

The Birth of Britain



Map of modern England, Scotland, and Wales



Ancient Britain

First known inhabitants of Britain were a nameless people shrouded in mystery

All that is known about them is pieced together from archeological sites. They created long ships and giant earth mounds.

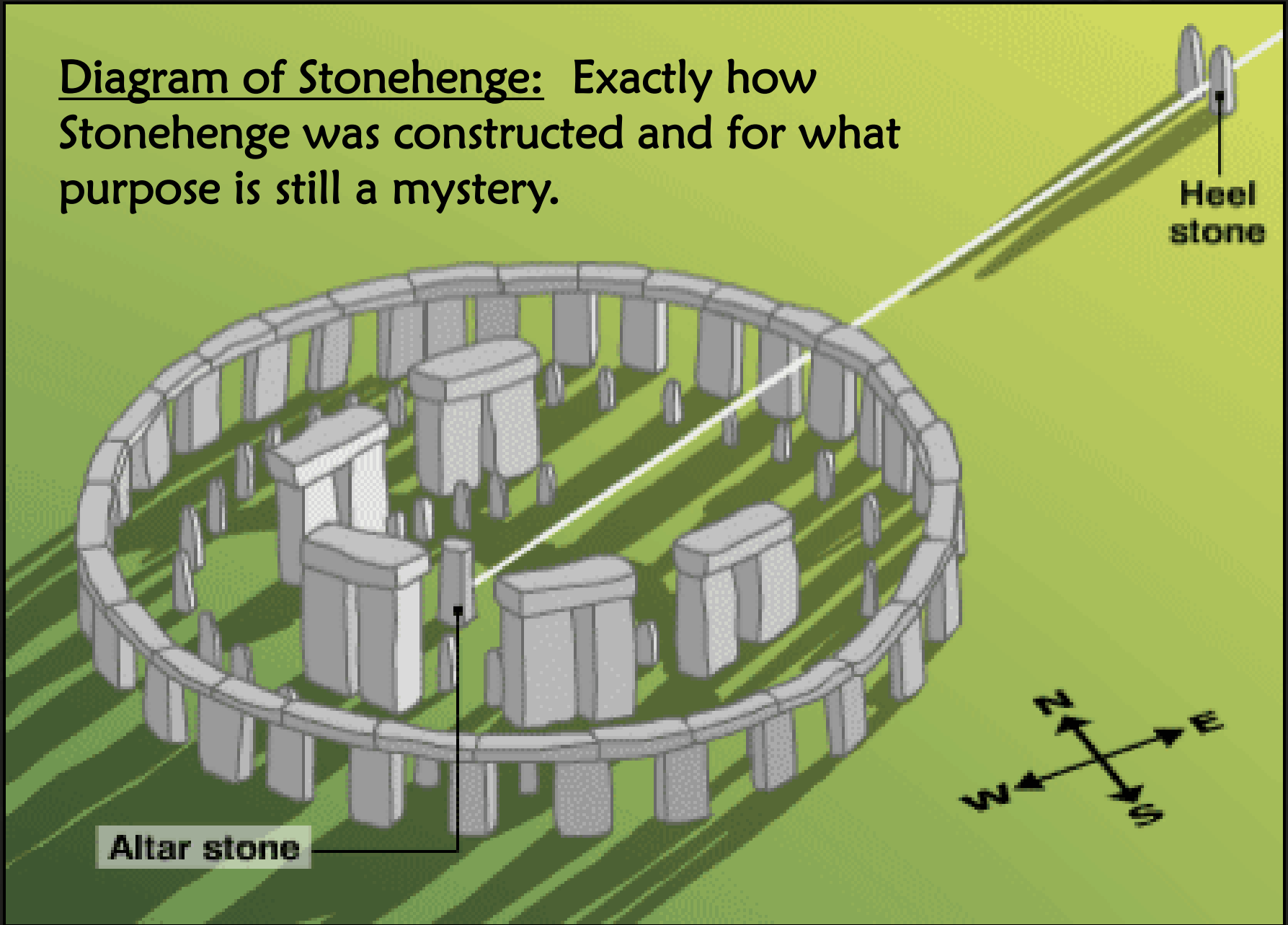
Their greatest accomplishment was the stone structure called Stonehenge, which later peoples claimed was built by a giants under Merlin the wizard's orders.



Diagram of Stonehenge: Exactly how Stonehenge was constructed and for what purpose is still a mystery.

Heel stone

Altar stone



Celtic Tribes

Celtic tribes that originated in Germany and the Netherlands invaded Britain, claiming the island for themselves.

In 387 B.C. the Celts easily conquered the simple people of Britain. Then the two peoples mingled into one.

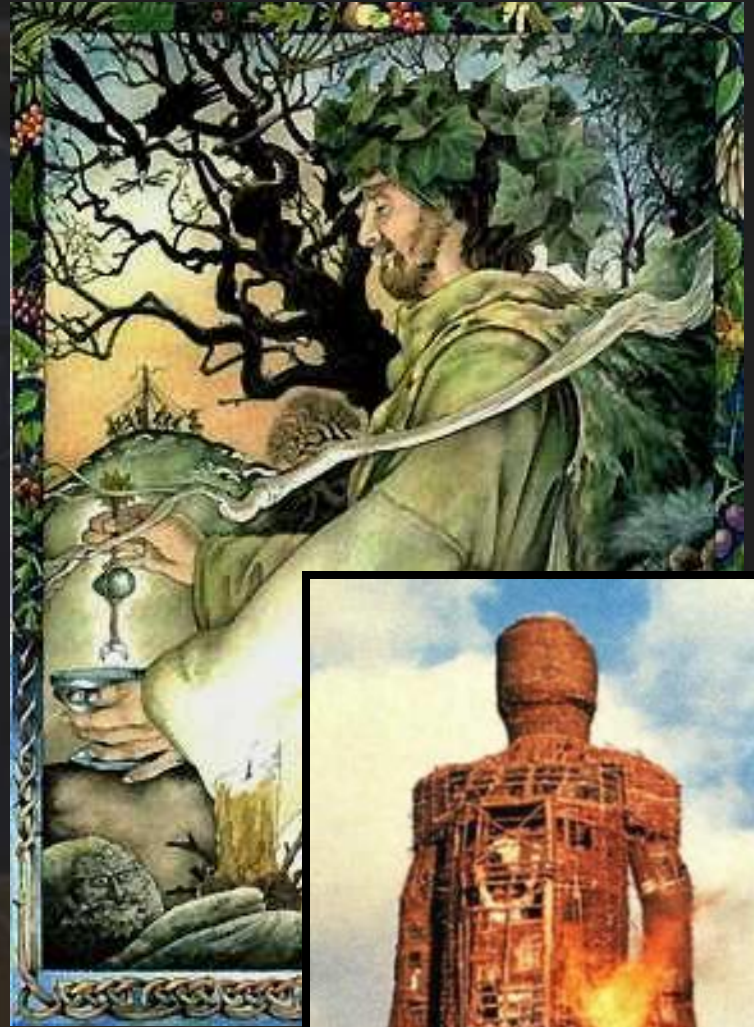
Celtic warriors used horse-drawn vehicles, chain mail, long swords, bucklers, and well-crafted helmets in the shape of beasts.



Celtic Religion

Druids (the Celtic holy men) believed that the secrets of their religion should never be written down. Because of this, very little is known of their beliefs.

The Celts performed human sacrifice. Enemies of the Celts, along with their women and children, would be placed in large, wicker constructions and burned alive as offerings to the gods.



Celtic Religion



The Celts built Dolmens, dwelling places for the dead, all around Britain.

Roman Invaders

In 54 B.C. Julius Caesar became the first Roman to attempt to conquer Britain.

Eventually conquered by the Romans, the British were ruled by the Roman Empire for 400 years.

When they finally left Britain, the Romans had made **THREE** significant changes to the country:

Roman Roads across Britain

Christianity and Latin

Established City Sites (London, etc.)





Roman Era Woodcarving



Roman Era Woodcarving



Roman Era Serving Platter



Roman Era Mosaic

Anglo-Saxon England

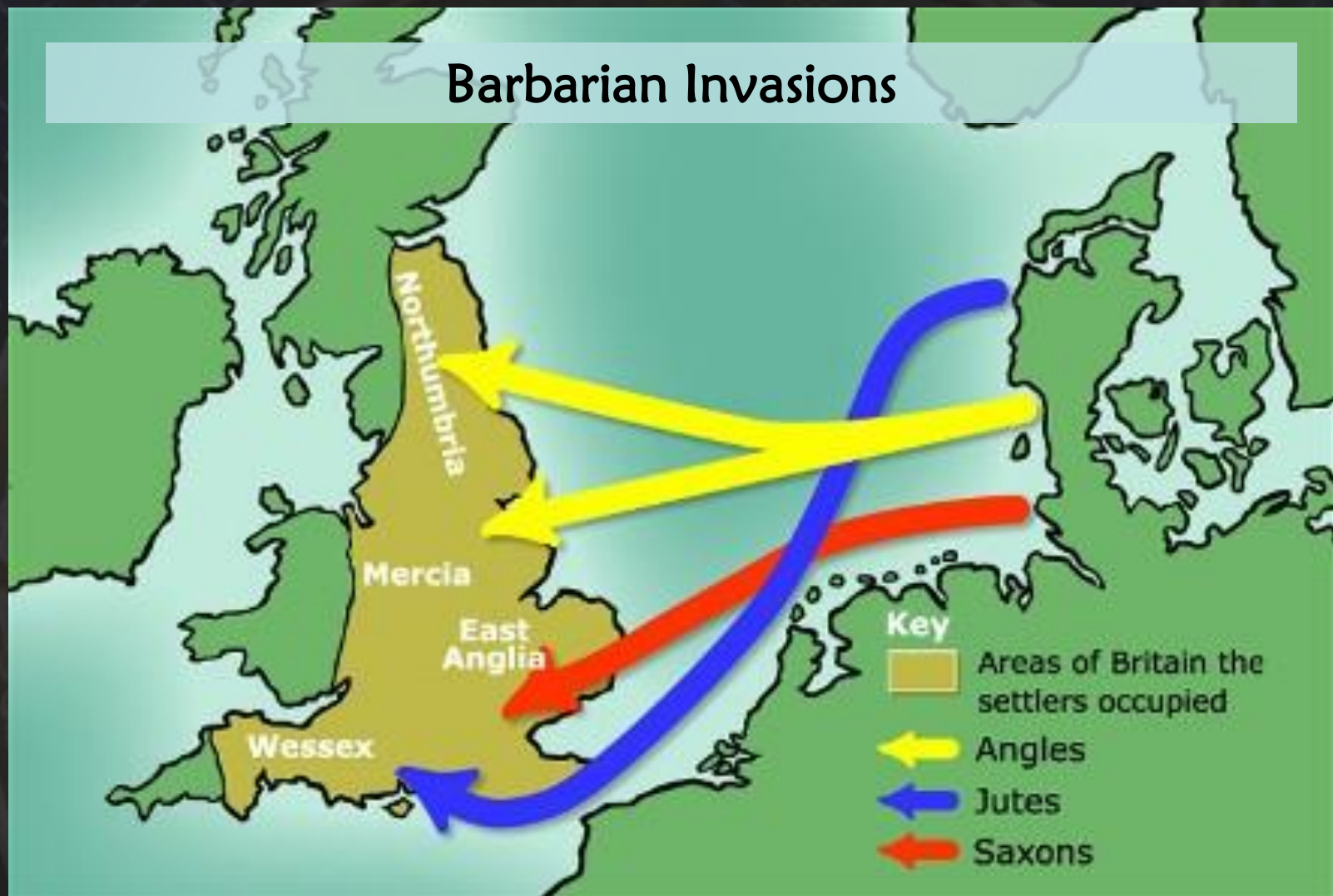
Wild, pagan tribes from the mainland (Angles, Saxons, and others) started to pour into Britain and plunder what the Romans have left behind, burning churches and killing priests.

With them these invaders brought their Nordic gods (Woden-Odin, Thor, Frigga, Tyr, etc.) for which the days of the week are named.

The historical King Arthur is said to be a war leader who resisted this pagan invasions.



Barbarian Invasions

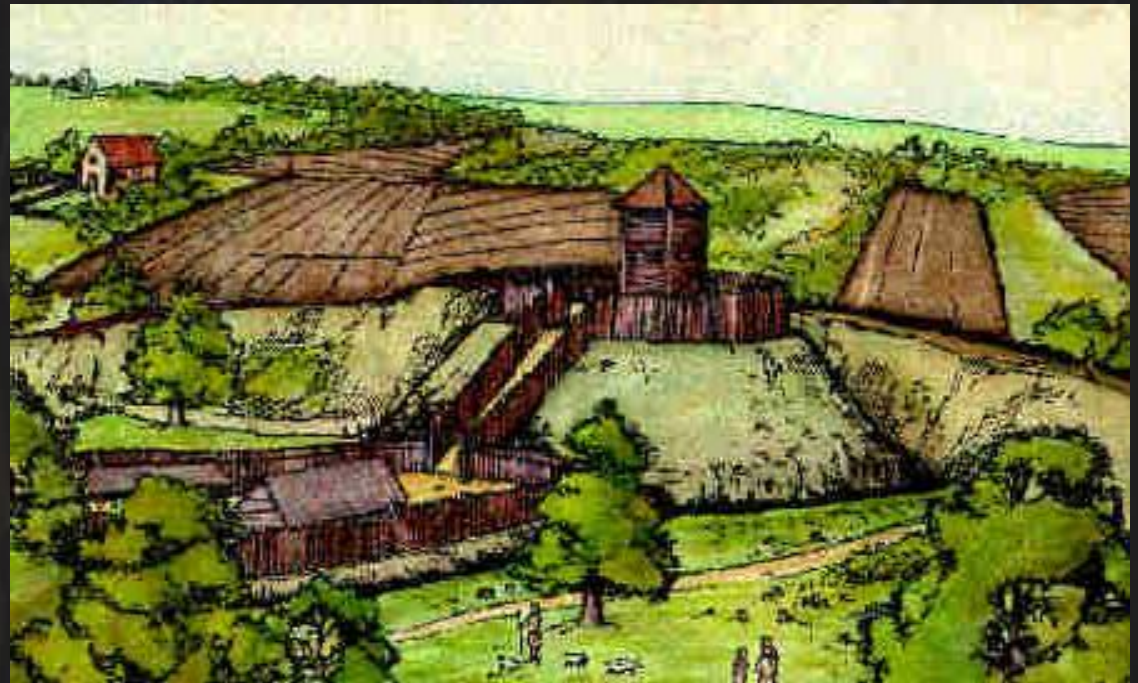


Anglo-Saxon England

Soon the invaders and the invaded mingled. The people of Britain became known as Anglo-Saxons. The pagans accepted Christianity.

The area known as “Brittania” under the Romans became known as “Ang-land” after the new Anglo-Saxon people.

The Anglo-Saxon kings began to build wooden forts called motte-and-bailey castles (the forerunners of the traditional stone castle).





**Anglo-Saxon burial mound:
A lord was buried lying in his ship**



A Roman Coin



An Anglo-Saxon Shield



Anglo-Saxon Helmet

Anglo-Saxon Armor





Anglo-Saxon Helmet



Anglo-Saxon Buckle



Anglo-Saxon Buckle



Anglo-Saxon Chess Pieces



Anglo-Saxon Chess Pieces



Anglo-Saxon Shield



Roman Era Mosaic



Anglo-Saxon Brooch



Anglo-Saxon Longsword



Preserved “Bog Person” from the Anglo-Saxon Era



Preserved “Bog Person” from the Anglo-Saxon Era

The Mead Hall

Anglo-Saxon leaders or lords were expected to entertain their followers with feasts. A lord gave his men gifts in return for their loyalty—treasure after a victory in battle, perhaps, or a roasted boar after a successful hunt. The feast was held in the lord's great hall. They ate roast meats, bread and fruit. They drank ale or mead, a strong drink made from honey. People often drank too much, so feasts were often noisy and sometimes ended in fights!



Stories and Poems

Anglo-Saxons liked to gather in the lord's great hall listen to songs and stories while they feasted. They loved tales about brave warriors and their adventures.

The storyteller played music to accompany the songs and poems on a small harp or on another stringed instrument called a lyre.



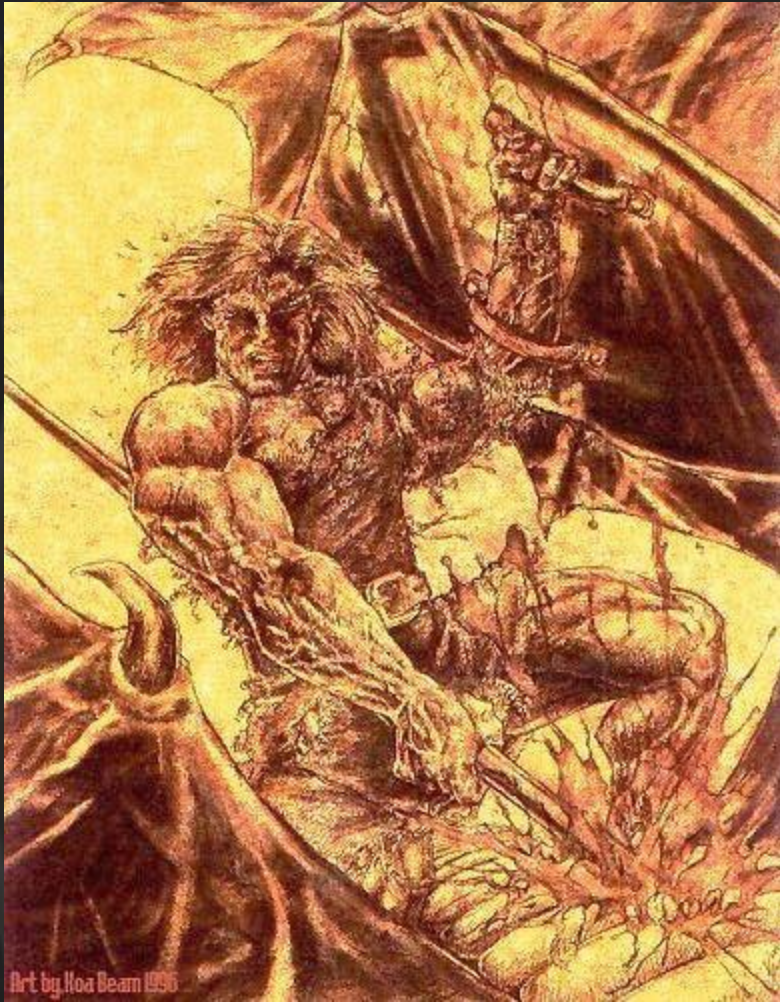


Only monks (educated and isolated in their abbeys) possessed the knowledge of reading and writing. When they heard the ancient and entertaining Anglo-Saxon tales, they wrote them down, but added Christian elements in place of the old pagan gods.



The language of the church (the language monks wrote in) was Latin, but the illiterate people spoke a language we call Anglo-Saxon or Old English.





BEOWULF

An epic poem, written down between 600—800 A.D.

The story of the hero Beowulf, the earliest heroic poem in Northern Europe

One of the earliest writings in the English language (Old English or Anglo-Saxon)

WÆT FE LARD

na mæcra dazum. þeod cyninga
þym s̅f̅ þamon luda æþe lincas elles
f̅re medon. oþz seyla seepuz scaþen
þæt cum mone s̅u̅ mæstum meodo secl̅
of t̅erh̅ esode eopul syddan aq̅er̅ f̅
f̅a seapz fundon. he þat̅ epoppe seba
p̅æx undz polenun p̅op̅d̅ myndum þald̅
ad̅ þ̅ him æghpyle þ̅aia ymb sit ten d̅ra
oþz̅ h̅ion. p̅ade h̅ian seolde zombarr
z̅ldan þ̅at̅ z̅od cyningz. d̅am a̅p̅a p̅at̅
a̅p̅a c̅aned z̅aung m̅z̅ardum þ̅one z̅od
sende polce eop̅oppe f̅yn̅a d̅ap̅e on
z̅æz̅ þ̅ne a̅p̅uzon aldo. se. l̅anze
h̅ile h̅m þ̅at̅ l̅p̅ f̅ra puld̅a̅z̅ p̅al d̅e
p̅op̅d̅ a̅ne p̅op̅ z̅ap̅. h̅ap̅a̅z̅ p̅at̅ h̅æu
bl̅ad p̅ade s̅p̅anz̅. sevd̅a̅z̅ a̅p̅a seode
landum m̅. S̅p̅a sevd̅a̅z̅ a̅p̅a seode

A copy of a text written in Old English

