Osbern Bokenham

Lives of the Saints

This is the first edition of a major work by the translator and hagiographer Osbern Bokenham. Unknown before the discovery of the unique manuscript in 2005, Bokenham's work comprises a complete translation of Legenda Aurea, a collection of saints' lives compiled by the Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine which achieved widespread popularity throughout the Middle Ages and survives in over eight hundred manuscripts, supplemented with accounts of the lives of various British saints, including those of Cedde, Felix, Edward, and Oswald. Writing in the fifteenth century, Bokenham's work, 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.



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