



Deposited via The University of Sheffield.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/124158/>

Version: Published Version

Article:

Wallis, C. (2017) Frederick Klaeber, A Commentary on the Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History. *SPECULUM-A JOURNAL OF MEDIEVAL STUDIES*, 92 (4). pp. 1207-1208. ISSN: 0038-7134

<https://doi.org/10.1086/693824>

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

be read cover to cover by some, but most people encountering the collection will dip in to read the article on “The Nun’s Priest Tale,” the several articles on *Piers Plowman*, or whatever other individual article their particular research question has led them to. Those readers will find thought-provoking scholarship, but they will also be reminded of Pearsall’s individual interventions and contributions to the field. In some ways, this is a very satisfying realization, as the book recognizes and caters to its own culturally specific readers.

There is a brief biographical sketch of Pearsall by Linne Mooney, but I found myself missing the standard bibliography of the honoree (although perhaps this is no longer an essential component of such collections). The volume is rounded out with a comprehensive index of manuscripts and incunabula and another of subjects and critics. As befits a volume devoted to the materiality of the written word, the book itself is a beautiful and pleasing object with high-quality color reproductions of manuscript pages. Such collections are often uneven in their scholarship and formatting, but the editors are to be commended not only for the quality of the papers brought together here but also for the care taken in their presentation.

The field of manuscript studies is now well established, so it is doubtful that this volume will be as influential as the proceedings of the 1981 York conference. It is, however, a worthy successor to that project and a fitting tribute to Derek Pearsall, whose influence is evident on almost every page.

RICHARD J. MOLL, University of Western Ontario

FREDERICK KLAEBER, *A Commentary on the Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. Valentine A. Pakis. (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 482; Old English Publications: Studies and Criticism 2.) Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015. Paper. Pp. xxxviii, 195. \$45. ISBN: 978-0-86698-537-6.

doi:10.1086/693824

Frederick Klaeber’s linguistic commentary on the Old English translation of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (“the Old English Bede”) is a cornerstone of scholarship on this understudied text. The German-language *Commentary* was first published by *Anglia* in two parts in 1902 and 1904, and this welcome translation and edition by Valentine A. Pakis presents Klaeber’s study for the first time in English, and in a single volume, providing a handy and accessible version for the present-day reader. Klaeber’s study has long provided an invaluable guide to the Old English Bede, as Thomas Miller, editor of the most authoritative and widely-used version of the text, never completed a commentary to accompany his well-received edition for the Early English Text Society (1890–98). Klaeber’s detailed *Commentary* is therefore an important work that fills this gap, providing interpretations of awkward passages of the Old English as well as commenting critically on the editions of the Old English Bede by Miller and Jacob Schipper. Klaeber includes detailed linguistic notes on lexical, morphological, and phonological features and considers variant readings in the five main surviving manuscripts. Furthermore, he also deals with questions of dialect and textual origin (for example, the reconciliation of Mercian dialectal features with Late West Saxon ones, or the competing claims of an Alfredian or a Mercian impetus for the Old English translation), which still concern researchers of the Old English Bede today. The *Commentary* is keyed not only to Miller’s edition, based mainly on the oldest T manuscript, but also to the 1897 edition by Jacob Schipper (based on the later O and B manuscripts), allowing ready comparison between texts.

Pakis provides a clear and readable translation and in addition makes welcome additions and alterations to the original German commentary. In terms of presentation, the inclusion of modern English translations for Old English or Latin quotations is a real help in making

Speculum 92/4 (October 2017)

the text accessible, as is the introduction of clearer headings to indicate the presence of the Old English Bede's book divisions. Pakis's careful expansion of Klaeber's "often elusive" (ix) references and footnotes provides much-needed detail for the modern reader, and together with the additional bibliography of works cited in the *Commentary* allows the reader to follow up references with ease. Furthermore, the inclusion of a number of indexes (a general index; an index of modern authors; and an index of words, forms, and phrases in Latin, Old English, and other languages) is a major improvement on the original, allowing for a far more efficient search for commentary on individual words or linguistic features that may be discussed at length only the first time they appear in the Old English Bede text and not in subsequent appearances. In general these interventions make Klaeber's original study easier to use as a reference work and bring it into line with modern expectations of scholarship.

A further addition is the short introduction provided by Sharon Rowley, the only scholar so far to have provided a full-length treatment of the Old English Bede (2011). This introduction contextualizes the *Commentary* by detailing the history of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and its subsequent translation and deals briefly with the existing manuscripts. Following this is an overview of some of the main lines of inquiry in Old English Bede scholarship in the hundred years since Klaeber's publication (such as the translation's authorship, dialect, translation process, manuscript stemmata, and the purpose of the translation); a useful bibliography is included of this more recent work, bringing the references up to date. However, in light of current trends focusing on the manuscript context of Old English texts (including Rowley's 2011 monograph), and given Klaeber's own careful consideration of variant readings from different manuscripts, it would have been good to see these surviving manuscripts treated in more detail in the introduction, especially given the increasingly easy access for the present-day researcher to this material via online scans and other high-quality facsimiles. This, however, is a minor quibble about what is a well-written and concise introduction, which complements the *Commentary* well.

As we do not yet have an edition of the Old English Bede to supersede Miller's version (a new edition by Greg Waite and Sharon Rowley, which promises full notes and commentary, is forthcoming), this translation of Klaeber's *Commentary* is valuable not only for its own sake but also as a companion piece to Miller's still-current edition. Pakis states in his preface that his aim is to produce a work that is "a useful tool in its own right" (ix), and in this translation and re-presentation of the original text with supporting apparatus he succeeds admirably. As someone with an (infrequently used) reading knowledge of academic German, this reader found the present translation a valuable aid and supplement to the original, and in its improved form Pakis provides a user-friendly and accessible version of Klaeber's important work. In conclusion, this volume is a real benefit in helping modern-day scholars get the most out of a reference work that is still of importance for our interpretation of the Old English Bede today.

CHRISTINE WALLIS, University of Sheffield

STACY S. KLEIN, WILLIAM SCHIPPER, and SHANNON LEWIS-SIMPSON, eds., *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*. (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 448; Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies 5.) Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014. Pp. xiv, 361; 48 black-and-white figures. \$70. ISBN: 978-0-86698-496-6. doi:10.1086/693505

This collection emerges from the fourteenth biennial meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, held at Memorial University, Newfoundland, in 2009. Its fourteen new essays, many of them illustrated, reflect the society's commitment to interdisciplinary