

Notes  
On Hume's History  
of  
England.

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GEO ADPL MSS 32

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The Origin of all Nations is so obscure & indeed fabulous that an Author employs his pen little to the advantage of his Readers, when he attempts to elucidate those periods, nay could they be ascertained no utility could be derived from it, as it would only bring to light a continued scene of Wars & contention that would shew the similarity of conduct various Nations had held in their earliest days.

All Antient Writers agree that the first Inhabitants of Britain were a tribe of the Gauls or Celts, that they were subdivided into small tribes whose sole property consisted in their sword & Cattle, their Governments the Monarchical were free as well as that of the People they sprang from.

The Druids who were their Priests possessed much Authority, as they not only ministered at the Altar, educated the Youth, were exempt from Wars & Taxes, & were the Judges in all Civil as well as Ecclesiastical Affairs, & from this Decree their layed no Appeal.



The Britains had long remained in  
this rude but independant state, when  
Caesar thought of adding this Island to  
the Roman Dominions from the Ambition  
of carrying his Arms into a new World.  
after some resistance he is supposed to  
have landed at Deal, obtained hostages &  
on the Approach of Winter withdrew  
his Forces into Gaul. The Britains  
neglecting the performance of their  
stipulations, Caesar returned the next Spring  
& discomfited the Natives under  
Cassivelaunus, passed the Thames, burnt  
~~his Capital~~ & gave the Sovereignty of the Tribomanes  
to his Ally Mandubratius; he then returned  
to Gaul leaving a nominal Authority  
of the Romans in this Island.

The Roman Civil Wars kept off from  
the Britons the Yoke that was preparing,  
they continued unmolested for above a  
Century, when Claudius sent Plautius who  
gained some Victories prepared matters for  
the reception of that Emperor, & obliged  
the South East district of the Island to  
submit whilst the rest under Caractacus  
obstinately resisted, but Astorius Scapula  
defeated Caractacus & conducted him  
to Rome, where he received a more  
honorable treatment than was the custom  
in those days; yet this did not entirely put  
Britain under the Roman Yoke ~~which~~  
Nero sent thither Suetonius Paulinus who  
resolved to attack the Island of Mona now  
Anglesey, the chief seat of the Druids, he  
forced the Britains to retreat after an obstinate



engagement, & destroyed the consecrated  
Groves & Altars; London then a  
flourishing Colony of the Romans was  
attacked with the utmost fury by the  
Britains headed by Queen Boadicea  
of the Iceni, the Town burnt, & the  
numbers massacred amounted to 70,000.  
Suetonius soon revenged himself by  
a decisive battle wherein 80,000 Britains  
are said to have perished; this general's  
Successors do not require to be mentioned  
till Julius Agricola who commanded in  
the Reigns of Otho, Galba, Vitellius & Domitian,  
he formed the plan of regularly subduing  
Britain, drove all the most intractable  
northward, & drew a Roman wall between  
the firths of Clyde & Forth.

The Romans met now only with  
inquietude from the Caledonians, Emperor  
Hadrian building a strong Roman wall between  
Tyne & the firth of Solway, Historians  
only mention some seditions among the  
Roman Legions.

The Romans now accustomed to Wars in  
Italy were so enervated that they recruited  
their Legions on the frontiers where these  
Scourges had been more lately felt.

In the Reign of Arcadius & Honorius  
the Northern Nations made an irruption  
into the Empire; the Legions were  
recalled from the distant Provinces  
instead of arming the Inhabitants,  
those in Britain were also sent for.  
The Picts & Scots invaded the Southern  
Provinces, on which the Britains hired



obtained the Succour of a Legion from Rome  
which succeeded in driving them back,  
but the Romans reduced at home  
declared they could not for the future  
give any assistance, & that the Britains  
must defend themselves.

The Picts & Scots finding the Romans  
had finally relinquished Britain  
attacked the Forth & Dale & overrun  
the whole Country; the object Britains  
unable to attempt withstanding them  
took refuge in Forests & Mountains, where  
they suffered equally from hunger & the  
Enemy; the Barbarians also, from the  
preasure of Famine were obliged to  
return with their spoils to their own  
Country; the Britains then returned to  
the culture of their Lands, & by the  
advise of Gortigera Prince of Summorians  
sent a Deputation into Germany to  
supplicate the protection & assistance  
of the Saxons.

The Germans of all the barbarous  
Nations known in Antient & Modern times  
seem to have been the most distinguished  
for their Valour, & Love of Liberty, all  
refined Arts & even Tillage itself was  
almost wholly neglected. Hengist & Horsa  
were two Brothers that possessed great  
credit among the Saxons, esteemed the most  
warlike tribe of this fierce People; they  
were easily persuaded to accept of this  
invitation, they embarked in 449. or 450.

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& Landed 1600. Men in the Isle of Thanet  
 & with great ease freed Britains of the  
 Scots & Picts; but perceiving how easily  
 they might subdue Britain, they sent to  
 Saxony for a Reinforcement of 5000. on the  
 arrival of which they sought a quarrel,  
 on pretence that their subsidies were  
 ill pay'd, & provisions not regularly  
 deliver'd; they form'd an Alliance with  
 the Scots & Picts & avowedly attacked the  
 Britains, who deposed their vicious  
 Prince, Vortigern, in favour of his son  
 Vortimer.

Additional Saxons hourly arriving,  
 joined to the activity of Kingist soon  
 enslaved the Britains, tho' not without  
 some resistance; Gorva was killed in  
 the Battle of Egleford now Ailsford.

The Britains were then oblig'd to  
 retire into Wales & Cornwall, the Saxons  
 divided then the rest of the Kingdom  
 into seven separate Kingdoms viz.

1. Kent containing that County part of  
 Hertfordshire, & part of Surrey.
2. Suffex, or South Saxons containing that County  
 & the rest of Surrey.
3. Wessex or West Saxons containing the  
 Counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks  
 & the Isle of Wight.
4. Essex or East Saxons containing that County  
 Middlesex & the rest of Hertfordshire.
5. East Angles containing the Counties of Cambridge  
 Suffolk & Norfolk.
6. Mercia from the banks of the Severn to the  
 boundaries of the two last mentioned Kingdoms.
7. Northumberland containing that County, Cumberland  
 Lancaster, Durham & York.



The Heptarchy or Seven Saxon Kingdoms in Britain was thus established after a struggle of near an hundred & fifty years; not only the Inhabitants, Language & Customs were totally changed, but the advances made by the Britains whilst under the Roman Dominion towards Arts & Civil Manners were reduced by the fierce Saxons to their Antient State of barbarism.

The Saxon Chiefs having now no particular type of interest to keep up Amity betwixt them gave way to stripes & jarrings, but as little utility or curiosity can arise from examining into each of these separate Kingdoms, we will pass them over in silence, only remarking that during that period the Christian Religion was introduced into Britain; & fix our attention on Egbert King of Mercia, who by a judicious exercise of his natural & acquired talents put an end to the Heptarchy & decorated this Kingdom near four hundred years after the arrival of the Saxons into Britain.



2.  
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 attacked the Britains, who deposed their  
 vicious Prince Gortigern & put themselves  
 under the command of his son Gortimer,

Additional Germans hourly  
 arriving, joined to the activity of Hengist,  
 soon enslaved the Britains, tho' not without  
 some resistance, Horsa was killed in  
 the Battle of Eylesford, now Ailsford.

The Saxons subdued the whole of this  
 Island, except ~~part of~~ the Principality  
 of Wales & the Duchy of Cornwall, they  
 divided it into seven separate Kingdoms.

1. Kent containing that County part of  
 Hertfordshire & part of Surrey.
2. South Saxons or Sussex, that County & the  
 rest of Surrey.
3. West Saxons or Wessex, the Counties of  
 Dorset, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, & the Isle of  
 Wight.
4. East Saxons or Essex, that County, Middlesex  
 & the rest of Hertfordshire.
5. East Angles, the Counties of Cambridge, Suffolk  
 & Norfolk.
6. Mercia from the Severn to the borders of  
 the two last mentioned Kingdoms
7. Northumbria that County, Cumberland,  
 Lancashire, Durham, & York, & the  
 North of the Humber.



This Kingdom was soon thoroughly  
cemented into one State under Egbert the  
Language of the Inhabitants <sup>was the same</sup>  
as the one of their Antient Kings was  
totally extinct in all the subject States  
they readily transferred their Allegiance  
to a Prince whose Victories & Obvious  
Nobility of birth seemed to merit it  
but these pleasing prospects were  
by the appearance of the Danes who  
during some Centuries kept the Anglo  
Saxons in perpetual inquietude & at  
length reduced them to the most grievous  
servitude by the death of Egbert who  
alone was capable of providing against  
this new evil.