

Anglo- Saxon England

7



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Anglo-Saxon England 7

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What scientific observations is Bede likely to have brought to bear on the Easter controversy? What interest did the Anglo-Saxons take in precious stones and what did they know about them? Are heroic values rejected in one of Cynewulf's poems? What was Anglo-Saxon carpentry like? These are among the questions taken up in this volume. Some of the answers involve one form of evidence solving a puzzle presented by another; some involve collaboration between several disciplines in large-scale, many-sided undertakings, such as investigating the origins of a city or systematically studying a whole class of manuscripts.

Observations to determine the day of the equinox in Bede's Northumbria; Anglo-Saxon lapidary knowledge (particularly in the Old English Lapidary, the earliest in any western European vernacular) as part of the medical and exegetic traditions of early medieval Europe; lists of saints' resting-places as an aspect of the cult of saints in the intellectual and social life of Anglo-Saxon England; the symbolism of the *Pax*/*Pax*/*Pax* coin legend; the construction of some wooden roofs, walls, floors, window-frames, doors and, especially, the frame of a spire, likely to be Anglo-Saxon: these topics are subjected to keen examination – the last a hitherto completely neglected line of enquiry. The excavations carried out in the present decade to test key hypotheses about the Anglo-Saxon origins of Norwich are described, and the composite picture they have yielded so far is assessed. The rôle of units, independent in content and structure, within manuscripts of vernacular homilies is discussed; so, too, is the present state of combined palaeographical, codicological, art historical and textual study of manuscripts containing English decoration from the reign of Alfred to the Norman Conquest. In the field of vernacular poetry there

(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>	page vii
Easter cycles and the equinox in the British Isles KENNETH HARRISON <i>London, England</i>	I
Lapidary traditions in Anglo-Saxon England: part I, the background; the Old English Lapidary PETER KITSON <i>Emmanuel College, Cambridge</i>	9
Lists of saints' resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England D. W. ROLLASON <i>The University of Durham</i>	61
Beowulf, Wiglaf and the Wægmundings NORMAN E. ELIASON <i>Chapel Hill, North Carolina</i>	95
Cynewulf's devaluation of heroic tradition in <i>Juliana</i> CLAUDE SCHNEIDER <i>Portland, Oregon</i>	107
The genesis of <i>The Battle of Maldon</i> N. F. BLAKE <i>The University of Sheffield</i>	119
Affective language, especially alliterating qualifiers, in Ælfric's Life of St Alban RUTH WATERHOUSE <i>Macquarie University, New South Wales</i>	131
Leland's transcript of Ælfric's <i>Glossary</i> RONALD E. BUCKALEW <i>The Pennsylvania State University</i>	149
An interpretation of the <i>Pacx</i> , <i>Pax</i> and <i>Paxs</i> pennies SIMON KEYNES <i>Trinity College, Cambridge</i>	165
The Anglo-Saxon origins of Norwich: the problems and approaches ALAN CARTER <i>The University of East Anglia</i>	175
Anglo-Saxon carpentry CECIL A. HEWETT <i>Essex County Planning Department, Chelmsford</i>	205
Self-contained units in composite manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon period P. R. ROBINSON <i>The Queen's University of Belfast</i>	231
Manuscripts containing English decoration 871–1066, catalogued and illustrated: a review LINDA L. BROWNRIGG <i>Stanford University, California</i>	239

Contents

Bibliography for 1977 *page 267*

CARL T. BERKHOUT, *The University of Notre Dame, Indiana*,
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King's College, London, PETER A. CLAYTON, *The British Museum*,
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*Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pp. 268–9) are used throughout
the volume without other explanation*

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