

The Anglo-Saxons: 449–1066

Introduction to the Literary Period

Feature Menu



Video



Viewing
the Art

Interactive Time Line

Milestone: The Celts in Britain

Milestone: The Roman Occupation

Milestone: The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

Milestone: King Alfred against the Danes

Milestone: The Spread of Christianity

Milestone: The Norman Invasion

What Have You Learned?



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The Anglo-Saxons: 449–1066

Choose a link on the time line to go to a milestone.

300s B.C.

Celts in Britain

55 B.C.–A.D. 409

Roman Occupation

A.D. 449

Anglo-Saxon
Invasion

A.D. 878

King Alfred
against
the Danes

A.D. 1066

Norman
Invasion

300
B.C.

A.D.
1

A.D.
300

A.D.
600

A.D.
900

A.D.
1200

A.D. 400–699

Spread of Christianity



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The Celts in Britain

Before and during the 4th century B.C.

- Britain home to several Celtic tribes ▼
- Britain named for one Celtic tribe—the Brythons ▼
- Celtic religion a form of *animism* ▼
- Druids were Celtic priests



Stonehenge

The Roman Occupation

55 B.C.

Julius Caesar invades Britain ▼

A.D. 43

Celts defeated by Claudius

- Romans build walls, villas, baths, roads ▼

A.D. 409

Romans evacuate their troops

- Britain left vulnerable to attack
- Central government breaks down

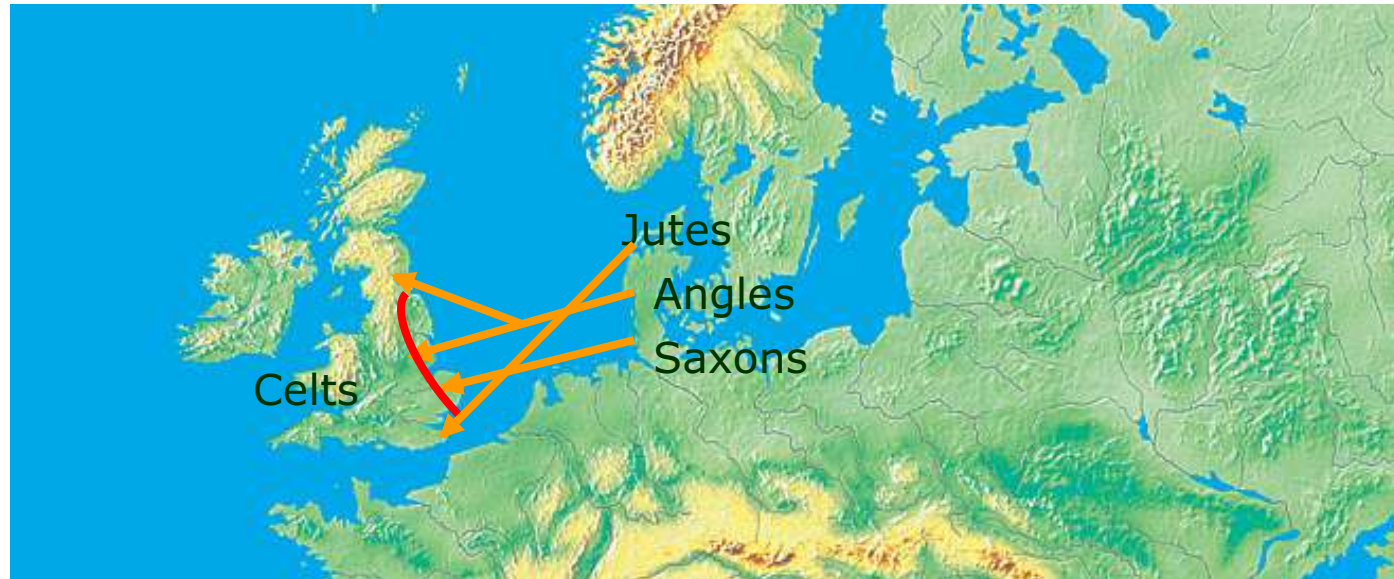
Hadrian's Wall



Roman ruins

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The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

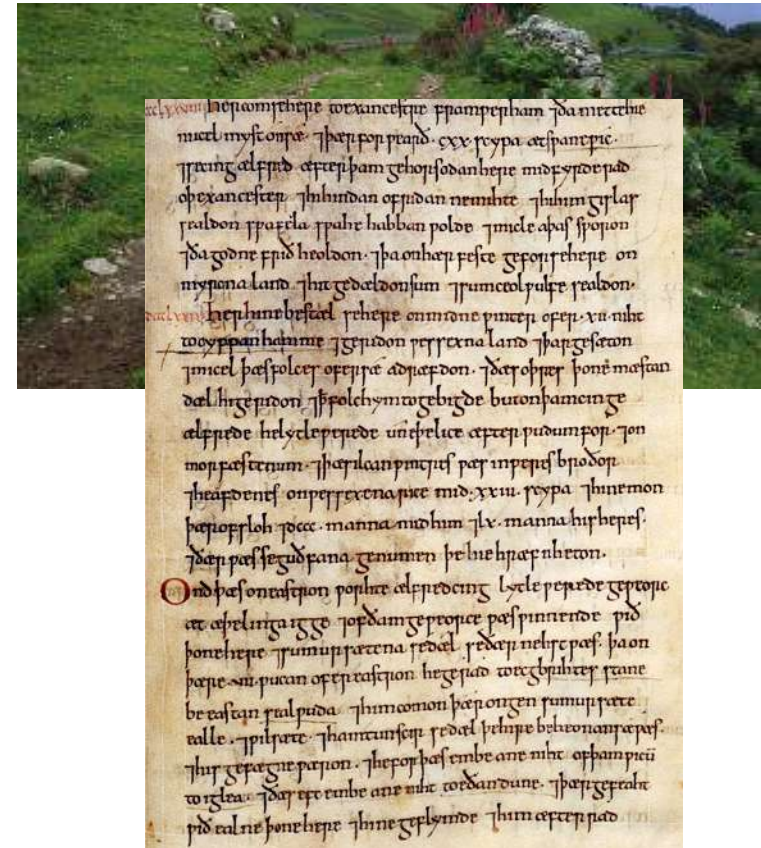


A.D. 449 The Anglo-Saxons push the Celts into the far west of the country.

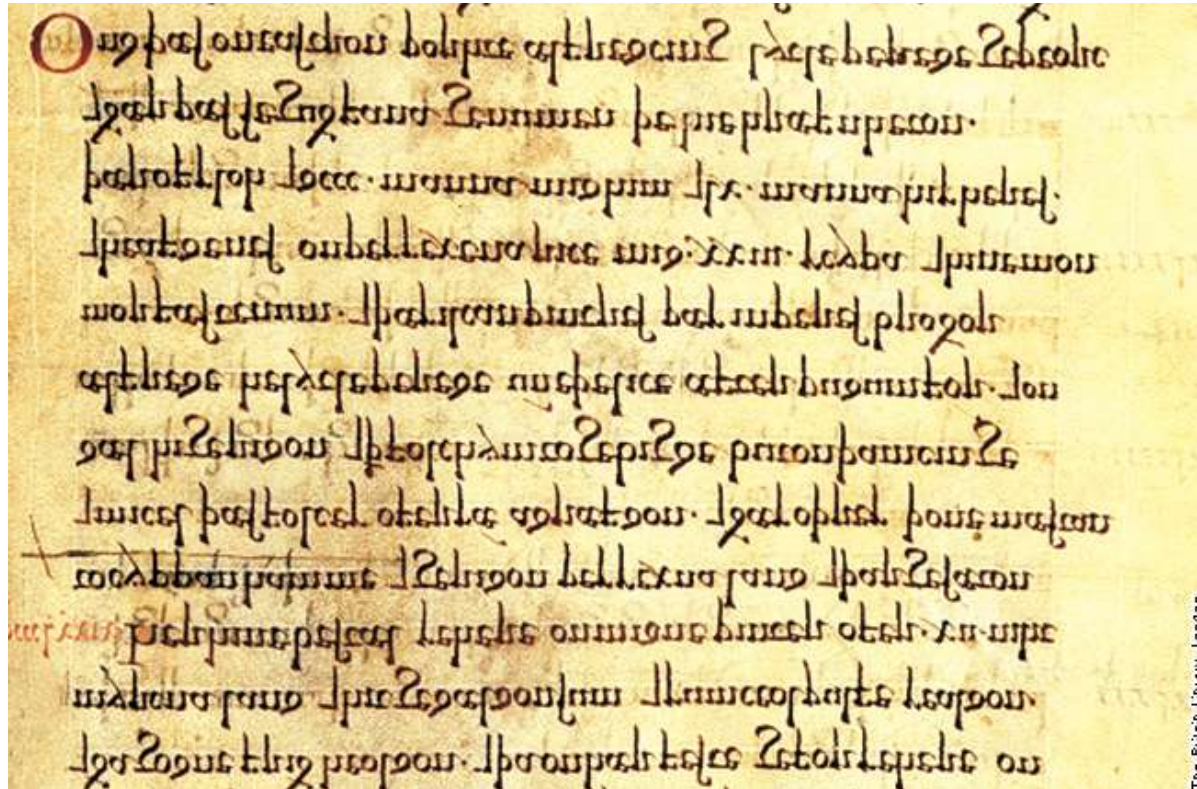
The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

Anglo-Saxon Society

- kinship groups led by strong warrior chief ▼
- people farmed, established local governments, produced fine craftwork ▼
- English emerged as a written language



Page from Anglo-Saxon Chronicle



The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

The Anglo-Saxon religion

- offered no hope of an afterlife ▼
- valued earthly virtues of bravery, loyalty, generosity, and friendship ▼
- similar to what we call Norse mythology ▼

Norse god	Anglo-Saxon god	Day of week
Odin	Woden	▼ Wednesday
Thor	Thunor	▼ Thursday

The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

The Anglo-Saxon bards

- called scops ▼
- strummed harp as they sang ▼
- sang of heroic deeds ▼
- were often warriors ▼

Why were the scops important?

- Anglo-Saxons did not believe in afterlife
- warriors gained immortality through songs



Anglo-Saxon harp

King Alfred against the Danes

8th–9th centuries

Vikings called Danes
invade Britain ▼

871 Alfred of Wessex
is king of England. ▼

878 King Alfred unifies
Anglo-Saxons against
the Danes.



King Sweyn and his Danish troops
arrive in England, from a
manuscript (c. 14th century)

England becomes a nation.

The Spread of Christianity

Around A.D. 400

- Christian monks settle in Britain ▼
- Christianity and Anglo-Saxon culture co-exist ▼

By A.D. 699

- British pagan religions replaced by Christianity



The Norman Invasion

1066

- William of Normandy crosses the English Channel
- William defeats Harold and Anglo-Saxon army
- French replaces English as the language of the ruling class



The Norman Invasion,
Bayeux Tapestry

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What Have You Learned?

Indicate whether the following statements refer to the time **before**, **during**, or **after** the Anglo-Saxon era.

during Viking invaders terrorized England.

after French became the language of the ruling class.

during England became unified under Alfred the Great.

before Animism was the primary religious belief.

END

