

Anglo- Saxon England 29



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Since its inception in 1972, the editorial policy of *Anglo-Saxon England* has been to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the study of all aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture. This approach is pursued in exemplary fashion by many of the essays in the current volume. New light is thrown on the dating and form of Cynewulf's poem *The Fates of the Apostles* through a comprehensive study of the historical martyrologies of the Carolingian period on which Cynewulf is presumed to have drawn. The literary form of Ælfric's *Preface* to his translation of Genesis is illustrated through a wide-ranging study of the rhetorical genre of preface-writing in the early Middle Ages (the genre which subsequently was known as the *ars dictaminis*), and the problems which Ælfric faced and solved in composing a *Life* of St Æthelthryth are illustrated through detailed comparison of the sources which he utilized. The interface between Latin and Old English is illustrated in several ways. The word order of the continuous interlinear Old English glosses in the 'Royal Prayerbook' is shown to have been influenced by the syntax of the Latin texts which the gloss was intended to explicate. The unusual style and vocabulary of Æthelweard's Latin *Chronicon* are examined in the context of the verse technique and diction of Old English verse, to show that Æthelweard was consciously attempting to emulate some of its most characteristic features. And consideration of literal errors in the transmitted text of *Beowulf* in the light of letter-forms in various grades of Anglo-Saxon minuscule script leads to new hypotheses about the genesis and transmission of this important poem.

But although much can be learned from interdisciplinary study, much is still to be learned from carefully focused study of individual texts and artifacts. Various passages of the poem known as *Genesis A* can be helpfully understood as reflecting

(continued on back flap)

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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

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29

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Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pages 297–358) are used throughout the volume without other explanation.

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