

**Antiquary to Academic:
The Progress of Anglo-Saxon Scholarship**

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Hardly more than a century after Chaucer's death, John Skelton complained about the inability of his contemporaries to read the great poet:

And now men would have amended
His englisshe whereat they barke.
Chaucer that famous clarke
His termes were not darke.

("Phillip Sparrow," ca. 1507)

If the language of late medieval England was dark to many people in the early sixteenth century, Old English was effectively a dead language, and its literary remains less accessible than those of ancient Greece and Rome, which were beginning to enjoy a renaissance themselves. If the Italian Renaissance stimulated Englishmen to a renewed and deeper acquaintance with the Greek and Roman classics, it was, to a sizable degree, the reformation in religion that encouraged a look at the ancient language of England itself. Indeed, in the case of England, it is artificial to separate the Renaissance and the Reformation, for they went very much hand in hand.

There were two strong feelings operating simultaneously: a deep reverence for a past golden age; and a determination to move forward to something totally new which was nevertheless seen, or at least presented, as a return to better times. The beginning of Anglo-Saxon studies in the sixteenth century is a good example of the amalgamation of these two forces. In the ecclesiastical field, for example, the reformed church, led by Matthew Parker, [p. 2] Queen Elizabeth's first archbishop of Canterbury, appealed to the doctrine and practice of an older English church to justify a complete break with medieval Catholicism. It contended that the pre-Conquest *Ecclesia Anglicana* had been a Church allied to but independent of the church of Rome, and that one of its established practices was to propagate the word of God in the vernacular. The Reformation was, therefore, supposed to be a "revolution" in the sixteenth-century sense of the term: a turn of the wheel back to the beginning, although modern scholars point out that the Anglo-

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Saxon church was one of the most vigorous supporters of the papacy. How much the reformers knew their movement to be a revolution in the modern sense of a complete overthrow of the past is another matter.

Reformation was not to be confined to the ecclesiastical field, for similar feelings were evident in the literary world which we think of more commonly as the Renaissance. While there was indeed a renewed respect for the ancient classics, the spirit of nationalism was active too. Literary men and educational theorists began to feel that England had a language, if not yet a literature the equal (or nearly) of anything that Greece or Rome had produced; others were not so sure. The argument was settled largely by a host of translators who poured out a flood of English versions of the classics.¹ Not least in importance among the translations were versions of the Bible. Thus the literary and ecclesiastical worlds supported each other in their efforts to bring to literate Englishmen who had small Latin and less Greek, the words of the great poets and philosophers, and the word of God in their own tongue. Latin remained, of course, the language of scholarship for those writers who wished to reach a European audience. For all other purposes English was felt to be more than adequate. By the time that Sidney could say in 1583, “for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the end of speech, English hath it equally with any other tongue in the world,” the matter had been firmly settled in favor of English.

Renaissance and Reformation went beyond the ecclesiastical and literary fields. Even in Elizabeth’s time there were signs that these movements would not be complete until the political system too had been revamped. Efforts in this direction remained somewhat quiescent until the old queen died in 1603, and it came to full life only under the Stuart monarchs. When it did, the call of the common lawyers who led the movement was the same as that of their clerical counterparts: there should be a “revolution” back to an immemorial law and constitution that was not the creature of monarchs.

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For the Church Archbishop Parker (1504-1575), as we know, took up the challenging task of directing research into the distant past of the Christian religion in England. Vernacular manuscripts that had escaped the destruction of the monasteries would have to be collected; and someone would have to buckle down, learn Old English, and sort through the collection for useful material. Parker scoured the cathedral libraries and other available sources of manuscripts, and assembled the fine collection that rests today in Cambridge. He organized his household, including his son John and his secretary John Joscelyn, into a kind of school of Anglo-Saxon. One of the chief results of this cooperative scholarly effort was the first book ever printed in Old English, **A Testimonie**

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of Antiquitie (1566/7).² It reproduced a sermon of Ælfric's on the sacrament of the Eucharist, which appeared to favor the reformer's view of that much-debated subject. Actually, it was a small haul from the large corpus of available Ælfrician material, but it was also a very astute choice: the sermon dealt with one of the areas of fundamental difference between Catholics and Protestants in a fashion that has given disputants room for discussion ever since. It has been endlessly reproduced either in the original or in translation. Even in the middle of the nineteenth century Ælfric's sermon was at the center of a vitriolic scholarly debate between John Lingard and Henry Soames; and as late as 1963 C. L. Wrenn found its theology worth another look.³

Another somewhat different fruit of the Parker group's researches was an edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels (1571) published over the name of John Foxe, the martyrologist.⁴ Why Foxe, who was no scholar of Old English, was chosen to put his name to the edition can only be a matter for speculation. He had just published the second English edition of his very popular **Book of Martyrs** (1570), and perhaps it was felt that the use of his name could only help the wider distribution of a very different kind of book. The main aim of this edition was undoubtedly to demonstrate in a very concrete and visual way that the work of Parker and his colleagues in publishing the Bishops' Bible in the vernacular (1572) had an ancient and venerable tradition in England: the Bible had been available in the vernacular before the Normans introduced their continental corruptions into the true **Ecclesia Anglicana**. The verse from Jeremiah cited on the title page of **A Testimonie** sums up perfectly the purpose of the whole enterprise: "Goe into the streetes, and inqyre for the olde way: and if it be the good and ryght way, then goe therein, that ye may finde rest for your soules. But they say: we will not walke therein."

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It is easy to account for an ecclesiastical interest in Old English material that might be of polemical use in the 1560's. It is not so easy to explain a deep interest at the same time in pre-Conquest law written in the vernacular. There were, indeed, some stirrings of unrest with the political system, but the violent argument that led to civil war and regicide in the following century under a new royal house must have been impossible to foresee, even vaguely, in the 1560s when Laurence Nowell was teaching himself the language and studying the Anglo-Saxon laws. Moreover, Nowell was a "servant" in the house of William Cecil, the queen's chief minister; the autocratic minister of an autocratic monarch probably would not have encouraged (as he clearly did) any study that seemed subversive of the English crown. Nowell's work became a favorite with the common lawyers at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, but one

cannot read back into it any intention to produce the effect for which they used it.

Let us defer for the moment a consideration of the importance of Nowell's work as a polemical document in the hands of later constitutional lawyers in order to reflect on the considerable achievement it represented in another respect. Clearly Nowell had acquired a remarkable, if incomplete knowledge of a dead language without the aid of a grammar or dictionary, and had even passed some of his competence on to his friend William Lambarde. Nowell probably had a good deal to do with the skill in Old English achieved by John Joscelyn, the archbishop's secretary. Nowell was even confident enough in his own ability (and no doubt in the ignorance of his readers) to compose Old English himself in order to fill inconvenient gaps in his sources; and he did it well enough to avoid detection until very recent years.⁵

How did Nowell and his contemporaries go about learning the language without the aid of printed texts, dictionary, and grammar--all the tools we take for granted? I have tried elsewhere to outline his probable method as far as it can be reconstructed.⁶ It may be briefly restated as follows. In Anglo-Saxon England young monks needed to be taught Latin, and Ælfric had written a grammar and a glossary for the students in his monastery. These works were still available in the sixteenth century, and could be used in precisely the reverse way by scholars who knew no Old English but were very familiar with Latin. Available also were some separate manuscript Latin—Old English glosses; versions of large parts of the Bible, some of them glossed interlinearly; and the Latin originals of the Alfredian translations such as the {p. 5} Orosius, Boethius and Bede. There was even an early Latin version of some of the Anglo-Saxon laws. Manuscript material for learning Old English was, therefore, not lacking, but it took a remarkably determined student to deal with it, and to extract from it the kind of command of the language that Nowell achieved.⁷

Let us now return to the political importance of Nowell's work. His edition of the Anglo-Saxon laws, entitled **Archaionomia**, appeared in 1568 under the name of William Lambarde. This editorial arrangement was not quite the same as that which Parker's household had with Foxe; for Lambarde did indeed know the Old English he had learned from Nowell, and he provided the Old English text with a Latin translation and some additional material from his own collection. Moreover, Nowell had gone overseas for some reason, leaving the publication of the book to Lambarde. The work is, therefore, known as Lambarde's, though a fairer and more accurate reference to the authorship would be to Nowell-Lambarde.

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The influence of their published work was as pervasive if not as long-lasting as the publications of their ecclesiastical counterparts.⁸ For when the common lawyers, led by Sir Edward Coke, argued their constitutional case against James I and Charles I, the **Archaionomia** became an important weapon. A constitutional historian assures us that it was “one of the key books of the common law interpretation,” which held that “the common law, and with it the constitution, had always been exactly what they were now, that they were immemorial: not merely that they were very old, or that they were the work of some remote and mythical legislators, but that they were immemorial in the precise legal sense of time beyond memory--beyond, in this case the earliest historical records that could be found.”⁹ Since the Anglo-Saxon laws were indeed historical records, it is difficult for the layman to understand how they were used to bolster such an argument. But in disputes of this kind perhaps logic or consistency is not at a premium. In any case Coke “was able to make very extensive use of Lambarde’s book to prove that institutions which had in fact been introduced by the Normans formed part of the immemorial law.”¹⁰ What Novell and Lambarde would have said about Coke’s use of their book we can only conjecture.

What does this use of the **Archaionomia** say of real knowledge of Old English in the earlier seventeenth century? Not much, probably. The book may have been used extensively, but its readers were not obliged to learn [p. 6] Old English, because Lambarde had provided a Latin translation. Indeed, a reading of standard works like Pocock’s **Ancient Constitution** and Samuel Klinger’s **The Goths in England** confirms the impression that most Jacobean and Caroline constitutional lawyers were much more at home with Tacitus than they were with the Anglo-Saxon.¹¹ John Selden was one exception to this rule; he did have a knowledge of Old English, but only someone well acquainted with the legal issues could say how important to his legal studies was his undoubted knowledge of the language.

There is no doubt, however, even for the layman, that Sir Henry Spelman, another eminent jurist, made much use of his knowledge of Old English. In fact he became aware that any serious study of constitutional history or ancient civil and ecclesiastical law in England required mastery of Old English, and he made a serious effort to see that permanent instruction in the language and culture of Anglo-Saxon England should be available at a university. He paid Abraham Wheelock, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, to study and teach the language and history of Anglo-Saxon England, to provide him with transcripts of manuscripts that he needed in his work, and to check his translations, for Sir Henry never felt complete master of the language. But this arrangement between Wheelock and Spelman—never a perpetual endowment--did not begin until 1638. By

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then Sir Henry was an old man and Wheelock was just beginning the study of Old English, so that except for supplying some transcripts, he was not of much use to Spelman before the latter's death in 1641. At that date Spelman was still the master, and the "professor" was still very much the pupil. Wheelock progressed fast enough, however, to publish the Old English version of Bede's **Historia Ecclesiastica** (1643) for the first time, together with an edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which he also translated into Latin. A reissue in 1644 added a somewhat augmented edition of the **Archaionomia**. Here all the major interests and motivations for the early study of Old English met in one volume. The **Historia** and the Chronicle are, of course, essential sources for the study of England's early history, and any edition of Anglo-Saxon law has a historical relevance beyond the polemical purposes for which the **Archaionomia** was sometimes used. But Bede's work was an **ecclesiastical** history; and Wheelock, in the tradition of Parker and his group, lost few opportunities in his abundant annotations to use it for ecclesiastical polemic. His position was the same as Parker's: the church of Bede was not a Roman but an English church to which the reformers had returned.

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In spite of faults apparent even to seventeenth-century scholars, Wheelock's book became an essential source for every student of early English history for the rest of the century and even later. One student was John Milton, who commented dryly on Wheelock's Latin version of the poem commemorating the battle of Brunanburh, embedded in the Chronicle at the year 937.¹² Milton's comment reveals one serious inadequacy in the study of Old English at this point, namely an ignorance of the rules and vocabulary of Old English verse. Wheelock acknowledged his deficiency by an embarrassed note to his translation of the poem. His ignorance is hardly surprising, given the way in which the knowledge of the language was acquired. Nowell, Lambarde, Joscelyn, Parker, and a number of others since had acquired a considerable mastery of Old English prose, but none of them made much effort to come to terms with the verse. This reluctance arose, apparently, from two causes. The poetic idiom was "perantiquum et horridum," as Wheelock put it, and was much more difficult than the prose. Furthermore, insofar as it was understood, it had no "practical" value; that is, it could not be used to make profitable points in the discussions of legal, constitutional, or ecclesiastical issues. There was, therefore, less impetus in the period to study the poetry.¹³

Indeed there had been no real advance since Nowell's time in the availability of tools to learn even Old English prose. There was still no published grammar or dictionary, although Nowell had made a manuscript glossary and Joscelyn had made an even more extensive one based on Nowell's, but neither of these was available to the only

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“professor” of the language in the country. Wheelock’s frequent correspondent Sir Simonds D’Ewes did have a copy of Joscelyn’s, but he was very jealous of his own plan to produce the definitive dictionary of Old English. Apparently he never made his copy available to Wheelock. Joscelyn had also made a grammar, though it did not survive even in manuscript, and Nowell probably made one in order to teach Lambarde. This painfully acquired knowledge was not passed on in a sensible way, so that Wheelock was compelled to learn the language by using the published editions and translations of his predecessors and the Old English manuscripts at Cambridge that had Latin versions available, such as the Bede. Inevitably he, too, started a glossary and a grammar. The scraps of his glossary that survive are inferior to Nowell’s dictionary, but William Somner thought well enough of his grammar to print a version of it later in his own **Dictionarium** (1659).¹⁴

[p. 8] Wheelock seems to have attracted no more students to Old English than he did to Arabic. Indeed it is hard to see how he could have induced young students to such an arcane study without the usual aids of a published grammar and dictionary. In any case his lectureship seems to have become largely a research post, and he left no body of students trained in the language and history of Anglo-Saxon England, as Spelman had hoped he would. After the reissue of the Bede volume with some additions, Wheelock apparently concentrated once more on his Oriental studies. Fortunately, other scholars had been pursuing Old English studies independently. After Wheelock’s death in 1653 the Spelman endowment was transferred to one of them, William Somner, who produced a full-scale dictionary by 1658.

Partly for technical reasons Somner’s dictionary was published at Oxford rather than Cambridge; and for many years thereafter Oxford was to take the lead in Anglo-Saxon study. Not until the mid-nineteenth century was Cambridge to have an endowed professorship of Anglo-Saxon. The publication of Somner’s dictionary at Oxford probably encouraged the surge of interest in Old English study there in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when Oxford became known as a “nest of Saxonists.” The nest included John Fell, the bishop of Oxford; Francis Junius, an anglicized Dutch scholar; his friend William Marshall, who became Rector of Lincoln College; George Hickes, a fellow of the same college; William Elstob, Arthur Charlett, and Humfrey Wanley, all connected with University College; and William Nicolson, Edmund Gibson, and Edward Thwaites, all of Queen’s College. Fell was a genuine patron and promoter of Anglo-Saxon studies, Charlett more a “pretender.” The others were active in the field. ¹⁵

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Marshall had become a fellow of Lincoln in 1668, three years after he and Francis Junius had co-edited the Old English Gospels¹⁶ on the Continent, where Marshall was chaplain to a company of English merchants. From that point until after the end of the century, there was almost no break in the line of scholars at Oxford who studied and published Old English. Junius joined his friend in Oxford about 1675, a couple of years before his death. By then he was a very old man; but his learning was widely known and deeply respected, and he received a constant stream of visitors. His presence, conversation, and publications spurred Englishmen to pursue the study to which he had devoted so much of his life. He was one of the first continental scholars to develop a mastery of early English philology greater than their English [p. 9] counterparts--a situation that was to become particularly galling in the nineteenth century.

William Nicolson was one of Junius' s visitors. Whether or not Junius influenced his decision, Nicolson certainly took up the study of Old English and even taught it for a while at Queen's College between 1679 and his departure from Oxford in 1681. Unfortunately we know nothing of his students or his methods of teaching. Even more unfortunately the teaching seems to have lapsed after Nicolson left to go on eventually to high ecclesiastical office. He must have contributed to a tradition in the pursuit of Old English study at his own college, however, for both Edmund Gibson and Edward Thwaites, who both arrived there in the 1680s, became prominent contributors to the field.

The rapid rise in interest in Old English during the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth was not solely because of the teaching of Nicolson, the presence of Junius, or the publication of Somner's dictionary. In the year that Thwaites arrived at Oxford (1689) the university press published the first grammar of Old English, the **Institutiones Grammaticae** of George Hickes. Hickes was a remarkable man in many respects; it is unfortunate that we do not have a thorough study of his full and painful career as cleric, scholar, and controversialist.¹⁷ Here we can only touch on the most relevant points.

Hickes was a man of great intellectual energy, unshakeable principle, and powerful personality. He and Marshall had been fellows of Lincoln together, and no doubt it was there that Hickes acquired an interest in Old English. But he did not take up the study in earnest until he went to Worcester as dean of the cathedral in 1683. By then he had had a fairly turbulent career as a staunch supporter of church and crown against sundry opponents. In spite of his own assessment, he loved controversy. His years at Worcester, however, were serene enough to allow him to pursue his other passion, scholarship. There he took up the study of Old English in earnest, and by 1689 he had produced the

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Institutiones, a far cry from Wheelock's skimpy effort. Political events, however, had overtaken Hickes; King James II had fled and William of Orange was on the English throne. Hickes detested James's Catholicism like most Protestants, but he did not deny James's divine right to the throne of England. He refused to take the oath of allegiance to William, and from that point on his career as cleric of the Church of England was finished. Even while his book [p. 10] was in press he was suspended from office, and shortly thereafter he was ejected from his deanery. For the next ten years or so he was a man without a profession or a permanent home, forced to use a false name and various addresses. During that time he decided on a new edition of his grammar, an aim he achieved without access to books and libraries. What is perhaps the most remarkable part of this achievement is how he got other scholars to give him the help he needed to finish his work. Some of these men, Nicolson and Gibson for example, were clerics who had no quarrel with the oath of allegiance and who heartily disagreed with Hickes's non-juring principles. Nevertheless, they gave their help generously, as did a large number of other collaborators.

One of the most important of these was Edward Thwaites, who may have met Hickes when he came incognito to Oxford to begin arrangements for a revision of his grammar. Certainly a short time after Hickes's visit he was corresponding with him about the revision, and in a very short time, was himself preparing an edition of the Old English Heptateuch for publication. He supplied Hickes with transcripts and eventually became business manager for the large operation into which the revised edition of the grammar evolved.¹⁸ Most interesting, perhaps, is that he now began to teach Old English at Queen's College, as Nicolson had done before him. Here we have more information than we do about the labors of either Wheelock or Nicolson. Theoretically at least Thwaites's position as a teacher was much easier than that of his predecessors, for he had available both a published dictionary and a grammar. But the dictionary and grammar were large and expensive books not totally suitable for teaching young and often impecunious students. At one point Thwaites had as many as fifteen students, and he complained that they had to share the one available copy of Somner among them. Thwaites took prompt and sensible action: he and a number of his students made a condensed version of Somner, which was published under the name of Thomas Benson, one of the students who presumably did most of the work. "It will not exceed 3d price, I hope," wrote Thwaites before publication, showing a commendable concern for the thin purses of his students. Perhaps there were more copies of Hickes's grammar available, for a similar condensation of that work did not appear until 1711, the year of Thwaites's death.¹⁹

In the meantime the revised version of Hickes's grammar proceeded with painful

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slowness, but the famous **Thesaurus** finally appeared between 1703 and 1705.²⁰ It

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was a much larger book than its predecessor. Besides the grammar of Old English there were grammars of Old Icelandic and Gothic, an essay on numismatics, a lengthy “Dissertatio Epistolaris” which was largely an Ars Diplomatica directed to Anglo-Saxon charters, an essay on the usefulness of the study of Northern languages, dedications, prefatory essays, and finally a catalog of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. It was an unwieldy book bound in large volumes, and unsuitable for the average student, not least in its price. It was a monumental work and unfortunately, like most monuments, it was admired rather than actually used.

The part of it that remains of most value was not, ironically, by Hickes himself, but was the work of his collaborator Humfrey Wanley. This was the great **Catalogus** of manuscripts, the third essential aid, after a grammar and dictionary, to the study of Anglo-Saxon culture. Most of the materials of interest to Saxonists were still in manuscript, and Hickes had determined to provide students with the best possible guide to their contents and whereabouts. He was in no position to do this work himself, and he chose the best man in England to do the job, Humfrey Wanley, a sub-librarian at the Bodleian with talent as a bibliographer and paleographer. Hickes engaged him to do the catalog and paid him what he could afford for the labor. But what Hickes could afford could never have repaid Wanley for the work he put into the project. Hickes was well aware of this, but in a paternally relentless way he pushed Wanley to complete the work through years of disappointment and drudgery. Disabused of hopes of promotion at Oxford, Wanley had moved to London where he was also disappointed in his hopes of becoming Keeper of the Cotton Library. In the meantime he became assistant secretary to the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, a post which provided him a salary and a prodigious amount of uncongenial work. Through it all he continued, prodded by Hickes and Thwaites, with the work of the catalog. Wanley’s troubles caused the delay in publishing the **Thesaurus**. But he was a perfectionist, and the result of his stubborn slowness was a work that has never really become obsolete. His **Catalogus**, the second part of the **Thesaurus**, was not replaced until 1957 when Neil Ker produced his **Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon**. In the preface to his book Ker, the man most qualified to pay Wanley tribute, said that even now the **Catalogus** “is a book

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which scholars will continue to use, or neglect at their peril.”²¹

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With the publication of the **Thesaurus** the study of Anglo-Saxon should, theoretically, have taken an upward turn, but this was not the case. Hickes's book was daunting, as has already been remarked, and Thwaites tried to make the Old English part of it more accessible to his students by producing a condensed version, still with Latin apparatus (1711). Elizabeth Elstob, the sister of one of Hickes's Oxford collaborators and a fine Saxonist herself, attempted the same for less academic students, using English explanations (1715).²² Her book, however, remained a curiosity rather than a text. After Thwaites's death in 1711 interest in Old English at Oxford lapsed once more. His Old English teaching had always been an unofficial affair. (His university posts were Professor of Greek and Reader in Moral Philosophy, about as far removed from his Anglo-Saxon interests as Wheelock's Arabic professorship had been.) He had trained a number of young men in the discipline; a couple of them had even produced work in Old English under his direction, and another, George Smith, had finished his father's work on an edition of the Old English Bede (1722), but we hear no more of any of them as Old English scholars.

The rest of the eighteenth century was not a total wasteland for early English philology,²³ but the most notable achievement in the period was the successful effort to direct attention to the more literary products of ancient England. Ironically, the first effective consideration of early English poetry as *poetry* was the work of amateur enthusiasts like Thomas Percy and Thomas Gray, neither of whom was a genuine student of Old English. They were not interested in scholarly rigor; indeed, Percy earned the wrath of Joseph Ritson for his tampering, in the interests of "smoothness" and completeness, with the Middle English texts that he published. Although for Percy the "barbarism" that had repelled literary men like Swift now became "gothic" and romantic, he felt correctly that contemporaries, like himself, preferred their Ossian Macphersonized. In the seventeenth century the term "gothic" had conveyed notions of freedom, political and ecclesiastical, which controversialists derived from their (largely imaginary) ancestors as portrayed by Tacitus. For Percy and Gray, less interested in political and ecclesiastical disputes, "gothic" also meant free from the literary restrictions of Augustan theme and

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form and displaying a certain “wildness” that was especially attractive to those reacting against Augustan restraints.

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The sneers that Pope and Swift had directed at the labors of editors of medieval texts like Thomas Hearne unfortunately continued. Even Thomas Warton, who had so much to do with the revival of interest in medieval literature, scorned the earlier scholars for “reviving obscure fragments of uninstructional morality or uninteresting history.” But in 1774 he said this unfortunate state of affairs had changed and the curiosity of the antiquarian is connected with taste and genius, and his researches tend to display the progress of human manners, and to illustrate the history of society.”²⁴ This condescension was understandable if unfortunate. Warton was, after all, interested in “literature,” and especially in poetry; and the pioneer Saxonists had done little to excite interest in the more literary productions of Anglo-Saxon England, least of all in the poetry of that period. Percy and Gray may not have known as much early English or Icelandic as Hickes, but they successfully directed attention for the first time to the literature of early England.

Warton, Percy, and Gray produced their work in the 1760’s and 1770’s. In 1755 Richard Rawlinson had already endowed a chair of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford. Surely this was the perfect opportunity for the marriage of amateur enthusiasm and professional scholarship; but again it was not to be. Rawlinson had set so many restrictions upon the tenure of the chair that nobody occupied it for the first 45 years. The first holder of the chair, Charles Mayo, knew little about Old English. The second and third occupants, James Ingram and John Josias Conybeare, however, did apply themselves with some success to the study of Old English, though they remained very much in the antiquarian tradition, with little awareness of comparative philology. In his inaugural address, for example, Ingram still repeated without much change the old Parkerian and Lambardian ideas on the importance of Old English for proof of the antiquity and Englishness of the civil and ecclesiastical establishment.²⁵ Conybeare’s popular **Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry**, the first book of its kind, was published posthumously in 1826. It consisted largely of selections from Old English poetry in the original with literal Latin translations and “versions” in English, often in Conybeare’s best romantic verse.²⁶

But the days of the old-fashioned, gentlemanly approach to the study of English philology

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quickly waned. In the very year that Conybeare's book was published, Benjamin Thorpe went to Copenhagen to study with Rasmus Rask, the distinguished Danish scholar who had published [p.14] a revolutionary grammar of Anglo-Saxon almost ten years earlier. A few years later John Kemble went to Germany, possibly meeting Grimm, who had produced independently a similar grammar at about the same time.²⁷ The 1830 publication of Thorpe's translation of Rask's grammar marks the change from the enthusiastic to the "scientific" in Anglo-Saxon studies in England. Shortly thereafter Kemble returned from the Continent with a respect for Rask, Grimm, and Thorpe matched only by his unbounded and openly expressed contempt for the Saxonists of the older school, especially for the occupants of the Rawlinson chair at Oxford. He created bad blood by his vigorous attacks on the university men, which was probably why he was not offered an academic position. Indeed, neither he nor Thorpe ever held academic posts, but their publications, carefully edited and abundantly glossed, revolutionized the study of Germanic philology in England. Nevertheless, the new philology caught on very slowly in the universities. It was many years before the Germanic philology taught in England was held in as high esteem as the scholarship in German universities.²⁸ Many American scholars, for example, went to Germany rather than to England for their philological training in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries.

The dilatoriness of the universities was compensated for, in part, by the learned societies in England: the Philological Society, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Early English Text Society. Their members, mostly untrained in philology by the universities, carried the weight of promoting philological study and publishing texts. It had taken 300 years and the rigor of continental scholars to force an appreciable number of Englishmen to form an organization to promote the study of the early language and culture of their own island.

Notes

1. For an excellent short account of the controversy see Julia Ebel, "Translation and Nationalism in the Elizabethan Era," Journal of the History of Ideas 30 (1969): 593—602. Another account can be found in Albert Baugh's A History of the English Language (New York: Appieton-Century-Crofts, 1957), pp. 240-305.

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2. The full title expresses the intent of the edition clearly: A Testimonie of Antiquitie shewing the ancient fayth in the Church of England touching the sacrament of the body and bloode of the Lord, here Publikely preached and also received in the Saxons tyme, above 600 yeares agoe.
3. John Lingard, Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church, 2 vols. (London: E. Walker, 1806); and Henry Soames, The Bampton Lectures (Oxford: Rivington, 1830); and The Anglo-Saxon Church (London: J. W. Parker, 1835). Lingard's 1845 edition of his original work was almost an entirely new book, incorporating the work of Thorpe and Kemble which had appeared since the first edition. The revision was also used to answer Soames, whose further reply came in The Latin Church during Anglo-Saxon Times (London: Longman's, 1848), and The Romish Decalogue (London: Longman's, 1882). Wrenn's article, "Some Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Theology," appeared in Studies in Language, Literature, and Culture, ed. E. Bagby Atwood and A. A. Hill (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 182-192. See also the article of Theodore H. Leinbaugh in the Gatch and Berkhout volume in which this present paper first appeared.
4. The Gospels of The Fower Evangelistes translated in the olde Saxons tyme out of Latin into the vulgare tounge of the Saxons, newly collected out of the Auncient Monumentes of the sayd Saxons and now published for the testimonie of the same (London: John Daye, 1571).
5. For a full account of Nowell's "forgery," see Kenneth Sisam, Studies in the History of Old English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 232-258.
6. Michael Murphy, "Methods in the Study of Old English in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," Mediaeval Studies 30 (1968): 345—350. [available on this website]
7. An enjoyable demonstration of Nowell's skill in translation can be found in The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques S Discoveries of the English Nation by Richard Hakluyt, more commonly known as Hakluyt's Voyages (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1903), 1:11-16.
8. The Archaionomia was reissued with some additions by Wheelock in his 1644 issue of

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Bede's Historia. It remained the only collection of Anglo-Saxon laws until that of Wilkins in 1721.

9. J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 36.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

11. *Ibid.*, esp. chapters 3-5. Also The Goths in England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), *passim*.

12. "The Saxon Annalist wont to be sober and succinct ... now labouring under the weight of his argument, and over-charg'd, runs on sudden into such extravagant fancies and metaphors, as bare him quite beside the scope of being understood." Cited in The History of Britain

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ed. French Fogle, in The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 5: 308—09, 323 n34.

13. For Wheelock see the Dictionary of National Biography. His name is variously spelled, but a review of his MS correspondence indicates that he himself seems to prefer Wheelock. For some commentary on his Old English work see David Douglas, English Scholars, 2d ed. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951), esp. pp. 68-70; Michael Murphy, "Abraham Wheelock's Edition of Bede's History in OE," Studia Neophilologica 39 (1967):146—59. [now available on this website. Also on this website is the article "Abraham Wheelock, Arabist and Saxonist" (Michael Murphy & Edward Barrett), 1985, which gives a fuller account of his life.]

14. For an account of early Old English dictionary-making, see Mary Sue Hetherington's article in Gatch and Berkhout.

15. For details of the work of these scholars, see Eleanor Adams, Old English Scholarship in England from 1566-1800 (1917; reprinted, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970), pp.

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42—114 and “Chronological Table”; and J.A.W. Bennett, “A History of OE and ON Studies in England from the Time of Francis Junius till the End of the Eighteenth Century” (Ph.D. diss. , Oxford University, 1939). Both are still indispensable.

16. William Marshall and Francis Junius, eds., Quatuor D.N. Jesu Christi Evangeliorum Versiones Perantiquae Duae scil. at Anglo-Saxonica (Dordrecht: Published by the Authors, 1665).

17. For a good account of Hickes see David Douglas in English Scholars. There is also a Ph.D. dissertation by W. B. Gardner, “Life of George Hickes” (Harvard University, 1946).

18. See J. A. W. Bennett, “Hickes’s Thesaurus: A Study in Oxford Book Production,” Essays and Studies, n.s. 1 (1948): 28—145.

19. George Hickes, Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica ax Hickesiano Thesauro Excerpta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1711).

20. Hickes, Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-Criticus at Archaeologicus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1703-05).

21. N. R. Ker, Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957). For accounts of Wanley, see Douglas, English Scholars; Kenneth Sisam, Studies in the History of Old English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935); C. E. Wright, “Humfrey Wanley: Saxonist and Library Keeper,” Proceedings of the British Academy 46 (1960):99—129. An edition of Wanley’s collected correspondence is in preparation by Professor Peter Heyworth of the University of Toronto.[This has since been published].

22. Elizabeth Elstob, Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue (London: Bowyer, 1715). The best account of the Elstobs is Sarah H. Collins, “Elizabeth Elstob: A Biography” (Ph.D. diss. Indiana University, 1970).

23. For some account of the lexicographical work of Edward Lye and his influence on Percy see T. A. Birrell, “The Society of Antiquaries and the Taste for Old English

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1705—1840,” Neophilologus 50 (1966): 107—117.

24. Cited by Arthur Johnstone, Enchanted Ground (London: Athlone Press, 19614), p. 221.

25 . James Ingram, Inaugural Lecture on the Utility of Anglo-Saxon Literature (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1807). Ingram also published an edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 1823.

26 .The Illustrations is readily available again in a reprint by Haskell House (New York, 1964). The point of Kemble’s attack on Conybeare is partially blunted by the statement of John Earle, perhaps the first really distinguished scholar to hold the Rawlinson chair. The Illustrations, says Earle, “had a great effect in calling the attention of the educated, and more than any other book in the present century has served as the introduction to Saxon studies.” Anglo-Saxon Literature (1884; reprinted New York: AMS, 1969), p. 45.

27. Rasmus Rask, Angelsaksisk Sproglære (Stockholm:Wiborg, 1817); Jakob Grimm, Deutsche Grammatik (Gottingen: Dieterich, 1819; 2d ed. 1822).

28. For an account of the New Philology in England see Hans Aarsleff, The Study of Language in England 1780-1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).