



TOEBI Newsletter

TEACHERS OF OLD ENGLISH IN BRITAIN AND
IRELAND

ISSUE XXII SPRING 2006 ISSN 1649-3532

TOEBI Conference and AGM 2005

The 2005 conference was held in the Institute of Byzantine Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, and was hosted by Hugh Magennis. The theme was 'TOEBI Now: Fifteen Years On'. There was a record attendance of 42 people.

Following coffee and registration, the conference opened at 10.30a.m. with an introduction and welcome from Hugh. In his opening remarks he explained that it was almost exactly fifteen years from the inauguration of TOEBI, the first meeting having been held on 17 November 1990.

The morning session of papers was begun by Chris Jones who spoke in a lively and interesting way about the place of Old English in an English department and about co-operation between English staff of different disciplines. This was followed by Graham Caie who compared the teaching of Old English in the UK and Ireland with that in continental universities, with particular reference to Glasgow and Copenhagen. He spoke among other things of a split between teaching and research in some institutions and mentioned the possible future impact of the Bologna Agreement. In her paper, Clare Lees commented *inter alia* on the way that literary criticism of Old English seems to be vanishing from undergraduate syllabuses, seen both in the courses offered and in the lack of many such books stocked by London bookshops serving the undergraduate community.

An extremely lively discussion followed these presentations. As Hugh Magennis pointed out, delegates seemed reasonably optimistic about the place of Old English compared to its position fifteen years ago. However the future is likely to bring new challenges. Among other things it was suggested that Old English may have to fit either into the model of a large research centre or into that of an English Department. Can Old English really survive with a foot in both

campus, as it were? Can TOEBI be an effective pressure group?

Following an extremely good lunch, the afternoon session was chaired by Ivan Herbison and consisted of three more excellent papers, by Philippa Semper, Gale Owen-Crocker and Christine Thijs. Philippa discussed some of the differences between a knowledge-based module and a research-based module and suggested that there were clear pedagogic advantages for the Old English undergraduate in the latter. In a lively manner, Gale described some of her own experiences using Anglo-Saxon women as a theme in teaching inter-disciplinary modules and using a workshop approach. Finally Christine described some of the student reactions she had encountered to the teaching of Old English in University College Dublin. A further enthusiastic discussion followed these papers.

The last session of the day was a discussion led by Elaine Treharne on Old English and the AHRC. In her initial remarks, Elaine underlined various tensions that could arise around the issue of funding. For example, academics are under pressure to produce books, for the sake of research ratings, and also to bring in research money, but these two pressures are not always pulling in the same direction. Again, collaboration may help to procure funding, but some people prefer to work on their own. In the full discussion that followed, both the role of the individual and the role of TOEBI were discussed. Elaine pointed out that Graham Caie is closely involved with the AHRC and Graham said that he was happy to answer any questions sent to him by members. Amongst possible roles for TOEBI, it was suggested that we might: report on interesting projects; help colleagues put proposals together; disseminate project proposals and ideas; link up colleagues in various institutions. Elaine concluded in her summing up that those of us involved in Old English teaching must play on our strengths and, in particular, she stressed the

collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of Old English studies.

The conference concluded with tea and was followed by the AGM. Reports were made by the Chair, the Secretary, the Awards' coordinator, the Newsletter editor, and by Mary Swan concerning the Ramsay Rutherford bequest. The following decisions were taken:

- the new committee was approved
- TOEBI is to send £100 again this year to the Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust
- Mary is to ask if any TOEBI member would like to house certain miscellaneous items from the Ramsay Rutherford bequest in their institutions.

Hugh Magennis deserves TOEBI's special thanks for organising such a pleasant occasion, with lively papers, fruitful discussion, a delicious lunch and even, as he himself acknowledged, perfect weather laid on specially for the day.

Elisabeth Okasha
Secretary

TOEBI CONFERENCE 2006

The TOEBI Conference 2006 is to be held in Leicester on 28 October 2006, hosted by Jayne Carroll. The theme will be 'Collaboration'. This is the same day as the Brixworth lecture and members will have the opportunity to attend it also. The 2007 conference will be held in Cambridge.

TOEBI Conference Awards 2006

TOEBI has set aside funding to help postgraduate students to attend conferences. 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.

Please note the following restrictions:

- the award is open only to postgraduate students
- only costs related to attending conferences are eligible for support
- to be eligible for an award, it is necessary to be a member of TOEBI, but it is permissible to join at the time of application: go to www.toebi.org.uk

The closing date for applications is **30 June 2006**. Applications will be assessed by TOEBI's executive committee. Notification of awards will be made by 7 July 2006.

TOEBI's executive committee will make awards according to the following criteria:

- priority will be given to applicants attending conferences in this academic year (i.e. 2005-6)
- although past award-winners are eligible to apply, priority may be given to applicants who have not previously received an award from TOEBI
- although presenting a paper is not a requirement for an award, preference may be given to those presenting papers
- awards are normally given only for attendance at conferences concerned with Old English or which contribute to Old English studies.

To apply for a TOEBI Conference Award please complete the application form, which is available at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/english/old-english/toebi_2006.html

Successful award winners will be asked to report back on the experience gained from the award. These reports (of approximately 300 words) will be included in the TOEBI Newsletter. They should be submitted to the editor, Dr Margaret Connolly at mc29@st-andrews.ac.uk by 31 March 2007.

Jennifer Neville
Royal Holloway, University of London

TOEBI Conference Awards (again!)

Since we have just issued the call for applications to the TOEBI Conference Awards scheme, now in its third year of operation, I thought it might be illuminating to hear the views of some of last year's successful applicants. In the 2005 competition we made four awards of £150 each. The successful applicants were Abdullah Alger (University of Manchester); Erika Corradini (University of Leicester); Pirkko Koppinen (Royal Holloway, University of London); and Francis Leneghan (Trinity College, Dublin). TOEBI's sponsorship resulted in a varied range of presentations at the Leeds IMC and elsewhere. For example, Abdullah Alger gave a paper on the poem *Judith* which was based on research for his MA; and Francis Leneghan used the grant to attend the MANCASS postgraduate

conference on Anglo-Saxon books and libraries where he delivered a paper entitled 'Making sense of Ker's dates: the origins of *Beowulf* and the palaeographers', which was based on a chapter of his doctoral thesis.

I asked all four awardees for some feedback on the TOEBI awards, using a simple format of six questions, and inviting other comments as well. My first question asked whether attending the conference had made a difference to the awardees' research, and if so in what way. Most of the awardees commented on the importance of presenting their research to a specialised audience of Anglo-Saxonists, and the usefulness of the questions and feedback which followed. Pirkko Koppinen noted that hearing other papers at the conference was useful too, in terms of learning about new research. All the respondents also mentioned the experience of meeting and talking with other scholars, both established and more junior, and were clearly aware of the importance of networking in terms of both research and career development.

There was a general consensus that the TOEBI awards had been helpful in defraying conference expenses, including travel. For international students in particular, subventions for such events can prove difficult to find, and TOEBI's inclusiveness in this regard is obviously appreciated. Pirkko Koppinen mentioned that receiving the award was also 'a boost of confidence'. I also asked whether the amount awarded (£150 in 2005) was enough to make a real difference, or whether we should rethink the upper limit. The awardees all felt that the sum awarded had been sufficient ('just right' was Erika Corradini's verdict). There was no support at all for my suggestion that perhaps it might be better if TOEBI allocated fewer larger awards; Francis Leneghan commented that he did not think that this would be beneficial, and that it was more important to encourage as many people as possible to attend such conferences, even if that meant more, *smaller* awards.

None of the awardees felt that the scheme could be improved, though the TOEBI committee might try to take account of one sensible suggestion regarding the timing of awards, which was that it would be helpful if the results of the competition were announced before the main conference season, with monies also allocated before the summer conferences take place.

It is probably too early for awardees to assess whether receiving a grant from TOEBI might benefit their careers in other ways, though at least one of the awardees is preparing their paper for publication. Francis

Leneghan commented that the award had allowed him to make contacts in MANCASS and beyond which were proving beneficial to his research.

Finally, I asked the awardees what else they thought that TOEBI could do specifically to help postgraduate students or early-career teachers and researchers of Old English. Abdullah Alger suggested that TOEBI could offer sponsorship to events such as postgraduate conferences, adding that this would 'put a face on the organization'. Another interesting idea came from Pirkko Koppinen who suggested that TOEBI might organize sessions on the teaching of Old English or workshops on related issues. Some such event would be similar to our annual conference, but aimed at a rather different audience, and it might be possible to do something like this in conjunction with the Higher Education Academy, or with the assistance of the AHRC. Both suggestions seem worthy of discussion at the AGM.

Margaret Connolly

English Manuscripts 1060-1220 PhD studentships

Two funded PhD studentships, starting in autumn 2006, are available to UK and EU nationals, to work on topics related to the 'English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220' project, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and co-directed by Elaine Trehearne of the University of Leicester and Mary Swan of the University of Leeds. Full details are available on the Project website: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ee/em1060to1220/>

The deadline for receipt of full applications is 26 May 2006. Please pass on this information to any students who might be interested in applying, to colleagues, and to any relevant distribution lists.

Exam Howlers

We all hope that the current pay dispute and the AUT's 'action short of a strike' will reach a settlement soon, not least because the Editor is looking forward to receiving some exam howlers relating to Old English. A selection of the most entertaining will be printed in the autumn issue.

Changing Faces

Congratulations (again!) to Alice Jorgensen (née Cowen) who has been appointed to a permanent lectureship at Trinity College Dublin, with effect from 1 February 2006.

Karen Smyth has moved from Queen's University Belfast to take up a lectureship in Middle English Literature at the University of Nottingham. And Stephen Kelly has been appointed to a permanent lectureship in English at Queen's Belfast.

Congratulations to Simon Horobin (University of Glasgow) on his appointment to a fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford. Simon's monograph, *The Language of the Chaucer Tradition* (Brewer, 2003) was recently awarded the Beatrice White Prize by the English Association. Simon will be taking up the fellowship in October 2006. Also leaving Glasgow is Takako Kato, who has taken up a 2-year post in the Centre for Textual Studies at De Montfort University, with effect from March 2006.

Congratulations to Gale Owen-Crocker (University of Manchester) on her appointment as Professor of Anglo-Saxon Culture.

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.

Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies Report 2005-6

This year's speakers were Dr Daniel Anlazark, University of Durham, on 'Snakes and adders: Grendel's mere and the poisoned places tradition in Old English literature'; Dr Catherine Hills, University of Cambridge, on 'Pattern or symbol? Anglo-Saxon pottery stamp designs in the context of the North Sea Migration period'; and Dr Carole Biggam, University of Glasgow, on 'The Colour Purple in Anglo-Saxon England'.

The Toller Lecture was given by Professor Roy Liuzza, University of Tennessee, who spoke on 'The Sense of Time in Anglo-Saxon England'. This lecture will be

published in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*.

The second MANCASS Graduate Students Conference was held in March, in conjunction with the Toller Lecture. The conference was again organized by Abdullah Alger and can be considered a great success. The topic was 'Saints' Lives in Anglo-Saxon England', and the keynote speaker was Mary Swan (Leeds). The graduate student speakers were Alexandra Bolintineanu (Toronto), Victoria Bristow (Nottingham), Paul Hilliard (Cambridge), Petra Hofmann (St. Andrews), Christopher Monk (Manchester), Letty Nijhuis (Cork), Rebecca Pickin (Birmingham), Dolores Perez Raja (Murcia).

The topic of the March 2007 conference will be: 'Literature and History in Anglo-Saxon England'. Do encourage your postgraduate students to take part. Just coming along to observe and to feel part of the Anglo-Saxon community is a valuable experience for new postgraduates, while reading a paper and having it refereed, edited and published on CD is a significant step towards an academic career. For further information contact Abdullahalger@hotmail.com. The 2007 Toller Lecturer will be Allen Frantzen.

The MANCASS Easter Conference April 2006 was on 'Royal Authority: Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England'. The conference excursion was to Repton. The conference was directed by Gale Owen-Crocker. The MANCASS Easter Conference 11-13 April 2007 on the topic 'Anglo-Saxon Landscapes' will be directed by Nick Higham. Proposals (title + 50-100 word summary) by 1 November 2006 should be sent to:

Nick.J.Higham@manchester.ac.uk
or tel. 0161 275 3114.

The most recent publications in the MANCASS series are:

G.R. Owen-Crocker, ed., *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005.

C.E. Karkov, S.L. Keefer and K.L. Jolly, ed., *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006.

The following publication is forthcoming:

S. Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006.

And finally, some news: Don Scragg has received a British Academy grant to continue work on the Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon Scribes and Script Project.

Gale Owen-Crocker
University of Manchester

Quadrivium Project Update

As reported in the last *Newsletter*, the Quadrivium Project is an AHRC-funded initiative in subject-specific doctoral training in the field of Medieval English Textual Cultures. The definition of Medieval English Textual Cultures is inclusive, covering Language, Palaeography and Codicology, Textual Criticism and Editorial Practices, Socio-Historical Contexts and Theoretical Contexts. The Project is hosted by the University of Glasgow and run in partnership with several institutions: Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Birmingham, Queen Mary University of London, the University of Leicester, and the University of York. The intention is to develop materials and orientation useful for many UK universities where medieval texts are studied, and to make this accessible via the Project's website: <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/quadrivium>.

The first Quadrivium Symposium was held at the Department of English Language in Glasgow on 3-4 November 2005. The meeting was attended by nine members of the Project team and twenty-two postgraduate student participants who came from as far afield as Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Queen's Belfast, Queen Mary London, and York. On the first evening, after the opening address and welcome by Takako Kato, there was a lively round-table discussion on the topic 'What is "Medieval Textual Cultures"?'. There then followed an excellent buffet supper and an evening of socialising. The hard work of the event really took place on the Friday with a series of three master classes: the first on palaeography, led by Linne Mooney; the second on linguistic perspectives, led by Jeremy Smith; and the third on textual criticism, led by Peter Robinson and Margaret Connolly. Participants also enjoyed a guided tour of the Hunterian collection at Glasgow University Library, with the opportunity to see and handle a large number of medieval manuscripts and early printed books. The Hunterian Library is one of the finest eighteenth-century libraries to survive intact. It was assembled by Dr William Hunter (1718-83), an anatomist, teacher of medicine, and royal physician, who was a collector of coins, medals, paintings, and shells, as well as books and manuscripts (for further information see the library's website:

<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/collection/hunterian.html>). The day ended with an open discussion on how to write a PhD in Medieval English Textual Studies, led by Wendy Scase. Subsequently much of the content of the two-

day event has been uploaded on the Project website, so that participants and any other interested students can access, for example, Linne Mooney's checklist of what to look for when examining a medieval manuscript, or follow bibliographical suggestions on language or textual criticism. It is hoped that this resource will prove especially useful to doctoral students who have to work in comparative isolation, as for instance in those cases where students are working with the only medievalist in their department (or even in their university).

A second Quadrivium symposium, which will follow up on issues raised at the first, is planned for the autumn of 2006; the venue is still to be decided.

Margaret Connolly

Old English in New York

On the Anglo-Saxon Studies Colloquium A Brief Report on a (New) New York Community

A delightful thing is brewing in New York City, and it is even bubbling over into New Jersey. Before I get any further, though, I should assure you that I am not referring to mead. Rather, I would like to share some of my experiences from working with the newly-formed and most congenial Anglo-Saxon Studies Colloquium (ASSC). I am writing, in part, to inform more students and scholars about the amazing opportunities for Anglo-Saxonists in New York, but I also hope that more cities will find themselves as centres for the study of Anglo-Saxon, with groups of universities modelling their interaction on this wonderful organization. The ASSC was formed in the fall of 2004 in order to provide a setting and community for people interested in Anglo-Saxon England. It is comprised of professors and graduate students from four universities: Rutgers, Princeton, NYU, and Columbia. But one does not need to be a member of these four institutions or even a graduate student in order to become involved. An interest - even a casual interest - in Anglo-Saxon England is enough.

The ASSC has been made possible by the dedication of its founding faculty. Drs Stacy Klein, Kathleen Davis, Hal Momma, and Patricia Dailey form the core, and with help from people like Mary Kate Hurley, a second-year graduate student at Columbia, they organize various lectures and events

throughout the year. At one of these events, a roundtable discussion on the “sylv” in Anglo-Saxon England, I was introduced to this friendly group. Since then, I have become involved in a number of events, such as the recent graduate student conference on “Friendship and Community” - a topic I initially suggested based on my experience in this particular community. Immensely stimulating to all who attended, the conference drew about thirty-five people, some of whom came from as far away as Chicago and the state of Washington.

In the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, which normally boasts only one representative at a given university, it is becoming more important to increase interaction and dialogue not only within, but also among, universities. Of course, New York City is particularly conducive to such interaction; but, even though the ASSC brings together every Anglo-Saxonist in the New York area, it also extends far beyond its own region. This year alone we have heard lectures by outstanding scholars in the field, including Nicholas Howe from the University of California, Berkeley; Allen Frantzen from Loyola University in Chicago; and Roy Liuzza from the University of Tennessee. Furthermore, the ASSC does not merely interact with scholars in the United States. This past month the ASSC crossed the Atlantic to host, in conjunction with Clare Lees and King’s College, the “Anglo-Saxon Futures” conference in London. This conference was also a huge success, attracting people from not only the UK, but also as far as the West Coast of the United States.

As the title of the UK conference suggests, the ASSC is concerned with the future of Anglo-Saxon studies. While the UK conference was mostly geared towards a discussion of new modes for studying Old English, the ASSC invests in a different sort of Anglo-Saxon future as well. It is immediately evident that the organization focuses primarily on graduate students, but also on undergraduates; they welcomed me into the community along with a number of other undergraduates such as John Wolitz and Hanna Elmer who are students at Rutgers and Columbia, respectively. Certainly, every American undergraduate in the humanities encounters *Beowulf* on at least one occasion (we hope), and students of English might encounter actual Old English in a medieval literature survey course. However, there is actually a surprisingly large group of undergraduates who have devoted their attention towards this particular field despite the fact that most American curricula skip over

the Anglo-Saxon period as swiftly as the men and their camels cross the river after stealing gold from the gigantic ants in *The Wonders of the East*. Occasionally, I even surprise myself with how quickly my interest has developed, and I believe it is almost exclusively due to the existence of the ASSC.

The presence of undergraduates within the ASSC does not make the organization any less serious or scholarly. In fact, we are often spoken to and regarded as though we were graduate students, and that is perhaps one of the most encouraging aspects of this community. Soon after my first encounter with the Old English (an attempt at teaching myself the language), I was introduced to the ASSC by my professor, Martha Driver. Knowing very little about Old English and even less about the culture, I was still treated as a peer by the graduate students and as an interested student by the professors (as one might expect). Organizations like ASSC, which allow students to spend Friday evenings listening to lectures and enjoying wine and cheese receptions, might not immediately catch an undergraduate’s attention; but, there is something about the ASSC that consistently attracts a room full of students and scholars. And, these rooms are consistently filled to the brim with an air of energy and enthusiasm. Beyond these events, having access to more than four professors who focus their studies on Anglo-Saxon England and a host of graduate students who do the same is quite possibly the best opportunity any student of Old English could ask for. Through the Anglo-Saxon Studies Colloquium, I have found my métier, and I am confident that through this community and others like it many more students and scholars will develop a much deeper interest in and appreciation for Anglo-Saxon England. Without a doubt, it is an exciting time to be an Anglo-Saxonist in New York. For more information on the ASSC and future events please visit our website www.columbia.edu/cu/assc.

Benjamin Saltzman
Pace University, New York City
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Teaching the Reading of Texts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Last October Jonathan Gibson, the academic co-ordinator for the English Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy, contacted

TOEBI seeking a volunteer to participate in a one-day seminar on the topic of the teaching of texts. The Higher Education Academy was founded in May 2004. It is an independent organisation funded by grants from the four UK funding bodies, subscriptions from higher education institutions, and grant and contract income for specific initiatives. It organizes annual conferences on teaching and learning, makes awards for excellence in teaching, and publishes teaching guides and resources through its website.

The seminar on 'Teaching the Reading of Texts' was held at the University of Glasgow on 7 December 2005, and was an interdisciplinary meeting organized by three of the Academy's subject centres: English; History, Classics, and Archaeology; and Philosophical and Religious Studies. As academics in the Humanities, we spend much of our time grappling with the meanings of texts which are often obscure, and sometimes downright difficult. Texts, short and long, in their original language and in translation, play a central part in our academic practice - and in our teaching practice. Many students, particularly in disciplines other than English, have been taught to use books rather than to read texts, and increasingly students do not devote their studies to a single discipline; how then are they to become proficient in the interpretation and understanding of these demanding materials? The seminar was intended to address some of these issues, and the basic idea of the day was to compare notes on the ways in which humanities academics teach texts. The presentations and discussions covered topics such as: teaching from translations; the long text; cross-disciplinary understanding; the possibilities of teaching texts at post-graduate level.

After a welcome from Colin Brooks (University of Glasgow), there was a brief 'Speed Dating' session where participants paired up to analyse two short previously-circulated texts. Pairs were drawn from different disciplines, which immediately highlighted the very different approaches to texts taken by historians, literary historians and critics, and philosophers; the exercise also had the added advantage of helping to break the ice and get everyone talking!

This was followed by the first presentation 'Encouraging Students to Read', which focussed on two extremes of the learning perspective. Keith Crome (Philosophy, Manchester Metropolitan University) spoke of his experiences teaching texts to a very large first-year philosophy class, most of whom would not continue with the

subject. Catherine Steel (Classics, University of Glasgow) talked about reading Greek in the original with small groups of postgraduate students, many of whom would not have great linguistic competence from their first degree since many undergraduate programmes in classics now place greater emphasis on cultural studies and the reading of classical texts in translation. Since both philosophy and Greek are now, like medieval literature, effectively *ab initio* subjects at university level, there was much common ground that could be shared here between the different disciplines.

After lunch my own presentation 'Dealing with Translations' covered the kinds of approaches that I have relied upon when introducing first-year students to medieval literature. I used a selection of original extracts from Middle English verse and prose to demonstrate the importance of reading aloud, and the familiarity of many words and expressions. I also used some passages from *Beowulf*, juxtaposed with a selection of different translations in both prose and verse, to demonstrate the range of choices open to the translator, and the issues involved in relying upon translations for access to the text's meaning. The day then concluded with a workshop and discussion led by David Jasper (Theology and Literature, University of Glasgow) which tried to explore other issues which have an impact on the teaching of texts, such as the availability of suitable editions, the place of electronic texts, and the best ways to assess student reading.

For a more detailed report of this workshop see <http://tinyurl.com/fqfws>. The Academy also plans to follow up the issues and topics raised at this event. For information about future initiatives, visit the website www.heacademy.ac.uk, or contact Jonathan Gibson at the English Subject Centre (jonathan.gibson@rhul.ac.uk) or Colin Brooks at the Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology (c.brooks@arts.gla.ac.uk)

Margaret Connolly

Old English Coursepack

As part of an English Subject Centre project, the University of Oxford has worked on a simple-to-use online coursepack for Old English which is available for anyone to use at: www.english.ox.ac.uk/coursepack/. It brings together some of the main 'set texts' in Old English used by UK universities. Each text has a running gloss with links to further notes,

translations, images, explanatory articles,
online journals and so on.

Recent Books

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 Medieval Studies 4

Boydell and Brewer, 2006. xx + 171 pp

hardback 1 84383 194 5 £50 (\$90)

The cross in early medieval England was so ubiquitous as to become invisible to the modern eye, and yet it played an innovative role in Anglo-Saxon culture, evident in art, architecture, material culture, literature, ritual, medicine, and popular practice. This is the second of three volumes produced by Sancta Crux/Halig Rod, an interdisciplinary project that sponsored seminars and conference sessions between 2001 and 2003. The essays in this volume move us from the place of the cross in the origins of Anglo-Saxon England and the Anglo-Saxon church, to its place in the expansion of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms both within and beyond England. They reach back to the sources, both material and textual, of Early Christian Rome and Jerusalem, and forward to the visionary cross of the Last Judgement. Perhaps most importantly, these papers challenge existing notions of the development of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, the patronage and audiences of Anglo-Saxon texts, the use of sources, physical and cultural geography and the Anglo-Saxon imagination. In doing so they make important contributions not only to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon England and the place of the cross within it, but also to our understanding of the place of Anglo-Saxon England within the medieval world.

Contents:

Ian N. Wood: 'Constantinian Crosses in Northumbria'

Elizabeth Coatsworth: 'The Cross in the West Riding of Yorkshire'

Alexander Rumble: 'The Cross in English Place-Names: Vocabulary and Usage'

Inge B. Milfull: 'Hymns to the Cross: Contexts for the Reception of *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*'

Karen Louise Jolly: 'Tapping the Power of the Cross: Who and for Whom?'

David F. Johnson: 'The *Crux Usualis* as Apotropaic Weapon in Anglo-Saxon England'

Karolyn Kinane: 'The Cross as Interpretative Guide for Aelfric's Homilies and Saints' Lives'

Jane Roberts: 'Guthlac of Crowland and the Seals of the Cross'

Calvin B. Kendall: 'From Sign to Vision: the Ruthwell cross and the *Dream of the Rood*'

Elaine Treharne: 'Hiht waes geniwad': Rebirth in *The Dream of the Rood*'

Nicholas Higham: 'The Cross in Cambro-Latin Historical Writing in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries'

Special Offer

Boydell is offering a special discount on this publication exclusively for TOEBI members. Save £25% on the full published price of £50.00 and pay just £37.50 with FREE postage. Order directly from Boydell & Brewer: tel. 01394 610 600, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF. Or order on-line at www.boydell.co.uk/souk.htm. In all cases please be sure to quote the reference number **06094**.

Also newly-available from Boydell & Brewer:

Nicola F. McDonald, ed.

Medieval Obscenities

York Medieval Press/Boydell and Brewer, 2006. 256 pp.

hardback 1 90315 318 2 £40 (\$80)

Obscenity is, if nothing else, controversial. Its definition, consumption and regulation fires debate about the very meaning of art and culture, law, politics and ideology. And it is often, erroneously, assumed to be synonymous with modernity. *Medieval Obscenities* examines the complex and contentious role of the obscene - what is offensive, indecent or morally repugnant - in medieval culture from late antiquity through to the end of the Middle Ages in western Europe. Its approach is multidisciplinary, its methodologies divergent and it seeks to formulate questions and stimulate debate. The nine essays examine topics as diverse as Norse defecation taboos, the Anglo-Saxon sexual idiom, sheela-na-gigs, impotence in the church courts, base ecclesiastical bottoms, rude sounds and dirty words, as well as the modern reception and representation of the medieval obscene. They demonstrate not only the vitality of medieval obscenity, but its centrality to our understanding of the Middle Ages and ourselves. Contributors are: Michael Camille, Glenn Davis, Emma Dillon, Simon Gaunt, P.J.P. Goldberg, Eamonn Kelly, C. Larrington, Alastair J. Minnis, Danuta Shanzer.

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. If you would be interested in reviewing for the TOEBI *Newsletter* please let the Editor know.

Andy Orchard

A Critical Companion to Beowulf

D.S. Brewer, 2003. xix + 396 pp.

paperback (2005) 1 84384 029 4 £19.99 (\$35)

Andy Orchard's *Companion* attempts two rather different things: first, it tries to be a reference book reviewing and referencing the most important scholarship relating to the poem; second, it endeavours to bring together a whole range of stylistic, metrical and source-study techniques in new or close readings of selected passages and themes. In some ways, the book most closely resembles Chambers' *Beowulf: an Introduction to the Study of the Poem*, or indeed, Klaeber's introduction to his edition, an indication of the writer's ambition.

The seven main chapters (a Foreword and Afterword not included) are titled 'Manuscript and text', 'Style and structure', 'Myth and legend', 'Religion and learning', 'Heroes and villains', 'Words and deeds', and '*Beowulf*: beyond criticism?' There are several tables, three substantial appendices on the foliation and formulas of the poem, plus a solid bibliography and indices.

The first of these is a close examination of the manuscript context which points up very interesting matters about the relation of the poem to the other works in the manuscript; it also reviews the processes involved in arriving at a text, including restoration and emendation of the manuscript readings. Orchard impressively deploys statistical and palaeographical reasoning here to explain and critique the approaches editors take to the task of producing a text.

'Style and structure' examines the sounds, syntactic patterns, lexical resources, variation, formulas and fitt-divisions of *Beowulf*. This is perhaps the chapter that shows Orchard at his best, outlining the wide-ranging and sensitive approach he consistently takes in the remaining chapters. 'Myth and legend' looks at the layered sense of the past in the poem and the possibility that the poet constructed the stories of *Beowulf* with earlier, possibly divine mythical characters in mind. Though Orchard gives a careful and nuanced

view here, this reviewer sensed that his heart was not really in this particular enterprise. The next chapter covers a range of sources and analogues from the Latin tradition: the classics, the Bible, the Fathers and hagiography. Orchard makes a useful distinction between sources and analogues (p. 132, note 12) and then outlines some of those proposed for the poem. He is generally judicious here, avoiding large claims and opting mostly for reportage.

'Heroes and villains' is a detailed analysis of the Finnsburgh episode and fragment, and of the Grendels, particularly Grendel's mother. This chapter shows another of Orchard's great strengths, the way he brings out the similarities and parallels between seemingly disparate parts of the text. The final major chapters, 'Words and deeds' and '*Beowulf*: beyond criticism?', discuss mostly the speeches of the poem, returning to Orchard's preferred mode of close reading, and touching on the overall meaning of the poem and the way it makes its impact on the audience.

There are faults: rather numerous typos or spelling errors (*-bourne* as the past participle of 'bear', pp. 103, 105 and 145, for example); but the one on p. 49, *that that* for 'than that' so delightfully illustrates the 'apparent errors that remain unemended by the scribe' which is the subject of the discussion that it is worth keeping. Orchard is also rather fond of formulas: Scyld's 'mysterious departure' appears several times (his arrival may be mysterious, but his departure really isn't); the speeches of the poem are 'carefully choreographed' (pp. 205, 208, 214, 227, 261 and more) just too many times for comfort; the idiom 'fall from grace' is twice used misleadingly on p. 178. A couple of times one sense that Orchard has misunderstood or not really analysed the text: 'it seems unclear why such a character [as the man who steals from the dragon's mound] should be regarded as "undoomed"' (p. 257: well, because he survived); and the emendation of (Thorkelin's readings) of *helle* to *healle* in *Beowulf*'s speech to Unferth, line 588, on the grounds that the (possibly) original reading is the work of a 'christianising scribe' (p. 253), needs more analysis of context and lexis (*sealt* is loosely translated 'shall', for example, and there is no examination of the semantics of *werhço*).

But these things are rather insignificant. Orchard's book could have been twice as long without losing its interest. It outlines, usually in terms that will be accessible to students, a wide range of critical

issues, and in the process models ways of evaluating the available opinions. The book has traditional critical concerns at heart, and barely nods in the direction of the postmodern (women are important but not gender issues, for example). The close readings are for me the meat of the book, engaging the text on its own terms, and bringing refreshing insights into the poet's technique and meaning. It achieves the two aims mentioned at the beginning by the simple expedient of reviewing scholarship mainly via the footnotes, and keeping the more personal, and engaging, approach to the main text.

I think this is a landmark study, like those of Chambers and Klaeber mentioned earlier, and even if one occasionally disagrees with Orchard, his *Companion* is likely to be the reference one turns to for succinct and intelligent treatment of many issues in the poem.

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Peter Hunter Blair
An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England
3rd edition, with a new introduction by Simon Keynes
Cambridge UP, 2003. xxxv + 384 pp.
hardback 0 52183 085 0 £55 (\$75)
paperback 0 52153 777 0 £19.99 (\$29.99)

The late Peter Hunter Blair's *Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*, first published in 1956 and revised in 1977, has long since earned its place as a classic undergraduate textbook on its subject. It is here reissued in what is somewhat questionably called a 'third edition'. The main text is reprinted without alteration, with the familiar chapters on political history, the Church, government, economy and 'letters' (which Hunter Blair takes to include language and art history); the new matter consists of an extended introduction by Simon Keynes, outlining developments in research and changes in approach since 1977, and a thoroughly revised bibliography, now including electronic as well as printed sources. How does the book stand up nearly twenty-five years after its author's death?

It must be said at once that the passage of time has only made more obvious the book's remarkable qualities: the awareness of all parts of a society as an interconnected whole, and the ability to track their development over a long and often obscure period; a comprehensive use of evidence of every kind; and throughout a strong feeling for

material culture, most obviously evident in the descriptions of churches, fortresses and inscribed stones. (This last feature has its dangers, for Hunter Blair sometimes shows little awareness of the intangible: his chapter on 'The Church', for example, completely ignores habits of devotion and spirituality.)

When one turns to the detail, however, there is inevitably need for revision. The very cover illustration, showing the Repton Stone, is a case in point: the Stone was unearthed only after the last edition was published. But the many new archaeological discoveries are only part of the story. As Keynes points out, new topics of research have been broached in recent years, and new agendas set, and most of these are of course absent from Hunter Blair's book. Most noticeably, women play little part in it; but the reader will also need to look elsewhere for discussions of (say) the excavations at Yeavering and *Hamwic*, the school of Theodore and Hadrian, or even of primary text likes the law-codes, charter and penitentials, all of which have come under renewed scrutiny.

Unfortunately, the chapter to which most readers of the *Newsletter* will turn first, that on 'Letters', is also the most problematic. Vernacular poetry is generously covered, in an account which ranges far beyond the usual text, but Hunter Blair's critical approach was old-fashioned even in the fifties, and some texts now seen as central are omitted or inadequately treated: *Judith* is passed over, and the Riddles are commended for their 'lightness and humour' (p. 348), but with no mention of their frequent ribaldry. In the section on vernacular prose, the *Chronicle*, the Alfredian writings and Ælfric inevitably bulk large, though Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and medical texts are not ignored, but the reader will look in vain for any adequate treatment of Wulfstan, a towering figure who here merits only one paragraph.

On Latin literature and learning, Hunter Blair is frankly outdated. His discussion of 'language' (pp. 301-05) ignores Latin altogether, and his cursory remarks on Latin palaeography contrast with his over-lengthy treatment of runes. When he turns to the texts, Bede, as might be expected, is one of Hunter Blair's heroes, and he is good on the innovatory brilliance of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, though he sees it largely as 'a source of accurate information' (p. 325) and as Keynes says is less aware of its subordination of narrative to a didactic agenda. Keynes, however, allows to pass without comment Hunter Blair's claim, long ago exploded by

Neil Wright, that Bede knew none of Virgil's works at first hand, and other judgements too are now showing their age. Aldhelm is described as existing 'in a state of intellectual intoxication ... which left little to posterity' (p. 326); the 'hermeneutic' writers are scarcely mentioned; and hagiography is largely ignored, with saints' lives discussed only as problematic sources of factual information. Of the whole book, it is this section which must be treated with the most caution.

Any textbook goes out of date here and there, and to observe that the clock has moved on does no discredit to Hunter Blair's remarkable undertaking. But can it still be recommended to undergraduates? With qualifications, yes. Those looking for an historical overview will still want to keep other general surveys, especially Campbell, John and Wormald's *The Anglo-Saxons*, by their side. Those whose interests are mainly in the literature are, however, now better served elsewhere (e.g. by Godden and Lapidge's *Cambridge Companion*). This is hardly surprising, for Hunter Blair's was the last generation to believe that it was possible, or even desirable, for one scholar to produce a book that covers the entire field like this. In more than one sense, then, it remains a heroic achievement.

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Katharine Scarfe Beckett
Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World

Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
33
Cambridge UP, 2003. viii + 276 pp.
hardback 0 521 82940 2 £45 (\$75)

This contribution to the CSASE series attempts to address the question: how much did the Anglo-Saxons know about Islam? It is an important question since throughout the Anglo-Saxon Period Islam was not only becoming a dominant religion, but also emerging as a profound political, intellectual and military giant in North Africa, Asia and Europe.

Chapter one outlines some of the broader issues that will appear throughout the book (i.e. Islamic historiography, Anglo-Saxon perceptions in literature, Orientalism, later perceptions of Islam). Chapter two provides a brief yet somewhat unreliable history of Islam and its most basic beliefs. Chapter three discusses the *Vita Willibaldi*, the only existing

account of Anglo-Saxons in direct contact with Muslims and discusses the significance of Kufic coins and imported Islamic goods into England. Chapters four through six discuss the evidence of Arabs, Arabia, Ismaelites and Saracens in Latin (in the Old and New Testaments and by exegetes) and Anglo-Latin literature. Chapter seven is concerned with the *Reuelationes* of pseudo-Methodius, known to the Anglo-Saxons in the late eleventh century. Chapter eight discusses the evidence of Arabs, or Muslims, in Old English texts. Chapter nine is concerned with the distortion and persistent vilification of Islam and the Prophet Muhammed after the conquest. Chapter ten is the conclusion and concentrates primarily on contesting Said's concept of 'Orientalism' focusing on medieval, and more importantly Anglo-Saxon, pre-conceptions about Islam which may have originated from pre-Islamic notions of Saracens and Arabs.

Perhaps the most concerning part of this book, raising questions about Scarfe Beckett's approach to the topic, is chapter two concerning the history of Islam and the beliefs of Muslims. She makes a factual error stating that 'many Muslims regard belief in a threefold divine nature with some suspicion that it borders upon polytheism' (29). Simply reading the *Qur'an* or *ahadith* (pl. Arabic; narrations of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammed) would have rectified her mistake, since there is not one verse in the *Qur'an* or suggestion in an authentic *hadith* (s. Arabic) that alludes to polytheism in any dimension. In this instance, it shows that her understanding of Islam and its history was perhaps influenced by Alfred Guillaume and other Orientalist writings. According to Scarfe Beckett, Guillaume's *The Life of Muhammed* is the 'standard Islamic source' of Ibn Ishaq's biography of the Prophet. However, this edition is unfortunately riddled with errors, and is a conglomeration of *Tafsir at-Tabari* (at-Tabari's exegesis of the *Qur'an*), stories of pre-Islamic Arabia, and Guillaume's own conjectured commentary. Scarfe Beckett or anyone wanting to read an 'authoritative' modern biography should, in my opinion, consult *ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum* ('The Sealed Nectar') by Safi-ur-Rahman al-Mubarkpuri. Furthermore, most of the accounts concerning the history of Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammed that Scarfe Beckett refers to are not considered trustworthy since much of it contains an array of false information drawn from corrupt chroniclers and fictitious narrations merged with authentic reports, which have established themselves as authoritative texts within Orientalist circles. In

her conclusion, she criticizes Said for not giving an ‘Orient’ voice in his writings on Orientalism. However, one could suggest that Scarfe Beckett does not provide an ‘Islamic’ voice in her portrayal of Islamic history and beliefs since she focuses solely on Orientalist writings, whilst not referring to a single source in Arabic from a traditional Islamic text, or by a contemporary Muslim scholar.

Although Scarfe Beckett’s approach to Islamic history is at times haphazard, the remainder of the book is useful and represents a good attempt at synthesizing the wealth of knowledge about the Anglo-Saxon perceptions of Islam and Arabs. Nevertheless, I suggest that the book be read objectively and with the primary sources. Just as the Latin and Old English sources were utilized in order to describe how the Anglo-Saxons viewed Islam, it is imperative that Arabic sources be treated with the same respect when discussing Islamic history.

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Hilmo, Maidie
Medieval Images, Icons, and Illustrated English Literary Texts from the Ruthwell Cross to the Ellesmere Chaucer
Ashgate, 2004. xxv + 236 pp.
hardback 0 7546 3178 8 £47.50

Éamonn Ó Carragáin
Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition
British Library and U of Toronto P, 2005.
xxxii + 427 pp.
hardback 0 7123 4875 1 (British Library), 0 8020 9008 7 (Toronto) £50

The central iconic significance and importance of the Ruthwell cross in Old English scholarship is acknowledged by the appearance of these two recent monograph studies, both of which emphasize the need to consider text and image in tandem.

Éamon Ó Carragáin ranges happily and with equal confidence through the fields of literature, history, art history and liturgy, as he seeks to construct a holistic scholarly approach to a subject which he claims has suffered ‘from the over-specialization endemic in modern scholarship’ (p. 53). His interdisciplinary discussion examines four of the most important surviving artifacts from Anglo-Saxon England: the Ruthwell Cross, the Bewcastle cross shaft, the *Dream of the Rood*

poem from the Vercelli Book, and the eleventh-century reliquary cross in Brussels. The result is a long book, comprising eight chapters, an introduction, and an epilogue. The introduction concerns itself with the central narrative of the *Dream of the Rood*, whilst chapter 1 surveys the history of the Ruthwell Cross and the central questions raised about it in modern debate. Having thus set the scene, the author assembles his main argument in the next four chapters where he aims to justify the following hypotheses: that the Ruthwell Cross had communal functions; that its runic verse tituli were an original feature; that the concept of gift-exchange influenced the editing of the Ruthwell verse tituli; and that the design of the lower stone accommodates sunwise movement. Accordingly chapters 2-5 examine the liturgical themes reflected in the iconography of the cross, namely the Virgin birth and Christ’s humanity (2); the liturgy of Lent and Easter (3); the way that Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday were celebrated in the seventh and eighth centuries (4); and how the Ruthwell community adapted contemporary Roman liturgy to their own local needs (5). The book’s central theses, that Northumbrian liturgical rituals and practices were modelled mainly, though not exclusively, on those of Rome, and that the liturgy of Lent, Holy Week and Easter provides a key to the unity of the Ruthwell Cross, are reinforced by summary in chapter six, where Ó Carragáin also examines the roles the cross may have played in the life of its local religious community. Chapter 7 then considers the dream vision frame of the *Dream of the Rood*, whilst chapter 8 focuses on the Brussels cross. The epilogue achieves a broad sweep of connections from early Roman eucharistic prayers through the Sarum Missal to the poetry of John Donne.

This book represents the fine distillation of a lifetime’s scholarship, as is apparent from its lengthy bibliography which includes no fewer than twenty-five previous studies by the author. Some will disagree with the detailed iconographic sequence of the Ruthwell Cross (pp. xxi-xxix), a topic which has been much debated, and it is always possible to quibble about minor points such as typos (e.g. p. 23 ‘bave’). But overall, this is a beautifully produced volume, lavishly illustrated with sixteen colour plates and sixty figures, generously sized, and printed on good quality paper; at £50 it must be considered a bargain.

Like Ó Carragáin, Maidie Hilmo builds her argument around objects and texts which are chance survivors, implicitly

demanding that we accept their testimony as representative. Her discussion of images, icons, and illustrated texts also argues strongly for a historical understanding of their function, and like Ó Carragáin she believes that illustrations go beyond mere visual renditions of text to guide and inform the reading process itself. Her first chapter outlines an approach to 'Reading Medieval Images' which must necessarily be different from the concerns of modern art historical judgement with its emphasis on perceived aesthetic quality. Beginning with a brief examination of the concepts and aims of early Christian art, Hilmo works forwards in chapter 2 to the Ruthwell Cross, which she describes as 'a meditation site for people of varying levels of literacy' (p. 28). Her overall argument is that the surviving artifacts of the medieval period - be they monuments or manuscripts - offer evidence of the visual as well as the verbal literacy of their designers and makers. Thus in chapter 3 she considers the Alfred jewel as an image of divine and earthly kingship, and examines the visual exegesis of the Caedmon MS, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11. Hilmo's study also covers some of the best known Middle English codices such as Auchinleck and Vernon (chapter 4), the unique manuscript of *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, British Library Cotton Nero A.x (chapter 5) and the Ellesmere Chaucer (chapter 6). The lack of divine or saintly images in these later codices hampers her case somewhat, but she continues to argue that the visual elements in these manuscripts, as in her earlier examples, are equally informed by the theology of the Incarnation. Seventy-six plates (regrettably all black and white) support the text.

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Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole (eds)
Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank
 Toronto Old English Series 13
 University of Toronto Press, 2005. xi + 298 pp. hardback 0 8020 8011 1 £48 (\$75)

This volume contains fourteen original essays by former doctoral students of Roberta Frank at the Centre for Medieval Studies and Department of English at the University of Toronto, together with an introduction by the two editors and a bibliography of Frank's writings. Closely reflecting her own research interests, the essays are grouped into four

sections, on words (Christopher A. Jones, Don Chapman, Pauline Head, Soon-Ai Low), Anglo-Latin and Old English prose (Carin Ruff, Dorothy Haines), Old English poetry (Karin Olsen, Robert DiNapoli, Haruko Momma, Antonina Harbus), and Old Norse literature (Martin Chase, Oren Falk, Bernadine McCreesh, Russell Poole). The level of scholarship throughout is a sound testimonial to Frank's influence as a teacher, and the book has been edited to a high standard.

In a volume dedicated to Roberta Frank, word play is naturally a recurring theme. Among several interesting contributions, Head's study of OE *cennan* stands out as a perceptive analysis of the double meaning 'to cause to be born'/'to cause to know' and its theological significance as an expression of Christ's incarnation. Polysemous vocabulary is also central to Chase's discussion of the interplay of skaldic and Christian tradition in the poetry of Einarr Skúlason, while Low's analysis of the range of meaning of OE *möd* has implications for its interpretation in both poetic and prose texts. Falk uncovers a rich vein of sexual innuendo in *Gisla saga*, and Poole shows how the metaphorical language of kennings conceals allusions to a familial relationship between poet and patron in the verses of Hallfréðr Óttarsson vandræðaskáld and Sigvatr Þórðarson.

The theme of ambiguity continues through a fine article on runes in Old English poetry by DiNapoli, presenting new insights into *The Rune Poem*, the Exeter Book riddles, and the runic 'signatures' of Cynewulf. Also in this section, Olsen writes on images of infertility in *Genesis A*, and Momma offers a thought-provoking reading of the first half of *Beowulf* in terms of the development of the young hero and the civilising influences of his visit to Heorot.

Two essays explore the Anglo-Saxons' own attitudes towards language, with particular reference to compounding (Chapman) and grammar (Ruff). Two others focus on the role of speech in Old English literature. Harbus examines the use of dialogue in *Juliana*, pointing to the potential for dramatic performance, while Haines argues persuasively that the dramatic monologues within the Vercelli homilies deserve consideration alongside those of *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Wife's Lament* and *The Husband's Message* - and indeed, of the speaking Cross in the best-known poem of the Vercelli Book itself. Also in the field of religion, McCreesh discusses the role of dreams and visions in Old Icelandic literature,

with particular reference to hagiographical motifs in the lives of the early saints.

In sum, this is a wide-ranging and substantial collection of essays, with much of interest to specialists in both language and literature. I have ordered a copy for my university library, and I encourage other TOEBI members to do the same.

Carole Hough
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Terje Spurkland
Norwegian Runes and Runic Inscriptions
Boydell, 2005. x + 206 pp
hardback 1 84383 186 4 £25 (\$49.95)

This attractively produced little volume is an elegant and witty translation (by Betsy van der Hoek) of the author's 2001 Norwegian volume *In the Beginning was the Futhark*. The author is an Associate Professor at the University of Oslo, responsible for Germanic philology at the Centre for Viking and Medieval Studies. This book has the appearance of an introductory course in runology (or 'runacy' as Spurkland terms it). The title might encourage one to expect a corpus or perhaps a guide to Norwegian inscriptions but instead the reader is presented with an account of Germanic runes and their development in the history of rune use, linguistic, orthographic or functional and then looks in detail at a handful of inscriptions which exemplify the points made in the discussions. Many of the chapters also include historiographical elements such as the wonderful discussion of the relationship between the discovery and destruction of the Gallehus horn and the rise of Scandinavian romanticism (chapter three). Suggested further readings are supplied, with guidance, at the end of each chapter.

Spurkland's style is didactic and he takes the reader through the material step by step, showing his workings at all times and offering alternative readings (with the context of their production) more often than one might have expected. This makes this work an ideal teaching text. Although most of the exemplars are Norwegian, texts from elsewhere in Scandinavia, and even from the Isle of Man (chapter six), are discussed if they better illustrate Spurkland's points. The focus of Spurkland's analysis is refreshingly human. What interests him is not simply the philology and the stave forms but also the context of production. His discussion of Jórunn, who raised the stone at Alstad in Hadeland, and of her family and situation (also chapter six)

brings the reality of surviving in medieval Scandinavia to life. In the final chapter, on the High Middle Ages, the author compares the widespread use of rune sticks with short messages (e.g. 'Gyða says to come home!') with text messages or post-it notes. At times Spurkland gets a little carried away with his contextual speculations but one can easily imagine that it is just such flights of fancy that make him such a popular teacher. His enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and has lost nothing in either transfer to the written page or translation. This well illustrated book will make an excellent teaching tool.

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Corinne Saunders (ed.)
Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England
Studies in Medieval Romance II
D.S. Brewer, 2005. x + 193 pp.
hardback 1 84384 032 4 £45 (\$90)

Robert Allen Rouse
The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance
Studies in Medieval Romance III
D.S. Brewer, 2005. viii + 180 pp.
hardback 1 84384 041 3 £45 (\$80)

In the introduction to *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, Corinne Saunders writes: 'The consideration of romance in terms of cultural encounter demonstrates that the classic opposition in romance criticism, between views of romance as mimetic or non-mimetic, as situated within the world of fantasy or reality, is much too simple' (p. 2). These comments are borne out by both the volumes under review, perhaps even more strongly by Robert Rouse's useful monograph than by Saunders's lively and wide-ranging edited collection.

The main focus of Robert Rouse's study is the group of romances set in Anglo-Saxon England, *Guy of Warwick*, *Beves of Hamtoun*, *Havelock the Dane*, *Athelston* and *Horne Childe and Maiden Rimmild*. Discussion of these texts takes up the central three chapters (three to five), bracketed by introductory material on the theoretical framework (chapter one) and the *Proverbs of Alfred* (chapter two) and a closing chapter on the meeting of narrative and urban space in Winchester (chapter six). Rouse takes as his starting point some key concepts set out in Frantzen and Niles's edited volume *Anglo-*

Saxonsim and the Construction of Social Identity: ‘Anglo-Saxonism’, the ‘idea’ of Anglo-Saxon England, and the notion of ‘appropriation’. He is interested in the way the Anglo-Saxon past is re-used and re-invented (appropriated) in post-Conquest England in the service of both locally and temporally specific agendas and larger cultural projects such as the construction of English identity. While he embraces the notion that Anglo-Saxon England survives as an ‘idea’ that is repeatedly refashioned, Rouse insists that ‘the past is constructed on the basis of memories, places, events, and people that have left an imprint upon the reality of the present’ (p. 5).

Accordingly, Rouse pays attention to the genuine historical traditions that inform his texts. For example, he has some interesting suggestions concerning the development of an association between King Alfred and proverbial wisdom - the treatment of Asser’s *Vita Alfredi* in the Ramsey portion of the *Historia Regum* is something of a missing link here (pp. 44-9) - and points out the influence of genuine pre-Conquest legal practice, in particular the prominence of the oath, on the image of Anglo-Saxon law presented in the romances (pp. 118-21). However, precisely those ‘cultural relicts’ (p. 10) in which the past’s imprint seems most clear are often the sites in which the past is most transformed. A strong theme in the book is the ‘materialising and memorialising function of geographical place’ (p. 68). Rouse stresses the importance of places in the romances, and the association of romances with places, in rendering the past tangible in the landscape and in articulating relationship between local and national identity. Yet the past in question is often largely fictional. One striking example that recurs in the study is Guy of Warwick’s combat with the giant Colbrond, an event supposed to have occurred at Winchester (pp. 139-43). Guy’s defeat of Colbrond was associated with Athelstan’s defeat of the Dublin Norse and their allies, and Winchester thus ‘materialises’ this episode of Anglo-Saxon history, but Guy’s story transforms and displaces the historical battle of Brunanburh (pp. 56-60) (the site of Brunanburh is, of course, notoriously obscure). Such tangible yet fabricated memories of the Anglo-Saxon past underpin what Rouse revealingly labels, in another context, a ‘national fantasy of Englishness’ (p. 158): ‘as the point of origin, both real and imagined, of English law and cultural identity, the Anglo-Saxon past was important in the construction of a post-conquest English society that was both aware

of, and placed great stock in, its Anglo-Saxon heritage’ (p. 157).

There is inevitably more that could be said. One occasionally feels Rouse could engage more sparkily with the critical works he cites. For example, he is a little dismissive of some of Elaine Treharne’s comments on *Athelston* (p. 132), but he could have done more with her intriguing perception that the Athelston of the romance is counterpointed against the historical Athelstan (‘Romanticizing the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*’, *RES* 50 (1999), 1-21, at pp. 20-21). Rouse argues that English identity in the romances is founded on English law and an Anglo-Saxon legal golden age, but since he also argues that the romances show ‘nostalgia’ for a legal past that never was (p. 118) one wonders about the self-alienation within this English identity; something more complicated is going on than the sense of ‘continuity’ between post- and pre-Conquest England that Rouse repeatedly emphasises (pp. 56, 68, 132, 160). These criticisms (and the sometimes repetitive writing style) aside, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England* is a welcome and thoroughly worthwhile study that repays careful reading.

Rouse’s chapter on law also appears in a shorter form as his contribution to *Cultural Encounters*. The encounter of late and early medieval England and of England with other, more legally deprived, countries turns out to be one of the more obvious examples of cultural encounter in the collection; the phrase is extended to cover the meetings of different traditions, social classes, genres, discourses, and languages. The volume publishes papers from the Eighth Biennial Conference on Romance in Medieval England and the theme is one that arose from the conference. Of particular interest to Anglo-Saxonists will be Tony Davenport’s essay on post-Conquest narratives about Ine of Wessex, which veer most strongly towards romance in a Register of the Priory of Bath (London, Lincoln’s Inn Library, Hale MS 185). Ine’s case illustrates the impulse to fill in scattered historical records with romance narrative but raises the question of why so many suitable Anglo-Saxon subjects seem never to have made it into romances. Davenport’s comments underline how much has in fact been deleted to produce the idea of Anglo-Saxon England studied by Rouse. Ivana Djordjevic’s theoretically assured discussion of the translation of *Boeve de Haumtone* into Middle English has relevance to all who study translated texts, as well as to all who read texts they are obliged to translate: ‘It is the passage of time that

accounts for the most important cultural misunderstandings in [the] process of translation' (p. 11). Other stand-out contributions include Rosalind Field's discussion of the exile-and-return motif, which she argues to be a response to historical developments in the twelfth century and not a folktale element, and Elizabeth Archibald's highly entertaining if ultimately inconclusive essay on 'Did Knights Have Baths?'. This is, however, a consistently excellent collection. The series Studies in Medieval Romance looks very promising.

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Chris McCully and Sharon Hilles
The Earliest English. An Introduction to Old English Language

Pearson Education Ltd, 2005. xv + 307 pp
paperback 0 582 40474 6 £20.99

This book is one in the series 'Learning About Language', under the general editorship of Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short. It is apparently addressed to students of language history and linguistics, although some indication of the intended audience could usefully have been given.

The book, which is designed to be used with or without a teacher, is divided into eight Units. Each of these units is reckoned to take four to five hours of work. The units combine language study with accounts of the history, literature, and culture of the Anglo-Saxon period. Thus, for example, Unit 3 combines an account of Anglo-Saxon history, principally from the fifth to the eighth centuries, with a reading passage taken from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle s.a. 755, followed by a long account of the system of nominal and pronominal inflection in Old English. In this unit we are told that inflections form 'a set of small but irritating obstacles to the student who wants to begin to read the earliest English' (p.94). However there seems far too much detail given for students whose wish is to acquire an adequate reading knowledge of Old English.

The book has some excellent features. For example, at the first use of technical, or even semi-technical, terms like 'extant' or 'cultural sign', a clear definition is given. When modern English is used to illustrate a point, both British and American varieties are noted. Indeed, the use of modern English to explain, for example, subjunctives before discussing their forms and functions in Old

English (pp. 125-7) is masterly. Again, Old English passages are well used, first to illustrate given historical information, second to allow students practice in translating, and third to illustrate grammatical and syntactical points which are about to be explained.

Other features of the book are less impressive. For example, set between Units 4 and 5 is an 'Interlude' concerning how to understand the entries contained in the *OED*, in the *Middle English Dictionary* and in the *Dictionary of Old English*. Some of this material is interesting, and much of it is extremely useful for students to know, but its relevance to the content of this book is highly questionable. Again, the book is excellent at giving web-site references but the actual Bibliography contains very little which has appeared since 2000.

Another caveat concerns the discussion of the Old English verb. This is given in huge, indeed in exhaustive, detail in Unit 4 and again at the end of Unit 7, yet nowhere is there any mention of *i*-mutation in the present tense of strong verbs. This is the more surprising since *i*-mutation is in fact discussed on page 235 in the context of Old English spelling.

A most irritating feature of the book is its incongruously chatty style, addressing the reader as 'you' or 'we', writing sentences without verbs, and using abbreviations and colloquial vocabulary. Examples abound. One such is on page 86: 'If you suspect that the OE inflection *-as* is the source of the 's-plurals' in PDE you would of course be quite right. (We actually said the same thing in Unit 1, so don't run riot with self-congratulation).'

In brief, although this book has some excellent features, it is not likely to be of great use to students of English who require a reading knowledge of Old English, unless the students are first and foremost historical linguists.

Elisabeth Okasha
University College Cork

The autumn issue of the *Newsletter* will carry reviews of:

The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church, edited by Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield (Brewer, 2005)

Readings in Medieval Texts, edited by David Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford UP, 2005)

Caedmon's Hymn: A Multi-media Study, Edition and Archive, edited by Daniel Paul O'Donnell (Brewer, 2005)

Forthcoming Conferences 2006/2007

Reading Women Institute of Medieval Studies, University of Nottingham 3 July 2006

This one-day conference/workshop is designed to provoke methodological debate, offer case-studies and pose queries in relation to specific issues on 'reading women' in Medieval studies. Proposals from any discipline, or interdisciplinary presentations, are welcome. Indicative topics include, but are not restricted to:

- dynamics of female reading communities
- woman as implied reader
- the politics of women reading
- depictions (any media) of women readers
- reading the concept of 'woman'
- a female concept of reading?
- male readings of women
- women patrons
- womanly rewritings

The conference fee is £10 which includes refreshments and lunch. Proposals for papers, consisting of paper title, academic affiliation, e-mail address, an abstract of 100 words, and any requests for A/V, should be sent on or before the 1st May 2006 to:

Dr Karen Smyth
School of English Studies
University of Nottingham
University Park Campus
Nottingham NG7 2RD
karen.smyth@nottingham.ac.uk

To register attendance please forward your name, affiliation, subject area, e-mail address, and any dietary requirements to Dr Smyth at the above e-mail or postal address by 1st June 2006. A full programme, including details of plenary speakers, times, payment details, map and full venue details will be e-mailed to all registered participants in early June.

Sound Effects: the Oral/Aural Dimensions of Literatures in English University of St. Andrews 5-8 July 2006

This is the third of an occasional series of conferences organised by the School of

English at St. Andrews University on the media in history as a context for literary interpretation. Previous events have been *The Renaissance Computer* (1998) and *Re-marking the Text* (2001), which was itself part of a series of conferences on the history of the book presented at Trinity College, Cambridge and York. The aim of the present conference is to extend our discussion of the literary media from script and printed text back to the most fundamental medium of all: speech. Products of the modern electronic media are beyond the scope of the conference, though discussion of the ways in which these may throw light on earlier forms of communication are welcomed. Topics include: orality and literacy; oral transmission; orality and performance; orality and print; memory and mnemonic systems; metrics; rhyme; oral formulaic poetry; residual orality; orality and the dramatic text; folk ballads; street ballads; street cries and other commercial patter; speech-making and oratory; elocution; recitation; speech and education; literary and salon readings; religious contexts for the spoken word; speech act theory and literary texts. Speakers include Mark Amodio, Derek Attridge, Douglas Dunn, John Miles Foley, Andy Orchard, Patricia Parker and Don Paterson.

Further details are available at http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/english/sound_effects.html

The conference organisers are Chris Jones csj2@st-andrews.ac.uk and Neil Rhodes nppr@st-andrews.ac.uk

Disease and Disability in Northern Europe 400-1200 Professional Development Centre, University of Birmingham 8-9 July 2006

The organisers invite session proposals on all aspects of disease and disability in early medieval Europe. We welcome papers that explore sickness and the status of the afflicted from a range of different angles, such as archaeology, palaeopathology, as well as linguistic and historical evidence. The conference aims to be a forum for scholars working on the topic in a variety of disciplines and regions of Northern Europe.

Jointly organised by Dr Sally Crawford (Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham), Dr Christina Lee (School of English, University of Nottingham) and Robert Arnott (Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Birmingham Medical School).

For further information contact:
Christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk

**International Medieval Congress 2006
University of Leeds
10-13 July 2006**

The Institute for Medieval Studies of the University of Leeds will host the twelfth annual International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds July 10-13 2006, with over 1200 scholars from around 35 nations likely to attend. As in previous years, a whole strand of the Congress sessions will be devoted to Anglo-Saxon studies, and will include papers on all aspects of the field. Mary Swan (m.t.swan@leeds.ac.uk) is the Anglo-Saxon studies strand co-ordinator for the IMC, and will be happy to answer queries and give advice on paper and session proposals. In addition to the regular IMC strands, the special theme of the 2006 Congress will be 'Emotion and Gesture'. Full details of the IMC can be found at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims>.

**Anglo-Saxonists' Dinner
Leeds IMC 2006**

As usual, Mary Swan is organising the Anglo-Saxonists' dinner for the 2006 IMC at Leeds. The dinner will take place on Monday 10 July at 7pm in the usual restaurant, which is near the Congress site. The total cost for three courses is likely to be in the region of £16. Anyone who would like to be put on the mailing list for the dinner should send an e-mail to Ms Alison Martin by 1 June on medieval-studies@leeds.ac.uk. Please feel free to circulate this information to colleagues and postgraduate students who might like to come to the dinner. In early June Mary will send out a message with menu choices for the meal to everyone who has signed up to attend it.

**Conceptualizing Multilingualism in
England 800-1250
A Worldwide Universities Network
Multilingualism in Medieval Societies
Conference and The Third York Alcuin
Conference
Centre for Medieval Studies
University of York
14-17 July 2006**

Throughout the period 800-1250 English culture was marked by linguistic contestation and pluralism: the consequence of migrations

and conquests and of the establishment and flourishing of the Christian religion centred on Rome. Norse and French, the Celtic languages of the borderlands, and Latin competed with dialects of English for cultural precedence. The conference, which will include papers on all of England's languages, seeks to foster work that transcends individual languages, to examine overarching structures of linguistic pluralism.

'Conceptualizing Multilingualism' will address questions like: Is multilingualism individual? or cultural? How does it map onto social class, education and political hierarchy? What are the consequences for literary culture? How does it impact upon modes of transmission? Was England, though not uniquely multilingual, nevertheless distinctly so? Is multilingualism a medieval concept or a construct of modern disciplinarity?

Speakers will include Christopher Baswell, Stephen Baxter, Emma Campbell, Julia Crick, Helen Fulton, Andrew Galloway, Robert Hanning, Lars Mortensen, Bruce O'Brien, Andy Orchard, Robert Stein, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Townend, Elaine Treharne, David Trotter, Elizabeth Tyler, David Wallace and Roger Wright.

Selected papers from the conference will be published by Brepols in the York-based series 'Studies in the Early Middle Ages'.

For further information contact:

Dr Elizabeth Tyler,
Centre for Medieval Studies,
The King's Manor
York YO1 7EP
emt1@york.ac.uk
www.york.ac.uk/inst/cms/centre/multiling.htm

**The Thirteenth International Saga
Conference
Durham and York
6-12 August 2006**

The major theme of the conference is 'The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature'; the secondary theme is 'Sagas and the British Isles, especially Northumbria. The conference is sponsored by the Viking Society for Northern Research.

For further information please contact

John McKinnell
Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies,
University of Durham
john.mckinnell@durham.ac.uk
or see the website:
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/medieval.www/>

Lost in Translation?
**The Tenth Cardiff Conference on the
Theory and Practice of Translation in the
Middle Ages**
Université de Lausanne, Switzerland
17-22 July 2007

Call for Papers

We welcome not only papers which address traditional aspects of the translation of texts with reference to any of the classical, Middle Eastern or vernacular languages of the medieval world, but also those which address the modern translation of medieval texts, and those that interpret the idea of translation more broadly, examining the translation of ideas, images, cultural perceptions, or objects of material culture.

Papers may be given in English or in any of the national languages of Switzerland, and should be thirty minutes long. Please send one-page abstracts and brief curriculum vitae by 31 August 2006 to either of the organisers:

Christiania Whitehead,
Department of English and Comparative
Literary Studies,
University of Warwick,
Coventry CV4 7AL
c.a.r.whitehead@warwick.ac.uk

Denis Renevey,
Chair in Medieval Literature
English Department, Faculty of Letters,
University of Lausanne, BFSH 2,
CH-1015 Lausanne, Switzerland.
Denis.Renevey@unil.ch

Following previous practice, it is planned to publish a book of selected papers in the peer-reviewed *Medieval Translator* series (Brepols) following the conference.

International Medieval Congress 2007
University of Leeds
9-12 July 2007

The Institute for Medieval Studies of the University of Leeds will host the thirteenth annual International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds July 9-12 2007. In addition to the regular IMC strands, the special theme of the 2007 Congress will be 'Medieval Cities'. The deadline for individual paper proposals is 31 August 2006; the deadline for

session proposals is 30 September 2006. Full details of the IMC can be found at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims>.

Lectures and Seminars of interest to TOEBI members

University of Nottingham
Institute for Medieval Studies
Seminar Programme

4 May 2006

'Late medieval serfdom in a Mediterranean context: A peasant community in Venetian Cyprus'

Dr Aysu Dinçer
University of Birmingham

10 May

'Pagans and Christians: Conversion in the Viking Age'

Dr Lesley Abrams
Balliol College, Oxford

All meetings are held at 5.30pm in Room Trent A46, Department of English. For further information contact Dr Sara M. Pons-Sanz sara.pons-sanz@nottingham.ac.uk

First Call for Papers

RCEI (Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses) has the intention of publishing a number (issue 55) on Old English. The preference is for studies on the linguistic aspects of Old English, but other perspectives such as cultural, literary, or philological approaches will also be welcome. Our intention is to offer an idea of what the main points of interest are as regards Old English and current research. Titles and abstracts should be sent to mcexposi@ull.es.

For more information on our Journal visit the webpage: <http://www.ull.es/publicaciones/rcei>. The title 'Old English Studies in the 21st century: A New Understanding of the Past' is born with the hope of opening contact among all those of us who have a certain devotion for this topic. This is an invitation for those of us who believe there is much more to be done.

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 Elaine Treharne (2007)
Secretary: Dr Elisabeth Okasha (2006)
Newsletter Editor: Dr Margaret Connolly (2007)
Awards' co-ordinator: Dr Jennifer Neville (2006)

Committee members:

Dr Jayne Carroll (2006)
Dr Richard Dance (2006)
Professor Clare Lees (2006)
Professor Hugh Magennis (2007)
Dr Mary Swan (2007)
Dr Gale Owen-Crocker (2008)
Mrs Sara Pons-Sanz (2008)

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 30 September 2006 to the Editor:

Dr Margaret Connolly
Lauderdale,
Cupar Road,
Ceres,
Fife KY15 5LP
Scotland

✉ e-mail: mc29@st-andrews.ac.uk

Action points for Members

- **For information about the October 2006 TOEBI meeting** please contact the Secretary or Dr Jayne Carroll jc237@le.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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www.toebi.org.uk

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