

Anglo- Saxon England 28



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This year marks the 1100th anniversary of the death of King Alfred in 899, and it is fitting that the present volume of *Anglo-Saxon England* should be framed by articles which throw new light on the achievement and reputation of that greatest of Anglo-Saxon kings. The volume opens with a wide-ranging study of the literary and archaeological evidence for the novel design of Alfred's ships, a design which in later times led to his being regarded as the father of the English navy. The volume closes with a survey of the development of the Alfredian legend from the tenth to the twentieth century, with material drawn from a wide variety of different sources, including art and literature, much of which may be unfamiliar to students of Anglo-Saxon England.

Between these two articles on King Alfred lies a variety of studies which illustrate the journal's aim of encouraging the interdisciplinary study of surviving records. One such study isolates a number of puzzling features in the Old English poem known as *The Descent into Hell*, and persuasively suggests that these features derive from an illustration in the Utrecht Psalter, a continental manuscript which is known to have been at Canterbury in the tenth century. Another study analyses the rubrics in the Claudius manuscript of the Old English prose Genesis, and is able to demonstrate that the Old Testament narrative was restructured in order to adapt the text to the interests of an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon lay audience; the well-known drawings in the Claudius manuscript can thus be seen as a further aspect of this process of adaptation. The interests of Anglo-Saxon laymen, particularly in the commissioning of manuscripts, during the eleventh century are further illustrated by analysis of the colophon to the Paris Psalter. An interdisciplinary study of a different kind treats a compendious glossary which was compiled at Abingdon in the early eleventh century, and is now preserved in Antwerp and in the British Library. It is demonstrated for the first time that the glossary
(continued on back flap)

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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

28

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Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pages 357–9) are used throughout the volume without other explanation

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