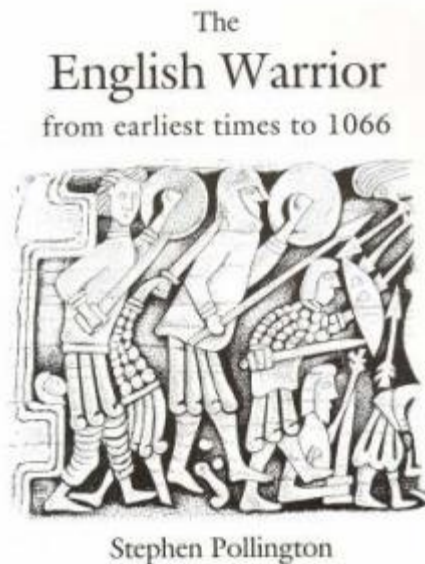


**'The English Warrior: From Earliest Times to 1066'**  
**By Stephen Pollington**  
**Review by Rob Morgan**

This is an old title now, published in 1996 by A-S Books, 267 pages in paperback and the ISBN 1-898281-10-6. Our library's just taken over one of the old extra-mural sites, and this came with the contents of that library. I'd never encountered the book before, and though I'd like to have seen it better illustrated (there are only 20 or so illustrations in the whole book), it is very interesting, and worth some consideration. It *might* crop up on one of the eBay sites, and if you are an early medieval wargamer, this is a book for you! 'Earliest times,' incidentally, means more or less Beowulf and so, to me at least, this is a truly medieval title.



A remarkably well-written book, divided into three parts: the warrior, weaponry, and warfare. It completely covers the wars of the Anglo-Saxons, is fascinating and readable. The first section of the book deals with the complex status and elaborate rituals of the warrior, and even contains a brief section on shield-maidens, the women who fought with and against men. It is comprehensive, and the war bands, the Fyrd leadership and, amazingly, the life of warriors in exile are all dealt with. The section ends with the topic of later Anglo-Saxon military organization at the time of Hastings and Stamford Bridge.

The weaponry section which follows is intricate and informative, with sections on the development of the sword, and on the spear, the principal Saxon weapon. The axe, in several versions, is also dealt with, as is the defensive gear of the warrior ó shield, body defences and helmets ó and all well-written. The Sax, that odd, single-edged blade, naturally follows, and the bow, which, as Pollington suggests, was more widely used and more useful than most modern sources are prone to admit. He makes little mention of the sling however, but the few pole weapons known, the standards borne in battle and even the war-horn are included here.

In the final section, the book covers the 'nature' of war in Saxon lands and across the borders, the strategy and tactics of forces and armies. He calls it

the experience of the field of battle. Here, the book ventures into the subject of wounds encountered in combat and their effects, which is most interesting, and the use of horses, always a contentious issue in Anglo-Saxon warfare, and wargames, I realize. He also mentions the use of wagons, not a thing I've ever encountered anywhere. The Anglo-Saxon wagon! Is there a model of one?

Pollington concludes with some consideration of early fortifications and what he calls "strongholds." From a wargamer's point of view, I thoroughly enjoyed the notes on "Hall Attack" (very Beowulf, eh?), which offered an interesting potential for a raid or skirmish wargame, I thought.

Overall, this is useful, and an interesting book.

This was the best time for the Germanic tribes to come as for them the British Isles had been a desirable land for a long time. The most powerful Germanic tribes to settle down were Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Jutes were the first to settle in Britain. In the early 6th century Ambrosius Aurelianus headed the resistance against the Anglo-Saxon invaders. It is believed that under the Ambrosius leadership Wansdyke was constructed, that is a series of defensive earthwork in the West Country dating from the Dark Ages. Ambrosius with his army fought against the Saxons and won the battle at Mons Badonicus (Mount Badon). The Anglo-Saxon period gave rise to the English spoken language as well as the spread of the written English. Writing came with the introduction of Christianity. In his book, *The English Warrior*, Pollington gives a description of the Anglo-Saxon warrior beginning on the Continent during the first century, through the migration to England, and the eventual downfall at the battle of Hastings in 1066. His book is concerned primarily with three aspects of the English Warrior: their role in Anglo-Saxon society, weapons and equipment, and their *The English Warrior: From Earliest Time to 1066*, by Stephen Pollington, Anglo-Saxon Press, 1996, (reprinted in 2002). Within the Warrior, there is lots concerning th *The English Warrior from earliest times till 1066* by S Pollington, 2002, 255 pages plus appendices. This is quite an easy read and there is quite a lot to enjoy. I have his book "The English Warrior From Earliest Times Till 1066", lots of great research in there, a very thorough survey of the subject. It has some useful insights into the mindset of AS culture, such as the relationships/obligations between kings and their people. Reply. Jonathan says: November 22, 2015 at 5:51 pm. Every time I see this map, the Dad's Army theme plays in my head! Reply. *The History of England* says