

THE DANISH WARS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES

The Mercians, whose administration had been shattered by the Danish invasions, accepted Alfred as their king in 886, and his treaty with Guthrum of that year defined the Danelaw boundary. Where his writ ran, Alfred regulated the burdens of taxation and military service by reference to 5- and 10-hide units, in a scheme that enabled him to maintain a mobile field force with rotating levies. At the same time a corresponding Danish system was being imposed on the areas of Mercia relinquished to the Danes. The Hundred of Stodfold between the Great Ouse and Whittlewood Forest was occupied in part by detachments of the Danish army of Northampton, and this accounts for the presence of Danish reckoning alongside English in that hundred. The Stodfold Danes submitted to Edward the Elder in 914, the rest of the army of Northampton in 917. In Stodfold, 6-carucate and 5-hide units appear from the Domesday returns to have been of roughly equal economic value; each hide was therefore some 20% more valuable than a carucate, and when carucates were treated as hides for taxation their burden was proportionately greater. The area contributing to the defence of Edward's burh of Buckingham was defined by the number of men needed to man the perimeter of that stronghold; though originally a military command rather than a civil jurisdiction, this area gave rise to the county, to which the Chiltern Hundreds were soon added.

Dr. Browne Willis¹ claimed in 1755 that 'King Alfred, in his Division of the Kingdom, Anno 886 into Shires . . . fixed on this Place [Buckingham] as the most fitting to be the Capital of this his new erected County'. As late as 1952 R. H. Hodgkin² considered that 'the shires of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire round the burhs bearing these names may well go back to the times of Alfred'. Oxfordshire can still defend this claim³, but it will be submitted with some regret that Buckinghamshire was not 'erected' until 914, and then as a military command, not a civil jurisdiction; that it did not at first include the Chiltern Hundreds; that its establishment arose from the military exigencies of the time; but that it was indeed the events of 886 which eventually led to the formation of this and other Midland shires. To explain what happened in each of these critical years one must go back at least to 874,

when the Danes conquered the kingdom of Mercia.

In that year the area which was to become Buckinghamshire had long been part of the Mercian realm. Offa's victory at Bensington (Benson) in 779⁴ had carried his rule to and beyond the Thames. The sub-kingdom of the *Cilternsæte* lost its separate identity among the *regiones* and *provinciae* of the Mercian kingdom; the Mercian term for an administrative district seems to have been *boldgetale*⁵, and movement from one district to seek a lord in another without the ealdorman's consent could be penalised⁶. One such district would have been centred on Aylesbury, the capital of the *Cilternsæte* with the shrine of St Osyth in its ancient minster⁷. The Vale of Aylesbury, whatever the tribal origin of its settlers⁸, had become Mercian in speech⁹. The Ouse Valley would

have constituted another district; it had been Middle Anglian from the first, and Buckingham had the bones of another 7th-century royal saint, Romwald¹⁰. Between the two lay Bernwood Forest and Whaddon Chase, probably a Celtic multiple estate centred on Brill which had been taken over in the 7th century by the Mercian kings, who preserved its ancient customs¹¹. In the south the Chilterns remained Saxon, with a British substratum; their links were with London rather than Aylesbury, but London also was now Mercian, and Offa had acquired Wycombe as a royal estate in 767 in exchange for Harrow¹². Further secondary centres would have been Wing with its 7th-century basilica, Winslow, which Offa gave to St Albans¹³, and perhaps Olney¹⁴. The areas which looked to each *villa regia* as their 'kingston' or 'kingsbury' are not beyond conjecture, but the old arrangements were about to be destroyed by the Danish wars. The hundredal boundaries defined in the 10th century and the hundredal groupings of the 11th sometimes followed but sometimes overrode the older administrative geography.

The Viking horde known as the Great Army (*se micel here*) invaded Mercia in 868, and King Burgred sought help from his brothers-in-law in Wessex; Prince Alfred, who was his brother Ethelred's *secundarius*¹⁵ (heir-designate, almost joint-king) had just married Ealhswith, whose mother was of the Mercian royal house¹⁶. The two brothers called out the West Saxon *fyrð* and led it to Nottingham, 'single-mindedly seeking battle'¹⁷, but Burgred and his nobles made an inglorious peace and the Vikings moved to York. Next year they were allowed to return through Mercia into East Anglia, where they killed St Edmund and subjected his kingdom to their authority, though they did not settle there. Instead, they moved across Buckinghamshire in 871, no doubt ravaging along the Icknield Way¹⁸, and entrenched themselves at Reading. There followed the 'year of battles' — Englefield, Reading, Ashdown (where Alfred took command and won), Basing, *Meretun*, Wilton. Ethelred died, his young sons were passed over and King Alfred made a peace of exhaustion which at last secured the departure of the

Army. The Danes wintered in or near London (*ob ambitu London urbis*)¹⁹; the Mercians again bought peace with them, but had to repeat their payments (*stipendia*) in 873, when the Army moved north into Lindsey. In 874 the Danes compelled Burgred to abdicate and go to Rome. 'After his expulsion the pagans subjected the whole [Mercian] kingdom to their own authority; however, by an unhappy arrangement²⁰ they entrusted it to a certain foolish king's thegn, whose name was Ceolwulf, on these terms of custody, that whenever they should wish to have it again, he should hand it over peacefully to them . . . he swore that he would not seek to oppose their will in any way, but would be obedient in all respects'²¹.

The Great Army still did not settle down, but split into two; Halfdan led one section, which conquered most of Northumbria, shared out the land and began to plough. The other, under three kings (Guthrum, Oscetel and Anwend)²² spent a year at Cambridge before moving back to Wessex, perhaps not by the obvious route (the Icknield Way) as they slipped past the West Saxon levies and reached Wareham, where they made their base in a well-sited nunnery²³. There the Danes swore on their sacred armlet to leave Alfred's kingdom but promptly broke their oaths and killed their hostages; their mounted force (*se gehorsoda here*) rode west by night^{23a} and seized Exeter²⁴ before Alfred could overtake them.

The next year, 877, was to prove critical for Mercia and for Buckinghamshire. Unfortunately there is a lacuna in Bishop Asser's garrulous and invaluable life of Alfred at this point. Chapter 51, though accepted by all editors²⁵, seems to be an interpolation from the Annals of St Neots²⁶; its substance is however supported by the Chronicle texts²⁷, including that used by Æthelweard. Asser may well have been working from an early draft of the Chronicle (extending to 887) which did not say what happened after Alfred made a treaty with the Army at Exeter. In fact the Danes gave him as many hostages as he wished (or even more), swore great oaths and this time kept a firm peace until harvest, when they moved into

Mercia²⁸, ravaged the country, began to drive out the inhabitants and required Ceolwulf to share his kingdom with them. No source gives details of this partition, but it proved permanent. The Danish share must have included what became the Five Boroughs (Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford and Derby) which may well have been in their possession since 874; the south-western boundary of this confederacy was probably Watling Street from the first. It seems likely that Northampton and Bedford became permanent centres of Danish colonization in 877, and that the area settled from Northampton extended to the Great Ouse both east and west of Watling Street. This does not imply that all, or even most, English landholders in the area were dispossessed; the forested areas were thinly populated, and in particular there was room around Buckingham for both peoples. The same may be said of the Chiltern Hundreds, which were within the orbit of London; the earliest Danish settlements in the central Chilterns may date from this time. Oxfordshire and the Vale of Aylesbury remained in Mercian hands, though on sufferance.

Every Englishman should be familiar with the events of 878: the Danes' treacherous attack on Twelfth Night, the collapse of Wessex, Alfred's refuge in Athelney with the thegns of Somerset, the immense joy when he rallied the *fyrð* at Egbert's Stone, his victory at *Ethandun* (Edington), his magnanimity in success 'as his custom was'²⁹ and Guthrum's final acceptance of Christianity at Wedmore as Alfred's adopted son, showered with honours. This was indeed 'the high tide and the turn'. The story has been retold many times from Asser's glowing biography³⁰ to G. K. Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*³¹. Chesterton was however mistaken (though he followed what was then the best authority³²) in thinking that it was on this occasion that

a line was drawn north-westerly
That set King Egbert's empire free.

At this stage Alfred claimed no *imperium* (overlordship) outside his own kingdom; he still recognised the feeble Ceolwulf II as king of the

Mercians and shared coin types and moneyers with him^{32a}. All that can certainly be said of the Treaty of Wedmore is that it required Guthrum's army to leave Wessex for good. They remained at Chippenham during the summer, moved to Cirencester in Hwiccan (and thus Mercian) territory, and after a year's delay once again moved across our area into East Anglia and shared out the land. Guthrum issued coins there under his new Christian name Athelstan³³.

With the departure of the Great Army from Mercia the removal of their nominee Ceolwulf was inevitable. He is credited in a Mercian regnal list with a reign of five years³⁴, and disappears in 879, in circumstances which no annalist chose to record^{34a}. His only known legislative act was to absolve the whole diocese of the Hwicce from the charge of feeding the king's horses and those who led them³⁵.

Ealdorman Ethelred assumed control of English Mercia, though without the royal title. In charters of the next four years he is variously styled *dux et patricius* of Mercia, ealdorman of Mercia and lord of the Mercians³⁶. At first he acted independently; the kings of Glywysing (Glamorgan) and Gwent sought Alfred's protection against him, but by 883 he had himself accepted King Alfred as his overlord³⁷, and by 887 he had married Alfred's daughter Æthelflæd, then about sixteen; this is the indictional date of a charter in which she witnessed his grant of Watlington and Brightwell Baldwin to Worcester, to pertain to the church of Radenore (Pyrton)³⁸. There seems no reason to reject the statement³⁹ that Ethelred held a Mercian Council at (Princes) Risborough in 884, though Mawer and Stenton⁴⁰ found it "very difficult to believe that in 884 central Buckinghamshire was sufficiently settled under English rule to permit the holding of a witenagemot". The suspect form *Hrisbyri* would relate to the fortified manor-house, not to the hills (*beorgas*); it is supported by *Risesbirie* in a Bodleian charter of c.1155, and by Bracton's pedantic form *Risevilla*, which assumed that the second element was *burh*. James Tait⁴¹ thought that *Hrisbyri* was a late copyist's corruption of a correct form of

Risborough. The MS. (Somers Ch. 9) has been lost since 1722.

Guthrum's army in East Anglia kept the peace^{41a} until 885, when they took up arms in support of a Viking force which had for several years been ravaging the Frankish empire and was now raiding in the Thames estuary. Alfred had sent a contingent from Salisbury (Old Sarum)⁴² to relieve Rochester. Some of the Viking ship-army returned to the Continent, deprived of their horses (*behorsude*; Asser, 'equis, quos de Francia secum adduxerant, derelictis'). The rest made peace with Alfred, exchanging hostages, but they soon resumed their depredations and established a base at Benfleet in Essex, where "the foul people who then held East Anglia gave [them] support" though the two forces soon quarrelled. Æthelweard says that Benfleet was outside the East Anglian boundaries; this may perhaps mean that Alfred had maintained some kind of presence north of the Thames. He certainly was not inclined to condone this breach of peace by Guthrum's people, and launched a punitive expedition against them. Next year after severe fighting by land and sea he recovered and garrisoned London and received the willing submission of all the English people who were not in the power of the Danes. He was regarded as "the redeemer whom no savage civil discord could overcome, whether through guile or by open challenge". It was probably on this memorable occasion in 886 that Alfred took the opportunity of holding a witenagemot of "the councillors of all the English race" who approved a treaty with Guthrum and "all the people who are in East Anglia"⁴³.

Wessex and English Mercia were thus united under Alfred, king of the Angles and of the Saxons, or (significantly) of the Anglo-Saxons, *Angul-Saxonum rex*⁴⁴. In Mercia he was now accepted as the successor of Burgred, *rex Anglorum*. This is the form of address in a letter from Fulc, archbishop of Rheims, c. 886, offering him the help of Grimbold in educating the barbarians⁴⁵.

The treaty between Alfred and Guthrum established the boundary of English Mercia, as

far as Guthrum could answer for it. It ran up the Thames, up the Lea to its spring, then straight on to Bedford and up the Great Ouse to Watling Street (at Stony Stratford). Hitherto it has been generally assumed that the Danish boundary then ran north-westwards up Watling Street⁴⁶, but the text does not say so. Hodgkin noted this⁴⁷, but presumed that 'the English made other agreements, verbal or formal, which have not been preserved, delimiting the frontier'. There may well already have been such an agreement with the army of Leicester, which Guthrum did not control, and Watling Street has remained the boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire; but in the south-west of Northamptonshire and around Buckingham the presumption is that existing arrangements were not to be changed, and were too complex for a firm boundary to be defined. Under the treaty there was to be no movement of people across Guthrum's frontier and only limited trade, hostages being given. In what became the hundred of Stodfold this would have been impracticable if, as will be argued, the three largest vills (Leckhampstead, Maids Moreton and Shalstone) were divided between Danish and English estates, the Danes predominating in each case. Here it would have been in the English interest to leave well alone.

All the land ceded by Guthrum north of the Thames was entrusted by Alfred to his son-in-law Ethelred as viceroy (*procurator, sub-regulus*) of Mercia. Alfred fortified London, which had been in Danish hands since 878 and probably since 872, but with his usual wisdom he treated it as a Mercian city. Ethelred continued to issue charters in his own name; in 888 he granted land at Walden in Hertfordshire to Wulfgar⁴⁸. The intention was clearly to establish a king's thegn (*minister*) on the frontier, but this raises a difficulty; the Mimram, an eastern tributary of the Lea, rises between the two Waldens, but it would hardly have been regarded as the main stream; this runs to the west of the Waldens and rises north-west of Luton. Sir Frank Stenton had doubts about this charter. In any event, a straight line drawn from any of the headwaters of the Lea to Bedford seems quite artificial, and the frontier defined in 886 'for the living and the unborn'

did not last long enough to have any permanent effect on the administrative geography of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The 'years of the peace of Wessex' from 886 onwards were a great period of civil and military reform and cultural renaissance. They saw a new code of West Saxon law, with assimilation to Mercian or Kentish practice where Alfred and his councillors thought this preferable⁴⁹. He had what we have not, the laws of Offa; and no king since Offa had been a legislator. Alfred established strongholds, sometimes intended, as at Oxford and Wallingford, to become new towns; he seems to have founded Shaftesbury as early as 880⁵⁰. He initiated an ambitious educational programme for which he secured the services of scholars from the Continent, Wales and especially Mercia, where the decline of learning was less pronounced than south of the Thames⁵¹. His aim was that 'all the free-born young men now in England who have the means to apply themselves to it may be devoted to learning (as long as they are not useful for some other employment) until such time as they can read English writings well'⁵². Since there were not many available English writings except for heroic poetry, Alfred sponsored translations from the Latin of those books which were 'most necessary for men to know'. He himself undertook a version of the Psalms, and the first fifty psalms in the Paris Psalter⁵³ are now securely attributed to him⁵⁴. Significantly, he rendered Ps. ii. 10-12 as 'Learn, you judges . . . embrace learning⁵⁵, lest you incur God's anger and stray from the right path'. Asser, writing in 893⁵⁶, recalls that Alfred's illiterate ealdormen, reeves and thegns 'applied themselves remarkably to the study of letters, preferring rather to learn this unaccustomed discipline (however laboriously) than to relinquish their offices of power'⁵⁷.

In his earlier wars Alfred's major difficulty had been to keep an army in being. The Viking army (*here*) consisted of professional warriors and ravagers who could remain in the field for years. The English levies (the *fyrð*) fought splendidly but were liable to melt away after a few weeks, especially if asked to fight far from

home. In the words of the Chronicle⁵⁸ 'the king divided his *fyrð* into two, so that always half its men were at home, half out on service, except for those men who were to garrison the boroughs' (the word in the A-text is *burga* (*a* interlined) and at this period we should say 'strongholds' or leave the word untranslated as 'burhs'). In an emergency the king's concern was, first, to station men as necessary in the local burh (up to one man from each hide); second, to have available a mobile field army, the men assigned to it serving in settled rotation. As one such man was required for the *fyrð* from each 5 hides, there was good reason for land units to be grouped in multiples of 10 hides to facilitate replacement.

The policy of a mobile force maintained by service in rotation seems to have been new, and was perhaps suggested to Alfred by a passage in Orosius⁵⁹ which was translated as part of his programme in or soon after 890⁶⁰. The Amazons were said to have maintained continuity in their campaigns in this way: 'hie heora here on tu to dældon, oþer æt ham beon heora lond to healdanne, oder ut faran to winnanne'. This may be compared with the A-text of the Chronicle s.a. 894: 'hæfde se cyning his fierd on tu to numen, swa þæt hie wæron simle healf æt ham, healf ute'. The resemblance is surely too close to be accidental. A similar idea occurs in the First Book of Kings. Solomon levied 30,000 workmen and 'used to send them to Lebanon for a month at a time by turns, so that each man should spend two out of every three months at home'⁶¹. Alfred's household was managed in three rotating monthly shifts⁶².

The village communities of the settlement period in Wessex and the Vales of Oxford and Aylesbury probably consisted of no more than 5 or 10 households, with populations of 25 to 50, not counting slaves taken over with the land or subsequently acquired. The original hide was conceptually the land required to support a family, and 5 hides were an estate sufficient to support a thegn. In effect, Alfred was demanding that each small village or equivalent group of holdings should provide, equip and maintain one half-time fighting man.

In Wessex there had been from the first a strong tendency to count in multiples of 5 hides. In southern Mercia, on the other hand, multiples of 3 hides were not uncommon, and this may suggest that the 'Three Households' type of settlement⁶³, characteristically three farms round a common green and pond, may have antedated the Danish period. In north Germany and Denmark, sixth-century nucleated hamlets often comprised three or four families^{63a}. In Buckinghamshire we have Winslow with 12 hides and Granborough with 3 hides in 792⁶⁴, Wotton Underwood with 9 hides in 845⁶⁵, but multiples of 5 are also frequent (Horwood 10 and *Lygetun* 10 in 792, Turville 10 in 796⁶⁶). The important estate of Monks Risborough was assessed at 30 hides in 903⁶⁷, during the last years of Mercian autonomy, but 30 is a multiple of 3 as well as of 5 and 10. In all later Buckinghamshire land charters the assessment, where stated, is a multiple of 10 hides (Chetwode-Hillesden 20 hides in 949⁶⁸, Linslade 10 in 966⁶⁹, Olney 10 in 979⁷⁰, Over Winchendon 10 in 1004⁷¹) and Domesday Book provides clear evidence that 5- and 10-hide units were then normal, except in Stodfold. Where large estates had been subdivided, the Domesday returns can often be aggregated to exhibit this feature. Two important Chiltern villis provide well-known examples; the holders are those at the death of King Edward the Confessor⁷²:

Amersham

	<i>Hides</i>
Queen Edith	7½
Alwin, a man of Queen Edith	½
Turchil, a man of King Edward	½
Siward, a man of Aldeva	½
Ulviet	½
Alvric, a man of Godwin the sheriff	½
	<hr/>
	10

*Chesham*⁷³

	<i>Hides</i>
Queen Edith	4
Brictric, a man of Queen Edith	8½
Epy, a man of Brictric	½
Two sokemen	1½
Not named	½
	<hr/>
	15

If, as seems likely, the new policy was applied north of the Thames, one natural consequence would be for older Mercian assessments to be decimalised, in order to impose a pattern of 5- and 10-hide units where this did not already obtain, rounding up rather than down. Thus Winslow's 12 hides became 15, Wotton's 9 hides 10 and Granborough's 3 hides 5⁷⁴. Winslow and Granborough could thus be grouped so that Winslow sent two men to one half of the *fyrð* while each vill sent one man to the other half.

The policy of rotating cohorts was severely tested in 893. Guthrum (Athelstan) had died in 890, and the army of East Anglia broke its oath and joined other Viking invaders in harrying Wessex. After a defeat at Farnham they fled across the Thames and up the Colne to a marshy island identified by Æthelweard⁷⁵ as Thorney, near Iver, between two branches of the river. Alfred had divided the Wessex militia; the division serving with his son Edward besieged the Danes in Thorney, but completed their term of service and used up their provisions before the relieving force could arrive. Alfred himself was besieging Exeter, but was able to arrange for a small detachment to watch the Danes at Thorney until his son-in-law Ethelred, sub-king of Mercia, raised a force in London, joined Edward and compelled the Danes to submit and leave Mercia. They gave hostages and returned to Essex, but were soon reinforced and launched another raid up the Thames and into the Severn valley, where they were besieged at Buttington by Ethelred's levies from north of the Thames and even by some part of the Welsh people. (Anarawd, king of Gwynedd, previously allied with the Vikings of York, had changed sides.) Over eighty years later old men boasted to Æthelweard of what happened⁷⁶. The Danes broke out when they had eaten most of their horses (the rest having starved) and suffered great losses before reaching Essex⁷⁷. There the natives had cast down the ramparts at Benfleet and divided the accumulated booty among themselves⁷⁸.

Where village communities existed, all that Alfred or Ethelred had to do to establish their military liability was to place them in the

5-hide, 10-hide or larger tax bracket. The Chiltern estates of Middle Saxon origin would already have had assessments conforming to this pattern, but in other areas of dispersed settlement the grouping for this purpose may sometimes have been new. Its imposition on existing village communities of varying size must have entailed very rough justice, but the 'lumpiness' of the scheme would be less apparent where scattered farms or small hamlets could be grouped *de novo* into 10-hide units. It would then be necessary to specify one local landowner who could be made responsible for his neighbours, and at whose house renders in kind could be collected. There is more than a hint of this in the Domesday return from Lavendon⁷⁹, where the principal manor was occupied before the Norman Conquest by eight thegns, all of whom could sell their land, but one of whom, a man of King Edward, was senior to the others (*unus eorum, Alii homo regis, senior aliorum fuit*) so that he represented the group in the eyes of the Crown. He was in fact a housecarl with a small manor of his own⁸⁰. Similar arrangements would have been needed wherever there were many individual farmsteads and no single superior. Once a manor-house was thus designated, a parish church was likely sooner or later to be built nearby; and when such a centre was recognised, seignorial pressure, defence against enemies and the need for co-operation in tillage would all tend to favour concentration around it. However, this subject needs further examination. It is not suggested that the designation of centres of administration was deliberately calculated to promote centralized estate management. There is no evidence for such an explicit intention on the king's part; but it was in his interest to impose on one local notable some responsibility for the conduct of others in his neighbourhood, and this might well be among the causes leading to eventual nucleation.

Simultaneously with the Alfredian scheme, a somewhat similar Danish system of assessment was being imposed on the areas of Mercia relinquished to the Great Army after 877. In the Danelaw, the ploughland or carucate was the land which an eight-ox team could plough

in a year; meadow, pasture, rough grazing and woodland were regarded as ancillary to arable cultivation, and rights in them arose from and were related to the occupation of arable land. The carucate, consisting of eight oxgangs or bovates, was measurable on the ground. In principle, the hide was somewhat different; it was a unit of obligation, based on a rough traditional assessment of the actual or potential productive capacity of the land, whether for tillage, grassland or woodland, perhaps even mineral wealth. Nevertheless the two systems came together during the 10th century. Both the hide and the carucate were held to consist of 120 arable acres, though the size of the customary acre depended on local open-field practice. The acre was secondary in relation to the size of the selion.

The Danes counted in dozens and half-dozens; they had twelve gods and juries of twelve thegns, and where they were in occupation 6- and 12-carucate groupings took the place of the 5- and 10-hide units which Alfred would have imposed. There is one corner of Buckinghamshire where the two systems are intermixed: the hundred of Stodfold, bounded on the south and west by the Great Ouse and to the north and east by the high land of Whittlewood Forest. It was assessed at 101 hides in 1086, but the original figure may well have been exactly 100 hides. This total is arrived at by excluding the 3 hides at Akeley, perhaps a late assart in the oak-woods, and adding the single hide assigned to the county borough of Buckingham north of the river (extra-hundredal in 1086) and one hide at Boycott which was detached from Dadford and assigned to Oxfordshire. If we omit Buckingham and restore Boycott, the hundred falls into two parts; 57 hides where the building blocks are 6-hide units (with the 3 hides of Akeley) and 45 hides made up of nine 5-hide units. There had been much fragmentation before the Conquest, especially as Danish law allowed a free market in land, but some divided manors were recombined by the Conqueror, and the original units are discernible.

The 6-hide areas in Stodfold are Biddlesden

with Evershaw (6 hides); Lamport (6), the hundredal centre; Foscott or Foxcote (6); Earl Leofwine's manor at Leckhampstead, later part of the barony of Maminot (18); Turstin's manor in Maids Moreton (6); and the pre-Conquest estate of Azor son of Toti, afterwards divided between Water Stratford and Shalstone (12 hides). Azor's manor seems to have been called Scaldeby, a Danicised form of **Scealdestun*; the form *Scaldebi*⁸¹ occurs in 1167, and in the 13th century the forms in the Luffield Priory charters⁸² vary between *Scaldeston* (partly Danish), *Saldeston* (Norman, developing to Selston) and *Shaldeston*, the English name which gave the modern Shalston(e). If the pure Danish form had survived, it would have been the southernmost *by*. It may be significant that Roman roads cross the Ouse at Water Stratford and at Biddlesden⁸³.

The areas of Stodfold where Saxon reckoning persisted are Dadford with Boycott; Lillingstone Dayrell; Suartin's land in Leckhampstead, later part of the honour of Gifford; Leofwine's manor in Maids Moreton; Radclive with Chackmore (but without Hasley south of the Ouse, which was in Rowley hundred⁸⁴); Odo's manor in Shalstone; Stowe; Westbury; and Turweston. Each of these was assessed at 5 hides. It may be suggested that Westbury was bracketed with Shalstone, Stowe with Dadford, Radclive with the Maids Moreton estate and Lillingstone Dayrell with the 5 hides at Leckhampstead to constitute 10-hide units. The Lillingstones had originally been a single vill of 10 hides, but half of this (Lillingstone Lovell, with two hamlets half a mile apart) had become a detached part of Ploughley hundred in Oxfordshire before 1086; this arrangement, which lasted until 1844⁸⁵, is further evidence that the original 10-hide groupings were somewhat earlier than the delimitation of county and hundred boundaries in the 10th century.

No grouping can be suggested for the 5-hide unit of Turweston, but here the Domesday entry⁸⁶ is most unusual; it records that besides the 5 hides at which *Turvestone* was assessed there were 3 carucates of land in the demesne of

William de Felgeres (his only Buckinghamshire holding). The implication is presumably that these were exempt from geld. The only Bucks parallels are at Hanslope (in an area that was Danish from 886, or earlier, to 906) where there were 5 hides in the demesne and 5 carucates of land besides⁸⁷, and Newport Pagnell and Tickford, contiguous 5-hide vills where there were 4 and 2 carucates in the demesne⁸⁸. In these cases certain lands seem to have been temporarily or permanently exempted from taxation.

The name Turweston suggests that its history was exceptional. The first element is usually taken as the Scandinavian personal name Thurulf (þorolfr) but Ekwall pointed out that the Old Swedish name Thoruaster would fit the forms better⁸⁹. There may well have been a replacement of an older name in *tūn*, for this riverside site would surely have attracted English settlement at a much earlier date. Swedes did not reckon by fives or sixes but by powers of 2. In East Sweden, villages usually had either 8 or 16 *attungar* (*attung* is translated *octonarius*⁹⁰). It is suggested that Thoruaster was a Swedish adventurer who had divided his estate into 8 units, and ensured that only 5 of these were to be taxed; in other words, he was treated as an English thegn. Circumstances in which he may have secured this concession arose in 914; but this is to anticipate by some twenty years.

The campaign of 895 was a brilliant success for Alfred. The invading Danes were besieged at Hertford, where Alfred blocked the river Lea so that they could not bring their ships out; they abandoned them, and those that were serviceable were brought to London where Alfred studied them closely to see how their speed and stability could be improved. In 896 the Viking army dispersed; some chose to settle in the Danelaw, while those without property (*feohlēas*) moved to the Continent. 'The Army had not (thank God) too greatly afflicted the English people; they were much more seriously afflicted in those three years [894-6] by the pestilence among cattle and men'⁹¹.

In his later years Alfred seems to have encouraged his son-in-law Ethelred and his

daughter Æthelflæd (who was increasingly regarded as joint-ruler of Mercia) to follow the West Saxon example by establishing and fortifying burhs in their realm⁹². In the last year of his life Alfred took action to advance the restoration of the city of London⁹³. He died on 26 October 899, 'unshakeable pillar of the people of the west, a man replete with justice, vigorous in war, learned in speech, above all things instructed in sacred literature . . . Now, reader, say "Christ our Redeemer, save his soul".'⁹⁴

Alfred left his translation of the Psalter unfinished. Although fairly literal, it contains a number of turns of phrase which permit or demand a personal application. 'Ask me, and I shall deliver the enemy peoples for your inheritance, and I shall extend your authority over their boundaries . . . I do not now fear the thousands of the enemy peoples, even though they surround me from without . . . He drives back from us every attack, far away beyond our borders; and he shatters our enemies' bows and crushes their weapons and burns their shields'⁹⁵. Chesterton quoted this last passage as having been shouted (in Latin!) during the battle of *Ethandun*. This was insight, not scholarship:

Alfred's son Edward had been recognised as heir in his father's lifetime and probably as joint-king in 898⁹⁶, but the succession was disputed by Æthelwold, the son of King Ethelred I who had been passed over as an infant in 871. The Danes recognised him as king (no doubt hoping to divide the English resistance to themselves) and broke the peace. Sir Frank Stenton⁹⁷ thought that it was on this occasion that the Danes occupied all Bedfordshire (this seems clear enough) and advanced into northern Buckinghamshire; this appears to accept that until then there were no Danes west of Watling Street, but on the interpretation here adopted Buckingham was no more than a bridgehead surrounded by Danish settlements, if indeed it was in English hands at all. During 903 the army of East Anglia is said to have harried over all (English) Mercia until they reached Cricklade.

The Danes of East Anglia and Northumbria made peace with King Edward the Elder at Tiddingford on the Ousel in 906. The terms of the treaty are not recorded, and the northern and southern recensions of the Chronicle differ as to which side it favoured. Its absence from the Mercian Register suggests that Ethelred and Æthelflæd did not greatly like it. Probably Edward ceded all Bedfordshire to the Danes, while extending his boundary in North Bucks from the line of the Great Ouse to Salcey Forest and Yardley Chase on the Ouse-Nene watershed, thus annexing Lavendon, Olney, Weston Underwood, Ravenstone (settled or renamed by Hrafn?), Stoke Goldington, Castlethorpe and Hanslope. Thus the Great Ouse was no longer the frontier downstream from Stony Stratford, but the river probably remained a boundary for some distance upstream, as it is today.

Ethelred died in 911, and was succeeded in Mercia by his widow Æthelflæd, Alfred's heroic daughter, who is given the title *regina* by Welsh⁹⁸ and Irish⁹⁹ sources and even by the Abingdon Chronicle¹⁰⁰. Henry of Huntingdon¹⁰¹ goes further: 'non solum domina vel regina, sed etiam *rex* vocaretur' because of the fear she inspired (William of Malmesbury¹⁰² calls her *pavor hostium*). However, she had hardly acquired this reputation by 911, and Edward probably wished to relieve his sister of the burden of a common boundary with East Anglia¹⁰³. He took direct control of London and Oxford and the lands pertaining thereto; London had been entrusted to Ethelred in 886, and was not part of his original ealdormanry (at least *de facto*) but Plummer's suggestion¹⁰⁴ that the same was true of the Oxford region is hardly consistent with the charter evidence already discussed, or indeed with the transference of the Mercian see of Leicester to Dorchester-on-Thames. In any event this resumption or assumption of possession by the West Saxon Crown must have included what was to become Buckinghamshire. Probably Edward already had in mind the fortification of Hertford and Buckingham as steps towards the reduction of Bedford and Northampton. He came to Hertford in

November 912 and ordered the northern burh to be built; a second stronghold was established on the south side of the Lea during the following summer, while Edward was engaged in Essex.

Soon after Easter 913, men from the armies of Northampton and Leicester rode out to ravage North Oxfordshire. As this force came home, another raiding band rode out against Luton; this was within the bounds of the army of Bedford, which had apparently chosen not to break the peace. Probably this band moved down Watling Street, harrying as they went; but Chalgrave and Tebworth, abutting on Watling Street, had been in the hands of Eadred, an English thegn, at least since 911^{104a}. The people of the district (*landleod* 'country folk') rose against the Danes, put them to flight, rescued all that they had captured and took a great part of their horses and their weapons.

King Edward would naturally conclude that his next move must be against Northampton, that this would have strong local support in what was to become North Bucks, and that the men of Bedford were unlikely to oppose him. Edward was a strategist who laid his plans well ahead, but for most of 914 he was preoccupied with the defence of the south-west and the Severn valley against a ship-army which had come from Brittany and ravaged South Wales. There was no heavy engagement, and when in the autumn they left Dyfed for Ireland Edward was able to resume the reconquest of the south midlands. He came with his *fyrð* to Buckingham before Martinmas (11 November) and stayed four weeks to build strongholds on each side of the Ouse. Before he went away many of the principal men of the army of Northampton submitted to him, probably all those who had settled south of Whittlewood Forest. It is suggested that Thoruaster of Turweston played some part in securing the submission of the Danes of Stodfold, and was suitably rewarded by the exemption of his demesne from geld. Other assessments would be allowed to remain, carucates being treated as hides. Whether this was equitable is considered below. Æthelweard comments on the tranquillity of the winter of

914, when Christmas Day fell on a Sunday.

A year later, in the autumn of 915, Edward went with his forces to Bedford, accepted the submission of almost all the citizens (as their leading men had promised at Buckingham) and ordered another burh to be built on the south side of the river, as at Buckingham, where however there is no mention of citizens or burgesses (*burhware*).

In 916 Earl Thurcytel went to France with the men who were willing to serve him; he, and presumably they, were among those who had already submitted to Edward at Buckingham.

The campaign of 917 was decisive, and is fully described in the A-text of the Chronicle. Its events included the occupation and fortification of Towcester; its defence against the army of Northampton; the raid by that army through Bernwood Forest towards Aylesbury, probably using the river-crossing at Water Stratford, the Roman road south to Bicester, and then Akeman Street; the defence of Bedford against the army of East Anglia; the building of the wall of Towcester, while the West Saxon *fyrð* encamped at Passenham near Stony Stratford; and the submission of Earl Thurferth, the *holds*¹⁰⁵ and the whole army of Northampton. Their territory became Northamptonshire; Edward had had to fight them hard, in contrast to his unopposed occupation of Buckingham in 914. He imposed a new and onerous hidation, which lasted for 25 years until 942, when the Northamptonshire landowners, still largely Danish though now Christian, secured a substantial reduction, perhaps as a reward for their service against the pagan Northmen. Meanwhile the carucation of c. 887 was still used for the assessment of public liabilities other than geld¹⁰⁶.

It is not necessary to follow the campaign of 917 further. The division of the English force which had secured Northamptonshire went home, and the other division which replaced it according to Alfred's scheme proceeded to capture Huntingdon.

If the whole instead of part of the North-

ampton host had submitted to Edward in 914, instead of holding out for three more years, Buckingham would hardly have been needed as a permanent burh, and the county to which it has given its name would probably not have come into being. Most of Bucks north of the Chilterns and west of Watling Street would have become part of a greater Oxfordshire; Domesday Book records one house in Oxford, valued at 30d a year, belonging to Princes Risborough¹⁰⁷, and two worth 4d belonging to Twyford¹⁰⁸, probably because these were at one stage among the places pertaining to Oxford and contributing to its defence. The Chiltern Hundreds would have formed part either of a greater Middlesex or of an enlarged Berkshire; the area north-east of Watling Street would probably have been assigned to Bedfordshire, and the land north of the Ouse, including Buckingham itself, to Northamptonshire.

The claim that Buckinghamshire was founded by Alfred the Great is still sometimes made on formal occasions, but cannot be sustained in view of the annal for 911, which leaves no room for a proto-shire based on Buckingham, or indeed on Aylesbury. The county originated because Edward decided that one of his two strongholds at Buckingham should be permanently maintained, namely the predecessor of the castle, on the site of the present great church built in 1779-81 on 'fair Castle Hill'. The memory of the temporary burh on the south bank is preserved by Bourton (*burh-tūn*) and the full name of the 11th-century borough was Buckingham cum Bourton.

Buckingham and Oxford are included in the Burghal Hidage¹⁰⁹, an official list of fortified sites and their contributory hidages, dating originally from the earliest years of Edward the Elder. The best text (A) is preserved by B.L. Add. 43703, a transcript made in 1562 from B.L. Cotton Otho B. xi which was largely destroyed in the disastrous fire at Ashburnham House in 1731. Six late medieval manuscripts, deriving from another lost pre-Conquest archetype (B), rectify some errors in the A-text (while adding others of their own) and also include the statement 'That is fully

twenty-seven thousand hides and seventy which belong to it, and thirty to Wessex'. This appears to mean that 30 burhs were in Wessex, supported by land having a total assessment of 27,070 hides. In fact, 31 places have been listed, but if we exclude Buckingham and adopt what seem to be the best attested hidages for the others the total is 27,071 hides. It thus appears that Oxford was included in the Alfredian arrangements, but that Buckingham was not added to the system until 914.

The view taken here is that the 1500 hides contributing to the support of Oxford included the greater part of Oxfordshire, which had some 2412 hides in 1086, but that south Oxfordshire supported Wallingford, to which 2400 hides belonged. Buckingham is credited with 1600 hides; the Domesday Buckinghamshire had approximately 2074 hides, but if we exclude the Chiltern Hundreds with 335 hides, this leaves 1739 hides. We know that increases of 34 hides were imposed on the Chetwode-Hillesden liberty at some time after 949, and of 5 hides on Linslade after 966; deducting these, 1700 hides remain. One is tempted to suggest that the figure of 1600 hides was fixed by Edward as part of his forward planning before he fortified Buckingham in November 914, and that it therefore did not include the 100 hides of Stodfold which he did not yet control. Alternatively, there may have been subsequent increases in assessments elsewhere in the county which are now unknown to us, but which might account for the difference between 1600 and 1700 hides; perhaps especially in the three hundreds of Newport. In Wessex proper there seem to have been many abatements of hidage during the 10th century; concessions were easier to obtain south of the Thames where the kings lived. In Buckinghamshire the two changes known to have been made after 914 were increases.

The Chiltern Hundreds were not needed for the borough-fastening of Buckingham; it seems likely that they had already been assigned, together with the seven hundreds of Cookham and Bray in Berkshire, to support the shortlived stronghold of *Scaftesege*, Shaftsey or

Sashes¹¹⁰, on an island near Cookham on the Berkshire side of the Thames. This stands next to Buckingham in the list and is credited with 1000 hides. On its abandonment the three hundreds of Chiltern would naturally be added to the area contributing to Buckingham; the seven hundreds south of the river could then be associated with Wallingford, and what became south Oxfordshire could be assigned to Oxford. Thus Maitland¹¹¹ was right in associating Wallingford's 2400 hides in the Burghal Hidage with Berkshire's 2473 hides in 1086, but the connection is less straightforward than might appear. Even in Wessex the military districts were not coterminous with the ancient shires (though there would be a natural tendency to make them conform); and north of the Thames there were as yet no shires. The present Midland counties are largely artificial, and correspond to districts delimited by Edward the Elder or his sister Æthelflæd to support their fortresses and to man them in time of need. These districts would not originally have been intended as administrative areas¹¹² but they became so naturally enough, and by c. 1000 the term *scīr* was being applied to them¹¹³. There is a remarkable contemporary parallel on a larger scale in the 10th-century Byzantine Empire, where the stress of repeated invasions led to the supersession of the old civil jurisdictions by the *themes* or military governments (*thema* 'legion') with fluctuating limits¹¹⁴.

The A-text of the Burghal Hidage goes on to explain that 'for the maintenance and defence of an acre's breadth of wall [i.e. 4 poles, or 22 yards] 16 hides are required; if every hide is represented by one man, then every pole can be manned by four men . . . For the maintenance of a circuit of 10 furlongs, 1600 hides are required.' Thus the perimeter to be defended at Buckingham must be taken as 2200 yards, a mile and a quarter. The hidage assigned to Wareham was the same, and there the existing earthworks measure 2180 yards, the riverside not being counted. Of course a force of 1600 men within the ramparts would only be required, and could only be assembled, in times of great need.

It would thus appear that the extent of

Buckinghamshire and of other Midland shires was originally determined by no other consideration than the length of the defences of what became their county towns. They were arbitrary areas, not based on any past or present civil jurisdictions, but simply designed to meet a prospective military need. Alfred can be credited with this scheme, and his son and daughter applied it to English Mercia; but they did not thereby create shires corresponding to those of Wessex, each with its own ealdorman and its courts administering its ancient customs. Ethelred was ealdorman of all the Mercians, *dux Merciorum*, and his widow was Lady of the Mercians.

Alfred did not establish counties or hundreds in Mercia, but he did impose military obligations on what can be called tithings, and such land units could then be aggregated, perhaps into hundreds, certainly into larger areas needed to support the burhs. In Mercia, though not in Wessex, this eventually gave rise to a new administrative geography. The new county boundaries, based on the exigencies of the war of reconquest, lasted with very little change for over a thousand years. In the 1974 reorganization of local government, Oxfordshire, was much enlarged at the expense of Berkshire, which was recompensed by giving it what was then the largest town in Buckinghamshire, but the total dismemberment of our county was eventually averted. History proved too strong for geography.

There remains one question to which the exceptional situation in Stodfold may help to provide an answer. On average, can six carucates be equated with five hides in terms of land values? Alternatively, could the Danish carucate be fairly regarded as of the same value as the hide? The Domesday returns for Buckinghamshire include three valuations for each manor or other holding; its annual value in 1086 and corresponding figures for its value when received by its post-Conquest holder and in King Edward's time, before the depredations of the Northmen in 1065 and the Normans in 1066. Of these, the current valuations appear the most reliable; the figures for earlier years would often depend on the

recollections or guesses of those present at a special session of the hundred court. There is however no reason to suppose that they would exhibit any bias for or against holdings in the two parts of the hundred of Stodfold.

We must proceed, however hazardingly, from the known position in 1086 and the estimated position in 1065 to the unknown situation in 914 when Earl Thurcytel took King Edward as his lord with almost all the army of Bedford and many of the army of Northampton. These men of Northampton, who submitted at once, before Edward left Bucking-

ham, would no doubt be those who had settled nearest to the new stronghold. It is suggested as a working hypothesis that Edward allowed them to keep their land but required them to render service to him on the basis of the assessments which the Danes had settled for themselves since their occupation in 877 and its acceptance by Alfred after 886. The question is whether this would involve relatively heavier burdens than those borne by the 5-hide units which were held by Englishmen who did not belong to the army of Northampton. The evidence from Domesday Book may be summarized as follows:

<i>Stodfold Hundred</i>	<i>Hides</i>	<i>Value (shillings)</i>			<i>Value per hide (s.)</i>		
		1065	When received	1086	1065	When received	1086
5-hide units:							
(i) including Turweston	44	700	440	570	15.91	10.00	12.95
(ii) excluding Turweston	39	600	360	490	15.39	9.23	12.56
6-hide units	57	690	536	600	12.11	9.40	10.53

In these calculations Buckingham has been omitted because of its urban character and its wholly exceptional treatment as the county borough. Boycott is excluded because it was valued and returned in Oxfordshire. The total for the 5-hide estates is thus not 45 hides but 44 (or, excluding Turweston, 39). Akeley is regarded as half a 6-hide unit.

Thus the ratio of the average value of an 'English' hide to that of a 'Danish' hide is as follows:

	1065	When received	1086
Including Turweston	1.31	1.06	1.23
Excluding Turweston	1.27	0.98	1.19

The average for the 5-hide areas 'when received' is depressed by the inclusion of a nil value for Stowe, which had been completely laid waste, no doubt by the northerners in 1065. Elsewhere land was valued even when it was waste, and if we insert a 'guesstimate' of 15s. for Stowe, a quarter of its pre-Conquest value, the intermediate ratios become 1.10 (including Turweston) and 1.02 (excluding Turweston) instead of 1.06 and 0.98. There

was a blank return for Alric's three virgates ($\frac{3}{4}$ hide) in Biddlesden, which still lay waste in 1086, but the ratios would hardly be affected by the inclusion of small imputed figures for this holding.

If the Danish 6-hide (really 6-carucate) and English 5-hide units were on average of equal economic value, the ratio would be 6:5 or 1.2:1. This is in good agreement with the ratio of current values actually found by the hundred court, especially if Turweston is excluded. Hence to tax English and Danish hides equally was to penalise the latter. The evidence of valuations in 1086 and of estimated valuations in 1065 supports the view that treating carucates as hides after 914 meant that the Danish 6-hide units would bear, and were intended to bear, a burden of taxation and service some 20 per cent more onerous than their equivalent 5-hide neighbours. Indeed the pre-Conquest estimates suggest that when the estates were fully stocked the disparity in the average value of the two kinds of hide was somewhat greater than this. On the other

hand, the intermediate ratios, after the two harrings and any destocking after 1066¹¹⁵ indicate that the averages for a hide of unstocked land were not so different in the two halves of the hundred of Stodfold.

It is hoped in a future paper to follow the development of Buckingham from a fortress to a county borough.

REFERENCES

1. Browne Willis, *Hist. and Antiq. Buckingham* (1755) 23.
2. R. H. Hodgkin, *Hist. Anglo-Saxons* (3rd edn., 1952) ii. 601.
3. The Alfredian origin of Oxford was accepted by G. C. Brooke, *English Coins* (1932) 47 and M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* (1953) i. p. xxiii.
4. A.S. Chron. (A) s.a. 777, corrected to 779 by Roger of Wendover.
5. *Boldgetale* is used by Bishop Wærferth of Worcester to translate *provincia* in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great; *scirum* occurs once as a variant of *boldgetalum*.
6. Laws of Alfred ss. 37-37.2.
7. C. Hohler, 'St Osyth and Aylesbury', *Recs. Bucks* xviii (1966) 61-72.
8. V. I. Evison, *The Fifth-century Invasions south of the Thames* (1965) 84 claimed that the Dinton beaker and the Bishopstone belt-plate indicated a Frankish element in the federate force located at Aylesbury; the evidence is slight, but this seems not unlikely.
9. A. H. J. Baines, 'The Boundaries of Wotton Underwood', *Recs. Bucks* xxi (1979) 141 regards the vernacular charter of 845 (P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968) no. 204 [cited as S204]) as 'a unique record of the speech of the Vale of Aylesbury just before the Mercian kingdom was shattered by the Danish invasion'.
10. The cultus of St Romwald, a grandson of Penda who died three days after his baptism, is evidenced by the 10th-century Bosworth Psalter. The developed legend is in John of Tynemouth, *Nova Legenda Angliae* ii. 349-50.
11. Cf. M. Reed, *The Buckinghamshire Landscape* (1979) 74. It is suggested that Brill was the secular focus (*llys*), Oakley the church focus (*llan*) and Boarstall the steward's fortified house (*maerdref*). This was a characteristic form of major land unit in post-Roman Britain, and hence in medieval Wales: G. R. J. Jones in H. P. R. Finberg (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* I.ii (1972), especially 301, 376, 380; P. H. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement; Continuity and Change* (1976) 7.
12. S106, regarded by A. Bruckner and R. Marichal, *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* III (1963) as contemporaneous, very probably original.
13. S138 (interpolated, but with authentic basis).
14. S68, dated 664, is a pious fraud, but may possibly incorporate an old list of Peterborough (Medeshamstede) holdings; cf. H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (1961) no. 426.
15. Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi* cc. 29, 38, 42.
16. Asser, c. 29. King Alfred left her Wantage (his birthplace) and Edington (the site of his great victory). She died 5 December 902. Her brother, ealdorman Æthelwulf (d. 901), whose relationship to the Mercian royal family is supported by S1442, has been tentatively identified as owner of East Risborough: A. H. J. Baines, 'The Boundaries of Monks Risborough', *Recs. Bucks* xxiii (1981) 79. Their father, Mucel (otherwise Ethelred) was ealdorman of the *Gaini*, a Mercian folk otherwise unknown; he and his father Mucel Esning witnessed the Wotton Underwood charter of 845.
17. Asser, c. 30.
18. F. W. Ragg in *V.C.H. Bucks* (1927) iv. 522.
19. Æthelweard, *Chronicon* iv. ch. 3; ms. Otho Ax f. 7r; H. Savile (ed. 1596, f. 480r) emends to *Lundoniae*, probably following Bede's usage.
20. *miserabili condicione*; in legal texts, *condicere* is 'to give notice that something should be returned' (e.g. *Digest* 39.6.13).
21. Asser, c. 46.
22. Asser, c. 47 has 'Gothrum et Osscytil et Anvind'; Æthelweard iv. ch. 3 'Oscytel quoque et Gudrum et Annuth (hii tres reges eorum)'. Italicized letters are no longer legible but were so read by Savile (who usually wrote *th* for *ð*) before the MS was badly burnt in 1731.
23. Asser, c. 49.
- 23a The editions of Asser retain a blundered reading 'omnes equites, quos habebat, occidit . . .' Florence of Worcester inserted *rex* after *quos* and thus gave rise to the legend of the slaying of Alfred's cavalry. It is clear from the Annals of St Neots that *occidit* should be *occidentem*.
24. Probably the Danes expected support from the Britons of Devon and Cornwall, as in Egbert's time. Exeter (Caerwisc) was still a largely British city: *Gesta Regum* i. 148. Alfred later gave its episcopal charge to Asser, a Welshman but enthusiastically loyal, whose life of Alfred seems aimed at British readers.
25. Parker (1574), Camden (1602-3), Wise (1722), Petrie (1848) and Stevenson (1904).
26. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (*Alfred the Great* (1983) 247) point out that c. 51 is not in the Corpus transcript of the lost manuscript (C.C.C.C. ms. 100). W. H. Stevenson, who noted this omission in his apparatus (*Asser's Life of King Alfred* (1904) 40), considered that 'the great value of this transcript

- lies in the fact that it was copied from the Cottonian ms. before the interpolations in the latter were made by Parker' (p. liii). Yet he retained c. 51 and regarded it as the source of the St Neots annal for 877.
27. A.S. Chron (A) s.a. 877: '& þa on hærfæste gefor se here on Miercna lond, & hit gedældon sum, & sum Ceolwulfe saldon'. This corresponds to s. 51 except for the repetition from c. 45 of 'cuidam insipienti regis ministro'.
 28. Æthelweard says that they established camp (*ategias figunt*) at Gloucester.
 29. *suatim utens* 'as was his wont', a favourite phrase of Asser when praising his hero Alfred.
 30. Asser, cc. 52-56.
 31. G. K. Chesterton, *Collected Poems* (1933) 221-316.
 32. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* i. 126-9, iii. 84; C. Plummer (ed.), *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (1899) ii. 99-100.
 - 32a R. H. M. Dolley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Coins* (1961) 80-82.
 33. He is the 'Alstemus' whom Dudo of St Quentin mentions as a friend of Rollo, founder of Normandy: Duchesne, *Historiae Normannorum Scriptores Antiqui*, 75 D.
 34. Keynes and Lapidge, *op. cit.* 244 n. 83. Sir Frank Stenton (*A.S. Engl.* (2nd edn., 1947) 257) and R. H. Hodgkin (*op. cit.* ii. 575) both thought that Ceolwulf II vanished after 975.
 - 34a Florence of Worcester says (i. 167) '. . . ultimus regum Merciorum . . . post cuius mortem . . . Ælfrædus . . . partem regni Merciorum, quam Ceolwulfus habuit, acquisiuit.' He does not say that Alfred's acquisition of English Mercia was immediate.
 35. S215, *Engl. Hist. Docs.* I, no. 95.
 36. S217-219.
 37. S218.
 38. S217; the misdating of this charter to 880 led Plummer (ii. 100) to hold that English Mercia had been ceded to Alfred under the peace of Wedmore.
 39. S219.
 40. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire* (1925) 171 n. 1.
 41. J. Tait, *The Medieval English Borough* (1936) 16 n. 8.
 - 41a Though a doubtful charter of 882 in the Codex Wintoniensis (S345) is said to have been issued by Alfred in *expeditione*.
 42. Æthelweard iv. ch. 3, Otho xii. f. 5r: 'auxilia quaerunt rex iussit Sarauara duci' (italicized letters read by Savile), probably 'they [the men of Kent] sought help; the king [Alfred] gave orders to the ealdorman of the men of Salisbury' (-ware, inhabitants). Æthelhelm was ealdorman of Wiltshire at least from 887, when he took Alfred's alms to Rome (Asser c. 86) to his death in 898.
 43. *Engl. Hist. Docs.* I, no. 34, pp. 380-1 (from C.C.C.C. ms. 383 and *Quadripartitus*).
 44. Asser, who first stayed with Alfred in 886, uses the title *rex Angul-Saxonum* throughout his biography. The title was used by Alfred and his successors to emphasize the union of the Angles and Saxons, but after Athelstan's time it was replaced by *rex Anglorum*, except when draftsmen revived the old style as rhetorical embroidery.
 45. *Engl. Hist. Docs.* I, no. 225.
 46. Sir Charles Oman (*Hist. England* (11th edn., 1904) 40) cited a text of 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frith' taking the boundary 'along Watling Street to Chester', but he gave no reference. Chester was not restored until 907, and lies far outside Guthrum's kingdom.
 47. Hodgkin, *op. cit.* ii. 579.
 48. S220.
 49. Laws of Alfred, Int. 49.9.
 50. R. C. Hist. Monuments, *Dorset* iv. 56-7.
 51. Delicately recognised by Alfred in the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis*.
 52. *Engl. Hist. Docs.* I, no. 226.
 53. J. W. Bright and R. L. Ramsey (eds.), *Liber Psalmorum* (1907).
 54. Janet Bately, 'Lexical Evidence for the Authorship of the Prose Psalms in the Paris Psalter', *Anglo-Saxon England* x (1982) 69-95.
 55. The translation is not perverse; several ancient versions have 'Lay hold of (or Receive) instruction', the R.V. marginal rendering of Ps. ii. 12.
 56. Implied by Asser c. 91.
 57. Asser, c. 106.
 58. A.S. Chron (a) s.a. 894 (for 893).
 59. Orosius, A.S. version, ed. Sweet, p. 46.
 60. R. Wülker, *Grundriss der angelsächsischen Litteratur* (1885) 396 assigns the translation to 890/1-893.
 61. I Kings (III Kings in Vulgate) v. 14, trans. R. A. Knox.
 62. Asser, c. 100, 'in tribus . . . cohortibus praefati regis satellites prudentissime dividebantur'. The *satellites* 'followers', forming the king's *comitatus*, had estates of their own to manage.
 63. Cf. J. Chenevix Trench, 'Coleshill and the Settlement of the Chilterns', *Recs. Bucks* xviii (1973) 241-258.
 - 63a *Agrarian Hist. E. & W.* I.ii (1972) 262-3.
 64. S138.
 65. S204.
 66. S150.
 67. S367.
 68. S544.
 69. S737.
 70. S834.
 71. S909.
 72. Cf. *V.C.H. Bucks* (1905) i. 208.
 73. The two principal estates at Chesham became Chesham Higham and Chesham Bury. The former (Brictric's estate) included 4 hides occupied by two sokemen who were Brictric's men; one of these has been identified by G. R. Elvey (*Luffield Priory Charters* II (1975) p. xlix) as Almar, ancestor of the de Wedon family.
 74. D.B. i. fos. 146, 147, 145b.
 75. Æthelweard iv. ch. 3, Otho x f. 11r: 'Interea tenentur obsessi Dani in Thornigne insula pali'. The italicized letters depend on Savile's readings. Campbell translates "Thorney, an island of marshy land".

- Probably Æthelweard mistook the declension of *palus* 'marsh' and wrote *pali* for *paludis*. *Insula pali* should mean 'island of the stake', which would hardly translate *þorn-ig* 'thorn island'. Cf. F. M. Stenton, 'The Danes at Thorney Island in 893', *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England* (1970) 14-15.
76. 'Gesta haec quippe in Buttingtune praedicantur a priscis', Otho x. f. 4v. *Praedicere* is often 'to vaunt, extol'; *priscis* is for *priscis viris* 'by ancient men' (with an overtone 'of earlier and better times').
 77. A.S. Chron. (A) s.a. 894 (for 893).
 78. ' . . . Danaa suda in Beamfleote loco, experto nutu ab incolis, ruit; annilem diuidunt inter se thesaurum ' (italicized letters from Savile). The translation is not certain; *Danaa* is fancifully used for 'Danish' (it should mean 'Greek'). *Suda* seems to be 'palisade, rampart' from **sudis* 'stake'. *Nutus* 'nod' can mean 'downward motion, gravity'; here it seems to mean 'downward push'.
 79. D.B. i. fo. 145b.
 80. D.B. i. fo. 152b.
 81. *Pipe Roll 13 Henry II*, p. 108.
 82. G. R. Elvey (ed.), *Luffield Priory Charters II* (1975) nos. 477-539K.
 83. The Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* (1964) nos. 160a, 166 (see p. 315).
 84. A. H. J. Baines, 'Hasley: a Domesday Manor Restored', *Recs. Bucks xxii* (1980) 53-72.
 85. Stat. 7 & 8 Vict., cap. 61.
 86. D.B. i. fo. 151.
 87. D.B. i. fo. 152.
 88. D.B. i. fos. 148b, 149.
 89. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire* (1925) 49 and Addenda (p. xxxii); Lundgren-Brate, *Personnamn* 267.
 90. S. Göransson, 'Field and Village on the Island of Oland', *Geografiska Annaler* xl (1958) 101-158, at 106-8.
 91. A.S. Chron. (A) s.a. 897 (for 896).
 92. S223.
 93. S1628.
 94. Æthelweard iv. ch. 3 *ad fin.*
 95. Ps. ii. 8; iii. 5 (7); xlv (xlvi) 8 (10).
 96. S350 (not free from doubt).
 97. F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (2nd edn., 1947) 258.
 98. *Annales Cambriae*, s.a. 917. Celtic sources sometimes speak of Ethelred as king of the Mercians, as does Æthelweard.
 99. *Three Fragments of Irish Annals*, 226-36.
 100. *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson, i. 44.
 101. Henry of Huntingdon, ed. T. Arnold, 158.
 102. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum* i. 136.
 103. F. W. Ragg in *V.C.H. Bucks* (1927) iv. 523.
 104. C. Plummer (ed.), *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (1899) ii. 126. Florence of Worcester (i. 121) regards London and Oxford as part of the 'regnum Merciorum'. To the same effect, Henry of Huntingdon, 155.
 - 104a S396.
 105. A.S. Chron. (D) s.a. 915 reads *eorlas* for *holdas*; this is to rank them rather too high, though in Northumbria the *hold*'s *wergeld* was equated with that of the king's high-reeve.
 106. C. R. Hart, *The Hidation of Northamptonshire* (Leicester, 1970).
 107. D.B. i. fo. 154; cf. the Princes Risborough entry, D.B. i. fo. 143b, mentioning a burgess of Oxford belonging to this manor and paying 2s (an error for 2s 6d?).
 108. D.B. i. fo. 154; not mentioned in the Twyford entry.
 109. D. Hill, 'The Burghal Hidage: the Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology* xiii (1969) 84-92.
 110. N. Brooks, 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology* viii (1964) 74-90, at 79. Tait, *Med. Engl. Borough* (1936) 18 n. 5, attributes the identification to Stenton.
 111. F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (Fontana edn., 1960) 580.
 112. Stenton, *op. cit.* 262 n. 2 ' . . . the text [of the Burghal Hidage], . . . gives no ground for any theory that the districts assigned to the fortresses were used as administrative as well as military units '.
 113. *Buc(c)ing(a)hamscir* first occurs in the Chronicle s.a. 1010, 1011 (E), 1016 (D,E).
 114. E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Chandos Classics) iv. 60.
 115. Apart from Stowe, the estates which had suffered most were both parts of Shalstone, Lamport and the 6-hide portion of Maids Moreton. This suggests that the northern raiders of 1065 harried a belt of land to the west and north of Buckingham. Azor son of Toti may then have concentrated his resources in Biddlesden, where his holding was of greater value when Aubrey dispossessed him than it had been in the Confessor's time. This is the only such case in Stodfold, 18 of the 24 returns showing substantial reductions in annual value; these may often have arisen because English or Danish landholders who failed to come to an arrangement with their new Norman lord then disposed of much of their stock. At Westbury, where there was continuity of occupation, there was also stability of value.