



# The Anglo-Saxon World

*Nicholas J. Higham , Martin J. Ryan*

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The Anglo-Saxon period, stretching from the fifth to the late eleventh century, begins with the Roman retreat from the Western world and ends with the Norman takeover of England. Between these epochal events, many of the contours and patterns of English life that would endure for the next millennium were shaped. In this authoritative work, N. J. Higham and M. J. Ryan reexamine Anglo-Saxon England in the light of new research in disciplines as wide ranging as historical genetics, paleobotany, archaeology, literary studies, art history, and numismatics. The result is the definitive introduction to the Anglo-Saxon world, enhanced with a rich array of photographs, maps, genealogies, and other illustrations. The Anglo-Saxon period witnessed the birth of the English people, the establishment of Christianity, and the development of the English language. With an extraordinary cast of characters (Alfred the Great, the Venerable Bede, King Cnut), a long list of artistic and cultural achievements (Beowulf, the Sutton Hoo ship-burial finds, the Bayeux Tapestry), and multiple dramatic events (the Viking invasions, the Battle of Hastings), the Anglo-Saxon era lays legitimate claim to having been one of the most important in Western history.

## **The Anglo-Saxon World Details**

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## From Reader Review The Anglo-Saxon World for online ebook

### Anne says

My only complaint about this book is that I wish there was more detail - which is not to say it was short on detail at all! I have searched long and hard for a definitive history of post-Roman, pre-conquest Britain, and I am delighted that I have finally found it.

Chronologically organized with supplemental sections on sources and on particular institutions, the authors include a wealth of names, relationships, and explanations about the development and change of Anglo-Saxon society and institutions in Britain. The photographs include maps, diagrams of archeological sites and gorgeous full-color plates of artifacts, buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites, and art.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to know more about Anglo-Saxon England.

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### Brian Page says

Higham's and Ryan's "The Anglo-Saxon World" is a marvelous text that lies between popular history and technical history. If you're the type who likes well-told stories, then it's probably not for you. But if you want a solid, comprehensive, overview of the current state of Anglo-Saxon historical scholarship then this is definitely the book to own. A particular strength of the work is noting differing opinions on various matters and then offering their own informed judgments. I also really like the "sources and issues" scattered throughout. These are generally short chapters inserted between the topics that are almost like embedded appendices for further detail.

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### Jo says

I was pleasantly surprised at how easy to read this book was. I can see it appealing to a wide readership, being both academic but of more general interest too, and covers everything and more that you could want to know of the period.

I won a copy of this book in a firstreads giveaway.

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### Kate says

This book was infinitely more readable than other books on the same subject. The logical breakdowns of sections in the chapters, the pictures, and the language used all make the book more accessible. I liked the end sections on the things that were tangentially related to the topic of the chapter because I felt like it added more without distracting from the main points.

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### Scriptor Ignotus says

Great resource. Lucidly written.

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### **Wilfried says**

The “dark ages” are an interesting period and I was curious to learn something more about it.

The book is quite voluminous (440 pages) and well-illustrated. It gives an up to date overview of what we know about this obscure time in history. The latest findings of different sciences that can help the historians are explained. At regular intervals, the authors have inserted articles about special topics like the Domesday Book, the Anglo-Saxons Chronicles or some interesting excavations. All by all pleasant reading.

The only problem is that the authors seem to be afraid of possible critics from their colleagues. They are very cautious not to mention data that could be discussed. E.g. nowhere you will find a map with an overview of the different kingdoms. Not even a chronological overview of the different kings in the most important kingdoms is given. For a book that is aimed at a more general public, this is a flaw.

Remains the question, what we have learned by the end of the day. The answer is: very little. The more science tries to shed light on this dark period, the more confusing it becomes! But for that the authors are not to blame.

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### **Edoardo Albert says**

Skimming the other reviews, I see I'm just adding to the consensus, but this really is the best one-volume introduction to the Anglo-Saxon world around - not cheap, but worth every penny. Nick Higham's writing style has improved immensely since he wrote *The Kingdom of Northumbria A.D. 350-1100* (my go-to guide when working on *Edwin High King of Britain and now Oswald: Return of the King*), and he now combines engaging prose with his immense knowledge of the subject. Really, no criticisms; if you want to learn about the history and culture of the Early Medieval Period in Britain, read this book.

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### **Joe Tristram says**

Comprehensive, with sensible starting and finishing points, but perhaps a not entirely happy half way house between popular history and a need to be thorough and complete. Some chapters, particularly later on when the written source material is much greater, I found turgid with names, and I therefore lost my sense of overview. I very much liked the suggested ways of understanding what it may actually have been like at the ending of the Roman period as the Saxons arrived.

The writing is not brilliant however, and would have benefitted from some editorial oversight, if only to cut down the number of times a sentence begins with "such"!

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### **Jan Schindler says**

read this along with Cornwell's Saxon series. well researched, recommend to anyone interested in this part of

English history. Nice to have the history to refer to altho the series stays close to it and gives it "color".

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