

Anglo- Saxon England 24



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Our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon England depends wholly on the precise and detailed study of the texts and artifacts which have come down to us from pre-Conquest times. The international scholarly reputation of *Anglo-Saxon England* has always been based principally on the publication and analysis of these primary sources. The present volume contains pioneering studies of some of these sources which have hitherto been neglected or misunderstood. A comprehensive study of a group of lavish gospelbooks written under the patronage of a late Anglo-Saxon countess, Judith of Flanders (sometime wife of the Earl Tostig who was killed at Stamford Bridge in 1066) shows the importance of these artifacts for the first time, and provides new understanding of the transmission of the gospels in late-eleventh-century England. Close analysis of the *Libellus Æthelwoldi*, a neglected Latin translation of a late-tenth-century documentary record of the estates acquired by the redoubtable Bishop Æthelwold for Ely Abbey, throws new light on the operations of the laws of land tenure in the late tenth century. And a thorough analysis of the Old English gloss which accompanied the *Regularis Concordia* helps to clarify the mechanisms of monastic reform in the late tenth century, as well as the techniques by which a text central to that reform was interpreted and studied.

Other texts and manuscripts come to light for the first time. Attention is drawn to a late copy of an Old English poem (the *Metrical Epilogue* to King Alfred's *Pastoral Care*) which had escaped the notice of the editors of a recent facsimile edition of all minor Old English verse. An edition of a previously unprinted prose text serves as the focus for a valuable discussion of the rite of excommunication as it was practised in the later Anglo-Saxon church.

More traditional lines of enquiry are also shown to be capable of yielding fresh results. A detailed

(continued on back flap)

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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

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24

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vii
An Anglo-Saxon mass for St Willibrord and its later liturgical uses NICHOLAS ORCHARD <i>Courtauld Institute of Art, London</i>	1
Some difficulties in <i>Beowulf</i> , lines 874–902: Sigemund reconsidered M. S. GRIFFITH <i>New College, Oxford</i>	11
The <i>Metrical Epilogue</i> to the Alfredian <i>Pastoral Care</i> : a postscript from Junius PETER J. LUCAS <i>University College, Dublin</i>	43
Sociolinguistic aspects of Old English colour lexemes C. P. BIGGAM <i>Strathclyde University</i>	51
The interchangeability of Old English verbal prefixes MICHIKO OGURA <i>Chiba University</i>	67
The <i>Regularis Concordia</i> and its Old English gloss LUCIA KORNEXL <i>University of Munich</i>	95
Law and litigation in the <i>Libellus Æthelwoldi episcopi</i> ALAN KENNEDY <i>University of Sydney</i>	131
A unique Old English formula for excommunication from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 E. M. TREHARNE <i>University of Leicester</i>	185
The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia LESLEY ABRAMS <i>University of Cambridge</i>	213
The Anglo-Saxon gospelbooks of Judith, countess of Flanders: their text, make-up and function PATRICK MCGURK <i>Woodford Green, Essex</i> and JANE ROSENTHAL <i>Columbia University</i>	251

Contents

Bibliography for 1994

309

LESLEY J. ABRAMS, *University of Cambridge*
CARL T. BERKHOUT, *University of Arizona*
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Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pages 309–311) are used throughout the volume without other explanation