

This is an offprint of:

Mercenaries and Paid Men
The Mercenary Identity in
the Middle Ages

Proceedings of a Conference held at University
of Wales, Swansea, 7th–9th July 2005

Edited by

John France



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2008

HOUSEHOLD MEN, MERCENARIES AND VIKINGS IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

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Mercenary soldiers played a crucial role in both the birth and death of Anglo-Saxon England. What is odd, however, is how little evidence there is for their presence in Britain between the end of the fifth century and the turn of the millennium. What makes this even stranger is that there is considerable evidence for soldiers who fought for wages throughout this period.

I found myself pedagogically wrestling with the distinction between mercenary and paid soldiers while teaching American midshipmen Machiavelli's *Art of War*. Machiavelli's famous (and, in historical context, ironic) denigration of the ability and effectiveness of professional mercenary troops in comparison to patriotic citizen militias led to a spirited discussion in class about how one might classify the United States' all volunteer military. When I asked the midshipmen how many of them were attending the Naval Academy in order to serve the nation out of patriotic duty, all but a few raised their hands. When I followed up by asking how many of them would still be sitting in these seats if they were not going to be paid to serve in the Navy and would be responsible for their own sustenance, every hand went down. A number of students protested that I was creating a false dichotomy. Certainly, they expected to be paid for military service. How could they otherwise serve? Without pay they could not support themselves, let alone a family. But they had not chosen the profession of Naval officer for its material rewards, they insisted, but out of a sense of patriotism. The midshipmen, in other words, conceived their military service as rooted in obligation and loyalty to a nation; their pay, while essential to the performance of that duty, was only incidental to the reason they had chosen the profession of Naval officer.

By protesting the implication that they were mercenary troops, my students were underscoring the negative connotations that this term now possesses.¹ They were also suggesting a distinction between those who fight purely because they are paid to do so, regardless of their

employer, and those who fight because of a sense of duty to a state or nation, even if they receive wages for doing so. The distinction raised here is between what Stephen Morillo, in the useful typology that he proposes in this volume, terms soldiers ‘unembedded in the society of their employer’ who ‘sell their services according to the best offer among potential military employers,’ the ‘classic mercenary,’ and soldiers embedded in the moral economy of their society but for whom, nonetheless, market forces play an important role in their choice of the military profession, the stipendiary soldier.² Understood in this way, the relationship between the mercenary and his master is purely—or, at least, primarily—commercial, while that of other categories of paid troops is not.

All cross-cultural definitions are, of course, constructs, and as such raise difficulties similar to those encountered with more elaborate historical constructs, such as, most notoriously, ‘feudalism.’ But the proposed definition of a ‘mercenary’ soldier as one who employs his fighting skills as a commodity is, at least linguistically, anchored in the meaning of the term during the Anglo-Saxon period.³ *Mercennarius* in classical and early medieval Latin, as well as the words that rendered it into Old English—*celmertmonn*, *esne-man*, *med-wyrhta*, and *hyra*—meant simply one who worked for pay, regardless of the type of labor.⁴ For the most part the words referred to agricultural workers, tradesmen, and servants. Perhaps significantly, they are never applied to the service of soldiers in any Anglo-Saxon text.⁵

Terms for hired labor appear relatively rarely in Anglo-Saxon literature, and then mostly in late texts, which may reflect the generally uncommercialized character of the English economy before the mid tenth century. *Celmertmonn* and *esne-man*, for instance, are found only in translations of the Vulgate, and one suspects that they may have been coined for that purpose. I could not determine the etymology of *celmertmonn*,⁶ but the term *esne* carries negative connotations of servility, which is appropriate given the denigration of *mercenarii* in *John* 10:10–13: ‘I am the good shepherd,’ John has Jesus declare.

The good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man [*mercennarius*/*celmertmonn*], since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man [*quia mercennarius est*] and has no concern for the sheep.⁷

Although the attitudes expressed in this passage arose in a different culture, the Gospel's aspersions upon the reliability and loyalty of hirelings may well have colored how early medieval Christian authors, including Anglo-Saxon writers, regarded those who worked merely for wages, including mercenary soldiers.⁸ If so, biblical prejudice against mercenary labor confirmed and reinforced an independent cultural distaste among the Anglo-Saxon elite for military service contracted upon a purely economic basis, a distaste rooted in native conceptions of loyalty, manhood, and reciprocity.

In this paper I will draw a distinction between, on the one hand, mercenaries, that is, soldiers who lacked political or social ties to those who employed them, and, on the other, salaried household men and paid expeditionary soldiers whose duty to serve arose, at least in part, from the demands of lordship. In Old English this represents the difference between the *hyra-man*, the *hired-man*, and the *fyrð-man*: the hireling, the household man, and those who performed military service to the king upon his summons because of the bookland they or their lords possessed. Although these categories in practice may have overlapped, the Anglo-Saxons regarded them as different and distinct. I hope to explain in this paper why paid military service was ubiquitous throughout the Anglo-Saxon era, while true mercenaries for whom military service was a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder were rare before the eleventh century. Or perhaps I should say that I hope to explain why few Anglo-Saxon soldiers or their masters before the late tenth century were willing to represent their relationship in purely, or even primarily, economic terms before then. This paper will examine the interrelated political, social, and economic factors that account for this apparent paradox.

Given their subsequent rarity, it is ironic that Anglo-Saxon history begins with the coming of German mercenaries to Britain. This is, at least, how Gildas describes the *adventus Saxonum*. Following the withdrawal of the Roman legions by Constantine III and the subsequent refusal of Roman imperial authorities to defend Britain, a Romano-British '*superbus tyrannus*' (whom Bede names as Vortigern), in consultation with a council of elite landowners, opted to hire German mercenaries, *foederati*, to defend Britain against the incursions of 'barbarian' Picts and Scots. In doing so, Vortigern was following established imperial practice. Gildas underscores this by using technical Roman military terms to describe the terms of their contracted service. Vortigern, he tells us, contracted a *foedus* with these Saxon 'barbarians,' who (in

his words) ‘falsely represented themselves as *milites* ready to undergo extreme dangers for their excellent hosts.’ The terms of the agreement involved the Britons providing the Saxons with supplies, which Gildas terms variously *annonae*, *epimēnia*, and *munificentia*. Over time, the Saxons grew dissatisfied with their pay. When the Britons refused to meet their demands, they broke their *foedus* and began to plunder the lands of their employers.⁹

As Chris Snyder observed, Gildas’ use of technical military administrative terms ‘seems to be a strong indicator that Roman fiscal machinery was still operating—at least in the immediate post-Roman years described here by Gildas—in conjunction with some sort of military pay-and-requisition system.’¹⁰ If so, Gildas’s account also attests that such vestiges of the imperial Roman military system were slowly giving way in the British principalities and the emerging Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of his day to a different sort of military organization, one characterized by chieftains and their warbands, rather than military officers commanding regular troops and foreign *foederati*.

The German federates whom Vortigern so unwisely invited to Britain may well have been the last mercenaries to ply their trade in England until the late ninth century. Bede, writing in the early eighth century, certainly understood the concept of mercenary soldiers, as evidenced by his incorporation of Gildas’s account into his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. But if Gildas’s use of technical imperial terminology suggests continuity with Roman administration, Bede’s elimination of such terms as *epimēnia* (monthly allowances) from his narrative suggests just as strongly that by his day the fiscal apparatus of the imperial Roman state was no longer even a memory in Northumbria.¹¹ Perhaps most significantly, Bede does not mention mercenaries anywhere else in his *History*. The military organization described in Bede’s writings was one centered on royal and noble households, composed of veteran soldiers (*duguth*) or *emariti milites* who possessed landed estates and youths (*geoguth* or *iuuentus*) who did not. Both ranks served in expectation of rewards in the form of moveable wealth, most notably gold and silver rings. This was pay of a sort, but the coin of the realm was social prestige rather than economic power.¹² The number and quality of rings worn by a warrior defined his social and political standing; they were material expressions of the ‘love’ he earned from his lord.

The distinction between ‘youths’ and ‘proved men’ was basic to this military society. The former were young, unmarried warriors who, having as yet no land of their own, resided with their lord, ate at his

table, and accompanied him as he progressed through his estates. When a retainer of this sort had proved himself to his lord's satisfaction, he would receive from him a landed endowment, perhaps even the estates that his father had formerly held from that lord. By such grants youths were transformed into *duguth*, or, as Bede puts it, into the 'companions [*comites*] or tried warriors [*emeriti milites*] of secular powers [*potestates saeculi*].'¹³ The warrior now ceased to dwell in his lord's household, although he still attended his councils. Now he lived upon his own estates, married, raised a family, and maintained a military household of his own, which would accompany him when he answered his royal lord's summons to war, or when he pursued his own vendettas against his personal enemies.¹⁴

On first glance, these 'youths' might seem a species of mercenary. Their dependence upon the economic rewards of service led them to seek powerful and wealthy lords, wherever that search might take them. Bede was well aware of this, and worried that the proliferation of spurious monasteries in his native Northumbria was undermining the safety of the realm by depriving King Ceolwulf of disposable land with which to endow the 'sons of noblemen and veteran warriors' [*fili nobilium aut emeritorum militum*].¹⁵ Bede believed that young noble warriors ought to serve their native kings, and that those kings ought to answer that service with the land necessary to graduate these 'youths' into the ranks of the *duguth*. But he acknowledged the practical reality that if a king lacked the landed resources to do so, the young warriors of his realm would seek their fortunes elsewhere. Royal wealth in moveable goods and land translated into political capital and military power.¹⁶ A good king, the *Beowulf*-poet reminded his readers, 'took mead-benches away from enemy bands' and rewarded his followers with a share of the booty so 'that they would stand by him when war came.'¹⁷

One mark of a successful chieftain, whether king or warlord, in pre-Viking England was his ability to attract followers from other 'peoples.' Bede attests to the exceptional qualities of King Oswine of Deira by observing that 'men of the greatest nobility from almost every 'province' flocked to serve him as retainers.'¹⁸ But King Oswine's neighbor and rival, King Oswiu of Bernicia, was an even greater magnet for the service of warriors, and when the two confronted each other in war, Oswine thought it more prudent to dismiss his forces than to engage Oswiu's larger and more powerful army.¹⁹ Three centuries later, Asser praised his royal lord Alfred by observing that his court swarmed with non-West Saxons. He counted Welshmen, Mercians, Franks, Frisians,

Bretons and even Scandinavians among the king's household men, all drawn to Alfred by his reputation for generosity and his ability to reward.²⁰

If we read the literary sources without romantic preconceptions, a *quid pro quo* of rewards for military service stands out in bold relief. But these were socially embedded exchanges in which the economic value of the gifts given was less important than the social prestige they symbolized. The military retainers in a lord's household, his *hiredmen*, certainly were 'paid soldiers,' stipendiary troops, even though their pay came in the form of bracelets, rings, collars, food, and arms rather than cash; they were not, however, mercenaries. As a good lord, Hrothgar lavishly rewarded Beowulf for freeing Heorot from the monsters that haunted it. Like another hero from poetry, Widsith, Beowulf, having won treasure abroad in the service of foreign kings, returned to his native land, and, as is only proper, handed over the booty he had won to his royal lord. King Hygelac concluded the transaction by giving his kinsman and retainer a valuable sword, a hall, a 'princely seat,' and seven thousand hides of land.²¹ None of these transactions ought to be understood as commercial exchanges. Rather, they reflect the principle of reciprocal gift-giving.

The gift-giving lord is a familiar figure in Old English poetry, and it is not surprising that the Anglo-Saxons should have regarded munificence as a great virtue in their rulers. For gift-giving was a tool of governance. The flow of goods between lords and retainers sustained the social hierarchy. In military terms it was reified into the ritual payment of the heriot: the posthumous return to a lord of the weapons and armor he had given the retainer when he entered his service. Since the ritual in which these arms were conferred created a bond of loyalty and service, all booty obtained through the exercise of those arms properly belonged to the man's lord. When Beowulf, Weohstan, or Wiglaf offered their lords the wealth they won, they fulfilled their duty as retainers, and when their lords answered with as much or even greater treasure, they too acted as they should have. A gift in that society bore a value beyond its simple market price, for it created, symbolized, and confirmed the relationship between a man and his lord. The offer of a gift and its acceptance established a social relationship; the recipient of the largess placed himself in moral debt to the giver and obliged himself to requite the favor. The weapons, ring, mead, and, above all,

the land given to a man by his lord constrained that man to respond appropriately; in the words of the oath that he swore to his lord, to 'love all that his lord loved, and to hate all that he hated.'²²

As a gift looked for its return, so love, freely bestowed, was to be answered in full measure by the open-handed lord. King Alfred in his very loose translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies* enjoined a thegn to prefer the giver to the gift and to be willing to forfeit his worldly wealth if so commanded.²³ Alfred wrote of love in a number of his interpolations in his translations, almost always in the context of true friendship or lordship.²⁴ For Alfred lordship remained a species of friendship. He conceived of his thegns and, in particular, his household men as his true companions. In his words, it was both 'unjust' and 'unseemly' for a king to rule over a nation of slaves. Only free men could willingly return love and loyalty.²⁵

King Alfred's arrangement of his household provides us with the clearest window on to the relationship between Anglo-Saxon kings and their fighting men in the Middle Saxon period. The old distinction between *duguth* and *geoguth* persisted. Alfred's secular household was divided into two classes of followers, men of substance and property who served as officers of the household, and the humbler household warriors resident at court. The former possessed estates and households of their own, and Alfred attempted to lighten the burden of attendance upon his person by dividing them into three cohorts, each of which would serve in various capacities in court for a month, then return for two months to their own estates and attend to their private affairs.²⁶ The other main group that made up Alfred's secular household was his household warriors. In a famous interpolation in his translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Alfred declared that fighting men, along with those who prayed and those who worked, were the necessary tools for royal rule.²⁷ In the turbulent years of Alfred's reign his household troops played an especially important role. But one should not think of them merely as 'tools' to be used in times of need. They were also Alfred's hearth-companions, who feasted at his table, slept in his hall, shared his delight in the hunt, and followed him into the marshes of Somerset in that dreadful and glorious winter of 878. Asser, influenced by his knowledge of Francia, called them *faselli*, 'vassals,' which captures something of their intimacy with Alfred. Nor were they simply warriors. Alfred's *hiredmen* also played an important role in

the king's civil administration of the realm in their capacity as royal messengers and emissaries, serving as his eyes, ears, and voice in his dealings with local government.

That these transactions between lords and their household military retainers were understood in 'moral' rather than 'commercial' terms, that is as exchanges of free gifts rather than sales of commodities, is supported not only by the language of the sources but by current interpretations of the economy of pre-Viking England. The orthodox view, which owes much to the work of the archaeologist Richard Hodges, represents commerce in the seventh and eighth centuries as having been organized around large coastal trading sites. These *emporia* or *wics* were 'gateway communities' that linked the undeveloped economic periphery, England, with a more economically developed core across the Channel in Francia.²⁸ Luxury goods from the continent flowed into the emporia, where, under the supervision of royal port-reeves, they were exchanged for raw materials and locally produced craft goods. Emporia such as Hamwic and *Lundenwic* were, according to this model, created and regulated by kings, and served as the terminus points for estate networks through which lords, secular and ecclesiastical, extracted and disposed of surplus wealth in what was a redistributive, command economy. As such, wics 'were symbolic of a command economy, existing to provide the elite with a monopoly access to luxury traded goods, and hence to allow royal patronage, which was still very much the language of power.'²⁹ Wics did not serve as the heads of regional systems of production and exchange as would the burhs in the tenth and eleventh centuries; they looked outward rather than toward their hinterlands. They were, in short, mechanisms through which the Anglo-Saxon elite, secular and ecclesiastical, could acquire and control the economic and ideological profits of overseas trade in socially prestigious goods.³⁰

The agrarian economy was similar. The great estates of the seventh- and eighth-century elite consisted of multiple dependencies, sometimes several miles distant from one another, all of which paid renders or 'tribute' to a central estate. Because these 'multiple estates' were supposed to provide their landlords with all the material resources they required, the outliers would often have specialized economic functions. The entire system was designed to produce 'tribute' for the consumption of the elite.³¹ The economic world of pre-Viking England was thus characterized by tribute, gifts, and peasant subsistence rather than by markets and commodity exchange, although the latter certainly existed to some extent.³²

Given the nature of this economy, it is not to be wondered that traders were regarded as suspicious characters. The late seventh-century West Saxon code of King Ine expresses concern that a company of traders (*ciepemen*) venturing 'up country' might become a band of thieves.³³ Alfred, two centuries later, repeated this concern and ordered that a trader planning to venture inland should report first to a king's reeve, at a public meeting, with all the men he planned to take up country. The trader, according to Alfred's law, was to be responsible for the good behavior of his men and for bringing them to justice.³⁴ This precaution was necessary precisely because the status of traders was anomalous. As lordless men they did not fit easily into the existing social networks for the maintenance of public order.

The very nature of the pre-Viking English economy thus militated against the employment of mercenaries. Quite simply, the English economy was not sufficiently commercialized in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries for military service to be treated as a high-end commodity. By the late ninth century, however, the English economy had begun to change in significant ways, largely in response to the Viking invasions. The emporia proved ephemeral. They withered and collapsed in the ninth century with the upsurge in North Sea piracy and repeated Viking sackings. Although piracy did not end cross-Channel trade, it did make it far chancier and less profitable. The raids and ravaging of Viking *heres* disrupted the economy of the English hinterlands as well, affecting in particular the endowments of the great monasteries, which had been the hub of much economic activity in the seventh and eighth centuries.

But, paradoxically, the Vikings may also have contributed to England's economic development and growth. Viking activities included trading and settlement as well as raiding, and, as Christopher Dyer reminds us, in the ninth century 'these different sources of profit were closely connected.'³⁵ When one thinks of Vikings such things as longships, spears, shields, helmets and swords come to mind; but scales and weights are equally representative of the activities engaged in by these Scandinavians abroad. Once Vikings had acquired plunder and slaves, they became traders. In this way they restored into economic circulation large amounts of silver that had been stored in church plate and ornaments. In doing this, the Vikings helped move the focus of commercial activity away from long-distance trade in luxury items to domestic craft production and regional markets. Their demands for tribute also probably contributed to an increase in the amount of coins minted and to

the quality of that currency. Although an immense amount of silver was carried off to Scandinavia, a significant portion of the shared-out tribute was probably spent on the spot.

By the end of Alfred's reign there are indications that the English economy had begun to become more monetized and commercialized. Like all good Anglo-Saxon kings and lords before him, Alfred materially expressed his love for his *hiredmen* through gifts. By the late ninth century, however, these rewards came in the form of coins as well as rings and robes. By his own testimony, Alfred rewarded his household warriors with stipends of cash at regular intervals. In his will he left 'to the men who follow me' 200 pounds in silver coins, to be 'divided between them, to each as much as will belong to him according to the manner in which I have just now [at Easter] made distribution to them.'³⁶

Alfred's military household retainers were paid men who served him out of love and loyalty, not mercenaries. But some of the foreigners who flocked to Alfred's court probably were. The Frisian sailors who helped man his newly created fleet in 896, for instance, look very much like naval mercenaries.³⁷ It would be surprising if mercenary service remained unknown in ninth-century England. From the middle of the ninth century on, Frankish and Breton rulers had been hiring Viking muscle, and at least one Viking mercenary captain, Weland, operated on both sides of the Channel.³⁸ It is reasonable to think that there was also an active 'market' for the services of 'young guns' across the Channel. That ninth-century Anglo-Saxons were familiar with mercenary service and compared it unfavorably with the service of *hiredmen* is suggested by a passage in the poem *Beowulf*. Beowulf, now an aged king, is made to reflect upon his career, in particular upon the service he rendered his kinsman and lord King Hygelac: 'I repaid in war the treasures [*geald æt guðe*] that he gave me—with bright sword, as was granted by fate: he had given me land, a pleasant dwelling. There was not any need for him, any reason, that he should have to seek among the Gifthas or the Spear-Danes or in Sweden in order to buy with treasure [*weorðe gecypan*] a worse warrior.'³⁹ The language in this passage invites an unfavorable comparison between honorable retainers, such as Beowulf, who answer past gifts with continuing service, and rootless warriors who could be bought with treasure [*weorðe gecypan*]. *Gecypan*, the standard verb for buying merchandise, is the language of the marketplace, and it is tempting to believe that the poet wanted his audience to think in terms of commercial trafficking. If so, a Christian audience

might well have made the connection with John's parable of the good shepherd and the unreliable hireling. If, as many now believe, *Beowulf* was composed in the late ninth century, perhaps even in association with Alfred's court, the poem's disparagement of mercenary service may help explain why there are no explicit references to mercenaries in the sources for Alfred's reign. Given how carefully Alfred controlled his image, one might speculate that the absence of mercenaries from Asser's *Life of King Alfred* and from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was deliberate. Asser may well have recast Alfred's hired soldiers and sailors as loyal *hiredmen*, much as eighth- and ninth-century charters sometimes disguised sales of lands to monasteries as pious donations.⁴⁰ The negative connotations of mercenary military service hinted at in *Beowulf* may explain why the heriot, a dead warrior's return of the gift of arms to his lord, resisted commutation into a cash payment.⁴¹

Alfred's reign marks a watershed in English political and economic history.⁴² His creation of a network of fortified towns termed *burhs* to defend Wessex not only provided the political and administrative framework for a highly centralized and effective monarchy but the foundations of a precociously monetized and commercialized economy. During the tenth century England experienced an economic boom, aided by an aggressive royal monetary and economic policy. King Edgar the Peaceable (959–75) ordered that there be one coinage and one system of measurement, and one standard of weights' in the royal realm.⁴³ English kings from Æthelstan (924–39) on guaranteed the supply, quality, and authenticity of the coinage. Numismatists estimate that tens of millions of silver pennies circulated in late tenth-century England, supporting what had become an increasingly commercialized economy and society. The commercialization of English society occurred in both town and countryside. The burghal system Alfred created and which his children extended to Mercia and the Danelaw worked so well that by the middle of the tenth century the West Saxon dynasty could reasonably claim to be kings of a consolidated kingdom that possessed the approximate boundaries of present-day England.

Neither Alfred nor his children probably planned an urban revolution when they dotted their kingdom with fortified towns and forts. Nonetheless, over the course of the tenth century, their burhs evolved into urban centers for craft production and commercial exchanges. From their inception, burhs served as centers for royal administration. Because market transactions, in particular sales of cattle, were a source of potential disputes leading to public disorder, Alfred's successors took

an active interest in restricting them as much possible to royal towns where these transactions could be conducted before witnesses and under the careful supervision of a 'port reeve'.⁴⁴ Similarly, moneyers were only allowed to strike coins in specified burhs.⁴⁵ As military threats waned, administrative functions and economic activities eclipsed the burh's original military purpose. Defenses were slighted to facilitate commercial traffic, while burhs poorly sited for commerce were abandoned entirely. There was a virtual explosion in the growth of towns and urban population. In 1066 there were probably over a hundred towns in England.⁴⁶ Christopher Dyer estimates that the percentage of town dwellers in England increased fourfold between 850 and 1066, so that by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period urban dwellers accounted for about 10% of the English population.⁴⁷

The agrarian economy also became more highly monetized and commercialized during the tenth century.⁴⁸ Money played a critical role in the emerging agrarian economy. Peasants were expected to pay rent to their lords and taxes to the king and church with money obtained from selling their surpluses in town markets. They and their lords also used cash to purchase craft goods, agricultural tools, and jewelry from specialized craftsmen.⁴⁹ For the aristocracy, in particular, day to day living had become expensive. The elite foods they ate and the clothes they wore required the outlay of considerable cash.⁵⁰ Many of these country gentlemen had residences in the towns and participated actively in the urban economy.⁵¹ Towards the end of the tenth-century the word *rice*, which earlier had meant 'a man of power' (*potens*), assumed its current meaning of one who possesses material wealth.⁵²

In short, by the late tenth century, the English economy was far more highly commercialized and monetized than it had been a century before. This had a profound impact upon the military organization of Late Anglo-Saxon England. Military service became, in all of its forms, paid labor. By 1066 royal custom dictated that fyrdmen, the troops levied for royal military campaigns on the basis of one soldier per five hides of land, were to be paid 20 shillings in cash for 60 days of service. We shall return presently to the significance of this level of pay for *fyrdmen*, but before we do, let us first consider the impact of commercialization upon the organization of the late Anglo-Saxon military, and in particular upon the recruitment of mercenaries in the late tenth and eleventh centuries.

When Viking fleets suddenly returned to England in 980, they found a peaceful and wealthy land ripe for pillaging, with a royal administration

capable of extracting immense amounts of silver from the inhabitants. The English military system that King Æthelred II had at his disposal was inadequate to meet the new threat, especially as it intensified in the 990s.⁵³ But if the Æthelred was 'unready' to deal with the raiders, it was not his fault. Even before he ascended the throne the expensive Alfredian military system of an integrated defensive network of garrisoned burhs supported by a standing mobile field army had disappeared. Some of the boroughs remained defensible, but none now had permanent garrisons. The royal army had been weakened. Not only was Alfred's standing mobile field army a thing of the past, but the *fyrð*, to some degree, had been privatized. First bishops and abbots and then secular magnates secured royal privileges allowing them to raise and lead the troops owed from their lands.

Æthelred recognized the inadequacy of his kingdom's military resources to counter the Viking raiders and took steps to remedy the situation. Notable among these was his decision to purchase the military services of some of these raiders to ward off others. This policy was being implemented as early as 994. In that year a Viking fleet of 94 ships under the dual command of Olaf Tryggvason and Swein Forkbeard 'did,' in the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'the greatest damage that a *here* could do, by burning, ravaging, and slaying, everywhere along the coast, and in Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire.'⁵⁴ Æthelred and his councillors' response was to pay a tribute of 16,000 pounds and raise provisions for the fleet in its winter quarters in Southampton. Subsequently, Æthelred sent to Olaf a high level delegation of bishops and ealdormen to conduct the young Viking chieftain 'with great honour' to the royal palace at Andover. Here Æthelred showered him with gifts worthy of a king and stood sponsor at his confirmation, much as Alfred had done for the Viking chieftains Guthrum and Hasteinn a century before. At this meeting the two apparently concluded a treaty, the text of which has been preserved as II *Æthelred*. After announcing a general truce (*woroldfrið*) between 'Æthelred, and all his people, and the whole raiding-army to which the king gave the tribute,' the treaty dictates:

(1.1). If any hostile fleet harry in England, we are to have the help of all of them; and we must supply them with provisions as they long as they are with us.

(1.2). And each of those lands which affords protection to any of those who harry England shall be regarded as an enemy by us and by the whole *here*.⁵⁵

The terms of the treaty included a further payment of 22,000 pounds in gold and silver. Swein is conspicuous by his absence, and it is possible that the treaty was Æthelred's attempt to divide his enemies.⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter, Olaf, enriched with English treasure and perhaps accompanied by English missionaries,⁵⁷ returned to Norway to seize the kingship in defiance of Swein's claims over that kingdom.⁵⁸ But from the treaty's provisions regulating feuds and trading between Danes and Englishmen, it would seem that at least part of the fleet remained in England, serving Æthelred as a mercenary army to deter future raiders. Æthelred endowed some of the fleet's leaders, notably, the Danish chieftain Pallig, with estates in return for pledges of loyalty, in an attempt to embed them into the existing political and social structures. This may not have proved a good bargain as matters turned out. In 997 a Viking fleet, perhaps including some of those who were supposed to be in Æthelred's service, ravaged the West Country. Four years later, when a new Viking fleet appeared off the coast of Devonshire, Pallig joined the raiders with as many ships as he could assemble, 'in spite of all the pledges he had given' and the gifts of land and gold and silver he had received from the king.⁵⁹ Æthelred's response was to purchase another peace with the Vikings for 24,000 pounds. On St. Brice's Day in 1002, Æthelred made a bold attempt to eliminate the problem of untrustworthy Danish mercenaries in one fell swoop by ordering (in the words of a royal charter of 1004) a 'most just extermination' of 'all the Danes who had sprung up in this island, sprouting like cockles amongst the wheat'.⁶⁰ There can be no clearer testimony than this to Pallig and his fellow Danish mercenaries remaining a people apart.

Æthelred's next attempt to purchase Viking mercenaries proved more satisfactory. Between 1009 and 1012 a large Viking fleet under the command of one of the most successful freelance Vikings of the day, Thorkell the Tall, devastated much of southern England. English forces once more proved completely inadequate and Æthelred in 1012 was forced to pay the raiders an immense tribute, some 48,000 pounds, in addition to supplying them with sufficient food and wine, which in itself was no mean feat. For reasons unknown, Thorkell suddenly decided that it was more profitable to eat at the king's table than to steal food from it. He struck a deal with Æthelred. He and his forty-five ships would defend Æthelred's realm in return for being fed and clothed. To fulfill his end of the bargain Æthelred instituted a regular tax, the much hated impost known as the *heregeld*.⁶¹ When in the fol-

lowing year Æthelred's government collapsed in the face of Swein's invasion and the promised provisions failed to materialize, Thorkell returned to his Viking ways. In spite of this understandable relapse, what is more striking is that Thorkell apparently remained loyal to King Æthelred for the duration of his reign. In this his record is far superior to a number of Æthelred's English earls. In 1013 when it was clear that Æthelred had lost his kingdom, Thorkell's fleet gave the king refuge and carried him to the safety of Normandy. Thorkell, however, probably did switch allegiances to Cnut after Æthelred's death 1016, otherwise it would be impossible to explain why Cnut entrusted him with the province of East Anglia.⁶²

Nicholas Hooper has identified two major developments in military organization during Cnut's reign, the establishment of the king's housecarls and what Hooper sees as a standing army, the lithsmen.⁶³ Neither, I believe, were innovations but rather variations on existing themes. Cnut's housecarls were precisely what the word indicates, his Scandinavian military household. Like King Alfred's household thegns, the housecarls were royal retainers who specialized in, but whose services were not limited to, war. We find them in the sources performing such miscellaneous duties as manning garrisons, witnessing charters, and collecting taxes. That they had some sort of corporate existence and were salaried is beyond serious doubt. The early eleventh-century saw the advent of the gild, and just as there were gilds of thegns and *cnihtas*, there is no reason to believe that there wasn't also a gild of royal housecarls.⁶⁴ But in other respects they were traditional, stipendiary royal dependents in the mold of Alfred's salaried household warriors.⁶⁵

Cnut's *lithsmen*, the crews of the forty ships that the new king retained in his service after the rest of his fleet dispersed, may be thought of as the successors to Thorkell's mercenary fleet. In the changed political circumstances of a conquered kingdom, however, they became something new: a standing royal mercenary naval force.⁶⁶ One of the first things that Cnut did following his accession to the throne was to reimpose the *heregeld* as a annual levy to maintain the crews of these forty ships. As a foreigner who had won the English throne by force, Cnut needed a standing army to discourage would be rebels, and the lithsmen served that function. By the end of his reign, Cnut felt secure enough to reduce the fleet to sixteen ships, which remained the fleet's size throughout the reign of his successor Harald Harefoot. Hardacnut's accession to the throne in 1040 had the trappings of an invasion. He

came from Denmark with sixty-two ships and immediately imposed a large tax on his new subjects to pay the crews.⁶⁷ His English half-brother, Edward the Confessor, on the other hand, in 1050 paid off and dismissed the lithsmen of nine of the fourteen ships that then made up the royal fleet; the crews of the remaining five were promised only twelve-months pay.⁶⁸ At the mid-Lent meeting of the royal council in London in 1051 Edward dismissed the remaining ships and formally abolished the *heregeld*. This greatly pleased the author of the 'D' version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, who explained that the *heregeld* had oppressed the English ever since it was first imposed by King Æthelred thirty-nine years before. 'That tax,' he explained, 'always came before other taxes, which were variously paid, and it oppressed people in many ways.'⁶⁹

The oppressive character of the *heregeld* does not come as a surprise. It cost an enormous amount of money to maintain a standing mercenary naval force that at its lowest consisted of fourteen ships manned by about a thousand soldiers and which at its peak comprised sixty-two ships and some four thousand men.⁷⁰ The lithsmen's service did not rest upon an ethos of reciprocal love and loyalty but simply on an expectation of payment. Their importance to Cnut and his Danish successors is indicated by how much they were willing to pay for their services. The lithsmen's annual wage of 8 marks, amounting either to four or six pounds, for ordinary sailors and 12 marks for steersmen, was, in James Campbell's words, 'really big money,' and placed them 'among the tiny population which was really well off.'⁷¹ As a standing military force they possessed considerable clout. Indeed in 1035 they played king-maker by supporting Earl Leofric's and Earl Siward's choice of Harald Harefoot in preference to his half-brother Harthacnut.⁷² Karl Leyser had a point when he compared the lithsmen to janissaries.⁷³ As outsiders, they were invaluable to kings who regarded their realm as subject territory, but they were also politically dangerous. Edward the Confessor's decision to dismiss them and to abolish the *heregeld* might seem foolhardy, especially in hindsight. But just as Harthacnut's mercenary fleet of sixty-two ships announced the insecurity of his rule, Edward's grand gesture was a proclamation that England had a legitimate English king who could rely upon the loyalty of his earls and subjects. The notion that only tyrants and illegitimate rulers needed the support of mercenaries may well underlie William

of Malmesbury's tendentious assertion that King Harold Godwineson had very few Englishmen with him at Hastings apart from stipendiary and mercenary soldiers (*stipendiarios et mercenarios milites*).⁷⁴

The monetized character of English society on the eve of the Conquest is reflected by the paid service of fyrdmen, to which I previously alluded, and it is with this topic that I will conclude my survey. The well-known military recruitment rule that appears at the beginning of the Berkshire Domesday Book states that 'if the king sent an army anywhere, only one soldier [*miles*] went from five hides, and four shillings were given for his subsistence or wages from each hide for two months. The money, indeed, was not sent to the king, but was given to the soldiers.'⁷⁵ I have written at length on the evidence that Domesday Book affords for military recruitment and obligation on the eve of the Conquest and need not rehearse those arguments here.⁷⁶ For our purposes present, it suffices to observe that the *milites* of the Berkshire customs were military tenants and domestic warriors retained by the holders of bookland to acquit their estates of their military liability, and that these soldiers were stipendiary troops paid by those landowners. A salary of 20 shillings for two months service compares favorably with the wages paid the lithsmen earlier in the century. This high level of pay established by the Crown ensured the quality of his fyrd soldiers. By setting the fyrdmen's wages at twenty shillings the king was trying to guarantee that he would receive professional warriors rather than poorly paid and provisioned peasants. That the soldiers brought money rather than provisions with them on campaign suggests that they were expected to purchase their food, drink, and other supplies, perhaps from traders who accompanied the army or at markets set up by the army's commanders. This is another reminder of the commercialized character of the English economy in 1066.

The Berkshire *miles* brings us back to our initial distinction between stipendiary and mercenary forces. Like my students, the fyrdman was a stipendiary soldier whose obligation to service rested on more than the acceptance of wages. Domesday shire customs make it clear that he was either a landowner directly acquitting the military service due from his land, or the commended man of such a landowner. As a paid military retainer, a *miles* of the latter sort was obliged to serve his immediate lord rather than the king. The law codes and Domesday Book make it clear that he was answerable to his lord for any dereliction of duty,

and that his lord, and not he, was accountable to the king.⁷⁷ Ethically, the Berkshire *miles* stood in the same relationship to the bookholder who paid him as a household warrior to his lord.

This is not to deny the existence of mercenaries in England in 1066. There clearly were. Domesday Book records military recruitment customs for the boroughs of Oxford, Warwick, and Malmesbury that allowed the burgesses to commute their military obligations at the rate of 20 shillings per fyrdman.⁷⁸ Commutation of military service for cash strongly suggests a reservoir of professional mercenaries whom the king could hire in lieu of those fyrdmen. The mysterious butsecarls, 'boatmen,' whom Earl Godwin in 1052 and his son Earl Tostig in 1066 recruited from the boroughs of Sussex and Kent to complement the foreign mercenaries they hired in support of their respective rebellions, may have been professional sailor-warriors for hire. Some have speculated that butsecarls were royal garrison troops in the Cinque Ports.⁷⁹ There is some reason to believe that King Edward employed a company of 'butsecarls' for whose upkeep he was responsible. This is the implication of the Domesday custom of the borough of Malmesbury. The burgesses, we are told, had the choice of sending one soldier on royal expeditions or of paying the king 20 shillings to feed 'his butsecarls' (*ad pascendos suos buzecarles*).⁸⁰ But one probably ought to resist the temptation of reading 'butsecarl' as a technical term with a single meaning. The word probably meant no more than 'sailor for hire.'

Despite the Domesday Book evidence for mercenary service, I think that the pool of mercenaries hanging around England in 1066 could not have been very large. The demand simply wasn't there. With the exception of the Welsh marches, the kingdom had enjoyed relative peace for over a decade. As sailors for hire, 'butsecarls' could easily find employment in the burgeoning shipping and fishing industries of the Cinque Ports. But dedicated professional mercenary soldiers are quite another matter. Without war or the threat of war, they starve. The Continent was another matter, and even Norman sources show mercenaries flocking to the banner of Duke William, lured by the promise of pay and booty. *Pace* William of Malmesbury, it was the Conqueror and not King Harold whose fortunes rested in the hands of mercenary soldiers.

To conclude, then, stipendiary soldiers, whether their pay was in cash or kind, played an important role throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. With the notable exception of the period between 1012 and 1051, mercenaries did not. In pre-Viking England the lack of mercenaries

was a consequence of an aristocratic ethos that emphasized reciprocal loyalty between lord and dependent, combined with a redistributive, command economy in which commercial exchange played a subordinate role. Although the growing commercialization and monetization of the English economy from the late ninth century on made mercenary military service possible, the old heroic ideals of lordship militated against its respectability. It was not until the end of the tenth century that the English state began to hire mercenaries in earnest, and that was out of desperation. On the other hand, these economic developments led to a situation in which household retainers and fyrdmen alike were paid in cash. The ethos that infused their service, however, remained in both cases very much shaped by traditional ideals of lordship, love, and loyalty.

NOTES

¹ Steven Isaac, 'The Problem with Mercenaries', in Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon (eds), *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1999), 100–10, warns against the tendency to impute later negative connotations to the 'mercenary label' in dealing with eleventh- and twelfth-century Anglo-Norman sources. I would like to thank Stephen Morillo, Steven Isaac, and Robin Fleming for their helpful criticisms and insights. I am also much indebted to my colleagues at the United States Naval Academy who read and discussed an earlier draft of this piece in our History Department's Works-in-Progress Seminar.

² Stephen Morillo, *infra*, pp. 243–60.

³ Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London, 2003), 112.

⁴ *Mercennarius* in classical Latin: *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed., P.G.W. Glare (Oxford, 1982), 1101; *mercennarius* in early medieval Latin: J.F. Niermeyer (ed.), *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 2002) 2.876–7 and see Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1989) and *Supplement* (1921) (accessed online at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kurisuto/germanic/oe_bosworthtoller_about.html), 672 (defined as '1. a merchant's servant, commercial agent, factor; 2. leaseholder, lessee'; for *mercennarius* glossed or translated as *celmertmonn* (p. 150), *esne-man* and *esne-wyrhtlahyra* (258), and *med-gilda* (675).

⁵ I could find only one instance in a search of the electronic Old English corpus in which *mercennarius* or any of the Anglo-Saxon words used to translate it appear in a military context. An eleventh-century glossary explains that a *lixa*, a Latin word usually translated as 'sutler' or 'camp-follower,' is a *mercennarius militis qui est calo dicitur*, 'a hired servant of a soldier who is called a *calo*.' L. Kindschi, ed., 'The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32246', Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford U, 1955, line 6. For *lixa*, see *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 1038. Significantly, even here *mercennarius* is not used to describe military service *per se*, but rather those hired by soldiers to carry their provisions.

⁶ The second element of the compound, *mert*, may be derived from *meord*, pay or reward.

⁷ *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, 3rd edn. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), p. 1677; trans. *The Jerusalem Bible*, Reader's Edition (Garden City, New York, 1968), 133. Cf. the matter of fact treatment of military pay, *stipendia*, in Luke 3:14: [Jesus's admonition to soldiers] 'interrogabant autem eum et milites dicentes quid faciemus et nos et ait illis neminem conculcatis neque calumniam faciatis et contenti estote stipendiis vestris'; 1 Cor. 9:7: 'quis militat suis stipendiis umquam quis plantat vineam et fructum eius non edit quis pascit gregem et de lacte gregis non manducat'; 1 Mac 3:28: 'et aperuit aerarium suum et dedit stipendia exercitui in annum et mandavit illis ut essent parati ad omnia'; 1 Mac 14:32: 'tunc restituit Simon et pugnavit pro gente sua et erogavit multas pecunias et armavit viros virtutis gentis suae et dedit eis stipendia.'

⁸ See Ælfric of Eynsham's homily on this text. Peter Clemoes, (ed.), *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford, 1997), 313, 314, 315.

⁹ Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London and Chichester, 1978), Chap. 23 (26–27, 97).

¹⁰ Christopher A. Snyder, *An Age of Tyrants. Britain and the Britons, A.D. 400–600* (Stroud, 1998), 112. See Ian Wood, 'The Ends of Roman Britain: Continental Evidence and Parallels', in Michael Lapidge and David N. Dumville, (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge, 1984), 21; Bernard S. Bachrach, 'Gildas, Vortigern, and Constitutionalism in Sub-Roman Britain,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988), 35. But cf. Michael Lapidge, 'Gildas's Education and the Latin Culture of Sub-Roman Britain,' in Lapidge and Dumville, ed., *Gildas: New Approaches*, 25–50.

¹¹ Bede eliminated the terms *epimenia* and *munificentia*. In rewriting Gildas's account, Bede has Vortigern grant the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes land and wages (*stipendia*), 'on condition that they fought against their foes for the peace and safety of the country.' He retained the terms *foedus* and *annonae*, which he explicitly equated with food supplies (*alimentorum copia*). *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 1.15, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 50, 52.

¹² For the importance of moveable wealth for early Anglo-Saxon rulers, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Distinction between Land and Moveable Wealth in Anglo-Saxon England', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.) *Medieval Settlement. Continuity, and Change*, (London, 1976), 180–90. James Campbell, 'The Sales of Land and the Economics of Power,' *Haskins Society Journal* 1 (1989), 23–37, reprinted in Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), 227–45, makes the interesting (though ultimately unpersuasive) suggestion that moveable wealth may have been more important than land for the establishment of stable royal power.

¹³ *Letter to Egbert*, in Charles Plummer (ed.), *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896), 1:405–23, 415.

¹⁴ Richard P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Los Angeles and London, 1988), 32, citing *Beowulf*, ll. 70–81, 160, 621, 1189–90, 1718–19, 1749–50, 2490–6; *Deor* ll. 35–42; *Widsith* ll. 89–96; Bede, *HE* iii.1, iv.22; *Letter to Egbert*, in Plummer, *Baedae*, 1:405–23, at 414–17.

¹⁵ Plummer, *Baedae*, 1:414–15.

¹⁶ M. Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (1990), 41–65.

¹⁷ *Beowulf*, ll. 4–11.

¹⁸ *HE* iii.14, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 256–9.

¹⁹ *HE* iii.14, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 256–9.

²⁰ Asser, ch. 76. *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St. Neots*, ed. W.H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), 60.

²¹ *Beowulf*, ll. 2196–99; *Widsith*, ll. 89–96.

²² Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, 30–1; *Sveorian*, c. 1, ed. Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903–1916), 1:396–7.

²³ *Alfred's Soliloquies*, ed. Carnicelli, 62–3.

²⁴ Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1998), 254–5.

²⁵ Walter John Sedgefield, ed., *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Oxford, 1899), 166–7.

²⁶ Asser, ch. 10, trans. Keynes and Lapidge, 106.

²⁷ *King Alfred's Boethius*, ch. 17, trans. Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, 132.

²⁸ Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics. The Origins of Towns and Trade, AD 600–1000*, 2nd edn. (London, 1989), 150–85.

²⁹ Ben Palmer, 'The Hinterlands of Three Southern English *Emporia*: Some Common Themes,' in Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (eds), *Markets in Medieval Europe. Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650–850*, ed. (Macclesfield, Cheshire, 2003), 48–59, at 49. Although Ben Palmer is skeptical about the validity of this paradigm outside of Wessex, he provides a good summary of its main points.

³⁰ Christopher Scull, 'Urban Centers in Pre-Viking England?' in John Hines, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century, An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, 1997), 284.

³¹ Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages. The People of Britain, 850–1520* (New Haven and London, 2002), 27–30.

³² This is not to argue that smaller, local markets did not exist in the hinterlands, or even that there were no periodic 'beach-markets' at which overseas trade was carried on. The recent explosion in seventh- and eighth-century coin finds as a result of the growing popularity of metal-detecting in Britain implies the existence of numerous inland sites at which money was used, perhaps (though not certainly) in local markets. But even these so-called 'productive sites' appear to have been integrated into what was mainly a redistributive rather than true market economy. Most historians still discount their importance to the overall economy, which remained subsistence for peasants and extractive for their lords. For discussions of these 'productive sites' and consideration of their economic significance, see Pestell and Ulmschneider, *Markets in Medieval Europe*.

³³ *Ine* 25.1, ed. F.L. Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922; repr. AMS Press, 1974), 44.

³⁴ Attenborough, *Alfred* 34, 78.

³⁵ Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*, 45–6.

³⁶ F.E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1914), no. 14: ' & þam mannum þe me folgiað, þe ic nu on Eastertidum feoh sealde, twa hund punda agyfe man him & dæle man him betweoh, ælcum swa him to gebyrian wille æfter þære wisan þe ic him nu dælde.'

³⁷ *ASC*, s.a. 896. See Abels, *Alfred the Great*, 306–7.

³⁸ *Annals of St Bertin*, s.a. 861. In 860 Weland led a Viking *here* based on the Somme in what proved to be an unsuccessful raid on Wessex. From continental sources, we know that this same Viking army had in the previous year entered into a formal contract, a *locarium*, with the West Frankish King Charles the Bald whereby they were to be paid three thousand pounds of silver to rid the Seine basin of another and, to Charles, more immediately threatening Viking band. Hincmar's use of *locarium*, indicating a pay-for-hire contract, rather than *tributum*, is significant. He used the same term to describe Salomon's arrangement with the twelve ships that he took into his service in 862, and for Lothar II's payment of cash and provisions to Rodulf in 864. Cf. *Annals of St Bertin*, s.a. 884, where *locarium* refers to a formal lease of territory. See Simon Coupland, 'From poachers to gamekeepers: Scandinavian warlords and Carolingian kings', *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998), 101–2, n. 91. Niermeyer, *Lexicon Minus*, s.v. *locarius* (.618).

³⁹ *Beowulf*, ll. 2493–6, trans. E. Talbot Donaldson, in Joseph F. Tuso (ed.), *Beowulf. The Donaldson Translation, Backgrounds and Sources Criticism* (New York, 1975), 44. F. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (Boston, 1950), 94.

⁴⁰ Campbell, 'Sale of Land,' 231, citing Sawyer nos. 282, 319, in 'The Electronic Sawyer: An online version of the revised edition of Sawyer's *Anglo-Saxon Charters*,' prepared by S.E. Kelly and adapted for WWW by S. Miller, <http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer99/eSawyer2.html>.

⁴¹ Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, 138, 265–66 n. 45.

⁴² For its importance for future economic developments, see S.R.H. Jones, 'Transaction Costs, Institutional Change, and the Emergence of a Market Economy in Late Anglo-Saxon England,' *Economic History Review* 46 (1993).

⁴³ III *Edg* 8.1.

⁴⁴ I *Edw* 1; II *As* 12; 14.1; III *Edm* 5; IV *Edg* 6.

⁴⁵ II *As* 14; 14.2; IV *Atr* 9.

⁴⁶ David Griffiths, 'Exchange, Trade, and Urbanization', in Wendy Davies (ed.), *From the Vikings to the Normans, 800–1100*, The Short Oxford History of the British Isles (Oxford: Oxford, 2003), 98; Dyer, *Making Living in the Middle Ages*, 62.

⁴⁷ Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*, 62.

⁴⁸ Robin Fleming, 'Lords and Labour,' in Davies, *From the Vikings to the Normans*, 109–11.

⁴⁹ Dyer, *Making a Living*, 39–40. See also James Campbell, 'Was it Infancy in England? Some Questions of Comparison,' in Campbell, *The Anglo-Norman State*, 179–99, for a maximalist view of the Anglo-Saxon economy. Robin Fleming points out that excavations of tenth- and eleventh-century thegnly residences have uncovered manufactured goods but little evidence of craft activities on site. Fleming, 'Lords and Labour,' 113.

⁵⁰ Robin Fleming, 'The New Wealth, the New Rich, and the New Political Style in Late Anglo-Saxon England,' *Anglo-Norman Studies* 22 (2001), 1–22.

⁵¹ Robin Fleming, 'Rural Elites and Urban Communities in Late-Saxon England,' *Past & Present* 141 (1993), 3–37.

⁵² M. Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in Late Anglo-Saxon England,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (1990), 46–65.

⁵³ Richard Abels, 'From Alfred to Harold II: The Military Failure of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in R.P. Abels and B.S. Bachrach (eds), *The Normans and their Adversaries at War* (Woodbridge, 2001), 22–9.

⁵⁴ ASC, s.a. 994; trans. D. Whitelock, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (New Brunswick, 1961), 83.

⁵⁵ S.D. Keynes, 'The Historical Context', in Donald Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), 106; A.J. Robertson, *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925; AMS reprint 1974), 57.

⁵⁶ Niels Lund, 'Peace and Non-Peace in the Viking Age Otter in Biarmaland, the Rus in Byzantium, and Danes and Norwegians in England,' in J.E. Knirk (ed.), *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress* (Oslo, 1987), 255–69, at 265–66.

⁵⁷ Lesley Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', *Anglo-Saxon England* 24 (1995), 213–49, at 220–3.

⁵⁸ Niels Lund, 'The Danish Perspective,' in Scragg, *Battle of Maldon*, 138–40; Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Viking Policy of Ethelred the Unready,' *Scandinavian Studies* 99 (1987), 284–95.

⁵⁹ For Pallig, see ASC, s.a. 1001. Simon Keynes suggests that Pallig received his 'great gifts, in estates and gold and silver' in connection with this treaty. S.D. Keynes, 'The Vikings in England: c. 790–1016,' in Peter Sawyer (ed.), *Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), 77.

⁶⁰ See Ann Williams, *Aethelred the Unready, The Ill-Counselled King* (London and New York, 2003), 52–55. The charter is Sawyer, no. 127, translated in *EHD*, I, no. 127, renewing title-deeds to St. Frideswide's, Oxford. St. Frideswide's lost its charters in a fire set by the burgesses, intent on killing the Danes who had taken refuge in the church.

⁶¹ ASC, s.a. 1012.

⁶² S.D. Keynes, 'Cnut's Earls,' in Alexander Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut, King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), 54–7.

⁶³ Nicholas Hooper, 'Military Developments in the Reign of Cnut,' in Rumble, ed., *Reign of Cnut*, 87–105.

⁶⁴ Judith Jesch, *Ships and men in the Late Viking Age. The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse* (Woodbridge, 2001), 239–43, discusses the use of the word *gildi* in Scandinavian runic inscriptions.

⁶⁵ Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, 167–72.

⁶⁶ Hooper, 'Military Developments,' 89, 97–100. The word *liðsmen*, it must be acknowledged, in itself does not connote mercenary or paid service. In late tenth- and early eleventh-century Scandinavia the basic meaning of the term *lið* was a troop or crew and, by extension, a fleet. In runic inscriptions and Scandinavian skaldic poetry *liðsmen* often denoted the crews of naval fleets, warrior-sailors. Given that Vikings used their ships to carry them to the territories that they ravaged by land, it is not surprising that the poem *Liðsmannaflökkr* begins with a *liðsman* urging his companions, 'Let us go ashore, before warriors and large militias learn that the English homelands are being traversed with shields: let us be brave in brattle, brandish spears and hurl them; great numbers of the English flee before our swords.' Quoted by Judith Jesch, p. 199. For a full discussion of the terms *lið* and its compounds, see Jesch, pp. 187–95, 198–200.

⁶⁷ ASC, s.a. 1040 E, 1040 C.

⁶⁸ ASC, s.a. 1050 E, 1049 C.

⁶⁹ ASC, s.a. 1052 D.

⁷⁰ Lawson, *Cnut*, p. 177.

⁷¹ James Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State,' in *The Anglo-Saxon State*, 206–7.

⁷² ASC, s.a. 1036 E, F.

⁷³ Karl Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London, 1994), 109.

⁷⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2.228.12, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), 1:422.

⁷⁵ DB i. 56v.

⁷⁶ Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, 97–161.

⁷⁷ Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, 145.

⁷⁸ DB i. 154, 238, 64v.

⁷⁹ For further discussion of the 'butsecarls', see C. Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1962), 16–19; Nicholas Hooper, 'Some observations on the navy in late Anglo-Saxon England,' in C. Harper-Bill, C.J. Holdsworth and J.L. Nelson (eds), *Studies in medieval history presented to R. Allen Brown*, (Woodbridge, 1989), 203–13.

⁸⁰ DB i. 64v.