Leeds Studies in English

New Series XLV

2014

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Leeds Studies in English

<www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>
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University of Leeds
2014

which could have added an extra dimension to the discussion of that text's representation of patronage and power, but the case study does not suffer from its absence. The portrayals of the female patron in each of these texts are complex, and perform a multitude of functions. The overriding conclusion, though, is that gender is not inherently linked with power and agency; textual gendered personae share complicated and shifting relationships which are not fixed within the hierarchy of patron and author, but adapt to reflect the complexity of the relationships themselves.

The final chapter again plays with our perceptions of genre, this time by performing a refreshing literary analysis on the charter texts of the *Libellus Æthelwoldi Episcopi*, in which different representations of power interact in two textual genres. This prosimetrical text presents patronage in the period of the Benedictine Reform through the needs of Bishop Hervey in the twelfth century and demonstrates the enduring relevance of Anglo-Saxon patronage. The *Libellus* shows Æthelwold within local networks of power with his community and with the laity. He is enmeshed in relationships of exchange, gift-giving and obligation, as each community is dependent on the other. The prosimetrical text is simultaneously panegyric and practical. It explores the asymmetric relationship between the ecclesiastic and lay communities, in which the laity is presented as opportunistic and the monastic community, represented by Æthelwold, is fair and just. Similarly, in the prose text, Æthelwold is pragmatic and politically capable, whereas in the verse he is saintly and idealised, described with hagiographic language that elevates him above the earthly concerns of the petty laity and their land-holdings. These representations of Æthelwold create for Hervey a 'legitimising' model for his own actions in the twelfth century, asserting his rights in the newly created bishopric of Ely (p. 170). This chapter successfully explores different models for expressing patronage, both practical and spiritual, using different genres.

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Donald Scragg, *A Conspectus of Scribal Hands Writing English, 960–1100*. Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 11. Cambridge: Brewer, 2012. xxii + 94 pp. ISBN 9781843842866.

Donald Scragg's *A Conspectus of Scribal Hands Writing English, 960–1100* is a welcome and valuable addition to the reference resources for the study of English scribal and manuscript culture in the later Anglo-Saxon period. The scope is limited to the narrow band of the 'long eleventh century', and the work seeks to identify and enumerate the contribution of scribes working in that period across our surviving manuscripts. In addition to the table of scribes itself, a number of other resources are included that expand the usefulness of the *Conspectus*, including five full-page, black-and-white images of scribal hands; an index of names mentioned in or otherwise attributed to the various manuscripts, cross-referenced by hand number; an index of places where the scribes are thought to have been active; and a map of the locations mentioned in the *Conspectus*, as well as a subject index based on the summary of the contents supplied by the respective scribes. The project rests on the back of a significant quantitiy of palaeographic research into the manuscripts; references to the secondary literature are condensed down to the absolute minimum form required. As such, the *Conspectus* identifies the various scribal hands writing in English in the long eleventh century and gives locations in the manuscripts where each can be found. The details of and

arguments for identifying each hand are, of course, ommitted, making this work the tip of an immense iceberg that each researcher can draw on as guide before delving into the depths of the manuscripts and scribes of their own interest.

The main focus of the *Conspectus* is the enumeration of the scribal hands. Where the same scribe appears in multiple manuscripts, all examples are listed together under the hand number, usually (but not always) on the scribe's first appearance in the *Conspectus*. Manuscripts are listed alphanumerically in the *Conspectus*, first by repository and then by shelf-mark. A diamond mark is given for the hand number when a manuscript which has already been covered is reached, along with a note to refer to the entry in the *Conspectus*. In this way a user working with a specific manuscript which is not the first instance of a given a scribe can easily find the other works to which he or she contributed. Scragg notes in the introduction (p. xiv) that where there are conflicting opinions in the scholarship as to whether or not two items in a given manuscript are by the same scribe, the corresponding pieces are identified with a lower-case letter immediately following the main number for the scribal hand, e.g. '78a'. In a small number of instances, the numbering for a scribal hand is followed by '.5', such as for scribal hand '60.5'. While no explanation is given for this practice by Scragg in the introduction, it can be assumed that these sub-divisions represent scribal hands which were identified later in the compilation process and were then inserted into the *Conspectus* subsequent to the main numbering having been established.

Manuscripts and scribes are cross-referenced to their relevant entries in the other major reference works relating to the mansucrits, as appropriate: Helmut Gnuess's *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, Neil Ker's *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, Peter Sawyer's *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, and David Pelteret's *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents*. In many instances, Scragg also includes cross references to published images of the manuscripts, although in light of the ever-changing digital environment he errs on the side of caution and only includes reference to facsimiles in hard copy, most notably the relevant volumes from the Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile series and the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile (ASMFF), as well as making reference to specific books in which images of a whole manuscript are reproduced. One minor problem is that reference to the microfiche facsimile of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 (ASMFF 11) is omitted; but with the publication of much better quality images via the Parker on the Web and Early English Law projects, this is hardly an issue. The omission of direct reference to digitial images is justified in the introduction on the basis of the ever-changing nature of the internet and, also relating to printed images of indiviudal folios, the unfeasibile scope of identifying every single image of a given hand.

In all, there are few problems that can be identified in the *Conspectus*, once the deliberate limitations and scope of the project are taken into account; responses to problems arising during the research seem to have been clearly thought through. Most issues that occur on perusal of the *Conspectus* are addressed in the introduction, and while a bibliography would have been an appreciated supplement to the resource it provides, Scragg duly notes that such an endeavour would have extended the size of the project beyond its scope and that the forthcoming bilbiography to accompany Gneuss's *Handlist* will fulfil this need. Again, the scope and intentions of the *Conspectus* are made explicit, and Scragg clearly envisions its function in relation to the bodyof resources for the study of later Anglo-Saxon texts, manuscripts and scribes.

Overall, it is a valuable resource that will be of immense use to those working in the field. It is a project that one would like to see extended to the manuscripts containing English produced and used in other centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period. Obviously the scope of such a project would be immense, and the relationship of the numbering within this conspectus to the larger whole would require some reassessment. The potential for using the *Conspectus* in researching the scribes and English manuscript culture of the long eleventh century is enticing, and future studies of individual scribes will both draw on and refine the details that this useful work contains.

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Peter S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in 'Beowulf'*. Anglo-Saxon Studies 20. Cambridge: Brewer, 2013. x + 279 pp. ISBN: 9781843843467.

Peter Baker's study of violence as a social and economic construct in Anglo-Saxon England accomplishes the rare feat of being deceptively simple to read yet highly complex and eclectic in its approaches and solutions to long-lasting puzzles in *Beowulf* scholarship. Its main merit consists in making explicit a socio-economic system (and its component structures) which would have been obvious to the 'textual communities' from which the poem arose, and are therefore encoded implicitly in the text, but which otherwise remain invisible to us.[1] We might think that we know how a heroic society lives and breathes, but Baker successfully proves that we do not and that presentist biases always block the view of even consummate scholars. This lack of familiarity with the intimate life of a heroic society (albeit an ideal one, which lives only in heroic poems) makes us strangers to the meaning of many gestures which we often interpret on the basis of speculative nineteenth-century approaches uncritically perpetuated to this day. Baker astutely uses what is at heart an anthropological framework to gain access to the culture implied by *Beowulf* and makes explicit the workings of the heroic system in which honour, violence, and treasure are commensurable forms of capital.

His monograph is not merely the study of violence in Old English literature, but a successful attempt to understand the ways in which violence shapes a society and its economy. Although the idea of a socio-economic system organized around treasure and honour as signs of one's worthiness in an ideal heroic society like the one portrayed in *Beowulf* is not new, Baker's study is the first to present a coherent system which explains many phenomena otherwise poorly understood so far.

In his introduction (pp. 1–34), Baker firmly sets his work in the wake of previous scholarship on violence (Guy Halsall most recently among others), the economy of gifts (Marcel Mauss), and Anglo-Saxon studies (too many to list). While it is clear that Baker's knowledge of his eclectic range of secondary sources is thorough, his innovations come to light only slowly and modestly in the following chapters. Baker's main contention is that violence is a social practice, and every violent act is a social transaction (and hence subject to regulation and part of a system which we do not see but to which the authors, disseminators, listeners/readers of early medieval heroic poems would have been intimately accustomed).

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[1]   For the notion of 'textual communities', see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 1–10 and 30–87.