

EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY

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NEW PUBLICATIONS FOR 2024

OS 364. *History of the Early English Text Society, Volume I. Frederick James Furnivall: The Early Years, 1825–1864*, by Helen Leith Spencer.

This first part of the EETS's 'History' covers the period from the birth of the founder, F. J. Furnivall, in 1825, down to 1864, just on the eve of his founding of the Society. Furnivall was a literary figure of national significance, who knew and corresponded with many of the well-known writers and thinkers of his time, including Ruskin, Tennyson, Browning, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Tom Hughes, and F. D. Maurice. He qualified as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, where he came under the influence of the Christian Socialist movement, led by Maurice. He succeeded Herbert Coleridge as the editor of the Philological Society's new Dictionary of the English language, working to divide up the language into periods and to transcribe early English texts. Furnivall's interest in medieval texts was not purely philological; like Carlyle, he believed in taking lessons from the past to inform his own times, especially class struggles, the grievances of working people, developments in education, the role of the upper classes, abuses of the Church, as well as social manners and customs. This new history builds on the previous work of biographers and literary historians, but is based wherever possible on primary documents, especially unprinted letters and contributions to periodicals. There is much new material about Furnivall's life, and that of members of his circle. The materials of his biography have all been scrutinised afresh, and this new account goes further in showing how, from unlikely beginnings, he became the prodigious editor and campaigner that he did, and founder of seven publishing societies. It is intended that this will be the first of three volumes. The second will cover the period from 1864 (the founding of the EETS) to Furnivall's death in 1910. The third will cover the period from 1910 to 1984.

OS 365. *Osbern Bokenham, Lives of the Saints, Volume III*, ed. by Simon Horobin.

This third volume completes the text of this major hagiographic collection by the fifteenth-century writer Osbern Bokenham, and follows the Society's publication of the first two volumes of his *Lives* in 2020 and 2022, as OS 356 and 359. Bokenham's version of the *Legenda aurea*, with additional lives of English saints, was thought to have been lost but was identified by the editor in a manuscript preserved in the library of Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford House. Bokenham's text, which combines prose and verse, was influenced by major writers such as Chaucer and Lydgate, both in its content and in its verse forms and style, and thus sheds new light on their fifteenth-century reputation. Bokenham's work is also important for his naming of the patrons for whom he translated a number of these saints' lives, allowing scholars to trace networks of patronage amongst prominent members of the gentry and nobility in fifteenth-century East Anglia. This volume presents the first editions of the remaining thirty-five of Bokenham's *Lives*. A final volume will follow, containing the Explanatory Notes and Glossary.