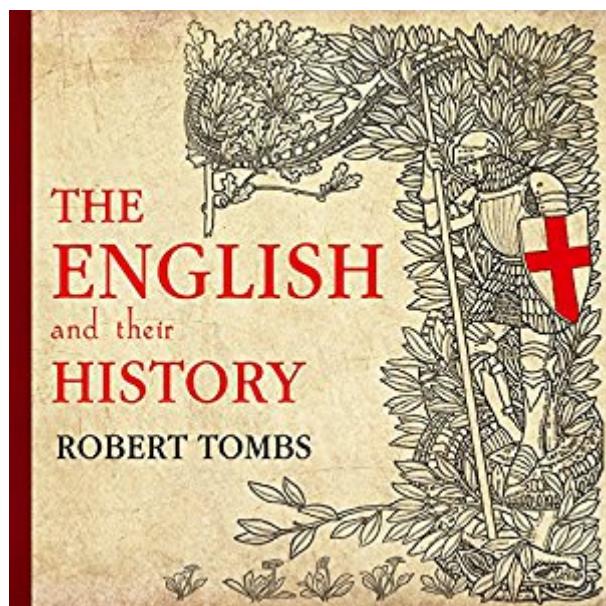


The book was found

The English And Their History



Synopsis

Robert Tombs' momentous *The English and Their History* is both a startlingly fresh and a uniquely inclusive account of the people who have a claim to be the oldest nation in the world. The English first came into existence as an idea, before they had a common ruler and before the country they lived in even had a name. They have lasted as a recognizable entity ever since, and their defining national institutions can be traced back to the earliest years of their history. The English have come a long way from those first precarious days of invasion and conquest, with many spectacular changes of fortune. Their political, economic, and cultural contacts have left traces for good and ill across the world. This book describes their history and its meanings, from their beginnings in the monasteries of Northumbria and the wetlands of Wessex to the cosmopolitan energy of today's England. Tombs draws out important threads running through the story, including participatory government, language, law, religion, the land and the sea, and ever-changing relations with other peoples.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Tombs makes it clear early on in this engaging history that "England" is not synonymous with "Great Britain" or the "United Kingdom," although common usage over the last few centuries has conflated the terms. Here is a 900 page book with 100 more pages of meticulous notes and suggestions for further reading that is engaging from start to finish. England is a special and very lucky place. With a strong claim to be the oldest nation-state in continuous existence, the roots of

the English are to be found in the earliest days of human migrations into what became Europe. Successive movements of peoples known to history, though not necessarily to themselves, as Celts, Picts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Norse settled on the island. Eventually, after their Roman conquerors withdrew, they became a unified kingdom which held together in the face of invasion and conflict. Benefiting from a good climate and isolated by the sea, the English gradually gained, lost, and sometimes regained power over their entire island as well as neighboring ones. Ruled by a succession of kings but always maintaining a measure of self-government, the English prospered through the Middle Ages and Renaissance and gained a decisive advantage in the 1700s by becoming the first Europeans to industrialize. This allowed England to become the center of the world's largest empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries, fight and win two world wars, and adjust to changing realities time and again. Robert Tombs has a good eye for a pertinent anecdote and can produce a fine character sketch within just a few sentences.

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