

RE-ASSESSING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD – AND RE-SETTING THE TONE OF DEBATE

John Hines, FSA

Cardiff University, UK. Email: hines@cardiff.ac.uk

This review article examines How England Began: from Roman Britain to the Anglo-Saxons by Nicholas J Higham (225 mm. Pp viii+360, 32 pls. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2026. ISBN 978-0-300-25492-1. £25.00 (hbk)), and its contribution to debates about the transition from Roman Britain to early Anglo-Saxon England. Through a close reading of Gildas' De excidio Britanniae, Higham argues for the continued strength of British Christian identity while acknowledging a greater role for migration than earlier revisionist models allowed. While this more nuanced treatment of the evidence is to be welcomed, there remain questions about some of his demographic assumptions and the continued use of a supposed 'Germanist' historiographical tradition as a polemical target. Archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence suggests there is a need for more explicit demographic modelling that prioritises empirical, regionally focused and critically balanced interpretations of fifth- and sixth-century Britain.

Keywords: Gildas; Roman Britain; Anglo-Saxon migration; population change; historiography

The title of Nicholas Higham's latest monograph is rich in implications. No historical source bears witness to an entity called 'England' before the late tenth century; even then, the earliest relevant form is Latin *Anglia*. *England* itself is a form of Norse origin; its Old English counterpart, *Engla land*, was used as the name for the kingdom first under the Danish conqueror Cnut in the early 1020s. There is nonetheless much to show that this was the culmination of a long process of development of Englishness and construction of 'national' institutions. For about a century prior to Cnut, successors to Alfred the Great and his son Edward the Elder used a title translating as 'King of the English' – superseding a temporary preference for 'King of the Anglo-Saxons'. From early in the eighth century there is firm evidence that the common language of this population, above any and all regional variations, was known as *englisc*, while earlier still the Gregorian mission to re-Christianise this part of Britain was sent to establish an *ecclesia Anglorum*. Collectively, the descendants of Angles, Saxons and Jutes in Bede's eighth-century view, formed a *gens Anglorum*.

Those salient milestones largely post-date the fifth to seventh centuries on which the present book focuses. What Higham examines in detail is thus the primary phase of a coherent period of more than six centuries in the history of early medieval Britain – what has long been identified and discussed as the Anglo-Saxon period. From the aspects he explores in substance, his main title could as well have been 'How Roman Britain Came to an End': the ending of one dominant system and inception of its successor were two sides

of one coin in Higham's view, but of course one may concentrate rather more on one than the other. The British writer Gildas' tract usually known as *De excidio Britanniae* or *De excidio Britonum* ('On the ruin of Britain/the Britons') is at the centre of Higham's analysis. Emphasising that Gildas refers to the work simply as a letter (*epistola*), and not by any title, Higham chooses to call it 'The Ruin'. He provides a clear and informative account of the late- and sub-Roman cultural, intellectual and ecclesiastical context of Gildas' education, datable around the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries AD. This is approached via Gaulish sources of the fifth century in Chapter 3, but firmly rooted in an intellectually self-sufficient Insular sphere in Chapters 4 and 5, the fulcrum of the book's historical case.

Although Higham is particularly insistent on the coherency of structure and purpose of Gildas' 'The Ruin', the treatise is still, as Higham acknowledges, a multifaceted text – it had been ruminated over and composed, on the author's own testimony, for more than a decade. A large part of it is a moralising, political commonplace book: a pounding compilation of Biblical quotations, organised by source and moral, that can be quoted against sinning secular leaders and ecclesiastical representatives respectively. Between and around these scriptural excerpts, however, Higham cogently demonstrates how careful reading can identify more discreet references to and reflections of political debate within an educated British Christian circle of the earlier sixth century. He further explains how Gildas crystallised a strain in the early-medieval British sense of themselves as a people belonging to and wanted by the Christian God but, like the Israelites in Old Testament history, subjected to corrective punishment at the hands of barbarian aliens permitted to dominate them – until they should reform and it please God to allow them to expel those enemies and regain full possession of their rightful territory.

This angles Gildas' tract in a rather different way from what I (not alone) had previously thought; namely, that the devotion of the whole of the second half of the text to faults of many within the Church, and to teaching, exhortation and examples directed towards more holy behaviour, reflects a purposeful emphasis on spiritual triumph and rewards of greater importance than worldly success. If being *cives Romani* ('Roman citizens') could no longer in practice mean anything like what it had once done, becoming *municipes ... civitatis Hierusalem caelestis* ('townsmen of the Heavenly City of Jerusalem') remained within reach (*De excidio*, 110.3). The reference to the *communis hostis* (in an ablative absolute: 'enemy of all', Satan) in that same final clause recalls and may deliberately allude to the specific lament that *cunctorum mortalium hostis* ('the enemy of all mortal men') had tempted and corrupted the most powerful of the British kings, Maglocunus – made towards the culmination of the denunciation of the five kings' conduct (*De excidio*, 34.3). Higham attaches great significance to the plural of the noun, *hostes*, as a word with near-automatic associations with those whom Gildas and his fellow *Britanni* called *Saxones*. A point of particular attention is Chapter 92.3, where 'a certain one of our people well avers' (*bene quidam nostrorum ait*) that 'rightly we wish that the enemies of the Church should also be our enemies, with no alliance, and that friends and protectors [of the Church] be not only our allies but also our fathers and lords' (my translations). That unambiguously expresses an aspiration for a united Christian British *patria* or *natio*. But, coming as it does in the very midst of a powerful critique of those who were undermining the Church by abuses or failures in pastoral responsibilities, it is still realistically to be read as first and foremost a condemnation of badly inadequate fellow-Christians: firstly those who were ecclesiastical; then those in secular ranks. In the final analysis, there is no need for the pastoral-Catholic character of Gildas's 'Epistle' and its political implications to be considered mutually exclusive.

Surprising too, even puzzling, is the emphasis Higham invests, in support of his position, into downplaying the siege of *mons Badonicus* and consequent British triumph – ‘nearly the most recent and hardly the slightest rout of the Yahoos’ – as ‘a comparatively minor success’ (pp 128–35). The close reading of Gildas’ adjectives and adverbs here in *De excidio* 26.1 needs to note that *ferme* with a negative is a regular Latin idiom, hence also Winterbottom’s translation ‘certainly not the least’ for *ferme . . . non minima*, ‘hardly the slightest’ as I have just put it. Higham presents a shift of focus as crucial to the case that Gildas was less concerned with the threat of future further Saxon land-taking than with reversing the losses of the generation or two before his own. What is strong and welcome within this is Higham’s argument that *postrema patriae victoria* (‘the last victory of [our] fatherland’) of Gildas’ historical synopsis in Chapter 2 is to be identified with the *victoria Domino annuente cessit* (‘victory [that] came about with the Lord assenting’) after the Britons had rallied under the leadership of Aurelius Ambrosianus (*De excidio*, 25.3). That connection is made not just by repetition of the noun *victoria* but also by the reference to God’s assent – *Dei nutu* in Chapter 2. However many times I must have read the opening section of ‘The Ruin’, I had never noticed that before. Focusing primarily on Aurelius Ambrosianus, a Roman, of noble descent, of sober and discreet character (*vir modestus*), was indeed positive and important for the values Gildas was promoting. And not least when Aurelius’ own grandchildren had by then fallen away from his virtues: *cuius nunc temporibus nostris suboles magnopere avita bonitate degeneravit* (‘his line in our days has seriously degenerated from their grandfather’s quality’).

In this study of the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England, Higham is revisiting the core topic of a monograph he published in 1992, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*. Arguments over how we should reconstruct and understand this historical and cultural watershed have gone on and on through the last three decades and more, but significant new data have been obtained and illuminating empirical research carried out, mostly archaeological. Higham has, as a result, substantially revised his personal position on the context in which he would place Gildas: he recognises that he and other scholars of the 1980s and 1990s ‘overemphasized indigenous factors and underemphasized the impact of incomers’ (p 240). He gives little credence in this study to continuing revisionist rejection of what have been understood to be prominent factors and events in the story of what happened in southern and eastern Britain in and around the dimly lit fifth century (see especially his ‘Introduction’, pp 1–16), and insists particularly that the historical sources be treated seriously – which of course means being subjected to extremely careful critical analysis.

This is a refinement and moderation of stance, not a *volte face*. Primarily to accommodate the healthy late antique culture implied by the composition of Gildas’ treatise, Higham infers that the proto-England of this phase retained a substantial majority of ‘indigenes’, even if new Germanic-speaking settlers from the Continent and Scandinavia were numerous. On the evidence of aDNA, backed up by material culture, it is now clear that the former, a sub-Romano-British population, cannot be represented, at least its mass, by the classic ‘Early Anglo-Saxon’ cemeteries.¹ One would like to think that it is an exercise in emphatic irony to have topped and tailed a paragraph on p 256, where Higham outlines what are presented as ‘realistic’ figures for the indigenous population level of immediately post-Roman Britain and the number of new settlers from the Continent and Scandinavia, first with the blunt comment that ‘Scholars are prone to guesstimating’ such numbers and

1. Gretzinger *et al* 2022.

then concluding that ‘It must be a mistake . . . to think solely in terms of relative numbers’. I suspect, though, it is rather more indicative of current confusion and uncertainty at a crossroads in historical demographics. Trying to tiptoe around the challenges of quantification as hopelessly speculative is no longer valid in an age of population statistics based upon genetic data and rigorous and explicit formulae.

Here, Higham postulates a minimum ratio of natives to immigrants of 5:1, giving a sub-Romano-British proportion of at least 85 per cent of the total population. Nonetheless, he has also noted that the early Anglo-Saxon archaeological record – overwhelmingly that of cemeteries and settlement sites – is now to be accepted as representative of the presence and range of the newly introduced population and its practices in the later fifth and sixth centuries (p 179). There is indeed some justification for the suggestion that an indigenous population had a way of life that can be all-but invisible to archaeology, in the near-total absence of relevant finds within large enclaves that may be postulated, surrounded by dense zones of early Anglo-Saxon sites: most of the Chilterns, Surrey and West Sussex north and south of London; a large area around Lincoln in the embryonic kingdom of Lindsey; and across even larger areas of Mercia and Northumbria that imply deep ‘marches’ between the culture zones. The past quarter-century has seen remarkable advances in identifying British cemeteries and settlements of the early post-Roman centuries in the south-west of England and Wales, and we must hope that, with care and patience, more and more gaps will be filled in. And indisputably, we can identify contact phenomena and elements of acculturation in the material culture of various parts of early Anglo-Saxon England, among which it has long been observed that the agrarian taskscape shows multiple, important aspects of continuity and modification, not catastrophic disruption. Higham’s case is rational and coherent in many respects, but that there was a culturally distinct sub-Romano-British majority throughout southern and eastern England as well as further north and west remains, for now, empirically unproven and quite hypothetical.

A significant complication, the implications of which seem to be unrecognised, is that earlier on Higham had accepted arguments that the population of Britain halved across the third and fourth centuries, during the late Roman period (pp 28–9). The causes of this shrinkage are identified as pestilence and warfare, and deterioration in both the industrial and the agricultural economies, associated in part with worsening environmental conditions – probably exacerbated, in fact, by over-exploitation. Demographically, such factors can be killers, causing surges of sudden, untimely deaths; longer-term, they are also circumstances in which the rate of reproduction may well fall, with people just having fewer babies. If we postulate a collective reproductive generation of twenty-five years, which is realistic, it would take a mean 8.5 per cent drop in the fertility rate from the conventional replacement level of 2.1 per adult female to 1.95 for the population to halve over two centuries. Modern figures (which of course are dubiously applicable to the third–sixth centuries AD) indicate that falls in birth-rate tend to be steady rather than exponential, but if the fall in birth-rate did decline further to 1.75 in the probably worse conditions of the fifth century, this population would have halved again over the following century, even without postulating catastrophic mortality events. But such extreme circumstances did occur in the 530s and 540s under the late antique Little Ice Age and Justinianic plague, and Gildas understood comparable grim tribulations to have afflicted Britain in the fifth century as well.² Higham’s projection, conversely, stands upon a steady-state premiss: that

2. *De excidio*, 19.3–4, 20.2 and 22.2.

the inferred population decline of the third and fourth centuries ceased, or became negligible, in the fifth century. That is patently implausible. One does not need to be able to claim to know what the answers actually are in order to make the valid point that more fluid and generative demographic models, with quantified parameters, *are* now requisite in the face of direct and robust human population data. Higham is absolutely right insofar as his argument is that numbers, relative or absolute, do not in themselves provide all the answers and explanations we need for what happened in Britain over these centuries – if indeed any. That is not what they are of interest for. They are not just important but now ineluctable components of the overall picture that we first construct and then seek to understand. Quite the opposite of a simplistic assumption that population change was a single overwhelming cause of the transition, demography is one of a plurality of factors, which it is wise to suppose co-acted in a complex interplay.

Before addressing one more, major question of principle, a few corrections need to be noted. Higham could not have known that radiocarbon dating now suggests that a sub-Roman phase of occupation at Crickley Hill near Gloucester is a mirage, and this site needs to be deleted from his models (pp 88 and 158); this involves no major restructuring of arguments, although there is then another intriguing dimension, in that Crickley Hill conversely appears to have been a hillfort site re-used in the late Roman period but not beyond that. *Cave, lector*, too, a slip whereby the Roman shore-fort of Lympne and Kentish great hall complex and monastery at Lyminge are confused and conflated (pp 55, 178 and 246); where there is evidence of a great hall site in a Roman shore-fort is at Dover.³ Higham's recurrent references to the term *wealh* in Old English over-simplify this word's history: its historically primary sense in several Germanic languages was something like 'subject/inhabitant of the Roman Empire', while the sense of a servile/unfree individual, even a chattel slave, is attested to only at the end of the tenth century – albeit, I agree, probably reflecting common situations involving Britons in English-speaking contexts over a longer period.⁴ In hedging the significance of the results of the Max Planck Institute's aDNA study of early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries,⁵ Higham lays himself open to criticism in turn for assumptions downplaying the possible level of economic migration from the Western Britain and Ireland population gene pool into England over the past millennium and more.

All round, we are gradually, even steadily now, gaining relevant information about the complex, mosaic pattern of contact and change in fifth- and sixth-century Britain. I shall therefore conclude just as Higham does with a deeper and broader critique of and for the field as a whole, directly and carefully addressing a matter that regrettably hangs like a raincloud over discussion of this period in the history of Britain. Generalisations and preconceptions can only distort the understanding of this phase, and it is wearisome, unnecessary and divisive to continue to caricature approaches to this period in Europe that are comfortable with substantial and culturally consequential relocations of population having been a factor as intellectually fossilised, trapped in a jingoistic nineteenth-century mindset. The belief that a dangerously wrong-minded 'Germanist' view of the past continues to hold some scholars in thrall is intermittently insinuated throughout this book but emerges in full flow towards the end of Chapter 7 and in the final Chapter 8. It is supposedly illustrated by references to a paper by John McNeil Dodgson on the county of

3. Thomas 2018.

4. Hines 2026.

5. Gretzinger *et al* 2022.

Cheshire published in 1967 – thus rather more than ‘a generation ago’ as it is described – and to a more recent book by Axel Kristinsson. Both of those are free for anyone to download; please read them.⁶ Dodgson was explicit that his reconstruction, based primarily upon place-name evidence, attributes the anglicisation of that region in the north-west Midlands to the political ascendancy of English-speakers backed by the growing power of a Mercian kingdom over a mixed population. There are questions to be raised about Dodgson’s thoughts on demographic processes, which allegedly allowed an English-speaking population to outgrow that which spoke early Old Welsh, but, short of him positively asserting that the indigenous population continued to outnumber the descendants of immigrants to Britain of the previous two centuries, his reconstruction looks entirely consistent with just about everything Higham also perceives. There is nothing that justifies the assertion that Dodgson ‘supposed that “Anglo-Saxons” actively displaced British communities and settled their lands’ (p 227), which, especially in the freighted context in which the charge is laid, can only be interpreted as essentially what we now know of as ethnic cleansing.

There is one sentence in Kristinsson’s book that contrasts the settlement of late Roman Britain, the Rhineland and the Upper Danube with other parts of the Empire where barbarian incomers formed a ‘small minority’, and that could, in isolation, seem to support the allegation that he ‘recycles the traditional “Germanist” explanation that England emerged from a migration of continental north-Europeans sufficiently numerous and powerful enough to exterminate or displace the indigenes’ (p 238, a typo in the book under review gives the reference as p 371).⁷ At the end of the next paragraph, however, Kristinsson presents the proposition that ‘In Britain, the effectiveness of local resistance and perhaps the disappearance of Roman order in the early fifth century made sweeping conquests impossible’. Kristinsson explains this thesis on pp 186–92 of his monograph: specifically declaring to start with that it is unclear to what extent the indigenous population was replaced or assimilated to the invading group and its culture, he proceeds to suggest that the more Romanised parts of sub-Roman Britain were able to organise resistance relatively quickly, and so succeeded in blocking a full territorial conquest for some time. Their polities could correspondingly be comprehensively defeated in the end, albeit with no implication of expulsion or flight of population as a result (on which final point, *contra*).⁸ This is a thoughtful and intelligent thesis, markedly innovative for 2010 even if resurrecting observations that were commonplace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹ I concede that I would like it, because I came to a similar position in a recent review of modern dating evidence for ‘centres of power’ in early-medieval Britain.¹⁰ More and better data on the relevant sites will surely emerge from the current research projects ‘Making the March: contesting lands in the early medieval frontier’ and ‘Hidden Kingdoms: the southwest of Britain in late antiquity’ in the near future, and we shall then be able to improve upon these ideas.

With neither of those publications will Higham have knowingly misrepresented publications he draws attention to. This can only be a case of unchallenged conventional presuppositions leading someone to ‘see’ what they expect to find. In the same part of his

6. Dodgson 1967; Kristinsson 2010.

7. Kristinsson 2010, 171.

8. Green 1881, 131–45.

9. See also Oman 1910, 188–202.

10. Hines 2025.

book (p 239), comments on the “culture-historical” approach to archaeology’ associable with V Gordon Childe are followed by the statement that “A general displacement of Celtic by Nordic peoples in the richest agricultural districts of the island” was generally accepted, therefore, in the mid-twentieth century’. Higham’s quotation is taken from Trevelyan’s *History of England*, first published in 1926. Apart from early work on the fourteenth-century ‘Lollard’ reformer Wycliffe, Trevelyan did not specialise in medieval history, but rather in liberal-romantic and nationalist movements of the modern era, especially the Italian *Risorgimento* and its charismatic leader Garibaldi. It is most significant in *that* regard that the chapter from which the quotation is taken is a strong example of how, by the inter-war period, an equation of ‘race’ with culture, concurrently attaching high importance to a geographical home territory, was firmly embedded in scholarly cognition. ‘Race’ was a loose category to which Trevelyan found it unproblematic to assign ‘the Celt’ and ‘the Saxon’.¹¹

What we may call a maximalist notion of forced population removal and replacement in fifth-century Britain did hold sway in authoritative history books over two to three generations from the publication of the first volume of Freeman’s *History of the Norman Conquest* in 1870; in six editions from the 1870s to 1903, Bishop William Stubbs’s *Constitutional History of England* was an important intermediary between Freeman and Trevelyan at this canonical level.¹² Even here, let us recognise that, however bombastic and eminently Victorian his manner of expressing himself, Freeman carefully *argued* for this position; it was no mere assumption. And for both Freeman and Stubbs, the crucial point about maximum discontinuity was that it allowed the institutions of England to have developed from a *tabula rasa*, without the constraints and influence of Roman law and practices manifest in the former imperial provinces of the near-Continent; national or racial superiority was not the issue. Although Trevelyan’s *History* continued to be reprinted, with only minor revisions, into the early 1950s, the authoritative view of the mid-twentieth century on this matter must be Stenton’s *Anglo-Saxon England* in the Oxford History of England series, with its first edition in 1943 and a second edition in 1947. Stenton did accept ‘mass migrations of free peasants’ into Britain, meaning simply that there were a lot of them (a position that Higham accepts; and note Stenton’s use of the plural), and that they arrived as masses rather than deeply ranked and structured armies. We can criticise and seek to refine that too now, but everything else Stenton had to say on the subject is characterised by a measured and cautious position on interactions between these and the prior inhabitants.¹³

Stenton, moreover, was setting out no pioneering position there. His synopsis was firmly in line with that already articulated by archaeological specialists in this period, such as Baldwin Brown – ‘Few people at the present day find thinkable the old theory of the extermination by the conquerors of the British race over all the eastern and central parts of England’¹⁴ — or Leeds¹⁵ on ‘Native art in Early Anglo-Saxon times’. There are even passages in Trevelyan’s chapter on ‘The Anglo-Saxon conquest’ that could be quoted so as to give the opposite impression of his position from that emphasised above.¹⁶ At the level of mass-market publication, Sir Winston Churchill followed Stenton respectfully and closely

11. Trevelyan 1926, 28–48.

12. See, eg, Freeman 1877, 9–21; Stubbs 1891, 63–7.

13. Stenton 1947, 1–31 and esp 310–11.

14. Brown 1915, 50–4.

15. Leeds 1936, 1–19.

16. See Trevelyan 1926, 42–5.

in the relevant section of volume I of his *History of the English-speaking Peoples*.¹⁷ A contemporary recrudescence came from the pen of the populist and popular Arthur Bryant:¹⁸ ‘... left behind by the receding British tide in squalid, remote villages as the victors’ slaves, were the primitive, pre-Celtic peasants who continued to live much as before.’ One could see that as consistent with the emphasis on institutional wipe-out given by Freeman, Green, Stubbs and indeed Oman to a carefully circumscribed extent – and this reductive portrayal is well answered by Higham’s more positive assessment of the cultural context implied by Gildas’ writings – but it takes little learning to be able to demolish Bryant’s guesswork as presumptuous nonsense, and superficial chatter like that is no substantive specimen of seriously misguided, institutionalised habits of thought that need to be purged.

Study of this era through history and archaeology does progress over time, then. That has particularly come about through the discovery and establishment of concrete new evidence, certainly, although also through appropriate and effective critical evaluation of propositions that prove simplified or exaggerated. It may also feel, however, as if from the 1960s to the 2020s one facet that has been stuck circling and deepening ever the same dreary rut is this field’s perception of its own more recent past – which in effect is then its representation of itself. An unexpected but relevant by-product of a re-assessment of Oman’s *England before the Norman Conquest* for the present discussion (with multiple revised editions through to 1938)¹⁹ has been to observe how close, point-by-point, are Oman in the Edwardian period and Higham now, in terms of familiarity with the range and details of historical evidence and in their judgements of what it may mean. Of course, the contexts are now very different, but Oman, Chichele professor of modern history in Oxford from 1905–46, was similarly assiduous in considering relevant archaeological evidence; he was a distinguished numismatist, and president of the Royal Archaeological Institute from 1927 to 1939. Like Higham, Oman was keen to emphasise where Gildas’ ‘The Ruin’ could be treated as a reliable historical source, and he drew attention to Gildas’ own learning and range of literary references. Concurrently, though, he repeatedly labelled Gildas ‘hysterical’ and called his account of fourth-century events ‘full of notorious errors’, ‘rubbish’ and ‘nonsense’. Reinforced by his use of an older title for Gildas’ work, *Liber Querulus*, this may be seen first and foremost as the tone of his time: the laconic put-downs of a public-school master that shaped and maintained the conventions of teacher–pupil relationships, overlain by the confident mindset of enlightened Anglicanism facing late-antique scriptural zeal. The tone of contemporary academic discourse is equally what we, collectively, now need to be keenly aware of.

I suggest that, for the immediate future, research on fifth-/sixth-century transitions will best be conducted on a regional basis and, above all, empirically (cf in particular).²⁰ The supposed ‘Germanist tradition’ is illustrated in Higham’s book by nothing relevant less than a century old, and non-evidential references and unfounded assertions like those identified above demonstrate only that it is an imaginary bogeyman that now exists and is perpetuated solely in the writings of those who wish to define themselves against it. What is at stake in pushing firmly back on this issue is not criticism of an individual historian or book, but the fact that it is this exhausted trope alone that above all others is persistently

17. Churchill 1956 [2002], 49–51.

18. Arthur Bryant 1953, 58.

19. Oman 1910.

20. Henry 2026.

recycled as a fact requiring minimum attention to its demonstration and evaluation. The whole world of scholarship faces far too many truly chilling threats from a philistine political climate, an academic world over-run by managerialism and the proliferation of absurdities and nastiness disseminated through both mainstream and internet media. It is a waste of everyone's time and energy to tilt at windmills. Can we not please agree to deal with our scholarly heritage and one another with the same level of objectivity and critical care, humane engagement, respect and earned authority that Higham brings to Gildas in this volume?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, G B 1915. *The Arts in Early England. Vol III: Saxon art and industry in the pagan period*, John Murray, London
- Bryant, A 1953. *The Story of England*, Collins, London
- Churchill, W S 1956. *A History of the English-speaking Peoples. Vol I: the birth of Britain*, Cassell, London (page references from 2002 pbk edn)
- Dodgson, J McN 1967. 'The English in Cumbria'. *Trans Hist Soc Lancashire and Cheshire*, **119**, 1–37 and 241–3 (<https://www.hslc.org.uk/journal/vol-119-1967/attachment/119-2-dodgson/>)
- Freeman, E A 1877. *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its Causes and its Results. Vol 1: the preliminary history to the election of Eadward the Confessor*, 3rd edn, Clarendon Press, Oxford
- Gildas, *De excidio*: Winterbottom, M (ed and trans) 1978. *Gildas: the ruin of Britain and other works*, Phillimore, Chichester
- Green, J R 1881. *The Making of England*, Macmillan & Co, London
- Gretzinger, J et al 2022. 'The Anglo-Saxon migration and the formation of the early English gene pool'. *Nature*, **610**, 112–19 (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05247-2>)
- Henry, R 2026. *Fractured Britannia: the twilight of Roman Britain*, Archaeopress, Oxford
- Higham, N 1992. *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*, Routledge, Abingdon
- Hines, J 2025. 'Seats of the powerful in Britain after the short fifth century: a chronological and geo-political pattern. With a postscript on sites of the ninth to twelfth centuries', in M Gierszewska-Noszczyńska, L Grünwald and O Grimm (eds), *Frankish Seats of Power and the North: centres between diplomacy and confrontation, transfer of knowledge and economy*, 115–40, Leiza, Mainz (<https://books.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeum/catalog/book/1681/chapter/24450>)
- Hines, J 2026. 'Exploitation of the unfree: the impact of the Viking Age on Welsh society and economy', in D Griffiths, N Edwards, F Edmonds and C Downham (eds), *Viking Connections: proceedings of the nineteenth Viking congress*, 26–36, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool
- Kristinsson, A 2010. *Expansions: competition and conquest in Europe since the Bronze Age*, ReykjavíkAkademian, Reykjavík (<https://www.axelkrist.com/>)
- Leeds, E T 1936. *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford
- Oman, C 1910. *England before the Norman Conquest*, Methuen, London
- Stenton, F M 1947. *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd edn, Clarendon Press, Oxford
- Stubbs, W 1891. *The Constitutional History of England: its origin and development*, Vol 1, 5th edn, Clarendon Press, Oxford
- Thomas, G 2018. 'Mead-halls of the Oiscingas: a new Kentish perspective on the Anglo-Saxon great hall phenomenon', *Medieval Archaeol.*, **62** (2), 262–303 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/00766097.2018.1535386>)
- Trevelyan, G M 1926. *Illustrated History of England*, 1st edn, Longmans, Green and Co, London