

Anglo- Saxon England 22



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From its very inception it has been the intention of *Anglo-Saxon England* to invigorate growth in all areas of Anglo-Saxon studies. The present volume follows the lead of its predecessors both by pruning away old dogmas and by sowing fresh seeds for further scholarly growth in many areas of the discipline.

That Alcuin addressed to the monks of Lindisfarne the question, 'What has Ingeld to do with Christ?', is a much-repeated dogma in Old English studies; but close examination of the letter in question shows that it was addressed not to Lindisfarne nor to a monastic community, but to a bishop in Mercia. That 'Ultán the scribe' was responsible for some of the most lavishly illuminated Anglo-Saxon manuscripts is shown to be another untenable dogma. The question of who was buried in the famous Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo is reconsidered in the light of much new evidence, and traditional views on the provenance of the earliest Latin loan-words in Old English are re-examined critically and found to be wanting.

Meanwhile much new evidence is brought to light. A hoard of tools recently excavated from a grave in Lincolnshire reveals the working methods of an Anglo-Saxon smith. Fragments of a previously unrecognized Anglo-Saxon manuscript in Chicago throw light on the transmission of Alcuin's letters and on the development of Anglo-Saxon Square minuscule script. Most strikingly, a seventeenth-century transcript of a lost cartulary from St Albans is shown to preserve the texts of a number of previously unknown documents in Old English.

New perceptives emerge from interdisciplinary study. The 'beasts-of-battle' typescenes which are characteristic of Old English poetry are studied in the wider context of other European literatures. The nasty Viking habit of murdering hostages by throwing bones at them (as happened to St Ælfheah) is illuminated by a wide-ranging study

(continued on back flap)

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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
Early Latin loan-words in Old English ALFRED WOLLMANN <i>The Catholic University of Eichstätt</i>	1
Three men and a boat: Sutton Hoo and the East Saxon kingdom MICHAEL PARKER PEARSON <i>University of Sheffield</i> ROBERT VAN DE NOORT <i>University of Hull</i> and ALEX WOOLF <i>University of Sheffield</i>	27
Aldhelm's <i>Enigmata</i> and Byzantine riddles ČELICA MILOVANOVIĆ-BARHAM <i>Millersville University of Pennsylvania</i>	51
The 'baptism of tears' in early Anglo-Saxon sources T. O'LOUGHLIN and H. CONRAD-O'BRIAIN <i>Dublin</i>	65
An unreported early use of Bede's <i>De natura rerum</i> VERNON KING <i>The University Library, Cambridge</i>	85
What has Ingeld to do with Lindisfarne? DONALD A. BULLOUGH <i>St Andrews, Scotland</i>	93
Ultán the scribe LAWRENCE NEES <i>The University of Delaware</i>	127
A smith's hoard from Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire DAVID A. HINTON <i>The University of Southampton</i> , with a contribution from ROBERT WHITE, <i>City of Lincoln</i> <i>Archaeological Unit</i>	147
An Anglo-Saxon fragment of Alcuin's letters in the Newberry Library, Chicago DAVID GANZ <i>The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</i>	167
Convention and originality in the Old English 'beasts of battle' typescene M.S. GRIFFITH <i>New College, Oxford</i>	179

Contents

Serious entertainments: an examination of a peculiar type of Viking atrocity	201
IAN MCDUGALL <i>The Dictionary of Old English, Toronto</i>	
Miracles in architectural settings: Christ Church, Canterbury and St Clement's, Sandwich in the Old English <i>Vision of Leofric</i>	227
MILTON MCC. GATCH <i>Union Theological Seminary, New York</i>	
A lost cartulary of St Albans Abbey	253
SIMON KEYNES <i>Trinity College, Cambridge</i>	
Bibliography for 1992	
CARL T. BERKHOUT <i>The University of Arizona</i>	
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Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pages 281–283) are used throughout the volume without other explanation