



Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England (Medieval Cultures)

Clare A. Lees

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In this major study of Anglo-Saxon religious texts sermons, homilies, and saints' lives written in Old English -- Clare A. Lees reveals how the invention of preaching transformed the early medieval church, and thus the culture of medieval England in placing Anglo-Saxon prose within a social matrix, her work offers a new way of seeing medieval literature through the lens of cultures.

To show how the preaching mission of the later Anglo-Saxon church was constructed and received, Lees explores the emergence of preaching from the traditional structures of the early medieval church -- its institutional knowledge, genres, and beliefs. Understood as a powerful rhetorical, social, and epistemological process, preaching is shown to have helped define the sociocultural concerns specific to late Anglo-Saxon England.

The first detailed study of traditionality in medieval culture, *Tradition and Belief* is also a case study of one cultural phenomenon from the past. As such -- and by concentrating on the theoretically problematic areas of history, religious belief, and aesthetics -- the book contributes to debates about the evolving meaning of culture.

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