



Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald

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Patrick Wormald was a brilliant interpreter of the Early Middle Ages, whose teaching, writings and generous friendship inspired a generation of historians and students of politics, law, language, literature and religion to focus their attention upon the world of the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks. Leading British, American and continental scholars - his colleagues, friends and pupils - here bear witness to his seminal influence by presenting a collection of studies devoted to the key themes that dominated his work: kingship; law and society; ethnic, religious, national and linguistic identities; the power of images, pictorial or poetic, in shaping political and religious institutions.

Closely mirroring the interests of their honorand, the collection not only underlines Patrick Wormald's enormous contribution to the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, but graphically demonstrates his belief that early medieval England and Anglo-Saxon law could only be understood against a background of research into contemporary developments in the nearby Welsh, Scottish, Irish and Frankish kingdoms. He would have been well pleased, therefore, that this volume should make such significant advances in our understanding of the world of Bede, of the dynasty of King Alfred, and also of the workings of English law between the seventh and the twelfth century. Moreover he would have been particularly delighted at the rich comparisons and contrasts with Celtic societies offered here and with the series of fundamental reassessments of aspects of Carolingian Francia. Above all these studies present fundamental reinterpretations, not only of published written sources and their underlying manuscript evidence, but also of the development of some of the dominant ideas of that era. In both their scope and the quality of the scholarship, the collection stands as a fitting tribute to the work and life of Patrick Wormald and his lasting contribution to early medieval studies.

Contents

Foreword; Preface; Patrick Wormald: The writings of Patrick Wormald, Sarah Foot; Patrick Wormald as historian, Sarah Foot; Patrick Wormald: the teacher, Stuart Airlie; Living with Patrick, Jenny Wormald. Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Foundations: Archipelagic thoughts: comparing early medieval polities in Britain and Ireland, James Campbell; Celtic kings: 'priestly vegetables?', T.M. Charles-Edwards; The Bretwaldas and the origins of overlordship in Anglo-Saxon England, Barbara Yorke; Royal and Ecclesiastical law in 7th-century Kent, Lisi Oliver. Gregory and Bede: Divine justice in Gregory the Great's Dialogues, David F. Johnson; Bede, the Britons and the book of Samuel, Alan Thacker; Bede and Benedict of Nursia, Scott DeGregorio; After Bede: continuing the Ecclesiastical History, Joanna Story; Chosen arrows, first hidden then revealed: the visitation-archer sequence as a key to the unity of the Ruthwell cross, Éamonn Ó Carragáin. Carolingian Authority and Learning: Alcuin, Charlemagne and the problem of sanctions, Henry Mayr-Harting; 'For it is written in the law': Ansegis and the writing of Carolingian royal authority, Stuart Airlie; Kings, clergy and dogma: the settlement of doctrinal disputes in the Carolingian world, Thomas F.X. Noble; Carolingian missi and their books, Rosamond McKitterick; Charlemagne's daughters, Anton Scharer; Hrabanus Maurus in Anglo-Saxon England: in honorem sanctae crucis, William Schipper. English Politics and Law (9th-12th centuries): The Fonthill letter: Ealdorman Ordlaf and Anglo-Saxon law in practice, Nicholas P. Brooks; An anonymous historian of Edward the Elder's reign, David A.E. Pelteret; Reform and retribution: the 'anti-monastic reaction' in the reign of Edward the Martyr, Sashi Jayakumar; Donne se cirilsca man ordales weddigid: the Anglo-Saxon lay ordeal, Sarah Larratt Keefer; Trial by ordeal in Anglo-Saxon England: what's the problem with barley?, John D. Niles; Lordship and justice in late Anglo-Saxon England: the judicial functions of soke and commendation revisited, Stephen Baxter; The Making of English Law and the varieties of legal history, John Hudson; Liturgy or law: misconceived alternatives?, Janet L. Nelson. Church, Cult and Memory in England: King Æthelred's charter for Eynsham Abbey (1005), Simon Keynes; Si litterali memorie commendaretur: memory and cartularies in 11th-century Worcester, Francesca Tinti; Emma's Greek scribe, Lynn Jones; Emma: image and ideology, Catherine E. Karkov; The bishop's book: Leofric's homiliary and 11th-century Exeter, Elaine Treharne; The dangerous dead in early medieval England, John Blair; Indexes.

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