



# The Mead-Hall: The Feasting Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England

*Stephen Pollington*

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Communal meals were an important part of Anglo-Saxon society. They were enjoyed by nobles and yeomen, warriors, farmers, churchmen and laity. Some of the feasts were informal communal gatherings ( *gebeorscipe* ) while others were formal ritual gatherings ( *symbol* ). Using the evidence of Old English texts - including the epic *Beowulf* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* - Stephen Pollington shows that the idea of feasting remained central to early English social traditions long after the physical reality had declined in importance. The words of the poets and saga-writers are supported by a wealth of archaeological data dealing with halls, settlement layouts and the magnificent feasting gear found in many early Anglo-Saxon graves. The volume includes three appendices: Hall-themes in Old English verse; Old English texts; The structure and origins of the warband.

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