



# TOEBI Newsletter

TEACHERS OF OLD ENGLISH IN BRITAIN AND  
IRELAND

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TOEBI Annual Meeting  
St Catharine's College, Cambridge  
20 October 2007

## MATERIALS

10.00 Registration and tea/coffee (Ramsden Room)

10.30-12.00 Morning Session

*Dr Christine Rauer: 'On-line Resources for Old English: Advantages and Disadvantages'*

*Dr Richard Marsden: 'Editing Old English for Students'*

*Dr Carl Phelpstead: 'Who's Afraid of Postmodernity? Theory and the Teaching of Old English'*

12.00-1.30 Lunch

1.30-3.00 Afternoon Session

*Dr Peter Stokes: 'Palaeography can be Fun! Old English Manuscripts Online'*

*Dr Rebecca Rushforth: 'The Parker Library on the Web and Old English Manuscripts'*

*Matthias Ammon, Rosa Maria Fera and Abi Queen: 'Teaching Students'*

3.00-3.30 Special Discussion Topic

*Professor Graham Caie: 'Gamelfeax gnornap: Some Thoughts about Old English Leading to RAE 2013'*

3.30-3.45 Tea/coffee

3.45-4.30 AGM

## **TOEBI Conference Award Reports**

In 2007 5 awards were made in the TOEBI Conference Awards scheme. Awardees were asked to provide short reports on the use to which they put their grants (this is now a condition of receiving an award). Here are the first reports from the 2007 competition.

**Helen Foxhall Forbes (Trinity College, Cambridge) reports as follows:** I was awarded a grant of £70 by TOEBI to aid with the costs of attending the MANCASS 2007 postgraduate conference. This was an extremely interesting conference, with papers from many different aspects of Anglo-Saxon studies. The wide range of papers and subject areas, and in particular the two excellent keynote lectures given by Dr Richard Dance and Professor Gale Owen-Crocker, made for a really valuable couple of days, and it was also excellent to be able to attend the Toller lecture given by Allen Frantzen on the evening of the first day of the conference.

My own paper was entitled 'Angels and Demons: Connections between Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England'. The fascination with the spiritual world is well-documented for the scholastic period, when angelology became an obligatory part of the curriculum in Paris, but the earlier ideas which informed this and the increasing interest in spiritual beings throughout earlier centuries is often neglected. I examined the importance of angels and demons in Anglo-Saxon England, focusing on the idea of their continual presence in the air around human beings. This becomes particularly significant in the context of beliefs about death and dying, since the soul was believed to be in constant danger during its journey to the otherworld, especially from the attacks of angels and demons. The idea of angels as psychopompal guides, fighting off demons at every stage, informs much of the liturgy and literature concerned with death. The relevance of angels and demons to Anglo-Saxon life is sometimes underestimated, but closer examination reveals a fascinating insight into the Anglo-Saxon world view, which is informative when interpreting literature and liturgy.

I received some useful feedback on this paper, and hearing the other papers at the conference was also very valuable. I am extremely grateful to TOEBI for their help with the costs of attending the conference.

**Mary Rambaran-Olm (University of Glasgow) reports as follows:** I was both

surprised and delighted to receive a TOEBI award in May 2007 to put towards expenses incurred in attending the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo. As it was my first time attending the conference, I was both excited and a bit nervous, especially with regard to presenting my paper which aimed to shed light on an area of medieval drama studies that has been inadequately discussed by critics. I am pleased to report that delivery of my paper went very well. The response from listeners was positive and I received useful, encouraging feedback from various scholars.

I was also able to take in a number of sessions which related to the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, while also indulging in a few 'guilty pleasure' sessions that did not exactly fit into my area of research, but were of great interest and too close at hand to pass up. I must say though, that the highlight of my time at the conference was seeing Professor D. Scragg dance at the annual Saturday night dance – really there is no price tag attached to that!

In all seriousness, I am very grateful for your financial assistance. As a self-funded postgraduate student, it goes without saying that 'every little bit helps', and I thank you very much for your generous contribution to my research. The TOEBI award provided me with the opportunity to build my CV and make some valuable contacts with academics in the field of Anglo-Saxon studies as well as others from various areas relating to the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Not only am I grateful for the award itself, but I also appreciate the general support and encouragement I have received from many of the TOEBI members whom I have met (both virtually and personally). Your assistance is invaluable to me. Thank you again.

**Jean Rumball (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge) reports as follows:** I was generously granted £170 to go towards expenses of attending the 42<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo in June 2007. This was my first big conference, my first big paper and my first taste of America, so well worth the trip. What can I say about Kalamazoo? It has to be experienced at least once. Famous academics prove not to be so scary (at least the ones I met) and I was surprised at the easy-going, even partyish atmosphere, not to mention the Saturday-night dancing. I met plenty of interesting people whom I hope to see at future conferences and got some good bargains at the bookstalls.

I gave my paper ‘Ælfric’s Outlaws’ in the session titled ‘New Voices in Anglo-Saxon Studies’. In it I examined the history of the word ‘outlaw’ in Old English and especially its use by Ælfric and Wulfstan. I argued that Ælfric could not have borrowed the Norse loan off the Archbishop, since he not only uses *utlaga* and its supposed second element, *lagu*, in works very probably dating before any known contact with Wulfstan, but he even prefers a different form of ‘outlaw’ (*utlaga* as opposed to *utlah*). Therefore (I argued), given Ælfric’s didactic purpose, genre and probable audiences, *utlaga* and *lagu* were already instantly recognisable by readers of Ælfric’s late West-Saxon standard and the familiarisation of these words outside the Danelaw need not therefore have anything to do with Wulfstan.

A very satisfying undertaking (apart from missing my plane home) – thanks TOEBI for helping make it happen.

Further reports from the 2007 Award scheme will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

### **Last Words from the Editor**

This is my final issue as Editor of the *Newsletter*. I took over the role of Editor from Elaine Treharne in November 2001, producing the Spring 2002 *Newsletter* as my first issue. Like Elaine and Stuart Lee before her, I’ve now done a double-stint of six years as Editor, producing twelve issues of the *Newsletter*, so it now seems a very good point to let someone else have a turn! The distribution list for the *Newsletter* currently stands at almost 100, and copies also now go to all the copyright libraries in Britain and Ireland. This means that the *Newsletter*, with its varied report of all of TOEBI’s activities, and its promotion of all aspects of Old English studies, now reaches a potentially wide audience.

A new Editor will be appointed at the TOEBI AGM in October; if you are interested in volunteering for this committee post please let the Acting Secretary, Richard Dance know as soon as possible. Be assured that the role of Editor is not particularly onerous. The responsibility of producing two issues of the *Newsletter* per year requires some concentrated activity in April and September when the spring and autumn issues are compiled, proofed, printed, copied, and finally distributed. More generally throughout the year it is necessary to spend some time cajoling colleagues into forwarding notices of developments in teaching, research projects, or

other matters relevant to Old English, broadly understood. Another ongoing activity is the requisitioning and assigning of books for review. One of the other things I have tried to do as Editor is to increase the number of books reviewed, so it is very satisfying to produce a final issue containing quite so many reviews. I have also enjoyed negotiating some special discount deals for TOEBI members with various presses. I’ll miss the many and varied opportunities for contact with TOEBI members that being Editor has given me (though would-be contributors and reviewers may not miss my nagging!). Thank you to everyone who has willingly contributed; I wish my successor an equal share of co-operation.

**Margaret Connolly**

### **Changing Faces**

Belated congratulations to David Clark who was appointed to a lectureship in Old English at the University of Leicester during 2006-7. More recently, Orietta da Rold has also been appointed to a lectureship in the Department of English at Leicester.

Alaric Hall has been appointed to a lectureship in Medieval English Literature in the School of English, University of Leeds.

Congratulations and best wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement to Professor Elisabeth Okasha and Professor Éamon Ó Carragáin, both of University College Cork. The chair of Old and Middle English at UCC has been redesignated as a chair in Medieval and Renaissance English.

The Editor’s apologies to Dr Juliet Hewish for mis-spelling her name in the Spring Newsletter. Dr Hewish, formerly of University College, Dublin, has been appointed to a permanent lectureship in Old English at University College Cork. In University College Dublin meanwhile there are two short-term appointments: Lucy Perry has moved from Lausanne, Switzerland, to teach Old and Middle English for 12 months, and Katie Long has taken up a 1-year postdoctoral fellowship.

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.

**Quadrivium III**  
**English Medieval Textual Cultures,**  
**Methods and Materials**  
**8-9 November 2007**

The third symposium of the Quadrivium Project, which is a collaborative PhD training programme targeted at students in the field of medieval English, will be held 8-9 November 2007, hosted by the Department of English, University of Birmingham. It will consist of workshops and networking sessions facilitated by specialists from the collaborating institutions of Birmingham, Glasgow, Queen's Belfast, York, and beyond.

The programme includes sessions on 'Material Culture and the Book', led by Orietta Da Rold (University of Leicester) and John Thompson (QUB); 'Recovery of the Visual: Materials and Methods', led by David Griffith, Rebecca Farnham, and Philippa Semper (all University of Birmingham); 'Paper Evidence and the Medieval Book', led by Dan Mosser (Virginia Tech University and University of York). There will also be opportunities for student participants to present their doctoral research projects in sessions led by Jeremy Smith (University of Glasgow), Estelle Stubbs (University of York and Sheffield), and Margaret Connolly (University of St. Andrews). A final session, entitled 'Life after the PhD', will be led by Takako Kato (De Montfort University). For further details and information on how to register, please consult the project website:

[http://www.medieval.bham.ac.uk/Quadrivium/quadrivium\\_web/prog.html](http://www.medieval.bham.ac.uk/Quadrivium/quadrivium_web/prog.html)

**International Medieval Bibliography**  
**Call for Contributors**

The International Medieval Bibliography (IMB) based at Leeds since 1967, is a multi-disciplinary database of Medieval Studies which helps underpin the work of the IMC. Now, after the implementation of the IMBOnline, the bibliography is working to expand greatly its coverage of publications. To this end, the editorial team is looking for individuals or organisations to become contributors to join its existing range of partners throughout the world. Contributors take responsibility for identifying and cataloguing publications relating to specific subject or geographical areas, and are rewarded with free subscriptions to IMB (online or print), other free publications and other benefits. Contributors are sought who are

based in the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Portugal, Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Romania, and the Arab world, particularly with interests in archaeology, art, regional and local history, and vernacular languages. If you are interested in becoming a contributor, contact the editor, Dr Alan V. Murray, at [a.v.murray@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:a.v.murray@leeds.ac.uk)

**Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust**

[www.lynnegrundytrust.org.uk](http://www.lynnegrundytrust.org.uk)

The Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust was established to commemorate the life and work of Lynne Grundy, a researcher and lecturer at the University of London, who died in 1997. The Trust, which is a registered charity, gives several grants of up to £500 each every year to scholars and students in the disciplines of Old English / Anglo-Saxon or Humanities Computing (applicants must not already have a permanent full-time academic post or adequate funding). Please publicise the existence of the Trust in your department and/or at conferences, and encourage eligible students to apply for grants from it. Details of award winners, references and academic support, how to apply for a grant from the trust and how to donate, are available on the Trust website. Please note that the closing date for applications for 2007 will be **no later than Easter 2007**.

You can contact the Trust directly by e-mail:

[info@lynnegrundytrust.org.uk](mailto:info@lynnegrundytrust.org.uk)

or at:

Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust  
2A East Mount Street  
London E1 1BA  
☎ 020 7377 2171

**Special Offer for TOEBI Members**

University of Exeter Press are offering Robert K. Upchurch's *Aelfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses* to TOEBI members at the special price of £12.00. This edition of the lives of Julian and Basilissa, Cecilia and Valerian, and Chrysanthus and Daria, gives the original Old English with a modern English parallel-text translation. The introduction places the text in literary-historical, manuscript and social contexts, and explores Ælfric's interest in the hagiographical genre of chaste marriage.

For further details of this offer see the flyer enclosed with this issue of the *Newsletter*.

## **The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060-1220 Project Progress Report**

During the last twelve months the Project team has worked to consolidate the methodology and format of the proposed catalogue of English manuscripts 1060-1220. As a result the introductory matter for the catalogue is now available on the website, as is a sample manuscript description (for Cambridge University Library Ii.1.33); new manuscript descriptions will be added as they are completed. The Project team has been expanded by the addition of Jo Story (from the School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester), and by the inclusion of two Leicester MA students, Zoe Enstone and Rob Payne, on work experience placements in the spring of 2007. Two AHRC-funded PhD students have been appointed at Leeds to work on the Project: Thomas Gobbitt (from autumn 2006) and Kate Wiles (from autumn 2007). The first of the Project's two symposia was held in Leicester on 5-6 July 2007 (a second is planned for 2009). The 29 attendees included historians, literary scholars, linguists and codicologists, and topics discussed ranged from charters, preaching texts, liturgy and music, to Latin and English glosses, dialect, and script. The symposium immediately preceded the 'Writing England: Books 1100-1200' conference, organised by Elaine Treharne and Orietta da Rold. For further information see the project's leaflet which is enclosed with this issue of the *Newsletter*, or visit the project's website: [www.le.ac.uk/em1060to1220](http://www.le.ac.uk/em1060to1220)

### **The Vernon Manuscript Project**

The Vernon Manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet. a.1) is the biggest and most important surviving late medieval English manuscript. An extensive collection of Middle English religious literature (and some French and Latin), and lavishly illuminated, it is potentially an incomparable resource for art historians, codicologists, palaeographers, literary and cultural historians, linguists and editors. However, access is currently extremely limited for conservation reasons and because of the sheer scale of the volume. The Vernon Manuscript Project will create a Digital Edition of the manuscript published on DVD in the Bodleian Digital Texts series. Providing high quality full-colour images linked to searchable descriptions and transcriptions of

every page, the Digital Edition will transform the manuscript as a research resource. The edition will include essays on codicology, palaeography, production, provenance, and related manuscripts by A. I. Doyle; on language by Simon Horobin and Jeremy J. Smith; on decoration and illumination by Linda Dennison; and an overview of the manuscript and its contents.

The aims of the project are as follows: to enhance knowledge and understanding of the Vernon Manuscript in terms of its contents, textual and codicological relations, production and reception; to enhance knowledge and understanding of problems in medieval English literature and culture, palaeography, codicology, dialectology and historical linguistics, editing, art and book history; to enhance access to the Vernon Manuscript by the research community and others whilst addressing conservation concerns; and to provide a model for the production of electronic facsimiles of large manuscripts. The project is based in the Department of English at the University of Birmingham. The Project team comprises the Project Director, Professor Wendy Scase, two post-doctoral research fellows (Dr Rebecca Farnham and Mr Gavin Cole) and five transcription assistants. Project Partners are The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (Dr Samuel Fanous) and Evellum.com (Professor Bernard Muir, University of Melbourne). The project is funded for three years and one month from 1 July 2006 by the AHRC. For further information see:

<http://www.english.bham.ac.uk/medievalstudies/vernon/>

### **Essay Prize Announced**

The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, publishers of *Medium Aevum*, invites entries for a new essay prize. Entrants must be postgraduate or postdoctoral, but within three years of the date of submission of their thesis. Entries must be written in English and must discuss a theme that falls within the range of the journal's interests in the medieval period (up to 1500). Submissions should be no longer than 8,000 words, including notes and any appendices. The prize includes publication in *Medium Aevum* during 2008 and £250.

Entries are to be sent in hard copy to the Secretary of the Society, Dr L. Rumsey,

Mansfield College, Oxford OX1 3TF, to arrive by 1 December 2007. Queries may be addressed to the Secretary, [lucinda.rumsey@mansfield.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lucinda.rumsey@mansfield.ox.ac.uk) or the Treasurer, [john.watts@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:john.watts@ccc.ox.ac.uk)

## Lectures and Seminars of Interest to TOEBI members

### *University of St. Andrews Medieval Studies Research Seminar*

Craig Taylor (York)  
'Chivalry, wisdom and writing during the Hundred Years War'  
15 October

Virginie Pektas (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)  
'Augustine and the Eckhartian theory of the intellect'  
22 October

David Dumville (Aberdeen)  
'A dead letter? The first surviving will of a king of England'  
29 October

Frederik Pedersen (Aberdeen)  
'Kings, clerics, canon law and crusading. Some reflections on Scandinavia in Europe, c. 980-1120'  
5 November

Elizabeth Tyler (York)  
'Reading through the Conquest: The "Life of King Edward" and the Women of Wilton Abbey'  
19 November

Andrew Reynolds (UCL)  
'Headstakes and heathen burials: the archaeology of judicial execution in Anglo-Saxon England'  
26 November

John Watts (Oxford)  
'The dynamics of politics in later medieval Europe, c. 1300-c. 1500'  
3 December

All meetings take place at 5.15pm in the Old Class Library, St. John's House (adjacent to the Department of Mediaeval History), South Street.

## Recent Books

**Kathy Cawsey and Jason Harris, eds.,**  
*Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*  
Four Courts Press, 2007 212 pp.  
Hardback 978 1 85182 990 3 €55 (£60)

This book is concerned with cultural change, how it occurs, who its authors are, and whether it is intentional. Focusing on texts as the conduits for change, the authors of these essays engage with the processes of translation, adaptation, appropriation and dissemination. Written by some of Ireland's leading young medievalists, these ten essays study cultural and literary transmission over the course of eight centuries in medieval England and Ireland. Integrating perspectives from literary scholarship, philology, and cultural history, these essays both address specific moments of cultural transformation and build an overall image of the dynamic engagements of individual medieval authors with the texts and traditions they inherited. Of particular interest are the essays by Christine Thijs on the Anglo-Saxon translators of Latin texts, and Letty Nijhuis on animal imagery in Aelfric's homilies and lives of saints.

**Michael Alexander**  
*A History of English Literature, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*  
Palgrave, 2007 xvii + 418pp.  
paperback 0 230 00723 9 £16.99

A welcome second edition of Alexander's *A History of English Literature* which traces the development of literature in English from Old English to the present day (first edition published in 2000). Major changes include the expansion and rewriting of the final sections to take account of new authors and developments in literature, society, and the literary marketplace. Figures discussed for the first time include Disraeli, Chesterton, Firbank, Jean Rhys, Stevie Smith, and Patrick O'Brian. Topics further developed include post-modernism, internationalization, minority writing, multi-culturalism, literary biography, and genre fiction, especially crime and fantasy. Earlier sections have also been revised and updated to reflect fresh discoveries and emerging critical emphases. A few poetic illustrations have been added. There are many small changes, updates, and corrections throughout, which will keep this introductory companion current and up-to-date for a new wave of students.

## Book Reviews

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

**Thomas Owen Clancy and Murray G. Pittock, eds.**

***The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume One: From Columba to the Union (until 1707)***

Edinburgh UP 2007, ix + 334pp.  
hardback 0 7486 1615 2 £65

It is traditional to begin the history of Scottish Literature in the fourteenth century, with John Barbour's *The Bruce*. The reason for this traditional late start is the dearth of any sort of writing in Scots, or its predecessor, northern Old English, before this date. All the more surprising then to find this first volume of *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* devoting a substantial amount of space to the period 'Until 1314'. Of the twelve essays in this section of the volume, the first three offer broad surveys of history (a good account by Benjamin Hudson), topography (a slimmer, less convincing offering from Sally Forster), and language. The last, by William Gillies, is probably the most important in setting the parameters for the rest of the volume, since it discusses not just the four 'major' languages, spoken and written, of medieval Scotland (Gaelic, Scots, Latin and Norman-French), but also the Celtic and Germanic languages which contributed to Scotland's linguistic make-up: Cumbric, Pictish, Old English, and Norse. The remaining essays treat more specific topics or texts. Two contributions by Thomas Clancy discuss praise poetry, and narrative and lyric poetry. Katharine Simms assesses poetry ascribed to Muireadhach Albanach, appending a useful checklist of poems, editions and translations. Several essays cover various forms of religious writing: James E. Fraser's contribution is on hagiography; Clare Stancliffe's is on the prose of Adomnán, abbot of Iona; and Thomas O'Loughlin gives an account of writings on theology, philosophy and cosmography, building his chapter around four important figures: Adomnán again, Adam of Dryburgh, Michael Scotus, and John Duns Scotus. Gilbert Markus covers 'Saving Verse' (early medieval religious poetry), ostensibly in Latin, Gaelic, Welsh, English, and Norse, though in practice most of his examples are drawn from Latin and Gaelic.

Almost all of the contributions focus on verse rather than prose (Stancliffe is a rare

exception), reflecting the scant evidence of a prose tradition in early Scottish writing, religious and historical texts excepted. Various other lacunae in Scotland's early literary heritage mean that several contributors find themselves stretching the definition of *Scottish* literature. Jenny Rowland's chapter on the *Gododdin*, a series of lyric elegies whose only surviving manuscript is Welsh, begins with a frank acknowledgment that its presence needs justification. Another essay which transgresses political borders is Judith Jesch's excellent discussion of 'Norse literature in the Orkney Earldom', though this is a less surprising inclusion. Thomas Clancy summarises a point that must have occasioned extensive editorial debate: 'Throughout this first section of the *History*, we have been trying to give some sense of the literary riches of the earlier period – yes, all this literature is contested, in terms of text, place of origin, relationship to Scotland, but it nonetheless fills out our sense of Scotland as having a literary history which goes back before 1314' (p. 124).

Since the period pre-1314 is likely to interest TOEBI members most this review has concentrated on the essays in that section, but it should be noted that there are eighteen further essays, covering 1314-1707, and two introductory surveys which sketch issues of canon, criticism, and the study of Scottish Literature. For those whose interests extend beyond the Middle Ages there are also two further volumes: *Volume 2, Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918)*, and *Volume 3, Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)*.

**Margaret Connolly**  
**University of St. Andrews**

**Angelo Forte, Richard Oram, and Frederick Pedersen, eds.**

***Viking Empires***

Cambridge University Press 2005, 486pp.  
hardback 0 521 82992 5 £30

If Forte, Oram and Pedersen's book, *Viking Empires*, ever ran for office, I'm afraid it would be numbered among that ilk of oft-maligned politicians who, having won a hard-fought campaign, failed to deliver on the mandate that got them elected. Big promises, made and then broken, for whatever reason, inevitably leave people with a sense of frustration and disillusionment. Pick up a copy of *Viking Empires* and the blurb on the jacket will tell you that you're holding 'a definitive new history of five hundred years of Viking



civilisation and the first study of the global implications of the expansion, integrations, and reorientation of the Viking World'. Fantastic, you might think. Fantastic, indeed, or it would be, if it lived up to the claim. It doesn't.

That being said, any one of the politicians from the aforementioned group might well make an excellent dinner companion for the simple reason that such people are, very often, gifted speakers who know how to spin a good tale. The real text in politics, however, has little to do with storytelling and everything to do with results. *Are taxes lower? Is the health service improved? Has the crime rate fallen?* And so it is with *Viking Empires*. In part it offers some interesting insights (though mixed with the odd, unfortunate, inaccuracy), but these are usually found in those detailed chapters where the authors write from their own particular spheres of expertise: Scottish medieval history, seafaring, and medieval Danish ecclesiastical history. Unfortunately, however, the book as a whole is hardly 'new', and certainly not 'definitive'. *Viking Empires*, like an over-eager politician seeking your vote, fails because it falls so far short of what's been promised.

The disappointment is perhaps the greater because the world of Viking studies is very much in need of 'a definitive new history'. Such a work, however, will have to wait until someone comes along with enough guts to break from the herd, embrace the plethora of recently-published and, in many cases, seminal works from a number of gifted archaeologists, stone-sculpture specialists, numismatists, linguists, place-names experts, and others, and risk the attempt of forging a new paradigm. Things have moved on in so many areas that such a pioneering approach, grounded in the basics but seeking new solutions, is necessary to shake things up and spark new debates both different from, and hopefully more fruitful than, those championed by scholars of previous generations. The fact is that within the framework of the existing paradigm many of the pieces still don't fit. But then, if we simply continue raking over the same old ground, they never will. The 'definitive new history', as promised by the blurb, was clearly beyond the scope of the authors of *Viking Empires*.

To return to my original analogy, if *Viking Empires* was a politician, I'd gladly take it out for a pint or two, but come election day it's one book that shouldn't count on getting my vote.

**John Quanrud, University of Nottingham**

**David Bates, Julia Crick, and Sarah Hamilton, eds.**

*Writing Medieval Biography 750-1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*  
Boydell and Brewer 2006, xiii + 262pp.  
hardback 1 84383 262 1 £60

What forms did biographical writing take in the medieval period? What is it possible to learn from the mass of lives that survive? Can one write a 'biography' – in the modern sense – of any medieval figure? These are among the questions posed in this welcome collection of essays in honour of Professor Frank Barlow.

Appropriately, in view of Barlow's own classic biography of Edward the Confessor, several contributions are on Anglo-Saxon themes. Elisabeth van Houts discusses the Flemish hagiographers active in eleventh-century England, asking what drew them there (wealthy lay patrons and a healthy supply of saints) and what in turn attracted their hosts to them (stylistic virtuosity and a gift for writing for women); though one or two of its assumptions (e.g. that Goscelin was present at the dedication of Westminster Abbey) may need questioning, this is a valuable addition to the fast-growing literature on these writers. Barbara Yorke's paper on the 'biographies' of Anglo-Saxon women saints argues that with a careful use of comparative evidence and an awareness of each writer's bias and method of working, it is still possible to deduce biographical information even from conventional hagiographies; Yorke also reopens the old debate about 'lost' Old English saints' lives, suggestions that lives of women were more likely to have been written in the vernacular and thus more vulnerable to destruction. Another article concerns material rather than literary remains: Robin Fleming's wide-ranging and occasionally harrowing discussion of the evidence from skeletons for widespread disease and curtailed life-expectancy throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

Other writers reflect on their own biographical practice, or on their work in progress. Simon Keynes offers a 're-reading' of Æthelred the Unready which includes a new periodization of the Viking raids throughout the reign, some astringent ripostes to historians who argue for the strength and sophistication of the late Anglo-Saxon state, useful comments on the limitations of existing sources and an interpretation of Ælfric's *De oratione Moysi* as a comment on current affairs from 985-93; the entire article can be read both as a discursive expansion of Keynes's entry on Æthelred in the new *DNB*



and as a foretaste of his eagerly awaited full-length biography of the king. Richard Abels reflects on several biographies of Alfred, medieval and modern (by Asser, Charles Plummer, Alfred Smyth and himself), reaching the slightly despairing conclusion that all four share the same underlying narrative because they depend on the same sources, which in turn transmit only what Alfred and his court wanted posterity to know. (Not everyone, perhaps, will share Abels's conviction that the 'Alfredian' translations in fact represent the king's own thoughts.) And Pauline Stafford ruminates on her development from 'an Annaliste/structuralist youth', with its downplaying of individual autonomy, to a growing conviction of the importance of human agency and choice; this she illustrated by a discussion of Queen Emma's dilemma in 1035 when, as the widow of two kings and the mother of sons by both, she can have had no clear 'role; or 'script' to dictate her response.

The remaining contributions, dealing with post-Conquest or Continental topics, are outside the present reviewer's range, but a few at least should be mentioned: Janet Nelson's brilliant treatment of Charlemagne's religious life and its imitation by the elite; an engrossing study by David Crouch of the vernacular (French) life of William Marshal, with an exemplary analysis of the author's complimentary use of written and oral sources; Edmund King's reassessment of the *Gesta Stephani*, drawing at one point on parallel material from the *Chronicle*; and Nicholas Vincent's ambitious and sharply written examination of the problem of the 'missing biographies' of the Plantagenet kings. But every article in the collection repays study.

Inevitably in a book of this type, inconsistencies remain: key terms, including 'biography' itself, are not always adequately defined, and not every writer is aware of the differing conventions of (say) secular biography, hagiography and political history. It is unfortunate, too, that relatively little is said about Barlow himself: there is no extended assessment of his work, little evocation of his personality and teaching style, not even a list of his publications (which now span an astonishing 71 years). But none of this seriously detracts from one's enjoyment of an exceptionally interesting and rewarding book.

**Peter Jackson**  
**Oxford**

**Magnús Fjalldal**  
***Anglo-Saxon England in Icelandic Medieval Texts***

University of Toronto Press 2005, 200pp.  
hardback 0 8020 3837 9 £40 (\$60)

This book offers an overview of information about Anglo-Saxon language, history, and geography available to late medieval Icelandic readers and assesses its accuracy. Fjalldal admits the subject would ideally be treated in an anthology of texts with translations, but says he has 'settled for re-telling these legends myself' (vii). A high proportion of the book indeed consists of plot summary but, thankfully, this is not all he does.

The opening two chapters deal with ideas about language including evidence for whether speakers of Old English and Old Norse could understand one another. This discussion is limited by Fjalldal's focus on 'Icelandic medieval texts' and consequent neglect of other kinds of evidence. Moreover, Fjalldal's coverage of relevant earlier scholarship is, as elsewhere in the book, far from comprehensive: the fullest treatment of this topic, Matthew Townend's *Language and History in Viking Age England* (2002), receives quite inadequate attention.

Subsequent chapters consider 'General Attitudes' including geographical knowledge (3); Anglo-Saxon England in Kings' Sagas (4-5) *Egils Saga* (6) and *Breta sögur* and sagas of Anglo-Saxon saints (7). Almost no attention is paid to skaldic verse, with Fjalldal bizarrely claiming this is because verses in the sagas rarely add any information to the 'main text', though in fact verses were often a writer's main sources!

Fjalldal recognizes the crucial distinction between what a saga may reveal about thirteenth-century Icelandic beliefs and whether it is historically accurate (p. 5), but chapters 1-7 are almost solely concerned with pointing out how much Icelanders got wrong (without always documenting the 'correct' version fully). The exception is *Jatvarðar saga's* account of Anglo-Saxon settlement by the Black Sea, which Fjalldal believes may contain accurate information of importance to Anglo-Saxonists.

However, it is not only medieval Icelanders who make mistakes. Giraldus Cambrensis, a Welshman of Norman descent who wrote in Latin, is referred to as a 'Middle English writer' (viii). The name Óláfr sometimes appears thus, but sometimes as Ólafr; the *Special Saga of St Ólafr* (23) is, less excitingly, known as the *Separate Saga* in English. The letter 'hooked o' consistently

points the wrong way in the main text (though in quotations in the endnotes it faces the right way).

After much plot summary and identification of error, the final two chapters of the book offer some interesting general observations. Chapter 8 'Kings and Courts' argues that in Icelandic texts Anglo-Saxon kings are presented as a positive contrast to Norwegian ones (but Icelandic attitudes to the Norwegian monarchy are not as purely negative as Fjalldal maintains.) Chapter 9 'The Hero and His Deeds' proposes that in the sagas Anglo-Saxon England is primarily a space in which Scandinavian heroes can demonstrate their ability to perform great deeds of valour.

Anyone wanting to know what the sagas say about Anglo-Saxon England without having to read the texts will find this a useful book, as will historians seeking reassurance that they need not waste time reading sagas. Having demonstrated so fully how little value he believes the texts have for Anglo-Saxonists, it is a shame Fjalldal devotes so much less attention to the value they do have for those interested in thirteenth-century Iceland (the body of his book after all, comprises only 124 pages). The ideas sketched in the final two chapters could have been developed more fully and a better balance struck between summarizing texts, identifying errors, and analysing the ideological work being performed by conceptions of Anglo-Saxon England in thirteenth-century Iceland. Nevertheless, the idea of a book on this topic was a good one, and this volume deserves a qualified welcome.

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**Susan E. Wilson**  
*The Life and After-Life of St. John of Beverley: the Evolution of the Cult of an Anglo-Saxon Saint*

Ashgate 2006, xii + 246pp.  
hardback 0 7546 5326 9 £50

In this volume, Susan Wilson maps the development of the cult of St. John of Beverley from the first written record of his life in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* in 731 to the royal decree which proclaimed John a national saint after the battle of Agincourt. The longevity, variety of sources and international nature of the cult makes the life of John of Beverley an ideal project for scholars of hagiography, but also for those interested in the textuality of history. *The Life and After-*

*Life of St. John of Beverley: The Evolution of the Cult of an Anglo-Saxon Saint* is a considered examination of the sources, biographical data and process of canonisation of John of Beverley. A chapter on Beverley's royal patrons and a chapter on its links with France add further weight to this important study. A selection of the first English translations of the Life of St. John supports the discussion.

In the course of the study, Wilson exposes the flexible nature of the *Vita Sancti Johannis* in the hands of the hagiographers and discusses the ways in which the cult of St. John of Beverley was exploited for economic, political, and social gain. For example, Folcard's account was commissioned by the Archbishop of York shortly after the translation of John's relics to Beverley. Folcard includes additional miracles to Bede's account one of which makes reference to King Osred, thereby imbuing John with relevance beyond the religious and local. These posthumous miracles establish Beverley, the burial place of his relics, as a centre of ecclesiastical importance. The *Alia Miracula I* version includes miracles that suggest adaptation for the growing numbers of female readers and also makes use of the Beverley's position in the North to sanctify the right of English kings to rule Scotland. Wilson, in her careful controlled analysis of the cult, demonstrates the extent of the power that rested in the hands of the writers.

In her introduction to the chapter on hagiography, Wilson is careful to point out that the life of a saint reflects both the values of the community promoting the saint and of the writer who chose what to include or exclude. However, the volume calls for further reflection on the relationship between the writer and the community in which the text is produced. Did the hagiographic writer unquestioningly reflect the values and tastes of the community in which the story exists or is s/he using the story to promote his or her own subjective agenda? For example, if there existed an alternative tradition to the 'vir sanctus' as Wilson suggests in chapter 3, can it really be dismissed as less credible and on what grounds? There is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that a more sensational, popular version of the life of John of Beverley may also have been in circulation. Wilson mentions Julian of Norwich's brief reference to John of Beverley who was a sinner in his youth, the existence of church paintings, images in the margin of a British Library manuscript and a sixteenth-century edition of a Dutch folktale entitled *Historie van Jan van*

*Beverley* all of which contain common elements: a hirsute hermit and a saint doing penance on all fours. Despite taking the time to detail this considerable body of evidence, Wilson dismissed the tradition as less real: 'John's reputation as a pious man of God is certainly the more credible tradition.'

This is an over simplistic statement in a study that otherwise engages well with the constructed nature of hagiography. Wilson points out the way in which Bede shaped the five stories about John around scriptural accounts of Jesus. However, she fails to take into account that Bede may have made his selection from a narrative tradition on John's life that was already well established in the community in which he wrote, to rework it among more classical hagiographic lines. A John that was continent, learned, noble and diplomatic suited Roman values better than the more sensational, folksy account of an incontinent although penitent, back-to-nature, hairy hermit!

Perhaps all of this is to make too much of but one aspect of an otherwise solid and well-written study. However, I do think that it is as important to be aware of the tension between authorised, written tradition and the less tangible, but popular or folk tradition. As Wilson acknowledges, 'in creating this written account of John's virtue, Bede also provides proof of his sanctity and thereby laid the foundation for the written cult'. In the process, Bede both follows and reinforces the values of the establishment, but not necessarily of the community in which the narrative originated. This is a worthwhile contribution to the study of hagiography.

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**Susan D. Thompson**  
*Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas: a Palaeography*

Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies. Vol 6.  
Boydell and Brewer 2006, xiii + 174pp.  
hardback 1 84383 218 6 £45

In this volume (the basis of which was her doctoral thesis), Susan D. Thompson explores 'the one hundred and eighteen presumed original royal Latin diplomas enacted before 1066', her book being 'the first to examine the palaeography of the complete collections' (foreword). Part I is a comprehensive survey of part of the corpus of surviving diplomas, which addresses the issue of authorship of the

diplomas (including 'the thorny question of whether or not there was an Anglo-Saxon chancery') before discussing their physical features, layout and script, concluding with a summary of the features important for dating. Part II consists of a detailed analysis of four representative charters from different periods as well as six 'problem charters', including one which is 'quite unlike any other Anglo-Saxon document' (131).

In her preface, Thompson explains that she restricted her survey to royal diplomas, 'omitting those issued by bishops, other ecclesiastics and lay people', as the whole corpus (even of royal diplomas, which alone comprised 1163 documents) 'proved too unwieldy to deal with adequately in the time available'. Because of this, she admits that 'it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from such a statistically insignificant sample', but says that 'some trends have emerged'. The discussion in chapter 1 ('Who wrote the Anglo-Saxon Charters?') incorporating various views on the existence of an Anglo-Saxon chancery, relies extensively on previous scholarship by those such as David Dumville, P. Chaplais, M. B. Parkes, F. M. Stenton, S. D. Keynes, A. R. Rumble et al. The author inclines to Keynes's view that 'centralized production of charters remained the norm, but there can be no doubt that arrangements were sufficiently flexible to allow some charters to be produced in other circumstances'. And she concludes by quoting Chaplais: 'On the actual identity of the draftsmen and scribes we can only speculate, since the charters themselves do not disclose it' (18).

Chapter 2, as its title suggests ('Physical Features of the Diplomas') describes the documents in detail in terms of their present condition and appearance; folding; hair or flesh side, and pricking and ruling. In chapter 3 ('The Layout of the Documents') Thompson lists sixteen textual elements which appear in some or most of the Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas. She then applies these elements (with illustrations where appropriate) to each of the diplomas under scrutiny. These include such features as the pictorial invocation; the proem; the dispositive clause; the boundary introduction clause; the witness list; the blessing etc.

Chapter 4 is the longest, most detailed and (for this reader) most interesting chapter in an interesting book, dealing as it does with the actual script of the documents. Starting with a ten-page history of writing before 1066, the chapter continues with a discussion (including illustrations from the diplomas) of the various forms of the alphabet (uncial, half-uncial,

majuscule, etc) in use during this period, and goes on to discuss ligatures, orthography, abbreviations (at length) and punctuation. No doubt this information will be of great benefit to future researchers of Anglo-Saxon Latin documents.

Chapter 5 is a short summary of features that may be of use in the dating of Anglo-Saxon documents (size, order of textual elements, style of pictorial invocation, etc.)

As indicated in my introduction to this review, Part II of the book consists of a detailed analysis of four representative charters from different periods (679, 814, 717 and 1018), with four plates (chapter 6) and six more ‘problem’ charters (chapter 7, with a further six plates), all carried out with the thoroughness which typifies the book.

*Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas: a Palaeography* is worthy of its prestigious imprint, and is a valuable, interesting and useful addition to the body of contemporary work on Anglo-Saxon documents.

**Dr Lorraine Taylor**  
**Queen’s University Belfast**

**Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe and Andy Orchard, eds.**

***Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge, volume 1***

University of Toronto Press 2005, xvii + 460pp.

hardback 0 8020 8919 4 (set of 2 vols) \$150 (£96) (set of 2 vols)

As festschrifts and homage volumes go, *Latin Learning and English Lore*, a two-volume collection of essays in honour of Michael Lapidge, is a big one. Its forty essays represent a weighty compliment to and comment on the career of this distinguished Anglo-Saxonist.

To review forty essays at once, however, would hardly do justice to *Latin Learning and English Lore*, whose Latin and vernacular objects of study span the Anglo-Saxon period from its earliest days to the end of the eleventh century. The editors, Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe and Andy Orchard have arranged the collection into two volumes by adopting the conventional division of the period into before and after 900. I follow their lead by reviewing first volume one. My review of volume two will appear in the next issue.

Even to review volume one, however, proves to be something of a challenge. For one thing, there is a dizzying array of topics and methodologies on display—from manuscript,

textual and palaeographical analysis through the study of glosses, Latin metrics, inscriptions, and early medieval theology and vision, and then on to English poetics, law and literature. For another, the contributors are themselves major scholars. Indeed, precisely because the book is formulated both as compliment to and comment on Lapidge’s scholarship, it offers a chance to view the study of the earlier centuries of Anglo-Saxon written culture from the perspective of his impact on the discipline.

It seems inevitable, therefore, that the book opens with Archbishop Theodore (whose importance Lapidge worked hard to establish) and with ‘Anglo-Saxon Glosses to a Theodorean poem?’ by Mechthild Gretsche and Helmut Gneuss. The Theodorean poem in question is the Latin rhyming prayer *Sancte sartor* and the glosses are Old High German *interpretamenta* in Munich, BSB, clm 19410 that, Gretsche and Gneuss argue, derive from older Anglo-Saxon *scholia* and glosses. Nor can it come as much surprise that a further three essays explore the work of the late seventh-century, early eighth-century writer and scholar, Aldhelm. Michael W. Herren kicks the group off with a necessarily cursory, though helpful, survey of Aldhelm’s somewhat predictable views on, for example, the apocrypha, paganism, salvation and so forth in ‘Aldhelm the Theologian.’ As Herren points out, Aldhelm was no theologian but it is possible to reconstruct his position on key theological matters. Aldhelm the poet is more familiar to us, although Paul G. Remley is after Aldhelm the English poet rather than his better attested Latin persona. ‘Aldhelm as Old English Poet: *Exodus*, Asser and the *Dicta Ælfredi*’ takes a fresh look at what evidence there is for Aldhelm’s English poetry. Remley draws our attention back to the Aldhelmian English poem, *Exodus*, and argues that Asser may well be the conduit through which Aldhelm’s reputation as an English poet was channelled to later generations where it would find favour with William of Malmesbury and in the *Dicta Ælfredi*. Knowledge of Aldhelm in the later medieval centuries is enriched by Michael Winterbottom’s identification of a second version of ‘Faricius of Arezzo’s Life of St Aldhelm,’ in Gloucester Cathedral, MS 1. Faricius’s Life was hitherto only known from a single manuscript ((London, BL, Cotton Faustina B. iv) and Winterbottom’s preliminary assessment of the two versions argues that Faustina B. iv may well be a revised version of the longer Gloucester copy. Winterbottom promises a new version of the Life.

Other essays have a similarly preliminary feel. Christopher A. Jones re-examines the case for the attribution of four anonymous and as yet unedited Latin sermons to Candidus Wizo, best known as one of Alcuin's students and author of two more substantial works (the *Opusculum de passione domini* and a treatise on whether Christ—while on earth—was able to see God using his corporeal eyes, *Num Christus corporeis oculis deum uidere potuerit*). The circulation of these little-known sermons now attributed to Candidus, by contrast, seems very limited. Staying with Alcuin, Michael Fox offers an account of Alcuin as teacher in 'Alcuin as Exile and Educator: "uir undecumque doctissimus"' while, by contrast, Simon Keynes encourages us to think about the relation 'Between Bede and the *Chronicle*: London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fols. 104-9.' The three bifolia that comprise fols. 104-9 of this manuscript include, among other things, chronological notes on England, the world, 'useful knowledge' (p. 48), the 'Metrical Calendar of York', lists of the popes and of the seventy-two disciples, Anglo-Saxon episcopal lists and the so-called 'Anglian' royal genealogies. The collection has often been characterized as Mercian though Keynes here makes a plausible case for Canterbury (perhaps even Christ Church, Canterbury). Malcolm Godden offers a careful account of Vatican City, BAV, lat.3363—a ninth-century copy of Boethius's *De consolazione Philosophiae* with glosses in a variety of hands—in 'Alfred, Asser and Boethius.' The essay is a contribution to the ongoing Alfredian Boethius project. Godden demonstrates how the manuscript provides evidence of the study of Boethius in Wales in the ninth century such that Asser may well have known of it and drawn Alfred's attention to it. The manuscript, furthermore, subsequently made its way into the hands of Dunstan, probably at Glastonbury. Patrick Sims-Williams's 'A Recension of Boniface's Letter to Eadburg about the Monk of Wenlock's Vision,' includes an edition (somewhat clumsily presented, it has to be said) of the late twelfth-century copy of this letter in Oxford, BL, Fairfax 17 in an essay that otherwise examines the interesting topic of the circulation of vision collections in the early Middle Ages.

Revision and re-assessment also characterize a number of essays. Mary Garrison returns to the much-debated question of 'Quid Hinieldus cum Christo,' to argue that Alcuin was more worried about the performance of royal propaganda (in the form

of genealogies and praise poems perhaps) at courtly entertainments and about close alliances between the episcopacy and the Mercian royal family than with Ingeld and English poetry *per se*. Neil Wright assesses the relation between Bede's poetic theory in the *De arte metrica* and his practice, as evidenced by the metrical Life of Cuthbert in 'The Metrical Art(s) of Bede' (and not, as the Table of Contents has it, 'The Medical Art(s) of Bede'). The essay makes a compelling case for Bede's deft handling of Latin verse, an accomplishment that he acquired quite early in his career and continued to practice into his later years. Bede's knowledge of King Ceadwalla and especially of the inscription associated with his burial in St Peter's, Rome, is the subject of Richard Sharpe's 'King Ceadwalla's Roman Epitaph'. Sharpe examines the wider textual history of this inscription in epitaph collections both in the early Middle Ages and later. He speculates that Aldhelm (him again) may have travelled with Ceadwalla to Rome after his renunciation of his crown; Aldhelm may thus be responsible for the accurate transmission of the epitaph to England. David N. Dumville tackles the 'troublesome' (p. 307) issue of 'English Script in the Second Half of the Ninth Century,' with a reassessment of the evidence in Northumbria, Mercia and Kent. Evidence from the scriptoria confirms, as we might expect, the impact of Viking assaults and low standards of learning in the Church in the pre-Alfredian reform period. And, in a brief but elegant essay, George Hardin Brown takes us on a tour of the literal and symbolic meanings of the pomegranate in 'Patristic Pomegranates, from Ambrose and Apponius to Bede.' The reversal of meanings for the pomegranate that Brown traces—from the fruit of sexual love in, say, the Song of Songs to that of the fruit of chastity and virginity in, for example, Bede's Commentary on the Songs—demonstrates the elaborate intellectual super-structures built on the natural world by patristic learning in the early Middle Ages.

Andy Orchard's 'Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition' signals the introduction of English texts into volume one of *Latin Learning and English Lore*. Orchard corrects some popular misconceptions about Latin riddle collections—that, for example, these riddles always circulate with their solutions or that only the English riddles include examples of *double entendre*—and he argues for a cross-fertilization of Latin and English traditions from the ninth-century. This is particularly evident in conventions for beginning and ending riddles.

The volume ends with five essays on *Beowulf*. Lapidge's own study of suspense in this poem and his account of its dating are, of course, well known. *Beowulf* finds its place at the end of volume one (the end of the ninth century, then?) on the grounds that, as the editors put it, the 'undeniably self-conscious antiquarianism and retrospection of the poem make it a suitable candidate for inclusion alongside the texts of the Alfredian revival as representative of a point in Anglo-Saxon literary culture that looked both forward and back' (p. 7). Aside from the relatively minor point that there is virtually no attention paid to the works of the Alfredian revival in *Latin Learning and English Lore* other than the important Godden's 'Alfred, Asser and Boethius,' one would be hard pressed to find a point in any period of Anglo-Saxon literary culture that did not look 'both forward and back.' But let's not quibble. No-one, not even Michael Lapidge, can (yet) date the composition of *Beowulf*; before 900 is, in this regard, as just as good as after.

R. D. Fulk proposes solutions to 'Six Cruces in *Beowulf* (lines 31, 83, 404, 445, 1198, and 3074-5),' which are, for the most part, explications of these cruces without emendation of the manuscript. We stay with the manuscript in 'The Merov(ich)ingian Again: *damnatio memoriae* and the *usus scholarum*,' by Tom Shippey. Shippey examines all the known evidence for the name, 'merewioing,' in 2921 and concludes that the poem transmits an accurate early form. This, in turn, tends to support the hypothesis that the poem was composed (very) early, rather than, (much) later in the period. By contrast, Roberta Frank's 'Three 'Cups' and a Funeral in *Beowulf*,' concludes with a thought about the poem's 'refusal to be dated' (p. 414). Frank notes the different layers of meanings for material objects—cups ('bune,' 'orc,' and 'wæge')—and explores how the poem uses them to register a split between past and present worlds. This split is at its most dramatic at the moment of Beowulf's funeral and its re-interment of the dragon's treasure. With Leslie Lockett's 'The Role of Grendel's Arm in Feud, Law, and the Narrative Strategy of *Beowulf*,' we stay with matters of culture and interpretation. The display of Grendel's arm in Heorot, Lockett points out, is a chilling example of the use of suspense by a poem fully aware of the multiple, unpredictable outcomes that may result from legal and illegal feud.

Volume One of *Latin Learning and English Lore* concludes, fittingly, with Nicholas Howe's '*Beowulf* in the House of

Dickens,' and with a nineteenth-century context for this allegedly ninth-century (or earlier, or later) poem. Howe draws our attention to a summary of the poem, drawn largely from Benjamin Thorpe's 1855 edition and translation, which was written by Henry Morley in the 1 May, 1858 issue of *Household Words*, a journal far better associated with Charles Dickens than *Beowulf*. The piece reminds us that the audience for this poem has been and will continue to be, at various times, broad, popular and diverse. The same cannot be said of *Latin Learning and English Lore* but volume one will certainly hold its own as an important scholarly tribute to Michael Lapidge.

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**Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer and Karen Louise Jolly, eds.**  
*The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*

Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 4  
Boydell and Brewer 2006, xx + 171pp.  
hardback, ISBN 1 84383 194 5 £50

This book is the second of three being published by the *Sancta Crux/Halig Rod* project and it brings together essays treating historical, literary, onomastic and material evidence for the role of the cross in Anglo-Saxon England and (briefly) from Wales. There are eleven essays divided into three groups, 'The Cross in the Landscape', 'The Cross in the Church', and 'The Cross in the Text'.

Ian Wood begins with a comparison of Bede's story of Oswald erecting a cross before the battle of Heavenfield, and how that story might have reflected Constantine's vision of a cross before the battle of the Milvian Bridge. He thinks the persistent tradition, in various sources including *Elene* and *The Dream of the Rood*, of the cross being jewelled (*crux gemmata*) might have arisen through contact with early Christian art in Jerusalem.

Elizabeth Coatsworth reviews the standard view of Collingwood that stone crosses in West Yorkshire were influenced in their essential design by Bernician sculpture. She examines some pieces that were not known to Collingwood, and concludes that his theory of the direction of influence is no longer tenable. This article is a tantalising preview of the fuller discussion to come in the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture volumes: it is

well illustrated with photographs of the pieces examined.

Alexander Rumble gives a brief but thorough synopsis of references to the cross in English place-names. The wide range of types of name which might have referred to crosses indicates that they must have been familiar, and have played many roles in the social and spiritual landscape, from shrine to boundary marker. A survey like this cannot be comprehensive since material is still coming to light as onomastic study continues, but it very usefully outlines the range of vocabulary the Anglo-Saxons used.

In the second of the three sections of the book, Inge Milfull deals with the reception and use of Venantius Fortunatus's *Vexilla Regis* in Anglo-Saxon England. In a stimulating essay, she shows that, so far as the evidence goes, *Vexilla Regis* was not used in early Anglo-Saxon liturgies, but that in the late Anglo-Saxon Office it was widely influential.

Karen Jolly deals with the use of the sign of the cross in remedies and rituals of the *Lacnunga* type. She shows that the material in these texts does not readily submit to categorisation: the cross appears in learned and popular sources, in prayer and (what seems like) superstition, in medicine and liturgy. This is interesting and valuable in itself, but she adds a list of sources in which cross-related remedies appear, and a number of texts from the Vitellius Psalter to illustrate the textual overlap.

David Johnson draws together literary sources illustrating the use of the sign of the cross in the Christian's battle against the devil. He gives four general categories: teaching about crossing oneself, use of the sign as protection, use of it for healing, and use of it as a weapon. The narratives here are engaging and the essay rightly concludes that the sign of the cross has been underestimated in criticism of the literature.

An essay by Karolyn Kinane suggests that Ælfric used the example of the cross to help guide his readers from the material realm to the spiritual. The cross unites present with past and future, and physical with metaphysical reality, and so becomes an easily-understood example of how the world might be interpreted even by those with no theological education.

The third section of the volume deals with literary texts. Jane Roberts examines the role of the cross as sign and seal in the Lives of Guthlac in their various forms. In the process she provides a good deal of concise and interesting information on the manuscripts and traditions relating to the saint, and thus not

only adds to the theme of the book, but also illuminates the Guthlac material.

Calvin Kendall's essay revisits Constantine's vision and the Ruthwell cross to suggest that these are images which are later interpreted in the stories of Constantine's battle and *The Dream of the Rood*. The process of interpretation is giving a 'voice' to the image, and thus becomes paradigmatic of the kind of response that the cross (or the church portal, as he also mentions) might have elicited more generally. This is an intriguing thesis.

Elaine Treharne proposes that one of *The Dream of the Rood*'s key themes is baptism. She outlines patristic materials relating the cross and baptism and interprets references to hope and moisture in the poem as signifying baptism. The proposal faces difficulties, however: there are no clear references to baptism in the poem, least of all the phrase *hiht wæs geniwad* (148); by the time it was written, the rite was predominantly administered to infants and connection with the cross and Easter was less significant than in the patristic period; and Treharne's translation of *gedrefed* (20b) as 'drenched', repeated four times, is not one that any of the major dictionaries recognise.

The volume closes with a brief essay by Nick Higham which treats cross references in Welsh 'texts' of the Anglo-Saxon period. The inscription on the Pillar of Eliseg uses the cross in defiance against the English, whereas two other references are more pacific. This essay interestingly situates cross references outside England within a context of political relationships.

This is a wide-ranging and stimulating collection of essays, revisiting old and opening up new ways of understanding the role of the cross. The variety of approaches makes it seem a little miscellaneous at times, but the coherence will be clearer when it is seen as the middle part of the three-volume proceedings of the *Sancta Crux/Halig Rod* project. There is something here to interest every teacher of Old English.

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**Elizabeth M. Tyler**  
**Old English Poetics: The Aesthetics of the Familiar in Anglo-Saxon England**  
York Medieval Press 2006, 208pp  
hardback 1 90315 320 8 £50

In this stimulating book, Tyler re-evaluates some of the 'facts' that we know about Old



English poetics and suggests that these may not mean quite what we thought they did. Her starting point is the familiar issue of the stability of Old English poetic style, which prevailed despite the social and political changes during the centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period, and the consequent difficulty of dating the extant poetry. Rather than accepting the inability to date the poetry as an unfortunate failure of scholarship, Tyler suggests that the poets who wrote this poetry, particularly in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, valued and thus chose a traditional poetic specifically because of its archaism and timelessness. She describes this poetic as 'the aesthetics of the familiar'.

Tyler constrains the scope of her argument by focusing specifically upon the language of treasure, although, as she notes, since treasure is ubiquitous in Old English poetry, this constraint still allows for wide coverage. Treasure is a useful focus since its 'fusion of potentially conflicting values' (18) frequently serves as a central theme in many texts, but, more importantly, the presentation of treasure encapsulates the archaism that characterises Old English poetry. Tyler notes that, although gold was increasingly replaced by silver as the main precious metal after 700 AD, poets avoided it, even in late compositions such as *The Battle of Maldon*. Similarly archaic is the common image of the king as the possessor of a hoard.

At the centre of Tyler's book is her detailed analysis of five key words for treasure (*maðm, hord, sinc, gestreon, frætwe*) and their collocations with other words. Several points arise in the course of this analysis, but perhaps the most interesting is that these terms are not simply interchangeable.

Tyler also addresses formulas and verbal repetition and takes issue with previous analyses of these features of Old English poetry based on oral-formulaic theory. She argues that formulas were not simply utilitarian but rather aesthetic, and that scholars cannot agree on a definition of 'formula' because of the diversity with which poets used tradition. Referring to Rabinowitz's 'rules of notice' (127), she distinguishes between verbal repetition in the foreground and verbal repetition in the background, as well as verbal repetition that cannot easily be categorised in this way, with *Beowulf* proving the main example of such ambiguity. Tyler suggests that the repetition of terms for treasure in *Beowulf* indicate that the poem is a rejection, not a celebration, of the hero (150).

Another key aspect of Tyler's argument is her insistence that traditions are created and maintained by people. Poems are not written by tradition; Old English poets chose to use the particular aesthetic that we observe in their poetry rather than having no other choice but to express themselves in this way. This is an important contrast with much of the scholarship that has grown out of oral-formulaic theory, and an interesting counterpoint to the apparently accretive nature of the extant poetry. In fact, Tyler contends that the diversity of individual poets' responses to their tradition (perhaps most starkly marked by *Beowulf* on one side and the Paris Psalter on the other) testifies not only to their awareness of that tradition but also their ability to look at it from the outside (153). Although I am fully convinced by her depiction of the Old English poetic tradition as one that was flexible, sophisticated, valued, and active as opposed to tired, unthinking, and fossilised, it may be too much to argue that the poets who responded to this tradition could actually stand outside it. Nevertheless, her point regarding the currency and vitality of the Old English poetic tradition, with its aesthetics of the familiar, stands.

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**Stuart D. Lee and Elizabeth Solopva**  
*The Keys of Middle-Earth: Discovering Medieval Literature Through the Fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien*  
Palgrave 2005, xii + 284pp.  
paperback 1-4039-4671-X £15.99

**Marjorie Burns**  
*Perilous Realms: Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle-Earth*  
University of Toronto Press 2005, xii + 225pp.  
paperback 0-8020-3806-9 \$27.95 (£18)

There are so many books on one aspect or another of the relationship between medieval literature and Tolkien's fiction that some genuinely original approach to the subject is required to justify any newcomer to the by-now saturated market. Happily, Lee and Solopova's *The Keys of Middle-Earth* is exactly that, being not so much an exegesis of Tolkien, as an edition or reader of a number of medieval texts and passages which might throw light on aspects of Tolkien's work. The emphasis, however, is firmly on comprehension and appreciation of the texts themselves, with illumination of Tolkien's work as an incidental by-product of the

authors' approach. The aim of the book then, is to harness the curiosity of Tolkien enthusiasts, to use that enthusiasm as a doorway into the world of medieval literature, and to enable a wider audience to read medieval literature for its own sake and interest. As the authors put it, this book does not attempt to provide the keys to Middle-Earth, but the keys of Middle-Earth, so that readers unfamiliar with medieval literature may unlock the world 'in which Tolkien's imagination roamed' for themselves.

To this end, a fifty page introduction prefaces the texts, outlining Tolkien's career as a medievalist and offering concise accounts of Old English, Middle English, and Old Norse (the three languages illustrated in the following reader). These introductory sketches include notes on pronunciation for the novice, as well as a sense of historical context, and basic linguistic characterisation. The minimum technical knowledge essential for an initial exposure to texts in these languages has been well-judged by the authors, and helpful sections on further study direct readers to printed and digital resources should they wish to undertake more detailed studies in any of these fields. Five thematic essays close the introductory section – these deal with the quest, the epic, runes, alliterative verse, and names in medieval literature – so that readers will be able to draw technical and thematic parallels for themselves between the texts they encounter in the edition and Tolkien's fiction. Given the limited space available, these essays are quite detailed, and even advanced students will find much that is insightful and useful, as well as familiar concepts freshly put. The section on Old English verse forms is as good as any other introductory, student-targeted account. Appropriate further reading is always offered.

Forming the core of the book are seventeen texts or passages, mostly of poetry, arranged in the order that one might find them suggestive if one were reading through *The Hobbit* and then *The Lord of the Rings*. These range from more obvious (although essential) choices of teaching texts (three excerpts from *Beowulf*, one from *Maldon*, three of the 'elegies', a passage from *Gawain*, and from *Pearl*) through to more interesting and surprising choices (passages from *Maxims II*, *Solomon and Saturn*, *Voluspá*, and *Ælfric's Homily on the Maccabees*). Each medieval text is preceded by the same discursive apparatus: a brief plot summary of whichever passage of Tolkien the authors think it will illuminate; an introduction to the medieval work, including remarks on its textual condition, genre, style and so on; a 'discussion' section which

indicates some of the ways in which features of the text under scrutiny might be thought to make themselves felt in Tolkien's work. The texts themselves are all presented with facing-page modern English translations, and are followed by the kind of textual and interpretative notes one might expect of any student edition. In terms of presentation it might have been preferable to have these printed as footnotes, below the texts themselves. At present there is quite a bit of flicking back-and-forth with thumbs between pages required, in order to get the most out of the authors' considerable acumen. But one can appreciate how a publisher may not have wanted to litter the texts themselves with too much apparatus, for fear of putting off the non-specialist reader. Undoubtedly, this book will appeal to the auto-didactic Tolkien fanatic, wishing to find out more about the medieval literature that Tolkien professed in his day job, but without the benefit of a university tutor. Were I in such a position, this would be exactly the kind of book I would want. But one can also see how a tutor could easily adopt *The Keys of Middle Earth* as a textbook reader for an alternative kind of medieval literature course, one 'themed' around Tolkien, but in which the main focus remained on the early literature. I will be buying it for my teenage nephew's birthday in the hope of unlocking medieval doorways for him.

*Perilous Realms* by Marjorie Burns, is a more typical contribution to Tolkien studies. It argues that Tolkien's fiction is much more morally and stylistically complex than it is normally given credit for, and that this complexity results out of his habit of doubling characters, situation and attitudes. Burns suggests that Tolkien's recourse to both Celtic and Teutonic medieval literature can be seen as another example of this kind of doubling, and that in seeking a resolution of these two different cultural expressions of 'the north', Tolkien was swimming against a current of nationalist prejudice against Celtic literature and languages. In order to pursue her thesis, Burns treats Celtic and Teutonic medieval literatures as more coherent and stable expressions of culture than many medievalists might be tempted to; she admits early on, for example, to having elided Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon under the term 'Norse', with the justification that 'perhaps because far more Norse literature has survived than Anglo-Saxon, the Norse became the most recognized and most celebrated [during the nineteenth century] of the two'. And in some places Burns seems to have relied on slightly out-of-date medieval scholarship, such as when she

refers to 'the eighth-century, Old English *Beowulf*,' without seeming to be aware that scholars now supporting such an early date would be few in number. Nevertheless, medievalists can only be pleased when colleagues from other fields show an interest in our field and attempt to engage with its literatures. We need to write back, as Stuart Lee and Elizabeth Solopva have done. If not quite hands across the ocean, then at least handing keys across perilous realms.

**Chris Jones**  
**University of St. Andrews**

### **Forthcoming Conferences 2007-2008**

***Preaching in Medieval England***  
**University of Bristol**  
**21 November 2007**

This half-day conference run by the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Bristol will explore the theme of preaching in medieval England. Speakers include Margaret Connolly (St. Andrews), Veronica O'Mara (Hull), and Mary Swan (Leeds). The conference begins at 2.15pm. For further details contact Carolyn Muessig, [c.a.muessig@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.muessig@bristol.ac.uk)

**Association for Manuscripts and Archives  
in Research Collections**  
**Winter Meeting 10 December 2007**

This year's AMARC winter meeting will be held at St. William's College, a medieval hall close to the Minster in York. Speakers include Patrick Cadell, a former Keeper of the Archives of Scotland, the title of whose talk is 'Lost, stolen or strayed: archives as cultural symbol', and Professor Kenneth Morgan of Brunel University, who specialises in the study of archival sources of slavery in the West Indies and America. The programme includes a chance to visit the adjacent facilities of the York Minster Library. For further details contact [rvassie@microform.co.uk](mailto:rvassie@microform.co.uk)

**Educating the Laity: Pastoral Care, c.1200-1600**  
**University of Kent**  
**11 December 2007**

650 years ago this year, the Archbishop of York, John Thoresby, issued a set of instructions to the clergy concerning pastoral care. These instructions were closely modelled

on the earlier Syllabus of Archbishop Pecham (1281), and form part of a tradition of responses to *Omnis utriusque sexus*, Canon 21 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council (1215). Unusually, however, Thoresby's response took the form of a set of Latin instructions and also of an English translation, the so-called *Lay Folks' Catechism*, suggesting a broader concept of his intended audience and of how that audience might be reached. This colloquium, organised by the Canterbury Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent, will revisit the issue of pastoral care, very broadly defined, in England and elsewhere. Topics to be discussed include the form and content of pastoral care manuals; the changing languages of religious instruction; the use of images for lay education; non-Christian religious instruction; the effect of the Reformation on educating the laity; and extending the boundaries of the pastoral care tradition to include other devotional writing and literary works by the *Gawain*-poet, Chaucer, and Gower. For further information contact Sarah James, [s.james@kent.ac.uk](mailto:s.james@kent.ac.uk).

**International Medieval Congress 2008**  
**University of Leeds 7-10 July 2008**

The Institute for Medieval Studies of the University of Leeds will host the fourteenth annual International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds 7-10 July 2008. In addition to the regular IMC strands, the special theme of the 2008 Congress will be 'The Natural World'. Interest in the natural environment is not simply a modern phenomenon. Human identities are defined by their relationship with their natural environment, and human lives depend on natural resources. In medieval Europe the discourse about the natural world was dominated by the Christian religion, but its foundation was much broader, encompassing a rich and varied inheritance from antiquity, including classical natural philosophy, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious thought, as well as pagan and vernacular traditions which formed the basis for the development of new European attitudes towards nature. Aspects of this thematic strand may include: perception of nature and perception of creation; the 'Book of Nature'; natural history and the encyclopaedic tradition; the wilderness in literature, theology and art; climate change and its effect; animal populations; uses of plants and animals in science, medicine and commerce. Full details may be found on the website: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims>

## TOEBI Committee

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

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or consult the web-site: [www.toebi.org.uk](http://www.toebi.org.uk)

## Postdoctoral Research Associate Wanted

The 'English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220' AHRC-funded research project, co-directed by Elaine Treharne and Mary Swan, is advertising for a postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Leicester. Full details can be found at <http://www.le.ac.uk/personnel/jobs/a&r.html> and also at [http://www.jobs.ac.uk/jobs/YX409/Research\\_Associate\\_in\\_Medieval\\_Studies/](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/jobs/YX409/Research_Associate_in_Medieval_Studies/)

Please circulate this note to any colleagues or recent PhD graduates who might be interested in applying.

## Action points for Members

- **For information about the October 2007 TOEBI meeting** please contact Dr Richard Dance [rwd21@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rwd21@cam.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
  - Useful websites for teaching Old English

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Don't just file your copy of the TOEBI Newsletter away or put it in the bin. When you've finished reading it why not pass it on to a colleague who is not a member, or to one of your postgraduate students? Better still, leave it in the staff common room so that other faculty members can find out what goes on in the world of Old English studies.

## Send submissions for the next Newsletter by 31 March 2008 to the Editor

[A new Editor will be appointed at the October meeting]