

Anglo- Saxon England

12



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Anglo-Saxon England 12

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The contribution to knowledge made by this volume is as substantial and diverse as that of any previous issue in this series. Four very different kinds of Anglo-Saxon thinking are clarified – traditions, learned and oral, about the settlement of the country, study of foreign-language grammar, interest in exotic jewels as reflections of the glory of God, and (surprisingly, no doubt, to some) a mainly rational attitude to medicine. Publication of no less than three recent discoveries augments our corpus of manuscript evidence. The nature of Old English poetry is illuminated – as a variety of oral expression and as exemplified in a particular poet's treatment of a particular Latin source. A useful summary of the present state of editorial treatment of textual problems in *Beowulf* is provided.

A re-examination of the accounts of the settlement in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* yields new insight into the processes of Anglo-Saxon learned historiography and oral tradition. Detailed analysis of the grammatical writings of Aldhelm, Tatwine and Boniface provides a firmer basis for estimating what Late Latin grammatical texts were available in eighth-century Southumbria. The second, concluding, part of a study of lapidary traditions in Anglo-Saxon England identifies some previously unsuspected sources among those Bede used for his *Explanatio Apocalypsis* and shows that, in its turn, Bede's work was used for a hymn of later, probably Anglo-Saxon, composition. Three newly noticed leaves, here first published, provide fresh evidence, each in its own interesting way, for the history of script or musical notation and for the history of culture. Two of them are survivals from manuscripts otherwise unknown; the third is a detached part of the famous 'Cambridge Songs' codex. A thorough-going analysis of an under-studied major work, Bald's *Leechbook*,

(continued on back flap)

Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA

© Cambridge University Press 1983

First published 1983

Printed in Great Britain by the Alden Press, Oxford

ISSN 0263 675 1

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