

Anglo- Saxon England 11



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Anglo-Saxon England 11

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Much new knowledge and understanding is to be found in this volume. Several unusual fields of study are extensively explored – a distinctive politico-religious cult, penitentials, inscriptions, the Sutton Hoo whetstone and medical knowledge – while treatments of more ‘standard’ subjects – late Anglo-Saxon law, King Alfred’s *Boethius* and *Beowulf* – lead to unusual conclusions.

A phenomenon special to Anglo-Saxon England is given its first separate treatment in a careful and imaginative analysis of the ecclesiastical and political significance of the cults of murdered royal saints. A basic step is taken in the study of penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England – including a guide to the available editions and the manuscripts underlying them; for the first time it will be possible to link up the penitentials into a tradition reliably. A dark corner of Anglo-Saxon legal history is illuminated by the first coherent edition of the legislative pronouncements compiled by Wulfstan as the outcome of a meeting between Danes and Englishmen at Oxford in 1018. Elisabeth Okasha’s *Hand-List* which has been indispensable to any work on Anglo-Saxon non-runic inscriptions for the last decade is brought up to date by the description and illustration of twenty-six additional items and by other *addenda* and *corrigenda*. An adventurous investigation of archaeological and literary analogues starts from a hypothesis that Celtic affinities are primary in the Sutton Hoo whetstone and ends in a suggestion that this intriguing object was probably made in southern Scotland. A review of the principal medical writings, which manuscripts show were available in western Europe in the early Middle Ages, enables the texts used in Anglo-Saxon England to be identified more correctly and



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Her mon mæg giet gesion hiora swæð

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

II

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*Abbreviations listed before the bibliography (pp. 275–7) are used throughout the volume
without other explanation*

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