

PREFACE

Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile provides students and scholars with a fundamental tool in the field of Anglo-Saxon studies. The project aims to produce complete microfiche facsimiles of the five-hundred or so manuscripts containing Old English, in an accessible and handy format. Each volume presents facsimiles and descriptions of complete manuscripts (typically between 8 and 16 items). The descriptions are prepared by experienced scholars basing their work on first-hand examination of the manuscripts and extensive research. Images in most cases are from existing microfilm stock provided by the holding libraries. New photography is limited to those manuscripts that had not yet been photographed or were poorly photographed in the early period of the project when images were generally being acquired, plus supplemental photos on a case-by-case basis as seems necessary. The images are meant to be up to the standards of good black-and-white microfilm reproduction.

Beginning with this volume the fiche images are presented not on cellulose, but on DVDs. This modified procedure has been adopted due to the inevitable exigencies of technology and changes in production methods. Our long-time partner in the production of the images for users, Amtek Data Corp., of East Syracuse, New York, can no longer provide fiche in large quantities, due both to the scarcity and expense of cellulose blanks and to the difficulty of keeping up the ageing equipment for film/fiche reproduction. Given this, the editors and publisher have chosen to produce the stock in DVD format so as to continue to present the images as part of a physical package of books and images to be used together. Users will find some advantages to this new format, such as easier storage, elimination of fiche readers (from vol. 26 on), an ability to magnify images and focus on specific areas, and depending on the platform used, to enhance images to a certain extent. For the editors, the advantages are an ability to more easily eliminate duplicate images from the films, insert missing images, and routinely enhance images (all procedures which used to involve considerable back-and-forth between libraries, Amtek, and us). Users should, nevertheless, keep in mind that these are still the fiche images, generated from the microfilm stock, and are not intended to compete in quality with true digital images. Whenever the editors or describers are aware of available on-line or

CD Rom/DVD digital images of a particular item, they call attention to them in the descriptions. The editors would appreciate being made aware of any such digital versions we may have overlooked. In a future volume we will publish a list of digital facsimiles corresponding to the manuscripts in this series.

Manuscripts are reproduced *in toto*, even though the post-Anglo-Saxon material that is found as part of many of them may demonstrate no immediate or ultimate relationship with Anglo-Saxon interests. Many or most manuscripts are basically in Latin, with small amounts of Old English text. To have edited the facsimiles, presenting only confirmed Anglo-Saxon parts, or Old English words, would eliminate important material to be noticed or discovered and in any case would remove Anglo-Saxon vestiges from their actual material and historical contexts. Users must decide for themselves the relevance of the images presented in this series.

Each manuscript is assigned a main index number for this series; that number is given before the shelf-mark and always appears bolded and in square brackets after the shelf-mark when a manuscript in this series is mentioned in the body of a description. The index number is concorded with the catalogue of numbers of Ker and Gneuss/Lapidge. A complete handlist of all manuscripts included in this project has been published in Vol. 15. An interim cumulative index of volumes 1–10 has been published as a separate volume (2006) and a further interim cumulative index of volumes 1–25 is forthcoming; a final comprehensive index will follow the completion of the volumes of descriptions, now projected as about forty in number. Users of these descriptions (and of the indices) are requested to bring any errors, omissions, or relevant new scholarship to the attention of the publishers or the editors.

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M.T.H.