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**THE DANISH INVASION OF ENGLAND  
AND THE ENGLISH RECONQUEST**

**BY  
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**THESIS**

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## THE DANISH INVASION OF ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH RECONQUEST

At the beginning of the ninth century Anglo-Saxon England was beset by a new enemy. Vikings from Denmark began ravaging the coasts in search of easy wealth. England was divided into a number of small kingdoms which were continually at war with one another. As a result England was weak and virtually defenseless against these raids. After a half century of raiding, the Danes mounted a full scale invasion aimed at conquering the isle as well as plundering. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms failed to present a unified defense and the Danes subjected most of England to their rule. Nevertheless, Wessex led by Alfred the Great persevered. Eventually the Danes lost their momentum and the remaining free English were able to take the offensive. Alfred's heirs led the reconquest of the Danish held territory and successfully united England into one kingdom. This period of reconquest was over by Athelstan's death in 940. After nearly a century of conflict against the Danes the English kingdom was firmly established.

For three centuries Anglo-Saxon England was militarily isolated from the rest of Europe. The period of migrations had ended and the Germanic tribes were settled. Then, in the last decades of the eighth century the situation in Europe changed and England was once again attacked by

Germanic peoples.

By the middle of the eighth century the Scandinavian countries had developed the technology necessary to build their longships.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the only other northern nation with any naval power, Frisia, was defeated by Charlemagne leaving the seas empty. Meanwhile, Scandinavia was one of the most backward areas of Europe. Politically it resembled the ancient German tribes more than the kingdoms of contemporary Europe. This state of disunity, where power was held by petty chieftains, was particularly conducive to raiding for plunder. However, the Scandinavian kingdoms were beginning to take shape, and the kings were able to use their greater authority to curb interregional raiding. Regardless, the people of Scandinavia gradually realized that they had the ability to raid anywhere in the rest of Europe, thus in the final decade of the eighth century the coast of England was first visited by the Danes. In England they saw a land which was rich, weak, and agriculturally better than their native land.<sup>2</sup> These men were looking for a better life and had no qualms about taking it from weaker opponents.

The Anglo-Saxons saw the marauding heathen in a slightly different light. To the ecclesiastics they were a punishing force sent by God because sin was rampant in England.<sup>3</sup> For the peasants, warfare and being pillaged was nothing new, the Anglo-Saxon aristocrats had been doing it

for three centuries now. That it was conducted by foreigners was a novelty, nothing else. Furthermore, the Danes were a very similar people to the Saxons. After all they originated from the same cultural stock.

The Danish invaders caused a perplexing problem for the Anglo-Saxon aristocrats. The quickness of their raids made the Vikings almost untouchable. The defense of the land was in the hands of the ealdorman and his shire's militia, unless the situation got out of control when the king would oppose the enemy.<sup>4</sup> Even when the king came out the Danes were consistently able to escape without a battle and sail away. The problem of how to stop the raids was never satisfactorily resolved by the aristocrats, and the Viking movement lasted until the situation in Scandinavia changed.

Regardless, the early raids did not alter England; the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms continued to fight among themselves as before. Wessex and Mercia, the two strongest states, fought for dominance of the other southern kingdoms for more than thirty years after the raids had begun. Their conflict was only ended when Egbert decisively beat the Mercians in 825 and then again in 829.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards the Mercians were never strong enough again to oppose the West Saxons, and the two states began to develop closer ties. In 853, Aethelwulf, Egbert's son and now king of Wessex, aided Burgred of Mercia against the Welsh. At the conclusion

of the joint campaign Burgred married Aethelwulf's daughter.<sup>6</sup> This expedition demonstrates the changing situation in England; it is the first time that the two nations had ever fought side by side. The political marriage firmly tied the two kingdoms together, and was the first step toward unification of the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon states. Furthermore, the marriage was a result of the need for closer cooperation against the Danish raiders as well as a demonstration of Egbert's power at the time.

The raids were becoming a serious problem. In 850 for the first time a Danish army spent the winter in England.<sup>7</sup> In the following year the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle recorded that an army from 350 ships put Beortwulf, king of Mercia, to flight.<sup>8</sup> Later in the year it was completely destroyed by Aethelwulf at Aclea, yet Beortwulf's defeat was the first time that an English king was "put to flight." This was by far the largest Danish army to attack England thus far. The Danish threat had become strong enough to defeat the second most powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdom. However, the Danes were unable to leave their supply lines unguarded, and were thus forced to face the West Saxon army before they could exploit their victory. Aethelwulf's decisive victory at Aclea saved Anglo-Saxon England from attempted conquest for another fifteen years.

Until this attack the Danish raids were conducted by small bands of men. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle recorded

twelve attacks by heathen armies before the invasion in 851.<sup>9</sup> This is by no means all of the raids,<sup>10</sup> and it is impossible to determine how many small raids were carried out between 789, when the crews of three ships killed the reeve of Dorchester, and 851. Of the recorded raids the Danes attacked in groups of no more than 35 ships. How many fighting men a Viking longship carried is a debated question, but a conservative estimate would be about 30 men. Assuming that the figure of 35 ships is not an overly inflated one, these raids would have been carried out by armies of up to 1000 men. The size of the army of 851 has surely been exaggerated, but it is clearly a break with the earlier raids, and it undoubtedly was conducted by thousands, not hundreds of Danes as has been suggested.<sup>11</sup> Before Aethelwulf's victory the raids had been an almost yearly occurrence, afterward they became less common until a generation later when the Great Army invaded.

It is interesting to note that the lull after the 851 expedition coincides not only with a great English victory, but also with the end of a strong government in Denmark. In 854 Horik, the Danish king, was defeated and the entire royal house was wiped out.<sup>12</sup> The kingdom disintegrated. No one held enough power to stop piracy and prevent adventurers from enriching themselves. England was attacked less in this period because the chieftains fought in Denmark in an effort to gain power and wealth in their own territory.

In England the West Saxons were finally uniting the kingdoms which Egbert had conquered. Mercia remained independent, but Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Essex were all annexed into Wessex.<sup>13</sup> The subjugation of these small kingdoms was inevitable by this time and their annexation was never challenged. Aethelwulf ruled over the entire kingdom until 855, when he made a pilgrimage to Rome, leaving his eldest son Aethelbald in command. When he returned in 856 Aethelbald refused to relinquish the kingdom. So, to avoid war, Aethelwulf remained king in only Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Essex. Two years later when he died, his second son Ethelbert became king of the small southern states and the kingdom created by Egbert remained divided. Finally, in 860 Aethelbald died and Ethelbert became king of a united Wessex. Five years later he died and his brother Ethelred attained the throne. It was also the year that the Great Army of Danes invaded.

Without warning the lull ended, the raids ceased and an effort at conquest was begun. The Great Army landed in East Anglia in the autumn of 865. Here they acquired horses and made peace with the East Anglians. The following year they moved to York. According to legend the leaders of the Army, Ragnar Lothbrok's sons, were seeking revenge for the death of their father. This supplies a handy reason for the expedition to York, but the real reason would seem to be Northumbria's political state. The king of Northumbria, Osberht, had been removed and Aella, a

king whose royalty was questionable, gained the throne. These two were still fighting when the Danes occupied York in November.<sup>14</sup> The march from East Anglia to York caught the Northumbrians completely by surprise, and they were unable to end their fighting and attack the Danes for another four months. This delay, and undoubtedly their disunity caused their downfall. The Danes routed the Northumbrians on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 867,<sup>15</sup> ravaged the country and then set up an Englishman, Egbert, as king.

With Northumbria under their control the Danes went to Nottingham in Mercia, where they built a fortress for protection. Once again Burgred and his councillors asked the West Saxons for help. In response king Ethelred and his brother Alfred led the West Saxon army to Mercia. Together the Mercians and West Saxons besieged the Danes in their fortress, but were unable to force a battle. Eventually the Mercians made peace and the Danes escaped back to York unharmed. The Army remained in York for a year and then rode into East Anglia in the autumn of 869, building a fortress at Thetford. Shortly thereafter they defeated an East Anglian force at Hoxne and killed Edmund, the last of the East Anglian kings. As in Northumbria, the Danes then ravaged the land and probably set up their own king, although there is no mention of who ruled in East Anglia for the Danes.

By the fall of 870, East Anglia was subjected enough to

allow the Danish army to move again; this time they tried Wessex's defense. Late in the year the Danes built their customary fortress at Reading. Meanwhile a small contingent of the army started raiding the countryside, but they were opposed and defeated by the ealdorman of Berkshire at Englefield. Four days later King Ethelred and Alfred led the West Saxon army to Reading where, after a fierce battle, the Danes held the battlefield. After this victory the Danes were confident enough to leave their fortress and move deeper into Wessex. Within four days, however, the West Saxons had regrouped and met the whole Danish army at Ashdown. Both armies were divided into two divisions; Alfred and Ethelred commanded the English, and the Danes were commanded by earls in one division, and their kings Bagsecg and Halfdan in the other. Halfdan was one of Ragnar Lothbrok's sons, the other, Ivar the Boneless, disappeared before the army moved into Wessex, his fate unknown.<sup>16</sup> Another bloody battle ensued, however this time the West Saxon armies held the battlefield. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle the Danes "were put to flight and many thousands were killed,"<sup>17</sup> including Bagsecg and five Danish earls. Clearly this was an exaggeration; within a fortnight another battle occurred. Again the Danes felt strong enough to leave Reading, they marched south and met Ethelred and Alfred at Basing where they defeated the English. Two months then passed without any recorded engagements, during which time the Danes

probably returned to Reading to spend the winter. After this period the Danes and West Saxons fought at an unidentified location known as Meretun where, despite heavy losses, the Danes eventually beat the English force.

In the spring of 871, probably late in April, King Ethelred died.<sup>18</sup> His brother Alfred was chosen as the successor. The youngest of Aethelwulf's sons was the only reasonable choice; he had proven himself an able leader in war, at this time nothing else mattered.

Shortly before Ethelred died another Danish army arrived. A "great summer army"<sup>19</sup> joined the now depleted army at Reading. This reinforced army scattered a small English force while Alfred was at Ethelred's funeral.<sup>20</sup> One month later Alfred fought the Danes at Wilton, despite an initial success the West Saxons were beaten by the Danes. Alfred and the West Saxons were forced to make peace. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle there were nine major battles fought against the Danes in this year, besides the forays led by single ealdormen, king's thegns and Alfred before he was king.<sup>21</sup> The majority of the conflicts were thus not recorded, nevertheless the account of this year's engagements is by far the most documented.

In the autumn of 871 the Danes left Wessex and made their winter quarters in London. The year in Wessex had been unproductive for the Danes. Despite a number of victories, they had failed to completely defeat the strongest of the

Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. They had sustained heavy losses, and their first defeats since they had landed in East Anglia six years earlier. The Danes were undoubtedly glad to leave Wessex with what they could. Nevertheless they were not ready to leave England or even just hold what they had acquired. A fresh army had joined the veterans of six years; the desire for conquest and plunder had not diminished.

The Danish army remained in London throughout 872 receiving an immense tribute from the Mercians in return for peace.<sup>22</sup> As usual they moved in the autumn, this time they went to Torksey in the Mercian province of Lindsey. During this year the people of Northumbria revolted against the Danish backed Egbert, who fled to Mercia for protection.<sup>23</sup> In his place Ricsige another Englishman, probably ruled, although Roger of Wendover states that he did not become king until Egbert died in 873.<sup>24</sup> The Danes had thus lost their hold on Northumbria, seemingly causing the Danish move north, and the entry in the A, B, and C versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under 873. This entry says "the army went into Northumbria"<sup>25</sup> before spending the winter in Torksey. These versions, however, were all made in the southern part of England. The D, and E versions which were probably compiled in York<sup>26</sup> do not mention any Danish expedition into Northumbria, neither do the other important northern sources; Simeon of Durham and Roger of Wendover. In this light we must conclude that the Danes

did not return to Northumbria in 872.

From Torksey the Danes forced the Mercians to make peace again. In the following year the Danes moved to Repton in the heart of Mercia. From here they drove Burgred out of Mercia, "conquered all that land... And the same year they gave the kingdom of the Mercians to be held by Ceolwulf, a foolish king's thegn; and he swore oaths to them and gave hostages, that it should be ready for them on whatever day they wished to have it."<sup>27</sup> It is unfortunate that the details of the lengthy campaign against the Mercians have been left unrecorded. The Danes spent three years in defeating Mercia. During the first two they were not strong enough to attack the center of Mercia, instead they laid waste the eastern edges of the kingdom. Finally Mercia was weakened sufficiently for the army to force the decisive battle. Burgred's Mercia was no longer strong enough to stand alone, and Wessex was too battered to give them any aid. Once they had driven Burgred out of Mercia the Danes followed their usual policy: "conquer the land" and then set up a puppet king.

In the autumn of 874, Halfdan took part of the Great Army into Northumbria and spent the winter by the Tyne River. From here they easily reconquered the land and ravaged the Picts and Britons until 876 when Halfdan and the Danes with him took over Northumbria and settled on the land.<sup>28</sup> England had been plundered time and again, war was

becoming unprofitable so the Danes turned to farming. In southern England this was not the case yet, and when Halfdan went north in 874 most of the Great Army went from Repton to Cambridge.

Three Danish kings, Guthrum, Oscetel, and Anwend led the army to Cambridge where they spent 875. During the summer Alfred attacked a fleet of seven Danish ships, capturing one and putting the rest to flight.<sup>29</sup> The raids had not completely ceased, neither, however, had the attacks of the army; late in the year they launched a second attack on Wessex. The Danes slipped past the West Saxons, built their fortress at Wareham, and raided the surrounding countryside. Alfred was again forced to make peace with them. He took hostages and accepted oaths in return for allowing the Danes to leave Wessex. Even so, the Danes broke their promises and the mounted part of the army escaped by night and took Exeter before any help could reach the city. A little later the rest of the army left Wareham and went to Exeter. In order to avoid the West Saxon army the Danes went by sea, but they encountered a terrible storm which destroyed 120 ships at Swanage. This was a devastating loss for the Danes and the army in Exeter was compelled to make peace with Alfred who had trapped them at Exeter. Again the Danes gave Alfred as many hostages as he wanted and swore great oaths, however, this time they left Wessex. The much diminished army reached Mercia at

harvest time and divided the kingdom into two parts, they retained the eastern portion, which they shared out among themselves, and the remaining part was returned to Ceolwulf to rule as he saw fit.

The entire Danish army did not participate in this partitioning of Mercia, and in the first weeks of 878 Guthrum led an army from Gloucester back into Wessex. This was the first time a Danish army had moved in midwinter, and Wessex was caught completely offguard. Like East Anglia and Northumbria who were caught unprepared, Wessex's defense crumbled. Many people fled across the sea. Alfred, the last of the royal Anglo-Saxon kings hid in marshes and woods eventually making a stronghold at Athelney, on a small island in the Parret River. While Guthrum occupied Chippenham another army landed in Devon. This force, led by the brother of Halfdan and Ivar, was completely destroyed in a battle at Countisbury.<sup>30</sup>

Just after Easter, 23 March, Alfred established himself at Athelney and began openly opposing the enemy. Finally in May, five months after Guthrum's surprise attack, he emerged and with the fyrd from Wiltshire, Somerset and part of Hampshire he faced and defeated the Danes at Edington, fifteen miles south of Chippenham.<sup>31</sup> The Danes fell back to Chippenham where they were besieged by the English for a fortnight. The Danes were again forced to make peace, they gave hostages and Guthrum agreed to be baptised.

Three weeks later Guthrum and 30 other important Danes were baptised at Aller, for twelve days they remained with Alfred, feasting and exchanging gifts. In the autumn Guthrum's army moved to Cirencester in Mercia where it remained until late in 879, when it returned to East Anglia. During 879 another Danish army assembled at Fulham and joined with Guthrum's army, however when Guthrum went to East Anglia the new force quit England and turned upon the Frankish Empire, Wessex was spared for the time being. Meanwhile Guthrum's army shared out the land and settled in East Anglia.

The West Saxons had persevered. For the next five years what remained of Anglo-Saxon England was free from incursion by a Danish army. Small raids continued, but the Great Army had changed occupations, and established what would later become known as the Danelaw.

Some historians have claimed that the Great Army had no plan of conquest.<sup>32</sup> They perceive the Danish movements as a sort of land based raiding expedition, aimed at forcing the English to buy peace. This does not satisfactorily explain the movements of the Great Army. Each move of the Army was carefully considered according to the existing circumstances. Admittedly the Great Army changed its base each autumn and plundered the countryside around it, however, no army of this size could have remained in the same place for long without facing starvation. Also, this

army was made up of Vikings, men whose livelihood was raiding; if they did not receive some plunder they were apt to go elsewhere to find it. Land was nice, but gold was better; the Great Army moved around England until they had bled the English of their wealth and grown tired of the life of a plunderer, then the Danes settled on the land which they had conquered.

The Danes took advantage of the Anglo-Saxon weaknesses whenever possible. They landed in East Anglia because it was the weakest of the kingdoms, the one least able to oppose them thus allowing the Danes to become organized. The attack upon Northumbria was made at the most opportune time; civil strife, which had recently begun, made a well planned, unified defense unlikely. After the Danes had used East Anglia they returned and crushed the kingdom as soon as it was advantageous to do so.

The campaigns against the two most powerful Anglo-Saxon states were conducted in a different manner. Here the Danes would lay waste the edge of the kingdom, sapping strength from the English until they were confident of victory, at which time they marched into the heart of the kingdom forcing the English into a final decisive battle. This policy was successful in Mercia, only in Wessex was the Great Army unable to subject the Saxons. Even after achieving complete tactical surprise the Danes were not able to hold Wessex against the indefatigable Alfred and

the West Saxon fyrd.

Clearly then, the Danes did pursue a plan in their attempt to subjugate the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. They sought the chance for plunder, but the underlying goal was never compromised. By 880 the Great Army was tired, they had conquered more land than they could possibly use, and had despoiled England from Exeter to Strathclyde. They had virtually nothing to gain from further campaigns. Thus the last of the Great Army either left for the Continent or settled in the conquered land.

Wessex had survived the Great Army, nevertheless attacks from other Danish raiders continued. In 882 Alfred went to sea and fought the crews of four Danish ships; he captured two and the other two surrendered to him.<sup>33</sup> Two years later part of an army which had been raiding of the Continent landed at Rochester. Alfred confronted this new threat quickly, but the Danes refused to fight and escaped to their ships. The army then split, with some of the Danes going back across the sea, and the rest making peace with Alfred. This second group broke their peace and raided the land south of the Thames with the support of the Danes in East Anglia.<sup>34</sup> The force remained at Benfleet for a time, but it also eventually left England. In 885 Alfred retaliated against the East Anglian Danes by sending a fleet from Kent to the Stour River in East Anglia where the English seized sixteen ships and killed the crews. On the

way back however, the English were attacked by a large naval force and the Danish fleet was victorious.<sup>35</sup> Alfred also retaliated by attacking and retaking London after ravaging the surrounding land. This was the first area to be reconquered from the Danes, and since it used to be Mercian, Alfred entrusted it to Ealdorman Ethelred, the ruler of English Mercia. Ceolwulf had disappeared from Mercia sometime after 877 when the Danes divided Mercia. By 883, Ethelred had become the ruler of Mercia, and was already acknowledging Alfred as his lord.<sup>36</sup> In 886 after Alfred occupied London "all the English people that were not under subjection to the Danes submitted to him."<sup>37</sup> As the head of the English people, Alfred made the famous treaty with Guthrum, in which the boundary between Danish and Anglo-Saxon England was drawn. The boundary was a line up the Thames, up the Lea to its source, straight to Bedford, then along the Ouse to Watling Street, after this the line was not established.<sup>38</sup> This treaty was made sometime between 886 and 890 when Guthrum died, interestingly it does not include Ethelred as a ruler of the English. From all indications he seems to have ruled Mercia as a province of Wessex. His connection with Wessex was strengthened even further when he married Aethelflaed, Alfred's daughter, sometime before 889.<sup>39</sup>

England was relatively peaceful after Alfred occupied London until 892. It is probably during this time that Alfred began changing the system of defense in Wessex.

Amazingly he had been king for seven years before the disaster of 878, yet he had not changed the fyrd and defense, both of which had proved to be inadequate. Finally, during this respite Alfred reorganized the system. In the Saxon kingdoms every free man had always owed the king three basic duties; bridge work, fortress work and service in the fyrd.<sup>40</sup> Evenso, the fyrd had major weaknesses; the peasants would not fight far from their shire's border or for long periods of time, it also had a tendency to disintegrate at harvest time. These problems were overcome by Alfred. He split the fyrd into two parts, so that one half was always in the field and the other was at home, protecting the district and caring for the fields. This simple solution was strengthened by the building of fortresses known as boroughs throughout Mercia and Wessex for protection. The Danes had taught the English the value of a good fortress, and Alfred correctly saw that if the English built fortresses the Danish raids would become virtually useless. Due to continuous occupation most of his fortresses have been lost. Nevertheless remaining sites indicate that these boroughs enclosed about twenty acres of land inside an earthen rampart, and a citadel within this area.<sup>41</sup> The boroughs were garrisoned by the local members of the fyrd who were not on duty. With these changes the fyrd was more willing to venture farther from home and still feel that their homeland was secure.

The success of Alfred's changes can clearly be seen in

the flexibility of the English armies in the following years. Furthermore his changes "were copied by the most powerful European monarch of the next generation, Henry the Fowler."<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately his plans were not completed in time to protect the English in 892 when another large Danish army came to England. This army had been fighting in the Low Countries and Northern France since 879, and had been badly defeated in both of the last two years. The Danes crossed from Boulogne to Kent using 250 ships "in one journey, horses and all" according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.<sup>43</sup> The army defeated some peasants who were inside a half completed fortress and built a fortress for itself at Appledore. Meanwhile a smaller army which arrived in 80 ships, and was led by Haesten, landed in Kent and built a fortress at Milton. In 893 Alfred obtained oaths from the Danes in Northumbria and East Anglia and he also took hostages from the East Anglian Danes to insure that they would keep the existing peace. Regardless, while Alfred went and confronted the Danish armies in Kent the settled Danes broke their newly made oaths and aided the invaders.<sup>44</sup>

Alfred managed to come to terms with Haesten's army, Haesten's children were baptised and the army retired to Benfleet in Danish territory. The larger army, however, slipped past Alfred and raided Wessex as far as Hampshire and Berkshire. After amassing a great amount of booty they headed for Essex, where Haesten was protecting their ships.

Before they could get far Edward, Alfred's oldest son, caught up with and defeated them at Farnham, thus recapturing the lost booty. The defeated Danes were routed and attempted to cross the Thames where there was no ford. They ended up stranded on Thorney, a small island in the Colne River.<sup>45</sup> Here the English army besieged them until their term of service ended and their provisions ran out. Despite this, the Danish king was wounded and could not be moved, so when Ethelred brought a new force from London the Danes made peace, gave hostages and then joined Haesten at Benfleet.

While Ethelred and Edward were engaged against the Danes at Thorney, a force of some 100 ships from the Danes in Northumbria and East Anglia sailed south and besieged the borough of Exeter. Simultaneously another 40 ships went north and besieged a fortress on the coast of Devon. When Alfred, who was marching to relieve Edward's men, heard of this he turned and went to Exeter, only sending a small relieving force eastward. Alfred reached Exeter and the Danes fled to their ships apparently without a battle. Nevertheless, Alfred spent about six months achieving this. In 894, the Danes ravaged the coast near Chichester, however, the local militia routed them, killing hundreds and capturing some of their ships.

Back in the east an English army composed of the reinforcements from Alfred's army, the London garrison and

the militia from eastern Wessex attacked the Danish camp at Benfleet. At the time Haesten's army was raiding in Mercia for the second time, and the army which had recently arrived from Thorney was quickly defeated.<sup>46</sup> The English captured the Danish fortress, ships, women and children, and booty. The expedition was a complete success; the spoils were brought to London and the ships were either destroyed, taken to London or to Rochester. Haesten's wife and children, who had been baptised, were returned to Haesten along with gifts, despite the fact that he had been raiding the domain of his son's godfather, Ethelred.

After this crippling loss and generous gesture by the English, the Danes reorganized further east at Shoebury where they built a new fortress. With reinforcements from East Anglia and Northumbria the Danish army set out along the Thames and then up the Severn in a long distance raid. While this army headed west the Anglo-Saxons were collecting a huge army to face it. The English force, led by Ealdorman Ethelred of Mercia, Athelhelm of Wiltshire and Aethelnoth of Somerset, consisted of king's thegns from parts of Wessex, Mercia, and some Welsh nations. This conglomerate army overtook the Danes at Buttington along the Severn and besieged them there. After many weeks the Danes, faced with starvation, fought their way out and hastily returned to Shoebury. Still, before winter came, the Danes organized another raid. Yet another army was collected from

Northumbria and East Anglia and they marched by day and night until they reached Chester. The English were unable to oppose the Danes until they were already well established there. Nevertheless, by destroying the surrounding districts the English forced the Danes to leave their fortress. Thus the Danes slipped into Wales and spent the winter ravaging the length of Wales.<sup>47</sup>

In the summer of 894 they left Wales and marched across Danish territory in order to avoid the English. The army went to Mersea island, where the ships had been collected. Late in the year they rowed into the Thames estuary and up the Lea, establishing a new camp some twenty miles north of London. During the summer of 895 the only opposition given to the Danes was from an army of peasants which was easily beaten off. In the autumn, however, Alfred arrived to protect the harvest, and blocked the Lea further upriver to prevent the Danes from leaving with their ships. In response the Danes forsook their ships and marched across Mercia once again, building a new fortress at Bridgnorth. The English army closely pursued them, and the men of London took the abandoned ships. The Danes held out in Bridgnorth until the summer of 896 when the army split up, some of the Danes went to East Anglia, some went to Northumbria and the rest returned to the Continent. The army which had campaigned in England from 892 until 896 had posed no serious threat to the English kingdoms. Its movements were unplanned and

the damage which it had inflicted upon the English was not too great.<sup>48</sup>

For the rest of the year the Danes in East Anglia and Northumbria were content to raid the coast of Wessex. To protect against such raids Alfred had some new ships built; longer, swifter, steadier and higher than the Danish ships. To handle these ships Alfred employed a number of Frisians.<sup>49</sup> The new ships had their problems, particularly with their draft which was not as shallow as the Danish longships. Nevertheless the start of the English navy had some successes, and during the summer of 896 no fewer than twenty ships were destroyed along the southern coast.<sup>50</sup>

For the rest of Alfred's reign England was free from any major attacks. Alfred died on October 26, 899, after ruling Wessex for almost thirty years. On his death his son Edward succeeded to the kingdom, taking the title "King of the Anglo-Saxons," a claim which Alfred never made, undoubtedly out of deference for the Mercians.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately his succession was not undisputed; Aethelwold, the son of King Ethelred felt he had a better claim to the throne. He rode to Wimborne, land held by his family, and seized the area. Hoping to quickly put down the rebellion King Edward led the army to Badbury, a prehistoric earthwork which was close to Wimborne. When Aethelwold saw this he abandoned his followers and fled to the Danish army in Northumbria where he was recognized as king. This title

acknowledged his personal rank, but the A versin of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is the most biased in Wessex's favor, repeatedly ignors his newly gained title.<sup>52</sup> In the autumn of 901, Aethelwold arrived in Essex with a large fleet from "across the sea."<sup>53</sup> In 902 he induced the East Anglians to break the peace, and together they harried across Mercia eventually reaching Cricklade. Here they crossed the Thames and plundered the region around Braydon. Loaded with booty they returned to East Anglia. In retaliation Edward ravaged the land between the Dykes<sup>54</sup> and the Ouse all the way to the fens. As the English left East Anglia the Kentish contingent lagged behind the rest of the army. The Danes quickly saw the opportunity to attack the stragglers and a bloody battle ensued at Holme, now unidentifiable. When it ended the Danes still held the battlefield, but the East Anglian king, Eohric, and the athelings Aethelwold and Brihtsige had been killed. Thus ended Aethelwold's claim to the throne of Wessex.

For the period following the battle at Holme until 909 we are left almost completely in the dark. We do know that in 906 Edward established a peace with the East Anglians and Northumbrians at Tiddingford. Why this peace was made, and whether Edward "decreed"<sup>55</sup> the peace or was "forced by necessity"<sup>56</sup> to make peace is impossible to determine. Interestingly it is during this period that the English began buying land from the Danes at King Edward's orders.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately the purpose of this policy has also been forgotten, however, it can not have been, as some suggest, a serious attempt to reacquire the Danish held land. It would have been inconceivable to think of such a policy, much less implement it.

In 909 the campaigns begin to be recorded again; King Edward sent an army composed of Mercians and West Saxons into Northumbria where they harried the land for five weeks. A peace was established, which the Danes promptly broke the next year, and attacked Mercia. At the time Edward was assembling a fleet in Kent, but he sent an army after the Northumbrian Danes who, apparently expecting no concerted opposition, had raided as far south as the Bristol Avon. The English army, drawn from both Mercia and Wessex, caught up to the spoil-laden Danes near Tettenhall where they decisively defeated the Danes on 5 August.<sup>58</sup> In the battle three Danish kings and a number of other nobles were killed.<sup>59</sup>

The following year Ethelred, the Ealdorman of Mercia, died, and Aethelflaed, his widow, and King Edward's sister was recognized as "Lady of the Mercians" and became the effective ruler of Mercia. Aethelflaed's claim to the position was aided by Ethelred's gradual death. She was already directing the building of fortresses in the previous year, and Edward had been commanding the Mercian fyrd since 909.<sup>60</sup> This enabled Edward and Aethelflaed to prevent any

ambitious Mercian from claiming the leadership of Mercia. On Ethelred's death King Edward succeeded to the lands around Oxford and London, beginning the peaceful assimilation of Mercia into Wessex which would be concluded on Aethelflaed's death in 918.

Following the period of apparent inactivity the English began the reconquest of the Danish settled lands. "Battle and manoeuver were supplemented by a highly intelligent use of geography and well-sited fortifications."<sup>61</sup> These fortresses were used as both defensive outposts to prevent Danish raids and as bases for advancing against the Danes. Between 907 and 916 Aethelflaed and Edward built at least twenty boroughs. Rather than simply raiding the Danish lands, the English would advance, build a borough, and effectively conquer the surrounding countryside. This was a dramatic change in policy, and must surely have resulted from the success of Alfred's system of defense.

Chester was the first of these boroughs to be built, it had been deserted when the Danish army temporarily occupied it in 893, but in 907 the Mercians refortified it.<sup>62</sup> In 910 Aethelflaed built a borough at Bremsbyrig, now unidentifiable. Finally her fortress building began in earnest. In November of 911, Edward ordered a borough built at Hertford. Then in late May or June of 912, he led an army to Maldon in Essex where he stayed while a fortress was constructed at Witham. While he oversaw the building

at Witham a second fortress was built at Hertford. These boroughs brought much of the old Essex back under West Saxon rule, and the people submitted to Edward.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile Aethelflaed built boroughs at Scergeat, now lost, and Bridgnorth where the Danes had crossed the Severn at least twice in recent expeditions.<sup>64</sup> The next year she built fortresses at Stafford and Tamworth, which was within a day's march of two major Danish armies. In 914 two more were constructed, at Eddisbury and Warwick. These four boroughs created a strong line of defense against the Danish armies which were based at Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Northampton. In 915 Aethelflaed had the boroughs of Chirbury, Runcorn and the now inidentifiable Weadbyrig built. These are the last recorded fortresses built by the "Lady of the Mercians." She sent an army against the king of Brycheiniog in Wales the following year in retaliation for a raid into Mercia.<sup>65</sup> Then, in 917, with her country secure behind a line of boroughs, Aethelflaed was ready to help her brother reconquer Danish held England.

During these years Edward had also been busily working toward the reconquest, but since he did not need to fortify two frontiers he was able to achieve more in these years. In 913 a Danish army from Northampton and Leicester ravaged the area of Hook Norton. On their way back they met up with another band of raiders and rode against Luton.

Here the Danes were faced by the district's fyrd and completely beaten. The English recaptured all that the Danes had taken. In 914 a new army crossed the channel from Brittany and harried the coast of Wales and the Severn estuary. The army disembarked and raided the district of Archenfield. Once again the English fyrd came out in defense of their land; the men from Hereford, Gloucester and the area put the Danes to flight. Defeated, they retired to an enclosure, but were eventually forced to give hostages and leave the English lands. As an added precaution Edward garrisoned the coast from Cornwall to the Avon. Nevertheless, as the Danes withdrew they were bold enough to raid the coast of Somerset on two different occasions, the English opposed them both times and few of the Danes escaped. The Danes stayed on an island throughout the summer, but a scarcity of food forced them to sail first to Dyfed, then to Ireland where they remained.

With this threat removed Edward returned to his fortress building. In early November he had two fortresses built at Buckingham, one on each side of the river. These were clearly meant to protect the land which had been ravaged by the Danes in the previous year. Furthermore they completed the line of defense which now stretched from the Mersea River to Essex. While the Buckingham fortresses were built, Earl Thurketil, who commanded the Danish army of Bedford,<sup>66</sup> all the prominent men of Bedford and many men

from the Danish army in Northampton came to Edward and accepted him as their lord. In the autumn of 915, Edward capitalized on their submission by marching to and occupying Bedford. He stayed there for a month and built an English borough on the south side of the river across from the fortress which he had just occupied. The following summer Edward went to Maldon and built a borough there to back up the fortress at Witham. Also in this year Earl Thurketil and all who wanted to follow him left England for France, 'with Edward's peace and support.'<sup>67</sup>

The submission and then departure of Earl Thurketil is a clear indication of Edward's growing power. The momentum which the Danes had held for so long was nullified by the English boroughs. Raiding in England was becoming an exercise in futility, and subjugation to the English was beginning to appear inevitable. Those Danes who still enjoyed being Vikings left England. Edward made a wise political move when he helped Earl Thurketil leave: a large area of land was secured relatively bloodlessly, and a precedent of leniency for those who peaceably submitted was set.

By 917 Aethelflaed had completed her fortress building, and subdued the Welsh. She was finally able to advance against the Danes. Before the first of August, Aethelflaed had taken the Danish borough of Derby after a heavy fight within the gates.<sup>68</sup> While the Mercians attacked Derby,

Edward was in the midst of his most successful campaigning year. He started 917 by building a borough at Towcester, within ten miles of the Danish army at Northampton. He then built a fortress at an unidentifiable Wigingamere. During the summer the Danes from Northampton, Leicester, and an ill-defined "north" attacked the borough of Towcester.<sup>69</sup> The English defense held out long enough for reinforcements to arrive and the Danes were forced to withdraw.<sup>70</sup> Shortly thereafter they raided the area between Aylesbury and Bernwood forest, retreating before the English could oppose them.

Meanwhile, a Danish army from East Anglia and Huntingdon advanced to Tempsford and built a fortress there. From here the Danes attacked the borough of Bedford, but the militia garrison came out and beat them. Having failed here, a large army of East Anglian and Mercian Danes attacked Wigingamere. Again they were unsuccessful and they retreated after pillaging the countryside. In retaliation a great English army was assembled and attacked Tempsford. The English captured the fortress, killing the East Anglian king and the earl of the Huntingdon Danes along with many who fought to the death. The campaign was a complete success.

In the autumn, before the Danes could reorganize, an army drawn from Kent, Surrey, Essex and the nearby boroughs besieged Colchester. Once again the English succeeded in

taking the fortress and all that was in it. For some reason the English did not hold and refortify Colchester, but withdrew. Despite two crippling defeats the East Anglians managed to raise another army which was joined by a Viking host which agreed to assist the Danes. This army besieged Maldon but failed to take the borough before reinforcements came. For the fourth time in 917 a Danish army had failed to take an English borough. Furthermore their withdrawal was executed so poorly that the reinforced English came out and forced a battle. The disorganized Danes were annihilated by the Saxons.

In the midlands, meanwhile, Edward marched to Passenham, where he remained while the borough of Towcester was repaired and provided with a stone wall. At this time the Northampton Danes followed the example of Earl Thurketil's army; Earl Thurferth and his men submitted to Edward, accepting him as their lord. Edward thus gained the region extending as far north as the Welland.<sup>71</sup> Then Edward called out the second contingent of the army to replace the men whose period of duty was over. This force took the Danish fortress of Huntingdon, refortified and garrisoned it, and Edward received the submission of the people of the district. With these major achievements completed, Edward turned his attention back to East Anglia. In early November he advanced to Colchester, and the borough was garrisoned. The people of the area and the Danish army submitted to him.

Finally, the now isolated Cambridge Danes accepted him as lord and protector.

Here this long and eventful year comes to a close. Edward and Aethelflaed had reconquered all of East Anglia and a great deal of the Midlands. Only the Danish armies of Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford and Lincoln remained south of the Humber. For the Danes 917 was a disastrous year. The independent armies failed to work together on any coherent strategy. The army of Derby fought and lost by itself, unaided by the other Danish armies. The English boroughs were attacked in a completely random manner; attacks were neither coordinated nor sustained, and had any borough fallen the Danes would have been unable to exploit their success. The Danes had changed; instead of the bold armies which conducted sudden long distance raids, we see demoralized men whose attacks were acts of frustration which tended to end in defeat.

The English continued their advance in 918, and the opposition put forth by the Danes remained ineffective. Sometime in late May or early June King Edward advanced to Stamford and built a fortress on the south side of the Welland, across from the Danish fortification. Instead of fighting, the Danes submitted to Edward. Also in the early part of the year Aethelflaed "peacefully obtained control of the borough of Leicester," according to the Mercian Register.<sup>72</sup> Immediately afterward the people of York

submitted to her authority. Undoubtedly this was a last gasp attempt to secure protection from a new enemy; Norse Vikings from Ireland were taking an avid interest in northern England. The Danes in York recognized Aethelfaeld's Mercia as the strongest nation in the vicinity and one which could adequately supply them with protection against the Norsemen. More interesting is the fact that they submitted to a Mercian ruler, but refrained from seeking the protection of Edward, who claimed to be King of the Anglo-Saxons, even when he acquired Mercia less than a month later.

On 12 June 918 while Edward was at Stamford his sister Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, died at Tamworth. Immediately upon hearing this Edward marched to and occupied the borough. Only by good fortune was he able to quickly neutralize any Mercian thoughts of independence. Anglo-Saxon England was finally combined under one king, yet less than one century earlier Wessex and Mercia had been enemies. Edward's bloodless seizure of Mercia was the culmination of the move toward political unification of Saxon England. In 829, King Egbert, the last king who was acclaimed Bretwalda, conquered Mercia, however he only held it for one year. This was the last time the two states fought each other. In 853, Burgred, king of Mercia, was given Aethelwulf's daughter in marriage. In 868 there was another political marriage; Alfred, Aethelwulf's son married Ealhswith the daughter of a Mercian ealdorman and

a member of the royal family of Mercia.<sup>73</sup> Finally Aethelflaed had married Ethelred. Throughout this period of growing connection through marriage, the Mercians and West Saxons were constantly fighting side by side against the heathen armies. Thus when Edward occupied Tamworth in June of 918 he was easily able to impose his rule upon the Mercians. Rarely in history are two nations brought together so smoothly. The final unification of Anglo-Saxon England which for centuries had seemed hopeless had been flawlessly conducted in an amazingly short period of time.

Our knowledge of Aethelflaed's role in the reconquest of England is only known from the scanty record of the Mercian Register. Her accomplishments were pointedly ignored by the Anglo-Saxon Chroniclers, yet the Chronicle is full of detail for these years.<sup>74</sup> Some of the versions of the Chronicle later incorporated the Mercian Register into their manuscripts. Nevertheless, the original version clearly avoided any mention of Aethelflaed. The Anglo-Saxon Chroniclers were concerned solely with King Edward and his achievements. Recording the Mercian gains would have detracted from Edward, as a result the accomplishments were callously ignored.

Edward stayed at Tamworth only long enough to insure the loyalty of his new Mercian subjects and accept the submission of the Welsh. The kings of Gwynedd, Dyfed and the

land between Gower and Merioneth<sup>75</sup> and all the Welsh people recognized Edward as their lord. He then turned his attention back to the east and advanced against the borough of Nottingham which he successfully stormed. In the wake of this victory all the people who then lived in Mercia submitted to him. This advanced the frontier to the traditional boundary between the northern and southern English; the Humber.<sup>76</sup>

Thus far Edward had had no problems with the conquered Danes, and he was confident enough of their continued loyalty to rebuild Nottingham and garrison it with both Danish and English soldiers.<sup>77</sup> His policy of considering the Danes as equals to his English subjects enabled his swift reconquest to last. There are no recorded revolts by the Danes against King Edward.

After Aethelflaed's death her daughter Aelfwynn was permitted to remain in Mercia, where she held some authority. However, Edward decided not to allow her a chance to gain the position which Aethelflaed had held. In the winter of 918<sup>78</sup> she was "deprived of all authority in Mercia and taken into Wessex."<sup>79</sup> as the Mercian Register bleakly notes. From thence forward Mercia is considered just another region of England.

In the autumn of 919 Edward led an army to Thelwall where he built a borough. As this army built the fortress another army advanced to Manchester and repaired the Roman

fortress there. In 920 he moved back to Nottingham and constructed a borough on the opposite side of the Trent River from the existing fortress, he then connected the two by a new bridge. He did not remain here long; he proceeded to Bakewell and built another borough. These northern fortresses were meant to protect Edward's realm from the Norse Vikings who now held the north.

Ragnald, a Viking leader, had been fighting in northern England off and on since about 913. By 919 he conquered York and the surrounding district.<sup>80</sup> The following year his cousin Sihtric ravaged the Peak District with an army from Dublin destroying Davenport<sup>81</sup> -- thus the building of a borough at Bakewell late in 920. What Edward's armies did next is unknown, but still in 920 he accepted the submission of most of the northern rulers: the king of the Scots, the king of the Strathclyde Welsh, Ealdred<sup>82</sup> of Bamburgh, Ragnald of York and everyone then living in Northumbria. As Sir Frank Stenton points out each of these rulers profitted from this meeting and acknowledgement of overlordship. For Ealdred and the king of the Scots it was protection from more powerful enemies which brought them to Edward. Ragnald received acknowledgement of his newly acquired kingdom. The king of the Strathclyde Welsh got confirmation of his control over part of the old Northumbria which he claimed.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, Edward was the real benefiter of the agreement. Although his power

in these kingdoms was only nominal, it extended his sphere of influence, and strengthened his claim to sovereignty over all of England.

Due to the agreement made in 920 Edward was freed from battle for the following years. In 921 he built the borough of Cledeburgh, at the mouth of the Olwyd River,<sup>84</sup> further strengthening his coast against the Norse raiders from Ireland. Besides the building of this borough Edward apparently spent the last years of his reign organizing his vastly enlarged state. The conquered regions were divided into shires following the highly successful system in Wessex. The creation of these shires was done in a completely arbitrary manner,<sup>85</sup> and undoubtedly caused some local resentment. How much disaffection existed at the time was left unrecorded, but in 924 Edward went to Chester to put down a local revolt which was supported by the Welsh.<sup>86</sup> Shortly after Edward suppressed the uprising at Chester he died at Farndon on 17 July 924.

Edward's son Athelstan was accepted as king by the Mercians as well as the West Saxons, and crowned at Kingston on September 4, 925.<sup>87</sup> Athelstan grew up in Mercia in the care of Ethelred and Aethelflaed, and was thus the first West Saxon king to be close to the Mercian aristocracy. With this tremendous advantage Athelstan won the complete support of his Mercian subjects; no Mercian revolts were to mar his reign. The process of assimilating the Danish

settled regions was also well under way, and many Danish earls were members of his Witan. Except for cultural differences Danish England was treated no differently than Saxon England. The success of their acceptance of English rule is borne out by the fact that Athelstan never had any problems with their loyalty.

While England south of the Humber was becoming accustomed to being unified, any claim to the kingdom of York was lost. Ragnald died in 921 and his cousin Sihtric acquired York, but did not recognize Edward as his lord.<sup>88</sup> Sihtric retained this independence until 926 when he married one of Athelstan's sisters at Tamworth on 30 January.<sup>89</sup> Just over a year later Sihtric died, this "gave Athelstan the opportunity of joining Northumbria, which belonged to him both by ancient right and recent marriage alliance, to his own part."<sup>90</sup> Under these pretexts Athelstan claimed the kingdom of York and drove out Olaf, Sihtric's son, and his uncle Guthfrith. Olaf fled to Ireland, but Guthfrith went to Scotland. Athelstan immediately threatened Constantine king of the Scots and Owain king of Cumbria with war if they did not hand over Guthfrith and recognize him as their lord. In response Constantine, Owain and Ealdred of Bamburgh established a peace with him at Eamont on 12 July. However, Guthfrith escaped from the Scots and marched to York in hopes of taking the city. He was unsuccessful and eventually surrendered to Athelstan, was

treated as a guest and permitted to return to Ireland. In order to prevent anyone else from holding York, Athelstan razed the defenses which the Danes had made. In this year he also reaffirmed his control over the Welsh. At Hereford the Kings of the Northern Welsh<sup>91</sup> submitted to him agreeing to pay a yearly tribute. He turned next to the West Welsh,<sup>92</sup> forced them to leave Exeter and made the Tamar River the boundary of their province.

Athelstan had become supreme king of all England. Nevertheless, by 934 he was having problems with the kings in Scotland, and in the summer of this year he ravaged Scotland with both the army and the navy. This campaign succeeded in keeping the Scots quiet for another three years, however, in 937 Athelstan's northern opponents combined forces in hopes of regaining their independence. Olaf, Guthfrith's son, who was now king of Dublin, united an army from Ireland with the kings of Scotland and Strathclyde. This immense host opposed the English army, led by King Athelstan and his brother Edmund, at Brunanburh, an unidentifiable place somewhere in Aethelstan's kingdom. Here, after a fierce day-long battle the English force annihilated their enemies. The Chronicle boasted that never before in England's history "was a greater slaughter of a host made by the edge of the sword."<sup>93</sup> Among the dead at Brunanburh were five kings, seven of Olaf's earls and a son of Constantine the king of the Scots. The English lost

many also, the most prominent of whom were two sons of Aethelweard, King Alfred's youngest son.<sup>94</sup> Olaf fled back to Ireland with the battered remains of his army, and the Scots were finally subdued. Athelstan reigned in peace until his death on October 27, 939.

Edmund succeeded to the kingdom of England, which had not been so unified since the days of Rome's greatness. Athelstan's victory at Brunanburh ended the advancement of the English armies; the period of reconquest had come to a close. Athelstan and Edmund ruled over one kingdom where a multitude had existed for centuries.

The success of the Danes was a direct result of the fragmented nature of Anglo-Saxon England. Even before the arrival of the Vikings, the Heptarchy was clearly an ineffective way to govern Britain. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were exhausted from constant warfare, and further weakened from feeble leadership. The Heptarchy also caused an inability to unite to face a common danger. In such an atmosphere the Danish invaders were able to destroy one state after another.

The survival of Anglo-Saxon England was entirely due to the strength of Wessex and the West Saxon kings whose wisdom and ability prevented England from complete collapse. Eventually the Danes settled down on their conquered lands, however, the same problem of disunity which had proved fatal for the English developed in Danish England. Thus

when the English turned to the offensive they too met with success. The West Saxons reconquered the land, and through the greatness of their kings, the diverse peoples were fused into one nation.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Gwyn Jones, A History of the Vikings, (Aylesbury: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 183.
- <sup>2</sup> Jones, p. 201.
- <sup>3</sup> Jones, p. 196.
- <sup>4</sup> Frank M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 244.
- <sup>5</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, and David Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 171.
- <sup>6</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 174.
- <sup>7</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 173.
- <sup>8</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 173.
- <sup>9</sup> These raids occurred in 789, 793, 794, 835, 836, 838, 840, 841, 842, 843, 845, and 851. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, pp. 166-173.
- <sup>10</sup> Roger of Wendover, "Flores Historiarum," in English Historical Documents, ed. Dorothy Whitelock and David Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 255-256.
- <sup>11</sup> Jones, p. 219.
- <sup>12</sup> Stenton, p. 242.
- <sup>13</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 171.
- <sup>14</sup> Roger of Wendover, p. 256.
- <sup>15</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 176.
- <sup>16</sup> Stenton, p. 248.
- <sup>17</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 177.

- 18 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 178.
- 19 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 178.
- 20 Stenton, p. 250.
- 21 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 178.
- 22 Lease by Waerferth, in English Historical Documents,  
ed. Dorothy Whitelock and David Douglas (London: Eyre &  
Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 490.
- 23 Roger of Wendover, p. 256.
- 24 Roger of Wendover, p. 256.
- 25 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 178.
- 26 Dorothy Whitelock, English Historical Documents,  
(London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 111.
- 27 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 178.
- 28 Roger of Wendover, p. 256.
- 29 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 179.
- 30 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 180.
- 31 Stenton, p. 255.
- 32 The most prominent of these is Stenton. Stenton, p.  
246-247.
- 33 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 181.
- 34 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 182.
- 35 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 182.
- 36 Stenton, p. 260.
- 37 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 183.
- 38 Treaty Between Alfred and Guthrum, in English  
Historical Documents, ed. Dorothy Whitelock and David

Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 380.

39 Stenton, p. 260.

40 Charles Warren Hollister, Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 59.

41 Stenton, p. 335.

42 Christopher Brooke, The Saxon and Norman Kings, (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1963), p. 111.

43 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 184.

44 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 185.

45 Stenton, p. 266.

46 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 186.

47 Stenton, p. 268.

48 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 188.

49 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 189.

50 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 189.

51 Richard Humble, The Saxon Kings, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), p. 67.

52 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 190.

53 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 190.

54 Devil's Dyke and Fleam Dyke. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 191.

55 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 192.

56 Simeon of Durham, "Historia Regum," in English Historical Documents, ed. Dorothy Whitelock and David Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955). p. 252.

57 Grant by King Athelstan, in English Historical Documents, ed. Dorothy Whitelock and David Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), p. 504.

58 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 193.

59 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 193.

60 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 192.

61 Humble, p. 72.

62 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 192.

63 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 194.

64 Stenton, p. 326.

65 Stenton, p. 327.

66 Stenton, p. 325.

67 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 196.

68 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 196.

69 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 196.

70 The borough must have come close to being taken, for Edward immediately went there and repaired it.

71 Stenton, p. 329.

72 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 198.

73 Thomas Hodgkin, The Political History of England, (New York: Longman's Green & Co., 1906), p. 289.

74 The Anglo-Saxons, "Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture," ed. Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), p. 53.

75 Stenton, p. 330.

76 Bede, "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation,"

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78 F. T. Wainwright, "The Chronology of the 'Mercian Register,'" English Historical Review, LX (Sept. 1945), p. 388.

79 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 198.

80 Simeon of Durham, p. 252.

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87 Stenton, p. 339.

88 Stenton, p. 338.

89 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 201.

90 William of Malmesbury, p. 280.

91 Those people in Wales.

92 The people of Cornwall.

93 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 201.

94 William of Malmesbury, p. 282.

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