



Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland

TOEBI aims to promote and support the teaching of Old English in British and Irish Universities, and to raise the profile of the Old English language, Old English literature and Anglo-Saxon England in the public eye.

Membership

TOEBI welcomes new members. If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact the Secretary, Dr Marilina Cesario, m.cesario@qub.ac.uk

Meeting

The next TOEBI meeting will be held at King's College London on Saturday October 22nd 2016. The proposed theme is 'Old English Performance, Pedagogy and the Profession.' Please contact the meeting organiser, Prof Clare Lees, for further information: clare.lees@kcl.ac.uk

Conference Awards

TOEBI awards bursaries to help postgraduate students attend conferences. Applications are welcome from postgraduates and those who have recently completed doctorates but do not yet have an academic post. The application form can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.toebi.org.uk/grants-for-graduates/> and should be submitted to Dr Alice Jorgensen <jorgena@tcd.ie>.

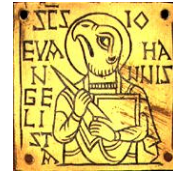
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Special Report from TOEBI's Postgraduate Rep:

Those of you at the TOEBI conference in Dublin in October may remember some of the ideas that the Medieval Postgraduate Students at the University of Nottingham School of English were concocting to increase the impact for medieval English. We wanted to create reading groups, organise an inter-disciplinary conference, start an e-journal and host a series of talks on medieval themes that would fire-up the undergraduate imagination. Where are we a year on?

The easiest, and perhaps the most successful plan, was to set up a reading group. There has been an Old Norse reading group for postgraduates for some years and this was very successful, so we shamelessly borrowed the idea from the wonderful Judith Jesch and set up an Old English one which the equally wonderful Paul Cavill generously offered to host. Flushed with success we started an undergraduate reading group for Old English that Paul and I host. This has been very successful too. Not all the undergraduates come – there are some die-hards and some casual visitors. But even those who don't come know it's there and they know it's fun. It creates a sense that there is more to Old English at Nottingham than just passing exams; it is something people enjoy and do for fun and it allows undergraduates, postgrads and teachers to mix in a friendly and relaxed environment.

On the back of that we took a more daring step and launched an Old English Conversation Group for the postgrads as an extension of the Reading Group. We had our first meeting two days ago. Everyone was a little nervous. We had some 'Con-



versational Old English' sheets to get the ball rolling; even then the ball kept getting stuck until we hit on the idea of making 'yo mamma' jokes in Old English. After that, there was a great deal of laughter and merriment and a great deal of spoken Old English. Not all of it was grammatically accurate, but it got us thinking about grammar and vocabulary and word order in a really fun way. Next time we are going to try Old English dating and chat-up lines...

Another new venture, again raided from the Vikings who have a fabulous Vikings for Schools programme, was Anglo-Saxon for Schools. We sent students into local primary schools in October and November to teach children about the Anglo-Saxons. These programmes are really wonderful ways of giving back to the community whilst at the same time allowing students to use their studies in a real and valuable way. For the moment ASfS is on hold because we need to find some funding and see how it can be organised at Department level, but we have high hopes of seeing it take off again in September.

Funding has tended to be the sticking point for many of our ideas. We invited our fellow PhDs in History and Archaeology to a meeting about organising a postgraduate conference and we attempted to contact fellow OE PhDs in neighbouring Universities in Birmingham and Leicester, but in the end it was most practicably organised by the M3C students, none of whom were in English departments. However, on a more positive note we did get to make some new friends and that is priceless. Our idea of hosting talks aimed at undergraduates will take place next year, again, if we can get the funding. I have high hopes that we will. The first grant proposal was well received, but the project itself did not meet all the criteria for that funding body. However we were

encouraged by the panel to try elsewhere. Writing that proposal was a great learning experience in itself, but it took a surprising amount of time. Even if the outcome was not the one we wanted, we have learned about writing grant proposals with help from lecturers in the department, most notably Nicola Royan whose capacity for patience and rigour is legendary.

So there we are. A year on and some things have taken root and others have not or are still lying dormant. At first it felt as if we had failed. Our enthusiastic meetings of a year ago and all our ideas have seemed to crash into barriers of money or our own limited time. However, on reflection I think we have achieved quite a bit. We have a list of willing speakers who are eager to come and give those talks to our undergraduates without a fee, only needing expenses, and that *will* happen. The already warm atmosphere of medieval studies is enhanced by our regular meetings and reading groups. And even if these were the simplest and cheapest to organise, they are in many ways the most important. A year into my PhD I was lucky enough to be awarded a Teaching Fellowship which allowed me to study full time, but I remember only too well how lonely working part-time is. How, despite all the care, attention and opportunities offered, you still feel a little left out. These regular meetings allow us to see our part-time colleagues much more often. We get to talk to each other about our research and our love of Old English and it has made us a real team. So, if at first it felt as if we had failed, I think, in retrospect that we have actually achieved something truly valuable and we will go on to do more.

Eleni Ponirakis
TOEBI Postgraduate Rep
School of English, University of Nottingham



TOEBI Annual Meeting 2015
Trinity College Dublin, 10 October –
‘Values’

The 2015 TOEBI Annual Meeting was organized and hosted by Alice Jorgensen at Trinity College Dublin. The meeting, which was being held in the Republic of Ireland for the first time, was well attended, with thirty delegates registered. The theme of ‘Values’ had drawn a varied range of contributions and the programme stimulated much lively discussion on the day.

The first session, chaired by Clare Lees (King’s College London), was on *Valuing Teaching*, with papers from Eleni Ponirakis (Nottingham), ‘Encouraging Undergraduates to Learn Old English’, Gerard Hynes (Trinity College Dublin), ‘The Value of Digital Technology for Teaching and Learning Old English’, and Rebecca Stephenson (University College Dublin), ‘Pedagogy and Byrhtferth’s Diagrams’, leading to a general discussion in which participants compared aspects of pedagogic practice. After this morning session the meeting broke for an enjoyable buffet lunch, during which the TOEBI committee met.

There were two afternoon sessions, both focusing on research issues. The first was on the topic of *The Values of Signs*, chaired by Christina Lees (Nottingham). Tom Birkett (University College Cork) spoke on ‘Rēdæ sē be cynne: The Value of Runes in late Anglo-Saxon England’, Patricia O’Connor (University College Cork) on ‘Bees and the Old English Bede: Evaluating the Margins of CCC 41’, and Rachel Burns (University College London) on ‘The Value of Parchment and Old English Verse mise-en-page’.

The second afternoon session, chaired by Hugh Magennis (Queen’s University Bel-

fast), on Values in/of Beowulf, featured papers from Helen Conrad O’Brian (Trinity College Dublin), on ‘Family Values: Wealth-theow and the Danish succession’, Harriet Soper (Cambridge), on ‘Qualities of Old Age in Beowulf’, and Philip Shaw (Leicester), on ‘Relative Values: Beowulf in the Germanic Diaspora’.

Both afternoon sessions stimulated wide-ranging discussion, after which what had been an excellent day ended with the Annual General Meeting (the Minutes of which can be read on the TOEBI website).

Hugh Magennis, Queen’s University Belfast

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Reviews

Hugh Magennis, *Translating Beowulf: Modern Versions in English Verse*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011. Pp. ix, 244. ISBN: 9781843842613. Paperback £19.99.

This is a beautifully written, impressively comprehensive, and ultimately humbling book for someone who thought that she knew a thing or two about the translation of *Beowulf*. If you ever think about or talk to your students about translations of *Beowulf*, this book is one that you must read, and several chapters of it would be useful for students who are either translating *Beowulf* for themselves or reading it solely in translation. I am trying to work out how I



can set this book as essential reading for all my students.

In Chapter 1, Magennis sets out the theoretical issues that underlie not only translation in general but also translation of *Beowulf* in particular. Magennis points out that the poem itself has changed over time in accordance with critical discoveries and fashions. Drawing on Venuti and other scholars, he describes the balancing act between ‘domesticating’ and ‘foreignizing’ that every translation must enact; both tendencies distort the original. Then, although the focus of the book is on verse translations, Magennis provides a discussion of prose translation, including both an overview of the prose translations made by early scholars as well as a discussion of the purposes such translations might have. Tolkien’s view was that a prose translation needs justification, and Magennis agrees that a prose translation is primarily useful as an aid to reading the original. In contrast, a verse translation might hope to stand in for the original poem as a work of art in its own right and create the kind of excitement experienced by Keats ‘On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer’. I wish my students would read at least this chapter of the book, so that they might understand the political issues that lie behind the online translations that they read.

Chapter 2 provides a concise but masterly overview of the nature of *Beowulf* as a poem. Very briefly, it introduces the traditional nature of the poem’s form, its artistry, its metre, its use of alliteration, its references to oral culture, and its use of compounds, apposition, poetic vocabulary, and distinctive poetic syntax. It then provides close readings of two passages, the opening eleven lines of the poem and the description of the *scop* at lines 867b-74. These two passages provide the common

ground for comparing the work of translators later in the book. This chapter could very usefully be set for students to read as a short introduction to why *Beowulf* is great poetry and what kind of effects they should be looking for when reading it.

Chapter 3 sketches out the ‘earlier larger reception history of *Beowulf* in the modern era’ (41), starting with the acquisition of the manuscript by Nowell and moving through its earliest editors and translators. There is a fuller reading of Morris’ 1895 translation, which, despite the generally negative reaction it receives, Magennis sees as ‘a major artistic engagement with the Old English poem’ (61). There follows a longer section on ‘Perceptions of *Beowulf*’, starting with the nineteenth century and the sometimes nationalistic role that the poem was given in Denmark, Germany, England, and America, and then moving on to the different perspectives on the poem in the twentieth century. Magennis provides statistics (Google hits, number of publications, etc) to document the rise in *Beowulf*’s popularity, explores the impact of Tolkien’s lecture, ‘*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics’, and provides brief readings of two translations of *Beowulf* from the 1940s, by Kennedy and Waterhouse, to set the scene for Edwin Morgan’s translation, which is explored in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed close reading of the context, ambitions, and achievements of Edwin Morgan’s 1952 translation of *Beowulf*, along with the generally negative reception it received. Magennis notes that ‘Morgan’s translation did not fully achieve his aim in writing it, but it is a work of great critical interest and ... represents a key milestone in the history of *Beowulf* translations (81). Using passages targeted to reflect particular aspects of



Morgan's work and the two passages from *Beowulf* analysed in Chapter 2, Magennis lists several examples of characteristic features used by Morgan, including: archaism, inversion of word order, doublets and alliterative pairings, inventive vocabulary (particularly in compound words), abrupt interjections, and the removal of the communal narrative voice.

Chapter 5 again provides a close reading of an important translation of *Beowulf*, this time the (American) 1963 translation by Burton Raffel. Magennis clearly (and perhaps a little repetitively) sets out Raffel's aim to make the poem clear and accessible to the modern reader, his views of the translator's art, and his achievements, notably 'clarity, logic, and progression' (112). Again listing several examples of each feature, Magennis draws attention to narrative momentum, simplification, the provision of explanatory information, omission of metaphors and litotes, addition of imagery, and amplification of the Christian outlook, through an analysis of a variety of passages, including the two first analysed in Chapter 2. Despite the achievements and popularity of this work, Magennis notes that the poem in many ways is very unlike *Beowulf*, particularly in its elimination of the original's subtlety and complexity, and that its treatment of the first lines of the poem might alienate a modern audience with its enthusiastic representation of Scyld's Danes as 'a terrorizing force of empire' (129).

Chapter 6 addresses the 1973 translation by Michael Alexander (revised in 2001), which is 'the one used most for teaching purposes' and, in Magennis' view, 'a particularly interesting and enabling translation' (135). Alexander starts out as a follower of Pound, but Magennis applauds the way in which Alexander goes beyond his model through his sensitive attention to providing an

impression of the qualities of the original poem. In particular, he singles out the way in which Alexander handles syntax, diction, an elevated but not alienating register, litotes, balance, repetition, wordplay, kennings, alliteration, and other sound effects. As Magennis notes, Alexander's translation is 'impressionistic rather than precise in what it conveys about the features of Germanic poetry' (157), but nevertheless 'it succeeds better than most other translations in conveying to the modern reader an enabling sense of what it is like to read *Beowulf* in the original today' (159).

Chapter 7 turns to Seamus Heaney's Booker Prize-winner translation of 1999. Magennis notes both the positive and negative reactions to Heaney's poem. More importantly, he provides a detailed analysis of the poem in the context of Heaney's poetic practice, showing how Heaney, 'displaying thoughtfulness about language at every level, in effect creates a distinctive literary language with which to render, and appropriate, the Old English epic, making his version of it unmistakably a Heaney poem' (171). Magennis again provides a great wealth of detailed close readings of Heaney's techniques for rendering the effects of original poem, noting in particular his 'strikingly focused images based on compound words, sharpening or particularizing the sense of the Old English, often to powerful effect' (172). Magennis also responds to previous scholars' criticism of Heaney's simplification of the original poem's syntax; as he states, such comments 'need to be qualified by an appreciation of how much he has managed to take over from the Old English while at the same time writing in a modern poetic idiom' (181). Magennis again evaluates the translator's achievement in his two chosen passages, and concludes that Heaney complicates 'the



domesticating versus foreignizing binary' (187), for Heaney's choice to place *Beowulf* in his own, familiar language renders the poem foreign to most other readers. Magennis also notes that many of the characteristics of the idiosyncratic register developed by Heaney for this poem are, in fact, characteristic of Old English poetry: 'to a remarkable degree Heaney's *Beowulf* is faithful to essential features of the Old English poem' (189). However, as Magennis has argued throughout his analysis of successful translations, 'it works because it is "a living thing", transposed as it is to a fresh cultural context' (189).

Chapter 8 more briefly discusses other post 1950 verse translations, of which there have been more than twenty, most produced in America. He notes successful techniques as well as disappointing results in translations: in the UK, by Kevin Crossley-Holland (1968), Paula Grint (1995), and Felix Nobis (2000); in America, by Howell D. Chickering, Jr (1977), Albert W. Haley, Jr (1978), Stanley B. Greenfield (1982), Marijane Osborn (1983), Ruth Lehmann (1988), Raymond Tripp (1990), Raymond Oliver (1990), Frederick Rebsamen (1991), E. L. Ridsen (1994), Richard M. Trask (1998), Thomas Kennedy (2001), Roy Liuzza (2000), Alan Sullivan and Timothy Murphy (2004), John McNamara (2005), Martin Puhvel (2006), and Dick Ringler (2007). Magennis argues that all these translators 'operate within familiar theoretical parameters with regard to register, literalness and their degree of foreignness/domestication' (215), but draws attention to the variety of imaginative ways in which these translators have responded to the poem.

The Epilogue very briefly surveys the 'veritable industry of popular *Beowulf* adaptations and spin-offs' (217)—the movies, plays, operas, and novels that have

been built out of the original poem. The Bibliography is very full and thus extremely useful, and the book is completed with that most essential of scholarly tools, an index.

Overall, this is one of those books that I wish I had written, but I am grateful that Magennis has done it. It will make my own teaching of the subject much better.

Jennifer Neville
Royal Holloway University of London

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Loredana Lazzari, Patrizia Lendinara and Claudia Di Sciacca (eds), *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950–1150)*. Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 73. Barcelona and Madrid: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2014. xviii + 590 pp. Paperback. 978-2-503-55199-9. EUR 65.

This edited volume is to be welcomed as one of a number of recent books on Anglo-Saxon saints and hagiography, reflecting the increasingly prominent place that saints' lives now occupy in early medieval studies. Divided into four sections, it presents a wide-ranging and varied series of chapters, fourteen in number, from established and emerging researchers. Notably, half of the contributions are from Italian scholars affiliated to Italian institutions, a circumstance that bears happy testimony to the health of Anglo-Saxon studies south of the Alps.



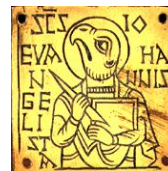
To thumbnail the chapters in order of appearance: in what is the first of a series of contributions on Ælfric of Eynsham making up the first section, Joyce Hill explores Ælfric's rationale for including saints in his collections and tabulates his selection of saints against those of his principal source compilations; Loredana Lazzari argues that Ælfric harmonizes different models of kingship and sainthood, particularly in his lives of Oswald and Edmund; Susan Irvine uses Ælfric's distinctive references to the torture instrument that he calls *hengen* as a way into studying his formulaic language; Rolf Bremmer shows how Ælfric's (among others') saints and persecutors live 'in different circles' in their understanding of shame and honour.

The second section is comprised of two pieces relating to *Vitas Patrum* writings: Claudia Di Sciacci, tracing the desert ideal from the *Vitas Patrum* to Anglo-Saxon England, argues that the Cuthbert of both Bede and Ælfric is a figure who transcends the binary divide between eremitic and coenobitic; Winfried Rudolf examines a version of the *Verba Seniorum* in a specific eleventh-century manuscript to uncover the lines of transmission that it represents and intriguingly to suggest an association with Wulfstan of Worcester.

A group of contributions then addresses hagiographical traditions and contexts in Anglo-Saxon England: Concetta Giliberto compares the accounts of St Guthlac's struggle with devils (reflecting a familiar theme in the lives of desert saints), and particularly his *descensus ad inferos*, in their two Old English variants, the *Life of St Guthlac* and Vercelli XXIII, finding shared contrasts with the Latin source but also differences between the vernacular texts; Guiseppe De Bonis compares the treatment of John the Baptist in the Blickling Homilies,

in which he sees John as portrayed as the forerunner of Christ, and in Ælfric, where he sees him as portrayed as the founder of asceticism, to argue that the Blickling Homilies should not necessarily be viewed as antithetical to the Benedictine Reform; Claudio Cataldi briefly surveys treatments of St Andrew in Old English homiletic tradition; Maria Caterina De Bonis identifies an unfinished eleventh-century drawing in a manuscript containing the *Regula S. Benedicti* as being of Benedict himself; Catherine Cubitt places the Latin lives of the three celebrated leaders of the Benedictine Reform in the political context of the reign of Æthelred II, viewing these lives as, in disastrous times, presenting stories of good and bad kings and as asserting the rightness of monastic reform; Patrizia Lendinara offers an exhaustive survey of references to St Augustine of Canterbury and his fellow missionaries from throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond, noting the relative neglect of Augustine until the eleventh century and pointing to the political dimension of his promotion in post-Conquest England.

The final two chapters, making up the fourth section, turn specifically to the Anglo-Norman period: Rosalind Love notes the profusion of Latin writings on Anglo-Saxon saints in this period and focuses on the hagiography of Thorney Abbey and in particular on Folcard's life of St Botwulf, which is shown purposefully (and expediently) to rewrite the beginnings of the Abbey so as to insist on its coenobitic rather than eremitic character; Roberta Bassi traces in summary form the development of the figure of King Oswald in post-Conquest historical sources, perceiving a move in his depiction 'from saint to martyr, from king to hero'.



This volume is so wide-ranging and varied in content indeed that its title is somewhat misleading. Nearly half of the contributions – and, taking account of the relative lengths of chapters, well over half the book – are not in fact on Old English prose but on other aspects of the veneration of saints in Anglo-Saxon England and afterwards. The coverage could perhaps have been explained by the editors in an introduction but the volume lacks such a feature, supplying instead a short preface that consists only of opening and concluding paragraphs accompanying brief outlines of the chapters. A more inclusive title would have been preferable.

Also noticeable in this book is a striking variation in the length of contributions, particularly those offering surveys of material. These contributions incorporating surveys range from brief overviews of fifteen to twenty pages, via Claudia Di Sciacca's sixty-page discussion of the desert ideal and St Cuthbert (an interesting study but one with inessential detail, particularly in the 222 footnotes), to Patrizia Lendinara's 132-page chapter (with 405 footnotes) on St Augustine of Canterbury. Lendinara's chapter is a fascinating and impressive piece of work but it reads as a monograph or long journal article rather than as a chapter in an edited book. It has an unbalancing effect in the present context.

In style-sheet terms *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England* is well edited. Some irregular punctuation (or lack of punctuation) is in evidence here and there and there is inconsistency between *-ise* and *-ize*, sometimes on the same page, but there are very few typos or obvious slips (though there is one typo in the table of contents). Style problems are apparent, however, at a higher level, and arise from the fact that in a book that is written entirely in English many

of the contributors are not working in their first language and are not always comfortable in English. The resulting infelicities and unidiomatic formulations could have been picked up by an eagle-eyed Anglophone copy-editor but have passed into print unchallenged. Also, many chapters have far more and longer footnotes than are strictly necessary for their arguments; some judicious culling would have been of benefit here, as on many pages the space taken up by the main text is dwarfed by that devoted to notes.

Overall, *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England* exhibits considerable learning, setting individual texts in the context of wider traditions and influences. There are exemplary contributions in all four sections, particularly, in my view, from the authors who focus sharply on narrower topics (though the survey-type chapters can also be highly insightful). This collection goes far to suggest the richness of the hagiographical traditions of early medieval England and valuably brings some little-known material into the spotlight. The coverage of new hagiographical traditions that developed in the post-Conquest period is to be applauded (even though, as suggested above, this and other coverage renders the book's chosen title unsatisfactory).

Hugh Magennis
Queen's University Belfast

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Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a bibliographical handlist of manuscripts and manuscript fragments written or owned in England up to 1100*. Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2015. Pp. 960. ISBN: 978-1442629271. Paperback £53.99.

Since its first incarnation, the *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* has been an invaluable tool to scholars of the period. In case any initiate has made it as far as a TOEBI membership without encountering the work of either of its authors, this project seeks to enumerate, describe, and now through bibliographic listings, contextualise each and every manuscript written, in whole or in part, in England up to 1100. In addition, it contains those manuscripts written in Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Ireland or on the Continent if they “certainly or very probably reached England by 1100”. Listings contain the dates, origin and provenance of the manuscript along with its contents and, new to the current edition a bibliography which has been separated into works concerning the manuscript as physical object, its decoration, facsimiles, editions, linguistic analyses and the self-consciously broad “studies”.

The *Handlist* as published in 2001 was a very welcome update to the project as it first appeared for public consumption in 1981. The intervening years have seen a mania in indexing as technologies and technical skills in the community have improved to the point that the task of providing detailed, but aggregated information about the material objects is now near-frictionless, and has thus become more democratic. This tome, however, is undemocratic in all the right ways to preserve its sharp focus, and lend authority and consistency to its depth.

The new edition recognises the position of the changed scholarly world in its content: the standard entry in the volume has been richly supplemented since the earlier work, modifications to the layout make the volume more user-friendly, and the addition of a good deal of bibliographic detail with dedicated sections on facsimiles and editions mean that unless and until the majority of these works have been superseded, the *Handlist* will remain a strong contributor to the fact-checking and sanity-checking that is frequently required throughout the research process. There has been a shift in focus since the earlier versions, from those characteristics intrinsic to the object (its contents, date of collation, and in a different way, its provenance) to a broader scope which includes more of the community’s perceptions of the object (facsimiles, editions, and secondary literature). This may sound trivial, but it is a truly monumental achievement when factored by the number of manuscripts (1291) considered in the *Handlist’s* scope. The bibliography alone would be a legitimate starting point for a project mapping out the historiography of manuscript studies. What the project has traditionally done so well, it continues to do: it provides scholars with firm ground from which to work.

For this work to be more than a monument, however, it needs, urgently, to migrate to a digital format, as others have noted. The wealth of information collected in the *Handlist* is not best served between physical pages. As a data specialist I am saddened by the questions this book allows me to ask but not to answer, and frustrated to know that the answers exist in the way in which the data recorded within the book interacts with itself, and with other achievements in the discipline, such as the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database, Cameron’s *Dictionary of Old English* index, the Prosopography



Project (*PASE*), and modern library projects, especially as they become more universally available.

Such extensions of the project, though greatly needed for larger questions to be answered, would deviate from the terms on which Gneuss and Lapidge have offered this work: solid ground. What we are all grateful for is the fact that they have managed to provide us with so much firm footing, and a rigorous map by which to navigate it.

Owen Roberson
RSO, University of Cambridge

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Reports from TOEBI Award Holders 2016

International Medieval Congress, Leeds, 4-7 July 2016.

Katrina Wilkins (Nottingham)

The funding I received from TOEBI assisted me in attending the Leeds International Medieval Conference in July 2016. I delivered my paper – entitled 'Feasting and Fasting, Food and Drink: Characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*' – as part of the New Voices in Anglo-Saxon Studies sessions, sponsored by the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists. The session went well and I received helpful feedback from the Q&A that will help me further develop my ideas. This was my first

time attending the Leeds conference, and it was a great opportunity to hear papers from a variety of scholars on a variety of topics, as well as to meet with others interested in similar topics and share ideas for future research. I was deeply grateful for the funding from TOEBI that helped make this experience possible for me.

Eleni Ponirakis (Nottingham)

With the help of a grant from TOEBI I was able to attend this year's Leeds International Medieval Conference. It was my great good fortune to be part of the Riddle Ages group, organised by Megan Cavell and Jenny Neville which boasted four panels – all of them with outstanding speakers and papers. In my session I presented a paper on riddling elements of *The Seafarer* accompanied by James Paz from Manchester and Victoria Symons from UCL. Our three papers spoke to each other so beautifully that it couldn't have worked better if we had planned it and this led to a fascinating discussion which embraced movement and stasis, ephemerality and storms in the mind. I attended all the Riddle Ages sessions and the breadth of scholarship was inspiring: from ecofeminism to thing theory, cosmology to M.R. James and linking other riddling traditions from the continent to Arabia. As a result I had the good fortune to meet some of the best scholars in my field, both established and upcoming.

Leeds is of course an excellent place to meet great minds. The atmosphere was convivial and those meetings stretch beyond the question and answer sessions to chatting over lunch and dinner. Megan and Jenny organised a dinner at a very jolly Italian restaurant, giving us all a chance to



get to know one another better and to carry on discussions that had sparked up earlier. This year's conference of course came in the wake of the fem-fog incident and it was heartening to see how Anglo-Saxonists tackled this head-on. The mentoring scheme was launched, giving younger scholars the opportunity to be guided and supported by more experienced mentors and meetings were held to discuss ways to make sure that the world of Old English and Anglo-Saxon studies was one that was friendly, supportive, equitable, open, free from prejudice and professional. Certainly this reflects my experience of the discipline and hopefully with such a proactive stance this will become a universal experience.

I have certainly come away feeling fortunate and privileged. Fortunate that there are groups like TOEBI who make it possible for students on lower incomes to attend conferences like this; fortunate that scholars like Jenny and Megan are willing to take risks and give a voice to new and upcoming scholars as well as established ones and privileged to work in an environment at Nottingham where equality and respect are the norm and where all students, be they part time or full time, younger or older and of whatever orientation are made to feel welcome and a valued part of a strong and supportive team.

Follow The Riddle Ages blog on Twitter, @The RiddleAges, or online:

<https://theriddleages.wordpress.com>

Corinne Dale (Royal Holloway)

TOEBI helped fund my recent attendance at the annual Leeds IMC. The Old English

Riddles of the Exeter Book have been enjoying renewed interest in recent years and this year at the IMC there were four sessions on these enigmatic texts. My paper, entitled '*freolic, sellic: An Eco-feminist Reading of the Exeter Book Riddles*', formed part of the second session, which was about the 'other' in the collection. Other contributors included Andy Orchard, Clare Lees, Gillian Overing and Jennifer Neville, and the sessions were hailed a great success. It is hoped that a publication will follow, showcasing the wide range of approaches to the riddles.

Rachel A. Burns, University College London

My attendance at this year's International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, where I was the co-organiser of a series of panels titled 'Eating the Book', was generously assisted by an award from TOEBI. Leaping off from the conference-wide theme of 'Food, Feast & Famine', our series of three panels sought to address the consumption and digestion of texts in Anglo-Saxon England, particularly through papers addressing the production and use of manuscripts, and practices of reading and reflection.

My paper, on 'Bibliophagy and Scholarly Failure in *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* and Exeter Riddle 47', took as its focus two of the texts I am investigating in the course of my PhD thesis. In my paper I propose that lexical correspondence between *Solomon and Saturn I*, *Solomon and Saturn II*, and Riddle 47 of the Exeter Book might suggest a direct or indirect link between the texts. In particular, we might see the scholarly failure of the book-moth in his overly literal digestion of the written page as a reference to the pagan Saturn, who similarly engages in intellectually



questionable bibliophagy, stating: “I have tasted of the books of all the islands.” Ultimately, both texts offer a warning to the reader on the perils of hyper-literal interpretative practices.

Questions and comments from the audience have helped me to think about how I might develop this paper in the future. Furthermore, the ‘Eating the Book’ series as a whole proved to be both popular and successful, and plans are now underway for a future symposium on the topic, with a view to producing an edited collection.

6th International Conference on the Science of Computus in the Middle Ages, Old Moore Institute, NUI Galway, 8-10 July 2016

Sabine Ines Rauch, UCD Dublin

I am grateful for a TOEBI grant that helped fund my travel expenses to the 6th International Conference on the Science of Computus in the Middle Ages in NUI Galway. This is a biannual conference on the science of computus and has taken place in NUI Galway since 2006. While the conference covers the fields of mathematics and astronomy, biblical interpretation and cosmology, empirical astronomical observation, and the perennial quest to understand the concepts of time and time-reckoning, its focus is on scientific thought in the Carolingian period. However, it welcomes papers in all other areas dealing with the scientific and cultural history of Computus.

This year’s conference even had an Anglo-Saxon panel in which I presented my paper “Number symbolic ideas in Byrhtferth’s diagrams of the *Enchiridion*.” This paper was related to the visualization of scientific concepts in diagrams and tables, that is,

number symbolic ideas that are present in Byrhtferth’s diagrams in the main witness of his *Enchiridion*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 328. In the first part, I outlined briefly the development of patristic number symbolic ideas and showed that these integrate influences from different sources, i.e. ancient symbolic ideas, natural observations and classical Greek philosophy. I then touched briefly on the availability of such sources in Anglo-Saxon England. The main part of the paper dealt in detail with two diagrams in the Ashmolean MS and the patristic number symbolic ideas these represent. I concluded that Byrhtferth’s diagrams reflect a variety of available patristic sources and demonstrate the significance of number symbolic ideas; the fact that these are presented in combination with the scientific material of the *computus* shows the significance of number symbolism in Anglo-Saxon England in the late tenth century. This paper is based on a part of my PhD dissertation.

The Viking World: Diversity and Change, Nottingham, 27 June-2 July 2016.

Heidi Stoner (York)

The funding I received from TOEBI contributed towards funding my attendance at the Viking World: Diversity and Change, held at the University of Nottingham. This six-day conference was an excellent opportunity to network and hear a diverse range of emerging research on the Viking World. I was able to present forthcoming research on the multi-lingual inscriptions of the Insular world and received critical feedback from scholars across disciplines and from varying perspectives. I focused on Old English inscriptions at Anglo-Scandinavian sites that feature Norse personal names and the relationships between Runic

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and Latin inscriptions. This will form part of my post-doctoral research and this opportunity was critical to my transition into early career research and I thank TOEBI for supporting me at this stage of my career.

Christine Wallis (Sheffield)

Christine's award will enable her to attend the Nineteenth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, in Essen, 22-26 August. Her report will be included in next year's Newsletter.

When you've finished reading this Newsletter, please spread the word by passing it on to colleagues or students

Minor correction to TOEBI Newsletter 32 (2015):

I am quite delighted that Hana Videen attended the paper session in which I presented on fathers and daughters, and even more tickled that she wrote up a summary of my paper. There is one small problem, however, with her recollection or notes; she writes: "3) the patriarchal example, where the father arranges his daughter Thasia's marriage to Apollonius." My third example was in fact of Apollonius giving his own daughter, Tarsia, in marriage to Prince Athenagoras. This takes place almost immediately after Apollonius has been reunited with her. Ms. Videen is correct in that I said that this is the patriarchal example, the father arranging the marriage of his daughter without any discussion with her, but not in the names. My thanks to TOEBI for helping to send

graduate students to the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo.

Jana K. Schulman
The Medieval Institute

Notice: 'Academics in the Classroom': English Outreach Conference for ECRs and Teachers. Hertford College, Oxford, 15-16 August. Organizers: Catherine Redford and Emily Mayne.

<http://english-outreach.blogspot.co.uk/>
@EnglishOutreach

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Contribute to the Newsletter:

Responses to any of the items in this issue; book reviews; short articles on your Old English courses or assessment procedures; material about professional practice.

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Changing Faces

Please send any information about recent / upcoming appointments or retirements in your department to either of the Editors, and encourage

your new colleagues to become members of TOEBI. Application forms can be downloaded from the website.

Contribute to the Newsletter:

Responses to this issue; book reviews; short articles on your Old English courses or assessment procedures; material about professional practice.

Please send information about the following items:

- conferences on Anglo-Saxon studies
- special lectures by Anglo-Saxonists
- postgraduate courses and opportunities in Old English
- news about promotions, or general news about Old English lecturers
- the publication of new books or articles useful for teaching Old English
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If you have a print-out of the TOEBI Newsletter, why not pass it on to a colleague who is not a member, or one of your graduate students? Better still, leave it in the staff common area so that other faculty members can find out what goes on in the world of Old English studies.