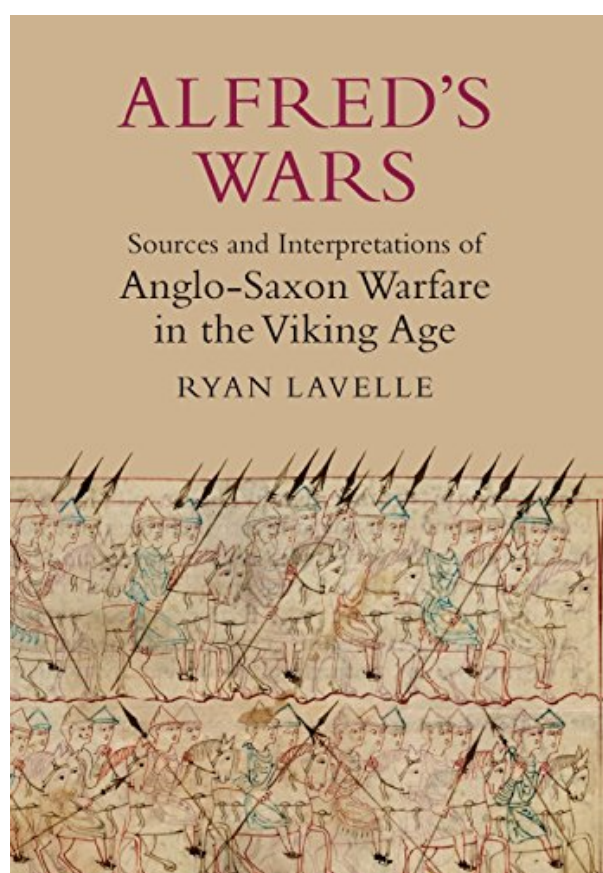


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About the Author

Dr Ryan Lavelle teaches in the Department of History at the University of Winchester.

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Selected by Choice as an Outstanding Academic Title. The warfare of the late Anglo-Saxon period had momentous consequences for the development of the English state following Alfred the Great's reign. This book provides a comprehensive guide, with extracts in translation from the principal sources for our knowledge, accompanied by the most important interpretations by scholars through the ages, and new introductions by the present author. It looks at every aspect of the topic, from land and sea forces to logistics and campaigning, from fortifications and the battlefield to the final peacemaking. In so doing, it highlights the significance of warfare and its organisation for the late Anglo-Saxon state, and the multitude of ways in which it was recorded and remembered. Dr Ryan Lavelle is Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Winchester.

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About the Author

Dr Ryan Lavelle teaches in the Department of History at the University of Winchester.

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Alfred's Wars

By tigerzouave

This is an excellent book. Working from diverse primary source material, which many other books dealing with this topic fail to do, the author builds a image of Anglo Saxon England during the Viking era that is both informed and compelling. The author investigates every aspect of warfare at this time including the very important social and cultural aspects of warfare that are often overlooked. The use of primary sources is impressive with not only literary texts but sources such as wills and probate records being used to arrive at conclusions. The style of this book is scholarly and the conclusions are measured. For anyone interested in an informed understanding of how things actually were in the era of Anglo Saxon warfare against the Vikings this is a highly recommened book.

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I expected to enjoy this book and I did not. It does contain a wealth of interesting material. The problem is the style, which is elliptical to the point of obscurity. The writer seldom tell us plainly what he means, or what his conclusions are, though five of the chapters finish with a 'Summary' and one concludes with a 'Summary and Observations'. What we are presented with is an analysis of the various conclusions reached by other scholars as to the interpretation of the sources, interspersed with over-lengthy quotations. The reader sometimes feels that he is removed from events - which are after all the stuff of history - by the presence of several panes of glass.

The central question which has troubled historians of the late Anglo-Saxon state is whether it was essentially strong, and unfortunate to go down fighting at Hastings, or whether it was weaker than its neighbour, in particular the Duchy of Normandy; and, if William the Conqueror had not triumphed in 1066, some other invader would have done. Unfortunately, this book did not give me any very clear answer to the question.

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