The Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Southern Britain AD 450-650
Beneath the Tribal Hidage

Martin Welch
Sue Harrington

The Tribal Hidage, attributed to the 7th century, records the named groups and polities of early Anglo-Saxon England and the taxation tribute due from their lands and surpluses. Whilst providing some indication of relative wealth and its distribution, rather little can be deduced from the Hidage concerning the underlying economic and social realities of the communities documented. Sue Harrington and the late Martin Welch have adopted a new approach to these issues, based on archaeological information from 12,000 burials and 28,000 objects of the period AD 450–650. The nature, distribution and spatial relationships of settlement and burial evidence are examined over time against a background of the productive capabilities of the environment in which they are set, the availability of raw materials, evidence for metalworking and other industrial/craft activities, and communication and trade routes. This has enabled the identification of central areas of wealth that influenced places around them. Key within this period was the influence of the Franks who may have driven economic exploitation by building on the pre-existing Roman infrastructure of the south-east. Frankish material culture was as widespread as that of the Kentish people, whose wealth is evident in many well-furnished graves, but more nuanced approaches to wealth distribution are apparent further to the West, perhaps due to ongoing interaction with communities who maintained an essentially ‘Romano-British’ way of life.
Masterpieces
Early Medieval Art

Sonja Marzinzik

This beautiful volume presents a history of Europe and the Mediterranean from the end of the Roman Empire to the twelfth century, as told through objects in the British Museum. Richly illustrated, this book will showcase some of the collection’s most outstanding and internationally renowned artefacts, such as the Projecta Casket, the treasures from the Sutton Hoo ship burial and the Fuller Brooch. The discussion of each object will provide a fascinating insight into their makers and owners as well as the world in which they were created. Drawn from all the major cultures of the period and covering an extensive geographical and chronological sweep, this publication celebrates the artistic accomplishment of objects made from a varied and attractive array of materials such as gold, silver, precious stones, ivory, glass, ceramics and textiles. This approach bridges the gap that is commonly presented between the Mediterranean and the North of Europe, the Empire (whether Roman or Byzantine) and the ‘barbarian’ world in a period that saw Christianity established as a major religion as well as the rise of Islam.
Hedingham Ware
A Medieval Pottery Industry in North Essex; its Production and Distribution

Helen Walker

Between the 12th and 14th centuries, the Hedingham pottery industry produced decorated and glazed finewares, mainly jugs, and grey-firing coarsewares. This study provides a synthesis of Hedingham Ware production and explores its distribution within East Anglia. A gazetteer of the fourteen known production sites is provided, and the pottery is used to create a typology of fabric types, vessel forms and decoration for both fine and coarse wares. The industry appears to have evolved from the early medieval tradition, although it has similarities with Late Saxon Thetford-type ware. The coarsewares are most similar to those produced near Colchester and show some similarities to coarsewares produced in Suffolk. The Hedingham industry did not die out in the 14th century but became subsumed into the sandy orange ware tradition and lost its identity as Hedingham Ware.
Religious belief was central to the lives - and deaths - of all medieval Londoners. Religion was fully integrated into the social and political order, providing the population with an understanding of their place in the world and inspiring artists, architects and craftspeople. Belief motivated progressive acts such as early forms of social provision and medical care but was also used to justify wars of conquest and the brutal repression of diversity. Archaeology sheds light on many aspects of belief: from organised religion, both Christianity and Judaism, to superstition or witchcraft; places of worship from the smallest parish churches to the great Cathedral of St Paul; tiny objects of personal devotion to entire monastic landscapes. Monasteries include communities cut off from the world, hospitals providing for London's poor or the headquarters of military religious orders behind the Crusades. Cemetery excavations reveal how Londoners responded to mortality both individually and together in the face of catastrophes such as the Black Death, while the events of the Reformation dramatically transformed both institutions and beliefs. This fully illustrated book provides an introduction to the evidence of belief from the Museum of London's archaeological excavations in the capital, with a particular focus on the programme of work, supported by English Heritage, on the sites of many of London's monasteries.
The Romans at Nostell Priory
Excavations at the new visitor car park in 2009

Dave Pinnock

A National Trust archaeological project carried out by On-Site Archaeology revealed the remains of a previously unknown multi-phase Romano-British settlement at the site of a new visitor car park at Nostell Priory, Wakefield. The remains had a surprising Roman military connection with implications both for our understanding of the Roman occupation in this region and the later, medieval history of the site.

A minor Iron Age phase preceded the early Roman phase, which was dated by late first to early second century pottery of types associated exclusively with Roman military sites. Wasters indicated a previously unidentified local kiln. The most likely interpretation of the site is a vicus-like settlement adjacent to an undiscovered Roman fort, raising the intriguing possibility that the earliest medieval religious community deliberately chose the site for its Roman associations.

The later Romano-British phases lacked military evidence and were characteristic of rural settlement elsewhere in the region, including land divisions, pits and a crop drier. So radical was the break from the earlier pottery types that there may even have been a hiatus in the habitation of the site after the early Roman phase. Several ‘empty’ graves were also found, including a stone-lined cist, which are likely to be of Romano-British date.
Crop Protection in Medieval Agriculture
Studies in pre-modern organic agriculture

Jan C. Zadoks

Mediterranean and West European pre-modern agriculture (agriculture before 1600) was by necessity ‘organic agriculture’. Crop protection is part and parcel of this agriculture, with weed control in the forefront.

Crop protection is embedded in the medieval agronomy text books but specialised sections do occur. Weeds, insects and diseases are described but identification in modern terms is not easy. The pre-modern ‘Crop Portfolio’ is well filled, certainly in the Mediterranean area. The medieval ‘Pest Portfolio’ differs from the modern one because agriculture then was a Low External Input Agriculture, and because the proportion of cultivated to non-cultivated land was drastically lower than today. The pre-modern ‘Control Portfolio’ is surprisingly rich, both in preventive and interventive measures. Prevention was by risk management, intensive tillage, and careful storage. Intervention was mechanical and chemical. Chemical intervention used natural substances such as sulphur, pitch, and ‘botanicals’. Some fifty plant species are mentioned in a crop protection context.

Though application methods look rather modern they are typically low-tech. Among them are seed disinfection, spraying, dusting, fumigation, grease banding, wound care, and hand-picking but also scarification, now outdated. The reality of pest outbreaks and other damages is explored as to frequency, intensity, and extent. Information on the practical use of the recommended treatments is scanty. If applied, their effectiveness remains enigmatic.

Three medieval agronomists are at the heart of this book, but historical developments in crop protection from early Punic, Greek, and Roman authors to the first modern author are outlined. The readership of these writers was the privileged class of landowners but hints pointing to the exchange of ideas between them and the common peasant were found. Consideration is given to the pre-modern reasoning in matters of crop protection. Comparison of pre-modern crop protection and its counterpart in modern organic agriculture is difficult because of drastic changes in the relation between crop areas and non-crop areas, and because of the great difference in yield levels then and now, with several associated differences.
Transforming Townscapes
From burh to borough: the archaeology of Wallingford, AD 800-1400

Helena Hamerow
Matt Edgeworth
Neil Christie
Oliver Creighton

This monograph details the results of a major archaeological project based on and around the historic town of Wallingford in south Oxfordshire. Founded in the late Saxon period as a key defensive and administrative focus next to the Thames, the settlement also contained a substantial royal castle established shortly after the Norman Conquest. The volume traces the pre-town archaeology of Wallingford and then analyses the town’s physical and social evolution, assessing defences, churches, housing, markets, material culture, coinage, communications and hinterland. Core questions running through the volume relate to the roles of the River Thames and of royal power in shaping Wallingford’s fortunes and identity and in explaining the town’s severe and early decline.