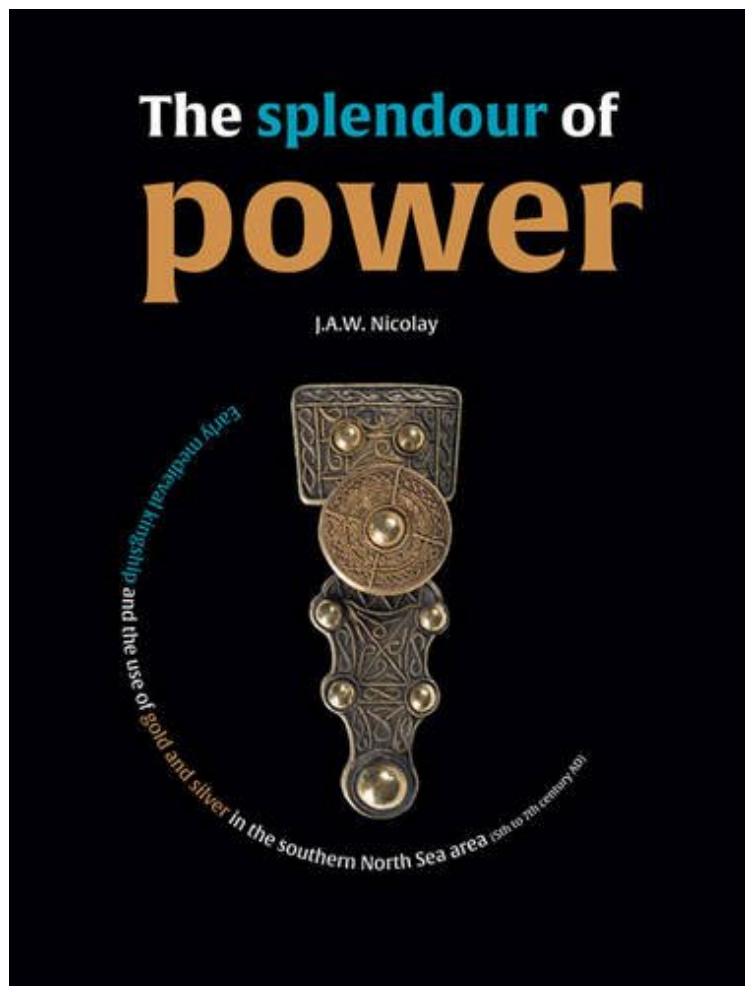


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The Splendour of Power: Early medieval kingship and the use of gold and silver in the southern North Sea area (5th to 7th century AD) (Groningen Archaeological Studies)

J.A.W. Nicolay

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From the 5th to the 7th century AD, the southern North Sea area functioned as an important cultural and political bridge, linking two power blocks: the late Roman Empire and its Frankish successor kingdom to the south, and the Scandinavian kingdoms to the north. This book examines how the regions intermediary position is reflected in the jewelry and other ornaments of gold and silver found along the southern North Sea coasts, and how it relates to the formation of kingdoms and the expression of group identity after the collapse of the West-Roman Empire. The book first discusses the history of earlier research into kingship around the southern North Sea, and this is followed by a description of the individual research regions: the northern and western Netherlands, northern Germany and south-east England. After presenting the valuables of gold and silver from graves, hoards and settlement sites with their dating and contextual evidence in an extensive catalogue, the author examines how such items circulated between and within early medieval societies, were transformed into symbols expressing regional or supra-regional identities, and eventually ended up in the ground. The various research themes come together in the synthesis, in which elite networks around the southern North Sea are reconstructed, and the expression of ethnic or other group identities among the members of such networks is considered. Finally, in an epilogue, the finds from the North Sea region are confronted with the nature and composition of the Staffordshire hoard. For the first time not only presenting, but also interpreting the superb collection of valuables from the southern North Sea area as a whole, this book makes compulsive reading for anyone interested in the fascinating world of early medieval Europe.