

Anglo- Saxon England 13



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Anglo-Saxon England 13

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A rich diversity of evidence and of topic characterizes this volume. A pioneer account of a unique group of Anglo-Saxon embroideries preserved on the continent and the publication of a previously unknown charter are two outstanding 'firsts'. Themes illuminated are as varied as the status of women, early urban history, the nature of medical collections, the standing of Marian feasts and the function of musical notation. The study of Old English poetry is advanced textually, codicologically, culturally, linguistically and critically. Innovation and established practice go hand-in-hand: a record of the first conference of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists and versions of six papers read at that conference are included, and so too is the usual full bibliography of the preceding year's publications; two pages of colour plates (showing parts of the embroideries) accompany twelve pages of black-and-white ones.

The highly important embroideries at Maaseik in Belgium, here treated in detail in English for the first time, are very significantly shown to be southern English work of the late eighth or early ninth century. The newly discovered text here first edited is that of an otherwise unrecorded charter of King Edgar for an estate in Derbyshire. Interesting implications for the status of women are recognized in a section of the early law code of Æthelberht, king of Kent. Recent excavations at Northampton, disclosing that a tenth-century industrial complex superseded an earlier palace sequence, show how a continuing centre of authority and administration, evolving as social, economic and political forces changed, gradually acquired the functions we associate with a town. Some ways in which medical collections were assembled, in particular the native elements in Bald's *Leechbook*, are elicited from an analysis of the hundred or so vernacular medical recipes that survive. Both literary and liturgical evidence are drawn on to demonstrate that the

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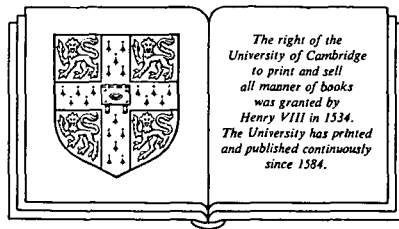
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Versions of the six items immediately following Professor Greenfield's record of the first conference of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists were read at that conference

Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pp. 269–71) are used throughout the volume without other explanation

Miss Rosemary Graham's help with the editing is gratefully acknowledged