Anglo-Saxon Art
A New History

Leslie Webster

The seven centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period in England (roughly AD 400-1100) were a time of extraordinary and profound transformation in almost every aspect of its culture, producing an explosion of artistic creativity. Settled by northern European tribal groupings of pagan and illiterate warriors and farmers in the 5th century, by the eleventh century England had acquired all the trappings of medieval statehood, including a remarkable and highly influential artistic heritage, which had impact far beyond England itself.

Key Sales points

- From the jewellery discovered on the great ship burial at Sutton Hoo to the Bayeux Tapestry, Anglo-Saxon art represents a unique high point of medieval creativity
- An authoritative reference book that traces the changing nature of art throughout the extraordinary Anglo-Saxon period. Explores the significance of art to Anglo-Saxon culture, and the various ways it both reflected and influenced the world in which it was created
- First new introduction to the subject for twenty-five years, particularly timely in the wake of the discovery of the Staffordshire Hoard
- Reveals the character, leitmotifs and underlying continuities of Anglo-Saxon art, through a wealth of stunning illustrations
- Offers a comprehensive introduction to the whole field of Anglo-Saxon culture, including art, history, literature and archaeology

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Leslie Webster was formerly Keeper of the Department of Prehistory and Europe at the British Museum. She is the author of The Franks Casket (British Museum Press, forthcoming) and co-editor of The Transformation of the Roman World, The Making of England and The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art.

All information is provisional and subject to change
Anglo-Saxon art went through many changes between the 5th and 11th centuries, but puzzles and story-telling remained central. The early art style of the Anglo-Saxon period is known as Style I and was popular in the late 5th and 6th centuries. Animal art continued to be popular on Anglo-Saxon metalwork throughout the later period, when it went through further transformations into the Mercian Style (defined by sinuous animal interlace) in the 8th century and then into the lively Trewhiddle Style in the 9th century. Anglo-Saxon art went through many changes between the 5th and 11th centuries, but puzzles and story-telling remained central. The early art style of the Anglo-Saxon period is known as Style I and was popular in the late 5th and 6th centuries. Cite this page as: The British Museum, "Decoding Anglo-Saxon art," in Smarthistory, February 28, 2017, accessed August 9, 2019, https://smarthistory.org/decoding-anglo-saxon-art/. At Smarthistory, we’re on a mission to open museums and cultural sites up to the world. Anglo-Saxon art covers art produced within the Anglo-Saxon period of English history, beginning with the Migration period style that the Anglo-Saxons brought with them from the continent in the 5th century, and ending in 1066 with the Norman Conquest of a large Anglo-Saxon nation-state whose sophisticated art was influential in much of northern Europe. The two periods of outstanding achievement were the 7th and 8th centuries, with the metalwork and jewellery from Sutton Hoo and a series of magnificent