

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH OF BUCKINGHAM, 914-1086

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In 914 Buckingham was fortified and garrisoned to control the Roman road system serving Northampton, Bedford and the Ouse valley. Buckinghamshire originated as the area which was needed to provide military and financial support to this stronghold, to which a hundredal market was transferred. After the pacification of 942, Buckingham lost its military significance but remained a royal borough and developed into a town (a market and service centre, with a mint) having an 'urban field' much smaller than the county, extending not more than twelve miles from the town. Links between its burgesses and neighbouring rural manors are inferred from the Domesday survey. Buckingham was assisted by exceptional fiscal concessions, and two of its reeves, Æthelmær and Æthelwig, enjoyed strong royal support, but the records, including the coinage, illustrate the difficulty with which its special position as the 'county borough' was maintained.

The construction of the fortress of Buckingham by Edward the Elder in November 914 and the definition of the area contributing to its support can rightly be regarded as the establishment of the borough and shire,¹ though at this period *burh* meant 'stronghold' rather than 'borough', and the term *scīr* was not applied to the contributory area until a century later.²

The reasons for Edward's decision were military. Unlike some other *burga* that he fortified, Buckingham was not a Roman 'waste chester': the Roman roads pass it by. The choice of site may however be explained by their proximity. C. W. Green³ has well said 'Edward's fortresses on each side of the Ouse at Buckingham, the advance camp at Passenham from which 171, 174 [the Ouse Valley roads] and Watling Street were within view, and the reconstruction of the Roman walls of Towcester (taking care of the Alchester and Tove valley roads passing behind Buckingham) all conform to the Roman road plan, but without that plan are somewhat incomprehensible.' The Danish counterstroke through Bernwood against Aylesbury in 917⁴ equally

depended on possession of the Water Stratford crossing and the use of the Alchester road (160 A) and Akeman Street. These roads were still significant, as the only surviving metalled highways.

In the late sixth century the Buccingas, folk led by Bucc or Bucca, probably approached the site of Buckingham by the Roman road from Magiovinium (166), crossed the Great Ouse at Buckford and occupied the land within the river-bend south of that road. Its approach to Buckford from the east is defined by crop marks and by masonry in the river bank, and on the west side a footpath indicates its line as far as the modern Buckingham-Stony Stratford road, near the first milepost; but then road 166 swerves right, away from Buckingham, along the hollow lane called (the) Holloway which became the borough boundary.⁵ At the top of the hill it crosses road 171, which ran from Water Stratford to Old Stratford, linking up Romano-British villas, settlements and industries, but ignoring Buckingham. Edward the Elder saw that the roads coming from Danish-occupied territory could all be controlled if Buckingham were garrisoned. His action led to the eventual

demise of these roads, with the emergence of a new pattern of communications once Buckingham became a town. As Mawer and Stenton observed, it is 'served today by roads which have little appearance of antiquity'.⁶

Before 914 Buckingham was probably not greatly different from other villages in what became Stodfold hundred on the north bank of the Ouse, such as Radclive and Water Stratford. There seem to have been no such settlements on the south bank in Rowley hundred until Hasley was founded at the end of the ninth century, the villages in the Chetwood being set well back from the river. The *Moreyf* (Whittlewood Forest) north of the Ouse probably also came down almost to the bank, but clearance was well under way before Danish invaders arrived, though there was still plenty of room for the newcomers. Settlement took the form of loosely grouped endships or hamlets; thus Lillingstone, with 10 hides, comprised several dispersed hamlets, and Leckhamstead still consists of Church End, Middle End, South End and Limes End, representing one 5-hide and three 6-hide units.

Six-hide units, characteristically Danish,⁷ accounted for half of Stodfold hundred reckoned by annual value both in 1065 and 1086, though they paid 56 per cent of the geld, which was more onerous for them than for the 5-hide estates; this may be explained by the terms of their submission to Edward in 914, which were nevertheless more favourable than those imposed on the rest of the army of Northampton which resisted him until 917. Between 877 and 914 the Danish landowners of Stodfold had been part of that army; their meeting-place was 'in a Ground antiently known by the name of Stock, or Stofield'⁸ in the vill of Lamport or Langport, now a hamlet, indeed scarcely a hamlet, in the parish of Stowe. Lamport was a 6-hide unit, and the name, representing *langa port* 'long market-place' suggests an attempt to establish a hundredal market. The holding of markets in conjunction with hundreds is characteristic of Northamptonshire; King's Sutton, Oundle and Higham Ferrers are examples recorded in Domesday Book.⁹ The *stodfald* (Danish *stod-*

fald 'enclosure for a stud of horses') could well have accommodated a horse-fair in connection with the hundred moot, and such gatherings would have led to other forms of trading. Mawer and Stenton¹⁰ translate Lamport 'long *port* or town' and comment 'It would seem early to have lost its status as such, to judge by its documentary record'. In fact the market function of a *port* does not necessarily imply more than a small resident population.¹¹

It would obviously be the policy of Edward the Elder to relocate the market in Buckingham, under the protection of his new *burh*. There would not be room for two such centres in a sparsely populated forest area. Buckingham north of the Ouse, though geographically in Stodfold hundred, was extra-hundredal, and the hundred-moot continued to meet at Lamport, but craftsmen and traders who had been attracted to the market there could readily move to Buckingham, taking their Danish customary law with them and helping to make both the incipient county town and the county itself part of the Danelaw.

Athelstan held a council at Buckingham on 12 September 934,¹² but this is no proof of its urban status. Nevertheless Athelstan rarely travelled north of the Thames, and he may on this occasion have taken some steps to develop the place. The market has probably always occupied its present site on Market Hill north of Castle Hill, though the church with St Rumbold's shrine lay to the south. Some indirect evidence for dating the origin of the town was obtained from an excavation carried out by R. A. Hall¹³ for the Bucks County Council in 1974 on the site of the new University College in Prebend End, which was then thought to be within the area of the Saxon *burh*. No feature earlier than the thirteenth century was identified, and it appears that previously the area was meadow, part of the *hamm* of the place-name (at least in its Chronicle form); it lay within the church estate, held of the king by the bishop. There was however a quantity of late Saxon pottery of St Neots type, wheel-turned, fine, shelly ware with characteristic smooth 'soapy' surfaces, ranging in colour from medium to dark grey with red

undertones and a grey core. This pottery was residual and not apparently related to any of the excavated medieval features; the largest amount (four rims and 18 wall sherds) came from a ditch which had been filled with soil having a high cress content. This ditch, which was traced across the site from east to west, marks the transition from a clay to a gravel subsoil, and medieval occupation was found only on the gravel. St Neots ware was very common over much of East Anglia and the South Midlands during the tenth century,¹⁴ and Buckingham is among the sites where it is the only ceramic of the period present. In the Walton (Aylesbury) excavations it was taken to indicate a tenth-century horizon where it occurred on its own without other fabrics.¹⁵ Martin Biddle¹⁶ has suggested that cooking pots with narrow rim diameter in St Neots type fabric are generally indicative of a relatively early date. Further *comparanda* from closely dated deposits may in due course enable the Buckingham material to be appraised, but at present it seems wholly consistent with a mid-tenth-century or rather earlier date for the emergence of Buckingham as a market town.

Dr Browne Willis¹⁷ stated that 'We also find that Anno 941, the Danes made an excursion to Buckingham, and committed great Outrages'. He cited no source, leaving the event unverifiable; but in any such 'Excursion' the 'Danes' would presumably be the pagan Norsemen who were oppressing the Christian Danes of the Five Bouroughs.¹⁸ After these were redeemed by Edmund the Magnificent in 942 there was no longer any serious doubt as to the allegiance of the Danes of the South Midlands. Thereafter Buckingham was hardly needed as a fastness, and its future depended on its development as a market and an urban centre.

The area which Buckingham served as a market town must be distinguished from the much larger area which contributed to it as a royal *burh*, and the starting-point of any enquiry into the former must be the Domesday Survey. The account which Domesday Book gives of Buckinghamshire is prefaced by an account of Buckingham.¹⁹ Following the usual

Midland practice, the county town stands 'above the line', though in 1086 Newport Pagnell was also a borough. North of the Thames the commissioners normally dealt in this way with one and only one town in each county; thus Buckingham was not treated as *Terra Regis* or as anyone else's land. In legal theory all land was held either by the king or of the king, but it was characteristic of the county towns that some burgesses held directly of the king, while others held their burgages through other lords. In Buckingham the king had 26 burgesses who take the place which villeins occupied in his rural manors and even in Aylesbury. There were also 11 bordars and two slaves. Bishop Remigius of Lincoln, successor to Bishop Wulfwig of Dorchester, held the borough church, with land for four ploughs which belonged to it. On this land there were no burgesses but 3 villeins, 4 bordars and 10 cottars; very humble folk, though not servile. There follows a list of 27 burgesses and their lords; one of the 27 had passed to the king when Earl Aubrey's fee reverted to the Crown. At first sight one might even suspect that the two groups of burgesses were identical,²⁰ but probably the record intends to contrast them. Such approximate equality in numbers can be matched elsewhere. At Warwick the king had 113 houses in his demesne while other lords had 112, which belonged to lands which they held outside the borough and which were valued there.²¹ In Gloucester (c.1100) there were 300 houses in the king's demesne and 313 belonging to other lords; and as late as 1455 these numbers had changed only to 310 and 346.²²

F. W. Maitland's comments were characteristically incisive:

Or turn we to a small town:- at Buckingham the barons have 26 burgesses; no one of them has more than 5. The page that tells us this presents to us an admirable contrast between Buckingham and its future rival. Aylesbury is just an ordinary royal manor and stands under the rubric *Terra Regis*. Buckingham is a very petty townlet; but it is a borough, and Count Hugh and the Bishop of Coutances, Robert of OUILLY, Roger of Ivry, Arnulf of Hesdin and other mighty men have burgesses there.²³

There is nothing in Domesday to indicate directly that these burghal holdings were appurtenant to manors, still less to any particular manor; their values are given only under the town itself. But the Domesday Commissioners' instructions did not indicate how they should deal with such linked burgages. Often, as at Warwick and Winchester, they reported the linkages, but at Buckingham burgages outside the demesne were listed under their lords. Nevertheless a clear manorial connexion can be seen in most cases when the list is examined in detail.

The Bishop of Coutances had three burgesses whom Wlward son²⁴ of Eddeva held. This is Wulfward White; he and his wife Eadgifu (also 'Eddeva', though this may be a coincidence) held large estates which they kept through Queen Edith's influence while the Queen lived, and probably until Wulfward's death not long before 1086. Their estates were then divided into three portions, one of which their son-in-law, Ælfsige (Alsi) was allowed to keep during the king's pleasure, while the others went to the Bishop and to Walter Giffard, soon to be Earl of Buckingham. The only estate in Bucks in which the Bishop of Coutances is shown as succeeding 'Wlward cild' rather than his wife is *Stewkley*, and the three burgesses may be attributed to that manor.

Earl Hugh had one burgess, who had been a man of Burcard of *Shenley*; 'de Senelai' is interlined, possibly to make the manorial link explicit. There are two manors of *Shenley*; Burcard held one as King Edward's thegn, the other specifically as his housecarl, but in both he was succeeded by Hugh, earl of Chester, who held *Shenley* as one fee of the honour of Chester, later the honour of Arundel.²⁵

Robert de Olgi had one burgess who had been a man of Azor son of Toti (a Dane, from his name; he was a man of Queen Edith and a housecarl). Robert succeeded Azor in *Water Stratford* and part of *Shalstone* (Scaldeby in Danish), which together represent a 12-hide estate. Probably the burgess should be credited to the former place.

Roger de Ivry had four burgesses who were men of the same Azor. Roger succeeded Azor in *Radclive*, and nowhere else except the small and now lost manor of *Lesa* or *Esses* near Brill, which lay mostly in Oxfordshire and was nearer to Oxford than to Buckingham. *Radclive* adjoins Buckingham, the parish extending to within half a mile of Buckingham church; upstream, the ancient borough boundary did not extend far into the countryside. *Hasley*, which has been held with *Radclive* since the Conqueror's time and has lost its identity, came even closer to the town centre, but *Hasley* had belonged before the Conquest to *Thori*, who had no burgesses in Buckingham.

Hugh de Bolebec had four burgesses who were men of 'Alric'. Ælfric son of Goding held *Bourton*, *Hillesden*, *Beachampton* and *Akeley*, and at each of them his successor was Walter Giffard; Hugh de Bolebec was the most important of Walter's under-tenants in Bucks, and probably a relative, since the Giffards named Osbern de Bolebec as the founder of their house.²⁶ Walter was a Domesday commissioner; his park at Long Crendon is mentioned in the Survey, and soon afterwards he became earl of the county (in which he had 300 hides) and received the royal borough of Buckingham, but he had no burgesses there in 1086. The Hugh who held *Bourton*, *Hillesden* and *Beachampton* of Walter Giffard may well have been Hugh de Bolebec himself, but he did not hold *Akeley*. This case would seem to support the view that in some cases the link between burgess and lord had originally been based on personal commendation, and that even after the Conquest, when the link had become tenurial and heritable, there was not necessarily a formal link with a particular rural manor. Walter stood in Ælfric's shoes and took over any burgesses associated with his estates, but was free to dispose of them and their burgages to his kinsman and tenant Hugh de Bolebec.²⁷ It is suggested that before the Conquest there was one burgess for (or from) each of Ælfric's four estates around Buckingham.

Manno the Breton had four burgesses who

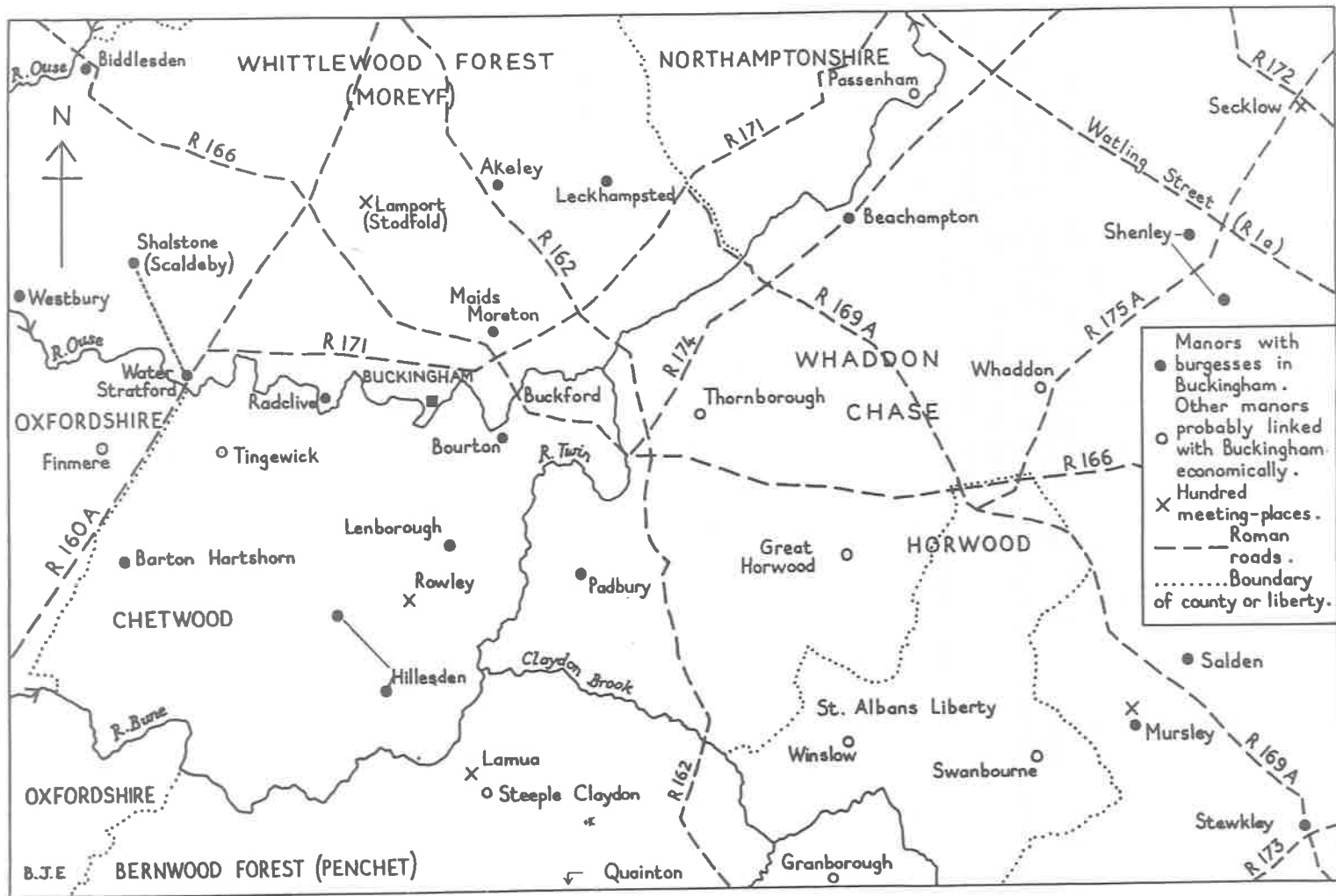


Fig. 1. Buckingham and its urban field.

were previously men of Eddeva wife of Syred. They were peculiar in owing no dues to the king and paying very low rents to the lord. In this case no manorial link can be made out unless it is at *Padbury*, where (exceptionally) Manno's antecessor is not named; it was an estate of 20 hides, much run down when received.

Hascoit Musart had one burgess who was a man of Azor son of Toti. Here the link is unambiguous but rather far from Buckingham; this particular succession occurred in one-fourth of *Quainton* in Ashendon hundred, but nowhere else.

Ernulf de Hesding had one burgess who was Wilaf's. This is an interesting case, as Ernulf was the Bishop of Bayeux's under-tenant at *Barton Hartshorn* and in *Lenborough*, both in Rowley hundred, and both previously held by Wiglaf, a thegn of Earl Leofwine. Clearly therefore it was possible for an under-tenant to have a burgess, before as well as after the Conquest; the succession had been at this level, but as far as the burgess was concerned he was two steps removed from the king, not three. Ernulf is said to have raised the value of Barton to £14 a year, compared with 40s when received and 60s in King Edward's time. Such a rise would be unprecedented, and one suspects that £14 is a scribal error for £4. If a figure looks wrong, usually it is wrong. Very few Bucks manors in 1086 exceeded their pre-Conquest value, but at Barton 30s was coming from pasture. Even this is quite exceptional, and indicates that at Barton Ernulf had escaped from the routine of subsistence agriculture and was engaged in stock farming or cattle-breeding with success. The onerous hidage (10 hides though there were only 3 plough-teams) suggests that the change had occurred at least a generation earlier. Pasture for cattle (*pecuniam*) is mentioned in the account of Buckingham itself and at Wing, but nowhere else in Bucks unless (as seems likely) the sums raised *de remanenti* on the royal demesnes of Aylesbury and Wendover came from pasture rather than from meadow. As Lenborough had been (though it was no longer) a more valuable manor than Barton, and as it was a township of Buckingham, Wiglaf's burgess should perhaps

be credited to it rather than to Barton, though in 1086 he may have been of more use to the latter manor.

William de Castellan had of the Bishop of Bayeux's fee two burgesses who were formerly men of Earl Leofwine. This represents yet another variation. William is not otherwise on record in Buckinghamshire; in this case there were now two intermediaries between the king and the burgesses, and their yearly payments to the king were no longer being made. The manors in which Bishop Odo succeeded Leofwine (as opposed to one of Leofwine's men) were Weston Turville, Chalfont St Peter, 'Dilehurst' (Leofwine's demesne manor in Cippenham), Dunton, and *Leckhampstead* in Stodfold hundred. Of these the last seems much the most probable, if a specific manorial link is sought.

One burgess of Earl Aubrey's fee is listed among the burgesses who had lords other than the king, though his only payment was to the king, since Aubrey's estate at *Biddlesden* in Stodfold had recently reverted to the Crown; it is shown at the end of the *Terra Regis* list.

Lewin of Niweham (Leofwine of Nuneham Courtenay) had five burgesses, and he had them in King Edward's time. This is the largest group, and no doubt it stands last only because Leofwine was an Englishman. For the same reason his considerable estates and those of 'Alsi' stand last in the Buckinghamshire Domesday, along with other king's thegns and almsmen. Leofwine held estates at *Maid's Moreton* in Stodfold hundred, *Beachampton* in Rowley, *Mursley* and *Salden* in Mursley hundred, and one virgate in Wavendon; this last hardly counts as a fifth estate, and if so one of the four, probably Maid's Moreton, must have had two burgesses.

The 27 burgesses who were not on the king's demesne may thus be tabulated as follows:

No. of burgesses	Lord in 1086	Lord in 1065	Suggested manor to which appurtenant	Miles from Buckingham	Yearly payment to lord (pence)	Yearly payment to king (pence)
3	Bp. of Coutances	Wulfward	Stewkley	11	78	11
1	Earl Hugh	Burcard	Shenley	9	26	5
1	Robert de Olgi	Azor son of Toti	{ Water Stratford Radclive	3	16	5
4	Roger de Ivri			1	90	13
4	Hugh de Bolebec	Ælfric	{ Bourton Hillesden Akeley Beachampton	1	28	12
				3		
				3		
				5		
4	Manno the Breton	Eadgifu	Padbury (?)	2½	29	-
1	Hascoit Musart	Azor son of Toti	Quainton	9	16	2
1	Ernulf de Hesding	Wiglaf	Lenborough (or Barton Hartshorn)	1 (3)	24	3
2	Wm. de Castillan (of Bp. of Bayeux's fee)	Earl Leofwine	Leckhampstead	6	16	3 (in 1065)
1	King (Earl Aubrey's fee)	(Azor son of Tored?)	Biddlesden	6	?	2
5	Leofwine of Nuneham	Leofwine of Nuneham	{ Maids Moreton Beachampton Mursley Salden	1	48	12
				5		
				8		
				9		

One can only guess at the apportionment of dues within the sub-groups of burgesses. Omitting the man on Earl Aubrey's fee, the nature of whose payment is uncertain, it is clear that Buckingham was unusual in having at least five pre-Conquest rates of *landgafol* for burgages outside the demesne, ranging from 1*d* (or perhaps 1½*d*) to 5*d*. Two burgesses, the men of Earl Hugh and Robert, paid 5*d* each to the king, and also paid the highest rents to the lords. Three burgesses may have paid 4*d* (two of the Bishop of Coutances's men and one of Roger's), eleven 3*d* (one of the Bishop's, three of Roger's, the four of Hugh de Bolebec, Ernulf's man and two of Leofwine's) and four 2*d* (Hascoit's man and three of Leofwine's). The remaining six paid nothing to the king, though two had paid 3*d* between them before the Conquest. A uniform charge was more usual, and was characteristic of the newer boroughs. At Hereford there were two rates, 7½*d* within the walls and 3½*d* outside; at Southampton three, 6*d*, 8*d*, and 12*d*. The normal rates, whether uniform or not, were well above the Buckingham figures; for example, we find

8*d* at Exeter, an average of 9½*d* at Wallingford and Calne, a uniform 10*d* at Malmesbury, 15*d* at Bath, and 16*d* at Canterbury.²⁸ It is suggested that at Buckingham we have a precious relic of the low but well-graduated customs which were fixed when the Crown was seeking to promote a mixed borough community after the crisis of 942, and that the Buckingham dues are unlikely to have been changed thereafter. In the Confessor's time the total was 66*d* from 22 burgesses not on the demesne. In contrast, the yearly payments to the lords in 1086 totalled 371*d*. It appears that the Crown had ceased to collect dues of less than 2*d* a year. This would account for the two who had been Earl Leofwine's men, and probably for the four who were Eadgifu's, since their payments to Manno were only 7*d* and 8*d* a year, the lowest in the list, probably because their tenements were of small value when the associated rural manor had been destocked. A *gafol* of a penny was collected at Lincoln, but there it was uniform throughout the city (de una quaque {mansione} unam denariam id est Landgable).²⁹

Over the whole range of payments, there is an obvious relation between the old *gafol* paid to the king and the lord's rent in 1086. With the guesses made above as to the apportionment of dues within groups of burgesses, the correlation coefficient comes out as 0.81; for the Norman lords, and omitting those who no longer paid *gafol*, the estimated correlation between the two payments is c.0.6. The ratio of rent to *gafol* ranges from 3.2 for Robert de Olgi to as much as 8 for the enterprising Ernulf de Hesinde and Hascoit Musart. In the century or more since the payments to the king were fixed, different town-houses had changed considerably in relative value. Robert de Olgi's charge looks low, both absolutely and in relation to the king's due; Roger de Ivri's charges look high on both scores, yet Robert and Roger are not likely to have pursued divergent policies at Buckingham. They were sworn brothers, and were in partnership at Stowe, which was waste when they received it, and where they had restored one and a half of the five ploughlands.³⁰

James Tait considered that 'at Norwich and Thetford, probably too at Buckingham, there is evidence that the burgesses, with few exceptions, were free to commend themselves to other lords, but did not thereby transfer the king's customs to them.'³¹ Most of the Buckingham burgesses outside the royal demesne are described as 'men' of the thegns, and this can be taken to imply commendation. The usual entry is in the form

. . . i *burgensem qui fuit homo Burcardi (de Senelai)*

but there are variants:

. . . iii *burgenses quos tenuit Wluuard filius Eddeue*

. . . i *burgensem qui fuit Wilaf*

These forms of words may point to something more than voluntary commendation, and may constitute Tait's 'few exceptions', but the Domesday clerks were so prone to slight alterations in their formulae that one cannot be sure that they meant to reproduce pre-Conquest distinctions. In any event the tenurial relationship between burgesses and lord was binding and permanent by 1086.

F. W. Maitland concluded that 'it seems generally expected that the barons of a county should have a few burgesses apiece in the county town. This arrangement does not look new. Seemingly the great men of an earlier day, the *antecessores* of the Frenchmen, have owned town-houses; not so much for their own use, as houses or "haws" (*hagae*) where they could keep a few "burgesses".'³² He went on to argue that the original burgesses had been fighting men rather than traders and craftsmen, and that the link with rural manors was a burden to landowners rather than a pecuniary benefit. He could have added that Alfred's scheme for alternating levies did not apply to the men who defended the boroughs. But at Buckingham such an obligation would have lost its *raison d'être* after 942, and if the arrangements found in the eleventh century originated in a duty imposed on the magnates of the county to maintain town-houses, we should expect those houses to be attached to manors in all parts of the shire, as at Winchester. In fact several of the principal Norman landowners in Bucks (the Count of Mortain, Miles Crispin, William Peverel, William son of Ansculf) had no burgesses. It is perhaps significant that they also had no land near Buckingham. Of the 27 burgesses not on the demesne, some 16 can be associated with manors within five miles of the town, and the remainder with manors within eleven miles. 22 can be linked with places within the Three Hundreds of Buckingham, 3 with Mursley hundred, 1 with Seckloe, and 1 with Ashendon hundred. Thus we have a rough delimitation of the area which looked to Buckingham as its market centre. It is clearly much smaller than the area attributed to Buckingham for purposes of defence. Even if the Chiltern Hundreds are written off as contributory to the minor stronghold of *Scaftesege* (Shaftsey or Sashes) on the Thames rather than to Buckingham in the early tenth century, on the garrison theory we might have expected some continuing link with the Vale of Aylesbury. In fact the notables of the Vale made little or no use of Buckingham as an urban centre in the eleventh century, the one exception being Azor son of Toti in respect of Quainton; and this exception almost proves the rule, as Azor's other estates were near Buckingham.

Maitland's latest editor, Edward Miller, considers that 'an equally strong case was made out against Maitland's view of the military origin of the Domesday boroughs and a military explanation of their "tenurial heterogeneity".'³³ But a distinction should be drawn. One can accept Maitland's conclusion that a fairly high proportion of the Domesday boroughs had a military origin, and would not have originated otherwise, while rejecting the hypothesis that military considerations still underlay their tenurial diversity in the eleventh century. On this point Buckingham provides a critical test. Its social and economic sphere of influence was necessarily smaller and more compact than the elongated county which maintained its defences; and its burgages outside the demesne are associated with the former, not the latter.

The view taken here is that the burgesses, and the thegns to whom they commended themselves between the mid-tenth century and the Conquest, were concerned to promote the borough as a trading centre. Once the Danes of the South Midlands were fully reconciled to English rule, Buckingham was no longer needed to defend a frontier, and unless it had found a new role it would have reverted to a village. To make it a successful market town, serving a developing though still sparsely populated area, required both the active support of local magnates and positive action by the Crown. The extent of local support is indicated by the table given above. Active support by the Crown is evidenced by the king's burgages; by the low and carefully graded king's dues; by the Chetwode-Hillesden charter of 949,³⁴ with its concern for the development of the hinterland; by the establishment of a mint before it was really necessary; and especially by the assessment of the town north of the Ouse at only one hide at a time when most county towns had hidages of 20 or more. The project must have had considerable support at the court of Eadred and Edwy.

It seems likely that the promotion of the borough can be associated with Æthelmær, the king's reeve. His family had been lords of an extensive woodland area south of Buckingham

a generation before, but had exchanged it with Æthelflæd for another forest estate, perhaps not too willingly. After her death in 918 it had come into the hands of the Crown, and in 949 Eadred restored it to his reeve with fiscal privileges which made it a kind of enterprise zone. He is described in a vernacular footnote to his charter as most dear (*leofast*) to the king.³⁵ It is suggested that he was permitted and encouraged to secure local support for the new town of Buckingham from those thegns within his jurisdiction who held estates within a day's return journey; that he set them a personal example, placing the burgage associated with his own estate of Hillesden at the mid-point (3*d*) of the scale of charges; and that he had reasonable success in associating the borough with its landward area, except in the liberty of the Abbot of St Albans (Winslow, Granborough, and Horwood) whose interests lay nearer home, and in the adjacent Whaddon Chase.

After the peace of 942, the establishment and maintenance of town-houses in the borough could no longer be seen as a military duty, but rather as a commercial and somewhat hazardous undertaking which the king's reeve could encourage but could hardly compel. An undertaking by the Crown to sponsor burgages equal in number to those sponsored locally would be a strong inducement, reinforced by the fiscal concessions granted to the borough. The Church developed its own land in Prebend End and Gawcott, south of the river, which were within the bounds of the medieval borough but were separately taxed.

Æthelmær retained his influence at court at least until 956, the year of discontent, when he attended three of the five sessions of the Witan; his position in the witness lists of the thegns ranged from second to fourteenth, averaging fifth but tending to decline. He was sheriff of Buckinghamshire in all but name, though the name was not used until the end of the century. Thus he could seek support within but not outside the area within which he represented the Crown. Hence the new town was not at the centre of its 'urban field', though it would have served conveniently a corner of Oxfordshire.

Of the 25 strongholds which had been fortified by Edward the Elder or his sister Æthelflæd, 8 became municipal boroughs, including Buckingham, and 7 of the 8 had mints in the tenth century. Athelstan's statute on coinage³⁶ provided that no one was to mint money except in a *port* or market town (nan man ne mynetege butan on porte); subject to this, there could be a moneyer in every borough (*burh*). Buckingham was both town and borough, but the writer was informed by the late Mr R. H. M. Dolley that the first known coin minted at Buckingham dates from c.956, so that this development also may be attributed to Æthelmær. It had previously been supposed that the Buckingham mint was one of those established to facilitate the great recoinage of 973. Before that date it would have been hardly more than a status symbol to mark the town's position as both *port* and *burh*, but Edgar's coinage reform³⁷ gave it a new justification. All existing coins were demonetized, and had to be exchanged for new silver pennies, which in their turn were to be withdrawn and replaced after six years. Thus the weight of the silver penny could be varied as a matter of monetary policy, its fineness being maintained, so that it could circulate by tale within the realm and by weight outside. The use of foreign coins within the realm was prohibited. On each recoinage everyone with current money was obliged to walk or ride to a mint to exchange it. If the distance were more than (say) 12 or at most 15 miles he would need a night's lodging. To avert this trouble and expense, which would have endangered popular acceptance of the new monetary policy, many small mints were founded or reactivated. Buckingham was half-way between Oxford and Northampton, but too far from either, and on similar grounds mints were authorized at Aylesbury and probably at Newport Pagnell.

It happens that no coins of Edgar from the Buckingham mint are known, but there are two of Edward the Martyr (975-8) with a common reverse die which was being used in a very rusty state.³⁸ The 'Reform' issue of 973 remained current until 979, and the average weights for mints in English Mercia, East Anglia, and the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw are all close to

21 grains.³⁹ The Buckingham coins weigh only 18.4 and 16.1 grains, and Tunulf was perhaps fortunate to retain office as moneyer until the fourth sexennial recoinage of 991. In that year the unhappy decision was taken to pay Danegeld on a national scale, so that the 'Crux' type of Ethelred is much commoner, especially in Scandinavia, than the preceding issues. Three of Tunulf's 'Crux' pennies survive (two in the royal collection at Stockholm, one in the British Museum) with weights of 22.3, 23.7, and 24.1 grains. For this issue the Mercian average was about 25.5 gr., while the Five Boroughs were striking around 22.5 gr. By the English standard, Tunulf was still striking light. He was replaced before the next recoinage in 997. We know that Æthelwig, the king's reeve at Buckingham (effectively, the sheriff) was 'dear and precious' to King Ethelred in 995;⁴⁰ his influence outweighed that of the ealdorman, and it was probably he who secured the services of Sibwine to reorganize the mint during the summer of 997. Instead of Tunulf's uncouth mint-signatures *Bucm*, *Bucig*, and *Bucin*, Sibwine used the correct form *Buccinga*. The intention was apparently to replace the Crux design by a diademed Crux variety with sceptre; this is found only for Aylesbury, Buckingham, and Totnes, and other transitional types are known. The design finally adopted later that year was the 'Long Cross', and for this a new moneyer, Ælfwig, was appointed at Buckingham (was he one of the reeve's family?). He used the mint-signature *Bucci* at a time when even careful scribes were ceasing to geminate the *c*, and his five surviving coins (three now in Scandinavia) have weights between 26.0 and 26.7 gr., compared with the mode of 26.5 gr. for this type. There is then a gap at Buckingham until 1017, when Ælfward appears there and at Aylesbury for the Quatrefoil issue, which had been delayed by the conflict between Cnut and Edmund Ironside. Ælfward's only known Buckingham (*Bui*) coin is 23 gr.; he was soon succeeded by Leofric, whose 8 surviving coins (6 now at Stockholm, 2 at Copenhagen) have weights averaging 14 gr. The national distribution of the weights of Quatrefoil pennies has distinct peaks at 15-16 and 20-22 gr., and it is thought that the heavier weight standard was the earlier. Ælfward clearly

precedes Leofric, who continued to strike coins at Buckingham for the next two recoinages. Leofric's weights were unstable and his mint signatures increasingly blundered, including *Buc*, *Buci*, *Bruc* (*Bbuc?*), *Buh*, and even *Duh*. The style of most of his coins points to a connexion with Oxford. For the 1023 'Painted Helmet' type he used the better form *Bucci* and was striking close to the appointed standard, which was now enforced everywhere. For 1029, the 'Short Cross' issue with *Buc*, he is represented only by a cut halfpenny. Minting at Buckingham lingered on under Brihtwine (*Bu*), Leofwine (*Bu*, *Bucin*, *Bucii*, *Bucn*, and even *Bucicn* in our own Museum), Theodred (*Buc*), and Aestan (*Bucie*), and ceased with the issue of 1059–62.

Of the four distinguishing features of the late Old English borough (market, special court, heterogeneity of tenure and possession of a mint) Buckingham retained the first three after the Conquest, and these were enough to secure its permanence. The neighbourhood, which had been harried by Vikings in 1010,⁴¹ did not escape their successors in 1065; Domesday

Book records widespread destocking in the area and even some depopulation, not fully made good by 1086 save in exceptional manors such as Barton Hartshorn. In the Confessor's time the borough rendered only £10 to the Crown by tale. The Conqueror demanded £16, and that in blanch silver, which added about a shilling in the pound to the burden; but this increase was much less than that in the royal demesnes of Aylesbury, Wendover, and Brill.⁴² When the Pipe Rolls begin in 1130, Buckingham had its own *iudices* (lawmen), but had so far fallen out of the list of county boroughs that no aid (*auxilium* or *donum*) was expected from it. This was a special tax, probably of pre-Conquest origin, which was collected from county towns and a few other ancient boroughs. The burgesses of Wallingford fell out of the list in that year after defaulting thrice *pro paupertate eorum*, and probably Buckingham had already been exonerated. Nevertheless the borough survived because a market centre was needed for the large area which was too far from Oxford, Northampton, Bedford and Aylesbury; but it had to be nursed through a sickly and prolonged infancy.

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3. The Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* (1964) 311.
4. *A.S. Chron.* (A) s.a. 921 (mechanical error for 920).
5. The Viatores, *op. cit.*, 313.
6. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire* (1925) xi.
7. *Recs. Bucks* xxvi (1984) 17.
8. Browne Willis, *Hist. and Antiq. Buckingham* (1755) 280. At p. 2 he calls the hundred Stodfield or Stofield, and derives it 'from *Stow*, a Parish universally known'; but Lamport was a distinct vill, and the lords of Stowe never acquired it.
9. Domesday Book i. fo. 219b, 221, 225b. The relationship between early markets and hundredal organization has been examined by R. H. Britwell, 'English markets and royal administration before 1200', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* xxxi (1978) 183–96.
10. Mawer and Stenton, *op. cit.*, 48–9.
11. Cf. E. Ekwall, *Studies on English Place-names* (1936) 180 ff.
12. W. de G. Birch, *Cart. Sax.* ii. 407–8; Sawyer, no. 426.
13. R. A. Hall, *Recs. Bucks* xx (1975) 100–33.
14. J. G. Hurst, 'Saxo-Norman Pottery in East Anglia', *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.* xlix (1956) 43–70. Hurst stated at a seminar in 1973 that there was no firm evidence that any St Neots ware was earlier than the 10th cent.
15. M. Farley, *Recs. Bucks* xx (1976) 153–291 at p. 230.
16. M. Biddle, *Therfield*, 101.
17. Browne Willis, *op. cit.*, 24. He may have relied on Bishop White Kennett, *Parochial Antiquities* i. 57, who speaks of 'those parts of Buckinghamshire which border on the north-east parts of this county [Oxfordshire]' and cites J. Leland, *Coll. MSS* ii. 240, 244; but the whole account seems to have been confused with the raid through Bernwood in 917.
18. The subjection of the Danes to the Northmen was first explained by A. Mawer, 'The Redemption of the Five Boroughs', *Engl. Hist. Rev.* xxxviii (1923) 551–7.
19. Domesday Book i. fo. 143.
20. Browne Willis, *op. cit.*, 26: 'Here are all the twenty-seven Burgesses of this Burgh, obnoxious to, and under the protection of, Foreign Lords and patrons; as Dr Brady observes in his *History of Burghs*, p. 9.' To the same effect, Muriel T. Vernon and D. C. Bonner, *Buckingham* (1969) 19.
21. D.B. i. fo. 238.
22. *Rental of Gloucester*, ed. W. H. Stevenson (1890) x.
23. F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (Fontana edn., 1960) 221–2.
24. J. H. Round commented: 'It is clear that this was Wulfward White, but whether 'filius Eddeve' is correct or an error of the Domesday scribe it is difficult to say' (*V.C.H. Bucks* i. 217 n. 1).
25. *V.C.H. Bucks* iv. 445–8. The manor was redivided in

- 1285, and the two halves were successively Vaches and Verdons, Great and Little or Lower and Upper or Nether and Over Shenley; they are still separate civil parishes as Shenley Church End and Shenley Brook End.
26. J. H. Round in *V.C.H. Bucks* i. 213.
 27. Domesday Book tends to identify burgesses with their tenements: hence the '140 burgesses less half a house' at Huntingdon, D.B. i. fo. 203a.
 28. J. Tait, *The Medieval English Borough* (1936) 90-1.
 29. D.B. i. fo. 336a; Hemmeon, *Burgage Tenure*, 69.
 30. For the relationship between Robert and Roger, see Dugdale, *Baronage* i. 460 and Round's comments in *V.C.H. Bucks* i. 213-14. They later gave Stowe to a college of secular canons which they had founded in the castle of Oxford, and which was absorbed by Osney Abbey.
 31. Tait, *op. cit.*, 89.
 32. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 220.
 33. *Ibid.*, 18.
 34. P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968) no. 544, at p. 199.
 35. A. H. J. Baines, 'The Chetwode-Hillesden Charter of 949', *Recs. Bucks* xxiv (1982) 1-33 at pp. 4, 8-9.
 36. II Athelstan, c. 14, 14.2 (trans. *Engl. Hist. Docs.* I (1955) 384).
 37. R. H. M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, 'The Reform of the English Coinage under Eadgar', in *Anglo-Saxon Coins*, ed. R. H. M. Dolley (1961) 136-68.
 38. D. J. Elliott, *Buckingham* (1975) 6-11 gives a catalogue of coins from the Buckingham mint.
 39. V. J. Butler, 'The Metrology of the late Anglo-Saxon Penny: the reigns of Æthelræd II and Cnut', in *Anglo-Saxon Coins*, 195-214, tabulates weights in the form of frequency tables arranged chronologically according to types.
 40. Sawyer, *op. cit.*, no. 883; trans. F. M. Stenton, *The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period* (1955) 77-8.
 41. See n. 2.
 42. D.B. i. fo. 143, 143b; *V.C.H. Bucks* i. 231-2.