

# Anglo- Saxon England 10

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Anglo-Saxon England 10

CHIEF EDITOR

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This volume is the equal of any of its predecessors in range and significance. Two important authorship questions are settled, the discovery of a major Northumbrian settlement is reported, the conceptions of Old English literature which have prevailed during the last three hundred years are paraded for critical inspection and substantial contributions are made to our knowledge of subjects as diverse as a monastic library of the first rank, eighth-century Latin poetic activity, metrical technique and literary convention in our greatest surviving vernacular poem, the family basis of political power in the tenth century, late Anglo-Saxon legal concepts, and scientific exposition in the early eleventh century. The usual bibliography and an index to volumes 6-10 round the book off.

The library investigated is that of Malmesbury Abbey, cultural meeting place of Celtic and continental currents in early Anglo-Saxon Christianity. Also illuminated is the taste of higher clergy in the eighth century for collecting Latin inscriptional verse, both native and Roman – interesting testimony to the impact of Rome on the Anglo-Saxon imagination. The art of *Beowulf* comes in for two different kinds of examination: two ‘rules’ of its metrical grammar are determined and Hrothgar’s ‘sermon’ is viewed as a specimen of traditional parental wisdom. A nagging doubt is at last put to rest when the Old English prose version of the first fifty psalms in the Paris Psalter is convincingly attributed to King Alfred because of its lexical correspondences to his accepted works; similarly, the early sections of the *Historia Regum* that goes under the name of Symeon of Durham are conclusively shown to display instead the distinctive Latinity and ways of thought of Byrhtferth of Ramsey. Byrhtferth’s best-known work is clarified too: the seemingly bewildering arrangement of his *Manual* is proved to be directly dependent on the ‘Ramsey’ computus surviving in Oxford, St John’s

*(continued on back flap)*

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*Her mon mæg giet gesion biora swæð*

# ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

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*Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pp. 245–7) are used throughout the volume without other explanation*

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