the poem itself alive to see it as the product of a local relationship of poet and patron, perhaps composed for a feast day, offering a quirky and individual combination of Latin learning and clued-in repurposing of heroic poetry: what might the audience have thought of it? If *Andreas* was composed at much the same time as the Old English *Pastoral Care*, it represents a very different approach to reworking Christian Latin in the vernacular. Nicholas Howe in his 1997 afterword to *The Dating of Beowulf* (ed. Chase) cautions against supposing that dating a work will reveal its meaning, since no time has been culturally homogenous. Placing *Andreas* at a specific time, however, serves to vivify a sense of the variety of a single cultural moment.

The sense that *Andreas* is a characterful poem is evinced not just by North and Bintley's authorship hypothesis, and of course their reading of its relationship to *Beowulf*, but by the tone of the edition. The opening plot summary (p. 1–4) is distinctly humorous; and the line-by-line translation, though in some respects extremely literal, is at the same time often colourful in its word-choices. I will conclude this review by examining one passage, lines 1215–21a. The passage is the conclusion of the

Lord's speech warning Andrew of his approaching tortures, plus some of the following narrative.

Ne magon hīe ond ne mōton ofer mīne ēst
þīnne līchoman lehtrum scyldige
dēaðe gedǣlan, ðēah ðū drype þolige,
mirce mānslaga; ic þē mid wunige.'

Æfter þām wordum cōm werod unmǣte,
lyswe lārsmiðas mid lindgecrode,
bolgenmōde

Neither can, nor against My consent may, they deal to your body, guilty with sin as they are, its death-blow, though you suffer beating, mean murky blows; I remain with you.'

After those words came a host without measure, lying professors with an armoured platoon, swollen with fury

Because the line-divisions of the Old English are preserved as far as possible, the translation is occasionally awkward (as in the first line of the passage quoted), but students wanting to refer between text and translation will find the direct relationship helpful. The directness extends to a fondness for etymological translation, as in 'mean murky blows'. Such an approach can of course be perilous. Here, the choice of 'murky' for *mirce* is entirely defensible: OE *mirce* (adj.) does mean 'dark' as well as 'evil', and indeed 'dark' is the primary meaning. On the other hand, 'mean' for the *mān* element of *mānslaga*, from sound-echo rather than

etymology, seems trivialising, though it does preserve alliteration, thus reaching towards the poetic texture of the passage. Most spectacular in this regard is 'lying professors with an armoured platoon'. This is a riot of anachronistic associations, and yet, as the commentary explains, *lārsmiðas* and *lyswe* are very rare words and the compound *lindgecrode* is unique: the line deserves such an arresting translation. If using this edition with students, which should now be possible thanks to the (comparatively) affordable price of the paperback, I would want to make translation decisions of this kind a topic for discussion; but I would also be grateful to the translators for bringing out the fun in the poem.

In sum, the paperback edition of North and Bintley's *Andreas* is a welcome resource for scholars that could start some lively classroom conversations. Anyone who thinks of the scholarly edition as a worthy but dull endeavour should think again.

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Anglo-Saxon Micro-Texts. **Ursula Lenker and Lucia Kornexl (eds.). De Gruyter, Berlin 2019. viii + 377 pp. + 28 black-and-white illustrations + 27, colour illustrations. Hardcover, £91. ISBN: 9783110629439.**

Anglo-Saxon Micro-Texts is a collection of sixteen articles based on presentations given at the 'Anglo-Saxon Micro-Texts' symposium held at the University of Munich on 3–4 November 2017 in celebration of Helmut Gneuss' 90th birthday. The volume's overarching subject is the study of micro-texts, a term which was introduced by the volume to describe 'very short pieces of writing typically constituting independent, self-contained texts' (blurb), with 'a length of up to 50 words' (p.2). Inspired by modern micro-texts such as tweets, text-messaging and micro-blogging and their impact on communication, the editors ask, what is the role of micro-texts in early medieval England? The aim of the volume is to highlight the diverse types of texts in early medieval England, to demonstrate the individual involvement of the producers of the text, and to show how modern research can expand the understanding of literacy in this period.

The volume has a wide range of contributions, both general introductions to topics as well as more detailed case studies of a particular micro-text, but the number of articles in the volume prevents detailed discussions on all individual articles in this review. The introduction considers the individual articles and draws out major themes and concepts, discussing textuality, text types, genres, materials, and intertextuality. In particular, the brief discussion on textuality and challenging the principles of 'cohesion', 'coherence' and 'informativeness' that are included in a definition of a typical text highlights how micro-texts balance deficits in one principle by promoting another principle, especially in the case of single-word texts or texts obscured from view, such as those discussed in Part I.

Individual chapters in 'Part I: Micro-Texts beyond Manuscripts' discuss numismatic texts (Naismith), runic inscriptions on lead sheets (Hines), and embroidered texts on the reverse sides of a stole (Owen-Crocker). Naismith's article is a general introduction to epigraphy on numismatic material whilst also providing an original discussion on how epigraphy was influenced by regional language variation, whilst Owen-Crocker

provides a case study of the embroidered texts on the robes inside St Cuthbert's coffin. Hines' article straddles both general introduction and case study, with a focus on runic lead plaques, though there is a disconnect between the general introduction of the early runic material, and the case study of the later-dated runic plaques. 'Part II: Scribal Engagement in Manuscripts', features colophons (Gameson), cryptograms (Scragg), and marginal commentary (Hill). Whilst Scragg's article is a general introduction to cryptograms before 1100, Gameson discusses the Codex Amiatinus and the degree of autonomy that was allowed for the scribes when producing manuscripts, highlighting the common themes of the colophons. Hill's discussion of the sometimes 'intensely personal' nature of marginal objections to Ælfric of Eynsham's *swig-dagas* emphasises the personal involvement of the scribe in the production of a micro-text. In 'Part III: From Scribbles, Glosses and Mark-Ups to Texts', essays discuss pen trials (Irvine), glosses (Nievergelt, Lendinara), encyclopaedic notes (Dekker), micro-texts of the Tremulous Hand of Worcester (Johnson), autographs (Rudolf), and prayers (Sauer). Nievergelt and Dekker provide overviews of their topics whilst the other articles are in-depth studies.

Nievergelt's overview highlights that there is a large number of dry-point glosses that need deciphering and editing, and thus is a promising new research area for those interested in micro-texts, and Rudolf breaks new ground by describing, editing and translating texts previously considered illegible attributed to Wulfstan of York. Finally, 'Part IV: Old English and Anglo-Latin Poetry', is focused, self-evidently, on short poems in both Old English and Latin (Stanley, Bammesberger, Lapidge and Gneuss). A highlight is Stanley's article, where he refutes his own argument from 45 years ago concerning the *Saxonicum Verbum*. Whilst the more conventional philological and codicological approaches are present such as Bammesberger, Lapidge and Gneuss, Stanley, Irvine, and Sauer, the volume shines in its wide range of different approaches and methodologies to studying micro-texts. The introduction highlights the usefulness in what could be considered a 'pragmatically-informed' approach, that is, an approach to studying micro-texts keeping in mind ideas often present in pragmatics, for example the consideration of conscious communicative decisions being made by the creators of the text that are informed by shared knowledge, though

in varying degrees, of literacy. Articles by Naismith, Gameson and Nievergelt specifically keep this approach in mind. Furthermore, Johnson's article on the Tremulous Hand of Worcester and MS Hatton 115 is particularly innovative in its approach to studying punctuation interventions using innovative technology. Johnson uses a digital tool called The Tremulator, created by Johnson and his son and collaborator Ian, which is used to identify, collect and then visualise the punctuation interventions that are undergoing analysis; Johnson then detects meaningful patterns in the data, concluding that the Tremulous Hand of Worcester was collecting texts for vernacular preaching.

The articles are diverse enough to engage readers from different sub-disciplines in early medieval studies whilst still providing a cohesive introduction to the topic. Alongside the variety of micro-texts under discussion and the methodologies used to study them, the volume's attention to detail concerning formatting and the layout of images that accompany the articles should be commended. Too often are images not included in articles, and in these instances the articles were supported greatly by images both in black and white and in colour. The

volume is also a refreshing move away from 'big data' or corpora studies, which have become increasingly popular, and further highlights how micro-texts are often new finds (such as in Hines and Rudolf), demonstrating how the study of micro-texts does not have a static corpus to work with but is instead constantly being updated. When working with micro-texts, every new find, however small, has huge value! Overall, *Anglo-Saxon Micro-Texts* provides a diverse and engaging introduction that will hopefully inspire a new generation of researchers to work with these often-neglected texts.

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Old English Lexicology and Lexicography: Essays in Honor of Antonette diPaolo Healey. **Maren Clegg Hyer, Haruko Momma and Samantha Zacher (eds). Cambridge: D. S Brewer, 2020, xv + 292 pages, 4 bw illustrations. Hardcover £60. ISBN 978-1-84384-561-4.**

This book is a tribute to Toni Healey and particularly her work on the Dictionary of Old English and Corpus. In the scholarly world of today in which technology is reshaping and making available resources unimaginable even thirty years ago, not every reader may be immediately aware of the importance of this body of work. I see it as the single most significant development in Old English studies of the past century, certainly of my lifetime, even in its as-yet-incomplete form. Toni Healey's vision and energy and hard lexicographical work established the project and set the standard for its coverage – ably assisted by other scholars, past and present, but Professor Healey's has been the guiding hand for longest. So it is fitting that the present volume deals with issues of lexicology, along with lexicography and related issues of interpretation. It also has a section on the *Visio Pauli*, her first major publication in 1978, and a section of warm personal tributes to her as teacher, colleague and scholar.

There are six sections, broadly relating to Old English poetry, homilies, Anglo-Saxon institutions, the 'lexis of the quotidian', issues of lexicography, and tributes. There is in the introduction a description of some of the advances made in lexicography by the Dictionary (very modest in its claims), and a measured and thoughtful description of the contents of each essay in the book, followed by the essays, and ending with a brief index and *tabula gratulatoria*. The

sheer range of the essays made it difficult, I think, to find categories in which to put them, and it is fair to say that the sections are not at all uniform even within the rather general themes. The 'lexis of the quotidian' section, for example, has three essays: a detailed examination of the word *gyrdels* and its associations by Maren Clegg Hyer; an analysis of time and how it was conceived and reckoned in early England by Roy Liuzza; and a search for the distinctive voice of the teacher in texts from Anglo-Saxon England by Damian Fleming. The thread of the quotidian runs through each, but there is very little more to connect the essays and make them cohere as a section. The essays themselves are, as is true of the others in the book, both stimulating and enlightening.

Much more coherent are sections I (Old English poetry), III (Anglo-Saxon institutions), and V (the task of the lexicographer). The essays in the last of these raise particular issues for the Dictionary of Old English. How or where do cryptographic words (mostly in glosses and names) fit in a dictionary? And when we have ostensibly clear categories (verse, prose, glosses), where does late Old English non-classical verse or rhythmical prose fit? Don Scragg's corpus of

cryptographical words is useful in itself. Jane Toswell's essay takes in much more than the issue of metre, though it has interesting points to make there. Names, by-names, and place-names are not included in the Dictionary for good reasons, but this policy leaves awkward gaps in the coverage, as Toswell shows. Section III on Anglo-Saxon institutions covers topics including 'self-construction' in Cnutian documents, biblical interpretation and application in Ælfric's Maccabees, and attitudes to female religious in early Old English. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe's essay uses the idea of 'ego-document', 'the textual "I" as a made object' (p. 131), to discuss the politics of Cnut's reign and his consolidation of power through self-presentation in laws and charters. Samantha Zacher shows how Ælfric uses the idea of just war to apply the story of the Maccabees to Anglo-Saxon England under viking attack, to justify armed defence of the land. Christine Rauer studies the lexis relating to Old English female religious before considering the references in the Old English version of Gregory's *Dialogues*. She concludes that religious women are predominantly portrayed in a negative light in Old English sources. Robert Getz and Christopher Jones tackle cruces in respectively *Juliana* and the *Soul and Body* poems. Getz gives a very

detailed linguistic account of the possible interpretations of *Juliana* 53a, while Jones makes a solid case for the idea that Old English poets and others thought that Christ might demand repayment for his wounds at the Last Judgement, understanding this through the idea of compensation for injury in the law codes.

In section II, the Old English homiletic tradition, there are two essays which broadly focus on the *Visio Pauli*. Stephen Pelle finds distinctive parallels between the Middle English version of the text in Lambeth Palace MS 487 and one in Einsiedeln MS 27 despite their disparity in age and area of provenance. Haruko Momma examines how the *Visio Pauli* text fits into the Soul and Body homily in Bodley Junius MS 85 and 86, before providing a translation of the text edited by Healey. In the first essay in the section, Joyce Hill asks some important questions about sources: which are ultimate and which are proximate? She shows that Ælfric's library might not have been so extensive as has been thought if the sources he used were homiliaries or florilegia rather than the original texts excerpted or quoted by the intermediaries. There is more work to be done in this area. Paul Szarmach's essay traces the variations in the

traditions of the eight cardinal sins, showing how the list used in later works for general instruction betrays its monastic origins in Cassian.

The final section, 'Word-Hoard', is mostly tributes to Toni Healey, but starts with what is presented as something of a *jeu d'esprit* by Roberta Frank, namely a dialogue between the *Beowulf* poet and Isidore, and continues with consideration of some words unique to *Beowulf* in verse but also recorded in prose. There is some very interesting reflection in this piece: it is composed more of discussion-starters than closely-argued conclusions, but it is a delightful way to round up the more analytical substance of the volume.

There is something for everyone here, and much to enjoy. The standard of editing is very good: typos cluster in the middle pages (p. 96 fn. 7 *Sammuluung* for *Sammlung*; p. 112 *cenoxdoxia* for *cenodoxia*; p. 125 'High Middles Ages'; p. 130 fn. 3 'Alexander K. Rumble' for Alexander R. Rumble; p. 137 *friðice* for *friðlice*; p. 147, fnn. 11, 13 'Ethics of War' for 'Ethic of War'), but they are few. Insightful essays cover an enormous raft of topics, some in great depth, others in more general terms. Probably Toni Healey is one of the few

people with the scholarly range to appreciate and assimilate them all. In this, and in the quality of the work and warmth of the accolades, the book is a fitting tribute to a scholar who has changed the landscape of Old English studies to the benefit of us all.

Paul Cavill, University of Nottingham

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Writing History in the Community of St Cuthbert c. 700-1130: from Bede to Symeon of Durham.
Charles C. Rozier. Writing History in the Middle Ages 7. York: York Medieval Press, 2020. xii + 241 pp. Hardcover £60.00 (ISBN 9781903153949). Ebook £19.99 (ISBN 9781787448674).

Charles Rozier's book offers a history of Cuthbert's community through the texts that it produced to create, record and manipulate its own narrative. Rozier is interested in the conditions which provided the impetus for history writing within St Cuthbert's community from the earliest years of his cult to the death of Symeon of Durham in the mid-twelfth century, and how this milieu is reflected in the texts. Cuthbert's community has a distinctive history of peregrination, moving from

Lindisfarne to Chester-Le-Street and then finally to Durham, which obviously created particular pressures on community unity and continuity. Rozier argues that historical writing was the community's 'single most valuable tool' (p. 2) in fashioning their identity. It would be hard to disagree with this thesis, especially given the volume and variety of materials that address the past produced by Cuthbert's community in this period.

Rozier's introduction provides an overview of historical writing and perceptions of history, as the diversity of modes of historical writing employed in Cuthbert's community is his focus. The chapters move forward chronologically and follow a consistent structure. Each opens with a summary of the period and its intellectual context, then Rozier turns to a description and analysis of the texts produced within it, synthesising previous critical work and often productively considering manuscript context. As such, the book as a whole serves as a history and historiography of Cuthbert's community. The volume includes a bibliography, index of manuscripts and index, as well as several black and white illustrations of manuscript pages. There is a helpful map of the region provided before the

introduction, and the appendix of historical writing within the community, *c.* 700-1130, affords a useful overview of texts, manuscripts and editions.

A brief first chapter on the origins of historical writing in Cuthbert's community, up to *c.* 750, deals with the anonymous *Vita*, Bede's prose *Vita* and his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. There are some references to Bede's metrical *Vita*, but it does not factor greatly in discussion: Michael Lapidge's new edition will have appeared too late for the author to have consulted it. Rozier persuasively argues for the centrality of Cuthbert's cult to the community's identity and also suggests that the authority of Bede's work explains the lack of narrative history produced by the community in the later eighth and the ninth centuries. In relation to this latter argument, some brief consideration of Aedilwulf's *De Abbatibus*, produced in a satellite of Lindisfarne, would have been welcome.

The second chapter examines the community during its time at Chester-Le-Street, commencing with details of its response to the Viking raid of 793 and later-ninth-century wanderings. Rozier examines the importance of landholding to the community, and,

following William Aird, sees peregrination as a means to display Cuthbert's presence to the region. The importance of Aldred's work as a translator is discussed and Æthelstan's donation, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183, is argued to highlight the community's place within the broader structures of England through the lists sandwiched between the prose and verse *Vitae*. Rozier then moves to a consideration of the date, structure and focus of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* (*HSC*), a quirky mix of property records and narrative. Rozier argues for a mid-tenth-century date for the original core of the work, composed as a response to West Saxon royal visits to grant authority to the community's claims, with later addenda. The chapter ends with a discussion of *The Durham Ritual* as evidence for the value placed by the community on knowledge of the past, and as an important record of the cultural environment of Chester-Le-Street in the tenth century. Rozier's key point is that the community's decision to move changes their relationship with the past: engagement with relics and objects – the material remnants of the past – and re-enactment become important as counters to geographical dislocation.

The final four chapters deal with the community in its final home in Durham. Chapter 3 looks at the establishment of the new cult centre, from the foundation of the community in Durham to the arrival of Benedictine monks in the 1080s. It commences with an analysis of the community's motives for moving to Durham and the community's history before the arrival of the Benedictines in 1083 – a politically fraught period. Rozier examines the parts of the *HSC* he argued to be later additions in the previous chapter; the final section narrating King Guthred's repulsion of a Scottish incursion is seen as a latter addendum which shows a shift in the perception of the *HSC* from something akin to a cartulary to a record of Cuthbert's miracles. A discussion of the Old English poem *Durham* follows; Rozier's reading of the text as encapsulating the importance of historical tradition to community identity is persuasive, but ought to have referenced recent work on the poem. The chapter concludes with an engaging consideration of the *Cronica monasterii Dunelmensis*, a lost text reconstructed by Herbert Craster in 1925. Rozier discusses correspondences between the *Cronica* and the *HSC* that indicate a textual relationship, and the *Cronica* is read as the expression of a

desire for an updated account of the community's history in this period, possibly spurred by the visit of King William in 1072.

The fourth and fifth chapters deal with Durham's Benedictines, who replaced the married priests whose families had served Cuthbert for generations, representing Cuthbert's community's past and future. The post-reform era saw an enormous expansion of the library, including the acquisition of a great deal of historical writing, reflecting a significant shift in intellectual culture and the rise of Durham as an elite centre. The principal focus of Chapter 4 is Symeon, whose *Libellus de exordio* is a key source for the community's history. As Rozier states, it constructs a careful image of the past to bolster the legitimacy of the Benedictine present and makes a coherent case for reform. Chapter 5 covers a similar period, but the emphasis here is on shorter texts which use the past to address present challenges, often of a more worldly nature. Rozier examines *De iniusta vexacione Willemi episcopi primi*, *De obsessione Dunelmi*, tracts on the bishops of York and Durham's claims to Carlisle, as well as collections of Cuthbert's miracles, which make connections to Lindisfarne and a

Chester-Le-Street whilst emphasising Durham's pre-eminence. Rozier ends with a brief, but important observation that the recopying of these materials throughout the medieval period demonstrates their continued importance for the community despite significant temporal remove from the particular political circumstances that generated them.

The final chapter tackles history and chronology on a grander scale through computus, chronicles and annals produced, or begun, in Durham during the earlier twelfth century. Rozier persuasively argues that we see the Durham community engaging with and intervening in contemporary discussions on the nature of time. Rozier highlights the production of two contemporary computus manuscripts reflecting different perspectives, demonstrating the community's active participation in debate, and the acquisition of two continental chronicles, which then attracted a marginal annotator with an interest in time. Rozier then moves to examine the differing methods of recording time employed in *De primo Saxonum adventu* and Symeon's world chronicle. The chapter ends by considering what is revealed about Cuthbert's community's interest in time by the group of

historical and chronological texts (now generally called *Historia de regibus*) assembled in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 139 for a grand project that was unfinished or lost. Historical texts produced in this period are seen as being shaped by computistics and vice versa. The book's conclusion summarises the chapters and argues for plurality of approaches to writing history in the period. Rozier envisages the centuries this volume covers, bookended by Bede and Symeon, as foundational for history writing in Cuthbert's community. Rozier ends by highlighting the continued tradition of writing history within the Durham community throughout the medieval period, and scholars examining those later texts will find this volume to be a valuable foundation for their own work. Although the community of Cuthbert is unique both in the amount of material associated with it, and its distinctive history of change and movement whilst consistently centring around its saint, there are insights here which can and should be considered as more broadly relevant to understanding the impulses driving historical writing in early medieval England.

Helen Appleton, University of Oxford

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Slow Scholarship: Medieval Research and the Neoliberal University. **Catherine E. Karkov. DS Brewer, 2019. xii + 168 pages, £30. ISBN: 9781843845386.**

This review of *Slow Scholarship: Medieval Research and the Neoliberal University* is itself somewhat slow. The essays collected here originated as papers given at Leeds International Medieval Congress in 2014, and publication was 2019 (two years ago, for anyone else battling pandemic-induced disorientation). Bringing together voices from across literary studies, history, art history, and digital humanities, *Slow Scholarship* is a dynamic, frank, contribution to ongoing conversations in medieval studies and higher education. These conversations have only become more urgent as the effects of the pandemic exacerbate the money-first, quantitative-target-driven mindsets of Vice Chancellors.

The collection is organised into four sections. 'Slow Collaboration' includes Catherine E. Karkov's introduction which chews over the contemporary political and institutional contexts of being a medievalist, demonstrating how such reflection on the forces that structure our scholarship is intrinsic to scholarship itself. Lara Eggleton's 'Research as Folly, or, How to Productively 'Ruin' Your Research' playfully and candidly explains how she makes her research happen without solid institutional backing, and describes the difficulty of turning an innovatively interdisciplinary PhD (on the long medieval-modern life of the Alhambra) into a job. Section two, 'Slow Words', reads as a glimpse into the work-in-progress notebooks of James Paz and Chris Jones. Both demonstrate how personal and environmental states (the time of the day, matters of grief and belief) and academic challenges (doggedly grappling with language, grammar, metre) continually re-shape the editor-translator's thought patterns and ways of thinking with and about a poem. Paz's essay works towards a new rendering of *The Order of the World* (Exeter Book, fol. 92v-94r), while Jones offers a re-lineation and translation of *The Grave* (MS Bodley 343, fol. 170r). The facing-page layout coupled with the rich discussion make these accessible and provocative teaching texts.

The third section 'Slow Looking' might very well have be named 'Slow

Experiencing'. In 'Rethinking Slow Looking: Encounters with Clonmacnoise' Heather Pulliam's close reading is cinematic in its movement: she circles the Cross of the Scriptures alone and with family, in different weathers, craning her neck to look up close and watching from a distance to see how the Cross's design is completed by groups of pilgrims. In 'Thinking about Stone: An Elemental Encounter with the Ruthwell Cross', Karkov reflects on 30 years of getting to know the monument. She discusses its long social and cultural life alongside a meticulous reading of the significance of the archer and bow in early medieval visual and literary culture. Part four, 'Slow Manuscripts' opens with Karen Louise Jolly's 'Letter by Letter: Manuscript Transcription and Historical Imagination'. Spending time with Aldred's glosses in Durham A.IV.19, Jolly reveals idiosyncratic use of Old English *lufu* to gloss Latin *fides* and *credere,* enabling speculation on understandings and practices of faith in Aldred's community, and fuelling her novel. Andrew Prescott's 'Slow Digitisation and the Battle of the Books' reads as a case study for best practice in digitisation. Prescott's starting point is a lecture given in 1990 by Robin Alston, and he unspools the ways in which Alston's predictions for

'the war between information and knowledge' (p. 144) have played out. His discussion of the *Beowulf* manuscript's digital lives demonstrates the importance of institutions spending the extra time and money on digitising in multiple ways, in consultation with a variety of user groups.

Disciplinarity

Karkov, Pulliam, and Eggleton's discussions of how medieval things accumulate or shed meaning over time, and Paz, Jones, Prescott, and Jolly's appraisals of how our ways of accessing the past shape their meaning, and the multi-sensory experiences documented in every chapter, serve as reminders that there is no medieval without medievalism. They demonstrate how we need the replica and the original to really apprehend the thing (and Sally Foster and Siân Jones's excellent work on this is referred to by Pulliam). For these reasons I would have liked to have seen more references to work being done in medievalism, medieval spaces/ place study, and public history studies on thinking with things across time and space, emotions, and experience. I think here especially of work by Clare A. Lees and Gillian Overing, Sarah Salih, and Salih and Julian Weiss, and Howard Williams and Pauline Clarke.

Slow Scholarship further prompts reflection on how medieval scholars use (or don't use) the languages of fine arts, theory, and creative writing, and the disciplinary boundaries that still exist within our inherently interdisciplinary field. Paz sets out what is clearly, yet not named, a manifesto for his approach to translation (p. 36). He describes experiencing a collapse between the 'process' and the 'product' (p. 38): surely this is a reflection on *practice*, combining doing and being. Jolly proposes that what is 'unknowable to the historian but can be imagined by the novelist' (p. 137), yet I wondered whether the inferences made about Aldred's world from his glosses, and the creative development of these inferences, seemed to me a sound literary-historical method. Jones's description and practice of what he calls 'personalism' – translating a poem with and through lived experience – put me in mind of feminist, creative-critical, and fine art approaches to the medieval. Identifying such ways of reading, translating, and doing scholarship as 'personalism' invites reflection upon the role of the communal and the individual. Gillian Overing, Clare Lees, Marijane Osborn, James Earl, Nicholas Howe, Donna Beth Ellard, and many others have critically developed these ways of thinking in early medieval studies, with collaboration and community-building intrinsic to their scholarship. I also think here of Vahni Capildeo ('Four Departures from "Wulf and Eadwacer"', 2011), Caroline Bergvall (*Drift* project, 2012-2015), and Miller Oberman (*The Unstill Ones*, 2017), to name just some of the poets who show us how to read Old English with our bodies combined with sustained intellectual exploration. (And doesn't Old English invite us to read in this way, with the mind/body physical/emotional slippages signified by *mōd* or *breōst*?). In his own proposal for resisting the classroom-as-market model, performance scholar Theron Schmidt has asked 'What if we think of the classroom as a work of art?'. A question that *Slow Scholarship* raises in return is: what if we think of medievalists as artists? There is exciting work to be done – building on work by those scholars named above – to situate medievalists within wider networks of thinking across creative-critical humanities.

The digital
Multiple 'places' are of concern in the volume, from geographical locations and institutions to the conceptual role of scholarship in the world. (To think about time is also to think about space).

The digital emerges as a particularly fraught locale. Karkov's introduction describes a dystopian view of 'the virtual at its worst' as 'a place of isolation, anonymity, surveillance and violence. It can also leave us feeling exhausted' (p. 4). *Slow Scholarship* reads differently now that the pandemic has impacted – perhaps forever – teacher, student, and researcher relationships with the digital. Online working can indeed lead to burn out and deepen existing inequalities. Yet technologies can make the medieval more accessible. Even as Jolly notes the role of nostalgia in, for instance, beliefs that hand-writing notes produces better scholarship (p. 130), the few digital-pedagogy citations in the book are neither comprehensive or critical. This seems a missed opportunity as each chapter celebrates the benefits of the 'intentional' (Jolly, p. 125) use of digital tools in research, from social media through to digital editions, facsimiles, and databases, and work from Vincent Gillespe and Anne Hudson's important collection is referenced. Since the *Slow Scholarship* papers were given at Leeds, a rich body of work by medievalists has emerged addressing critical digital pedagogies and research. For instance, Rick Godden and Jonathan Hsy discuss the phenomenon of scholars fetishizing handwriting without reflecting on accessibility, while Dorothy Kim has written and spoken on feminist approaches to digital archives, social media as a place of surveillance but also of community-building for marginalised research and teaching communities, and mitigating tech inequalities in online teaching. Digital approaches have been a mainstay of TOEBI conferences, and in every edition of the TOEBI newsletter available online from 1999-2020 at least one digital tool or teaching project has been showcased. To mention just two, Thijs Porck and Jodie Mann's 'Blanded leornung: Digital Approaches to Teaching Old English' seems to particularly speak to the intentional use of blending digital and traditional pedagogies (TOEBI vol. 34, 2017). The survey responses in TOEBI vol. 37, 2020 also demonstrate the health and variety of digital tools for Old English. *Slow Scholarship* then is a prompt for future work to be done on continually critically evaluating the digital tools that we use.

Solidarity

Slow Scholarship further reminds us that the neoliberalisation of the university means that 'surveillance and violence' are not exclusive to the virtual realm. Karkov's question, 'can radical

scholarship be maintained in any meaningful way' in institutions that 'cooperate in the deportation of immigrant staff [and] the surveillance of overseas students', is worth staying with (p. 8). Students – especially, due to the PREVENT mandate, black, Asian, and Muslim students – are regularly treated as suspects in UK universities. In 2019 King's College London shared the names of students who had not broken any laws with the police 'in breach of the university's own data protection guidelines and legislation'. Most of these students were active in campus campaigns, including Justice for Cleaners and galvanising support for staff strikes. I raise these examples because although *Slow Scholarship* urges colleagues to collectively act against neoliberal creep, the call could have been made more powerfully with explicit mention of work being done by unions, and staff and student-led campaigns. An existing review of *Slow Scholarship* critiques its 'ideological aggressiveness', however I was left somewhat unsatisfied. Useful texts to think with, I believe missing from footnotes (and here I must mention frustration at the lack of a bibliography) would be Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (2013), and *Decolonising the University*, edited by

Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial and Kerem Nişancıoğlu (2018). Further critical 'aggressiveness' would also have been welcome in the book's discussion of precarity. The ways in which precarity shapes research is most explicitly discussed in Eggleton's contribution (the only author 'of the precariat'). Her contribution should trigger reflection on the costs of 'freedom' (p. 10) from institutional life – aside from being shut out of pensions, sick pay arrangements, and employee support – and the knowledge that is lost as scholars are pushed out of or jump away from academia. Remarkable, too, is the reliance on volunteers in the work Eggleton describes: indicative of shared challenges across the cultural sector. The difficulty of talking about precarity is signalled with brackets in Karkov's account of the pressure on staff to ensure that 'enough PhD students [are] trained (but for what jobs?)' (p. 6). Jolly also notes how the 'adjunctification' of HE (p. 126) impacts everyone. Re-reading Karkov's remark that the precariat are 'generally younger' scholars (p. 9) was particularly sobering as Twitter was ablaze in summer 2021 with news of senior medieval literature staff redundancies at Leicester, threats to Archaeology at Chester, Sheffield, and Worcester, and cuts to

palaeography courses elsewhere due to small student numbers. Reading *Slow Scholarship* in 2021 makes clear a need for a collective, cross-disciplinary response to defend medieval studies. Karkov introduces the volume as a collection of 'very personal responses' (p. 9), and this is both a strength and a source of difficulty as essays push against structural problems and reveal the limits of personal success. Here, then, is where more critical scholarship is needed: thinking through the challenges facing medievalists, and what can be done, collectively, to address them. I have been recently buoyed up by grassroots organising: Eleni Ponriakis and Victoria Walker have started to create a space for early career medievalists to support each other through precarity. Promising, too, is TOEBI's recent survey reaching out to PGRs and ECRs to identify needs, organised by the Postgraduate Rep Abigail Williams. Collections such as *Slow Scholarship* raise questions of how we build scholarly networks of solidarity in early medieval studies and across hierarchies.

Hope for the future

Slow Scholarship demonstrates how medievalists are especially equipped to resist neoliberalisation. Jones writes how 'anachronism is part of our method' (p. 63), while Jolly, Pulliam, Prescott and Karkov show how medievalists have long combined slow and fast scholarship, leaving us well-placed to critique accounts of progress and binary options presented by managers, and to articulate the constructedness of modernity and the past. Paz discusses the critical importance of being able to confront and stay with uncertainty: *The Order of the World* 'has a sense of unknowing built into it' (p. 43), and so his aim is not to arrive at a place of total surety. Echoing Jones' *Strange Likeness* (2006), Paz discusses how medievalist ways of thinking enable us to sit with the strange: we deal with words and objects whose meanings are not self-evident – and this is a reminder that the modern world must be just as carefully parsed. Prescott's discussion of the multiple digitised versions of the *Beowulf* manuscript demonstrates how a proliferation of photographic techniques only better reveals the instabilities of the text, opening ever more avenues for enquiry. In a 'Disinventing Old English' workshop in May 2021, Emma Hitchcock, Mary Kate Hurley, and Elaine Treharne facilitated discussion exactly on the topic of unknowing, asking participants to engage with early medieval objects without Googling, to re-learn how to

question, and to plan research without enacting it, slowing our approach down. I was also put in mind of Clare Lees explaining to collaborators on the Colm Cille's Spiral project 'We know nothing – right? Nothing' about some histories. *Slow Scholarship* reveals uncertainty as a position of strength and creative-critical potential. *Slow Scholarship* rearticulates how the arts and humanities offer expansive 'way[s] of understanding' the world, 'hope', 'pleasure', 'escape', 'joy', a form of 'resistance' to every-day ways of thinking and being, and are a home for 'academic freedom' (p. 9). Karkov's list of delights put me in mind of bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* (1994). For hooks, 'education was the practice of freedom', with pleasure and joy inextricably linked to education's radical and transformative power, even as she warns of the white-supremacist education institution's potential to reinforce hegemonic authority. With hooks in mind, Karkov's discussion of how neoliberalisation 'threatens the quality, integrity and innovative nature of the research we do' is therefore even more troubling. Studies show how scholarship that upholds the 'status quo' is faster to produce, either because the writer need not think so hard, or reviewers are quicker to approve it (p. 6).

Although several contributions to *Slow Scholarship* lament that the work they are doing for the volume is not valued by the neoliberal university, they also offer options for what medievalists who do hold institutional power might do to reward risk-taking, radical work in peer review, funding, digitisation strategies, hiring decisions, and in the classroom. Jolly describes the 'braided essay' assignments she sets (p. 140), which sound akin to the essays collected in *Slow Scholarship* in their blend of creativity, reflection, and analysis. I would welcome more scholarship that adopts Jones' approach of sharing editorial feedback and thoughts-in-progress that make scholarship more transparent. More recently, Erik Wade's work has demonstrated the importance of such transparency: describing how one of the journal's anonymous peer reviewers bemoaned "'politicized nonsense'" and described several articles, including [Wade's], as "divisive, offensive," and in need of deletion'. Scholarship might be *made* slower by being continually rejected in a field that is slow to change. As Donna Beth Ellard and Karkov have both so evocatively put it, early medieval studies is haunted by ways of thinking and doing that keep the discipline from exploring and expanding.

Pulliam articulates her frustration at a myth of the Middle Ages as a 'sterilised', pious, sombre time, when she understands it as a time of colour and riotous pageantry (p. 85). The offerings in *Slow Scholarship* ask us to confront another medievalist fantasy: that of the lone scholar sequestered in a tower. The collection demands reflection on how medieval studies has itself contributed to the restrictive ways in which the 'quality' or 'value' of research and teaching is measured: how many students are assessed with blended learning or 'braided' portfolios? How many times does a scholar face rejection from conferences or journals in which feminist, critical race, and queer scholarship remains under-represented before their work is lost? 'Slow' emerges here not as a category of time, but one of careful method, looking and relooking, critical and innovative use of digital and physical research methods, following intuition as much as honing precise language and palaeography skills, and staying with – and insisting on the importance of retaining – capacious and generative difficulty.

Fran Allfrey, Independent scholar

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Recent *Publications*

The following titles, which may be of interest to TOEBI members, have recently been published. If you are interested in reviewing any of these titles, please get in touch with the editors

Medieval Texts in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. Emily Kesling. Boydell & Brewer, 2020 248 pages. Hardcover, £60, ISBN: 9781843845492.

Ælfrician Homilies and Varia: Editions, Translations and Commentary. 2 Vols. Aaron J. Kleist and Robert K. Upchurch (Eds). Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 1074 pages [1 b/w illustration]. Hardcover, £125.00, ISBN: 9781843845447. Available to pre-order

Textual Identity in Early Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe. Rebecca Stephenson, Jacqueline Fay and Renée R. Trilling (Eds). Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 335 pages [20 b/w illustrations]. Hardcover, £70.00, ISBN: 9781843846246.

Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts: The Phenomenal Book. Elaine Treharne. Oxford University Press, 2021. 272 Pages, 29 Illustrations. Hardcover, $40, ISBN: 9780192843814.

A Conspectus of Scribal Hands Writing English, 700-1100. Don Scragg. Boydell & Brewer, 2021. 126 pages. Hardcover, £80.00, ISBN: 9781843846178.

Rebel Angels: Space and Sovereignty in Anglo-Saxon England. Jill Fitzgerald. Manchester University Press, 2021 (1st pub. 2019). 336 pages. Paperback, £25.00, ISBN: 9781526155924.

Riddles at work in the early medieval tradition: Words, ideas, interactions. Megan Cavell and Jennifer Neville (Eds). Manchester University Press, 2020. 344 pages. Hardcover, £80.00, ISBN: 9781526133717.

TOEBI *Information*

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TOEBI welcomes new members. You do not have to be currently employed in teaching Old English to become a member. If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact Dr Neville Mogford (nmogford@hotmail.com) or consult the website, www.toebi.org.uk/joinus.

Meeting

The next TOEBI meeting will take place in 2022 at the University of Aberdeen.

Conference Awards

TOEBI regularly awards bursaries to help postgraduate students attend conferences. Applications are welcome from both current postgraduates and those who have recently completed doctorates but do not yet have an

TOEBI *Committee*

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Dr Megan Cavell

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Dr Neville Mogford

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Webmaster
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Dr Niamh Kehoe

ECR Representative
Dr Francisco Rozano-Garcia

Thanks go to outgoing committee members Prof Susan Irvine (President), Dr Frances McCormack (Secretary), Dr Helen Appleton (Awards), and Dr Francis Leneghan (Committee).

academic post. The application form can be downloaded from the website (www.toebi.org.uk/grants-for-graduates) and should be submitted to Dr Daria Izdebska (izdebsd@hope.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 need not be teachers to join!

Contact the editors

To contact the editors about a review, a submission, or anything else, please write to the following addresses: rachel.burns@ell.ox.ac.uk and niamh.kehoe@hhu.de