

Anglo- Saxon England 18



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Anglo-Saxon England 18

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This volume, like so many of its predecessors, makes important contributions to our stock of primary manuscript evidence: it recovers parts of six previously unrecorded charters and analyses two sets of fragments, each unique in its own way – two leaves of Old Testament text written in Mercia or Canterbury early in the ninth century and six leaves of a missal written at Worcester in the mid-eleventh century. Significant issues in both ecclesiastical and secular history are tackled too – the location of the see of Lindsey, the fate of Rutland during the Scandinavian invasions and settlements and the present state of our knowledge of the archaeology of the Five Boroughs of Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Stamford and Lincoln. Vernacular literature receives its fair share of attention as well: the relationship between author and audience is examined in the cases of a biblical poem and of the prose homiliary which is still least well understood among the principal ones extant.

The review of the location of the see of Lindsey, taking into account all available historical, onomastic and archaeological evidence, concludes that probably it was Lincoln. The now Japanese-owned leaves from early-ninth-century Mercia or Canterbury, containing part of the Book of Judges, are the only survival of Old Testament text from this particular environment and thus the only one from it to have this kind of claim to be evidence of a complete bible. The six leaves from the mid-eleventh-century missal, noticed now for the first time, fill a gap in our knowledge of Worcester's liturgical books at this period, and, when considered, as here, in the perspective of continental influence (especially from Saint Denis), reveal many unusual, and hitherto unrecorded, aspects of late Anglo-Saxon practice. Scrutiny of four sermons from the Blickling manuscript indicates that this collection was little governed by a sense of a specific congregation or reading audience. Analysis of the vernacular poem *Judith* reveals a poet seeking to involve his audience in applying, not discovering, truth through a narrative combining embedded allegory and

(continued on back flap)

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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

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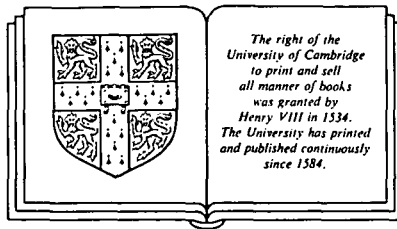
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