

AMERICAN NOTES AND QUERIES 15/2 (SPRING 2002), published in association with the University of Kentucky

This issue of *ANQ*, edited by Professor J. R. Hall of Mississippi University, is devoted to Old English textual scholarship. As it contains papers by some of the most distinguished Anglo-Saxonists living today, its mere 72 pages nevertheless deserve particular attention and wide circulation. In quality and significance it easily excels many book-length collections of essays on Old English. It contains twelve items, including an introduction by Professor Hall.

Peter Baker (University of Virginia), in a note on a barely legible Latin entry for 679 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, satisfyingly explains what had been taken as an allusion to Archbishop Jaenberht of Canterbury as one to Lotharius or Hlothhere, king of Kent. In her 'Provost and Prior in the *Regularis Concordia*', Joyce Hill (Leeds University) scrutinizes a problem of ecclesiastical title. 'The Case of the Miraculous Hand in the Old English Life of Guthlac' by Jane Roberts (King's College, London) is an illuminating piece, explaining differences between the Latin and vernacular lives of Guthlac as due to rephrasing, not (as previously supposed) bad translation. R. M. Liuzza (Tulane University) in his 'The Devil and his Father' notes aberrant translations in the Old English gospels, showing the poor state of Latinity at that date. One such rendering, 'he is a liar and so is his father' instead of 'he is a liar and the father of lies' (John 8:44), has alarming implications. By attributing a father to the Devil, it implies the Anglo-Saxons 'saw the world swarming with a multiplicity of demons spawned by their father, Satan', a belief tallying with references in Cynewulf's *Juliana*. The discussion by Paul Szarmach (Western Michigan University) of metre 20 in the Old English Boethius underlines the deficiencies of Sedgefield's 1899 edition of this text and the misunderstandings that result from this. T. D. Hill (Cornell University) cites Middle English evidence for translation of *leger* in *The Wife's Lament* as 'bed of love'. Bruce Mitchell (Oxford) discusses two passages in *The Phoenix*, offering a punctuation more sparing than that of other editors. In 'Five Textual Notes on *Judith*', Fred Robinson (Yale) clarifies references to Judith's finery, the curtain of Holofernes, and the state

of mind and coughing of his attendants. Carl Berkhout (University of Arizona) discusses lines 2200-8 of *Beowulf*, arguing that peculiarities of the text are the result of tampering by the sixteenth-century scholar Laurence Nowell. Roberta Frank (Yale) analyses two Old English words for 'ache' and 'pain', at the same time ruling out an emendation of *Beowulf* 1763a recently supported by Michael Lapidge. But the most impressive paper in the collection is surely that by Eric Stanley of Oxford. Nominally an account of letter-forms in Insular minuscule, it demolishes Michael Lapidge's recent use of such forms (in volume 29 of *Anglo-Saxon England*) to date the archetype of *Beowulf* to before 750.

This volume, work of an Anglo-American coalition, thus deploys weighty firepower. Few working on Old English will not find their activities touched on by the material in this important and stimulating volume, where so much is enclosed within so small a space.

Andrew Breeze
Universidad de Navarra

* † *