



TOEBI Newsletter

TEACHERS OF OLD ENGLISH IN BRITAIN AND
IRELAND
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TOEBI

Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland

Annual Conference 2004

Why are we here?

Saturday 30 October 2004

The Conference Suite, The Manchester Museum, University of
Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester

PROGRAMME

- 9.30 Committee meeting
10.00 Registration
Coffee/tea and biscuits
10.30-12.00 Morning session introduced and chaired by Professor D. G. Scragg, University of Manchester, President of TOEBI
10.40-11.00 Professor Elaine Treharne, University of Leicester
Strength in numbers: Old English in Higher Education
11.00-11.20 Dr Mary Swan, University of Leeds
Old English and interdisciplinarity
11.20-11.40 Dr Anke Bernau, University of Manchester
Teaching medieval and popular culture
11.40-12.00 Questions to the morning speakers
12.00 Lunch in The Discovery Room, Ground Floor, Museum
1.00-3.00 Afternoon session chaired by Dr Gale Owen-Crocker, University of Manchester
1.10-1.30 Dr Alexander Rumble, University of Manchester
The Anglo-Saxonist and the Manuscript
1.30-1.50 Dr Jayne Carroll, University of Sheffield
Teaching Old English in a Department of English Language and Linguistics
1.50-2.10 Dr Christina Lee, University of Nottingham
Even cowherds get the blues: teaching Old English in an interdisciplinary context
2.10-2.30 Questions to the afternoon speakers
2.30-3.00 General discussion on *Why are we here?*: all speakers and the audience 3.00
Coffee/tea and biscuits
3.30-4.30 General meeting of TOEBI

The Manchester Museum is on Oxford Road, 9 on the Campus Map. The nearest University pay-parking is Booth Street West (Campus North West) Car Park, dark blue on the Campus Map. The nearest station is Oxford Road, which is one stop from Piccadilly Station. Hulme Hall is 17 on the Accommodation Map. My mobile phone number is 07771848850, Gale Owen-Crocker

TOEBI Conference 2004

As detailed overleaf, the TOEBI conference will be held this year on Saturday 30 October at the Manchester Museum (University of Manchester), Oxford Road, Manchester from 10am to 5pm. The conference theme is 'Why are we here?' The cost for the day, including coffee, lunch and tea, is £27 (£17 unwaged); the cost including coffee and tea but excluding lunch is £20 (£10 unwaged). Refreshments will be provided by Kro Catering, who run the popular Kro Bars as well as the museum's Café Muse. Vegetarian options will be available.

Members attending the conference will be able to view at leisure the recently painted casts of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, which are truly stunning, as well as other exhibits in this award-winning museum, including the famous Manchester Mummies.

If you have not already registered your interest in attending it is not too late to do so! Please contact the organiser, Dr Gale R. Owen-Crocker (groc@man.ac.uk) or the secretary Dr Elisabeth Okasha (e.okasha@ucc.ie).

TOEBI AGM 2004

The AGM will be held immediately after the close of business at the conference.

More About Manchester

The University of Manchester was re-born on 1 Oct 2004, in a union of The Victoria University of Manchester and UMIST. The old Departments, Schools and Faculties were swept away! Old English will be taught in the subject area of English Studies, in the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, where we are committed to interdisciplinary opportunities for students; and in the subject area of Linguistics, in the School of Modern Languages and Linguistics.

In my own subject area of English, Old English will not be compulsory, but all students will be introduced to it in a general 'Medieval' course in first year and will have the opportunity to do a specific Introduction to Old English in second year as well as courses on Beowulf, Old English Texts and Contexts, Anglo-Saxon material culture, Reading Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and Medieval Woman at levels 2 and 3.

We have a thriving postgraduate community and offer a core course at MA level 'Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval Culture and Context' together with specialisms on palaeography and 'Images of Man, Plant and Beast'. From next year we intend to re-introduce our 'Beginning Old English' course at MA level which has successfully brought in quite a lot of students who did not do OE at undergraduate level, including overseas graduates, several of whom have continued or are continuing with the subject at PhD level. Recent successful PhDs include theses on Anglo-Saxon landscape representations of Heaven, Hell and Paradise; St Thecla; and Anglo-Saxon food and drink and its symbolic replacement. At present, under the aegis of English Studies, we have PhD students working on *The Exeter Book*, Anglo-Saxon prognostics, Anglo-Saxon glass, Anglo-Saxon manuscript illumination, *The Wonders of the East* and on Anglo-Saxon palaeography. There is also opportunity to work on specifically linguistic topics in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Linguistics and historical ones under the 'History' subject area.

We are the home of MANCASS, the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, which hosts the prestigious Toller Lecture, a programme of visiting speakers and frequent conferences, the proceedings of which are always published, most recently in our new series with Boydell and Brewer (Vols 1 and 2 published, vol. 3 forthcoming 2005, vol. 4 in preparation). Our Easter Conference this year is on King Edgar (30 March-1 April 2005, contact don.scragg@man.ac.uk) and the Toller Lecture will be given by Elaine Treharne (Monday 7 March). To join the MANCASS mailing list or for further information on the TOEBI conference contact Gale Owen-Crocker groc@manchester.ac.uk
☎ office 0161-275-3174; home 01625-878914

Special Offer from Boydell and Brewer

Enclosed with this edition of the *Newsletter* is a leaflet from Boydell and Brewer offering a 25% discount on eight titles which are likely to be of interest to TOEBI members. Please note that this offer expires on 31 December 2004.

Report on TOEBI Conference Awards (2004)

On 25 May 2004, TOEBI distributed the following advertisement electronically:

TOEBI has set aside funding to help postgraduate students working on Old English topics to attend conferences.

To apply for a TOEBI Conference Award, please send an email message (no attachments, please) to Dr Jennifer Neville, indicating the conference that you wish to attend, its relevance to your research, and the amount of money that you require.

Only costs related to attending conferences are eligible for support. We anticipate giving three bursaries of up to £200, but, depending upon the number and nature of applications, we may award a larger number of smaller awards. Bursaries will be paid on submission of receipts for the amounts claimed.

The closing date for applications is 30 June 2004. Applications will be assessed by TOEBI's executive committee. Notification of awards will be made by 7 July 2004.

We received four strong applications: from Pirkko Koppinen (Royal Holloway, London), to attend and present at the Leeds Conference (2004); from Melanie Heyworth (Royal Holloway, London and University of Sydney, Australia) to attend Germania Latina VI in Groningen, NL (2004); from Juliet Hewish (University College Dublin) to attend and present at the Leeds Conference (2004); and from Victoria Bristow (Nottingham), to attend and present at ISAS in Munich, Germany (2005). All four applicants were PhD students working on Old English literature.

Based on the advertisement and a long discussion, the Committee determined that the criteria by which we would judge applications were: the relevance of the conference to TOEBI and the relevance of the conference to the student's research. These criteria could be interpreted flexibly (e.g. relevance to TOEBI could include experience of teaching Old English), but we determined to apply them as simply as possible. Membership in TOEBI was not required.

Although we felt that all four applicants were worthy, we awarded three

awards: £120 to Pirkko Koppinen, £120 to Melanie Heyworth, and £120 to Juliet Hewish. We thanked Victoria Bristow for her application and asked her to apply again in the year of the conference that she wished to attend (i.e. for 2005).

Issues that have been identified for discussion centre upon the wording of the advertisement and the criteria for awards. We need to decide whether in future, like this year, we specify 'Old English' - and thus exclude potential applicants working on Anglo-Latin, for example - and whether presenting a paper at the conference is a requirement. Many members of the committee felt that actually presenting a paper was a priority, although in this case, as we had not specified it, we did not require it. The amount of information provided by the applicants varied considerably; we may wish to provide more details of the information we require, and it has been suggested that an electronic form might be useful (although technologically beyond my skills to provide). The advertisement should, of course, be released much earlier - as soon as possible following the TOEBI AGM, probably.

Jennifer Neville
Royal Holloway University, London

The Great Tolkien Debate Continued

Regular readers of the TOEBI *Newsletter* will recall that the debate over the place of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien in the teaching of Old English was started a year ago by Stuart Lee ('Talking Tolkien', *TOEBI Newsletter* XVII, pp. 2-3) and continued by John Hines ('Courting Popularity', *TOEBI Newsletter* XVIII, pp. 2-4, with a response by Stuart Lee printed in the same issue, pp. 4-6). Here are some further thoughts on the matter from Chris Jones, whose book on Old English in twentieth-century poetry (*Strange Likeness: the use of Old English in twentieth-century poetry*), will be published by Oxford UP next year.

A remark made by John Hines in the last issue of the newsletter has tempted me into a postscript to 'the great Tolkien debate'. 'It is a curious inversion of the *FONTES* approach to Old English texts', writes Hines 'to see the latter as a mine of literary motifs and concepts themselves.' I fail to see either the curiosity or the inversion. Such research is motivated by the same set of concerns as any area of source studies, whether it's the *FONTES* project,

investigation into the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and classical and Biblical texts, or the study of Eliot's allusions to, say, Jacobean tragedy. In all cases the concern is to establish some kind of understanding of the literary culture from which a text emerges; to situate a text more precisely in its inter-textual network and understand how and why the text enters into dialogue with the other works of literature that it does. Isn't this one of the most conventional of scholarly pursuits? If we can accept the value of exploring the use made of source materials by Anglo-Saxon writers, what is the problem with exploring the use made of source materials by twentieth-century writers, when some of those sources happen to be the same inter-textual Anglo-Saxons?

John Hines immediately identifies one of the potential problems: 'source-hunting can be a sterile exercise'. But his own piece eloquently continues to construct a powerful and nuanced argument about Tolkien and his medieval sources, an argument that effectively allays his own concern; evidently source-hunting can be a fruitful exercise too. It was therefore a pleasure to read, in the same issue of the Newsletter, that Rachel Becker has recently received funding from the Lynne Grundy Trust towards her research into Auden's use of Anglo-Saxon.

Underlying the slight tension in the Lee-Hines exchange seems to be the issue of what 'we' are meant to be teaching and for what reasons. Are we teaching Old English for its own sake? Because it's an exciting subject in its own right? Or are we teaching Old English because more modern writers have found it interesting and that must confer some value on it (at least in the eyes of the students, if not ourselves)? It seems to me that Old English and modern medievalizing literature are two separate fields of study, each with its own intellectual challenges and rewards. Perhaps I am lucky - in our department (which admittedly operates a four year course), students have had compulsory medieval courses for two years before they are able to opt into a 'Medievalism' course I run (in which Tolkien features only briefly and towards the end of the module). But at most institutions it ought to be possible to design a syllabus in which the pursuit of medievalist literature does not have to mean the abandonment of medieval literature (or vice versa). Most of my 'Medievalism' students also pursue other medieval courses offered by the department, to (we hope) their general benefit.

In terms of getting students interested in the first place - we all know how curious

and fascinating Old English literature is. Is it not a teaching truism that any enthusiastic and committed teacher (as Stuart Lee certainly seems to be from the account of his introductory session) will find ways of transmitting that sense of fascination to the students? Some of us may choose to co-opt Tolkien in order to achieve this, others won't. There are plenty of routes to the same goal. Once the imagination of the student has caught fire (regardless of how that happens), they'll begin to learn for themselves and then we are (as all good teachers eventually become) irrelevant in any case. One final personal confession: I too felt that feeling of pride at the *ubi sunt* passage in *Lord of the Rings*, but I felt slightly ashamed of myself at the same time! It was rather like the feeling that overcomes me when 'Flower of Scotland' is played before a rugby international; something you know is wrong gets the better of you despite yourself!

Chris Jones
University of St. Andrews

New Student Mentor Scheme for the Old English Language Course at University College Cork

In the 2003/4 academic year, as part of our second year module in Old English Language, we ran a pilot student-mentor programme, designed to ameliorate the stresses that the translation and grammar work can cause the students. No other course in UCC's English department demands such an intensive or technical study of language and, while good students can score very highly indeed in this exercise, many do find it difficult. It was felt that the experience of past students ('survivors') of the module could provide very helpful support and practical advice to the current class. This initiative was in part inspired by the example of such a scheme for students of Old English at the University of Manchester and also by the successful contributions made by student-mentors in courses run by the Medical Faculty at UCC. At the end of the 2002-3 course we collected names of students who might be interested in participating in the pilot scheme as mentors for the 2003-4 class. Twelve students expressed an interest and of those ten actually became mentors when we contacted them the following September.

When the scheme was introduced, it was made clear to both the mentors and the students that the mentors should not be expected to act either as counsellors or as

substitute language tutors. However, in future years we will place less stress on the latter point. Feedback from students indicated that many felt put off from making use of the mentors' service as they would not be able to ask them about the Old English grammar and in actuality the mentors had plenty of useful, practical help to offer. For the 2004 session we plan simply to emphasise that the mentors should not feel pressured to give instruction in areas where they are at all uncertain.

When arranging contact between students and mentors we decided to offer both a face-to-face setting and an online forum. Mentors were asked to take part in three meetings and to check the forum site at least once a week. The setting for the actual meetings was an informal one, using the social area near the English Department rather than a seminar room, with the mentors wearing a coloured badge to identify themselves. Students could then come and go at any time during the session hour. As expected, attendance was minimal until the first assessment became due. After that milestone, steadily more and more students made use of the meetings (roughly a quarter of the class used the service at some point). Timetable pressures made it almost impossible to find a time-slot where all students would be free, so the online forum was originally conceived of as our back-up for students unable to meet the mentors in person. A rough schedule was set up to ensure that the forum was checked by somebody (mentor and/or staff) each day. In the event, the online forum saw as much, if not more, activity as the face-to-face meetings. This was encouraging as it was also the first year we had incorporated an online site into the course.

It was not possible for us to offer our mentors any stipend for their work but they were presented with certificates thanking them for their efforts and we had a small ceremony to present these at the end of term. The mentors all expressed very positive feelings about the experience and were keen to see the scheme continue. After the presentation we had a general feedback session discussing how the mentoring might be improved for future years. Volunteers have been recruited for the 2004/5 academic year, though sadly not as many as last year, and we will see if the ideas contributed by last year's mentors improve the scheme and increase the number of students making use of it.

Samantha Mullaney
University College Cork

Old English at the University of Nottingham

The School of English Studies at the University of Nottingham has a strong commitment to the teaching of Old English. All of our Single Honours undergraduates (and Joint Honours with Archaeology) have to take the Medieval Studies I module in their first year, which introduces them to the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Medieval Studies I is also open to other Joint Honours students and is chosen by many of them. All students have to take modules from the medieval strand throughout their degree, these include the 'Literature of the Anglo-Saxons' and 'English Place Names' which both require proficiency in Old English. A sizeable number of students each year (22 for the session 2004/05) choose to study Old Norse either in conjunction with Old English or as part of their medieval options. The following members of staff are involved in the teaching of the subject in the School: Dr Richard Marsden, Dr Paul Cavill, Professor Judith Jesch, Dr David Parsons, Professor Thorlac Turville-Petre and Dr Christina Lee. All medievalists are members of the Institute of Medieval Studies at Nottingham and work closely with colleagues in other departments researching the Anglo-Saxon period, such as Dr Julia Barrow (History) and Dr Christopher Loveluck (Archaeology).

We also offer a popular MA in Viking and Anglo-Saxon Studies: Language, Texts and History. This unique programme introduces students to a variety of approaches to the early medieval period in England and Scandinavia, with particular emphasis on languages, scripts and texts.

The course offers students the basic linguistic, textual and analytical skills for early medieval studies within a broader comparative and thematic context. The course is made up of four different types of modules, totalling 180 credits. Students will have to take compulsory core modules in research methodology and research management. Other core modules have to be taken from either Old English or Old Norse language and literature modules. Choice options include modules on early medieval literacy, the conversion to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia, Viking-Age Scotland or the study of place names. All students will have to complete a dissertation module and write on an appropriate research topic.

Students are encouraged to participate in the thriving research community in

medieval studies at Nottingham, such as the seminar organised by the Institute for Medieval Studies, Norse and Viking Seminars (NoViS) and postgraduate research seminars. They will also have the chance to take part in a funded Socrates Intensive Course programme, which is organised for students from nine European universities. Additionally there are opportunities for study abroad at one of our partner institutions in Scandinavia.

We are currently looking to increase the number of Old English options and will offer a range of different MA courses in the next few years. For more information please access our website:

www.nottingham.ac.uk/english

or contact the Convenor of the MA, Dr Christina Lee: christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk

The School has currently seven PhD students in medieval studies, including two who are working on Old English topics. In the past ten years successful PhDs on Old English topics include those by Tania Styles (now with the OED), Paul Cavill (now Research Officer for the English Place-Name Society) and Jayne Carroll (now at the University of Sheffield and on the TOEBI committee!).

And finally, the journal *Nottingham Medieval Studies* publishes articles on all aspects of medieval studies, including Old English language and literature, and Anglo-Saxon studies more generally. For more information please consult our website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/history/research/medieval/journals.phtml>

or contact the general editor Professor Michael Jones: michael.jones@nottingham.ac.uk.

Christina Lee
University of Nottingham

Changing Faces

Congratulations to Vincent Gillespie on his appointment to the Tolkien chair at the University of Oxford. The promotion also involves a move from St. Anne's College to Lady Margaret Hall.

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has been appointed to the chair at York but will not take this up until 2005. For 2004-2005 the chair will be filled for one year by Professor Linne Mooney (Orono, Maine).

Jayne Carroll is moving in February from a lectureship in Sheffield (where she has been

for three and a half years) to another permanent position at Leicester. Happily for the future of Old English her post at Sheffield will be filled, and this will be advertised shortly; TOEBI members please bring this to the attention of any likely applicants! Jayne is currently on AHRB-funded research leave, finishing a book *Anglo-Saxon Mint-Names*, which is co-authored with David Parsons (University of Nottingham). She is also working on the poetry of Þórðr Kolbeinsson and Markús Skeggjason for the Skaldic Editing Project based at the University of Sydney.

After three years as a temporary lecturer in Old English and Viking Studies Christina Lee has been appointed to a permanent post at the University of Nottingham.

Several new appointments have been made this year in Old and Middle English studies in Ireland. Frances McCormack has been appointed to a permanent lectureship in the Department of English at NUI Galway. She was previously the holder of a Faculty of Arts Fellowship at University College Dublin. Christine Thijs was appointed to a permanent lectureship in Old and Middle English at University College Dublin, and Niamh Pattwell has taken up a three year post in the same department, replacing Mary Clayton who is on leave. Niamh has previously taught at UCC, UCD, TCD, and Queen's University Belfast.

Alice Cowen has moved from York to St. Andrews. She has been appointed as a Teaching Fellow in the School of English on a 9 months contract to replace Rhiannon Purdie who has Leverhulme-funded research leave. Alice teaches widely in Old and Middle English, but her own research area is Old English Literature (with a dash of Latin and Old Norse thrown in!). She hopes to turn her PhD thesis, 'Writing Fire and the Sword: The Perception and Representation of Violence in Viking Age England', into a monograph. She is editing a volume of essays on the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, following the conference on this topic which she organised at York earlier this year.

Please send information about recent appointments or retirements in your department to the Editor. And encourage your new colleagues to become members of TOEBI! Application forms can be downloaded from the TOEBI website.

Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust Awards

(registered charity no. 1072150)

Lynne Grundy was a brilliant, dynamic and innovative researcher and lecturer at the University of London from 1988 to 1997, and an inspiring teacher. She died from cancer in 1997 when she was forty. The Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust was established with help from her students, colleagues, friends and family, to commemorate her life and work, and to continue her passionate involvement in her specialist disciplines.

The Trust gives several grants every year (up to £500 each) to scholars and students in the disciplines of Old English/ Anglo-Saxon or Humanities Computing (who do not already have a permanent full-time academic post or adequate funding) to contribute towards knowledge in these fields, and to improve the situation for people who may be caught in part-time posts or with uncompleted or unrecognised work. The Trust aims to support scholars in realising projects which benefit the academic discipline and the individual.

The Trust has made grants helping people get books published, give papers at conferences, stage theatre productions, finish theses, make an academic contribution, make a difference to their careers. Every application is treated as confidential, but award winners can get good publicity for their projects in our widely-circulated newsletter. The application deadline is Easter and awards are made in May or June.

To apply for funding for a project in the disciplines covered, please write to the trust at this address:

LYNNE GRUNDY MEMORIAL TRUST
2A East Mount Street,
London E1 1BA
tel. (0207) 377 2171
email lynnegrundytrust@talk21.com

Please include a CV and academic references with the details of the proposal.

The Trust welcomes donations by cheque.

Trustees: Martin Grundy, Peter Mathews, Nick Gallagher, Frances Bingham & Liz Mathews

Online Resources

The Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: A Register of Written Sources Used by Anglo-Saxon Authors is now available in a stand-alone version for use on PCs. The stand-alone version offers substantial advances on the current Web version (<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>). nb the programme is not designed to run on Apple Macs.

The package is available in three ways: as a download from the Website on CD-Rom; by e-mailing name and address to fontes@english.ox.ac.uk or mailing the same on a sticky label to Rohini Jayatilaka, Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project, English Faculty, University of Oxford, St. Cross Building, Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UQ (while disks and postage funds last); or on demand from the Oxford Text Archive as a download or as a CD-Rom (Oxford University Computing Services, 13 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6NN; <http://ota.ahds.ac.uk>)

Exam Howlers

The following gems were gathered from last summer's exams for the medieval and linguistic courses in the English Department at UCC. With thanks to Elisabeth Okasha.

Old English is almost unrecognisable [...] but that would be back around the fifteenth century.

We can tell that they [the Anglo-Saxons] saw this life as 'tranistory' but the next as 'eternal' by their helmets.

Printing was introduced untill 1700.

John Donne was a Roman Catholic until he became an Anglo-Saxon.

Today the English language is as powerful as Latin was in the 1900's, before it broke up into the Romance languages.

Recent Books

Richard Marsden

The Cambridge Old English Reader

Cambridge UP, 2004. 566 pp.

hardback 0 521 45426 3. £55

paperback 0 521 45612 6. £18.99

This major new reader of Old English is designed for both beginners and more advanced students. It breaks new ground in its range of texts and in the degree of annotation it offers. The 56 prose and verse texts include established favourites such as *The Battle of Maldon* and King Alfred's *Preface* to his *Pastoral Care*, but also others which have not before been readily available, such as a complete Easter homily, Aelfric's life of Saint Aethelthryth and all 46 Durham proverbs. Headnotes establish the literary and historical contexts for the works that are represented, and reflect the rich cultural variety of Anglo-Saxon England. Modern English word glosses and explanatory notes are given on the same page as the text. Other features include a reference grammar and a comprehensive glossary.

Catherine E. Karkov

The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England

Boydell and Brewer, 2004. 248 pp.

hardback 1 84383 059 0. £55

Between the reign of Alfred in the late ninth century and the arrival of the Normans in 1066, a unique set of images of kingship and queenship was developed in Anglo-Saxon England, images of leadership that centred on books, authorship and learning rather than thrones, sword and sceptres. Focusing on the cultural and historical context in which these images were produced, this book explores the reasons for their development, and their meaning and function within both England and early medieval Europe. It explains how and why they differ from their Byzantine and Continental counterparts, and what they reveal about Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards history and gender, as well as the qualities that were thought to constitute a good ruler. It is argued that this series of portraits, never before studied as a corpus, creates a visual genealogy equivalent to the textual genealogies and regnal lists that are so much a feature of late Anglo-Saxon culture. As such they are an important part of the way in which the kings and queens of early medieval England created both their history and their kingdom.

Victoria Thompson

Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England

Boydell and Brewer, 2004. 300 pp.

hardback 1 84383 070 1. £50

This study of late Anglo-Saxon texts and grave monuments illuminates contemporary attitudes towards dying and the dead.

Pre-Conquest attitudes towards the dying and the dead have major implications for every aspect of culture, society and religion of the Anglo-Saxon period; but death-bed and funerary practices have been comparatively and unjustly neglected by historical scholarship. In her wide-ranging analysis, Dr Thompson examines such practices in the context of confessional and penitential literature, wills, poetry, chronicles and homilies, to show that complex and ambiguous ideas about death were current at all levels of Anglo-Saxon society. Her study also takes in grave monuments, showing in particular how the Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture of the ninth to the eleventh centuries may indicate not only the status, but also the religious and cultural alignment of those who commissioned and made them.

R.D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain

A History of Old English Literature

Blackwell, 2004. viii + 346 pp.

hardback 0 631 22398 3. £15.99

Recent years have witnessed renewed emphasis on historicism in medieval studies. This volume responds to that trend, focusing on the production and reception of Old English texts, and on their relation to Anglo-Saxon history and culture. The book presents a wide range of material, covering an intriguing range of genres, from riddles and cryptograms to allegory and romance; it also integrates discussion of Anglo-Latin texts which are crucial to understanding the development of Old English literature. Its extensive bibliographical coverage of scholarship devotes special attention to studies of the past 15 years, while a retrospective section outlines the reception of the Anglo-Saxons and their literature in later periods. Throughout their narrative, the authors champion Anglo-Saxon studies, contending that it is uniquely placed to contribute to current debates about literature's relation to history and culture.

If you have a book at press or which has recently appeared, please ask your publisher to send a review copy to TOEBI.

Book Reviews

New reviewers are always welcome. If you would be interested in reviewing for the TOEBI *Newsletter* please let the Editor know.

Daniel Donoghue

Old English Literature: A Short Introduction

Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2004 140pp

0 631 23485 3 hardback £45

0 631 23486 1 paperback £14.99

Daniel Donoghue's 'Short Introduction' to Old English literature is as brave as any book of this kind, packing references to a huge amount of texts into a mere 125 pages. His choice of 'figures' with which to order this work – the five chapters are centred around the vow, the hall, the miracle, the pulpit and the scholar – is innovative, and a useful way of bringing together a great deal of otherwise disparate texts, themes and ideas. 'The Hall', for example, ranges from *Beowulf* to the so-called elegies, taking in *Judith*, *Exodus* and *Genesis B* on the way. This allows Donoghue to discuss different kinds of 'hall' (including Heorot, the dragon's 'dryhtsele', Holofernes' tent, heaven, the elegiac ruins, and the household of Speratus) in the wider contexts of hall life and its complex cultural significance. As a means of aiding students to focus on particular aspects of Old English literature, this can hardly be bettered, and Donoghue's close textual analyses and continued attention to Old English words and phrases are themselves an excellent example to beginners learning how to deal with these texts.

The 'whistle-stop tour' of this literature and its context can be bewildering, however, and at times the reader will need to pause and work back through the ideas discussed in order to keep a sense of direction and purpose. For beginners who have not yet read many of the texts discussed, some of the points raised may not always be meaningful, while more advanced students will find new interpretations to interest them in relation to specific texts but may not wish to work through the more basic discussions in order to find them. This is a side-effect of Donoghue's admittedly 'idiosyncratic' approach (xiii), which at times is quite demanding of its imagined audience of 'new students', assuming, for example, that they already have the background knowledge to understand terms like *scriptorium* and *locus classicus*.

The list of 'classroom editions' of the texts discussed is helpful, as is the habit of

referring the reader to one of these editions. Such lists are, of course, always somewhat problematic in that they are no sooner published than out of date; here, for example, Richard Marsden's *Cambridge Old English Reader* is too recent to have made it onto the list. In terms of the remaining apparatus, notes to each chapter are kept to a minimum, as are the suggestions for further reading; the latter are limited to essay collections, translations and editions. This answers to the book's status as a 'short introduction', but also perhaps underlines the problems inherent in such brief surveys. Any beginner's course in Old English literature would need to supplement this provision with a much more explicit array of student resources dealing with cultural history, secondary criticism and language learning. However, in situations where colleagues are required to teach several Old English texts in a very short space of time, or for the purpose of focusing on particular themes and motifs, this book represents an extremely welcome resource.

Philippa Semper

University of Birmingham

The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching

edited by Paul Cavill

Christianity and Culture: Issues in Teaching and Research

D. S. Brewer, 2004. xviii + 207 pp.

hardback 0 85991 841 6. £40 (\$70)

This volume, the first of a new series, contains thirteen essays on aspects of the Christian culture (literary, ecclesiastical, visual, material) of Anglo-Saxon England. The emphasis is on the diversity of the responses made to Christianity in the period, and the essays suggest various ways of approaching the field for both research and teaching.

The outstanding essay in the collection is that by the editor, Paul Cavill, on 'Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*'. Dr Cavill argues convincingly that *Beowulf* 'reflects a view of the spiritual world that is specifically Christian' (p. 38), informed by the New Testament as much as by the Old. His close reading of several passages in the poem shows how stimulating, as well as clarifying, a biblically-informed critical approach can be. This is also true of Santha Bhattacharji's essay, 'An Approach to Christian Aspects of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*', which applies such concepts as *différance* to the riddle

structure of these poems and reads them in the context of biblical wisdom literature. Hugh Magennis's excellent 'Approaches to Saints' Lives' is also stimulating, especially on the similarities and differences between hagiography and the genres of heroic literature and romance. Richard Marsden's lucid 'Wrestling with the Bible: Textual Problems for the Scholar and Student' provides a valuable account of the various forms in which the text of the Bible was circulated in the Middle Ages.

Space permits only a brief mention of the wide variety of subjects dealt with elsewhere in the volume. Visual culture is treated very well in the essays by Barbara Raw, on the illustrations in a variety of manuscripts, and Philippa Semper, on the diagrams in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*. Material culture is covered by Elisabeth Okasha's survey of Anglo-Saxon memorial stones. Catherine Cubitt provides a scholarly account of how St Peter was regarded as an exemplar for the clergy, and Judith Jesch writes on the use made by Scandinavians in late Anglo-Saxon England of their pagan cultural heritage. The other essays suggest approaches to *Judgement Day II* (Graham Caie), medieval conversion narratives (Dabney Anderson Bankert), and the homilies (Mary Swan); and Jonathan Wooding writes on teaching insular medieval theology.

The best essays in the collection are those which not only outline new approaches but also show how they can be fruitfully applied to particular examples. That is the best way of demonstrating, as this well-produced volume does, that 'acknowledging the Christian tradition in all its varied forms in Anglo-Saxon England does not close down interpretative possibilities, but rather it opens them up' (p. xviii).

Brendan Biggs
Christ Church, Oxford

Heather O'Donoghue
Old Norse Literature: A Short Introduction
Blackwell Introductions to Literature.
Blackwell, 2003. x + 241 pp.
hardback 0 631 23625 2. £45
paperback 0 631 23626 0. £16.99

In her Preface, Heather O'Donoghue modestly reminds us (p. x) that: 'This book is not a survey or a history of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Rather it aims to introduce readers used to more familiar kinds of literature – medieval, or modern or both – to the distinctive literary qualities of a very rich,

diverse and extensive body of texts.' It is true that specialist students of Old Norse will not find in this book the sort of exhaustive surveys that they might look for in a full 'handbook' of the literature: it is very lightly annotated, the suggestions for further reading are spare, and there are relatively few citations in the original language(s). Working within the limitations of an introductory guide, however (which reflect the remit of this Blackwell series as a whole), O'Donoghue has succeeded in producing a compellingly-written, invigorating account that, as well as appealing to the general student of literature, should become a must for those on more traditional Old Norse courses as well. It achieves this precisely because of the critical dialogue it opens up between the place of 'Old Norse-Icelandic' texts within their own context of composition and the ways in which these texts might be, should be and have been conceived of by readers from the later Middle Ages to the present day.

The first chapter offers a potted history of Iceland, and an introduction to its language and cultural heritage, incorporating a welcome and useful discussion of the function and context of Viking Age runic inscriptions. O'Donoghue uses the Icelanders' own later accounts of their early history to foreground issues of historicity and fictionality versus the verisimilitude afforded by a naturalistic narrative mode, and the care taken here to encourage readers to engage with the roles of stylistic technique and lurking modern preconception when assessing Old Norse literature (and, by extension, any literature removed from immediately familiar times and places) are a particular asset of the following two chapters. These introduce respectively the family sagas, and then the other main branches of Norse literary tradition (eddaic and skaldic verse, historical writings, *fornaldarsögur* and others), all well illustrated through the close, and often delightfully canny, reading of selected examples (and an Appendix contains a faithful translation of the complete *Hrafnkels Saga*). The remaining two chapters take us on a journey through the after-life of Old Norse literature, accompanied by analyses that are no less judicious, critically astute and knowledgeable than those in the first half. First of all we come upon the post-medieval context of reception in Scandinavia and elsewhere, the many and various agendas of those who have made use of these texts (nationalistic, antiquarian, anthropological and otherwise), and, amongst other topics, some very interesting ruminations on the connections drawn between Old Norse and Old English traditions and the place of Old Norse

in English literature departments. We are then taken on a remarkable whistle-stop tour through the doyens of later English literature (Blake to Tolkien, Scott to Stevenson, Arnold to Heaney and beyond), upon whose works a knowledge of Old Norse literature, sometimes superficial, sometimes deep and appreciative, has exerted its influence.

Richard Dance
Cambridge

You might be a medievalist if ...

The following checklist 'You might be a medievalist if ...' was sent by Jason O'Rourke, Queen's, Belfast.

You might be a medievalist if ...

Your secondary sources are somebody else's primary sources.

Everyone else on your conference panel has taken holy orders.

You have a favourite decree of the fourth lateran council.

Your particular field of study could be wiped out by a car accident.

You've ever been asked 'the truth' about King Arthur.

You refer to the American Revolution as a 'recent development'.

You add the word 'yet' to the statement 'I don't know that language'.

You specify which level of hell your day has been like.

You call the renaissance 'a dirty lie'.

Further humorous contributions gratefully received, Ed.

Forthcoming Conferences 2005

Gender and Medieval Studies

University of Leeds

6-7 January 2005

The 2005 Gender and Medieval Studies conference will be held at the University of Leeds on January 6 and 7 2005. The theme of the conference will be 'Genders and Sexualities', and the keynote speaker will be Jacqueline Murray. For details of the programme and how to register see the GMS website: <http://www.medievalgender.org.uk/>
The host department for the conference is the Institute for medieval Studies, and enquiries about it should be addressed to Mary Swan on medieval-studies@leeds.ac.uk

King Edgar Conference

MANCASS

30 March-1 April 2005

The Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies is holding a multidisciplinary residential conference on King Edgar from 30 March to 1 April 2005. Offers of papers are welcomed on any of the following topics: Edgar's wives, sons, bishops; his relations with his neighbours; the art history, literature, language, history, geography, archaeology of the period.

Brief abstracts by 1 November 2004 to:
Donald Scragg,
Director, Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies,
Department of English,
University of Manchester M13 9PL, UK,
d.g.scragg@man.ac.uk

International Medieval Congress 2005,

University of Leeds

11-14 July 2005

The special theme for IMC 2005 is Youth and Age. The Anglo-Saxon Studies strand will run as usual in 2005 coordinated by Mary Swan m.t.swan@leeds.ac.uk

For general information contact:
Axel. E. Muller or Claire Clarke,
International Medieval Institute,
Parkinson Building 1.03,
University of Leeds,
Leeds. LS2 9JT.
✉ e-mail: imc@leeds.ac.uk
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/imi/imc/imc.htm>

TOEBI Committee

The dates refer to when members of the committee are due to retire or to stand for re-election.

President: Professor Don Scragg (2006)

Chair: Professor Peter Lucas (2004)

Secretary: Dr Elisabeth Okasha (2006)

Newsletter editor: Dr Margaret Connolly (2004)

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Dr Jayne Carroll (2005)

Dr Gale Owen-Crocker (2005)

Dr Richard Dance (2006)

Professor Clare Lees (2006)

Dr Jennifer Neville (2006)

For membership details and general enquiries contact the secretary:

Dr Elisabeth Okasha
Department of English
University College
Cork
Republic of Ireland

☎ 00 353 21 490 2635

✉ e-mail: e.okasha@ucc.ie

Send submissions for the next Newsletter by 31 March 2005 to the Editor:

Dr Margaret Connolly
Department of English
University College Cork
Cork
Republic of Ireland

☎ 00 353 21 4902583

✉ e-mail: mconnolly@english.ucc.ie

Action points for Members:

- **Send your registration fee for the November TOEBI meeting** to the Secretary or to Gale Owen-Crocker, groc@man.ac.uk
- **Contribute to the Newsletter:** responses to this issue; book reviews; short articles on your Old English courses or assessment procedures; material about professional practice; student howlers
- **Please send information about the following items for inclusion in the Newsletter:**
 - Conferences on Anglo-Saxon Studies
 - Special Lectures by Anglo-Saxonists
 - Postgraduate Courses and Opportunities in Old English in your Department
 - News about promotions, or general (non-salacious) news about lecturers in your Department
 - The publication of new books or articles useful for teaching Old English

Remember!

The new web-site address is:

www.toebi.org.uk