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KING ATHELSTAN'S 'WITAN', THE CHARTER EVIDENCE.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following libraries for allowing me to have access to charter documents:

The British Library, London

The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Cambridge University Library, Cambridge

The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The District Record Office, Chichester

The Chapter Library, York Cathedral, York

Also, I am especially indebted to three members of Durham University. Firstly, Dave Thornton of the Computer Centre for adapting a statistical programme in the computer to suit the needs of my thesis. Secondly, Dr. David Thomas of the Palaeography Department for providing an introduction to the subject of medieval palaeography. Finally I would like to thank my tutor, Dr. David Rollason for his encouragement and constructive criticism.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- A.S.C. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, ed and trans. D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas and S.I. Tucker (London, 1961).
- A.S.E. Anglo Saxon England (journal)
- C.S.II. Cartularium Saxonium II, ed. W. de Gray Birch (London, 1887). When a charter number given in this volume is preceded by the letter B, it refers to the number the charter is given in Birch.
- E.C.N.E.N.M. C.R.Hart, Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands (Leicester, 1975).
- E.H.D. English Historical Documents c500-1042, ed D. Whitelock, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1979).
- E.H.R. English Historical Review (journal)
- E.P.N.S. Early Place-Name Society.
- F/W Florentii Wigorniensis Monachi, Chronicon ex Chronicis I, ed B. Thorpe (London, 1848).
- Sym/D Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia, Historia Ecclesiae Dunelmensis, ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols. R.S. (London, 1882-5)
- W/M G.P. Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi, De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, ed N.E.S.A. Hamilton, R.S. (London, 1870).
- W/M G.R. Willelmi Malmesbirensis Monachi, De Gestis Regum Anglorum, ed W. Stubbs, 2 vols, R.S. (London, 1887-9).

## The Manuscripts

There follows a list of all the manuscripts which contain charters dated to King Athelstan's reign. This list is intended to clarify the charter abbreviations found in the appendix to chapter two of this thesis.

The list is divided into two sections. The first section lists the abbreviations which show where the different manuscripts are stored. The second section lists all the manuscripts in alphabetical order according to the name of the town in which they are stored. The numbers of the charters found in Sawyer's 'Anglo-Saxon Charters' are given beside the relevant manuscripts.

### Section 1

B.L.	British Library
DC	Dean and Chapter
D.R.O.	District Record Office
N.L.W.	National Library of Wales
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
U.L.	University Library

### Section 2

#### Aberystwyth

N.L.W., Peniarth 390 S392, S395, S397

Bath, Marquess of  
Longleat 39

S399, S426, S431, S442

#### Cambridge

Cambridge U.L., Addenda 3020 S437  
Corpus Christi College 111 S404, S411, S414  
Corpus Christi College 189 S398

#### Canterbury

D.C., Chartae Antiquae E206 S433

DC., Charae Antiquae T37	S433
DC., Lit.Manuscript E.19	S394
DC., Register P	S398
Cardigan, Earl of, Sturmeý House, Savernake Forest. The Muchelney Cartulary	S435
Chichester	
D.R.O., Episc.VI. I.1	S403
D.R.O., Episc.VI. I.2	S403
D.R.O., Episc.VI. I.6	S403
Exeter	
DC., 1705	S390
DC., 1706	S389
DC., 2517	S389
DC., 2518	S388
DC., 2519	S386
DC., 3672	S386
D.R.O. E/R 4	S450
London	
British Library	
Addenda 15350	S393, S400, S412, S416, S417, S437(2) S430, S439, S440, S441, S443, S444, S446, S449.
Addenda 46487	S422, S423
Additional Charters 19516	S387
Cotton Augustus ii	S421, S425, S447
Cotton Charters iv	S451
Cotton Charters viii	S416, S443, S449
Cotton Claudius B vi	S396, S404, S408, S409, S410 S411, S413, S448
Cotton Claudius Cix	S404, S408, S409, S410, S413
Cotton Claudius DX	S394
Cotton Domitian xiv	S418
Cotton Julius D ii	S394
Cotton Nero E i.pt 2	S428
Cotton Tiberius A ii	S398
Cotton Tiberius A xiii	S401(2) S402(2) S406, S428
Cotton Vitellius A xiii	S420
Cotton Vitellius C ix	S454
Cotton Vitellius D vii	S386, S404, S411
Harley 61	S419, S429, S445
Harley 436	S424, S438, S458
Harley 560	S451
Lansdowne 269	S451, S452
Lansdowne 417	S415, S434, S435

Lansdowne 417	S443
Lansdowne 447	S452
Lansdowne 966	S388
Royal 13.D.ii	S436
London	
Lambeth Palace 582	S433
Lambeth Palace 1212	S398
London	
P.R.O.	
Duchy of Lancaster, Miscellanea, Bundle 6, Roll 1 (DL 41/6/1).	S456, S457.
Exchequer, Kings Rolls, Miscellaneous Books Series i, Vol. 24 (E 164/24)	S415, S434, S435.
Charter Rolls, 12, Edw. II.	S444
Charter Rolls, 10-12 Hen. IV	S454
Confirmation Rolls, 2 Hen. VII pt 2	S454
Confirmation Rolls, 2 and 3 Phil. and Mary	S454
Confirmation Rolls, 6 Eliz.	S454
Confirmation Rolls, 2 Jas I pt 2	S454
Patent Rolls, 5 Ric. II pt 2	S454
Patent Rolls, 1 Edw. IV pt 5	S454
Patent Rolls, 22. Hen. VIII pt 1	S454
London	
St. Paul's, DC., Register B.	S452
St. Paul's, DC., W.D. 1	S453
St. Paul's, DC., W.D. 4	S453
Macclesfield, Earl of, Shirburn Castle	
<u>Liber Abbatiae</u>	S418
Oxford	
Bodleian Library	
Dodsworth 9	S407, S451
Dodsworth 10	S391, S407, S451
Dodsworth 66	S392
Dodsworth 160	S456, S457
Dugdale 21	S452
English history a. 2	S405
Gough Berkshire 20	S404
Tanner 223	S398
Wood empti 1	S399, S426, S431, S442
Wood empti 5	S415, S434, S435
c/o the Bodleian Library	
Mr. David Rogers (S.xviii transcripts of several pre-conquest charters).	S432
Oxford	
Magdalen College 172	S436
Oxford	
University College 82	S451



Stafford

William Salt Library, Stafford Manuscript 7 S433

York

DC., Magnum Registrum Album pt 1 S407

DC., Magnum Registrum Album pt 2 S407

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The object of this thesis is to examine the evidence for the composition of King Athelstan's 'witan' found in the witness lists of the royal charters and to see how this relates to the historical framework for his reign.

The study of the Anglo-Saxon charters has tended to concentrate upon general problems relating to the charter texts, such as the identification of land estates and the detection of forged charters.<sup>1</sup> There has been little detailed examination of the charters of any one individual Anglo-Saxon king and still less concentration upon the actual charter witnesses. There are only two studies which are concerned specifically with the charters issued during the reign of one king. They are T.J.Oleson's work on the 'witenagemot' in the reign of Edward the Confessor and Simon Keynes examination of the royal charters, or diplomas, of Aethelred II.<sup>2</sup> Both these studies include an analysis of the charter witness lists in order to provide evidence for the composition of the king's 'witan'.<sup>3</sup> My examination of the charters of King Athelstan is similar in intention to these works, with special consideration given to any indication of a change in the composition of the witness lists and how this reflects upon the history of Athelstan's reign.

There is very little pre-conquest source material available for Athelstan's reign (924-39). The Anglo-Saxon chronicle has only brief entries about the events of his reign, except for the 937 annal about the battle of Brunanburgh which consists of a long, vernacular poem



celebrating the West Saxon victory there.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the historical material is contained in post-conquest sources such as William of Malmesbury and Symeon of Durham and it is not all totally reliable.<sup>5</sup> However, the charters of King Athelstan are documentary records of transactions carried out during his reign and thus represent a body of source material directly relevant to it which has not been used to its fullest potential as a historical source.

The secondary sources for Athelstan's reign are mainly discussions contained in works of a more general historical significance.<sup>6</sup> Many are more concerned with the events of the later tenth century, examples of this are J. Armitage Robinson's work about the tenth-century monastic reformation and Keynes' work on the charters of Aethelred II.<sup>7</sup> The study of Athelstan's reign itself has tended to concentrate more upon cultural history and what this reveals about the period.<sup>8</sup> The event of his reign which has been most thoroughly examined is the battle of Brunanburgh; research has centred upon its historical context and the location of the battle-field.<sup>9</sup> There has been no specific examination of the organisation of government in Athelstan's reign. The analysis of the charter witness lists will hopefully give some more detailed evidence about the 'witan's' role in this context.

The source material emphasizes Athelstan's great reputation as a powerful and successful king. This is evident in the claim that he was the first king to rule all England, the impression his victory at Brunanburgh

created and his reputation as a generous church benefactor.<sup>10</sup> There is a further aspect to his power in his involvement in Continental affairs. Two of his sisters married into leading Continental families, one marrying Otto of Germany and the other Hugh, Duke of the Franks.<sup>11</sup> Another Frankish Duke, Louis d'Outremer, was given shelter at Athelstan's court when he was in exile.<sup>12</sup> Finally, William of Malmesbury records two embassies sent to Athelstan, one from Hugh Duke of the Franks and the other from Harald Finehair of Norway.<sup>13</sup> Both embassies brought him rich gifts and thus it appears that rulers outside the British Isles were actively seeking his friendship and alliance. The examination of the composition of Athelstan's 'witan' will hopefully shed some more light upon the extent of his power in England by revealing his control over different areas of the country through the identification of the individuals who attested his charters. This in turn may help to account for his reputation on the Continent.

The study of the charters of King Athelstan has been organised in three chapters, arranged upon the following lines:

A. (Chapter 2.)

This consists of a brief examination of the history and development of the Anglo-Saxon charter with a consideration of the problems which arise when differentiating between forged and genuine charters. It is followed by an examination of the charter formulae of the genuine charters of Athelstan's reign. The chapter concludes with an appendix which discusses the veracity of each

individual charter. The charters are referred to throughout the thesis by their number according to Sawyer's <sup>14</sup>'Anglo-Saxon Charters'.

B. (Chapter 3)

This is an examination of the corroborative and date clauses of the charters which shows when and where the 'witenagemots' were held and uses the evidence from the charters to construct an itinerary of the meeting places of the 'witan'.

C. (Chapter 4)

This commences with a computer analysis of the witness lists arranged as a prosopography. The witness lists were run through a statistical programme adapted to the needs of the prosopography. The results show how frequently each individual attested Athelstan's charters and their position of attestation in the witness lists. The identity of each witness is given if it is known. The use of a computer to analyse the witness lists enabled the large amount of factual data they provided to be dealt with in the quickest and most efficient way possible.

The prosopography is followed by a discussion about each category of witnesses in the lists and a final conclusion. The conclusion is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the composition of the 'witan' and the second gives a historical framework for Athelstan's reign as suggested by the results of the analysis of the witness lists.

FOOTNOTES - Chapter 1

1. For example, see the following works:  
Two articles by P. Chaplais in Prisca Munimenta, Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to A.E.J.Hollaender, ed F. Ranger (London, 1973). They are:- The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma, pp 28-43, 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas on Single Sheets: Originals or Copies?', pp 53-88. Also P.Chaplais, 'The Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diplomas of Exeter', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 39 (1966), 1-34. There is also the series originated by H.P.R. Finberg: H.P.R. Finberg, The Early Charters of Devon and Cornwall (Leicester, 1954), H.P.R. Finberg, The Early Charters of the West Midlands (Leicester, 1961), H.P.R. Finberg, The Early Charters of Wessex (Leicester, 1964), C.R.Hart, The Early Charters of Essex (Leicester, 1957), C.R.Hart, Early Charters of Eastern England (Leicester, 1966), C.R. Hart, E.C.N.E.N.M. (Leicester, 1975) and M.Gelling, The Early Charters of the Thames Valley (Leicester, 1979). See also the British Academy publications Anglo-Saxon Charters I, the Charters of Rochester, ed A. Campbell (London, 1973) and Anglo-Saxon Charters II, the Charters of Burton Abbey, ed P.H.Sawyer (Oxford, 1979). Finally, see 'The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents', Anecdota Oxoniensia, ed W.H.Stevenson and A.S.Napier (Oxford, 1895) and F.M. Stenton, The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period (Oxford, 1955).
2. T.J.Oleson, The Witenagemot in the Time of Edward the Confessor (Toronto, 1955) and S.Keynes, The Diplomas of King Aethelred the Unready (Cambridge, 1980).
3. Oleson, Edward the Confessor, pp 37-59 and Keynes, Diplomas, pp 134-228. There is some discussion of the charter evidence in F.Liebermann, The National Assembly in the Anglo-Saxon Period (Halle, 1913). For the identification of a large number of tenth-century charter witnesses see Hart, E.C.N.E.N.M. pp 253-380.
4. A.S.C. ann. 937
5. See, for example Sym/D I, 74-6, 211-12 and Sym/D II, 93, 123-5. See also W/M.G.R. I, 141-57 and W/M G.P., pp 396-406. An example of the legendary material is the account of Athelstan's birth in W/M G.R.I, 155
6. For example see F.M.Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971), pp 339-56.
7. See J.Armitage Robinson, The Times of St.Dunstan (Oxford, 1923), pp 23-71 and Keynes, Diplomas, pp 39-46.

8. See Robinson, Times of St Dunstan, pp 51-71. Also M. Lapidge, 'Some Latin Poems as Evidence for the Reign of Athelstan', A.S.E. 9 (1981), 61-99, M.Wood, 'The Making of Athelstan's Empire : an English Charlemagne?', Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society, ed P.Wormald and D.Bullough (Oxford,1983), pp 273-300 and S.Keynes, 'King Athelstan's Books', Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England, ed M. Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge,1985), pp 143-201.
9. For Brunanburgh see A.P.Smyth, Scandinavian York and Dublin, the History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms II (Dublin,1979), 31-89 and M.Wood, 'Brunanburgh Revisited', Viking Society for Northern Research, Saga Book 20 (1980), 200-17.
10. For Athelstan as the first ruler of all England, see Sym/D. II,380. For his victory at Brunanburgh see The Chronicle of Aethelweard, ed and trans. A.Campbell (London,1962), p 54 and W/M G.R.I, 142-4. For his reputation as a church benefactor see W/M G.P., p39 and Sym/D I, 75-6.
11. See Campbell, Aethelweard, p2, W/M G.R.I, 149-50 and Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp 345-9.
12. ibid, p 345.
13. See W/M.G.R.I, 50-1 for Hugh's embassy and ibid, 144 for the embassy of Harald Finehair.
14. The full reference is P.H.Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters, an Annotated List and Bibliography (London, 1968).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ORIGINS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CHARTERS

It is generally agreed that the charter was not a native development but was introduced to Anglo-Saxon England from abroad.<sup>1</sup> The agency through which it was introduced must have been the Church. This is firstly because the establishment of the Church in England brought literacy to this country and only the clerics would be able to draw up charter documents. Secondly, the Anglo-Saxon charter is, from its earliest occurrence, overtly religious in content and all the early examples benefit church and monastic centres. This indicates that the reason that the Church introduced the charter was in order to provide a written record of land-tenure and thus to safe-guard church property.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest genuine Anglo-Saxon charters come from late seventh-century Kent, the earliest original charter being a grant of land made by King Hlothhere of Kent to abbot Berhtwold of Reculver in 679.<sup>3</sup> There is a group of late sixth-century Kentish charters dated to the reign of King Aethelberht I, but these were examined and proved to be forgeries by Wilhelm Levison.<sup>4</sup> The earliest charter evidence all comes from the South East of England but the narrative sources concerning Northumbria show that the charter was also in use in Northumbria during the seventh century. Eddius Stephanus refers to the use of some type of charter in his 'Life of the Bishop Wilfrid' and Bede's work show that the Northumbrians in the seventh century



were using the charter as a method of ecclesiastical endowment.<sup>5</sup>

There are several different arguments about the introduction of the Anglo-Saxon charter. The orthodox view, as put forward by Levison, identifies similarities in the formulae of the early Anglo-Saxon charters and an Italian document known as the late Roman private deed.<sup>6</sup> This led Levison to conclude that the charter was introduced to England directly from Italy. Owing to the late seventh-century date of the earliest genuine Anglo-Saxon charters, he suggested that the person who brought the charter to England was Theodore of Tarsus, the archbishop of Canterbury between 669 and 690.<sup>7</sup> The second major argument, put forward most recently by Pierre Chaplais, also accepts that the Anglo-Saxon charter was imported directly from Italy.<sup>8</sup> He pointed out that Theodore of Tarsus was a noted scholar who came to an established see with a literate clerical staff at his disposal.<sup>9</sup> The two English documents known to have been prepared by Theodore and his clerics contain formulae which resemble those used in notarial practice in late seventh-century Italy.<sup>10</sup> The earliest Anglo-Saxon charters are more primitive in format than would be expected in a legal document introduced by a scholar such as Theodore who would be aware of the contemporary formulae in use in Italy. Consequently, Chaplais suggests that the charter was introduced to England by St Augustine when he established the first Roman mission in Kent in 597.<sup>11</sup>

Both these two arguments favour a purely Italian origin for the Anglo-Saxon charter. The third and the most recent suggestion is contained in Anton Scharer's argument that the charter was introduced separately to the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and did not diffuse from one centre of origin in Kent.<sup>72</sup> Patrick Wormald has reached a similar conclusion about the origins of the Anglo-Saxon charter.<sup>73</sup> He points out that although the Anglo-Saxon charter ultimately derives from similar, Roman documents and thus has a common origin with the charters of other countries of post-Roman Europe, there are evident differences between the late Roman private deed and the Anglo-Saxon charter. The most obvious difference is the religious tone of the charter, as opposed to the secular tone of the private deed.<sup>74</sup> He also observes that despite the formulaic similarities between the charter and the private deed, developments in Italian notarial formulae which took place during the mid-sixth century do not occur in the Anglo-Saxon charters. Thus if one accepts that the Anglo-Saxon charter originates from Italy without being influenced by any other European source, this places the introduction of the charter to England before the arrival of St Augustine in the late sixth century.<sup>75</sup> Alternatively, Wormald suggests that the variety of charter formulae used in different regions of England from the beginning of the eighth century indicates that not all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms began to use charters following the example and formulae of those used in Kent. This is supported by the documentary evidence which suggests charters were being used in

Northumbria as early as they were being used in Kent.<sup>16</sup>

It has been established that the charter was brought to England through the agency of the Church, so it is relevant to note that Christianity came to England via Iona and the efforts of the early saints of north-western Europe as well as via Rome.<sup>17</sup> Wormald's suggestion that the Anglo-Saxon charter does not have one specific area of origin but developed its own distinctive features from a mixture of Italian, Frankish and Celtic sources seems the most likely explanation for the problems of its origin. Consequently, one cannot credit any single individual with the introduction of the Anglo-Saxon charter to all areas of England.

#### The Role and Development of the Anglo-Saxon Charter

The earliest charters were all made in favour of the Church to provide religious centres with their own lands or, occasionally, to laymen to enable them to establish a monastery. The lands granted by a royal charter were termed bookland. However, there is some doubt about the nature of bookland and why it was different from any other form of land tenure. It has been interpreted as a method of breaking the family entail upon hereditary lands held by the kinship group, initially to allow for the endowment of the Church and later being used to make bequests to lay beneficiaries outside the kinship group.<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, it has been regarded simply as land granted with immunities from all services owed to the king, with the possible exception of military service.<sup>19</sup> There is also the theory,

put forward by Eric John, that bookland was the only form of heritable land available in early Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>20</sup> These three solutions have been discussed and rejected by Wormald who has defined bookland as acquired land which was given in perpetual right and thus quickly took on the character of inherited land, without any restrictions upon bequeathal within the family group. Initially the granting of bookland did not therefore involve immunities nor, specifically, hereditary right.<sup>21</sup>

The situation regarding bookland is far clearer in the tenth century when the charter grants reveal that it was land granted by the king in perpetual right of ownership to an ecclesiastical or lay beneficiary who was entitled to leave it to whomsoever he chose. It was also land freed from all services owed to the king other than the trimoda necessitas which were military service and the building and maintenance of bridges and fortresses.<sup>22</sup>

The use of the charter to grant lands to the Church does not imply that prior to its use the early Anglo-Saxon kings were unable to make any type of land grants, nor does it imply that they did not grant lands to the laity. It is probable that before the charter was introduced land grants were made at an oral ceremony before witnesses and that this practice continued in conjunction with the issue of charters, at least in the early years of charter production.<sup>23</sup> However, one cannot tell whether grants made prior to the use of the charter involved a concept similar to that of bookland.

There is some dispute about whether a charter was a

dispositive or an evidentiary document.<sup>24</sup> In the former case, only by possession of the document would the beneficiary be entitled to the lands it specified. This interpretation assumes that the written word completely superseded the oral ceremony. Alternatively the charter was evidentiary, a written record of a grant made at an oral ceremony which could be produced if any doubt was cast upon the legal ownership of the land. The legal function of the charter is not necessarily constant throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. If it were originally evidentiary, by the tenth century it could conceivably have become a dispositive document, regardless of whether any oral ceremony continued or not. What is known about the role of the charter is in favour of its being an evidentiary document. It was of great value as evidence of the beneficiary's right to the lands it concerned. A claimant who was able to produce a charter as evidence for a disputed grant was in a far stronger position than a contender with no written evidence to support his claim.<sup>25</sup>

It was during the eighth century that charters in favour of the laity began to appear. By the end of the Anglo-Saxon period the charter was an accepted part of the procedure involved in the granting of bookland to ecclesiastical and lay beneficiaries. Until the end of the ninth century charters remained relatively straightforward documents, often brief in content and with little elaboration in the text. There were no fixed formulae available for repeated use in different charters but the

basic components of the document did not alter significantly. In the early tenth century this changed. There are very few genuine charters of Edward the Elder (900-924), but from the reign of Athelstan onwards the charter became a deliberately verbose and inflated piece of writing, impressive in length and content and indicative of kingly power and dignity.<sup>26</sup> Charter development reached its peak during the tenth century. In the eleventh century the vernacular writ came into use for the same purpose as the charter. Both documents were used simultaneously, although the charter remained the major written instrument used for the granting of bookland until after the Norman Conquest in 1066. In Anglo-Norman England the Latin writ, a development of the pre-conquest vernacular version, gradually replaced the charter.<sup>27</sup>

### Charter Structure

The Anglo-Saxon charter was a solemn and formal document written largely in Latin on a single sheet, although few have survived to the present day in this single sheet form. It shows a consistency in structure throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, with little significant change in the components of the text.<sup>28</sup> One may divide these components into distinct parts and these are briefly discussed below.

#### 1. The Invocation

This could be either a short, written invocation of God or a pictorial representation of the cross or, as in many cases, both. It prefaced and introduced the main body of the text.

## 2. The Proem

The proem was basically a religious observation on the disadvantages of the world when compared with the joys of eternal life. It established a pious reason for the king to sanction the grant. The proem is a normal feature of the charter but not all the earliest charters include it in their texts. Hlothhere's charter of 679 commences with an invocation and continues immediately to the grant. It is an original charter and does not include a proem.<sup>29</sup>

## 3. The Grant

This is the central feature of the charter. It was written in clear and unambiguous language because it was important that both the grantor and the beneficiary understood the conditions laid down for land-holding. In its simplest form the grant states that the king was making a grant to a particular beneficiary and gave the location of the land. In all the later charters the appurtenances belonging to the land were listed, such as fields, woods, pastures and streams. During the tenth and eleventh centuries charters regularly included an immunities clause freeing the land from all services other than bridge and fortress building and upkeep and military service.

## 4. The Bounds

This consists of a list of features which described the boundary of the land grant. In the early Anglo-Saxon period it was written in Latin but during the ninth century this part of the charter came to be written in Old English,

presumably because of the decline in English scholarship which occurred as a result of the disruption of Church life caused by the Vikings. The bounds continued to be written in Old English until the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, despite the revival of learning initiated by Alfred the Great.<sup>30</sup>

5. The Anathema

Like the proem, the anathema is religious in sentiment. It was regularly present in all charters from the earliest times. It contained a threat of eternal damnation upon anybody presuming to alter or infringe the terms settled in the grant. The contemporary counterparts of the Anglo-Saxon charter in Frankia contained a secular penalty for charter infringement. This never developed in Anglo-Saxon England, the anathema was always a purely religious threat against such an offence.<sup>31</sup>

6. The Date and Corroboration

The year and the indiction were generally given here, although many tenth-century charters also gave the day and place of issue. The date was closely associated with the corroborative clause which stressed the importance of the witnesses attesting the charter who confirmed the validity of the grant.

7. The Witness List

This was a list of the people present when the grant was made. In form it consisted of a simple cross followed by the witness' name and attestation. Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period neither the cross, the name nor



the attestation formula were autograph. The attestations of the witnesses to the Anglo-Saxon charters were normally written in the same hand as the rest of the text.<sup>32</sup> The actual attestation formulae show much uniformity in the choice of words used until the tenth century when the phrases were deliberately varied.

### The Survival of the Charters

The charters which have survived to the present day are those which were initially stored in church and, most frequently, monastic archives. There are no known charters which have survived from the Anglo-Saxon period in a secular context. The monastic archives also contained other documents pertaining to the history and organisation of the monastery. The reason the charters were stored and copied is that they were important as evidence for legitimate land ownership. There is consequently an unavoidable bias in the charter evidence towards the recording of lands and privileges granted to religious establishments. Most charters are either direct kingly grants to a particular church or monastery or bequests of land originally obtained from the king by the laity which were later bequeathed to the church together with the charter as proof of ownership.

The number of extant Anglo-Saxon charters does not represent the entire corpus of charters in existence during the Anglo-Saxon period. Only a few genuine charters of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms have survived and charter evidence is entirely lacking for the kingdoms of Northumbria and East Anglia.<sup>33</sup> The reasons for the

fragmentary survival of the charter evidence lie in the events both during and after the Anglo-Saxon period, combined with the natural loss of such documents through the process of time and accident. The Viking invasions and settlement which occurred during the ninth and tenth centuries included raids on monasteries and churches and this caused the loss of archival material. After the Norman conquest Anglo-Saxon charters were preserved by the Church as evidence of land-tenure. However, if the Norman kings issued a reconfirmation of ownership for lands claimed through charter evidence, the earlier Anglo-Saxon charter was of less importance than the Norman reconfirmation. Consequently less care was taken to preserve such superseded charters in the church archives. The end of the medieval period saw the dissolution of the monasteries with the resulting dispersal and destruction of many monastic documents. This undoubtedly included charter evidence.

It is evident when one looks at the charter material available that some of them are forgeries. This is because they do not conform in structure, content or language to any charter of proven reliability for the Anglo-Saxon period.<sup>34</sup> The storage of charters in monastic archives accounts for the widespread occurrence of forged charters. A monastery had the wealth and materials available which were necessary for such a task and literate clerics capable of carrying it out. These resources were not readily available to the laity of the early middle ages. There

were three basic reasons for manufacturing forged charters:

1. To provide a replacement for a genuine charter which had been lost or destroyed.
2. To provide written proof for a legitimate land claim for which no charter had been issued.
3. A fraudulent attempt to create evidence for a land-grant which never existed.

The presence of forged charters in the documentary record has necessitated the development of methods by which one can differentiate between forged and genuine charters. This is achieved through the use of diplomatic analysis and the examination of the charter archive.

#### The Problems of Forgery and Diplomatic Analysis

Most charter forgeries date from the post-Conquest period and were manufactured during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>35</sup> However, the creation of charters to replace lost documents or provide written evidence for a land-claim was also necessary during the Anglo-Saxon period. These pre-conquest forgeries are more difficult to identify because a forger in the Anglo-Saxon period had the immediate tradition of the charter to draw upon. Forgers working after the conquest had to cope with language difficulties and an archaic form of document.

The situation is further complicated in that nearly all the Anglo-Saxon charters which have survived do so because they were copied into post-conquest monastic cartularies. Diplomatic analysis is the study of formulae, phraseology and document structure to judge whether a document is typical of the period to which it is dated. It is used in

conjunction with palaeography which involves the examination of the actual script of a document in order to discover the date at which that particular version of the document was written. Since the monastic cartularies containing charter copies were written mainly during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries they are evidently of no value for the palaeography of the Anglo-Saxon period. Diplomatic analysis is applicable only in a limited form because not every diplomatic feature was reproduced in each cartulary. Often the pictorial invocation is omitted and, more importantly for this study, the witness lists are abbreviated.<sup>36</sup>

A few charters survive as single sheet documents. These are either early copies, forgeries recorded before the drawing up of cartularies, or the original document issued about a particular land-grant. This category includes all the charters which, in their present form, are believed to have been written down during the Anglo-Saxon period. They can be submitted to palaeographic analysis in order to obtain the date of the era during which the surviving document was written, as opposed to the original date of issue recorded in the charter formulae. Palaeography does not give an absolute date for a document. At best it gives a time range of roughly two decades. Even this time range must be regarded with caution when one considers the difficulties involved when using palaeography as a method of dating a particular document. Firstly, there is the use of script imitative of an earlier period in the copying or forging of a document.

Secondly, there is the difference in hand-writing between individual, contemporary scribes from different monastic houses. Single sheet charters tend to contain all the structural and diplomatic features typical of an Anglo-Saxon charter. Consequently the use of diplomatic analysis produces more concrete results than it does when using it to examine cartulary copies.

There are problems inherent in the content of the charters which cause difficulty when one is trying to establish whether a charter is genuine or forged. There is little evidence for the repeated use of the same formulae in different charters until the tenth century. Thus before the tenth century one cannot make any detailed comparisons between the formulae of different charters to establish whether they are typical of the time to which they are dated. There are no outward signs which can be used to verify an Anglo-Saxon charter. It has no official seal, the name of the scribe is not recorded and there are no autograph signatures on the witness list. This is in marked contrast to the Frankish charters of the Continent which do contain these signs of verification.<sup>37</sup>

Owing to the nature of the charter evidence it is not possible to define any single charter as an original. Even a single sheet charter, written in a hand roughly contemporary with the date of issue, with no suspicious features in the text may well be a contemporary copy rather than an original charter.<sup>38</sup> The lack of original material increases the difficulty involved in separating the forged from the genuine charters. Recent scholarship has concluded that

there can be no rigid definition of a forged or a genuine charter.<sup>39</sup> Many texts considered to be basically authentic contain interpolations added at a later date. Such charters must be regarded as of dubious reliability. There are no firm guidelines by which one can judge the extent of the interpolation in such charters. It is not certain how much can be assigned to a straightforward later addition and how much is the result of textual corruption occurring when the charter was copied. The decision about the extent of the interpolation depends largely upon the discretion of the person examining that particular charter. Chaplais has made the most realistic attempt to cope with the difficulties of diplomatic analysis when applied to the Anglo-Saxon charters.<sup>40</sup> He has divided the charters into the following four categories:

1. An Original

This word is used to describe a charter written on a single sheet in a hand contemporary with the date of issue and which contain no suspicious features.

2. An Apparent Original

This describes a charter which appears to have all the features of an original but which has not been subjected to detailed analysis.

3. A Copy

A charter written on a single sheet with no suspicious features but written in a hand later than the date of issue.

4. A Forgery

A charter which contains any signs of attempted deception.

Chaplais' categories do have their disadvantages in that they cannot be used to deal with the problem of cartulary copies. One has to assess the reliability of the single sheet charters on the basis of the categories listed above and apply the results to the cartulary copies. Thus cartulary copies which contain formulae typical of the period to which they are dated and have no evident suspicious features are probably genuine charter records. One can obtain further information about the reliability of individual charters by examining the relevant monastic archives.

#### The Archives

Simon Keynes has identified a pattern in the bequeathal of lands to monastic houses through examining the land bequests made to several different monasteries.<sup>41</sup> He concluded that the initial land grant made to establish the monastery was often given by the king. Later acquisitions were obtained gradually and were given mainly by the lay nobility. Consequently monasteries such as Malmesbury, whose charters are predominantly records of direct grants to the monastery from the Anglo-Saxon kings, are suspect. Also, owing to the vicissitudes of monastic life, a monastery such as Worcester which contained a large number of charters dated to the ninth century and earlier, is open to suspicion.<sup>42</sup> An example of a reliable monastic archive is that of Burton Abbey. It was founded by an Anglo-Saxon noble in the late tenth century and its cartulary consists mainly of land grants made initially to the laity and which were later bequeathed to the abbey.<sup>43</sup>

In some cases there is no indication that the lands granted in a charter made in favour of a layman ever came into the possession of the monastic house in whose archive it was stored. Such charters are presumed to be genuine because monasteries were unlikely to undertake motiveless forgery, although one must remember that the reason for the manufacture of a forged charter may not be apparent in the historical record.<sup>44</sup> The explanation for this disinterested preservation of charters is that monasteries were used as a safe repository for important documents by the laity in times of danger. Some of the documents deposited for this reason were never reclaimed by the owner and remained in the monastic archive.<sup>45</sup>

Dorothy Whitelock has suggested a method of establishing the authenticity of charters through the comparison of documents stored in different monastic archives. She argued that the independent occurrence of similarly dated charters using the same formulae in different archives suggests that such charters are genuine in origin.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, charters which share the same date and formulae which are found in the same archive are suspect because of the likelihood that at least one of them is a forgery based upon the content of a genuine charter in the same archive.

The archival approach and the use of diplomatic analysis are to some extent inter-reliant. The pattern of land acquisition shown by the charters in a particular monastic archive is examined to judge the reliability of the archive, but it is the charters themselves which are



used to discover this pattern. Any such examination must exclude the more obvious charter forgeries which are discovered by using diplomatic analysis. Also, it would be necessary to examine the archives of every monastic house in order to establish whether the pattern of land acquisition in each is reliable or not. Since this has not been accomplished as yet, this type of analysis has its limitations when one is considering charter authenticity.

### The Charters of King Athelstan

There are seventy-three surviving charters which are attributed to King Athelstan.<sup>47</sup> The manuscript versions of these documents are dispersed in various libraries around the country. Consequently, my examination of the charters is based upon the available printed editions. There is no full, modern edition of the Anglo-Saxon charters in existence. This situation is at present being remedied in a joint project organised by the British Academy and the Royal Historical Society in which the entire corpus of Anglo-Saxon royal charters is being printed and edited in different volumes according to the archive in which they were stored. However, only two volumes of this edition have as yet been published. They contain the charters of Rochester and Burton Abbey.<sup>48</sup> The archive of Burton Abbey has three charters attributed to King Athelstan but the archive of Rochester has none. The majority of Athelstan's charters are printed in nineteenth-century publications and lack the benefit of more recent advances in textual criticism. A few charters have been printed in more recent publications and the three

contained in the British Academy's edition of the archive of Burton Abbey are preferred to any older editions of the same three charters. The following publications are those from which I have taken the basic text of the charters. They are listed together with the relevant charter numbers according to Sawyer's 'Anglo-Saxon Charters'.

1. Walter de Gray Birch, Cartularium Saxonicum II (London, 1887),<sup>49</sup> S386-91, S393-4, S396, S398-404, S406-31, S433-6, S438-58.
2. H.P.R. Finberg, The Early Charters of Wessex (Leicester, 1964), pp 130-2. S432.
3. C. Hart, The Early Charters of Eastern England (Leicester, 1966), pp 150-5. S437
4. Anglo-Saxon Charters II, Burton Abbey, ed P.H. Sawyer (Oxford, 1979), pp 3-9. S392, S395, S397.
5. The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents, Anecdota Oxoniensa, ed A.S. Napier and W.H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1895), pp 5-9. S405.

The criteria I have used to decide upon the authenticity of King Athelstan's charters are based upon the methods discussed earlier in this chapter. However I have not used the full terminology expressed in Chaplais' four categories of charter in my examination of the material. Only the words original and forgery are used in the sense defined by Chaplais. There is no category of an apparent original and a charter copy refers to any printed text which contains no suspicious features for Athelstan's reign.

There are four Athelstan charters which are accepted as originals. Three have been examined by Chaplais and the fourth, S449, is regarded as an original by all the authorities who have examined it.<sup>50</sup> I have accepted that all four of these documents are originals without attempting

to re-examine them for signs of forgery. Details of these four charters are given below:

1. S416, King Athelstan to Wulfgar, land at Ham, Wilts. A.D. 931.
2. S425, King Athelstan to Aelfwald, land at Derantune (possibly Durrington, Sussex) A.D. 934.
3. S447, King Athelstan to Eadwulf, land at Meopham, Kent. A.D. 939.
4. S449, King Athelstan to Wulfswith, land at East Overton, Wilts. A.D. 939.

The remaining charters were examined using the following methods:

1. An examination of the diplomatic formulae of the charters in comparison with the four originals.
2. A consideration of current opinion about the reliability of the archives in which the charters were stored and a comparison of charters with similar formulae in different archives.
3. Considering fully expert opinion upon the authenticity of individual Athelstan charters.

All seventy-three charters are listed and discussed in the appendix to this chapter under the headings original, genuine, dubious and spurious. The spurious charters are those which did not conform to the general structure of the Anglo-Saxon charter and which contained formulae atypical of King Athelstan's reign. I did not examine the manuscript versions of the spurious charters because signs of forgery were evident in the printed texts. The manuscript versions of the original, genuine and dubious charters have all been examined. In the case of the original and genuine charters, this was done to

check the textual accuracy of the printed versions of these documents. The manuscript versions of the dubious charters were examined to try and reach a positive decision about their veracity after the use of diplomatic analysis and examination of the archive had failed to produce this result. The examination of the manuscripts helped in only one case, that of S429, which is consequently included amongst the genuine charters. The remaining charters categorized as dubious are those whose veracity remains uncertain.

Only the original and genuine charters are used in the analysis of the witness lists. I have endeavoured to be fairly strict when differentiating between forged and genuine charters because it is essential for my analysis that the witness lists are definitely genuine.

There are six charters from Athelstan's reign which survive as single sheet documents. They are the originals S416, S425, S447 and S449, a genuine charter copy S405 and the dubious charter S421. Two of the originals, S425 and S447, have no known archive.<sup>51</sup> The other two originals, S416 and S449, survive in two versions, as single sheets and as cartulary copies in a cartulary from the archive of the Old Minster, Winchester. They are consequently assigned to the Old Minster Archive. The two remaining single sheet charters, S405 and S421, are both grants made to the church at Crediton. It is assumed that they were originally part of the Crediton archive. S421 is interesting because it is a dubious charter and may thus be an early forgery on a single

sheet. All the remaining charters survive as copies in the cartularies of twenty-four different monastic archives. In two of these cartularies, one from Glastonbury and the other from Sherborne, the scribes responsible for copying down the charters abbreviated all the witness lists. In the Shaftesbury cartulary all the witness lists of the charters of King Athelstan record only the first three people attesting. The archive of each particular charter is given, together with the discussion about that charter, in the appendix to this chapter.<sup>52</sup>

The reliability of every archive is difficult to judge because few of the archives containing charters from Athelstan's reign have undergone detailed examination. Consequently, only a few general comments can be made about these archives. Keynes has argued that Malmesbury, Bath, and Sherborne are unreliable because they contain a disproportionately high number of grants made directly to the monasteries by different Anglo-Saxon kings.<sup>53</sup> The Winchester cartularies are known to contain a substantial number of forgeries, whilst several of the pre-tenth-century charters in the Worcester archive are suspect.<sup>54</sup> The archive at Exeter is unreliable for documents dated before the eleventh century because when bishop Leofric moved the centre of the see of Crediton from Crediton to Exeter in 1050, it is recorded that the archive at Exeter was practically non-existent.<sup>55</sup> I have not come to a definite conclusion about the reliability of the archives at

Glastonbury and Shaftesbury. However the fact that after diplomatic analysis all the Athelstan charters in both archives were judged to be genuine may be a point in their favour.<sup>56</sup> The Athelstan charters in the archives of

St Augustine's, Canterbury and St Paul's, London, were all judged to be

forgeries and this may reflect upon their archives. Christchurch, Canterbury has a more reliable archive.<sup>57</sup> The lesser monastic

houses of Burton and Thorney do have reliable archives and

Keynes also favours the reliability of those at Wilton

and Abingdon.<sup>58</sup> Finally, there is the problem of the

spurious charters, assigned to the archives of Ripon

Milton and Beverley. The main reason these charters

are assigned to these particular archives is that the

recipients of the grants are Ripon, Milton and Beverley

respectively. There are no reliable surviving cartularies from these religious centres.

The archival approach has been used when possible to help judge the veracity of King Athelstan's charters.

In the cases when information about the reliability of the archive is unavailable my evaluation of the charters

has depended largely upon diplomatic analysis. The

diplomatic of Athelstan's charters is discussed in detail

on the following pages using the original charter S416

as an example. S416 is printed in its separate components

with a discussion of its relevant features during Athelstan's reign which draws upon the information found in the

other three original charters and the genuine charter

copies.

## A Discussion of the Diplomatic formulae of Athelstan's Charters

### The Invocation

Only one original charter contains a written invocation. It is S447, dated to 939 which has the introductory phrase 'Regnante in perpetuum domino nostro Jhesu Christo'. This phrase is preceded by a pictorial invocation in the form of a cross. The other three originals S416, S425 and S449 have only the pictorial cross for an invocation. Most of the charter copies commence with either a pictorial or a written invocation and some, like S447, have both. However, not every copy which I have judged to be genuine has an invocation. This is because not every monastic cartulary records the pictorial cross which originally prefaced the charter. In the Winchester Old Minster cartulary only the copy of S449 is prefaced by a cross. The remaining Athelstan charters in this cartulary have no recorded form of pictorial invocation.<sup>59</sup>

A charter copy which lacks any form of invocation but whose text appears to be reliable is regarded as genuine, rather than relying upon the copyist faithfully recording the pictorial cross when the charter was entered into a cartulary. The written invocation is *not common to* all four original charters, therefore its absence is not an indication of forgery.

### The Proem

Below: S416 Proem and Invocation

Flebilis fortiter detestanda. totillantis  
sæculi piacula, diris obscenæ horrendæque mortalitatis.  
circumsepta latratibus. non nos patria indoeptæ  
paci securos. sed quasi foetidæ corruptelæ

in voraginem casuros. provocando ammonent. ut ea toto mentis conamine cum casibus suis. non solum despiciendo. sed etiam velud fastidiosam melancoliæ nausiam. abhominando fugiamus. tendentes ad illud evvangelicum; "date et dabitur vobis"; Qua de re infima. quasi peripsema. quisquiliarum abiciens. superna ad instar pretiosorum monilium eligens! animum sempiternis in gaudiis figens. ad adipiscendam mellifluæ dulcedinis misericordiam. perfruendamque infinite letitæ jucunditatem.

Each of the four original charters has a religious proem in the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon charter, but the Latin style is noticeably different from that used prior to the tenth century. This style which first appears in Athelstan's reign is described as 'hermeneutic Latin'.<sup>60</sup> S416 is a typical example of its kind. The most striking feature of hermeneutic Latin is the deliberate use of unusual vocabulary, including words from the Greek and religious quotations. S416 has the quotation 'date et dabitur vobis', and S449 'omnia quae videntur temporalia sunt quae autem non videntur aeterna'.<sup>61</sup> S447 and S425 have no quotations, but S425 contains a reference to classical mythology: 'Acherontici ad ima Cociti'. The quotations, the arcane vocabulary and the reference to classical mythology all contributed to form a deliberately artificial and inflated Latin style. The style was inspired by the Latin of the monk Aldhelm, writing in the late seventh, early eighth centuries.<sup>62</sup> During Athelstan's reign Aldhelmian phrases such as 'toto conamine mentis' and 'peripsema quisquiliarum' in S416 are used frequently.<sup>63</sup> Current scholarship argues also for continental influence in the development of tenth-century hermeneutic Latin. Michael Lapidge suggests the



influence of Fleury, known to be influential in the monastic reform in England in the mid-tenth century. Donald Bullough looks to Brittany and Wales, pointing out the close links Athelstan had with these two countries.<sup>64</sup> Whatever the influences that formed the hermeneutic style, it was established during Athelstan's reign. The charters of the tenth century continued to be written in the hermeneutic style until the development of the narrative charter during the reign of King Aethelred II.<sup>65</sup>

Each of the four originals has a different proem but when studying the charter copies it is evident that the proems of S416, S425 and S449, especially those of S416 and S425, occur frequently in many of Athelstan's charters. This is not the result of forgery because the same proems occur as components of genuine charters stored in different archives. S416 is from the Old Minster, Winchester and its proem also appears in charters from the archives of Abingdon, Shaftesbury and Sherbourne.<sup>66</sup> A list of the proems which are shared by the genuine charters of King Athelstan is given below.<sup>67</sup>

1. 'Cuncta quae humanis optutibus caducarum molimina rerum'  
A.D. 926. S396.  
S397.
2. 'Afflante per cunctam triquadri orbis latitudinem'  
A.D. 928. S399.  
S400.
3. 'Regnante perpetualiter atque omnem humanae imbecillitatis'  
A.D. 930. S403.  
S405.
4. 'Fortuna fallentis saeculi procax'  
A.D. 930 for 934. S407.  
A.D. 934. S425. (original)  
S426.  
Undated S458.

5. 'Flebilia fortiter detestanda'  
 A.D. 931. S412.  
                   S413.  
                   S416. (original)  
 A.D. 932. S417.  
                   S418.  
                   S419.  
 A.D. 933. S422.
6. 'In nomine altithroni qui cuncta supra simil et  
 in imis gubernat'  
 A.D. 931. S411.  
 A.D. 937. S437.
7. 'Egregius agonista semocinatus est in scripturis'  
 A.D. 938. S441.  
                   S442.  
 A.D. 939. S449. (original)

There is a final group of charters with closely related proems, whose wording is not identical as are the examples listed above, this group consists of:

- A.D. 935. S430.  
 A.D. 937. S438.  
 A.D. 939. S445.  
                   S446.

The Athelstan charter proems can be arranged chronologically in order of occurrence.<sup>68</sup> With reference to the four original charters, proem S416 is used in genuine charters only in the period between 931-3, S425 only in 934 and in an undated charter S458 and S449 in 939. S447 is an unique proem in the surviving evidence, apart from the dubious charter S432 from Athelney cartulary. On the strength of these observations I would place the undated charter S458 in the year 934 together with all other genuine charter proems of this type. It is also apparent within this chronological framework that the most inflated and complex charter proems, represented in the originals by S416 and S425, occur in the middle

section of Athelstan's reign between 928 and 934. The charter copies which have proems different from those of the originals can also, as is seen in the list of charter proems earlier in this section, be divided into rough chronological periods.

### The Grant

Below: Grant from S416

ego ÆDELSTANUS rex Anglorum. per omnipatrantis dexteram totius Bryttaniæ regni solio sublimatus. quandam telluris particulam. meo fideli ministro ULFGARO. id est novem cassatarum. in loco quem solicolæ ÆT HAMME. vocitant tribuo. ut ille eam sine jugo exosæ servitutis. cum pratis. pascuis. silvis. rivulis. omnibusque ad eam utilitatibus. rite pertinentibus. liberaliter ac æternaliter. quamdiu vivat habeat: et post generalem. qui omnibus certus incertusque homunculis. constat transitum. cuicumque successionis heredi voluerit. imperpetuum derelinquat.

The Latin used in the grant is noticeably more simple than that of the proem. In its basic form the grant in Athelstan's charters states, as in the example given above, that the land is given in perpetual right to the beneficiary and that it is immune from all dues owed to the king other than the trimoda necessitas. In the charters S419, S422, S429, S438 and S449 an extra condition is added. The beneficiary is required to say prayers for the king. All these charters were made in favour of religious houses or individuals so the condition was not an unusual request to make. The five charters S392, S396, S397, S431 and S438 mention that a money payment was made by the beneficiary in order to obtain the lands granted. This is especially interesting in the case of the two charters S396 and S397. The charters

were issued for lands bought from the pagans by the beneficiaries. Apparently this method of obtaining land was one way that the West Saxon kings gained control over areas of the Danelaw.<sup>69</sup>

There is an overall similarity in the language of the grants of all four original charters but they vary in the phrases used. The grant is introduced by a formulae descriptive of the king's dignity, for S416 and S425 it is 'rex Anglorum per omnipatrantis dexteram totius Brytanniae regni solio sublimatus'. This formula is also used in the copies S403, S412, S413, S417, S418, S419, S422, S426, S458 and in S407 with a short extra phrase. Not only does this show a regular use of a specific formula, but it includes all the charter copies with the proem types of S416 and S425. The originals S447 and S449 share the same formula which is similar in sentiment to that of S416 and S425. The phrase is 'divina mihi adridente gratia rex Anglorum et curagulus totius Brytanniae'. This formula also occurs in the charter copies S411 and S437.

The similarities in the language used in the grant are most obvious in the formulae defining which services were compulsory in return for the land held. By the tenth century the established conditions for the holding of bookland were military service and the maintenance and building of forts and bridges, the three services or trimoda necessitas.<sup>70</sup> Athelstan's charters expressed these obligations in two basic formulae occurring in almost all his charters with minor variations in language.

These two formulae are 'sine jugo exosae servitutis' and 'expeditione et pontis, arcisve constructione'. The 'sine jugo' formulae does not specify any services. It occurs in the charters S403, S407, S412-13, S416-19, S422 and S425-6. All are dated to between 930 and 934. S399 and S400, dated to 928, have the formula 'vel praecipitio invisae servitutis', a phrase related in its unspecific nature to the 'sine jugo' formula. The period 928 to 934 corresponds with the occurrence of the lengthiest and most inflated proems of Athelstan's reign. H.P.R. Finberg suggested that lands were granted free from any dues during this period because Athelstan was the most powerful ruler in Britain and consequently more inclined to be generous when granting land.<sup>71</sup> I would argue with W.H. Stevenson that the 'sine jugo' formula is another phrase invented to express the set conditions for the bequeathal of bookland and that it included the trimoda necessitas which were essential services for the maintenance of public peace and order.<sup>72</sup> Only one genuine charter, S405, contains a phrase which exempts the grant from all services including the trimoda necessitas. It is the one exception to the rule and its veracity is discussed in the appendix to this chapter. The charters outside the 928-34 period all use the alternative, specific formula when referring to the 'trimoda necessitas'.

Any charter dated to King Athelstan's reign which has a grant containing narrative is suspect. This is evident from the lack of embellishment of the grant in

the four original charters. The grant was concerned only to record the transaction and narrative does not appear in the Anglo-Saxon charters until the reign of Aethelred II, when an explanation of why the charter was issued was often included in the grant.<sup>73</sup> I have taken the presence of narrative in a charter grant of King Athelstan to be evidence of forgery and have discounted any such charters from this study.

### The Bounds

Below: Bounds from S416

Prædicta siquidem tellus. his terminis.  
 circumcincta clarescit: ærast on eastewardan.  
 on lin leage geat. 7 ðonne on lin leage mid-  
 depearde. 7 ðonon suðrihte ƿið ðara stan ceastla.,  
 7 ðonne of ðæm stan ceastlum to pyddes geate.  
 ðonon to ospaldes berghe. ðonon ondlong herpoðes.  
 on burghardes anstigo. ðonne forð to bares  
 anstigon. ðonon on heardanleage middepearde.  
 ðonne suð on ge rihte. ondlong henna dene. oð hit  
 cimeð to ðære dic. ðonne ƿest ut ðurh henna Leah.  
 oð hit cimeð to ðære efese. ðonne a norð be ƿyrt  
 ƿalan ðæt on efen ðone greatan æsc: ðonne norð  
 ondlong ðæs 'h'linces. ðæt on bofan hangran:  
 ðonne ondlong hagan. on ƿifiling falod ƿeste ƿeardne:  
 ðonne norð ofer dune. on meos 'h'linc ƿeste ƿeardne:  
 ðonne a dune on ða yfre. on beoƿau hammes hecgan. on  
 bremeles sceagan easte ƿeardne: ðonne on ða blacan  
 græfan. ðonne norð be ðem 7 heafdan. to ðære  
 scortan dic. butan anan æcre: ðonne to fugel mere to  
 ðan ƿege: ondlong ƿeges. to ottes forða: ðonon to  
 ƿudumere: ðonne to ðære rupan hecgan: ðæt on langan  
 hangran: ðonne on grendles mere: ðonon on dyrnan geat:  
 ðonne eft on lin leage geat.,

In all four originals the bounds are written in Old English and consist of a list of features by which the extent of the grant was recognized. The Latin formula introducing the bounds of S416 and S425 is: 'Predicta siquidem tellus his terminis circumcincta clarescit'. This phrase is basically the same in the copies S403, S412, S413, S417-19, S422 and S458, all of which, other

than the undated charter S458 are dated between the years 930 and 933. S447 and S449 share the formula 'Istis terminibus praedicta terra circumgyrata esse videtur'. This phrase is the basis of the phrases introducing the bounds in the charter copies S430-1, S437-8, S441-2, S445-6 and S448, dated between 936 and 939. This, as in the use of the proems and certain formulae in the grants, appears to point to a chronological framework for the use of different formulae.

### The Anathema

Below: Anathema from S416

Si autem quod absit. aliquis diabolico inflatus spiritu. hanc meae compositionis ac confirmationis breviculam. infringere vel elidere temptaverit: sciat se novissima ac magna examinationis die. stridula clangente archangeli salpice. bustis sponte dehiscentibus. somata jam rediviva relinquentibus. elementis omnibus pavefactis. cum Iuda proditore. qui a satoris pio sato. "filius perditionis" dicitur. aeterna confusione. edacibus ineffabilium tormentorum flammis periturum.,

The anathema is related to the proem in several ways. Firstly, it is religious in content and secondly, it is written in the hemeneutic Latin style, as can be seen in the example taken from S416 printed above. However the anathema in Athelstan's charters is neither so lengthy nor so inflated in style as the charter proems. Thirdly, although none of the four original charter anathemas contain quotations, there are genuine charter copies which do. These are S392, S399-400, S403, S416-9, S422, S425-6, S441 and S445. Fourthly, the same anathema is used in several charters and one can see a distinct overlap when comparing the charters which have the same

anathemas with those which have the same proems. Yet it is not always the rule that the same anathemas are found in charters with identical proems. The anathema of S447 and S449 is common to both but they have different proems. The same pattern is seen in the other two originals S416 and S425. The copies S396 and S397 are identical in proem and anathema and similar in text throughout their length. There are two other groups of charters, identical in proem and anathema, S339 with S400 and S416 with S412, S413, S418 and S419. Other charters have closely related anathemas, S441-2 and S446 contain minor discrepancies in phraseology, S441 and S442 also share the same proem. Despite the occurrence of charters identical in proem and anathema there are sufficient examples, including the four originals, which differ in proem or anathema to conclude that there was no conscious attempt to use the same proem with the same anathema.

Below are listed the anathemas of the genuine charters which occur repeatedly.<sup>74</sup>

1. 'Si quis vero hanc largitionis munificentiam arrepto'  
A.D. 926. S396.  
S397.
2. 'Si autem quod non optamus evenerit aliquis superbiae'  
A.D. 928. S399.  
S400.
3. 'Si autem quod non optamus aliquis diabolico inflatus spiritu'  
A.D. 931. S412.  
S413.  
S416.  
A.D. 932. S418.  
S419.  
A.D. 934. S425.
4. 'Si quis quod non optamus hanc nostram donationem infringere'  
A.D. 939. S447.  
S449.



## The Date and Corroborative Clause

Below: Date and Corroboration from S416

Hujus namque a Deo dominoque Jhesu Christo.  
inspiratæ. atque inventæ voluntatis scedula.  
anno dominicæ incarnationis DCCCC<sup>o</sup>. XXX<sup>o</sup>IO.  
regni vero gratis mihi commissi. VII<sup>o</sup>. indictione  
IIII<sup>o</sup>. epacta nulla. concurrente. V<sup>o</sup>. II. idus.  
Novembris. luna XX<sup>o</sup>. VIIII<sup>o</sup>. in villa omnibus  
notissima. quæ Leo tun. nuncupatur. episcopis.  
abbatibus. ducibus. patr'i'æ procuratoribus.  
regia. dapsilitate ovantibus perscripta est:  
cujus etiam inconcussæ. firmitatis auctoritas;  
his testibus roborata constat. quorum nomina  
subtus. characteribus depicta:' ' annotantur.

The Roman numerals of the date are the easiest part of the charter to miscopy. I have not considered a charter to be spurious if the only suspicious detail is that the date given is outside Athelstan's reign. This is the case in the genuine charter copy S403 which has a date of 830 instead of 930.<sup>75</sup> If the rest of the charter is suspect in any way an incorrect date is taken as supporting evidence for forgery, as in the spurious charters S386-90 which purport to be grants to the monastery at Exeter but which are evident forgeries and dated to the year 670.<sup>76</sup> Only one of the charters which are correctly dated to Athelstan's reign has had its date revised. This is S407 whose date has been corrected from 930 to 934.<sup>77</sup>

The date normally consists of the year and the indiction as in S447 'Acta est haec prefata donatio anno ab incarnatione domino nostri Jhesu Christi DCCCCXXXIX. Indictione XII'. Between the years 928-34 the date is given in greater detail, with the place of issue and accompanied by a corroborative clause. This can be

clearly seen in the example given above, taken from S416. The expansion of the date clause is unique to the 928-34 period. It coincides with the period when the hemeuetic Latin style of the charter proem and anathema is at its most inflated and verbose.

The Witness List

Below: Witness List from S416

Ego Æðelstanus. florentis Brytaniæ monarchia  
 præditus rex. hujus indiculi fulcimentum:  
 cum signo sanctæ semperque amandæ c'r'ucis.  
 corroboravi et subscripsi.,  
 Ego Ðulfhelmus Dorobernensis ecclesiæ. archiepiscopus.  
 consensi. et subscripsi.  
 Ego Ðulfstanus Eboracensis ecclesiæ. archiepiscopus.  
 consensi. et subscripsi.  
 Ego Hoƿæ1 subregulus. consensi. et subscripsi.  
 Ego Iuðƿal subregulus. consensi. et subscripsi.

Ego Ælfƿine.	} episcopus consensi et subscripsi	Ego Ælfpald.	} dux consensi et subscripsi
Ego Eadulf.		Ego Osferð.	
Ego Cunan.		Ego Aldred.	
Ego Ælfheh.		Ego Uhtred.	
Ego Sigelm.		Ego Æscberht.	
Ego Cenƿald.		Ego Ælfstan.	
Ego Beornstan.		Ego Uhterd.	
Ego Oda.		Ego Urm.	
Ego Ðynsige.		Ego Guðrum.	
Ego Ðulfhun.		Ego Hapard.	
Ego Ðeoderd.		Ego Gunner.	
Ego Cyneferð.		Ego Ðurferð.	
Ego Tidelm.		Ego Ælferd.	
Ego Cynsige.		Ego Hadd.	
Ego Eadƿard.		Ego Scule.	
Ego Æscberht.			
Ego Ðired.			
Ego Ælfric. abbas. consensi et subscripsi.			
Ego Eadƿine. abbas. consensi et subscripsi.			
Ego Æðelnoð. abbas. consensi et subscripsi.			
Ego Bior'h'tsige. abbas. consensi et subscripsi.			
Ego Seaxhelm. abbas. consensi et subscripsi.			
Ego Odda.	} minister consensi et subscripsi	Ego Ælfheh.	} minister consensi et subscripsi
Ego Ðulfgar.		Ego Spiðulf.	
Ego Æðelstan.		Ego Ðullaf.	
Ego Ælfheah.		Ætðelm.	
Ego Æðelferð.		Ego Eadric.	
Ego Ælfhere.		Ego Æðelƿeard.	
Ego Æðelƿold.		Ego Æðelmund.	
Ego Eadric.		Ealh'h'elm.	
Ego Ælfpald.		Ego Æðelnoð.	
Ego Buga.		Ego Ðulfsige.	
Ego Ælfric.		Ego Ealhelm.	

Ego Beorhtulf.  
Ego Hefa.  
Ego Ælfric.  
Ego Ælfsige.  
Ego Sigeric.  
Ego Æðeric.

Ego ulfsige.  
Ego Beorhtric.  
Ego Æðelstan.  
Ego Æðelm.  
Ego Þulfnoð.  
Ego Þulfmær.  
Ego Þulfbold.  
Ego Þulfsige.  
Ego Þihtgar.  
Ego Þynsige.  
Ego Ælfhelm.  
Ego Ælferd.  
Ego Þulfric.

minister  
consensi et subscripsi

Ego Æðelstan.  
Ego Ælfric.  
Ego Ælfstan.  
Ego Þulfric.  
Ego Æðelmund.  
Ego Burherd.

Ego Ælfric.  
Ego Æðelpearð.  
Ego Eadulf.  
Ego Æðelsige.  
Ego Þiferð.  
Ego Þulfhelm.  
Ego Cyred.  
Ego Æðelstan.  
Ego Ælfnoð.  
Ego Ælfsige.  
Ego Aedelstan.  
Ego Aelfsige.

minister  
consensi et  
subscripsi

### The Witness List

There are two basic problems to be considered when studying the witness lists. One is the corruption of the witnesses names in the charter copies which may consequently be suspected of forgery. The other is the tendency for scribes to abbreviate the lists, copying down only the ecclesiastical witnesses and perhaps the leading lay nobility. An example is S437 which lists the king the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops of London and Winchester, followed by the words 'et cetera'. Evidently the copyist had not bothered to write out the full list of witness names. The copies which have abridged witness lists are S392, S395, S397, S407, S419, S429, S431, S437, S442 and S445. S392 and S395 give the number of witnesses not listed by name but the others do not, ending in a phrase such as 'ceteri' or 'cum multis aliis'.<sup>78</sup> These abbreviated witness lists cause problems when trying to examine the King's 'witan' through the evidence they provide. There is one charter, S458, which

has no witness list but all the remaining genuine charters of King Athelstan have their full witness lists, the most impressive being S416 which has 102 witnesses.

The usual order of attestation for one of Athelstan's charters is given below. It can also be seen in the sample witness list given at the beginning of this discussion which is from S416. The names given in brackets do not occur in every witness list.

1. The King

(King's Brothers)

2. Archbishops

(Subreguli)

3. Bishops

(Abbots) In the example S416 the abbots are listed after the duces. However, they usually attest before the duces in the other charter originals and copies.

4. Duces

5. Ministers

The order of attestation and the witnesses themselves are examined in chapter four.

It is important that the witness list of a charter is contemporary with the date of issue. Any charter which lists identifiable witnesses, such as the higher clergy, who were not in office at the date of charter issue is suspect. This is especially important because the concern of this thesis is to examine the king's 'witan' as seen through the charter witness lists.

The formulae of the attestation clauses vary little in content apart from that of the king. Generally, the ranks below the king attest, as in S416, with the words

'consensi et subscripsi' until the last years of Athelstan's reign. In charter S447 of the year 939 different formulae are used for the attestation of the king and the ecclesiastics whilst the laity are listed by name and rank only. The formulae used for the ecclesiastics are simple but vary in the verbs used. S447 includes 'consignavi', 'consensi', 'confirmavi' and 'roboravi' for the bishops, except for the bishop of Winchester who, together with the king and archbishop of Canterbury, attests with a more complex formula. The formulæ used for king, archbishop and bishop are identical in both the originals S447 and S449. The formulae are:

'Ego Aethelstanus rex totius Bryttanniae prefatam donationem cum sigillo sancte crucis confirmavi,  
Ego Wulfhelm, Dorobernensis aecclesiae archiepiscopus ejusdem regis donationem cum tropheo agio crucis consignavi,  
Ego Aelfheah, Wintaniensis aecclesiae episcopus triumphalem tropheum agie crucis impressi'.

All the genuine charters from the year 936 onwards, other than S437, have the same formula for the king's attestation and similar ones for the leading prelates. For the period 930-34, all the genuine charters other than S422 have the same formula of attestation for the king as S416. The genuine charters S396-7 of 926 also share an identical formula for the king's attestation.

### Conclusion

Examination of the genuine charters of King Athelstan's reign shows that the same formulae were used repeatedly in the texts of different charters. In some cases it is

possible to divide the use of these formulae into three chronological periods:

1. All charters dated before 928 whose language shows little sign of the hermeneutic style affected in later charters.
2. The 928-34 period which sees the repeated use of the same formulae. The charters are written in a developed hermeneutic style and the formulae differ noticeably in content from the formulae of the early and late periods of the reign.
3. The 935-9 period. This is marked by the diversification of the attestation clauses and the development of a set of charter formulae different from and more compact than those used in the second period of the reign.

There is no guarantee that the formulae fall into this pattern for any other reason than the accidental survival of certain charters in the documentary record. Yet the surviving evidence does indicate some sort of chronological division, the reasons for which are not clear at present.

The use of the same formulae in different charters indicates some form of central organisation by which certain standard formulae were available to the scribes who drew up these documents. There is much debate about the nature of this organisation.<sup>79</sup> This debate focuses upon the possible existence of a royal chancery with scribes in the service of the king drawing up the charters. Alternatively the ecclesiastical scriptoria of the various

religious houses produced charters regionally for local distribution. There is little evidence to suggest that a secular writing office existed before the tenth century and Athelstan is the first king for whom such an office has been definitely claimed.<sup>80</sup>

Richard Drögereit used palaeography to identify individual tenth-century scribes. For the reign of King Athelstan he discovered two scribes, Athelstan A who wrote S416 and S425 and Athelstan C who wrote S447 and two charters from King Edmund's reign S464 and S512. The scribe who wrote S449 has no other surviving charters attributed to him. Drögereit developed his argument by assigning charter copies to various scribes on the basis of the formulae used, but this method cannot be accepted with any degree of confidence. Having identified the scribes, Drögereit argued that since the same scribes were writing charters for different religious houses then they must belong to a central writing office, identified as the king's chancery and not to the scriptoria of the religious houses which the charters benefitted. This arrangement he claimed, broke down in the 950s and 960s since he could not identify a scribe recurring in the original charter scripts at this time, other than Edgar 'A' who was assigned to Abingdon. Consequently, Drögereit suggested that the reformed monasteries now took over charter production.<sup>81</sup>

Chaplais has identified eight scribes writing charters between 931-63. Scribe 1 and Scribe 2 equate with Drögereit's Athelstan A and C respectively.<sup>82</sup> Chaplais'

argument is that owing to the ninth century decline of the Church through Viking activity, the only ecclesiastical scriptorium still working was that of Winchester and he identifies the scribes as members of the 'Winchester School'. Thus certain formulae occur repeatedly in tenth-century charters because they were developed at the only ecclesiastical scriptorium able to produce them at this time and not at a royal writing office. The lack of identifiable scribes after 963 is explained in a way similar to Drögereits explanation; that different ecclesiastical scriptoria were now available owing to the monastic reformation.<sup>83</sup>

The debate about the royal writing office has been carried further by Simon Keynes.<sup>84</sup> He disagrees with Chaplais' conclusion about the Winchester school, arguing that even if the early scribes were trained there, they were not necessarily resident at Winchester but travelled in the service of the king as a royal secretariat, drafting and writing the charters at sessions of the witan which are identifiable through an examination of the witness lists. His arguments stress the king's interest in and control over the terms of the charters and consequently the need for a mobile writing unit able to follow the king to the various localities of the witan. He also argues for the existence of a royal writing office throughout the tenth century.

Both sides in this debate agree that the charters of Athelstan's reign were produced at a central agency and that the same scribes were drawing up different



charters. The argument is whether this agency was the responsibility of the king or the Church.<sup>85</sup> Wormald has taken the debate a step further by suggesting that the situation in England was similar to that in tenth-century Ottonian Germany.<sup>86</sup> The chaplains and notaries of the Ottonian kings remained at court in the king's service but retained close connections with the cathedrals where they had been educated, served and often still held benefices. If one applies this system to Anglo-Saxon England, it would account for church influence in charter production whilst keeping the actual issue of charters firmly in the king's control. Athelstan held great power and dignity throughout his reign and it is difficult to accept that he did not have a strong controlling interest in a document so concerned with kingly power as the charter.

APPENDIX

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE CHARTERS ATTRIBUTED TO  
KING ATHELSTAN.

Each charter is accompanied by a brief discussion upon its individual reliability. Owing to the subjective element in charter criticism there are a number of charters whose veracity cannot be firmly established and which I have been unable to classify as definitely genuine or definitely forged. Some are judged sufficiently reliable to be included in the list of genuine charter copies, but others which may have a genuine basis contain suspect features and are classed as dubious. The charters are numbered according to Sawyer, but are placed in order of reliability rather than in Sawyer's chronological order. They are listed in the following manner:

1. Originals  
S416, S425, S447, S449.
2. Genuine copies in descending order of reliability  
S441, S442, S412, S413, S417, S418, S419, S422,  
S407, S426, S458, S396, S397, S430, S438, S446,  
S445, S399, S400, S405, S403, S448, S395, S431,  
S392, S411, S429, S437.
3. Dubious charters.  
S402, S421, S423, S424, S440, S444.
4. Spurious charters.  
S432, S428, S406, S408, S409, S410, S414, S415,  
S386, S387, S388, S389, S390, S433, S393, S394,  
S398, S404, S420, S391, S401, S434, S435, S436,  
S439, S443, S450, S451, S452, S453, S454, S455,  
S456, S457.

The discussion of each charter is arranged as follows:

1. Sawyer's number.
2. The name of the beneficiary and the bequest.

The lands are given their modern place-name if it is

known, if the place-name is not certain then it is recorded in brackets, unidentified place-names are in quotation marks.

3. The manuscripts and their current place of storage.

4. The printed version upon which examination of the charters has been based.<sup>87</sup>

5. The archive in which the charter was stored. Several single sheet charters granting lands to the laity have no identifiable archive. It is listed as 'unknown'.<sup>88</sup>

6. The date of charter issue plus the place of issue, if it is known.

7. The number of witnesses attesting. If the witness list is abbreviated then this is stated and, in the case of the genuine charters, witness lists abbreviated to only three or four names have the names of the individual witnesses listed in full.

8. A brief discussion of the veracity of each particular charter, stating whether it is regarded as genuine or forged.

THE CHARTERS

1. Originals.

S416

Athelstan to Wulfgar 'minister'; land at Ham, Wilts.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Ch.VIII, 16 (original)

2. B.L., Add. 15350, fos 8Iv-83 (s.xii)

Pr: B677

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster.

Date: 12 Nov.931 at Lifton.

W.L: 102 names.

S416 is written on a single sheet in a hand contemporary with the reign of King Athelstan. It contains no suspicious features and is one of the four charters of this period regarded as an original in expert opinion.<sup>89</sup> Chaplais has established that it was written in the same hand as S425, other than the two final subscriptions in the last column of the original manuscript. These were written in a different, but contemporary hand and are in consequence taken as further proof that S416 is an original charter with its witness list receiving a contemporary correction.<sup>90</sup>

S425

Athelstan to Aelfwald 'minister'; land at 'Derantune'.

M.S: B.L., Cotton Aug. ii 65 (original)

Pr: B702

Arch: Unknown

Date: 28 May, 934 at Winchester

W.L: 92 names

S425 is regarded as an original charter of King Athelstan because it has no suspicious features and is

written on a single sheet in a hand contemporary with his reign. The same scribe also wrote S416.<sup>91</sup>

S447

Athelstan to Eadwulf 'minister'; land at Meapham, Kent.

MS: B.L., Cotton Aug. ii 23 (original)

Pr: B741

Arch: Unknown<sup>92</sup>

Date: 939

W.L: 33 names

S447 is a single sheet charter written in a hand contemporary with Athelstan's reign. The same scribe also wrote two original charters of King Edmund's reign: S464 and S512.<sup>93</sup> S447 is also generally regarded as an original document.

S449

Athelstan to Wulfswith 'ancilla Christi'; land at East Overton, Wilts.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Ch.VIII, 22 (original)

2. B.L., Add. 15350, fo. 118 (s.xii)

Pr: B734

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster.

Date: 939

W.L: 33 names

S449 is an original charter written during Athelstan's reign in a contemporary hand on a single sheet.<sup>94</sup> There are no other charters known to be written by the same scribe. However, the witness list is identical with that of S447 and the text is also very similar. This may indicate that both these charters were drawn up

at the same time but by different scribes, or reflect the consistency in the composition of Athelstan's 'witan' during 939. All the witness lists of the 939 charters are very similar in the personnel they list.<sup>95</sup>

## 2. Genuine Charter Copies

S441

Athelstan to Aethelred 'minister'; land at Rimpton,  
Somerset.

MS: B.L., Add.15350, fo. 53rv (xii)

Pr: B730

Arch: Winchester Old Minster.

Date: 938

W.L: 38 names. The witnesses are very similar to those  
listed in S440.

S441 is a charter copy with no suspicious features.  
Its formulae are consistent with its date of issue.  
The proem is the same as that of the original S449 and  
the formulae contained within the proem, grant, anathema,  
introduction to the bounds and attestations are very  
similar to those of another charter copy S442 of 938  
from the archive of Glastonbury.

S442

Athelstan to Athelstan 'comes'; land at 'Lym' (Lyme Regis,  
Dorset)

MSS: 1. Marquess of Bath, Longleat 39, fos 188v-89 (s.xiv)

2. Bodleian, Wood empt. 1, fo. 212rv (s.xiv)

Pr: B728

Arch: Glastonbury

Date: 938

W.L: Curtailed. Only King Athelstan and Wulfhelm  
archbishop of Canterbury are recorded, with the phrase  
'cum multis aliis'.<sup>96</sup>

S442 appears to be a reliable copy of a genuine  
charter of King Athelstan. It contains no suspicious

features and is similar in its formulaic content to S441, stored in the Winchester archive.

S412

Athelstan to Aelfric, abbot; land at 'Clere' (Ecchinswell, Hants.)

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fos 34-35 (s.xii)

Pr: B674

Arch: Old Minster, Winchester

Date: 23 March 931, at Colchester

W.L: 73 names.

S412 is typical of the charters issued during the middle period of Athelstan's reign. The proem type is that of S416, commonly used during this time.<sup>97</sup> The formulae used throughout S412 are practically identical with the formulae of S426 and both charters come from the Old Minster archive. However, the witness lists are not identical; after the archbishops and underkings there are differences in the subscribers. S416 has the bishops Wulfhun, Beornstan and Tidhelm who do not occur in S412 and S412 has Frithestan who does not occur in S416. Frithestan was the bishop of Winchester who retired owing to ill health in 931.<sup>98</sup> Beornstan was his successor who, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, was ordained on the 29 may 931.<sup>99</sup> S412 is dated to the 23 March and S416 to the 11 November 931. Thus the charter dates fit with the history of the see of Winchester. However, the preservation of both these documents in the Old Minster archive means that S412 could conceivably have been forged by a Winchester monk aware of the tenth-century history of his monastery. There are other



discrepancies in the witness lists. The 'duces' listed are not all common to both charters; Gunner, Thurferth and Aelfwold attest S416 but not S412, and Regenwold is unique to S412. It must be remembered that because there were a restricted number of bishops and 'duces' in office at any one time, there is bound to be a repetition of their names in many different witness lists. Five abbots attest S416, three attest S412 and the 'ministri' of the two lists vary in number, order of attestation and in persons present.

Given that S416 and S412 were issued in the same year and the formulae they contain were used repeatedly in the early 930's, I have accepted S412 as a reliable copy of an authentic land grant, despite its appearance in the same archive as S416.

S413

Athelstan to Aelfric 'minister': land at Watchfield, Berks.

MSS: 1.B.L., Cotton Claud. B vi, fos 21-22 (s.xiii)

2.B.L., Cotton Claud. C ix, fo 201 (s.xii: bounds only)

Pr: B675

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 21 June 931 at Kings Worthy, Hants. The epact and concurrents are incorrect for this year.

W.L: 56 names.

The formulae used in S413 are typical of the section of Athelstan's reign to which it is dated. They are also very similar to those used in S416 and S412 but S413 is from the Abingdon rather than the Winchester archive, thus strengthening the case for its acceptance.

as genuine. The witness list is similar, but not identical to those of S416 and S412. This is reasonable in three charters issued in the same year and attested by the 'witan'. The mistake in the dating formula is most likely the result of a copyist's error, rather than evidence of forgery. S413 can be regarded as a copy of an authentic charter from the reign of King Athelstan.

S417

Athelstan to Aethelweard 'minister'; land at Meon, Hants.

MS: B.L., Add. 14340, fos 37v-38v (s.xii)

Pr: B689

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster.

Date: 30 August 932 at Milton.

W.L: 90 names.

S417 is typical of the charters issued during the early 930's and contains no suspicious features. It has formulae similar to those in S416 and was stored in the same archive. Since the formulae it contains are common to many reliable charters of this period, including the original S416 and the reliable copies S412, S413 and S418, S417 is accepted as a genuine charter copy.

S418

Athelstan to Alfred 'minister'; land at North Stoneham, Hants.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Domit. xiv, fos 115-16 (s.xiii. no bounds)

2. Earl of Macclesfield, Shirburn Castle, 'Liber Abbatiae', fos 18v-19v (s.xiv)

Pr: B692

Arch: Winchester, New Minster

Date: 24 Dec. 932, at Amesbury.

W.L: 43 names.

S418 requires the beneficiary, the 'minister' Alfred to feed the poor and keep the 'familia' at Stanham supplied with food, in return for which the monks will pray for the king's soul. This is a very unusual condition to include in a charter made in favour of a member of the laity and is consequently suspect. The charters S419 and S422 include such a condition, but they are grants to monastic communities, so the religious nature of the request is reasonable. Another suspect feature is that S418 is very similar in formulae to S416 and there was a close connection between the two Winchester communities of the Old and New Minsters.

The date of issue is exactly the same as S419 which is preserved in the Shaftesbury archive. The text of S419 is very similar to that of S416 and therefore also to that of S418. Unfortunately the witness list of S419 is abbreviated so one cannot compare the people present at the time of issue.<sup>100</sup>

The case for reliability lies firstly in the preservation in different archives of charters with similar formulae that are typical of the year 932. Secondly, there is the previous, favourable judgement of S418.<sup>101</sup> Against its acceptance is the propinquity of the Old and New Minsters and the unusual condition laid down in the grant. I have concluded that S418 is a

reliable charter copy and have accepted it as genuine for the purposes of this study.

S419

Athelstan to Shaftesbury Abbey; land at Fontmell, Dorset.

MS: B.L., Harley 61, fos 11-12 (s.xv)

Pr: B691

Arch: Shaftesbury

Date: 24 Dec. at Amesbury, Wilts.

W.L: Abbreviated, 3 witnesses only. King Athelstan, Wulfhelm archbishop of Canterbury and Wulfstan archbishop of York.<sup>102</sup>

S419 belongs to the group of charters whose formulae are similar to those of the original S416. It was issued on the same day as S418, but was stored in a different archive. It contains no suspicious features and is regarded as a reliable copy of an authentic charter. The evidence of S418 and S419, when taken together, provides the proof of the reliability of both these charter copies.

S422

Athelstan to the 'familia' of Sherborne Minster; land at Bradford Abbas, Dorset.

MS: B.L., Add. 46487, fos 9-10v (s.xii)

Pr: B695

Arch: Sherborne

Date: 26 Jan. 933 at Chippenham.

W.L: 35 names

There are no suspicious features in S422. It is

expressed in the formulae typical of the group of charters which resemble S416. In addition, it comes from a different archive from other charters of its type. Finberg notes that in the witness list two bishops named Wulfhelm attest, he suggests that one is a miscopying for bishop Wulfhun of Selsey.<sup>103</sup> This is a reasonable suggestion because before 937 there is only one possible bishop Wulfhelm attesting Athelstan's charters. He is identified by O'Donovan as a possible suffragan bishop working under bishop Tidelm of Hereford.<sup>104</sup> S422 has therefore been accepted as a reliable charter copy.

In the printed version of S422 the witness list is confused, with the bishops Byrnstan and Aelfheah attesting in the middle of the list of 'ministri'. If one looks at the manuscript of S422, it is apparent that the witnesses are listed in two columns which begin beneath the charter text and continue overleaf.<sup>105</sup> Both the columns written directly beneath the charter text record the attesting bishops. Column two records only the two bishops Byrnstan and Aelfheah. Overleaf, column one continues to record the rest of the bishops, the 'duces' and some of the 'ministri'. Column two records the rest of the 'ministri'. It appears that when the charter was printed the two columns were taken separately so that two of the bishops are recorded amongst the 'ministri'. I would suggest that the scribe who copied the charter filled the space directly below the charter text with the witnesses listed at the beginning of the charter witness list so that both

columns record the attestations of the bishops. He then turned to a fresh page and wrote column one followed by column two.

S407

Athelstan to the church of St.Peters, York; land at Amounderness, Lancs.

- MSS: 1. Bodleian, Dodsworth 9, fos 4v-5 (s.xvii : no witnesses)  
2. Bodleian, Dodsworth 10, fos 43-43 (s.xvii)  
3. York DC, Mag Reg Alb., pt.1, fo. 49rv (s.xiv)  
4. York DC, Mag Reg Alb., pt 2, fos 78v-79v (s.xiv)

Pr: B703, Farrer E.Y.C., No.1. pp.4-5<sup>106</sup>

Arch: York

Date: 7 June 930 for 934, at Nottingham

W.L: 59 names, ending with the phrase 'et plures alii milites quorum nomina in eadem carta inseruntur, consenserunt et subscripserunt'. The witness list is consonant with the year 934.

This charter survives in the form of four late copies. The date includes the phrase 'in civitate Eborum tempore quo Wulfstanum archiepiscopum illius constitui'. This reference to the consecration of Wulfstan is incorrect for the year 930, since Wulfstan was not consecrated until 931. The epact, concurrent and indiction are all incorrect for that year and the witness list includes bishop Beornstan of Winchester and bishop Alfred of Sherborne, neither of whom were consecrated in 930.<sup>107</sup> However, Whitelock has suggested that the date is really 934, correct for the epact, concurrent and indiction. She explains the phrase about

Wulfstan's consecration as a later interpolation, concluding that the year 930 is given as the date of charter issue as a result of a copyist's error.<sup>108</sup> The date 934 is also acceptable as regards the witness list.

The text of the charter is typical of the period 928-34. The proem is identical with that of the original charter S425. The bounds are written in Latin in all four manuscript versions but this does not invalidate the charter because all four surviving versions are from the fourteenth century or later. The bounds were possibly translated from the original O.E. for the purpose of greater clarity.

Whitelock further argues for the reliability of this charter by explaining its purpose as an attempt by King Athelstan to consolidate his control over Northern England. He made a generous grant to the archbishopric of York in order to win its support.<sup>109</sup> 934 was the year of Athelstan's Scottish campaign and would naturally see him active in the north of England, which he had to be confident would not rebel against his authority once he was committed to a campaign in Scotland. Consequently, I have accepted 934 as the true date of S407 and the charter copy itself as authentic.

S426

Athelstan to Aethelm 'minister'; land at Kington (St. Michael), Wilts.

- MSS. 1. Marquess of Bath, Longleat 39, fo.203 (s.xiv)  
2. Bodleian, Wood empt. 1, fo. 235rv (s.xiv)

Pr: B704

Arch: Glastonbury

Date 12 Sept. 934, at Buckingham

W.L: Two names only (abbrev.) King Athelstan and Constantine 'subregulus' and the phrase 'cum multis aliis'.

S426 is very similar in formulae to S425, it has the same proem and although the archive of S425 is not known, the proem type of S425 and S426 is present in the different monastic archives of York, Wilton and Glastonbury.<sup>110</sup> The bounds are not included in the copies of S426, but the text itself has no suspicious features and is acceptable for the purposes of this research. Unfortunately, the curtailment of the witness list limits its usefulness in this respect, as only Athelstan and one underking are recorded.

S458

Athelstan to Wulfsige 'minister' and his wife; land at Chilmark, Wilts.

MS: B.L., Harley 436, fo. 82rv (s.xiv)

Pr: B745

Arch: Wilton Abbey

Date: 924 x 939. The charter is preserved in an incomplete form ending with the Latin introduction to the bounds.

WL: not extant.

S458 is preserved in an incomplete form ending with the Latin introduction to the bounds. Consequently it has no date but is typical in its existing formulae of the 928-34 period. It has the same proem as S425,



S426 and S407, all of which are dated to 934. It is possible that 934 is the date of the charter S458 also. Although the surviving text is reliable, the absence of a witness list means that S458 is of no practical use in this research.

S396

Athelstan to Ealdred 'minister'; land at Chalgrove and Tebworth, Beds.

MS: B.L., Cotton Claud. B vi, fos. 34v-4 (s.xiii)

Pr: B659

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 926

W.L: 23 names.

S396 is a charter from the early period of Athelstan's reign which contains none of the formulae present in the four original charters the earliest of which, S416, is dated to 931. However S397, a charter from the Burton Archive, is practically identical in formulae with the Abingdon copy S396.<sup>111</sup> Also, although S397 has a witness list abbreviated to ten names, those ten names are the same as those of S396. It is probable, as Sawyer suggests, that these two charters were drawn up at the same time.<sup>112</sup> The existence of two charters with identical formulae in different archives leads to the acceptance of both S396 and S397 as genuine. It is worth noting that S396 is the only genuine charter of King Athelstan to have a court official, Wulfhelm 'discifer regis', in the witness list heading the attestations of the 'ministri'. S397 records the presence of 'disciferi' also, but only in a phrase

which ends its abbreviated witness list.

S397

Athelstan to Uhtred; land at Hope and Ashford, Derbys.

MS: Aberystwyth, N.L.W., Peniarth 390, pp 346-7 (s.xiv)

Pr: B658, Burton Abbey, no. 3, pp.5-7.

Arch: Burton Abbey

Date: 926

W.L: Abbreviated, 10 names and the phrase 'ceteri, duces, ministri, disciferi, testes'.

S397 is accepted as a reliable copy of a genuine charter of King Athelstan for the reasons discussed above in the consideration of S396. The likelihood that S397 and S396 were drawn up at the same time leads to the supposition that they were grants made at the same meeting of the 'witan'.

S430

Athelstan to Wihtgar 'minister'; a lease for four lives of land at Marksbury, Somerset.

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fos 99-100 (s.xii)

Pr: B707

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 935

W.L: 42 names

The grant of S430 is restricted to three lives after the death of the beneficiary, which is a condition unique in the charters of King Athelstan. However, it is not rejected because of this since there are many other factors in its favour. The formulae are typical in style of the 930's, although the invocation, proem and anathema bear little resemblance in language to any

of the four originals. There is a group of charters, S430, S438, S445 and S446 dated between 935-9 which share the same invocation and similar proems. Two come from the Old Minster archive in Winchester (S430, S446), one from Wilton (S438) and one from Shaftesbury (S445). Their occurrence in different archives supports the reliability of S430, with the reservation that it shares the same archive as S446 and has a time limit in the grant. There are no other evident suspicious features in this charter and I have accepted S430 as a genuine charter copy.

The witness list of S430 is slightly confused in order because it lists four 'duces' amongst the 'ministri' in the manuscript. The printed version of this charter does not list these 'duces' and I have judged their appearance to be the result of a copyist's error. However, there are no other 'duces' recorded as attesting S430 so it has the odd feature of being the only genuine charter copy with no record of any 'duces' amongst the witnesses.<sup>113</sup> Consequently, I would suggest that the witness list in this charter copy is incomplete.

S438

Athelstan to the church of St.Mary, Wilton; land at Burcombe, Wilts.

MS: B.L., Harley 436, fos 59-62v (s.xiv)

Pr: B714

Arch: Wilton Abbey

Date: 937

W.L: 29 names

In formulaic content S438 belongs to the same group

as S430, but the two charters come from different archives, a fact which supports the reliability of both documents. S438 contains no suspicious features and is consequently regarded as a reliable charter copy.

Stenton has taken the view that the use of the word 'basileos' to describe Athelstan in the grant is suspicious, as the earliest genuine charter using this title is, in his opinion, dated to the year 939.<sup>114</sup> I do not see any reason why the title 'basileos' should not have been used to describe King Athelstan prior to 939, especially when one considers the hermeneutic Latin style used during his reign and his contemporary reputation.<sup>115</sup>

S445

Athelstan to Alfred bishop; land at Orchard, Dorset, with a regrant of the land by Alfred to Beorhtwyn, daughter of Wulfhelm.

MS: B.L., Harley 61, fos 15v-16v (s.xv)

Pr: B744

Arch: Shaftesbury

Date: 939

WL: Abbreviated, 3 names only: Athelstan King, Wulfhelm archbishop of Canterbury, Alfheah, bishop of Winchester.<sup>116</sup>

S445 contains an initial grant made by Athelstan to Alfred who regrants the land to a woman named Beorhtwyn. This charter contains two unusual features: one is the inclusion of a regrant in an otherwise straightforward charter and the other an anathema far longer than any of those in the original charters. The abbreviation

of the witness list means that one cannot check the witnesses for evidence of reliability. The anathema is typical in content, promising a divine reward for anyone who upholds the terms of the charter and retribution upon anyone breaking them.

The invocation, proem, bounds and dating clause relate this charter to S430 and S438. It is from an archive different from either of these two. Also, S445 is a late fifteenth-century copy, which allows time for corruption and confusion in the textual tradition. I have accepted this charter as reliable on the evidence of formula and archive, but with the reservation that the regrant may be an interpolation.

S446

Athelstan to Eadburh, his sister; land at Droxford, Hants.

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fos 101-2 (s.xii)

Pr: B742

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 939

W.L: 39 names.

S446 contains no suspicious features other than the unique presence in the witness list of the king's brothers Edmund and Eadred. They do not appear in any other reliable charter of Athelstan's reign. However, the beneficiary of this charter is the King's sister Eadburh. This may account for the witness of other members of Athelstan's immediate family.

The invocation, proem and introduction to the bounds are similar to the formulae used in S430 and as

both S430 and S446 are from the Old Minster archive, this raises a doubt about their reliability. However, as the charters S438 and S445, which are from different archives, share similar features with S446 and the formulae in S438 and S446 are not identical, S446 has been accepted as a genuine charter copy.

S399

Athelstan to Aelfflaed; land at Winterbourne (?Monkton, Hants)

MSS: 1. Marquess of Bath, Longleat 39, fo. 206rv (s.xiv)  
2. Bodleian, Wood empt. 1, fo. 240v (s.xiv)

Pr: B664

Arch: Glastonbury

Date: 16 April 928, at Exeter (See S400)

W.L: 3 names: Athelstan King, Wulfhelm, archbishop of Canterbury, Hrothward, archbishop of York.<sup>117</sup>

S399 has identical formulae with another charter copy, S400. Both were issued on exactly the same date in Exeter at Easter but survived in the different archives of Glastonbury and Winchester respectively. The survival of two such identical charters in different monastic cartularies has led to the acceptance of both as genuine copies. The formulae used do not occur again in any of King Athelstan's charters, but in type the formulae are consonant with those used during his reign. They belong with the hermeneutic formulae of the early 930's represented by the originals S416 and S425. The year 928, to which S399 is dated, appears as the earliest known date at which such lengthy and inflated formulae were in use.

There is one odd feature found in S399, S400, S405 and S403. This is the separation of the date and the corroborative clause. The date is placed before the grant and the corroboration after the anathema. The witness list of S399 is abbreviated but the corroborative clause states 'Haec siquidem scedula tempora paschali in arce rege quae calatur Execaester rege Athelstani suos subregulos, episcopos, duces, iudices, proceres, dignitates gaudio cum magno Pascendo, flexu articulorum depicta est'. This sentence is also present in S400 and as S399 has only three recorded witnesses, it shows that there were many more witnesses to this charter. The full witness list of S400 is relevant for S399 because if one accepts that the two charters were issued at the same time and place, it follows that the same body of people were most likely attesting both the charters. In this case it is very probable that the witness list of S400 is applicable to S399 and that one can reasonably suggest, from the evidence of S400, the witnesses of S399.

S400

Athelstan to Byrhtferth 'minister'; land at Odstock, Wilts.

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fos 70-1 (s.xii)

Pr: B663

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 16 April 928, at Exeter

W.L: 38 names

S400 is identical in formulae to S399. For the arguments in favour of this charter, see the discussion under S399. I have accepted S400 as a reliable charter

copy for the same reasons that S399 was accepted.

S405

Athelstan to Eadulf bishop and the 'familia' at Crediton;  
land at Sandford, nr. Crediton, Devon.

MS: Bodleian, Eng. Hist. a 2, no. iii(s.x)

Pr: N and S, 1895, pp.5-9.<sup>118</sup>

Arch: Crediton<sup>119</sup>

Date: 29 April, 930

W.L: 44 names

The position of the date and corroboration clause in S405 is similar to that in the charters S399, S400 and S403. S403, a charter dated 3rd April 930 and from the Chichester archive, has an identical proem and a very similar anathema to that of S405 dated the 29 April in the same year. The only obviously suspicious feature of S405 is the clause concerning the three services; 'sine expeditiones profectioe arcis pontis constructione'. There is a division in expert opinion about the reliability of S405, mainly owing to the specific exemption in the grant from the need to fulfil the three services which, by the tenth century, appear to have been a compulsory feature of the royal charters.<sup>120</sup> Chaplais believes that S405 is an eleventh-century forgery written in a hand imitative of the tenth century, and points to the clause concerning the three services as supportive of this opinion.<sup>121</sup> Stevenson, on the other hand, regarded S405 as an original charter.<sup>122</sup> It survives as a document written on a single sheet and Stevenson thought the hand was genuinely of the tenth century. I would accept Chaplais' views about S405, as they are the results of a more recent examination of this



particular charter, but Finberg has studied the actual land granted and concluded that S405 is in fact a reliable charter copy with a possible interpolation in the grant seen in the exemption from the three services.<sup>123</sup>

The result of all these differing opinions is that one cannot be certain of the veracity or otherwise of S405. The formulae are typical of the year 930 in style, there is corroborative evidence from the Chichester archive and the witness list is contemporary. Consequently S405 is tentatively included in this study as the diplomatic arguments in its favour are preferred to the palaeographic arguments against. If S405 is regarded as a charter copy, albeit of an early date, the only factor against its acceptance as genuine is the exemption from the three services. This, although it is odd, is not in itself sufficient for the charter to be totally disregarded.

S403

Athelstan to Beornheah, bishop; land at Medmerry and Earnley, Sussex.

- MSS: 1. Chichester D.R.O., Episc. vi. i. i., fo. 24rv (s.xiv)  
2. Chichester D.R.O., Episc. vi. i. 2., fo. 18v (s.xiv)  
3. Chichester D.R.O., Episc. vi. i. t., fo. 72rv (s.xiii)

Pr: B669

Arch: Chichester

Date: 3 April 930 at Lyminster

W.L: 42 names

The date of S403 has been miscopied as 830 instead of

930, but this is most likely a copyist's error and does not discredit the charter text. The Crediton charter S405 is very similar in formulae to S403. This is discussed under S405. The witness list of S403 is contemporary with its date and the charter has no evident suspicious features. It is accepted as a reliable charter copy.

S448

Athelstan to Eadwulfu, nun; land at Brightwalton, Berks.

MS: B.L., Cotton Claud. B vi. fo. 24rv (s.xiii)

Pr: B743

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 939

W.L: 32 names

S448 contains no suspicious features and is typical of the style of charter being issued in the last years of Athelstan's reign. Stenton has observed that although this charter is stored in the Abingdon archive, there is no historical record which shows that the land in question ever came under the control of the abbey of Abingdon.<sup>124</sup> This apparent disinterested preservation of S448 is a point in its favour, it is accepted as a reliable copy of an authentic charter.

S395

Athelstan to Eadric 'minister'; confirmation of land at Whittington, Staffs.

MS: Aberystwyth, N.L.W. Peniarth 390, pp.345-6 (s.xiv)

Pr: Burton Abbey

Date: 925 :

W.L: Abbreviated, 6 names and the phrase 'ceteri, duces, presbiteri, monachi, ministri usque ad L.VII'.

There are no suspicious features in the text of S395, although its usefulness in the context of this research is diminished owing to the abbreviated witness list. I have found no reason to reject S395 and have followed Sawyer in regarding it as a genuine charter copy.

S431

Athelstan to Aethelhelm 'minister' land at Marksbury, Somerset.

MSS: 1. Marquess of Bath, Longleat 39, fo. 186rv (s.xiv)  
2. Bodleian, Wood Empt. 1, fo. 208rv (s.xiv)

Pr: B709

Arch: Glastonbury

Date: 936 (incorrect indiction)

W.L: Abbreviated, 3 names: Athelstan king, Wulfhelm archbishop of Canterbury, Alfheah, bishop of Winchester.

S431 shares the same anathema with S411. The three surviving witnesses attest with identical formulae to those of S411 and both charters are of the last years of Athelstan's reign. I have taken the incorrect indiction to be the result of a copyist's error and regard S431 as a reliable charter copy.

S392

Athelstan to Byrthelm 'miles'; land at Eaton, Staffs.

MS: Aberystwyth N.L.W., Peniarth 390, p.345 (s.xiv)

Pr: Burton Abbey 4, pp.7-8<sup>125</sup>

Arch: Burton Abbey

Date: 850 (for 939)

W.L: Abbreviated, 10 names and the words 'et Duces VII  
et Ministri XVIII'

The date recorded is evidently inaccurate. The indiction is correct for the year 940 or late in the year 939. The charter cannot be earlier than 937x938 because Wulfhelm, bishop of Wells appears on the witness list and before this time Alfheah, bishop of Wells, was still alive. Also, Bishop Aelfric of Hereford is listed and there is no record of him attesting a charter before the year 939.<sup>126</sup> The probable date for S392 is late in the year 939, just before the death of King Athelstan. The language and formulae are typical of Athelstan's reign and the charter was preserved in a reliable cartulary. The proem is unusual in that it begins with an alliterative sentence, but Whitelock has identified a group of genuine alliterative Midland charters of the tenth century for whose distinctive style she suggests the influence of the bishop of Worcester.<sup>127</sup> Sawyer points out that there is no record of Burton Abbey claiming the lands mentioned in the charter, so that S392 appears to be an example of the disinterested preservation of a charter document.<sup>128</sup> There remains Hart's opinion that the charter is spurious.<sup>129</sup> His arguments are listed below together with my reasons for rejecting them.

1. The text of S392 is taken from a 940 charter S470.

The formulae used to introduce the bounds, the date and the witness attestations of S392 are identical with those of S470, but the formulae were in common use in this period, they are used in both the originals of 939,

S447 and S449.<sup>130</sup>

2. The witness lists of S470 and S392 are the same.

This cannot be proved as S392 has an abbreviated witness list of only ten names which is curtailed at the end of the bishops attestations. It is not remarkable to find the same bishops attesting two different charters of the same year.

3. The king's title in the grant was not used before the year 946.

I see no reason why Athelstan, considering the military and political achievements of his reign, should not be referred to by the title 'rex Angulsexna et Northymbria imperator, paganorum gubernator, Brittanorumque propugnator'.<sup>131</sup>

Consequently I have accepted S392 as a reliable charter copy.

S411

Athelstan to Aelfheah 'minister'; land at Farnborough, Berks.

MSS: 1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College III, pp.138-41 (s.xvi)

2. B.L., Cotton Claud. BVI, fos 22v-3v (s.xiii)

3. B.L., Cotton Vitell, D VII, fo. 34rv (s.xvi)

Pr: B682

Arch: Abingdon

Date: none

W.L: 36 names

S411 is a difficult charter to analyse because it is undated. Birch gives it a date of 931, but it is not typical in style of this year and the witness list

can be no earlier than 935 as both Alfheah of Winchester and Aelfheah of Wells attest.<sup>132</sup> In type, S411 is more like the charters of the 935-9 period but with the date, the introductory clause to the bounds and the corroboration omitted. The attestation of Aelfheah of Wells gives the charter a final date of 937-8.<sup>133</sup> The only other acceptable charters which share the same proem and anathema with S411 are S437 from the cartulary of Thorney Abbey and S429 from Shaftesbury. They both have an abbreviated witness list, but are headed by the same three names as S411. S411 and S429 are followed by identical attestation formulae, S437 is dated to the year 937 and S429 to 935. I have followed Robinson in ascribing S411 to the year 937, together with S437 which is, in general, closer to it in formulae than is S429.<sup>134</sup> I have accepted S411 as a genuine charter copy for the year 937.

S429

Athelstan to the nuns of Shaftesbury; land at Tarrant Hinton, Dorset.

MS: B.L., Harley 61, fo, 15rv (s.xv)

Pr: B708

Arch: Shaftesbury

Date: 935

W.L: Abbreviated, 3 names: Athelstan King, Wulfhelm and Wulfstan Archbishops and the words 'et cetera'

S429 is similar in formulae to the genuine charter copies S411 and S437. S437 is from Thorney Abbey archive and S411 from Abingdon, so all three charters have a

different place of survival. S429 is the earliest as both the other two are assigned to the year 937. The witness list of S429 is curtailed and cannot be used to gauge the reliability of the charter. It is accepted as a reliable copy because there is no satisfactory evidence to prove anything to the contrary. The whole group of charters S429, S411 and S437 is accepted as genuine because the evidence of each individual charter upholds the reliability of the other two.

S437

Athelstan to Sigulf; land at Water Newton, Hants.

MS: Cambridge U.L., Add. 3020, fo. 16v (s.xiv)

Pr: Hart 1966, pp.150-1<sup>135</sup>

Arch: Thorney Abbey

Date: 937

W.L: 4 names: Athelstan King, Wulfhelm, archbishop of Canterbury, Alfheah, bishop of Winchester, Theodred, bishop of London.<sup>136</sup>

S437 comes from a reliable archive and contains no suspicious features. It is similar to the more doubtful charter S411 and they may be of the same year of issue. The abbreviation of the witness list detracts from the usefulness of S437 in discussing Athelstan's 'witan', but there is no reason not to accept S437 as a genuine charter copy.

### 3. Dubious Charter Copies

S402

Athelstan to St.Mary's Worcester; land at Water Eaton,  
Oxon.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Tib. AXIII, fo.31rv (s.xi)

2. B.L., Cotton Tib. A XIII, fos 171v-2v (s.xi)

Pr: B666

Arch: Worcester

Date: 929

W.L: 12 names

S402 is atypical in formulae for the 928-34 era and makes no mention of the three services. Consequently it comes into the category of a dubious charter, having suspect features and so not used as reliable evidence for the membership of the king's 'witan'.

S421

Athelstan to the bishopric of Crediton; privileges.

MS: B.L., Cotton Aug. II, 31 Is.x)

Pr: B694, Earle pp.169-71 <sup>137</sup>

Arch: Crediton

Date: 933

W.L: 17 names

Stevenson and Chaplais both ascribe the script of S421 to the late tenth century, making S421 either an early charter copy or an early forgery. <sup>138</sup> The proem is of a type common in the 928-34 period, being the same as that of the original charter S416. The anathema is also one in common use in the 930's. There are, however, discrepancies in the witness list. Chaplais has observed that bishop Alfheah of Winchester did not hold the bishopric of Winchester in 933 and that the



two 'duces' Aelfhere and Wulfgar should attest as 'ministri' in 933. The 'duces' of this name do not start to attest as such until the year 939. Chaplais believes S421 to be an early forgery.

It is evident that the charter is at least mis-dated, owing to the mistakes in the witness list. If one redates the charter for Athelstan's reign it must be to 939 because of the content of the witness list. Yet the year 939 does not fit with the charter formulae. Consequently I have classed S421 as a dubious charter, probably based upon an authentic text but with suspect features.

S423

Athelstan to the church of Sherborne; land at Stalbridge, Weston, Dorset.

MS: B.L., Add. 46487, fos 12-13v (s.xii)

Pr: B696

Arch: Sherborne

Date: 26 Jan.933, at Chippenham

W.L: 39 names

There are no unusual features in S423 which is identical in date with S422 a genuine charter from the same Sherborne archive. The two charters contain similar formulae and the same proem which is a type common for the early 930's and is also used in the original S416. Yet despite their identical date, S423 and S422 have differences apparent in their witness lists; bishop Eadulf of Crediton attests S423, but not S422, an abbot Aldred attests S422, but not S423 whose 'duces' are headed by an 'Aldred dux'. The duces themselves

are not all common to both charters and in S423 are mixed in order amongst the 'ministri'. Finally, S423 has four more recorded witnesses than does S422. Many of the discrepancies in the witness lists may be the result of miscopying, but the fact remains that these two very similar charters were preserved in the same archive. Finberg casts further doubt upon the reliability of S423 on linguistic grounds.<sup>141</sup> His argument lies in the fact that the land mentioned in the grant is reckoned in 'familiae', a term not otherwise occurring in tenth-century charters, and that the grant also refers to 'Sherborne Castle' which was not extant in the early tenth century. Finberg regards S423 as a forgery based upon S422. I have classed S423 as a dubious charter, because of the suspect features in archive language and witness list.

S424

Athelstan to St.Mary's Minster, Wilton; land at North Newton, and at Oare in Wilcot, in Savernake Forest, Wilts.

MS: B.L., Harley 436, fos 73-4v (s.xiv)

Pr: B699

Arch: Wilton Abbey

Date: 933

W.L: 24 names

The recorded date of S424 is not contemporary with the witness list since Alfheah bishop of Winchester attests and he did not hold the see of Winchester until 935. O'Donovan suggests that the date is miscopied and should be 936, which would validate the witness list.<sup>142</sup>

The archive of Wilton is relatively reliable and this counts in favour of S424.<sup>143</sup> Darlington takes S424 as reliable for the purpose of monastic land reckoning.<sup>144</sup> This is probably justifiable, but I do not believe that the charter is of sufficient reliability for use in a study of the composition of the 'witan'. It cannot be of the year 933 for the reason stated above and if it is a 936 charter it is not typical in formulae for that year, judging from the other more reliable charters of that period. There are very definite formulae used from 935-9 and S424 contains none of them other than the clause concerning the three services, not sufficient in itself to validate the charter. It must be classified as dubious.

S427

Athelstan to the 'familia' of Holy Trinity, Winchester; land at Endford. Wilts and at Chilbolton and Ashamansworth, Hants.

MSS: 1. B.L., Add. 15350, fos 94-5 (s.xii) Latin version  
2. B.L., Add. 14340, fo. 95rv (s.xii) English version

Pr: Latin; B705, English; B706

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 16 Dec. 934, at Frome.

W.L: 37 names

The English version of this charter is shorter than the Latin version, omitting the description of the bounds. However it has a longer witness list with eight more ministers attesting. The witness lists of both versions of S427 have the same discrepancies. Alfheah bishop of Crediton attests although it is not certain when he

replaced his predecessor Eadwulf. There are three possible dates which are themselves in part dependent upon the evidence of the charters. The dates are June or December 934 or the year 937. <sup>146</sup> 934 is the last year in which Eadwulf attests a charter and 937 the first year in which Aethelgar attests. It is consequently possible, but not probable, that Aethelgar was consecrated in 934. Finally Athelstan, who heads the 'ministri', is more likely to be the 'dux' Athelstan, ealdorman of East Anglia, who was in office by the year 932.

Apart from the odd features of the witness list, the grant is, at least, interpolated. It contains the following condition: 'sed et quicumque episcopus qui tunc superfuit, illiusque acclesiae regimen teneat, eo de suis propriis episcopalibus villis pleniter pascat'. John has shown that granting monks the right to receive food from the bishop's land is not a condition found in early tenth-century charters. He suggests, as does <sup>147</sup> Finberg, that S427 is a basically genuine charter with a later interpolation in the grant. I consider that the <sup>148</sup> suspicious features in the grant, together with the inaccuracies in the witness list, must place S427 in the category of a dubious charter. It is not used for the study of the 'witan'.

S440

Athelstan to Aelfheah 'minister'; land at Rimpton, Somerset.

MS: B.L., Add 25350, fo. 115v (s.xii)

Pr: B729

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 938

W.L: 29 names.

S440 comes into the category of the dubious charters. The witness list is contemporary and the dating formula typical of the year 938, but the rest of the text contains formulae not found in other charters of Athelstan's reign. The clause concerning the three services is, 'tribus semotis causis a quibus nullus nostrorum poterit expers fore id est generalis expeditionis necessaria societate, ac pontium urbiumque jugi assolidatione', a phrase which is unique for any charter of King Athelstan and far more complex than any other formula of its kind. The grant states that the charter is given to ensure that the land grant is not forgotten by later generations, which is also atypical. No other, reliable charter contains such a statement. The Old Minster archive is not the most trustworthy of sources and, although there may be a basis of historical fact in this charter, I cannot accept it as genuine.

S444

Athelstan to Winchester, Old Minster; land at Tichborne and Beauworth, Hants.

MSS: 1. B.L., Add. 15350, fo. 62v (s.xii)

2. P.R.O., Ch. R 12, Edw. II, no. 4

Pr: B731

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 938

W.L: 16 names.

The witness list of S444 is contemporary with its date and the grant contains formulae similar, but not

identical to those used in other charters of the late 930's. The proem and anathema are both very brief and atypical in sentiment. S444 has features which are definitely suspect and although it may have a factual basis, in its present form it is classed as a dubious charter.

#### 4. Spurious Charters

S432

Athelstan to the church at Athelney; land at Lyng,  
Somerset.

MS: Oxford, Mr. D. Rogers, pp.116-9 (s.xviii)

Pr: Finberg E.C.W., no. 436 pp.130-2 <sup>149</sup>

Arch: Athelney

Date: 937

W.L: 24 names

S432 survives only in a post-medieval manuscript. The grant frees the lands from the obligation of the three services. The proem is abbreviated but appears to be of the same type as the original S447 although the rest of the charter does not contain formulae typical of the date of issue. The witness list is corrupt in spelling but is consistent with the date. Owing to the unusual formulae and the extraordinary privilege stated in the grant, S432 is regarded as a spurious charter and not used in this study. <sup>150</sup>

S428

Athelstan to St.Mary's, Worcester; land at 'Werstfelda', Cofton Hackett, Rednal in King's Norton, West Hill and Hopwood in Alvechurch, Worcs., and at 'Wihtlafesfeld'.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Nero EI, pt. 2, fo 182 (s.xi, last part only)

2. B.L., Cotton b. A XIII, fos 4v-5 (s.x)

Pr: B701

Arch: Worcester

Date: 7 June 930, for 934.

W.L: 33 names.

The date 930 does not agree with the presence in the Witness list of the bishops Beornstan of Winchester and Burgric of Rochester, neither of whom were consecrated at this time.<sup>151</sup> The dating formula is typical of the period 928-34 but the details referring to the date are incorrect for the year 930. They equate with the year 934, which is also consistent with the witness list. The only mistake in the dating formula for the year 934 is the golden number : this is 21 rather than 31, the latter being the correct number for 934.

If one accepts 934 as the correct date for S428, then there is a further problem. The day of issue is 7 June. The charter S407 also has a recorded date of 930 corrected to 934. It was also issued on the 7 June.<sup>152</sup> The problem is that S428 was issued in London and S407 in Nottingham, and the king, the leading ecclesiastics and lay nobility are recorded as present in both places on the same day. It follows that the two charters cannot both be genuine. Farrer suggests that S428 is a forgery based on S407, made after 972 when the sees of Worcester and York were held in plurality.<sup>153</sup> I have accepted S407 as a genuine charter copy and also Farrer's suggestion concerning the reliability of S428, which is regarded as a forgery.

S406

Athelstan to Worcester Minster ; land at Clifton-upon-Teme, Worcs.

MS: B.L., Cotton Tib. A XIII., fo. 196rv (s.xi)

Pr: B700

Arch:Worcester

Date:930

W.L: 10 names



The year of issue for S406 is not consistent with the witness list. The epact and the indiction are correct for the year 934, but there is still a discrepancy in the witness list which contains Archbishop Hrothwald of York who was replaced by Wulfstan in 931.<sup>154</sup> It is difficult to suggest an accurate date for this charter. The written invocation is far more complex than is usual for Athelstan's reign and the grant has a narrative section about Anlaf's attempt to kill King Athelstan. Taken all together, the evidence weighs against the acceptance of S406 as a genuine charter.

S408

Athelstan to the church of St.Mary, Abingdon; land at Sandford, Oxon.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Claud. B VI, fo. 2Orv (s.xiii)  
2. B.L., Cotton Claud. C IX, Fos 109-10 (s.xii)

Pr: B681

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 931

W.L: 24 names

The formula used for the date consists only of the year and indiction and is not typical of the year 931 when compared with the reliable charters of that year such as S416. There is no surviving proem and the text and witness list of S408 are identical with S410, a charter of 931 also stored in the Abingdon archive. These two charters share the same witness list with another Abingdon charter S409, also dated to 931. It follows that three charters with identical dates, close similarities in text and which belong to the same archive must be regarded with suspicion and that at least two of them may be forged. S408 and S410 are extremely similar and there are no other charters with comparable formulae of the 928-34 period. S408 and S410 must either have been issued at the same date or be the result of a forgery. Since one cannot tell which is forged or whether both are forged or both are genuine, it is safest to discount them both, especially as there are no comparable formulae of a contemporary date in other charters of King Athelstan.

S409

Athelstan to St.Mary, Abingdon; confirmation of land at Shellingford, Berks.

MS: B.L., Cotton Claud. B VI, fo. 19rv (s.xiii)

2. B.L., Cotton Claud. C IX, fo. 109v (s.xii)

Pr: B683

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 931

W.L: 23 names

The proem of S409 is very short for the year 931

and the witness list the same as that of S408, only lacking the attestation of 'Godescalc sacerdos' after the ministers. The anathemas of S408, S409 and S410 are all similar in phraseology.

Stenton regards S409 as a modified version of what was originally an authentic charter, but it is not possible to detect any modifications from any authentic text.<sup>155</sup> S409 may have an authentic basis, but the evidence in its favour is not strong enough for me to accept S409 as a reliable charter. It is not included in the evidence used for this study.

S410

Athelstan to the church of St.Mary, Abingdon; land at Swinford, Berks.

MS: 1. B.L., Cotton Claud. B VI, fos 19V-20 (s.xiii)  
2. B.L., Cotton Claud. C IX, fo. 110 (s.xii)

Pr: B680

Arch: Abingdon

Date: 931

W.L: 24 names

The text of S410 has a proem, but otherwise is virtually the same as S408. The reasons for discounting S410 are discussed under S408, it is one of a group of three suspect charters from the Abingdon archive.<sup>156</sup> All three charters are recorded in the same cartulary collection and Abingdon is known as a centre at which charter forgeries were carried out.

S414

Athelstan to the 'familia' of St.Peters, Bath; land at Priston, Somerset and Cold Ashton, Gloucs.

MS: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College III, pp.61-5 (s.xii)

Pr: B670

Arch: Bath

Date: 931

W.L: 35 names

S414 is a very long and convoluted charter and as such is typical for the early 930's. However it has an extensive passage of narration in the anathema which casts severe doubts upon its reliability. The witness list includes both the king's brothers; Edmund would not have been more than nine years old in 931 and Eadred still younger, making it unlikely that either would be attesting a charter of this date. Moreover, there are discrepancies between the date and various of the bishops who attest. Alfheah of Winchester was not consecrated until 934, Burgric of Rochester until 933, Aethelgar of Crediton until 934 nor Aelfric of Hereford until the late 930's. <sup>157</sup> Possibly S414 is dated wrongly to 931, but considering the presence of a narrative inclusion as well as an inaccurate witness list, I have considered S414 to be spurious.

S415

Athelstan to the 'familia' of the church of Malmesbury; land at Norton, Wilts, and Sumerford and Ewan, Glos.

MSS: 1. B.L., Lansdowne 417, fos 16v-8 (s.xiv/xv)

2. P.R.O., E 164/34, fos 129/30 (s.xiii)

3. Bodleian, Wood empt. 5, fos 34-8 (s.xiii)

Pr: B671

Arch: Malmesbury

Date: 931

W.L: 33 names

The text uses the same formulae as S414 and the witness lists are practically identical, although the corrupt spelling of the 'ministri' in S415 makes this difficult to establish with any certainty. In favour of S415 is the fact that the witness list is identical to that of S414 in the categories above the 'ministri' and the two charters have similar texts but come from different archives. This argument presupposes that S415 has an inaccurately copied date and is really a charter of the 934-9 period. Against S415 are the facts that the formulae are untypical in content, the date and witness list do not agree and there is narrative in the anathema. The case against S415 is stronger than the case in its favour and it has been rejected as a spurious document.

s386

Athelstan to the Minster of SS. Mary and Peter, Exeter, land at Culmstock, Devon.

MSS: 1. Exeter, D.C. 2519 (s.xi)

2. Exeter, D.C. 3672,p 94 (s.xv,boundaries only)

3. B.L., Cotton Vitell, D VIII, fo. 22 (s.xvi)

Pr: B724, Earle pp 328-9

Arch: Exeter

Date: 670

W.L: 15 names

The date of this charter is evidently wrong and it has no proem or mention of the three services. The presence in the witness list of the 'duces' Wulfgar and Aelfhere must imply a date of 939. However, the structure of the charter is atypical for King Athelstan's reign and in its present form S386 can only be regarded as spurious.

S387

Athelstan to the Minster of SS. Mary and Peter, Exeter; land at Monkton in Shobrooke and Thorverton, Devon.

MS: B.L., Add. Ch. 19516 (s.xi)

Pr: B726, Earle pp 329-30

Arch:Exeter

Date:670

W.L: 15 names

The text of S387 is identical to the text of S386, even including the date and witness list, and both charters come from the Exeter archive. Chaplais has shown that S386, S387, S389 and S433 all come from the same archive and are written in the same late eleventh century hand.<sup>158</sup> The first three charters mentioned are practically identical in text and S433 shares the same formulae with S388, another Exeter charter. It appears that this whole group of Exeter charters were forged during the eleventh century, possibly to replace authentic documents lost during the Viking disturbances of the reign of King Aethelred II.

S388

Athelstan to St.Petroc's Minister; land at Newton St.  
Petroc, Devon.

MSS: 1. Exeter D.C., 2518 (s.xi)

2. B.L., Lansdowne 966, fo. 70rv (s.xvii)

Pr: B725, Earle pp.325-6

Arch: Exeter

Date: 670

W.L: 18 names

S388 contains all the suspicious features common to the group of charters discussed under the heading of S387 and is rejected for the same reasons. Earle considered that S388 was the charter upon which the series of Exeter charters dated to 670 were based, whilst Chaplais thinks that it is a replica of S433.<sup>159</sup> Whichever is true, it does not alter the fact that S388 is an unreliable document.

S389

Athelstan to the Minster of St.Mary, Exeter; land at Stoke Canon, Devon.

MSS: 1. Exeter D.C., 2517 (s.xi)

2. Exeter D.C., 1706 (s.xv, bounds only)

Pr: B723, Earle pp.326-7

Arch: Exeter

Date: 670

W.L: 15 names

S389 belongs to the group of Exeter charters dated to the year 670 and is rejected for the same reasons. (see S387).

S390

Athelstan to SS. Mary and Peter, Exeter; land at Stoke.

MS: Exeter D.C., 1705 (s.xiv)

This charter was created by combining the text and the witnesses of S386 with the bounds of S389. It is an evident forgery.

S433

Athelstan to the Minster of St. Peter (MS.1., MSS.2,3; St. Mary), Exeter; land at Topsham, Devon.

MSS: 1. Canterbury DC., Chart. Ant. E, 206 (s.xi med)  
2. Canterbury DC, Chart. Ant. T 37 (s.x med)  
3. Stafford, William Salt Lib, S, MS. 7 (s.xi)  
4. B.L: Lansdowne 446, fo. 88 (s.xviii)  
5. London, Lambeth Palace, 582, p53 (s.xviii)

Pr: B721 ex MS1 B722 ex MS 2 and 3

Arch: Canterbury, *Christ Church*

Date: MS 1: 937 MS 2, 3: 670

W.L: 18 names

S433 survives in two different, Latin versions, only one of which, MS. 1, is dated correctly to Athelstan's reign. The formulae and the witness lists of the different manuscript traditions do not correspond and they are structured differently. Neither version contains formulae very typical of the year 937 and although the charter survives in the Canterbury archive, the grant is in favour of the Minster at Exeter for which there are very few surviving documents with an origin before the eleventh century.<sup>160</sup> Chaplais discusses S433 and its various surviving manuscripts. His



conclusion is that MS 1 is a skilful forgery created in the early eleventh century. Two of the attesting 'duces', Wulfgar and Aelfhere should attest as 'ministri' in 937. Chaplais has also shown that MS 3 was written by the same scribe who wrote the forged Exeter charters S386, S387 and S389, whilst MS 2 is a duplicate of MS 3 with an alteration in the boundary clause.<sup>161</sup> Consequently, S433 cannot be a genuine charter copy.

S393

Athelstan to the see of Winchester; confirmation of land at Downton, Wilts.

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fos 14v-15 (s.xii)

Pr: B690

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 904

W.L: 43 names

The formulae of S393 are not usual for a charter of King Athelstan. The proem is atypical in content and the grant has no mention at all of the three obligatory services. In the grant there is a passage about St. Birinus and the baptism of King Cynewald, a piece of narrative which casts great doubt upon the reliability of this charter. The anathema is also atypical and the date inaccurate. The witness list and corroborative clause indicate a date in the early 930's but the rest of the formulae are not correct for this period. In conclusion, S393 is not a genuine charter copy.

S394

Athelstan to St. Augustines; restoration of land at 'Werbunginland' in Thanet, Kent.

- MSS: 1. Canterbury D.C., Lit. MS E 19, fo. 1v-2 (s.xiv)  
2. B.L., Cotton Claud. D, fo. 183rv (s.xiii)  
3. B.L., Cotton Julius D II, fo. 104v (s.xiii)

Pr: B641

Arch: Canterbury, *St Augustine's*

Date: 4 Sept. 925

W.L: 14 names: the text is corrupt and omits the name of King Athelstan.

S394 is totally unacceptable as genuine when compared with the reliable charter copies of Athelstan's reign. The structure is incorrect, the grant makes no mention of the three services, the date is given in too great detail for the year 925 when all genuine copies contain only the year and indiction and the witness list is short and extremely corrupt.

Turner suggests that S394 is a memorandum of an original charter but even if this is true, in its present form S394 must be regarded as spurious.<sup>162</sup>

S398

Athelstan to Christ Church, Canterbury: land at Folkestone, Kent.

- MSS: 1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 189, fo.200 (s.xii)  
2. Cambridge, D.C. Reg P, fo. 21 (s.xii)  
3. B.L., Cotton Tib A II, fos 13v-14 (s.xii)  
4. London, Lambeth Palace 1212, pp 321-2 (s.xiii)  
5. Bodleian, Tanner 225, fos 14-15 (s.xvi)

Pr: B660

Arch: Canterbury, *Christ Church*

Date: 927

W.L: Abbreviated, 6 names

S398 has no proem, no invocation and no bounds. The grant is atypical and contains some descriptive narrative. The position of the immunities clause is unusual and the witness list inaccurate for the date of issue. I have judged S398 unacceptable in its present form.

S404

Athelstan to Cynath, abbot; land at Dumbleton on the river Isbourne, Glos, Aston Somerville, Worcs, and a woodland at Flyford Flavell on the Piddle Brook, Worcs.

- MSS: 1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. III, pp.171-3 (s.xvi)  
2. B.L., Cotton Claud. BVI, fos 18-19 (s.xiii)  
3. B.L., Cotton Claud. C IX, fo. 109rv (s.xii)  
4. B.L., Cotton Claud. C IX, fo. 20lv (s.xiii, bounds only)  
5. B.L., Cotton Vitell. D VII, fo. 19rv (s.xvi)  
6. Bodleian, Gough Berks 20, fo. 7 (s.xviii)

Pr: B667

Arch: Bath Abbey

Date: 930

W.L: 22 names

The formulae used in S404 are not typical in style or content of Athelstan's reign. O'Donovan states that the witness list is from the year 949, not 930.<sup>163</sup> Consequently S404 is not acceptable as a reliable charter copy.

S391

Athelstan to Milton Abbey; grant of lands.

- MSS: 1. Bodleian, Dodsworth 10, fos 40-1 (s.xvii)  
2. Bodleian, Dodsworth 66, fo. 122rv (s.xvii)

Pr: B739 (English version B738)<sup>164</sup>

Arch: Milton Abbey? <sup>165</sup>

Date: 843

W.L: 13 names

S391 contains formulae not typical of Athelstan's reign. The date is wrong but Sawyer gives it a date of 934, going by the English version of the charter. <sup>166</sup> The witness list is unreliable, there is no Aethelred, bishop of London, during Athelstan's reign and the names of Egwyn, Radulph and Offerd listed in S391 as bishops, are not known in any genuine charter of King Athelstan. The whole witness list is evidently much corrupted and S391 is unacceptable as a genuine charter for the purposes of this research.

S401

Athelstant to St.Mary's, Worcester; land at Aust, Gloucs. for a fishery.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Tib A XIII, fos 53-4 (s.xi)

2. B.L., Cotton Tib A XIII, fo. 194rv (s.xi)

Pr: B665

Arch: Worcester

Date: 929

W.L: 34 Names

S401 makes no mention of the three services and the charter uses odd formulae for the reign of King Athelstan. The dating clause claims that 929 is the sixth year of Athelstan's reign, but he came to the throne in 924. S401 is regarded as unreliable owing to the objections stated above.

S420

Athelstan to the 'familia' of Chertsey Minster; land confirmation.

MS: B.L., Cotton Vitell. A XIII, fos 38-9 (s.xiii)

Pr: B697

Arch: Chertsey

Date: 16 Dec. at Kingston

W.L: Abbreviated, 5 names.

The absence of a proem for the year 933 in which developed hermeneutic proems were in use argues either for the deliberate omission of a difficult piece of Latin or a careless piece of forgery. The grant is for the reconfirmation of lands given to Chertsey by Athelstan and his predecessors. The exemptions clause implies freedom from the three services. It is very unlikely that this would be the case. The witness list is very corrupt and abbreviated and the charter is not acceptable in the form in which it has survived.

S434

Athelstan to the 'familia' of Malmesbury; land at Bremhill, Wilts.

MSS: 1. B.L., Lansdowne 417, fo. 18rv (s.xiv/xv)

2. P.R.O., E 164/24, fo. 13Orv (s.xiii)

3. Bodleian, Wood empt. 5, fos 38-40 (s.xiii)

Pr: B716

Arch: Malmesbury

Date: 21 Dec. 937

W.L: 29 names

S434, S435 and S436 are related charters in that they are all dated to 21 December 937 and all come from the

Malmesbury archive, which is known to be unreliable. The proem formulae of all three charters are the same and typical of the 928-34 period rather than 937. O'Donovan points out that the witness list of S434 has clergy consistent with a date of 937, but laity typical of 934.<sup>168</sup> Several of the 'duces' attesting are not present in any reliable charters dated post 934. There is also no mention of the three services in the grant, Keynes regards S434-6 as spurious charters probably based on a genuine charter which was issued in 935 as the indiction, regnal year, and concurrent are all correct for that year.<sup>169</sup> S434 is taken to be spurious.

## S435

Athelstan to Malmesbury; land at Wooton, Wilts.

- MSS: 1. B.L., Lansdowne 417, fo. 18v (s.xiv/xv)  
 2. P.R.O., E 164/24, fos 130v-lv (s.xiii)  
 3. Bodleian, Wood Empt. 5, fos 40-lv (s.xiii)

Pr: B718

Arch: Malmesbury

Date: 21 Dec, 937

W.L: 14 names

The texts of S434 and S435 are practically identical, although S435 has fewer names in its witness list which mentions only four bishops and three 'duces'. It is regarded as a spurious document. The reasons for this are stated under the discussion of S434.

## S436

Athelstan to Malmesbury; land at Wooton, Bremhill, Little



Somerford, Norton Wilts. and at Ewen, Glos.

MSS: 1. B.L., Royal 13 D II, fos 34v-5 (s.xii part only)  
2. Oxford, Magdalen College 172, fos 93rv-4 (sxxii)

Pr: B719

Arch: Malmesbury

Date: 21 Dec, 937

W.L: 20 names

S436 has the same proem at S434 and the dating clause is similarly accurate for 935 rather than 937. The witness list records archbishops, subkings and bishops, but not the king or any 'ministri'. There is a section of narrative in the grant, and the actual lands granted at Wooton and Bremhill are also granted in S435 and S434 respectively on exactly the same day. S435 is taken to be spurious and is disregarded.

S439

Athelstan to the church of SS. Peter and Paul, Winchester; confirmation of the beneficial hidation of Chilcombe, Hants.

MS: B.L., Add. 15350, fo. 115v (s.xii)

Pr: B713

Arch: Winchester, Old Minster

Date: 937

W.L: None

S439 is an evident forgery. It contains a narrative section. The formulae are not typical of the year 937 and there is no surviving witness list. The dating clause states that the grant was made in 937 'qui precessit annum quo bello celebre in Bruningafelda factum fuit'. This

particular piece of information must be a later addition because it predicts Brunanburgh which took place in 937, not 938. The date of the battle of Brunanburgh must have been taken from the 'A' version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which also gives Brunanburgh the mistaken date of 938, and which was written at Winchester between 925-55, this is significant at S439 is a Winchester charter.<sup>170</sup>

S443

Athelstan to Frithestan, bishop of Winchester; confirmation of privileges and a grant of land at Withiel Florey, Somerset and 'Cearn' (Charmouth, Dorset?) to Taunton.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Ch. VIII, 17 (s.xi?)  
2. B.L., Add. 15350, fos 22v-3v (s.xii)

Pr: B727

Arch: Old Minster, Winchester

Date: 938

W.L: 22 names

S443 is a forgery for the following reasons:

1. It contains a prolonged section of narrative in the grant.

2. The dating formula, as in S439, refers to the battle of Brunanburgh in 938, rather than the correct year of 937, and S443 is also a charter from the Winchester archive; see S439 for further discussion of this point.

3. The grant combines two disparate elements, a confirmation of privileges to bishop Frithestan of Winchester and a grant of land to Taunton.

4. In 938 the bishop of Winchester was Alfheah, Frithestan died between 932-3. The witness list also contains



Aethelgar, bishop of Crediton who was not consecrated until 934.<sup>171</sup> S443 cannot be a misdated charter of the early 930's because of this discrepancy in the witness list. It must be an Old Minster forgery.

S450

Athelstan to the church of St. Buryan; land in 7 places.

MS: Exeter D.R.O. E/R 4, fo. 25 (s.xiv)

Pr: B785

Arch: Exeter

Date: 943 for 925x39, 6 Oct, at Kingston.

W.L: 17 names

The date of S450 is not contemporary with the reign of King Athelstan as he died in 939. The date clause gives the regnal year as six, for Athelstan this would give a date of 930 to the charter. If S450 were dated to 930, the formulae are not of the type generally used in that era. There are two anathemas, one before the bounds and one after the witness list, and there is no apparent reason for this double presence. The witness list is extremely corrupt, giving three archbishops, two of whom, Ethelfel and Radulfus, are unknown for Athelstan's reign, either as archbishops or as witnesses of a different rank mistakenly listed as archbishops. The witness list is so corrupt that, taken in conjunction with the problems posed by the rest of the text, it must invalidate S450.

S451

Athelstan to St. John's Beverley; privileges.

MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Ch.IV, 18 (s.xvi)

2. B.L., Harley 560, fos 21-2rv (s.xvi)
3. B.L., Lansdowne 269, fo. 97rv (s.xvii)
4. Bodleian, Dodsworth 9, fo. 22 (s.xvii; incomplete)
5. Bodleian, Dodsworth 10, fos 43v-4v (s.xvii)
6. Oxford, University College 82, p. 7 (s.xv; extract)

All the manuscripts are in English.

Pr: B644, B645, B1359.

Arch: Beverley? <sup>172</sup>

Date: None

W.L: None

S451 is written in metrical English of the medieval period. It cannot be genuine in its present form.

S452

Athelstan to St.Paul's Minster; confirmation of privileges.

- MSS: Latin, 1. B.L., Lansdowne 269, fo.98rv (s.xvii)
2. B.L., Lansdowne 447, fo.25rv (s.xvii)
  3. London, St.Paul's Reg. B, fo.20 (s.xiii; lost)
- English, 4. London, St.Paul's Reg. B, fo.20 (s.xiii; lost)
5. Bodleian, Dugdale 21, fo. 4lr (s.xvii;incomplete)

Pr: Latin B736, English B735

Arch: St.Paul's London

Date: None

W.L: None

S452 is regarded as spurious because the grant contains a passage of narration concerning St.Erkenwald and the formulae used are not typical of Athelstan's reign. Since there is no date nor a witness list, the year of issue is impossible to ascertain.

S453

Athelstan to St.Paul's Minster, London; confirmation of lands

- MSS: 1. London, St.Paul's DC, W.D. 1, fo. 38 (s.xiii)  
2. London, St.Paul's DC, W.D. 4, fos 3-4v (s.xii)  
3. London, St.Paul's DC, Reg.B (s.xiii; lost)

Pr: B737

Arch: St.Paul's Cathedral, London

Date: None

W.L: 9 names and the phrase 'et alii multi'

S453 is not a genuine charter for the reign of King Athelstan because it is atypical in formulae and the witness list is totally inaccurate. It is attested by Archbishop Adelgar of Canterbury and Archbishop Oskytel of York, neither of whom were in office during Athelstan's reign. Hart suggests that the witnesses suit a date in the reign of King Edgar between 961 and 971.<sup>173</sup> No Anglo-Saxon king attests this charter and it is evidently invalid for Athelstan's reign.

S454

Athelstan to the Burgesses of Malmesbury; grant of privileges and land near Norton, Wilts.

- MSS: 1. B.L., Cotton Vitell. C IX, fo. 200 (s.xvii)  
2. P.R.O., Ch. R 10-12, Hen IV, no.1.  
3. P.R.O., Pat. R 5, Ric. II, pt. 1, m.12  
4. P.R.O., Pat. R I, Edw. IV, pt 5, m.23  
5. P.R.O., Pat. R 22, Hen. VIII, pt 1, m.6  
6. P.R.O., Conf. R 2, Hen. VII, pt 2, no.2  
7. P.R.O., Conf. R2 and 3 Phil. and Mary, no. 17

8. P.R.O., Conf. R 6, Eliz., no. 8

9. P.R.O., Conf. R2, Jas. 1, pt 2, no. 14

Pr: B720

Arch: Worcester

Date: None

W.L: 5 names

S454 does not conform in structure or formulae to the type of charter issued during the reign of King Athelstan. The witnesses include a chancellor and a treasurer, terms not used to describe witnesses during the early tenth century. It is definitely a spurious document.

S455

Athelstan to Muchelney Abbey; land at Curry Rivel and at Stowey in Fivehead, Somerset.

MS: Earl of Cardigan, 'Muchelney Cartulary', fo. iv (s.xiii)

Pr: Bates, Muchelney Cartulary, p 38

Arch: Muchelney

Date: None

W.L: 12 names

S455 is a spurious charter. It is not typical in formulae of the charters of King Athelstan's reign because it specifies that the grant is given free from all worldly services. The bounds includes a preface in O.E. which states that the grant was made for the benefit of the souls of Athelstan, his predecessors and successors, a statement which is in itself suspect and totally out of place in the boundary clause.

S456

Writ of King Athelstan for the church and chapter of Ripon.

MSS: 1. P.R.O., DL 41/6/1, (s.xiii)

Pr: B646, B858

Arch: Ripon? <sup>174</sup>

Date: Unknown

W.L: 2 names

S456 must be spurious in its present form. The writ was not used in Anglo-Saxon England until the development of the vernacular writ in the eleventh century. The Latin writ is a feature of the post-conquest period and as S456 is written in Latin, it is probably a post-conquest forgery. <sup>175</sup>

S457

Rhyming English version of S456

MSS: 1. P.R.O., DL 41/6/1, (S.xiii; Fowler 1881 facing p.90)

2. Bodleian, Dodsworth 160, fo. 250 (s.xvii)

Pr: B647, B859

Arch: Ripon? <sup>176</sup>

Date: Unknown

W.L: None

S457 is unacceptable as a genuine document because it is another version of the forged charter S456.

FOOTNOTES : Chapter 2

1. See W. Levison, England and the Continent in the Eighth Century (Oxford, 1946). P. Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters into England? The Case for St. Augustine, Prisca Munimenta, Studies in Archival and Administrative History, ed F. Ranger and R.E.J. Hollaender (London, 1973), pp. 88-107, and P. Wormald, 'Bede and the Conversion of England : the Charter Evidence', The Jarrow Lecture (1984).
2. See E.H.D. p. 375.
3. See P. Chaplais, 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas on Single Sheets : Originals or Copies?', Prisca Munimenta, Studies in Archival and Administrative History, ed F. Ranger and A.E.J. Hollaender (London, 1973), pp. 63-87. Hlothhere's charter is discussed on pp. 65-78.
4. Levison, England and the Continent, pp. 174-233.
5. For Eddius Stephanus see The Life of the Bishop Wilfred, ed B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), p. 36. For Bede's history see Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica, ed. C. Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1896), I, 367, 370, 380, 414-5.
6. Levison, England and the Continent, pp. 223-5 and W.H. Stevenson, 'Trinodas Necessitas', E.H.R. 29 (1914), 689-703.
7. Levison, England and the Continent, p. 232. See also F.M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971), p. 141.
8. Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters?', p. 106.
9. ibid., pp. 99-100.
10. See P. Chaplais, 'The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diplomas', Prisca Munimenta, Studies in Archival and Administrative History ed F. Ranger and A.E.J. Hollaender (London, 1973), pp. 49-52. The two documents are the decrees of the Councils of Hertford (672) and Hatfield (679).
11. Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters?', pp. 106-7.
12. A. Scharer, Die angelsächsische Königsurkunde im 7 und 8 Jahrhundert (Vienna, 1892), pp. 23-57.
13. See Wormald, 'Bede and the Conversion', pp. 13-19.
14. ibid., p. 13.
15. ibid. p. 14.

16. *ibid*, p.14.
17. J. Campbell, 'The First Century of English Christianity', Ampleforth Journal 76 (1971), 12-29.
18. J.E.A. Joliffe, 'English Book-Right', E.H.R. 1 (1935) 1-21.
19. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p.307.
20. E. John, 'Folkland Reconsidered', Orbis Britanniae and other Studies (Leicester, 1966), pp.91-2.
21. Wormald, 'Bede and the Conversion,' pp.22-3.
22. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp.307-10.
23. For the importance of this oral tradition see Anglo-Saxon Wills, ed. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), pp.xxix-xxxiii.
24. For discussions of the problem see H.D.Hazeltine in the General Preface to Whitelock, Anglo-Saxon Wills, pp.xxxi-xxxiv and H.R.Loyn, The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England 500-1087 (London, 1984), p.111.
25. See S.Keynes, The Diplomas of King Aethelred The Unready 978-1016 (Cambridge, 1980), pp.33-5.
26. M. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth Century Anglo-Latin Literature', A.S.E. 4 (1975), pp.99-100.
27. Anglo-Saxon Writs, ed F.E.Harmer (Manchester, 1952), p.3, pp.34-8
28. For a discussion about the general composition and formulae of the Anglo-Saxon charters see. H.Hall, Studies in English Historical Documents (Cambridge, 1908), pp.191-201.
29. See Chaplais, 'Diplomas on Single Sheets', p.67 for Hlothhere's charter.
30. See D.A.Bullough, 'The Educational Tradition in England from Alfred to Aelfric : Teaching Utriusque Linguae', Settimane di Studio de centro Italiano de Studi sull' Alto Medioevo 19 pt 2 (1972), 454-64.
31. Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity', p.33.
32. *ibid.*, pp.32-3
33. F.M.Stenton, The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period (Oxford, 1955), p.15.

34. The problems of forgery in the charter record are discussed by various authorities. These include: Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici, ed. J.M. Kemble, 6 vols (London, 1839-48), I, IX-CXV. Diplomatarium Anglicum Aevi Saxonici, ed B. Thorpe, (London, 1865). J. Earle, A Handbook to the Land-Charters and other Saxon Documents (Oxford, 1885). Cartularium Saxonicum, ed Walter de Gray Birch, 3 vols (London, 1885-99). 'The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents', Anecdota Oxoniensa, ed A.S.Napier and W.H.Stevenson (Oxford, 1895). Stenton, Latin Charters (See n 33 for full reference).
35. Stenton, Latin Charters, p.20.
36. An example of a cartulary omitting the pictorial cross is the Old Minster cartulary, B.L., Add. 15350. The witness lists are abbreviated in B.L. Harley 61 and Bodleian Wood Empti, 1.
37. Chaplais, 'Diplomas on Single Sheets', p.63.
38. *ibid.* p.64.
39. *ibid.*, pp.63-5 and also see N. Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters, the Work of the Last Twenty Years', A.S.E. 3 (1974), 214-6.
40. See P. Chaplais, 'The Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diplomas of Exeter', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 39 (1966), 3.
41. For the following discussion see Keynes, Diplomas of Aethelred, pp.1-13.
42. The Worcester cartulary is available in a printed edition: Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis, ed T. Hearne (Oxford, 1726).
43. The charters are printed in Anglo-Saxon Charters II Burton Abbey ed P.H.Sawyer (Oxford, 1979), pp.3-9.
44. See F.M.Stenton, The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon (Reading, 1913), p.13.
45. E.H.D., p.370.
46. *ibid.* p.372.
47. The seventy-three charters mentioned are those which have survived in their entirety but include S458 which has no date or witness list. Other fragmentary Athelstan charters survive but have not been included in this study because they are incomplete. They are S1604, S1709-17, S1792 and S1841.



48. The two volumes are : Anglo-Saxon Charters I : Charters of Rochester, ed A.Campbell (London, 1973) and Sawyer, Burton Abbey.
49. I have used the Cartularium Saxonicum in preference to Kemble, Codex Diplomaticus because it is the more recent of the two general editions of Anglo-Saxon charters available.
50. For the three originals S416, S425 and S447 see "Chaplais, Origin and Authenticity", p.41-2. S449 is regarded as an original in Keynes, Diplomas, p.24, J.A.Robinson, The Times of St. Dunstan (Oxford, 1923), p.60 and Stenton, History of Abingdon, p.24.
51. In Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters, under S425 and S447, N. Brooks suggests that the lands of these two charters are in Kent and that the Christ Church forgery S1210 is based upon them. This may indicate that S425 and S447 are from the Christ Church archive.
52. The various cartularies are identified, unless otherwise stated, from G.R.C. Davis, Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain (London, 1958).
53. Keynes, Diplomas, pp.9-10.
54. See the printed edition of the Worcester cartulary in Hearne, Hemingi Chartularium for the Worcester Charters. The unreliability of the Winchester cartularies is discussed in J.A.Robinson, 'The Saxon Abbots of Glastonbury,' Somerset Historical Essays (London, 1921), p.36. See also Stenton, Latin Charters, p.11.
55. L.J.Lloyd, 'Leofric as Bibliophile', Leofric of Exeter, ed F.Barlow, (Exeter, 1972), p.34.
56. The charters from Glastonbury are S422, S426, S399 and S450. Those from Shaftesbury are S419, S429 and S445.
57. The charters are: Canterbury, Christ Church S398, S433.  
St. Augustine's S394.  
St. Pauls S452, S453.
58. See Keynes, Diplomas, pp.9-13. See also for Burton Sawyer, Burton Abbey, p.xiii
59. The cartulary is classified as B.L., Add.15350.
60. Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 67-113.
61. The biblical quote 'Date et dabitur' is from Luke 6:38 and 'Omnia quae videntur' is from Corinthians 2:4-18
62. Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 74 and Bullough 'Educational Tradition', 469.
63. Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 100.

64. *ibid*, 72-3 and Bullough, 'Educational Tradition', 467-76.
65. Keynes, Diplomas, pp.95-7.
66. From the cartulary of Winchester Old Minster are S412, S416 and S417, from Winchester New Minster S418, from Abingdon S413, from Shaftesbury S419 and from Sherbourne S422.
67. Previous comments on the repeated use of formulae are to be found in Keynes, Diplomas, pp.42-4, and Hall, Studies, pp.196-7, pp.341-6.
68. The chronological occurrence of some of the Athelstan poems is discussed in Keynes, Diplomas, pp.43-4
69. F.M.Stenton, 'The Danes in England', Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England, ed D.Stenton (Oxford, 1970), p.141.
70. See N. Brooks, 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth and Ninth Century England Before the Conquest', Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), p.82 and Stevenson, 'Trinoda Necessitas' pp.689-703.
71. H.P.R. Finberg, 'Fact and Fiction from Crediton', West Country Historical Studies, ed H.P.R. Finberg, (Newton Abbot, 1969), p.37.
72. Stevenson, 'Trinoda Necessitas', 701-2.
73. Keynes, Diplomas, pp.95-7
74. There is a chronological table of the charter formulae used in Athelstan's charters including those of the anathemas in Hall, Studies, pp.341-6.
75. See the appendix, pp. 72-3
76. See the appendix, pp. 92-5
77. See the appendix, pp. 61-2
78. See the appendix for further details about these charters.
79. There is a summary about the conflicting views on the subject of the royal chancery in Keynes, Diplomas, pp.14-28.
80. Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity', pp.58-9.
81. Drogereit's theory is summarized in Keynes, Diplomas, pp.16-19.
82. Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity', pp.41-2.

83. *ibid.*, pp.28-42.
84. For this argument see Keynes, Diplomas, pp.39-83 and Loyn, Governance of England, pp.106-118.
85. The debate is continued along the same lines discussed in this chapter in Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters', 218 and P.Chaplais, 'The Royal Anglo-Saxon "Chancery" of the Tenth Century Revisited,' Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis, ed H.Mays-Hasting and R.I.Moore (London,1985), pp.41-51.
86. P. Wormnald, Review of Keynes, Diplomas, in History 67, (1982), no.220, 309-10.
- FOOTNOTES, APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2
87. For the publications which contain the printed versions of Athelstan's charters, see p.25 of this chapter.
88. Each charter archive has been identified using Davis, Medieval Cartularies unless otherwise stated in the footnotes.
89. See Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity, p.41, also, Stenton, Latin Charters, p.53 and Keynes, Diplomas pp.16-18.
90. See Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity, p.41 and Chaplais, 'Anglo-Saxon Chancery Revisited', p.42, n3.
91. S425 is also discussed in Chaplais, 'Origins and Authenticity', p.41.
92. For a discussion of single sheet charters see p.27 and n.51 earlier in this chapter.
93. See Chaplais, 'Origins and Authenticity, p.41.
94. Recognition of S449 as an original charter is found in: Stenton, History of Abingdon, p.39. Robinson, Times of St.Dunstan, p.60 and Keynes, Diplomas, p.24.
95. The genuine charters from the year 939 are S445, S446, S447, S448 and S449.
96. For the identification of Wulfhelm as archbishop of Canterbury see Chapter 4, p.149
97. For proem types in common usage see pp 32-3 of this chapter.
98. For the identification of Frithestan, bishop of Winchester see chapter 4 p.171. See also M. A. O'Donovan, 'An Interim Revision for the Episcopal Dates for the Province of Canterbury 850-950 A.D.' A.S.E. 2 (1973), 110.

99. For the chronicle reference to Beornstan of Winchester see A.S.C. ann.931. See also chapter 4, pp 164-5
100. See S419 in this appendix p.59 for the abbreviation of its witness list.
101. See H.P.R. Finberg, The Early Charters of Wessex (Leicester, 1964), no.50, p.39.
102. For the identification of Wulfstan of York see chapter 4, p. 150
103. For Finberg's discussion about the two bishops Wulfhelm in S422 See Finberg, Wessex, no.578, p.166.
104. See M.A. O'Donovan, 'An Interim Revision for the Episcopal Dates for the Province of Canterbury 850-950 A.D', A.S.E. 1 (1972), .41-2. See also chapter 4, pp 177-8 for Wulfhelm, bishop of Hereford and Wulfhelm, bishop of Wells.
105. See the manuscript of S422 : B.L., Add. 46487, fos.9-10v.
106. See Early Yorkshire Charters I, and W.Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914), 4-5.
107. See chapter 4, pp 164-5 for Beornstan of Winchester, pp 159-9 for Alfred of Sherborne.
108. See E.H.D., p.548.
109. ibid., p.548.
110. The other charters with the proem type of S426 are S407 (York Archive), S458 (Wilton archive) and S420 (Glastonbury archive).
111. See Sawyer, Burton Abbey, no.3, pp.5-7.
112. See ibid, no. 3, p.6.
113. For a discussion of the four wrongly listed duces in S430 see chapter 4, category dux under Hefa, Alwold, Uhtred and Sigered.
114. For Stenton's argument see Stenton's History of Abingdon, p.40.
115. For Athelstan's hermeneutic charters, see chapter 2, p. 31.
116. For the identification of Alfheah, bishop of Winchester, see chapter 4, p. 163
117. For the identification of Hrothwald of York, see chapter 4, pp 147-8
118. The full reference is : 'The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents', Anecdota Oxoniensa ed. A.S.Napier and W.H.Stevenson (Oxford, 1895).

119. For the archive of S405, see Stevenson, 'Crawford Charters', p.vii.
120. For the 'trinoda necessitas', in the charters of the tenth century, see chapter 2, pp 35-6
121. See Chaplais, 'Diplomas of Exeter', no.9, pp.10-11.
122. See Stevenson, 'Trinoda Necessitas', p.702.
123. For Finberg's views see Finberg, 'Fact and Fiction', pp.30-8.
124. See Stenton, History of Abingdon, p.39.
125. See Sawyer, Burton Abbey, no 2, p.4.
126. See chapter 4, pp 177-8 for Wulfhelm of Wells, p 158 for Alfheah of Wells and p.159 for Aelfric of Hereford.
127. For Whitelock's discussion of the alliterative charters see D. Whitelock, The Will of Athelgifu (Oxford, 1968), p.42.
128. See Sawyer, Burton Abbey, no 4, p.9.
129. For Hart's opinion, see E.C.N.E.N.M., pp.90-1.
130. Charter B748 is dated to the reign of King Edmund in 940.
131. See Sawyer's opinion also, Sawyer, Burton Abbey, no.4, p.8.
132. For the date given by Birch, see C.S.II, no 682, p.371.
133. See chapter 4, p.158 for the episcopal dates of Alfheah of Wells.
134. See Robinson, Times of St.Dunstan, p.47, n 4.
135. The full reference for Hart is C.Hart, The Early Charters of Eastern England (Leicester, 1966), pp.150-1.
136. See chapter 4, p.175 for Theodred of London.
137. The full reference is J. Earle, A Handbook to the Land-Charters and other Saxon Documents (Oxford, 1885), pp.169-71.
138. See Chaplais, 'Diplomas of Exeter', no 10, pp.11-12 and Stevenson, 'Trinoda Necessitas', p.698, n 4.
139. See Chaplais, 'Diplomas of Exeter', no 10, p.11.
140. For a discussion of the duces Aelfhere and Wulfgar, see Chapter 4, p 197 (Aelfhere) and pp 206-7 (Wulfgar).

141. For Finberg's arguments, see Finberg, Wessex, no.679 p.167.
142. See O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 111
143. For the reliability of the archive of Wilton, see Keynes, Diplomas, p.9.
144. See R.R.Darlington, 'Anglo-Saxon Wiltshire' and 'Domesday Survey', Victoria County History of Wiltshire II (London,1955), 30, 91.
145. See chapter 4, p.170 for Eadulf of Crediton and p.162 for Aethelgar of Crediton.
146. O'Donovan gives the three possible dates for S427 in O'Donovan. 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 36-7.
147. See E. John, 'The Division of the Mensa in Early English Monasteries', Journal of Ecclesiastical History 6, (1955), p.154, n4.
148. See Finberg, Wessex, no 41, p.37.
149. The full reference to S432 in Finberg, Wessex is given in chapter 2, p. 25
150. See ibid, pp.130-2 for references about the authenticity of S432.
151. See Chapter 4, p. 165 for Burgric of Rochester and pp 164-5 for Beornstan of Winchester.
152. For the corrected date of S407, see E.H.D., p.548.
153. For Farrer's opinion see Farrer, Yorkshire Charters, p.4. see also E.H.D., p.548
154. See chapter 4, p. 160 for the accession of Wulfstan to the archbishopric of York.
155. See Stenton, History of Abingdon, p.38.
156. The three charters S408, S409 and S410 are discussed in ibid., p.38.
157. For a discussion of the bishops see the prosopography, category bishop, under Aelfric, Alfheah, Aethelgar and Burgric.
158. For Chaplais' views on the group of forged charters from Exeter, see Chaplais, 'Diplomas of Exeter', p.5.
159. For Chaplais' views about S433 see ibid., p.12 and for Earle's views see Earle, Land-Charters, p.325.
160. See Lloyd, 'Leofric as Bibliophile', p.34.

161. See Chaplais, 'Diplomas of Exeter', pp.4-9.
162. See 'The Register of St. Augustine's Abbey of Canterbury I', ed. G.J. Turner and H.E. Salter, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History 2 (London, 1915), xxx-xxxxi .
- 163 See O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates', I 36.
164. The English version of S391 is printed in Anglo-Saxon Charters, ed A.J. Robertson, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge, 1956), no 23, pp.44-9.
165. This charter is not mentioned in Davis, Medieval Cartularies. It is assigned to the archive of Milton because it is a direct grant to the religious community there.
166. See Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters, an Annotated List and Bibliography (London, 1968), p.166.
167. For the unreliability of Malmesbury archive see Keynes, Diplomas, p.9.
168. See O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 36.
169. See Keynes, Diplomas, pp.44, n78
170. For the significance of the incorrect date of 938 for Brunanburgh given in S439, see A.S.C, p.xi.
171. For the bishops Frithestan and Aethelgar, see chapter 4, p. 171 (Frithestan) and p. 162 (Aethelgar).
172. The Beverley archive is known for this charter from only one late fifteenth century manuscript version of this charter: Oxford, Univ. College, 82, recorded in Davis, Medieval Cartularies.
173. See C. Hart, The Early Charters of Essex, Dept. of English Local History, Occasional Papers, University of Leicester, 1st ser. 10 (Leicester, 1971), no 16, 12.
174. There is no mention of the provenance of this charter in Davis, Medieval Cartularies. It is assigned to the Ripon archive because it contains a direct grant to Ripon.
175. For the development of the writ, see chapter 2, p 13 .
176. For the archive of this charter see the reasons given in n88 above to explain why it is assigned to Ripon.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE MEETING PLACES OF THE KING'S "WITAN", 928-34.

The central theme of this thesis is the examination of the witness lists of the genuine charters to reveal what information they contain about the individual witnesses and thus the composition and function of Athelstan's "witan". The charters were issued at the "witenagemot", which was an assembly of the king's "witan", a word which translated literally means "the wise men". The witness lists show the membership of the "witan".

Before turning to the witness lists, there is some additional information about the "witan" which is obtainable from an examination of the corroborative and dating clauses of a particular group of Athelstan's charters. The charters in question are a group of fourteen dated to the years 928 to 934. The charters of this period are notably different from the rest of Athelstan's charters in their use of a developed hermeneutic Latin style in the text and the increased length of the witness lists. Outside the six years of 928 to 934 the charters issued have no corroborative clause and do not record where the "witan" met. The date clause gives only the year and the indiction as a record of when the document was issued. Between 928 and 934 the genuine charters give the date in much greater



detail. It consists of the year, the indiction, The epact, the phase of the moon, the concurrents and the day of the month.<sup>4</sup> This enables one to discover the precise day of the year upon which the charter was issued. Also within this period there is a corroborative clause and a phrase giving the place at which the charter was issued and thus the meeting place of the "witan". These charters of 928 to 934 provide the only information available for Athelstan's reign about the meeting places of the king's "witan". The typical

phraseology of the corroboration is that found in S416:

"in villa notissima quae Leowtun nuncupatur episcopis, abbatibus, ducibus, patriae procuratoribus regia dapsilate ovantibus perscripta est; cuius etiam inconcussae firmitatis auctoritas his testibus roborata constat, quorum nomina subtus characteribus depicta annotantur".

Thus the information given in the charters between 928 and 934 enables one to discover the exact date and place at which some of Athelstan's assemblies were held. The charters which give this additional information are listed chronologically with their date and place of issue in the table below. The identification of the place-names mentioned in the charters is based upon the authority of the Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names.<sup>5</sup>

NUMBER	BENEFICIARY	DATE	PLACE
S399	Elfleda	16 April 928	Exeter, Devon
S400	Byrhtferth	16 April 928	Exeter, Devon
S403	Beornheah, bishop	5 April 930	Lyminster, Sussex
S405	Eadulf bishop	29 April 930	Chippenham, Wilts.
S412	Aelfric abbot	23 March 931	Colchester, Suffolk.
S413	Aelfric "minister"	21 June 931	King's Worthy, Hants.
S416	Wulfgar "minister"	12 Nov 931	Lifton, Devon.
S417	Aethelgeard "minister"	30 Aug 932	Milton Regis, Kent.
S418	Aelfred "minister"	24 Dec 932	Amesbury, Wilts.
S419	Shaftesbury nunnery	24 Dec 932	Amesbury, Wilts.

S422	Sherborne			
	monastery	26 Jan 933	Chippenham,	Wilts.
S425	Aelfwald			
	" <u>minister</u> "	28 May 934	Winchester,	Hants.
S407	St. Peter's,			
	York.	7 June 934	Nottingham,	Notts.
S426	Athelm			
	" <u>minister</u> "	12 Sept 934	Buckingham,	Bucks.

An examination of the table shows that S399 and S400 and S418 and S419 are pairs of charters issued at the same assemblies. S399 and S400 were issued at Exeter in 928 and their corroborative clauses specifically state that this was done at Easter. S418 and S419 were issued at Amesbury on Christmas Eve in 932. There are therefore twelve different assemblies represented by the charters listed in the above table and they were all held in different places, except for the occurrence of two at Chippenham in 930 and 933. The map opposite depicts the meeting places of King Athelstan's "witan" as shown in the evidence from the charters. It is similar in concept to the map in David Hill's "Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England" which shows what is known of Athelstan's itinerary throughout his reign. However, Hill's

map includes the information from all the sources for Athelstan's reign, not merely the charters, which are the only sources to mention where the "witenagemots" were held. His record of the "witenagemots" includes evidence from all the charters, genuine and forged, which are attributed to Athelstan's reign and which mention the venues of the "witenagemot". The map opposite deals with the 928-34 period only because it shows the meeting places mentioned in the genuine charters and this information is only given during this period. It is noticeable that between 928-34 the only definite record we have of Athelstan's itinerary comes from the charter evidence. There is also the record of his Scottish campaign in 934<sup>7</sup> and the possibility that on his way North that year, Athelstan visited the Northumbrian ecclesiastical centres of Beverley, Ripon and Chester-le-Street.<sup>8</sup> The distribution of the meeting-places of the "witan" for each of the six years is as follows:

- 928 Exeter
- 929 No surviving charters
- 930 Lyminster, Chippenham
- 931 Colchester, Worthy, Lifton
- 932 Milton, Amesbury
- 933 Chippenham
- 934 Winchester, Nottingham, Buckingham

It is evident from the map and the above list that the meeting places of the "witan" were concentrated in Wessex, the heartland of the West Saxon dynasty to which Athelstan belonged. Meetings at Colchester in East Anglia and Milton Regis in Kent were also well inside the southern part of England in areas directly under Athelstan's control. There is no evidence for the regular use of a specific place as a centre for meetings of the assembly. Until 934 the distribution of meeting places each year is spread throughout Athelstan's inherited kingdom of Wessex, English Mercia and Kent but excludes the recently conquered Danelaw, with the exception of Colchester near the East Anglian border. In the years when more than one assembly is recorded Athelstan appears to have made a deliberate attempt to choose meeting places each of which was situated in a different region of his kingdom.<sup>9</sup> Thus in 931 the "witenagemot" was convened at Colchester in East Anglia, at Worthy in Hampshire and at Lifton in Devon. In the years when two assemblies are recorded a similar pattern emerges. Although the list of "witan" meeting places is the only evidence available for Athelstan's movements between 928 and 933, it clearly illustrates the peripatetic nature of his kingship. It also shows that the "witan" were generally summoned to attend the king in that part of Anglo-Saxon England which had not undergone any long-lasting Scandinavian settlement. The "witan" met in the area most

firmly controlled by King Athelstan in which the bulk of his own lands and wealth were situated.

In 934 there is a different pattern in the meeting places of the "witan". The meetings are aligned on a north-south axis starting at Winchester in May and continuing to Nottingham in June and Buckingham in September. Nottingham is the most northerly place to which Athelstan is known to have summoned his "witan". This distribution is explained by the events of 934. It was the year in which Athelstan led a successful campaign into Scotland as a punitive measure against the Scottish kings. S425 which was issued at Winchester in May of 934 has a similar witness list to that of the Nottingham charter S407. The witnesses of these two charters may consequently represent the leading members of the army that went North to Scotland with Athelstan in 934. S407 was made in favour of St Peter's church in York and it concerns a substantial grant of land at Amounderness in Lancashire. It may be that this grant was made to the church at York as an attempt to ensure the continued support of Wulfstan the archbishop of York for King Athelstan during his Scottish campaign. It has also been suggested that the grant was made so that the lands would form a bulwark against the recent Danish penetration of Westmorland and Cumberland. Corroborative evidence for the success of the Scottish campaign comes in charter S426, issued at

Buckingham and dated to September of 934. It is the only charter of King Athelstan to be attested by Constantine, King of the Scots.<sup>14</sup> His witness was presumably a result of the success of the Scottish campaign. Unfortunately the witness list of S426 is curtailed, recording only the attestations of King Athelstan and King Constantine. Consequently it is not possible to see whether the people who attested S425 and S407 also attested S426. However, it appears that in 934 the meeting places of the "witan" were chosen because of the military campaign of that year. The first meeting at the major West Saxon centre of Winchester for the initial gathering of the army, the second at Nottingham on the way to Scotland and the third at Buckingham on the way back. This also indicates that the "witan" could have a military function if required. 934 is the only year for which it can be argued that the meeting place of the "witan" was chosen for reasons of military expediency.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066 William I regularly held three assemblies a year at Westminster, Winchester and Gloucester, all three places being towns and important ecclesiastical or royal centres.<sup>15</sup> The choice of this type of meeting place may have begun earlier in the eleventh century but it did not occur during Athelstan's reign.<sup>16</sup> There is no regularity in the choice of venue during his reign other than two meetings being held at Chippenham. On one occasion

the "witan" met at the town of Winchester, but otherwise they did not meet in centres later used for this purpose by the Conqueror.

Since there is no indication that the "witan" met at any regular venues, the meeting places themselves have been examined in order to discover if they have any factors in common. As far as possible, this examination considers the status of the places during Athelstan's reign but includes a reference to their status in 1086 according to Domesday Book.<sup>17</sup> There follows a consideration of the meeting places of the "witan" listed in chronological order.

1. Exeter: Manuscript spelling, "Execeaster" (S399 and S400)<sup>18</sup>

In the charter Exeter is described as an "arx regia". The description of Exeter as a royal fortress is possibly connected with the fact that Athelstan expelled the West Welsh from Exeter and established the river Tamar as the boundary between the West Welsh in Cornwall and the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devon.<sup>19</sup> It appears from this information that Athelstan was campaigning in the West Country and that part of this activity was centred upon Exeter. The Burghal Hidage lists Exeter as a borough of 734 hides (3028ft).<sup>20</sup> It was a major centre under Athelstan, one of his law codes was drawn up there and it had a mint which was operating during his reign.<sup>21</sup> In Domesday book it is



recorded that several properties in Exeter were owned by King Edward before the Conquest.<sup>22</sup>

2. Lyminster: Manuscript spelling, "Lullyngmynstre" (S403).<sup>23</sup>

In the charter Lyminster is described as a "villa notissima". It is mentioned in King Alfred's will in which Alfred leaves the royal residence at Lyminster to his kinsman Osferth.<sup>24</sup> This presumably means that there was a royal vill at Lyminster at the beginning of the tenth century. The only other reference to Lyminster in a tenth-century source is in Athelstan's charter S403. Domesday Book records that Lyminster was held by King Edward before the Conquest.<sup>25</sup>

3. Chippenham: Manuscript spelling, "Cyppan hamm" (S405), "Cippenham" (S422).<sup>26</sup>

In both charters Chippenham is described as a "villa notissima". Chippenham was settled by the Vikings in 878 and became a temporary Viking fort during the ninth century.<sup>27</sup> It is not certain whether its fortifications survived into the tenth century. Asser states that Chippenham was a royal vill during King Alfred's reign.<sup>28</sup> In his will, Alfred left the royal residence there to his younger son.<sup>29</sup> Domesday Book states that land at Chippenham was held from the king by a man named Reinwald. It does not specify whether Chippenham was held by King Edward before the Conquest but the presence

of a royal vill there as early as Alfred's reign suggests that this was the case.<sup>30</sup>

4. Colchester: Manuscript spelling, "Colenceaster" (S412).<sup>31</sup>

Colchester is described as a "villa notissima" in the charter S412. Edward the Elder captured and rebuilt the borough at Colchester in the year 917.<sup>32</sup> Hill lists Colchester as a borough of over sixty acres in size.<sup>33</sup> Domesday Book records that king's lordship in Colchester consisted of 102 acres of land.<sup>34</sup>

5. King's Worthy: Manuscript spelling 1. "Worcig", 2. "Worthig" (S413).<sup>35</sup>

It is described in the charter as a "villa notissima". King's Worthy is not mentioned in the itinerary of any West Saxon king other than Athelstan. It is known only as a meeting place of Athelstan's "witan". In Domesday Book it is stated that King's Worthy was held by King William in 1086 and before the Conquest was of King Edward's revenue.<sup>36</sup>

6. Lifton: Manuscript spelling, "Leowtun" (S416).<sup>37</sup>

Lifton is described as a "villa notissima" in S416. Birch interpreted the name "Leowtun" as Luton.<sup>38</sup> It has since been corrected to Lifton owing to an abnormal change from "w" to "f" in the spelling of the place-name Lifton.<sup>39</sup> It is mentioned as a royal estate in King Alfred's will in which he

left Lifton to his younger son.<sup>40</sup> Lifton is described as a borough in the Burghal Hidage but it was very small, being under five acres in size.<sup>41</sup> According to Domesday Book it was held by Queen Edith before 1066 and afterwards by King William.<sup>42</sup>

7. Milton Regis: Manuscript spelling, "Middeltun" (S417).<sup>43</sup>

In the charter S417 Milton Regis is described as a "villa noblissima". Owing to the frequent use of the phrase "villa notissima" to describe the meeting places of Athelstan's "witan", it is possible that the use of the word "noblissima" is a corruption of the word "notissima" used in several other charters. The corruption of the text probably occurred when the charter S417 was copied. There is an element of doubt in the identification of Milton Regis as the "Middeltun" of S417. There are many places named Milton which are seen to have developed from the word "Middeltun".<sup>44</sup> However, for Athelstan's reign there are only two major contenders. One is Milton Regis near Sittingbourne in Kent, used as a temporary Viking fort in the ninth century.<sup>45</sup> The other is Milton Abbas in Dorset. This was originally a monastic centre and was founded by King Athelstan.<sup>46</sup> The meeting at Milton took place in the year 932. Milton Abbas was founded in or after the year 933, apparently in memory of the aetheling Edwin who was drowned at sea in 933.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, Milton Regis is more likely to have been the

venue for a meeting held in 932. In Domesday Book it is recorded that Milton Regis was held by King William in 1086 although it is not clear who held it prior to the Conquest.<sup>48</sup>

8. Amesbury: Manuscript spelling 1. "Ambresburig" (S418)
2. "Ambresburch" (S419).<sup>49</sup>

In both charters Amesbury is described as a "villa notissima". King Alfred bequeathed Amesbury to his younger son in his will.<sup>50</sup> It was still owned by the royal family in the 940s because King Eadred bequeathed it to his mother in his will.<sup>51</sup> A Benedictine nunnery was founded at Amesbury during the tenth century but there is no indication that it was established during Athelstan's reign.<sup>52</sup> In Domesday Book there is a reference to Amesbury which states that it was of the king's revenue.<sup>53</sup> It is not clear whether this reference refers to both King Edward and King William or not.

9. Winchester: Manuscript spelling, "Winte ceaster" (S425).<sup>54</sup>

It is described in the charter as a "civitas opinatissima". Winchester was the most important royal and ecclesiastical centre in Wessex.<sup>55</sup> Several of the West Saxon kings were buried there, including Alfred the Great, Edward the Elder and Eadwy. It is mentioned in the Burghal Hidage as a burh of 2400 hides (9900ft).<sup>56</sup> Winchester features in the itineraries of most of the West Saxon kings and already had several mints established under King Athelstan.<sup>57</sup>

Domesday Book contains a large number of references to lands and sites in Winchester held by King Edward.<sup>58</sup>

10. Nottingham: Manuscript spelling, "Snottingham" (S407).<sup>59</sup>

In the charter Nottingham is described as a "civitas notissima". It was one of the five boroughs of the Danelaw.<sup>60</sup> Edward the Elder captured Nottingham and restored its fortifications between 918 and 920.<sup>61</sup> Nottingham was a major centre in the East Midlands, as is shown by its description as a "civitas" in the charter. There was a mint operating in Nottingham during Athelstan's reign.<sup>62</sup> Domesday Book states that in 1086 the king held properties in Nottingham.<sup>63</sup>

11. Buckingham: Manuscript spelling, "Bukingham" (S426).<sup>64</sup>

Buckingham is described as a "villa notissima" in the charter S426. Edward the Elder built two burhs at Buckingham in 914.<sup>65</sup> It is described in the Burghal Hidage as a borough of 1600 hides (6600ft).<sup>66</sup> Domesday Book records only one property in Buckingham owned by King Edward before the Conquest, a church held from the king by a bishop<sup>67</sup> Wulfwy.

The meeting places of Athelstan's "witan" range from the major centre of Winchester to a place of no known importance such as Amesbury. Eight of the named meeting places are known to have had fortifications and six of these,

Buckingham, Colchester, Exeter, Lifton and Winchester are listed in the Burghal Hidage. The two remaining places, Milton Regis and Chippenham, were temporary Viking forts in the ninth century and it is not certain whether their fortifications survived into Athelstan's reign. The three places which have no record of any fortifications are Amesbury, King's Worthy and Lyminster. None of them are known to have been centres of any size or importance during Athelstan's reign. However, there is one factor that all these places have in common; there were estates owned by the royal family at each of them. Chippenham, Lifton, Amesbury and Lyminster are all mentioned in King Alfred's will, but most of the evidence for royal ownership comes from Domesday Book. One cannot trace the ownership of some of these places before 1086 because they are rarely mentioned in the source material for the tenth century. Domesday book shows that Milton Regis, Lyminster, Lifton, King's Worthy, Colchester and Amesbury all belonged to King William in 1086 and all, other than Milton Regis, are specifically referred to as properties previously belonging to King Edward or his wife. Domesday book also records that King Edward held property in the boroughs of Winchester, Exeter, Nottingham and Buckingham.

The charter formula most commonly used to describe a meeting place of the "witan" is "in villa notissima". Three charters contain different formulae, Winchester and

Nottingham are each termed a "civitas" and Exeter is  
described as an "arx regia".<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that  
all three of these places were major boroughs during  
Athelstan's reign and that each possessed at least one mint.  
The use of different formulae to describe them may denote  
their importance as urban centres. Chippenham and  
Lyminster, both called royal vills at the end of the ninth  
century, are both described in the charter evidence as a  
"villa notissima". If one adds to this Sawyer's argument  
that many of the tenth century "witans" met at royal vills,  
this leads to the suggestion that the "villa notissima"  
formula may be used to describe a meeting at a royal vill.<sup>69</sup>  
However, there is very little evidence to support this  
interpretation so it must remain a suggestion rather than a  
certainty. The fact that all the "witenagemots" of  
Athelstan's reign whose venues are known were probably held  
on royal estates, does tend to support this suggestion.

It is worth noting that a similar pattern can be seen in  
the itineraries of the Carolingian kings on the Continent.<sup>70</sup>  
The meetings of the Carolingian assembly were concentrated  
within the heartland of Carolingian power. This can be most  
clearly seen in the assemblies of Louis the Pious which were  
all held in or near the Carolingian fisc.<sup>71</sup> The same is true  
of the itineraries of the tenth-century Ottonian kings. The  
number and length of stays they made in the Ottonian  
heartland of Saxony far outnumbered any visits made to other

parts of their "regnum".<sup>72</sup> The Carolingian kings also held most of their assemblies in the vicinity of their royal palaces.<sup>73</sup> This compares with the tenth century in Anglo-Saxon England where it can be shown that many of the places mentioned as venues for the "witenagemot" were in areas associated with royal vills.<sup>74</sup>

The regularisation of the meeting places for the "witan" achieved by the Conqueror is also evident in the dates upon which he called his assemblies. They were convened three times a year at Easter, Whitsun and Christmas.<sup>75</sup> During Athelstan's reign the charters show that at least three assemblies were called in the years 931 and 934 and there is no apparent reason for the "witan" to be summoned more frequently in the early tenth century than it was during the eleventh century. However there is not sufficient evidence available to prove that Athelstan regularly summoned his "witan" to three meetings each year because only the years 931, 934 and 939 of his reign have surviving charters which appear to have been issued at three separate assemblies.<sup>76</sup> The dates of the assemblies, when known, do not correspond to the post-conquest dates of Easter, Whitsun and Christmas, as is shown below.



SAWYER NO.      DATE OF CHARTER ISSUE.

S399, S400	16 April 928
S403	5 April 930
S405	29 April 930
S412	23 March 931
S413	21 June 931
S416	12 Nov 931
S417	30 Aug 932
S418, S419	24 Dec 932
S422	26 Jan 933
S425	28 May 934
S407	7 June 934
S426	12 Sept 934

S399 and S400 were issued at an Easter assembly, but the specific mention of Easter in the corroborative clause argues that it was not the accepted rule for meetings to be held regularly each year on that day.<sup>77</sup> Once in 932 a "witenagemot" was held at Christmas on the twenty-fourth of December but this does not occur again.<sup>78</sup> There is no real regularity in the dates of the meetings each year except for the fact that they tend to occur at different times of the year, other than in 930 when the only two assemblies recorded were both held in April. It seems that Athelstan chose when to call his "witan" together, rather than establishing any regular venues or dates for these meetings. This is again markedly similar to the situation as regards

the king's assembly on the Continent. It has been shown that the ninth-century Carolingian king Louis the Pious convened his general assembly where he chose, not to any special meeting place, and that he did not hold a regular number of assemblies each year.<sup>79</sup>

The picture that emerges from this information is one of the "witan" being completely under the control of King Athelstan. He chose the place at which the meeting was to be held and it was invariably on royal property and nearly always within the area of his kingdom in which he was most secure. There are evident similarities between the type of meeting place chosen by the Carolingian kings and by Athelstan which would indicate that the Carolingian assembly and the Anglo-Saxon "witenagemot" had a certain similarity of purpose. The following chapter deals with the witness lists of Athelstan's charters to discover whether the observations made in this chapter are supported by the identification of the type of person attesting them.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter 3

1. H.R.Loyn, The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England (London, 1984), p.101.
2. Footnote deleted.
3. See chapter 2 pp. 32-44 for the differences between the 928-34 charters and those outside that period.
4. For further information on these methods of dating a document see; C.R.Cheney, Handbook of Dates for Students of English History (London,1945), pp.1-9.
5. See E. Ekwall, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1960)
6. See D.Hill, An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, 1981), p87, map no.155.
7. A.S.C., ann. 934.
8. See D. Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,' The Anglo-Saxons, ed P. Clemoes (London,1959), p.72. Reprinted in D. Whitelock, History, Law and Literature in Tenth and Eleventh Century England (London, 1980), pp.70-80.
9. See the accompanying map.
10. A.S.C., ann. 934, see also Sym/D I, 76 and II, 124.
11. P.H. Sawyer, 'Some Sources for the History of Viking Northumbria', Viking Age York and the North, ed. R.A. Hall, C.B.A. Research Report 27 (London,1978), 4.
12. For Wulfstan see chapter 4, p. 150
13. See Whitelock, 'Dealings with Northumbria' p.72.
14. For Constantine of Scotland see chapter 4, pp 151-2
15. Loyn, Governance of England, p.103.
16. See L.M.Larson, The King's Household in England Before the Norman Conquest (Wisconsin, 1904), pp.200-1 for a discussion of the regularisation of meeting places for the 'witan' during the reign of Edward the Confessor.
17. All references to Domesday Book are taken from : Domesday Book : seu Liber Censualis Wilhelmi Primi Regis Angliae, ed. A. Farley and H. Ellis, 2 vols. (London, 1783).

18. The manuscripts are : S400 B.L., Add. 15350, fo 70-1 and S399 Bodleian, Wood Empti 1, fo 24ov,
19. See W/M G.R.I., 148.
20. For the manuscript traditions of the Burghal Hidage see D. Hill, 'The Burghal Hidage : the Establishment of a Text', Medieval Archaeology 13 (1969) 84-92, For the size of the borough at Exeter see Hill, Atlas of England, p.86 numbers 150 and 152.
21. The law code is Athelstan V, see The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, ed and trans. by F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), pp.152-5.
22. See Farley, Domesday Book I, 102a, 104b, 105b.
23. There are three manuscripts of S403, Chichester D.R.O. episc. Vl.1.1. fo 24rv, Chichester D.R.O episc Vl.1.2. fo 18v and Chichester D.R.O. episc Vl.1.6. fo 72rv. In D.R.O. episc Vl.1.2, the spelling of Lyminster is Lillingmynstre rather than Lullynginynstre.
24. For the text of King Alfred's will see Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, ed F.E.Harmer (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 15-19 trans. pp.49-53. Lyminster is referred to on page 18. There is another translation in E.H.D., pp.534-7.
25. See Farley, Domesday Book I, 246.
26. The manuscript of S405 is Bodleian, Eng. Hist. a 2, no.111. S422 is in B.L., Add 46487, 9-10v.
27. A.S.C., ann. 878 and Hill, Atlas of England, p.135, no. 227, and p.35, no.47.
28. Asser's Life of King Alfred, ed W.H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), p.8 and p.40 Chippenham is described as a 'villa regia'.
29. See Harmer, English Historical Documents, p.18.
30. See Farley, Domesday Book I, 73a.
31. The manuscript of S412 is B.L., Add. 15350, fo.34-5.
32. A.S.C., ann. 917
33. Hill, Atlas of England, p.143 no.235.
34. Farley, Domesday Book II, 107a.
35. The manuscript is in B.L., Cotton Claud, B Vl, fos. 21-2.
36. Farley, Domesday Book I, 38b.

37. The two manuscript versions of S416 are B.L., Add. 15350, fos 81-3 and B.L., Cotton Ch. VIII 16a, (a single sheet charter).
38. See Birch, C.S.II, 363.
39. See Ekwall, Dictionary of Place Names, p.297, See also J.E.B. Glover, A. Mawer and F.M.Stenton, The Place Names of Devon, E.P.N.S. 8 (Cambridge, 1931), 188, n2.
40. Harmer, English Historical Documents, p.17. The spelling is 'Liwtune' which Harmer translates as Luton. Whitelock, E.H.D., p.535 has corrected this to Lifton.
41. See Hill, Atlas of England, p.85 no.149 and p.143 no. 235.
42. Farley, Domesday Book I, 100b
43. The manuscript of S412 is in B.L., Add.15350, fos 37v - 38v.
44. See Ekwall, Dictionary of Place-Names, p.326.
45. See A.S.C., ann. 892.
46. D. Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales (London,1971), p.70.
47. A.S.C., ann 933. See also W/M G.R.I, 157-7.
48. Farley, Domesday Book I, 2b.
49. S418 is in B.L., Cotton Domitian XIV 2, fos 115-6 and S419 in B.L. Harley 61, fo: 11-12.
50. Harmer, English Historical Documents, p.17
51. For Eadred's will see ibid., pp.34-5, trans. pp.64-5. Ther is another translation in E.H.D., pp.554-6.
52. Knowles, Medieval Religious Houses, p.104.
53. Farley, Domesday Book I, 39a, and 69a-b.
54. The manuscript version of S425 is, B.L., Cotton Aug. 11. 65.
55. See M. Biddle, 'Felix Urbs Winthonia', Tenth Century Studies, ed D. Parsons (London, 1975), pp.125-40.
56. See Hill, Atlas of England, p.86 no. 152.
57. See ibid , p.83 no.146 The Itineraries of the King's of Wessex to 871, p.87, no.154. Edmund's itinerary, p.90, no.160 Edgar's itinerary. For the number of royal mints see Attenborough, Laws, Athelstan II 14, l. which lists six mints in Winchester and

two in Exeter.

58. Farley, Domesday Book I, 386, 39a, 45a, 496, 51b.
59. There are four manuscript versions of S407, Bodleian, Dodsworth 9, 4v-5 and Bodleian, Dodsworth 10, 42-3 and two from York, York, D.C., mag. Reg. Alb., pt. 1, fo 59rv and York, D.C., mag. Reg. Alb., pt.2, fos 75v-79v.
60. See F.M.Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 3rd ed (Oxford,1971), p.358.
61. A.S.C., ann. 918 and ann.920.
62. Hill, Atlas of England, p.132, no.225.
63. Farley, Domesday Book I, 280a.
64. The manuscript of S426 is in Bodleian Wood Empti I, fo 235rv.
65. A.S.C., ann. 914.
66. Hill, Atlas of England, p.86, no. 152.
67. Farley, Domesday Book I, 143a.
68. For Winchester see S425, for Nottingham S407 and for Exeter see S399 and S400.
69. See P.H.Sawyer, 'The "Royal Tun" in Pre-Conquest England', Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society, ed. P.Wormald, D.Bullough and R. Collins. (Oxford,1983), pp.273-300.
70. See C. Brühl, Fodrum, Gistum, Servitium Regis, 2 vols. (Cologne, 1968)., see vol.I, pp.19-20 the itinerary of Charlemagne and Vol. II, maps 1 and 2 for the depiction of the itineraries of the Carolingian kings from Charlemagne onwards.
71. J.T.Rosenthal, 'The Public Assembly in the Time of Louis the Pious', Traditio 20 (1964), 30.
72. K.J.Leyser, Medieval Germany and its Neighbours (London,1982), pp.81-2.
73. E.Ewig, 'Résidence et Capitale Pendant le Haut Moyen Age', Revue Historique 230 (1963), 25-72, espec. 53ff.
74. See Sawyer, 'The Royal Tun', p.277.
75. Loyn, Governance of England, p.103.
76. The charters of 931 are: S412, S413, S416, of 934: S425, S407, S426 and of 939: S446, S448, S447 and S449. The latter two charters are probably from the same assembly owing to similarities in their text and witness list.

77. See C.S.II, p.341 for S400 and S399. The date clause states; 'Haec siquidem scedula tempore paschali... depicta est!'
78. See *ibid.*, p.387 (S418) and p.384 (S419)
79. Rosenthal, 'Louis the Pious', p.30.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PROSOPOGRAPHY

#### Introduction to the Prosopography

The charter witness lists are the only surviving records which list the individuals who attended a specific "witenagemot" and they are therefore the most complete evidence available for the membership of the "witan". This chapter is concerned with the identification of these individual witnesses.

There are thirty-two genuine charters from Athelstan's reign in existence and one of them, S458, has no surviving witness list. All the remaining charters have witness lists but eleven of them are abbreviated, some being more drastically curtailed than others.<sup>1</sup> They range from S426 which has only two names recorded to S407 which has a substantial list of fifty-four names concluding with the phrase "et plures alii milites quorum nomina in eadem carta inseruntur consenserunt et subscripserunt".<sup>2</sup> Other abbreviated charters also conclude with a phrase indicating that there were more witnesses present than the actual copy of the charter has recorded. These charters and the relevant phrase at the end of their witness lists are given overleaf.



- S392 "et duces VII, ministri XVIII".
- S395 "ceteri, duces, presbiteri, monachi, ministri  
usque ad LVII"
- S397 "ceteri, duces, ministri, disciferi, testes".
- S426 "cum multis aliis".
- S429 "et ceteri".
- S442 "cum multis aliis".
- S445 "et ceteri"

This represents the loss of information about the individual witnesses who attested at least eight of Athelstan's charters and thus gives an incomplete record of the number of the "witan" who were present when the charter was issued.<sup>3</sup> All the surviving names of the witnesses to Athelstan's charters have been examined in order to discover the basic composition of his "witan". The results are given in the following prosopography.

The prosopography is divided into the categories given in the charters themselves, those of archbishop, underking, bishop, abbot, dux and minister. Each category is concerned with the identification of the individual witnesses of that category. They are listed in alphabetical order, together with the charters they attest. If more than one witness of the same name attests the same charter all these attestations are included under one name-heading unless it has been possible to make a positive differentiation between two such witnesses.<sup>4</sup> Each entry in the list of charters

attested by a certain individual contains the following information; the position of the witness in the witness list as a whole and his position in the category to which he belongs, the land issued, the year of issue, the beneficiary and the number of the charter in Sawyer. Thus an entry for Hrothwald archbishop of York appears as follows:

Hrothward archbishop of York

Position 3 archbishop 2 Wynterborne 928 Elfleda s399.

All the charters witnessed by a specific individual are referred to in this manner. The only variations are in the categories of bishop and archbishop where the episcopal dates of each individual are given, if they are known, and in the category underking where the regnal dates are given. In some cases, especially in the category of "minister", it has proved impossible to give definite identifications for each individual listed and any such entries are followed only by the charter references.

Following the prosopography is a discussion of the witnesses divided according to category which looks at the information to be gained from a consideration of their inclusion in the witness lists.

There are three categories which are not included in the witness lists or the following discussion. They are:

1. Athelstan rex. 924-39

He appears as the first witness to all the charters and his presense as the grantor was naturally essential for the

issue of each charter.

## 2. Eadmund brother of King Athelstan

Eadred brother of King Athelstan

They attest only one charter S446 in 939.<sup>5</sup> As they only appear once in the witness lists it was considered unnecessary to allocate them a section in the prosopography. Edmund succeeded Athelstan as king late in the year 939 and ruled until 946. He was in turn succeeded by his brother Eadred who died in 955.

There is no apparent explanation for the absence of Athelstan's brothers from every charter witness list other than S445. The only explanation I can offer is that they only attest S445 because it concerns a grant of land to their sister.

## 3. Wulfhelm discifer

He appears only once in 926 as a witness to S396 and consequently has not been allocated a section in the prosopography. The possibility that he witnesses again under the title of "minister" is discussed in the category "minister".<sup>6</sup>

## The Prosopography

### Category 1. Archbishop.

In each charter which the archbishops of York and Canterbury attest, they are placed directly after the king, except in charters S400 of 928 and S446 of 939. S400 is witnessed by both archbishops but they appear after the "subreguli" whereas in all other cases they attest before them.<sup>7</sup> Only Wulfhelm of Canterbury witnesses S446 and he is placed after King Athelstan's two brothers Edmund and Eadred. Since S446 is the only charter to be attested by the king's brothers, they presumably took precedence over the the archbishop because of their relationship to the king.

Hrothweard archbishop of York, 904x928-931<sup>8</sup>

Position 3 archbishop 2 Wynterborne 928 Elfleda s399

Position 6 archbishop 2 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 3 archbishop 2 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 3 archbishop 2 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

The date of Hrothweard's accession is not known but he was replaced in 931 by archbishop Wulfstan.<sup>9</sup> Hrothweard always attests below the archbishop of Canterbury in the witness lists presumably because he occupied the northern archbishopric which was not as important to the West Saxon kings as the archbishopric of Canterbury. His attestations begin in 928, the year after Athelstan drove King Guthfrith out of Northumbria.<sup>10</sup> He attests all the genuine charters of

the 928-34 period, his last witness being to S405 on the 29 April 930. He was replaced by Wulfstan who attests from 931 onwards.<sup>11</sup>

Wulfhelm        archbishop of Canterbury, 926-941.

Position	2	archbishop	1	Eaton 940	Byrhtelm	s392
Position	2	archbishop	1	Chalgrave 926	Ealdred	s396
Position	2	archbishop	1	Ashford 926	Uhtred	s397
Position	2	archbishop	1	Wynterborne 928	Elfleda	s399
Position	5	archbishop	1	Stoke 928	Byrhtferth	s400
Position	2	archbishop	1	Selsea 930	Beornheah	s403
Position	2	archbishop	1	Sandford 930	Eadulf	s405
Position	2	archbishop	1	Clere 931	Aelfric	s412
Position	2	archbishop	1	Watchfield 931	Aelfric	s413
Position	2	archbishop	1	Ham 931	Wulfgar	s416
Position	2	archbishop	1	Meon 932	Aethelgeard	s417
Position	2	archbishop	1	N.Stoneham 932	Aelfred	s418
Position	2	archbishop	1	Fontmell 932	Shaftesbury	s419
Position	2	archbishop	1	Bradford 933	Sherbourne	s422
Position	2	archbishop	1	Derantune 934	Aelfwald	s425
Position	2	archbishop	1	Amounderness 934	York	s407
Position	2	archbishop	1	Tarrant 935	Shaftesbury Abbey	s429
Position	2	archbishop	1	Havant 935	Witgar	s430
Position	2	archbishop	1	Marksbury 936	Athelelm	s431
Position	2	archbishop	1	Water Newton 937	Sigulf	s437
Position	2	archbishop	1	Burcombe 937	Wilton	s438

Position 2 archbishop 1 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 2 archbishop 1 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 2 archbishop 1 Lyme 938 Athelstan s442

Position 2 archbishop 1 Archet\Fontmell 939 Alfric  
s445

Position 4 archbishop 1 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 2 archbishop 1 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 2 archbishop 1 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 2 archbishop 1 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Wulfhelm was consecrated bishop of Wells in 914 and was promoted to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 926.<sup>12</sup> He remained at Canterbury until his death on the twelfth of February in 941.<sup>13</sup> He attests every charter of King Athelstan other than S426 which has a witness list abbreviated to include only the names of King Athelstan and Constantine of Scotland and the incomplete charter S458 and S395 which is dated to 925 before he was consecrated archbishop. S395 is the only charter with a full witness list which Wulfhelm does not attest during King Athelstan's reign.

Wulfhelm always attests first of the two archbishops of Canterbury and York and generally he witnesses immediately after the king. This, together with the regularity of his attestations, indicates that he was an important member of the king's "witan".

Wulfstan        archbishop of York, 931-956.

Position    3 archbishop    2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position    3 archbishop    2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position    3 archbishop    2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position    3 archbishop    2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position    3 archbishop    2 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position    3 archbishop    2 Fontmell 932 Shaftesbury s419

Position    3 archbishop    2 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position    3 archbishop    2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position    3 archbishop    2 Amounderness 934 York s407

Wulfstan was the archbishop of York from 931 until his death on the twenty-sixth of December in 956. He attests regularly from his consecration in 931 until the year 934. After 934 Wulfstan ceases to attest. He, like his predecessor Hrothweard, always attests after Wulfhelm of Canterbury. It is unlikely that Wulfstan was always a supporter of the West Saxon monarchy since he was deprived of the see of York by King Eadred in 952, probably owing to his support for the Scandinavian rulers of Northumbria.<sup>14</sup>

Category 2. Underking.

The underkings do not attest all of Athelstan's charters, but in those they do attest, they are placed immediately after the archbishops in the order of attestation. The one exception to this rule is S400 when the underkings attest before the archbishops.<sup>16</sup> The position of the underkings in the witness lists shows that they were considered to be of a higher social rank than the Anglo-Saxon laity who witnessed the charters with them. The underkings are the only lay people, other than the royal family, who are placed above the bishops in the witness lists.

Constantinus underking: King of the Scots 900-43<sup>17</sup>

Position 2 underking 1 Kington St. Michael 934 Athelm

s426

He submitted to Athelstan in 927 in the company of other "subreguli" of the North and Wales<sup>18</sup> and had previously submitted to Edward the Elder in 921.<sup>19</sup> King Athelstan's 934 Scottish campaign was apparently a punitive exercise made because Constantine had not kept to the terms of the agreement he had made with Athelstan in 927.<sup>20</sup> The expedition is recorded as a success in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle and this is upheld by the evidence of S426.<sup>21</sup> It is the only charter to be attested by Constantine and is dated to November in 934, probably after the end of the campaign. Yet the effects of this campaign were not lasting because Constantine was one of the leaders of the great army which



was defeated by Athelstan at Brunanburgh in 937.<sup>22</sup>

Constantine remained the ruler of the Scots until 943 when he retired to the Kuldee monastery of St Andrews.<sup>23</sup> He held the abbacy there until his death in 952.<sup>24</sup>

Eugenius underking: King of Gwent.

Position 7 underking 4 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Eugenius is a latinised version of the Celtic name Owain. There are two kings named Owain who were contemporaries of King Athelstan. One is Owain of Strathclyde who was the nephew of Constantine of Scotland and ruled from roughly 926 to 945.<sup>25</sup> The other is Owain of Gwent who is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle as one of the kings who submitted to Athelstan at Eamont in 927.<sup>26</sup>

Athelstan's Scottish campaign of 934 was made against Constantine of Scotland and Owain of Strathclyde. Both these kings were amongst his opponents at the battle of Brunanburgh in 937.<sup>27</sup> The only reference to Owain of Gwent during Athelstan's reign is that in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle in 927 which records Owain of Gwent's submission to the West Saxon king at Eamont. The chronicle makes no mention of Owain of Strathclyde at Eamont in 927, but his name is included amongst the kings who submitted to Athelstan in 927 by William of Malmesbury.<sup>28</sup>

Since it is recorded that both the kings of Strathclyde and of Gwent submitted to Athelstan in 927, the Eugenius "subregulus" who attests S413 may be either of them. It is

not possible to find a definite solution to this problem. Yet the Welsh kings attest Athelstan's charters more often than the rulers of the Scots and Strathclyde. The only Scottish king to attest a charter, other than the possible witness of Owain of Strathclyde, is Constantine and he only attests once in 934 after Athelstan's Scottish campaign.<sup>29</sup>

Eugenius witnesses in 931 in the company of three other Welsh kings.<sup>30</sup> The charter and other documentary records show that Athelstan had more influence and closer contact with the kingdoms of Wales than those of Scotland. This is evident from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, whilst the charter witness lists which show the regular presence of Welsh kings at Athelstan's assemblies favour the identification of Eugenius as Owain of Gwent rather than Owain of Strathclyde.

Howel underking: Howel Dda, King of Wales.

Position 2 underking 1 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 4 underking 1 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 4 underking 1 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 4 underking 1 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 4 underking 1 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 4 underking 1 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 4 underking 1 Amounderness 934 York s407

He is mentioned as one of the kings who submitted to Athelstan in 927.<sup>31</sup> The charters show that he was often in attendance at the Anglo-Saxon assemblies between 928-49.<sup>32</sup>

Howel Dda is best remembered as a legislator and is credited

with the codification of the Welsh laws,<sup>33</sup> in which the influence of the English legal system is apparent.<sup>34</sup>

Howel ruled Dyfed until the death of his brother Clydog in 920 when he became the ruler of the whole of South West Wales as the kingdom of Deheubarth.<sup>35</sup> Upon the death of Idwal of Gwynedd,<sup>36</sup> Howel took control of Gwynedd and possibly Powys also, becoming one of the most powerful of the early medieval Welsh kings.<sup>37</sup> He died in 949-50.<sup>38</sup>

Howel always attests first amongst the underkings in the charters he witnesses. This must indicate his importance as an ally of King Athelstan and his personal prestige in the Anglo-Saxon court. Although he attests Anglo-Saxon royal charters until the year 949, during Athelstan's reign he is only recorded as a charter witness for the six year period of 928 to 934.<sup>39</sup>

Judwal underking: King of Gwynedd, died 942.

Position 3 underking 2 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 5 underking 2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 5 underking 2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 5 underking 2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 5 underking 2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 5 underking 2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 6 underking 3 Amounderness 934 York s407

Judwal is identified as Idwal Foel, the king of Gwynedd who was killed in battle against Athelstan's successor King Edmund in 942.<sup>40</sup> After his death Howel Dda took control of

<sup>41</sup>  
Gwynedd. Judwal, like Howel, attests regularly during the period from 928 to 934 and generally witnesses in second position after Howel amongst the "subreguli". He attests once in third position, in charter S407 in which Morcant and he change positions in the witness list. (see Morcant)

Morcant            underking: King of Glamorgan 930-74

Position 6 underking    3 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 6 underking    3 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 6 underking    3 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 5 underking    2 Amounderness 934 York s407

He is identified by Robertson as Morgan the Aged, the king of Glamorgan who ruled from roughly 930 until his death

<sup>42</sup>  
in 974. He only attests Athelstan's charters between 931 and 934, although he later attests charters of Athelstan's

<sup>43</sup>  
successors. During Athelstan's reign Morcant usually witnesses in third position amongst the underkings.

In the Nottingham charter of 934 (S407) Morcant attests in second position, above Judwal of Gwynedd. There is no apparent reason for this change in the general order of attestation amongst the underkings and as S407 is a charter copy, I do not think that it has any particular significance as regards the individual importance of the various "subreguli".

Teodor            underking

Position 7 underking    4 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Teodor is identified as Tewdor ab Elisedd, ruler of the small Welsh kingdom of Brycheiniog.<sup>44</sup> The dates of his reign are not known.

Wurgeat underking

Position 4 underking 3 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 7 underking 4 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Wurgeat attests at the assemblies held at Exeter in 928 and at Milton in 932. Davies suggests that "Wurgeat" is an attempt to spell the Welsh name Gwriad and that he is possibly to be identified as Gwriad the father of Nowy who was a Welsh chieftain active in Gwent during the 950s.<sup>45</sup> Another possible identification is as Guriat son of Rhodri and brother of Idwal Foel.<sup>46</sup> Guriat's descendants are mentioned in the Welsh annals of the 950s.<sup>47</sup> It appears to be certain that Wurgeat was a Welsh "subregulus" but his exact provenance is not known.

Category 3. Bishop.

The bishops in Athelstan's witness lists are easier to identify than the laity because the surviving documentary evidence is largely ecclesiastical. Consequently more care was taken to preserve details about high-ranking ecclesiastics than laymen. Despite this, no references have been found to bishop Buga and several other bishops, including Mancant and Benedictus, have a suggested provenance not supported by any concrete evidence. However, the majority of the bishops have been identified and allocated definite sees.

Aelfheah	bishop of Wells	923-937\8
Position	9 bishop	3 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position	12 bishop	9 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position	7 bishop	4 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position	9 bishop	4 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position	11 bishop	4 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position	9 bishop	4 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position	16 bishop	9 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position	6 bishop	3 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position	7 bishop	4 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position	10 bishop	4 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position	9 bishop	7 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position	7 bishop	5 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position	9 bishop	7 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Aelfheah attests from 928 to 937. After the year 934 two Bishop Aelfheahs attest Athelstan's charters. The second one is Alfheah of Winchester and it is possible to distinguish between the two because Wells always attests in a lower position than Winchester. In order to differentiate between the two bishops they are listed as Aelfheah of Wells and Alfheah of Winchester. (see Alfheah of Winchester for further information)

Aelfred bishop

Position 15 bishop 8 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 18 bishop 11 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 12 bishop 6 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 15 bishop 9 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 7 bishop 5 Havant 935 Witgar s430

There are two bishops Aelfred who attest charters during Athelstan's reign:

1. Aelfred bishop of Sherborne who was appointed in or after 932 and attests until 943.<sup>48</sup>

2. The second bishop Aelfred has no known see. O'Donovan suggests his bishopric lay in north-west Mercia whilst<sup>49</sup> Robertson prefers Elmham or Lindsey.<sup>50</sup> The only date known for this second bishop Aelfred is 934, the year in which he attested two charters in company with Aelfred of Sherborne.<sup>51</sup>

S430, a charter of the year 935 is the only charter attested by an Aelfred bishop after the two attest in 934. It is not certain whether the Aelfred who attests in 935 is

the bishop of Sherborne or the other bishop. Aelfred of Sherborne is preferred as it is known that he was holding a bishopric in 935 and we have no definite knowledge of the dates and provenance of Aelfred 2. An Aelfred bishop is the beneficiary of S445, dated to 939. Aelfred of Sherborne's successor does not appear until 943 and so it is assumed that he is the most likely person to be the beneficiary of S445.<sup>52</sup> William of Malmesbury records that a bishop Werstan of Sherborne died at Brunanburgh in 937 but the bishop of Sherborne in 937 was Aelfred.<sup>53</sup> This casts some doubt on the veracity of Malmesbury's story and considering the other evidence stated above, it is probable that Aelfred of Sherborne was still in office in the final years of Athelstan's reign.

Aelfric<sup>54</sup> bishop of Hereford 937\40-951\5

.. Position 7 bishop 6 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392

Position 24 bishop 17 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

He appears in Athelstan's reign only in the misdated charter S392 and attests until 949.<sup>55</sup> The date of his death is unknown.

The bishop Aelfric who attests S417 in 932 comes last in the list of bishops. He is in reality the first of the abbots who witnessed this charter and is mistakenly listed as a bishop. An Aelfric abbot regularly heads the abbots who witness Athelstan's charters during the years 930-4.<sup>56</sup>



Aelfwine        bishop of Lichfield 909\26-935

Position    2 bishop            1 Whittington 925 Eadric s395

Position    7 bishop            1 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position    4 bishop            1 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position    4 bishop            1 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position    6 bishop            1 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position    8 bishop            1 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position    6 bishop            1 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position    8 bishop            1 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position    4 bishop            1 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position    4 bishop            1 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position    8 bishop            1 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position    7 bishop            1 Amounderness 934 York s407

According to Florence of Worcester Aelfwine and Aella are alternative names for the same person.<sup>57</sup> The bishops Aelfwine and Aella never attest the same charter, which is an argument in favour of accepting them as the same bishop of Lichfield. However, when Aelfwine attests he is always listed first amongst the attesting bishops. When Aella attests he always occupies a lower position in the witness list. The difference in position between Aelfwine and Aella does not necessarily mean that they are two different people because it is not until 935 that any apparent order appears in the attestations of the bishops. Aelfwine last attests in 934 and Aella in 935. What is interesting is that Aelfwine always attests first and is the only bishop to have

such a regular position as a witness before 935. Aella attests twice in seventh position and once in sixth position. In my opinion, the regularity with which Aelfwine attests first amongst the bishops indicates that he and Aella are two different people. Aelfwine is the bishop of Lichfield listed by Florence of Worcester and Aella the bishop of an unknown see.

Aella bishop, see Aelfwine.

Position 9 bishop	7 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position 9 bishop	7 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397
Position 8 bishop	6 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Aescbryht bishop (see unknown)

Position 18 bishop	12 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position 17 bishop	12 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 22 bishop	15 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 21 bishop	16 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 22 bishop	15 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 24 bishop	17 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Searle assigns Aescbryht to a northern see as a suffragan bishop of the see of York on the evidence of the forged charter S401.<sup>58</sup> There are no other references to Aescbryht and he attests S401 as a suffragan of York<sup>59</sup> in the company of Wigred, identified as the bishop of Chester-le-Street who also attests Athelstan's charters between 928 and 934.<sup>60</sup> Thus the grounds for recognising Aescbryht as a suffragan of the

see of York are not totally convincing.

Aethelgar Bishop of Crediton 934-53.

Position 10 bishop	9 Eaton 940 Byrthelm s <sup>392</sup>
Position 9 bishop	7 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 10 bishop	8 Rimpleton 938 Aethered s441
Position 12 bishop	8 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 10 bishop	8 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 10 bishop	8 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 10 bishop	8 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Aethelgar's predecessor Eadulf last attests a charter in 934 and Aethelgar first attests in 937, so his consecration took place between these two dates. <sup>61</sup> Stubbs gives his obit. as 30 april 953. <sup>62</sup>

A manumission entered in the Bodmin gospels shows that bishop Conan of Cornwall was a suffragan of the see of Crediton rather than the bishop of an independent see. <sup>63</sup> This puts Aethelgar in charge of most of the South West peninsula.

Alfheah . . . bishop of Winchester 935-51

Position 4 bishop	3 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392
Position 3 bishop	1 Tarrant 935 Shaftesbury Abbey s429
Position 4 bishop	2 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 3 bishop	1 Marksbury 936 Athelelm s431
Position 3 bishop	1 Water Newton 937 Sigulf s437
Position 3 bishop	1 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 3 bishop 1 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Archet\Fontmell 939 Alfric  
 s445  
 Position 5 bishop 1 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Alfheah succeeded Beornstan of Winchester in 935.<sup>64</sup> He attests S430 in 935 as bishop elect and must have been consecrated after he attested this charter.<sup>65</sup> He always attests as one of the first bishops in the charters, thus enabling him to be distinguished from Aelfheah of Wells who attests in a more lowly position. He died on 12 march 951.<sup>66</sup>

Alfheah was one of the three bishops of Athelstan's reign who were also monks.<sup>67</sup> The other two were Cenwald of Worcester and Oda of Ramsbury.<sup>68</sup> It is not known when he took his monastic vows. He is connected with the beginnings of the monastic reform movement in England and was related to the later leader of that movement, Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>69</sup>

Benedictus bishop, see unknown.

Position 13 bishop 6 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

There are no references to a bishop Benedictus during Athelstan's reign. Michael Wood has suggested that he may be the same man as the Benedict who illustrated one of

Athelstan's manuscripts, Cotton Otho B IX. <sup>70</sup>

Beornheah bishop of Selsey 909<sup>71</sup>-930

Position 5 bishop 3 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 5 bishop 3 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397

He is mentioned as one of the seven bishops consecrated by archbishop Plegmund in 909 but O'Donovan thinks he may be a later addition to the list. <sup>72</sup> However 909 is the only date we have for his consecration. Beornheah last appears as the beneficiary of S403 in 930 and was succeeded by Wulfhun in 931.

Beornstan bishop of Winchester 931<sup>73</sup>\2-934

Position 17 bishop 10 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 12 bishop 7 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 12 bishop 5 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 8 bishop 5 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 6 bishop 3 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 11 bishop 4 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 22 bishop 16 Amounderness 934 York s407

Beornstan succeeded Frithestan of Winchester in either 931 or 932, there is some confusion in the chronology of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle at this period which has obscured the date of Beornstan's accession. <sup>73</sup> O'Donovan says it was more probably in 931 as the date of his consecration is given as 29 may, which was Whitsunday in 931 and so a date of special significance for the Church. <sup>74</sup> He attests until 934 and his death is recorded on the first of november in

that year.<sup>75</sup>

His last attestation is in S407, the charter drawn up at Nottingham in 934. O'Donovan believes his presence in this charter to be a later addition, arguing that his death a few months later makes his presence as far north as Nottingham in June unlikely.<sup>76</sup>

Buga bishop, see unknown.

Position 17 bishop 11 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

There are no references to a bishop of this name in the sources for Athelstan's reign.

Burgric bishop of Rochester 934\7-946

Position 9 bishop 8 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392

Position 17 bishop 10 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 14 bishop 8 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 8 bishop 6 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 8 bishop 6 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 9 bishop 7 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 11 bishop 7 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 9 bishop 7 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 9 bishop 7 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 9 bishop 7 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

The dates of Burgric's accession and death are not known exactly. Stubbs makes 933 the year of his accession and O'Donovan, going by the charter evidence, ascribes it to between 934-7.<sup>77</sup> He last appears as a charter witness in 946.<sup>78</sup><sup>79</sup>

Cenwald bishop of Worcester 929-957

Position 5 bishop	4 Eaton 940	Byrhtelm s392
Position 6 bishop	3 Selsea 930	Beornheah s403
Position 9 bishop	6 Sandford 930	Eadulf s405
Position 11 bishop	6 Clere 931	Aelfric s412
Position 10 bishop	3 Watchfield 931	Aelfric s413
Position 11 bishop	6 Ham 931	Wulfgar s416
Position 10 bishop	3 Meon 932	Aethelgeard s417
Position 13 bishop	10 N.Stoneham 932	Aelfred s418
Position 10 bishop	7 Bradford 933	Sherbourne s422
Position 10 bishop	3 Derantune 934	Aelfwald s425
Position 21 bishop	15 Amounderness 934	York s407
Position 5 bishop	3 Havant 935	Witgar s430
Position 5 bishop	3 Burcombe 937	Wilton s438
Position 5 bishop	3 Farnborough 937	Alfheah s411
Position 5 bishop	3 Rimpton 938	Aethered s441
Position 7 bishop	3 Droxford 939	Eadburga s446
Position 5 bishop	3 Meapham 939	Ealdulf s447
Position 5 bishop	3 Bright-Walton 939	Eadulfu s448
Position 5 bishop	3 Overton 939	Wulfswyth s449

80

Cenwald was consecrated in 929 and in the same year travelled around the Continent as a member of a diplomatic mission on behalf of King Athelstan. His presence is recorded in the confraternity book of the monks of St Gall.

81

82

Cenwald, like Alfheah of Winchester, was a monk as well as being a bishop. Barker has traced his presence as

"Kenwald monachus", listed as one of the companions of King Athelstan, in the "Liber Vitae" of Durham, before his consecration as bishop in 929.<sup>83</sup> Glastonbury claimed that Cenwald was a former monk of that monastery and kept his obit on the 28 June.<sup>84</sup> He attests royal charters until 957, also attesting a doubtful charter of 958.<sup>85</sup> 957 is preferred as the year of his death.

Conan bishop of Cornwall 931-934x955<sup>86</sup>

Position 8 bishop	3 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 12 bishop	5 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 8 bishop	3 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 19 bishop	12 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 19 bishop	12 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 16 bishop	10 Amounderness 934 York s407

The see of Cornwall was created by King Athelstan and Conan was the first bishop to be appointed there, probably in 926.<sup>87</sup> Although Conan is recorded as the first bishop of Cornwall, a manumission in the Bodmin gospels indicates that he was a suffragan of the bishop of Crediton and that Cornwall was not a fully independent see in the early tenth century.<sup>88</sup>

Conan last appears in the witness list of S425 in 934. There is no mention of a bishop of Cornwall after this date until the year 955.<sup>89</sup> The date of Conan's death must be between 934 and 955 but the actual year is not known.



Cyneferth bishop of Rochester 926-933

- Position 10 bishop 8 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
- Position 10 bishop 8 Ashford 926 Untred s397
- Position 13 bishop 7 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
- Position 7 bishop 4 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
- Position 11 bishop 8 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
- Position 14 bishop 9 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
- Position 21 bishop 14 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
- Position 17 bishop 12 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
- Position 17 bishop 10 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
- Position 10 bishop 7 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
- Position 9 bishop 6 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

He was succeeded by Burgric in 933 but the exact date of his accession is not known, the date given depends upon the charter evidence.

Cynesige bishop of Berkshire 931-949

- Position 16 bishop 11 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
- Position 19 bishop 12 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
- Position 19 bishop 14 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
- Position 21 bishop 14 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
- Position 21 bishop 14 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
- Position 17 bishop 11 Amounderness 934 York s407

He is identified as a suffragan bishop with control over Berkshire working under the authority of the see of Ramsbury. The bishop of Ramsbury during Athelstan's reign was Oda. This identification of Cynsige as suffragan bishop

of Berkshire relies upon the evidence provided by S1208, a charter issued by Athelstan senator. It is the only place in which he is specifically referred to as bishop of Berkshire.<sup>90</sup>

I would suggest that the grantor of S1208 is the Athelstan who was ealdorman of East Anglia, c932:56. He attests between 931 and 934. O'Donovan dates his accession to between 926-8.<sup>91</sup>

Cynesige was probably translated to Lichfield in 949 when a Cynsige bishop of Lichfield begins to witness charters.<sup>92</sup> There is no record of any other bishop Cynsige attesting at this time. The date of his death is not known although it must have occurred after his last attestation in 963 and before the appearance of Wynsige, his successor, at Lichfield in 973.<sup>93</sup>

Eadgar	bishop of Hereford	888x901-930x931
Position	5 bishop	4 Whittington 925 Eadric s395
Position	8 bishop	6 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position	8 bishop	6 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397
Position	15 bishop	9 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position	5 bishop	2 Selsea 930 Beornhealh s403
Position	10 bishop	7 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

The year of Edgar's consecration is unknown, he first appears in a doubtful charter of 900 (S360) and last attests S403 in 930. He is succeeded by Tidhelm.<sup>94</sup>

Eadulf            bishop of Crediton      909-934

Position 7 bishop            5 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 7 bishop            5 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397

Position 11 bishop           5 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 10 bishop           7 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 5 bishop            2 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 7 bishop            2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 9 bishop            2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 7 bishop            2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 9 bishop            2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 7 bishop            4 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 9 bishop            2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 20 bishop          14 Amounderness 934 York s407

Eadulf was the first bishop of the see of Crediton, created in 909.<sup>95</sup> He died on the ninth of November in 934.<sup>96</sup> He was succeeded by bishop Aethelgar. If the date of the foundation of the Cornish see is correctly given as 926, than Conan of Cornwall was a suffragan bishop under Eadulf, as was Aethelgar.<sup>97</sup>

Eadward            bishop, see unknown.

Position 9 bishop            6 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 15 bishop           10 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 20 bishop           15 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 13 bishop           11 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Searle assigns Eadward to a northern bishopric as a suffragan of the see of York.<sup>98</sup> Wood suggests that he may be

the deacon Edward who repaired an Irish gospel book which belonged to King Athelstan.<sup>99</sup> I do not agree with this identification because I do not see why the deacon Edward should be promoted to the rank of bishop when witnessing a charter.

Frithestan bishop of Winchester 909-931

Position 10 bishop 4 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 12 bishop 9 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 10 bishop 5 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

The Anglo-Saxon chronicle records his consecration in 909 by archbishop Plegmund, but O'Donovan points out that as he attests charters of the year 909, he may have been appointed at an earlier date.<sup>100</sup> He last witnesses in 931 and retired that year.<sup>101</sup> He attested charters infrequently and O'Donovan suggests that this was due to ill health which led to his retirement before his death in 932\3.<sup>102</sup> He was succeeded by Beornstan.

Mancant bishop, see unknown.

Position 20 bishop 13 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Searle has suggested that owing to his name, Mancant may be a Cornish bishop but there is no firm evidence to support this statement.<sup>103</sup>

Oda                    bishop of Ramsbury    926\27-942

Position 6 bishop            3 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392

Position 12 bishop           6 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 13 bishop           10 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 8 bishop            5 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 20 bishop           15 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 16 bishop           9 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 13 bishop           8 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 14 bishop           7 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 9 bishop            6 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 8 bishop            3 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 11 bishop           5 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 6 bishop            4 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 6 bishop            4 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 7 bishop            5 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 7 bishop            5 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 9 bishop            5 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 7 bishop            5 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 6 bishop            4 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 7 bishop            5 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Oda was appointed bishop of Ramsbury in 926\7. In 942 he became archbishop of Canterbury and held office there until his death on the second of June 958\9. He is the third of Athelstan's bishops who was also a monk. In 936 Athelstan sent him to the Continent on a mission connected with the restoration of Louis d'Outremer to the Frankish throne.

Louis had previously been in exile at Athelstan's court.

A post-conquest life of Oda, the "Vita Odonis", survives.<sup>106</sup>  
It records that he was Danish by birth and came from the  
Scandinavian part of England.<sup>107</sup> He was the uncle of St  
Oswald, one of the three leading figures of the monastic  
reform movement.<sup>108</sup> As archbishop of Canterbury Oda must have  
had a great influence upon the impetus for monastic reform  
in England. He was tonsured at the reformed monastery of  
Fleury and this indicates that he had connections with the  
monastic reform movement on the Continent.<sup>109</sup><sup>110</sup>

Barker suggests that the "Oda presbiter" listed in the  
Liber Vitae of the monks of Durham was the later bishop of  
Ramsbury and archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>111</sup> He is also recorded  
in the confraternity book of St Gall for the year 929.<sup>112</sup>

Saexhelm bishop see unknown

Position 23 bishop 16 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Searle suggests that Saexhelm is a suffragan of the see  
of York, but the area of his see is not known.<sup>113</sup> He may be  
the same bishop Saexhelm who held the see of  
Chester-le-Street briefly in 944, having been promoted from  
his office as a suffragan of York.<sup>114</sup>

Sigelm bishop of Sherborne

Position 6 bishop 4 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 6 bishop 4 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397

Position 8 bishop 2 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 11 bishop 8 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 6 bishop 3 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 19 bishop 14 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 10 bishop 5 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 15 bishop 8 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 5 bishop 2 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

No definite dates are known for Sigelm of Sherborne, he first appears as a witness in 926 and attests until 932.

His successor Aelfred begins to attest charters in 933. <sup>115</sup>

Theodred bishop of London . 909\26-951\3

Position 3 bishop 2 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397  
 Position 16 bishop 10 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
 Position 8 bishop 5 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
 Position 12 bishop 10 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 13 bishop 8 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 15 bishop 8 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
 Position 16 bishop 11 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 11 bishop 4 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 11 bishop 8 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 5 bishop 2 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Position 12 bishop 5 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 8 bishop 2 Amounderness 934 York s407  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Water Newton 937 Sigulf s437  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 4 bishop 2 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 6 bishop 2 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 3 bishop 1 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 4 bishop 2 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Theodred attests throughout Athelstan's reign but the precise dates of his appointment and obit are not known. He was at Brunanburgh with Athelstan's army and Athelstan's law codes show that he was involved with the promulgation of law. His will has survived and owing to the provenance of the bequests it contains Whitelock has suggested that he had the whole of East Anglia in his charge. Theodred is a German rather than an Anglo-Saxon name and it is possible that Theodred himself was of Germanic origin. There is a notable number of German names amongst the clergy mentioned in his will. This may indicate a connection between Theodred and the Germanic area of the Continent.

Tidelm bishop of Hereford. 930x31-937.

Position 18 bishop 13 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 18 bishop 11 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 16 bishop 9 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 13 bishop 7 Amounderness 934 York s407

Tidelm was the successor of Eadgar of Hereford. His earliest reliable attestation is for S416 in 931 and the latest S425 in 934. He is followed at Hereford by Wulfhelm



possibly in 937, although there is some doubt about the exact date of Wulfhelm's accession.<sup>122</sup> One manuscript version of S407 is witnessed by a bishop Frohelm who is called Tidelm in a second manuscript tradition.<sup>123</sup> Consequently I have taken the name Frohelm to be a corruption of Tidelm and have discounted the existence of Frohelm as an independent witness.

Wilferth bishop of Worcester. 922-929

Position 4 bishop 3 Whittington 925 Eadric s395

Position 14 bishop 8 Stoke 928 Byrthferth s400

Wilferth was appointed in 922 and last attests a charter in 928 (S400) as "Wulferth", a corruption of the name Wilferth.<sup>124</sup> He was succeeded by Cenwald in 929.<sup>125</sup>

Winsige<sup>126</sup> bishop of Dorchester. 909x25-934x51

Position 3 bishop 2 Whittington 925 Eadric s395

Position 3 bishop 1 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 3 bishop 1 Ashford 926 Uhtred s397

Position 12 bishop 7 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 14 bishop 7 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 14 bishop 9 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 13 bishop 6 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 14 bishop 7 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

He appears on no episcopal list, but attests charters regularly between 925 and 934. His last reliable attestation occurs in S425, dated to 934. The date of his death is unknown.

Wigred                    bishop of Chester-le-Street. 928-944

Position 18 bishop        13 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 23 bishop        16 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 22 bishop        17 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 23 bishop        16 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 22 bishop        15 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 19 bishop        13 Amounderness 934 York s407

Little else is known about Wigred other than the year of  
his accession and the year of his death. <sup>127</sup>

Wulfhelm        bishop

Position 8 bishop        7 Eaton 940 Byrhtelm s392  
Position 20 bishop        13 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 11 bishop        8 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
Position 20 bishop        13 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 18 bishop        12 Amounderness 934 York s407  
Position 8 bishop        6 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
Position 8 bishop        4 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
Position 8 bishop        6 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
Position 8 bishop        6 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
Position 8 bishop        6 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

There are two bishops named Wulfhelm known from  
Athelstan's reign:

1. Wulfhelm of Wells. He succeeds Aelfheah in or after  
937. <sup>128</sup>
2. Wulfhelm, see unknown. Both O'Donovan and Robertson  
suggest that he was a suffragan bishop of Hereford working

under Tidelm.

The problem in identifying the two different Wulfhelms lies in the period after 937. Until that year Aelfheah was attesting charters as bishop of Wells so the bishop Wulfhelm attesting before 937 must be the suffragan of Hereford. The date of Wulfhelm's accession to Wells is not known. Only one spurious charter is attested by both Wulfhelms, S434 of 937. If this were a reliable charter it would give 937 as the year of Wulfhelm's accession to Wells. As it is spurious, the information it contains must be treated with caution. Only one bishop Wulfhelm attests any individual charter for the remaining years of Athelstan's reign and as there is no reliable information about the accession of Wulfhelm of Wells nor the death of Wulfhelm of Hereford, it is not possible to say which of these two bishops is attesting Athelstan's charters after the year 937. There is always the possibility that Wulfhelm the suffragan bishop of Hereford was promoted to Wells in 937 and thus all the attestations in Athelstan's witness lists refer to the same

individual.

Wulfhun          bishop of Selsey. 929x31-940x44

Position 18 bishop          11 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 15 bishop          10 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 12 bishop          9 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 13 bishop          6 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 9 bishop          3 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 6 bishop	4 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 6 bishop	4 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 10 bishop	6 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 6 bishop	4 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 7 bishop	5 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 6 bishop	4 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Wulfhun of Selsey first attests S413 in 931 and continues to attest charters regularly until 940. The exact dates of his accession and death are not known.

Category 4. Abbot.

There is very little thoroughly reliable information available for the identification of the abbots who witness Athelstan's charters, the only positive identifications which have been made are of Cynath and Eadwine. They were both abbots of Evesham and this indicates that the abbot of Evesham held a position of some influence during Athelstan's reign.

Aelfric abbot

- Position 21 abbot 1 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
- Position 35 abbot 1 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
- Position 38 abbot 1 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
- Position 14 abbot 1 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
- Position 12 abbot 1 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
- Position 25 abbot 1 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

William of Malmesbury and Adam of Domerham both identify Aelfric as abbot of Glastonbury, Adam of Domerham giving the years of his rule as 927-40.<sup>131</sup> However, Robinson has shown that the Aelfric listed as abbot of Glastonbury during Athelstan's reign is probably a post-conquest creation made because the chroniclers misunderstood their source material.<sup>132</sup> There is a tenth-century abbot Aelfric of Glastonbury, but he is the successor of St Dunstan and not his predecessor.<sup>133</sup>

If the abbot Aelfric who attests Athelstan's charters is not assigned to Glastonbury than one cannot identify his

monastery. However there are other references to an abbot Aelfric which probably concern the same man who witnesses the charters. The confraternity book of St Gall records the presence of an abbot Aelfric who accompanied bishop Cenwald on his tour of the German monasteries in 929. It is likely that he is the same abbot who is attesting Athelstan's charters between the years 931 and 934. He is also present in the "Liber Vitae" of the monastery of Durham in company with bishop Cenwald. The list is dated to Athelstan's reign but before the year 929 because it speaks of Cenwald as a monk, rather than as the bishop of Worcester.

An abbot Aelfric is the beneficiary of a charter issued by King Athelstan in 931 (S412), in which he receives a grant of land at Ecchinswell in Hampshire. The abbot Aelfric who attests the charters does so between 931 and 934. This grant is of the period when he is seen to have been in regular contact with the king. Thus the Aelfric of the witness lists and the beneficiary of S412 may be the same person. Unfortunately, the existence of one charter granting lands in Hampshire is not acceptable as evidence strong enough to suggest the area in which Aelfric's abbey was located.

Aelfric always attests first of the abbots witnessing Athelstan's charters and this together with his possible inclusion in bishop Cenwald's tour of Germany in 929 and his identification as the recipient of a land grant from the

king in 931, indicates that he held a position of some importance amongst the "witan" who attested the royal charters.

Aethelnoth abbot

Position 37 abbot	3 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 40 abbot	3 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 26 abbot	2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 16 abbot	3 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 14 abbot	3 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position 27 abbot	3 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

There is only one possible abbot who may be suggested as the abbot Aethelnoth who witnesses Athelstan's charters. This is the abbot listed by Dugdale named "Alfnodus". He is assigned to the abbey of Westminster in 939. His predecessor has only one known date of 922, so it is possible that Alfnodus was in charge of the abbey of Westminster in the 930s when Athelstan's charters are witnessed by abbot Aethelnoth. However, the connection is tenuous and must remain as a suggestion rather than a positive identification.

Aldred abbot

Position 15 abbot	4 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
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I have not been able to identify an abbot Aldred as the head of a monastery during Athelstan's reign. He attests only once in 933. There is however an abbot Eadred who witnesses a charter of King Athelstan in 932. The two names

Aldred and Eadred are very similar and it is possible that they represent the same person whose name was corrupted into two different forms when the charter copies were made. (See Eadred)

Biorhtsige abbot

Position 38 abbot 4 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 41 abbot 4 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 27 abbot 3 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 17 abbot 4 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 28 abbot 4 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

There is no identifiable abbey which was ruled by an abbot Biorhtsige during Athelstan's reign.

Cynath abbot

Position 6 abbot 1 Whittington 925 Eadric s395

Cynath is the only abbot to attest a charter of King Athelstan in a period outside that of 930-34. He attests only once in the earliest charter of Athelstan's reign, S395. He is one of the few abbots whose monastery has been definitely identified. Robinson has established that he was abbot of Evesham and suggests that he was trained at Worcester under bishop Werfrith.<sup>139</sup> Cynath, like abbot Aelfric, accompanied Cenwald on his tour of the German monasteries in 929 and is listed in the confraternity book of St Gall.<sup>140</sup> He was succeeded at Evesham by Eadwine who first appears as a witness to Athelstan's charters in 931.<sup>142</sup> Consequently, Cynath must have died between the years 929



and 931.

Eadred            abbot

Position 19 abbot            6 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Abbot Eadred is possibly to be identified with the abbot Aldred who attests once in 933.<sup>143</sup> They both attest in the same position as last amongst the abbots who witness the charters in which they appear. Birch lists an abbot named Eadred, contemporary with the reign of King Athelstan, who ruled the abbey of St Augustine's Canterbury from 935-7 but these dates do not coincide with those of the charter witnessed by Eadred in 932.<sup>144</sup> The list of abbots in the history of St Augustine's abbey includes those who ruled there during Athelstan's reign.<sup>145</sup> In the period between 928 and 935 an abbot Guttulphe held power. He was succeeded by Ealdred in 935. If the list given in Dugdale is correct, than the abbot Eadred of the charter S418 cannot be the same person as the abbot of Westminster and it is therefore not possible to identify his abbey.

Eadwine            abbot

Position 22 abbot            2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 36 abbot            2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 39 abbot            2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 25 abbot            1 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 15 abbot            2 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 13 abbot            2 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 26 abbot            2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Eadwine was the abbot of Evesham who replaced abbot  
Cynath between the years 929 and 931. He is listed as abbot  
in the chronicle of Evesham and continued as abbot of  
Evesham until sometime in the reign of King Edmund. The  
exact date of his death is not known.

Seaxhelm abbot

Position 23 abbot 3 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 42 abbot 5 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 28 abbot 4 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 18 abbot 5 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

I have not been able to identify the abbey to which  
Seaxhelm belonged. Birch lists him only as a witness to  
Athelstan's charters and I have found no other reference to  
him.

Category 5. Dux.

Ten of the thirty-one genuine charters of Athelstan's reign have witness lists which have been abbreviated and do not include the ealdormen. <sup>149</sup> The remaining ~~twenty-one~~ do list them, but one, S430, has four ealdormen listed in the middle of the "ministri". The "duces" concerned are Aelfheah, Swithulf, Wulfmaer and Wulfgar, discussed in the prosopography below. They have been discounted from the list of genuine ealdormen. Consequently, only nineteen charters contain a record of the ealdormen present at a "witenagemot".

Some of the ealdormen have Scandinavian names. In order to differentiate between the "duces" with Scandinavian names, who probably came from the north of England, and the Anglo-Saxon ealdormen, I have used the system adopted by Chadwick. "Duces" with Scandinavian names are referred to as earls and those with Anglo-Saxon names as ealdormen. <sup>150</sup> This system is also applied to the "duces" of the Danelaw, where men of both Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon names were given the title of "dux".

Aethelred dux

Position 32 dux                      4 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

There are no recorded references to an ealdorman Aethelred during Athelstan's reign. Consequently I have not been able to identify him.

Aelfhere        dux

Position 13 dux	1 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 11 dux	1 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 11 dux	1 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 11 dux	1 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Hart identifies him as the Ealdorman of Central Wessex,  
<sup>151</sup>  
attesting between 939 and 941. His position at the head of  
the list of duces in all the charters he attests supports  
this identification. Wessex was the heartland of the West  
Saxon dynasty and thus the possession of an ealdormanry  
there must have been very prestigious.

Aelfred        dux

Position 18 dux	5 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 31 dux	8 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 35 dux	13 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Ealdorman of East Anglia, he attests in 930 and 931 and  
is succeeded by Athelstan Half-King.  
<sup>152</sup>

Aelfstan       dux

Position 19 dux	6 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 17 dux	4 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position 26 dux	3 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 27 dux	4 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 28 dux	6 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 35 dux	7 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s 417
Position 25 dux	6 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 38 dux	10 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 28 dux

6 Amounderness 934 York s407

Aelfstan is the son of Aethelfrith who was one of the three ealdormen under the overall supervision of ealdorman Aethelred and his wife Aethelflaed in Mercia during the reign of Edward the Elder.<sup>153</sup> Aelfstan had three brothers, Eadric, Aethelwold and Athelstan "Half-king" all of whom became ealdormen during the first half of the tenth century.<sup>154</sup> Hart suggests that Aelfstan succeeded his father to his Mercian ealdormanry.<sup>155</sup> The charter evidence shows that he was in power by the year 930. He last attests S407 in 934 and it is possible that he ceases to witness because he died in Athelstan's Scottish campaign in the summer of that year.<sup>156</sup> The succession of the Mercian ealdormanries is not clear during Athelstan's reign, so it is impossible to know this for certain.

There is one other possible reference to an Aelfstan "dux". That is as the man who was given land in Northumbria in 918. The land had formerly belonged to the monks of St Cuthbert.<sup>157</sup> However I think the former identification of Aelfstan as the brother of Athelstan Half-king is more likely to be the correct one, owing to the regularity of his attestations.

Aelfwald	dux	
Position 12	dux	2 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position 20	dux	2 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position 15	dux	2 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 15	dux	2 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position 25	dux	2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 23	dux	1 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 29	dux	1 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 21	dux	2 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 17	dux	2 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position 29	dux	1 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 23	dux	1 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 29	dux	2 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 10	dux	1 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 10	dux	1 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 11	dux	1 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Hart identifies Aelfwald as the ealdorman of Central Wessex, excluding the western provinces which were under the control of ealdorman Osferth.<sup>158</sup> He always appears in a high position amongst the "duces" witnessing Athelstan's charters and attests regularly throughout Athelstan's reign until 938. He probably died during this year because he was replaced by Aelfhere in 939.

Aelred dux

Position 16 dux 3 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

His identity is not known.

Aescberht dux

Position 16 dux 3 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 25 dux 2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 26 dux 3 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 27 dux 5 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 24 dux 5 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 37 dux 9 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Nothing is known about Aescberht other than the fact that he attests Athelstan's charters between 930 and 934. This is the period during which nearly all the northern "duces" who appear in the witness lists attest. Since Aescberht is an Anglo-Saxon name, it is more likely that he held power in the South or the recently reconquered Danelaw than in the Scandinavian North.

Athelstan dux

Position 31 dux 3 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 18 dux 3 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 31 dux 3 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 25 dux 3 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 15 dux 3 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 13 dux 3 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 13 dux 3 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 13 dux 3 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Athelstan was the second son of Aethelfrith, an ealdorman who held power in Mercia under Aethelred and Aethelflaed.<sup>159</sup> He was also the brother of Aelfstan, Aethelwold and Eadric, all of whom became ealdormen in or soon after the reign of King Athelstan.<sup>160</sup> It is likely that Aethelfrith's family came originally from the South West which is where the majority of their known land-holdings were concentrated.<sup>161</sup>

Athelstan succeeded Aelfred to the ealdormanry of East Anglia in roughly 932 when he first appears as an ealdorman in the witness lists. He ruled this area until his retirement to the monastery of Glastonbury in 956.<sup>162</sup> Hart believes that he held control over a huge ealdormanry which extended far beyond the borders of East Anglia into the rest of the Danelaw and that he had a number of ealdormen subordinate to him, including Thurferth, Scule, Hadd, Halfdene, Hereric and Uhtred 2.<sup>163</sup>

Athelstan was a friend of St Dunstan and a patron of the monastic reform movement in England.<sup>164</sup> After the death of King Athelstan in 939 he became one of the most influential advisors of King Edmund. His wife fostered Edmund's son Edgar who later became King Edgar, the most celebrated of the tenth-century English kings.<sup>165</sup> Athelstan's family was extremely powerful during the 940s when he and his two surviving brothers Athelwold and Eadric held the ealdormanries of East Anglia, Kent and its adjacent shires



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and Central Wessex respectively. The existence of this powerful family group and Athelstan's individual power is reflected in references to him as "Athelstan Half-king".

Ealdred dux

Position 28 dux                    5 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 33 dux                    10 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 25 dux                    3 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 22 dux                    3 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Ealdred attests in the early 930s and is always positioned next to an earl Uhtred. Ealdred and Uhtred have been identified as the two sons of Eadulf, the ruler of the autonomous northern ealdorðom of Bamborough.<sup>167</sup> In roughly

914, Ealdred's territory was invaded by a Scandinavian army led by Regenwald. Ealdred allied with Constantine of Scotland in an attempt to defeat the Scandinavians but was defeated at the battle of Corbridge.<sup>168</sup> He was one of the independent rulers who submitted to King Athelstan in 927.<sup>169</sup>

Ealdred last attests a charter in 932, but Uhtred his brother continues to attest until 934. Osulf, Ealdred's successor and possibly his son, also witnesses in 934.<sup>170</sup>

Hart has an alternative identification for Ealdred as the ealdorman of Central Mercia, the successor of Wulfgar I.<sup>171</sup> This suggestion is made because two charters of the year 926 exist which are made in favour of the two "ministri" Ealdred (S396) and Uhtred (S397). Both charters are from the archive of Burton Abbey, which was situated in Mercia. The

Anglo-Saxon chronicle for the year 927 records the submission of all the kings of the island of Britain to Athelstan at Eamont. "Aldred" of Bamborough is listed together with Constantine of Scotland, Howel of Wales and Owain of Gwent.<sup>172</sup> The latter three all attest Athelstan's charters as "subreguli", whereas the Ealdred of the witness lists appears as a "dux". Consequently it can be argued that the Ealdred dux of the witness lists is more likely to be the minister of S396 than the independent ruler of Bamborough. I have preferred Chadwick's identification of Ealdred and Uhtred as lords of Bamborough because they attest during the same period as the other northern "duces" and their names are correct for their identification as members of the ruling family at Bamborough.

Fraena dux

Position 22 dux 9 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Fraena is a Scandinavian name. He is probably from the Scandinavian north of England or the Danelaw and witnesses only once in 930.<sup>173</sup> The exact location of his lands is not known.

Grim dux

Position 21 dux 8 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 23 dux 10 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

He is identified by Chadwick as an earl of the Danelaw because he, like Fraena, has a Scandinavian name.<sup>174</sup> There is no evidence to show whether he comes from the Danelaw or

Northumbria.

Gunner            dux

Position 33 dux            11 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Chadwick identifies him as an earl of the Danelaw.<sup>175</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has an entry for the year 966 which refers to Thored Gunnarson, active in Westmorland.<sup>176</sup> It is possible that he is a descendent of the Gunner who attested a charter of King Athelstan. Searle records a noble named Gunner as the grandfather of Aelflaed, the wife of King Aethelred II.<sup>177</sup> The connection between the witness Gunner of S416 and the two identifications given as possibilities is tenuous and cannot be established with any certainty. One can only state that Gunner is a Scandinavian name and the "dux" of that name in Athelstan's reign was most probably from the northern part of England.

Guthrum            dux

Position 21 dux            3 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 20 dux            7 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 30 dux            7 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 30 dux            7 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 31 dux            9 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 37 dux            9 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 27 dux            8 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

The identity of Guthrum is not known. Like all the other "duces" with Scandinavian names he is probably from the Danelaw or Northumbria.<sup>178</sup>

Hadd dux

Position 35 dux 12 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 31 dux 8 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 36 dux 14 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 40 dux 12 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 40 dux 12 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 32 dux 10 Amounderness 934 York s407

Hadd is a Scandinavian name and Hart identifies him as an earl holding a position subordinate to ealdorman Athelstan in East Anglia.<sup>179</sup> He appears in the witness lists next to the East Anglian earl Scule between 931 and 934. His last attestation is to the Nottingham charter S407 in 934.<sup>180</sup> Hart suggests that like ealdorman Aelfstan and others who last appear as witnesses to this charter, Hadd was killed in the Scottish campaign of that year.<sup>181</sup>

Halfden dux

Position 34 dux 6 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 35 dux 13 Amounderness 934 York s407

He only attests two of Athelstan's charters. However, a man of this name appears in charter witness lists until the year 958.<sup>182</sup> There is a Halfden "dux" who appears as a co-signatory with earl Scule to a will of 943 which concerns lands in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.<sup>183</sup> Owing to Halfden's witness to this will, Hart suggests that his earldom lay in the two counties which it mentions.<sup>184</sup>

Haward dux

Position 33 dux 10 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 32 dux 10 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Haward is a Scandinavian name and presumably his earldom lay in the Danelaw or the North.<sup>186</sup> Nothing else is known about him.

Hefa dux

Position 28 dux 1 Havant 935 Witgar s430

S430 is the only charter witnessed by a Hefa "dux". He attests with four other "duces" Aelfwald, Uhtred and Sigereð but in the middle of the ranks of the attesting "ministri" rather than before the "ministri" as is normally the case. The two "duces" Aelfwald and Uhtred are regularly present as witnesses to Athelstan's charters in the 930s and from 935 to 938 they are the only two "duces" present in the charter

witness lists, other than that of S430. In contrast, Sigered and Hefa appear only as "duces" in S430. As S430 is a charter copy, it is likely that the order of the witnesses has been confused thus accounting for the presence of the "duces" in the middle of the "ministri" and the listing of Hefa and Sigered as "duces". Both Hefa and Sigered appear in witness lists of the 930s as "ministri". I think it is likely that they are wrongly listed as "duces" in S430 as a result of a copyist's error.

Inwaer dux

Position 43 dux 15 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 33 dux 5 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 31 dux 9 Amounderness 934 York s407

Inwaer is a Scandinavian name and consequently he is assigned to the north of England or the East Anglian district. <sup>187</sup> He last witnesses S407 in 934 and Hart suggests that he died in the Scottish campaign of that year. <sup>188</sup>

Odda dux

Position 18 dux 6 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Odda attests only once as a "dux" in Athelstan's reign, as the last witness of this rank in S446, a charter of the year 939. All the other charters of this year and many of those of the 935-9 period are attested by an "Odda minister" who witnesses first amongst the "ministri" recorded as present. <sup>189</sup> He first appears at the head of the "ministri" in the 928 charter S400. In his seventeen subsequent

attestations he appears first in all but the three charters S412, S425 and S449. Since an Odda "minister" is still appearing at the head of the list of "ministri" in 939, the presence of an Odda "dux" in S446 is regarded as a mistake upon the part of the charter copyist who gave him the title of "dux" instead of his correct title of "minister".

Ordgar            dux

Position 11 dux                    1 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

An ealdorman Ordgar attests Edward the Elder's charters and is undoubtedly the same man who attests Athelstan's charter in <sup>190</sup>926. He does not appear again in the charter witness lists. The ealdorman of Devon during king Edgar's reign was named Ordgar and he may be a descendent of the Ordgar active in the early tenth century. <sup>191</sup>Nothing else is known of the ealdorman Ordgar of Athelstan's charter S396.

Osferth            dux

Position 13 dux                    3 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 19 dux                    1 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 14 dux                    1 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 14 dux                    1 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 24 dux                    1 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 24 dux                    1 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 24 dux                    2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 30 dux                    2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 20 dux                    1 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 16 dux                    1 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 30 dux                    2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 24 dux                    2 Amounderness 934 York s407

Hart has identified Osferth as an ealdorman of Wessex who controlled the shires of Sussex, Surrey, Kent and possibly Berkshire.<sup>192</sup> The other counties of Wessex came under the authority of ealdorman Aelfwald.<sup>193</sup> Osferth is probably the same man as the Osferth who received a bequest in King Alfred's will. In this will he is called a kinsman of the king.<sup>194</sup> The exact degree of Osferth's relationship with the West Saxon dynasty is unknown but he attests regularly in a high position in the charter witness lists. This indicates that he was probably an influential member of the king's "witan".

If the Osferth of Alfred's will and the "dux" witnessing Athelstan's charters are the same person, he may also be the man who attests as a "minister" between 898 and 904.<sup>195</sup> His first appearance as a "dux" comes in 909 and he must have been roughly sixty years old when he ceases to attest in 934. He last attests Athelstan's Nottingham charter S407 and Hart has suggested that he is another of the "duces" who died in the Scottish campaign of that year.<sup>196</sup>

Osulf                    dux

Position 35 dux                    7 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 26 dux                    4 Amounderness 934 York s407

In 949 an Osulf attests a charter as High-Reeve. He is identified as the ruler of Bamborough and the same man who



attests Athelstan's charters in 934.<sup>197</sup> He is also identified  
as the successor of Ealdred of Bamborough.<sup>198</sup> His relationship  
to Ealdred and his brother Uhtred is not known but it has  
been argued that Osulf was Ealdred's son.<sup>199</sup> Ealdred last  
attests a charter in 932 and Osulf only attests in 934.  
Uhtred last witnesses S407 in 934, a charter which is also  
attested by Osulf. It appears probable from this evidence  
that Uhtred was never the sole ruler of Bamborough and  
Osulf's accession is consequently placed between 932 and  
934.

There is a further reference to Osulf in 953 during the  
reign of King Eadred, when he is called the earl of  
Northumbria and was apparently in control of the whole of  
Northumbria as well as his hereditary ealdordom of  
Bamborough.<sup>200</sup> Under King Edgar his ealdordom was divided,  
with Osulf retaining the north eastern area whilst York and  
its surrounding districts were given to an earl Oslac.<sup>201</sup>

Regenwald dux

Position 23 dux	10 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 34 dux	11 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 39 dux	11 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 30 dux	8 Amounderness 934 York s407

Regenwald is a Scandinavian name and he is probably from  
the north of England. Chadwick identifies him as the  
Scandinavian leader in Northumbria mentioned in the  
Anglo-Saxon chronicle when he submitted to King Edmund in

the early 940s.<sup>202</sup> There is an earlier reference to a Regenwald who took York in 923.<sup>203</sup> However he is the predecessor of the Scandinavian ruler of Northumbria named Guthfrith who was defeated by Athelstan in 927.<sup>204</sup> Consequently the Regenwald attesting Athelstan's charters between 930 and 934 is probably the man active in Northumbria during the 940s. No other Regenwald who is a contemporary of King Athelstan is known.

Scule dux

Position 36 dux	13 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 32 dux	9 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 37 dux	15 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 41 dux	13 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 39 dux	11 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 33 dux	11 Amounderness 934 York s407

He witnesses charters between the years 931 and 949 but only during the 930 to 934 period in Athelstan's reign. Like the other Scandinavian witnesses he is assigned to an earldom in the Danelaw or the North.<sup>205</sup> Whitelock identifies him as the earl referred to in the "Liber Eliensis" whose jurisdiction consisted of six hundreds attached to Sudbourne in Suffolk.<sup>206</sup> A man named Scule appears as a co-signatory with earl Halfden to a 943 will which concerns land in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.<sup>207</sup> These two counties are therefore another possible area for his earldom. Finally, there is a reference to a northern earl named Scula who

occupied part of County Durham in 923.<sup>208</sup>

Hart believes Scule was an earl under the supervision of ealdorman Athelstan of East Anglia and that he is the man mentioned in the "Liber Eliensis".<sup>209</sup> I have been unable to make a positive decision between the three identities suggested above. They all remain as possible identifications for the Scule who attests the charters of King Athelstan.

Sigered dux

Position 31 dux 4 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Sigered appears only once as a "dux" in S430. He attests in a group of four "duces" who are listed, unusually, in the middle of the attesting "ministri". Two of the "duces", Aelfwald and Uhtred regularly attest charters of the late 930s but Sigered and the fourth "dux" Hefa only witness S430. A "minister" named Sigered attests seven charters between 928 and 937. Owing to the confusion in the witness list of S430 as seen in the misplacing of the "duces" amongst the "ministri" and the occurrence of a "minister" Sigered in charters up to the year 937, I have concluded that the Sigered "dux" of S430 is in reality a minister wrongly listed as a "dux". The only two genuine "duces" of S430 being Aelfwald and and Uhtred, the two "duces" who are always present in charters of this period.

Styrcaer dux

Position 22 dux 9 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 19 dux 6 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Styrcaer is a Scandinavian name but I have been unable to discover his earldom. <sup>210</sup> In S403 the name "Srices" has been taken as a corrupt version of Styrcaer and has been corrected for the purpose of this prosopography.

Thurferth dux

Position 21 dux 8 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 34 dux 12 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 42 dux 14 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 34 dux 12 Amounderness 934 York s407

Thurferth is a Scandinavian name. <sup>211</sup> His last attestation is to S407 in 934 and, as in the case of Aelfstan, Osferth and others, Hart suggests that he died in the Scottish campaign in the summer of <sup>212</sup> 934. Thurferth is identified by both Chadwick and Hart as the man who surrendered his army to Edward the Elder at Northampton in <sup>213</sup> 917. He continued to govern Northamptonshire under the suzerainty of the ealdorman of East Anglia. <sup>214</sup>

Tiesberd dux

Position 34 dux 6 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

I have been unable to identify this "dux". It is possible that the name Tiesberd is a corruption of a more recognisable Anglo-Saxon name which has been lost through inaccurate copying of the charter S417.

Uhtred	dux	
Position 17	dux	4 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 18	dux	5 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position 27	dux	4 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 29	dux	6 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 28	dux	5 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 34	dux	11 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 26	dux	4 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 29	dux	7 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 33	dux	5 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 36	dux	8 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 23	dux	4 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 26	dux	7 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 19	dux	4 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position 36	dux	8 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 27	dux	5 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 29	dux	7 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 30	dux	3 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 11	dux	2 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 11	dux	2 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 12	dux	2 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 17	dux	5 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 14	dux	4 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 14	dux	4 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 14	dux	4 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

There are two Uhtreds who attest Athelstan's charters as "dux". As far as may be ascertained both attest from 930 to 934 and only one attests after this date. The regularity with which both Uhtreds attest until 934 leads to the conclusion that the presence of only one in the witness lists of 937 onwards, means that it is always the same person attesting.

Uhtred 1, who attests between 931 and 934 has two possible identities. Hart assigns him to an ealdormanry in north-west Mercia.<sup>215</sup> Chadwick believes him to be the brother of Ealdred of Bamborough as he attests next to him in the charter witness lists of the 930-34 period.<sup>216</sup> I have preferred the latter identification because the suggestion that Uhtred was an ealdorman in Mercia depends upon one identifying him as the same person as the beneficiary of S397, the Uhtred who received a grant of land in the Mercian area. This may refer to Uhtred of Bamborough or another man not identified from the witness lists. Owing to the title of "dux" given to Uhtred as a witness and his position next to Ealdred of Bamborough, I have considered that the evidence supports Chadwick's identification rather than Hart's.

Uhtred 2 attests charters from 931 to 949 and he has been identified as the ealdorman of Essex, the predecessor of ealdorman Aelfgar.<sup>217</sup> He witnesses the charter S430 in the company of Aelfwold and two "ministri" Hefa and Sigered who

are wrongly given the title of "dux" through an error on the part of the charter copyiest.

Urm	dux
Position 20 dux	7 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position 32 dux	9 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 29 dux	6 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 30 dux	8 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 38 dux	10 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 32 dux	4 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Urm is a Scandinavian name and his earldom was probably  
<sup>218</sup>  
in the Danelaw or the North. However I Have been unable to identify the region to which he belongs.

Wulfgar	dux
Position 14 dux	4 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position 14 dux	2 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 12 dux	2 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 12 dux	2 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 12 dux	2 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Chadwick assigns Wulfgar to a southern ealdormanry but  
<sup>219</sup>  
does not specify which. It is probable that there are two different "duces" named Wulfgar. One who attests S396 in 926 and another who attests only in the year 939.  
<sup>220</sup>

Hart assigns Wulfgar 1, who attests only in 926, to an ealdormanry in Central Mercia.  
<sup>221</sup>  
Robertson believes that Wulfgar 2 who begins to witness as a "dux" in 939 has a surviving will of the 930s.  
<sup>222</sup>  
The will mentions estates in

Wiltshire and benefits the Old and New Minsters of Winchester. The land bequeathed to the Old Minster of Winchester is at Ham, land which was given to Wulfgar by King Athelstan in the original charter S416. As the will is specifically concerned with lands in Wiltshire it is likely that Wiltshire formed part of Wulfgar's ealdormanry.

Wulfstan dux

Position 16 dux                      4 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Wulfstan attests only once in the same charter which wrongly lists Odda as a "dux" instead of a "minister".<sup>223</sup> It is possible that Wulfstan is also mistakenly listed as a "dux" but a Wulfstan "minister" does not appear amongst the leading "ministri" of the 939 charters, as is the case with Odda. A Wulfstan "minister" attests only one charter during Athelstan's reign, S425 of 934. Consequently I have accepted the Wulfgar "dux" who witnesses S446 in 939 as a genuine "dux".

There is a possible reference to Wulfstan in the "Liber Eliensis". It records a land transaction between the abbey of Ely and Wulfflaed, the daughter of Wulfstan.<sup>224</sup> The land concerned was at Stretham in Huntingdonshire and had been acquired by Wulfstan during the reign of King Athelstan. However, the Wulfstan in the Liber Eliensis is not referred to as a "dux" so the identification is not certain.



Category 6. Minister.

Nineteen charter witness lists from Athelstan's reign contain a record of the "ministri" present when the charter was issued. Three others, S392, S395 and S397, have a concluding phrase which mentions that "ministri" attested although their names were not recorded when the charters were copied in their present form. It has proved impossible to identify all the "ministri" or to do more than suggest a probable identification for some of those discussed in the prosopography below. This is because different "ministri" of the same name attest the same charters and the charters of Athelstan's reign show little sign of an established order of attestation amongst the "ministri". There is also no indication that "ministri" from a certain area of the kingdom attested only the charters issued at a "witenagemot" in that area, as has been proved for the reigns of Aethelred II and Edward the Confessor. Thus it is practically impossible to judge which particular "minister" of a certain name is attesting which charters. For example, S416 is witnessed by five "ministri" named Athelstan and four named Aelfric. "Ministri" of this name occur in other charters but not in the same numbers as in S416. Consequently one cannot tell which of the five Athelstans or four Aelfrics are attesting charters other than S416. I have assumed in the prosopography that if only one "minister" of a particular name appears in the different witness lists, then

it is always the same person attesting, no matter how their  
position of attestation differs in different charters. <sup>226</sup>

Aefric           minister

Position 19 minister     4 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Aelferd          minister

Position 88 minister    46 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

See Aelfred .

Aelferth         minister

Position 57 minister    14 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Aelfgar          minister

Position 47 minister    8 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Aelfheah         minister

Position 28 minister    7 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 30 minister    7 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 29 minister    6 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 39 minister    3 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 41 minister    3 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 47 minister    4 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 34 minister    7 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 34 minister    15 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 55 minister    16 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 38 minister    3 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 13 minister    4 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 18 minister    9 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 32 minister    21 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 21 minister    10 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

The charter S430 is attested by two "ministri" named Aelfheah. It is a charter copy and the only charter to be witnessed by more than one "minister" of this name. However, it is not possible to tell which of the two Aelfheahs is attesting the other charters listed above. In S430, one Aelfheah attests as "minister" number four and the second as number nine. If one attempts to separate the attestations of these two different "ministri" named Aelfheah in the other charters witnessed by an Aelfheah "minister", it can only be done by examining their relative positions on the witness lists. It is possible that Aelfheah 1, who witnesses in fourth position in S430, is the same man who attests within the ranks of the first ten attesting "ministri" in several charters between 928-38. Aelfheah 2 witnesses in ninth position in S430. The Aelfheah "minister" who attests S422, S425 and S411 may be Aelfheah 2 because he attests well below the ranks of the first ten attesting "ministri".

An Aelfheah "minister" was the beneficiary of S411 which concerned lands at Farnborough in Berkshire. This may be one of the two witnesses of this name who attest Athelstan's charters but one cannot say which.

Aelfhelm        minister

Position 87 minister        45 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 58 minister        15 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 40 minister        30 Havant 935 Witgar s430.

Aelfhere minister

Position 40 minister	4 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 52 minister	16 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 48 minister	6 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 50 minister	7 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 58 minister	19 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 48 minister	14 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 54 minister	20 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 35 minister	25 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 18 minister	7 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 22 minister	11 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 18 minister	6 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 25 minister	13 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Two Aelfheres attest in 931, 934 and 938. It is difficult to tell which of these two is attesting the charters where only one Aelfhere appears because Athelstan's 'ministri' do not have a regular position of attestation in the witness lists. However, it is notable that Aelfhere I always attests in a higher position than Aelfhere 2. It may be that Aelfhere I is the same man who appears high amongst the 'ministri' of s416, s417 and s418. Neither of the two Aelfheres appear as a witness in the year 939. In the case of Aelfhere I, I have assumed that this was because he was promoted to the office of ealdorman in that year. He is identified as the ealdorman of Central Wessex who witnesses Athelstan's charters in 939 and Edmund's charters in the 940s.

227

Aelfnoth        minister

Position 98 minister    56 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 75 minister    31 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 39 minister    12 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
Position 28 minister    9 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
Position 26 minister    15 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Aelfred        minister

Position 16 minister    1 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396  
Position 22 minister    7 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396  
Position 30 minister    9 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
Position 34 minister    11 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
Position 40 minister    17 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
Position 37 minister    10 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
Position 12 minister    3 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
Position 22 minister    11 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
Position 36 minister    25 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
Position 21 minister    9 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
Position 25 minister    7 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
Position 21 minister    7 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
Position 22 minister    8 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
Position 22 minister    8 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Two "ministri" named Aelfred witnessed S396 and S405 but other than this only one Aelfred appears in the witness lists. One may be able to differentiate between the two Aelfreds by noting the position in which they attest. The Aelfred who attests regularly in position number seven or

eight in 939 is in every case the same person. Hart locates him in the South West, receiving land from King Eadwy.<sup>228</sup> The other Aelfred is definitely present as a witness to S396 and S405 and may also be the Aelfred who attests in a lower position in S411.

A will which was made by an individual named Aelfred survives. It was written between 932 and 939 and concerns a bequest of land at Stoneham in Hampshire to the New Minster at Winchester.<sup>229</sup> Land at Stoneham was granted to an Aelfred "minister" by King Athelstan in S418 of 932. The beneficiary of S418 and the man who drew up the will in favour of New Minster are probably the same person. It cannot be proved that he was one of the Aelfreds who witnessed Athelstan's charters but I have assumed that he was. However, it is not possible to say which of the two witnesses named Aelfred is referred to as the beneficiary of S418 or in the will of the 930s.

Aelfric        minister

Position 18 minister	3 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position 38 minister	17 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position 63 minister	27 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 53 minister	15 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position 53 minister	11 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 56 minister	14 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 72 minister	30 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position 90 minister	48 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 65 minister 22 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 71 minister 27 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 40 minister 13 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 31 minister 12 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Position 62 minister 23 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 57 minister 23 Amounderness 934 York s407  
 Position 32 minister 22 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 15 minister 4 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 28 minister 17 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 32 minister 21 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 29 minister 18 Farnborough 937 York s411  
 Position 33 minister 22 Farnborough 937 York s411  
 Position 35 minister 24 Farnborough 937 York s411  
 Position 15 minister 3 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 20 minister 2 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 16 minister 2 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 16 minister 2 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 17 minister 3 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

An Aelfric "minister" is the beneficiary of S413. He may be one of the four Aelfrics who attest Athelstan's charters but it is not possible to say which one.

Aelfsige	minister		
Position 48	minister	12 Clere 931	Aelfric s412
Position 57	minister	15 Ham 931	Wulfgar s416
Position 99	minister	57 Ham 931	Wulfgar s416
Position 12	minister	59 Ham 931	Wulfgar s416
Position 83	minister	44 Derantune 934	Aelfwald s425
Position 85	minister	46 Derantune 934	Aelfwald s425
Position 42	minister	7 Amounderness 934	York s407
Position 24	minister	15 Havant 935	Witgar s430
Position 26	minister	16 Havant 935	Witgar s430
Position 25	minister	14 Burcombe 937	Wilton s438
Position 35	minister	24 Burcombe 937	Wilton s438
Position 27	minister	16 Farnborough 937	Alfheah s411
Position 24	minister	12 Rimpton 938	Aethered s441
Position 31	minister	19 Rimpton 938	Aethered s441
Position 29	minister	11 Droxford 939	Eadburga s446
Position 34	minister	16 Droxford 939	Eadburga s446
Position 24	minister	10 Meapham 939	Ealdulf s447
Position 29	minister	15 Meapham 939	Ealdulf s447
Position 25	minister	11 Bright-Walton 939	Eadulfu s448
Position 29	minister	15 Bright-Walton 939	Eadulfu s448
Position 25	minister	11 Overton 939	Wulfswyth s449
Position 30	minister	16 Overton 939	Wulfswyth s449



Aelfstan        minister

Position 54 minister    16 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 73 minister    31 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 60 minister    17 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s17

Position 64 minister    21 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s 417

Position 69 minister    30 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 81 minister    42 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Aelfwald        minister

Position 51 minister    9 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 61 minister    18 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 43 minister    16 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

He is possibly the beneficiary of S425 which concerns  
land at Durrington in Sussex.

Aelfward        minister

Position 53 minister    19 Amounderness 934 York s407

Aelhelm         minister

Position 39 minister    16 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Aethdelnoth    minister

Position 68 minister    26 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Aethelberht    minister

Position 59 minister    16 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 66 minister    27 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Aethelelm      minister

Position 48 minister    9 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Aethelferth minister

Position 56 minister 18 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 47 minister 5 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 80 minister 36 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 81 minister 37 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 89 minister 45 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 68 minister 29 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 58 minister 24 Amounderness 34 York s407

Aethelgeard minister

Position 23 minister 14 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Aethelgeard is probably to be identified with Aethelweard (see below). He attests charters between 928 and 932. Hart identifies Aethelgeard as a West Saxon thegn who bequeathed land to New Minster and is mentioned in the New Minster <sup>230</sup> "Liber Vitae" as "Aethelgeard Preng". He may also be the beneficiary Aethelweard who in S417 of 932 was granted land at Meon in Hampshire, which agrees with Hart's identification of Aethelgeard as a West Saxon.

Aethelhelm minister

Position 31 minister 8 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 39 minister 16 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

A "minister" of this name was the beneficiary of two of Athelstan's charters, S426 concerning land in Wiltshire and S431 concerning land in Somerset. *The beneficiaries of these two charters may thus be identified with either one, or both, of the Aethelhelms who witness S405. S426 and S431 were issued at assemblies*

held at Chippenham. It is therefore possible that both Aethelhelms came from the South west region.

Aethelm           minister

Position 23 minister       8 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 80 minister      38 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Aethelmund       minister

Position 32 minister      11 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 37 minister      14 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 37 minister      1 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 45 minister      7 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 66 minister      24 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 75 minister      33 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 76 minister      32 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 30 minister      11 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 70 minister      31 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 40 minister      5 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 22 minister      13 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 37 minister      26 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 34 minister      23 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 33 minister      21 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 37 minister      19 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 31 minister      17 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 31 minister      17 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 32 minister      18 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

An Aethelmund attests Athelstan's charters regularly from 928 until the end of his reign. In one charter, S416, two Aethelmunds witness and there is no regularity of

position in the witness lists to enable one to tell which of the two is witnessing the other charters. I have assumed that the Aethelmund who is witnessing charters frequently is the same person and that a second Aethelmund appears in S416 owing to the unusually long witness list. In 939 there is some regularity in Aethelmund's position in the witness list, he is always amongst the last of the attesting "ministri". It is possible that the Aethelmund "minister" of Athelstan's charters is the same man who witnesses Edmund's charters as an ealdorman.<sup>231</sup>

Aethelnoth minister

Position 46 minister 8 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 71 minister 32 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 41 minister 6 Amounderness 934 York s407

Aethelred minister

Position 26 minister 8 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

He is possibly the beneficiary of S441 of 938 which concerns a grant of land at Rimpton in Somerset. This would give Aethelred a probable location in the South West.

Aethelric minister

Position 91 minister 47 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Aethelsige minister

Position 49 minister 11 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 93 minister 51 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 78 minister 34 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 80 minister 41 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 56 minister 22 Amounderness 934 York s407

Aethelwald minister

Position 62 minister 19 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Aethelweard minister

Position 37 minister 16 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 35 minister 12 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 36 minister 13 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 49 minister 13 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 56 minister 13 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

See under Aethelgeard minister.

Aethelwold minister

Position 42 minister 6 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 49 minister 7 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 48 minister 5 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 49 minister 10 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 60 minister 21 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 49 minister 15 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 36 minister 26 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 20 minister 9 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 28 minister 17 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 20 minister 8 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 37 minister 25 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 24 minister 6 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 20 minister 6 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 21 minister 7 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 21 minister 7 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Two Aethelwolds attest S425 and S441, otherwise only one "minister" of this name appears regularly in the charter witness lists. I think that the Aethelwold who attests regularly can be differentiated from the second Aethelwold who witnesses S425 and S441 because the second Aethelwold appears in a much lower position in the witness lists, attesting S425, S407, S430, S411 and S441. Hart has identified the Aethelwold who attests frequently as the brother of Athelstan Half-king who became ealdorman of Kent in 940 and died in 946. Aethelwold's will has survived and it contains bequests to other members of Athelstan Half-kings family. In most charters he attests as one of the first ten "ministri" listed. The identity of the second Aethelwold is not known.

Aethered minister

Position 70 minister 34 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 51 minister 12 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 76 minister 37 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 41 minister 31 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 36 minister 25 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 30 minister 19 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 32 minister 20 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 35 minister 17 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 30 minister 16 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 30 minister 16 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 31 minister 17 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449  
 Aetheric minister  
 Position 59 minister 17 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 32 minister 13 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Aethred minister  
 Position 67 minister 31 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Aetthelm minister  
 Position 63 minister 21 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Alfheah minister  
 Position 46 minister 4 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 60 minister 18 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Athelstan minister  
 Position 26 minister 5 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
 Position 31 minister 10 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
 Position 27 minister 4 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
 Position 32 minister 9 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
 Position 36 minister 13 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
 Position 30 minister 7 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 33 minister 10 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 57 minister 21 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 73 minister 37 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 42 minister 4 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
 Position 45 minister 3 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 71 minister 29 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 79 minister 37 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 97 minister 55 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 12 minister 58 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 46 minister 3 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 36 minister 9 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 38 minister 11 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 54 minister 15 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 39 minister 4 Amounderness 934 York s407  
 Position 11 minister 2 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 31 minister 20 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 14 minister 3 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
 Position 28 minister 16 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Several "ministri" named Athelstan witness the same charters and it is not really possible to establish a separate identity for any of them. The most one can say is that the Athelstan who appears amongst the first ten attesting "ministri" in several charters may be the same man. Also, it is possible that one of the Athelstans who witnesses King Athelstan's charters as "minister" is the same person as the second ealdorman Athelstan who attests King Edmund's charters in the company of Athelstan Half-king.<sup>235</sup>

Athelweard minister

Position 65 minister 23 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 91 minister 49 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Athulf minister

Position 73 minister 34 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 17 minister 8 Havant 935 Witgar s430



Beorhtnoth     minister  
                   Position 38 minister     28 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
                   Position 30 minister     19 Burcombe 937 Wilton   s438  
                   Position 18 minister     7 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Beorhtric     minister  
                   Position 78 minister     36 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Beorhtulf     minister  
                   Position 54 minister     12 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Berhtric     minister  
                   Position 92 minister     53 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Biorhstan     minister  
                   Position 84 minister     45 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Biorhtelm     minister  
                   Position 86 minister     47 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Biornulf     minister  
                   Position 63 minister     20 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Buga             minister  
                   Position 23 minister     2 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
                   Position 25 minister     2 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
                   Position 52 minister     10 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
                   Position 30 minister     3 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
                   Position 21 minister     2 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Burhed         minister  
                   Position 40 minister     17 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Burherd       minister  
                   Position 76 minister     34 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Burthruc        minister

Position 41 minister    18 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Busa            minister

Position 26 minister    3 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Byrthelm       minister

Position 42 minister    19 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

A Byrthelm "miles" is the beneficiary of S392 in 939.

He may be the same man as the witness of S403. Searle mentions an early tenth-century noble of this name and identifies him as the father of Aethelflaed, the wife of Athelstan Half-king.<sup>236</sup> It is not certain that either of these two references concern the Byrthelm of the witness lists.

Byrhtic        minister

Position 24 minister    3 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Byrhtih        minister

Position 27 minister    6 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Ceolstan       minister

Position 17 minister    2 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 73 minister    29 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Cutherth       minister

Position 88 minister    44 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Cyred          minister

Position 96 minister    54 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 87 minister    43 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Eadelm         minister

Position 50 minister    14 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Eadmund        minister

Position 58 minister    22 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 63 minister    24 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 33 minister    23 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
Position 16 minister    5 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
Position 16 minister    5 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
Position 16 minister    4 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
Position 19 minister    1 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
Position 17 minister    3 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
Position 17 minister    3 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
Position 18 minister    4 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Eadnoth        minister

Position 47 minister    9 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 72 minister    33 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Eadred         minister

Position 62 minister    26 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 68 minister    32 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Eadric         minister

Position 34 minister    11 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
Position 35 minister    12 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
Position 42 minister    19 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
Position 43 minister    7 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 48 minister    10 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 50 minister    8 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 64 minister    22 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 49 minister    6 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 77 minister 33 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 42 minister 15 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 29 minister 10 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Position 59 minister 20 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 50 minister 16 Amounderness 934 York s407  
 Position 55 minister 21 Amounderness 934 York s407  
 Position 39 minister 29 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 33 minister 22 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 21 minister 10 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
 Position 29 minister 17 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 32 minister 14 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 27 minister 13 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 27 minister 13 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 28 minister 14 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Between 930 and 934 two "ministri" named Eadric witness Athelstan's charters. After 934 only one appears and attests most of the 935-9 charters. They are referred to as Eadric 1 and Eadric 2. Eadric 2 is identified as the "minister" attesting charters after 934. There is some regularity in his position of attestation which is in the lower half of the list of "ministri". This leads to the assumption that it is always the same person witnessing after 934. Eadric 2 is probably the brother of Athelstan Half-king who became the ealdorman of Central Wessex in 942.<sup>237</sup>

Eadric 1 witnessed until 934 and when both Eadrics were present, he attested in a higher position than Eadric 2. He

may be the beneficiary of S395 of 925 because Eadric 2 was probably not active until the 930s.<sup>238</sup>

Eadsige           minister

Position 53 minister   17 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 87 minister   48 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Eadstan           minister

Position 50 minister   11 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Eadulf            minister

Position 20 minister    5 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396

Position 51 minister   15 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 92 minister   50 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

The beneficiary of S447 in 939 is named Eadwulf. He may be the same person as the Eadulf "minister" witnessing Athelstan's charters. The land granted in S447 was at Meapham in Kent, this may be the area to which Eadulf belongs.

Eadwald           minister

Position 61 minister   22 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 77 minister   38 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Eadward           minister

Position 59 minister   23 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 79 minister   40 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Ealhelm            minister

Position 51 minister    13 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
Position 67 minister    25 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 70 minister    28 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 84 minister    40 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 90 minister    51 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 34 minister    23 Burcombe 937 Wilton    s438  
Position 24 minister    13 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
Position 30 minister    18 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
Position 33 minister    15 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
Position 28 minister    14 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
Position 28 minister    14 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
Position 29 minister    15 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Two "ministri" named Ealhelm attest s416 in 931 but in all the other charters witnessed by Ealhelm only one such "minister" is present. It is not certain whether it is always the same person or whether the two different Ealhels are attesting different charters between 931 and 939. If the Ealhelm who attests regularly as a "minister" in the charters of the 930s is always the same person, he may be identified as the Ealhelm who witnesses as an ealdorman in King Edmund's charters from 940 onwards.<sup>239</sup> Williams has identified this ealdorman Ealhelm as the father of ealdorman Aelfhere of Mercia who was a very influential figure during the late tenth century.<sup>240</sup>

Ealstan	minister	
Position	85 minister	41 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Elfsige	minister	
Position	20 minister	9 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Haethred	minister	
Position	74 minister	35 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Healmstan	minister	
Position	21 minister	6 Chalgrave 926 Ealdred s396
Position	43 minister	9 Amounderness 934 York s407
Hefa	minister	
Position	55 minister	13 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Hun	minister	
Position	65 minister	26 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Hunlaf	minister	
Position	82 minister	38 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Odda	minister	
Position	22 minister	1 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position	24 minister	1 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position	24 minister	1 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position	54 minister	18 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position	39 minister	1 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position	43 minister	1 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position	44 minister	1 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position	28 minister	1 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position	20 minister	1 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position	52 minister	13 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 36 minister	1 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 10 minister	1 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 12 minister	1 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 12 minister	1 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 13 minister	1 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 15 minister	1 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 15 minister	1 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 16 minister	2 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

I have not been able to identify Odda as a "minister" from sources other than the witness lists of Athelstan's charters. Odda's regular position at the head of the attesting "ministri" surely indicates that he was a man of some importance amongst them.

Ordeah            minister

Position 60 minister	24 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position 46 minister	7 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 37 minister	27 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 27 minister	16 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 26 minister	15 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 26 minister	14 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 30 minister	12 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 25 minister	11 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 26 minister	12 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 26 minister	12 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Ordgar            minister

Position 61 minister	25 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
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Oswig           minister  
           Position 90 minister   46 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Sigeferth       minister  
           Position 64 minister   28 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
           Position 78 minister   39 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Sigemer         minister  
           Position 66 minister   30 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Sigered         minister  
           Position 34 minister   13 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
           Position 27 minister    4 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
           Position 56 minister   20 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
           Position 75 minister   36 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
           Position 52 minister   18 Amounderness 934 York s407  
           Position 14 minister    3 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
           Position 31 minister   20 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Sigereth        minister  
           Position 71 minister   35 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Sigeric         minister  
           Position 58 minister   16 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Sigewold        minister  
           Position 72 minister   36 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Sigred          minister  
           Position 32 minister    5 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Sigulf            minister

Position 14 minister    5 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 29 minister    18 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 37 minister    26 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 27 minister    15 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 31 minister    13 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 26 minister    12 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 27 minister    13 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

He regularly witnesses the charters of 935 to 939 but only once, in S430, near the top of the list of attesting "ministri". Sigulf is the name of the beneficiary of the charter S437 of 937 which concerns land at Water Newton in Hampshire. It is probable that the beneficiary of S437 and the charter witness are the same person. The attestations of Sigulf the charter witness occur in the same period (935-9) during which Sigulf the beneficiary received a grant of land (937).

Sireth            minister

Position 36 minister    18 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Swithulf          minister

Position 61 minister    19 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 53 minister    10 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 21 minister    12 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Sydeman           minister

Position 65 minister    29 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Syeward	minister	
Position	69 minister	33 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Syfred	minister	
Position	29 minister	6 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Tiobeaon	minister	
Position	88 minister	49 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Wiferth	minister	
Position	94 minister	52 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Wilferth	minister	
Position	55 minister	17 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position	79 minister	35 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Winsige	minister	
Position	54 minister	11 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position	67 minister	28 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position	51 minister	17 Amounderness 934 York s407
Witgar	minister	
Position	36 minister	15 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400
Position	33 minister	10 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403
Position	41 minister	18 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405
Position	41 minister	5 Clere 931 Aelfric s412
Position	44 minister	6 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413
Position	85 minister	43 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416
Position	52 minister	9 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position	41 minister	14 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position	33 minister	14 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position	57 minister	18 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 19 minister      8 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 25 minister      14 Farnborough 937 Alfneah s411  
 Position 19 minister      7 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 36 minister      24 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441  
 Position 22 minister      4 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 19 minister      5 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 20 minister      6 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 20 minister      6 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

This is probably the same Witgar who is the beneficiary of S430, which concerns land in Hampshire. Consequently, he may be a Hampshire thegn.

Wulfbold      minister

Position 46 minister      10 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 83 minister      41 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 70 minister      26 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s 417  
 Position 27 minister      8 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Position 47 minister      13 Amounderness 934 York s407

Wulfgar      minister

Position 35 minister      14 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
 Position 28 minister      5 Selsea 930 Beornneah s403  
 Position 26 minister      3 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 32 minister      9 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
 Position 44 minister      8 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 55 minister      19 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 40 minister      2 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
 Position 44 minister      2 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 45 minister	2 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 67 minister	23 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417
Position 31 minister	4 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418
Position 23 minister	4 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422
Position 43 minister	3 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 53 minister	14 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425
Position 37 minister	2 Amounderness 934 York s407
Position 19 minister	10 Havant 935 Witgar s430
Position 13 minister	2 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 24 minister	13 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438
Position 17 minister	6 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411
Position 14 minister	2 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 23 minister	11 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441
Position 23 minister	5 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 28 minister	10 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446
Position 23 minister	9 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447
Position 24 minister	10 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448
Position 15 minister	1 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449
Position 24 minister	10 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Two "ministri" named Wulfgar frequently attest the same charters of the 930s and it is not possible to differentiate between the two. They both witness the charter S449 of 939 which is also attested by a Wulfgar "dux". Since the two "ministri" attest the same charter as the "dux" Wulfgar, neither was promoted to the rank of ealdorman during Athelstan's reign.<sup>241</sup>

Wulfheh        minister

Position 41 minister    1 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Wulfhelm       minister

Position 25 minister    4 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 33 minister    12 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400

Position 25 minister    2 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403

Position 28 minister    5 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 95 minister    53 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 86 minister    42 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 29 minister    2 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418

Position 22 minister    3 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 45 minister    11 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 15 minister    6 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 38 minister    27 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 38 minister    29 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 34 minister    22 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 38 minister    20 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 32 minister    18 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 32 minister    18 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 33 minister    19 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

There are two Wulfhelms witnessing the 928 charter S400 but after this date only one ever appears on the witness list. His position in the list differs so greatly in the different charters that it may represent the attestations of two different people. It is possible that Wulfhelm 1 is the man who attests amongst the first ten "ministri" listed in

the charters and Wulfhelm 2 is a different person who attests other charters in a much lower position. If these identifications are correct than Wulfhelm 1 may be the individual who attests S397 at the head of the "ministri" as a "discifer".<sup>242</sup> The English equivalent of this Latin word is seneschal. S397 is the only charter in which any attempt has been made to give a "minister" a more precise classification as a person holding an official position.

Wulfhere        minister

Position 17 minister        5 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Wulfmaer        minister

Position 37 minister        14 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405

Position 45 minister        9 Clere 931 Aelfric s412

Position 82 minister        40 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 69 minister        25 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 26 minister        7 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422

Position 44 minister        4 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 42 minister        8 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 20 minister        11 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 23 minister        12 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 13 minister        2 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 22 minister        10 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 27 minister        9 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 22 minister        8 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 23 minister        9 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

Wulfnoth        minister

Position 43 minister    20 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
Position 38 minister    15 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405  
Position 47 minister    11 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
Position 81 minister    39 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 68 minister    24 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 35 minister    8 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
Position 25 minister    6 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
Position 35 minister    16 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
Position 45 minister    5 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 46 minister    12 Amounderness 934 York s407  
Position 16 minister    7 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
Position 23 minister    12 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Wulfric        minister

Position 74 minister    32 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 89 minister    47 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
Position 55 minister    12 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 72 minister    28 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
Position 64 minister    25 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 82 minister    43 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
Position 23 minister    9 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Wulfsige       minister

Position 29 minister    8 Stoke 928 Byrhtferth s400  
Position 31 minister    8 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
Position 38 minister    15 Selsea 930 Beornheah s403  
Position 43 minister    20 Sandford 930 Eadulf s405



Position 38 minister      2 Clere 931 Aelfric s412  
 Position 43 minister      5 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
 Position 50 minister      12 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413  
 Position 69 minister      27 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 77 minister      35 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 84 minister      42 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416  
 Position 51 minister      8 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 83 minister      39 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417  
 Position 33 minister      6 N.Stoneham 932 Aelfred s418  
 Position 24 minister      5 Bradford 933 Sherbourne s422  
 Position 56 minister      17 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 89 minister      50 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425  
 Position 27 minister      17 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 34 minister      24 Havant 935 Witgar s430  
 Position 17 minister      6 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438  
 Position 19 minister      8 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411  
 Position 21 minister      3 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446  
 Position 18 minister      4 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447  
 Position 18 minister      4 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448  
 Position 19 minister      4 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

A Wulfsige is the beneficiary of a grant of land in Chilmark, Wiltshire but as there are several witnesses of this name attesting Athelstan's charters, it is not possible to say which, if any, this <sup>243</sup> is. One of these "ministri" named Wulfsige witnesses regularly in third or fourth position in all the charters of 939. It is probable that

these attestations refer to the same person. Sawyer has identified the Wulfsige of the 939 witness lists as a relative of the powerful Mercian thegn Wulfric Spot who founded Burton Abbey in 1004.<sup>244</sup>

Wulfstan minister

Position 91 minister 52 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Wullaf minister

Position 52 minister 14 Watchfield 931 Aelfric s413

Position 62 minister 20 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

Position 74 minister 30 Meon 932 Aethelgeard s417

Position 42 minister 2 Derantune 934 Aelfwald s425

Position 44 minister 10 Amounderness 934 York s407

Position 42 minister 32 Havant 935 Witgar s430

Position 39 minister 28 Burcombe 937 Wilton s438

Position 15 minister 4 Farnborough 937 Alfheah s411

Position 35 minister 23 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 38 minister 26 Rimpton 938 Aethered s441

Position 39 minister 21 Droxford 939 Eadburga s446

Position 33 minister 19 Meapham 939 Ealdulf s447

Position 19 minister 5 Bright-Walton 939 Eadulfu s448

Position 34 minister 20 Overton 939 Wulfswyth s449

The Wullaf who attests the charters of 938-9 is always placed next to Wulfhelm "minister". This may indicate that the two were related in some way, on the analogy that members of the same family witnessed next to each other in the witness lists.

Wynsige        minister

Position 86 minister    44 Ham 931 Wulfgar s416

## Prosopography Discussion

### 1. The Archbishops.

Wulfhelm of Canterbury attests everyone of Athelstan's charters other than S395 of 925. The date is several years before the archbishop of York began witnessing Athelstan's charters and the year before Wulfhelm was consecrated as archbishop of Canterbury. S395 is the only charter of Athelstan's reign not attested by an archbishop. The reason why the archbishop of Canterbury does not attest S395 is not clear; it may be because it was issued in the period between the death of the previous archbishop Athelm . . . and the consecration of his successor Wulfhelm during <sup>245</sup>926.

Hrothweard of York witnesses from 928 to 930 and Wulfstan takes his place from 931 to 934. *S412 of March 931 is not attested by the archbishop of York, indicating an interregnum between the two reigns.* The archbishop of York probably started witnessing Athelstan's charters as a consequence of the defeat of King Guthfrith of Northumbria in 927 and the subsequent submission of Constantine of Scotland, Owain of Strathclyde and Ealdred of <sup>246</sup>Bamborough. This gave Athelstan control of Northumbria and therefore the position of protector of the Northumbrian church. The archbishop of York last appears in the witness lists in 934, the year when the other individuals from the North of England cease to attest, an occurrence which coincides with a change in the style of the charters being

issued. This is discussed at greater length in the conclusion to this chapter.

The last charter attested by Wulfstan of York is S407 of 934. There is one other charter dated to the autumn of 934, S426, but it has an abbreviated witness list recording only the attestations of King Athelstan and Constantine, king of the Scots. It is possible that the archbishop of York also witnessed this charter but without a full witness list one cannot say for certain. S407 is a grant of land made to the church in York and has been interpreted as a grant made either to form a bulwark against Scandinavian penetration into Westmoreland and Cumberland,<sup>247</sup> or as an attempt to ensure the continued support of the Archbishop of York whilst Athelstan was fighting in Scotland.<sup>248</sup> The position of the archbishops who attest immediately after the king in the witness lists presumably indicates their importance as members of the king's "witan". It would appear from the constant presence of Wulfhelm at Athelstan's assemblies that he was one of the king's closest advisors. The presence of the archbishops of York between 928 and 934 shows the amount of influence Athelstan had in Northumbria during this period. The reason for the high-standing of the archbishops lies in the power of the ecclesiastical office that they held and in their position as amongst the biggest and wealthiest landowners in the country.

## 2. The Underkings

The underkings begin to attest Athelstan's charters in 928, the year after the submission of the British kings to Athelstan at Eamont in <sup>249</sup> 927. The year 927 saw the defeat and expulsion of King Guthfrith from Northumbria, the submission at Eamont and the establishment of a yearly tribute from the Welsh kings to Athelstan at Hereford. <sup>250</sup> It is probably also at about this time that the river Wye was established as the boundary between England and the Welsh kingdoms. <sup>251</sup> Consequently Athelstan was in a very powerful position and it is probably as a direct result of the events of 927 that the "subreguli" began to witness his charters.

The underkings who attest Athelstan's charters are all from Wales, other than the single attestation of Constantine of Scotland to S426. Thus the charters indicate that the submission made at Eamont in 927 was more effective in the case of the Welsh rulers than those of Scotland. This is implicit in the fact that the Scottish campaign of 934 was aimed against Constantine and Owain of Strathclyde, both of whom <sup>252</sup> submitted to Athelstan in 927. S407, a charter issued at an assembly in Nottingham in June of 934 has a witness list which probably includes the leaders of the army the king took on the Scottish campaign of that year. <sup>253</sup> The Welsh kings Howel, Judwal and Morcant all attest S407 and so must have been Athelstan's allies even if they did not actually accompany him into Scotland. S426 is dated to the twelfth

of September 934, presumably after the end of the Scottish campaign. It is significant that it is the only charter witnessed by a Scottish king, a fact which demonstrates the success of the campaign.

The effects of the 934 campaign were not long lasting, Constantine and Owain of Strathclyde were two of the leaders of the army defeated by Athelstan at Brunanburgh<sup>254</sup>. It would appear from the lack of attestations on the part of the Scottish kings that Athelstan never had any strong political influence in the Scottish kingdoms.

The situation is different in Wales. Welsh rulers from all parts of that country attested Athelstan's charters between 928 and 934. The most regular witnesses amongst the Welsh underkings are Howel and Judwal. They both attest the same seven charters which range in date from 928 to 934. Howel always attests first of the underkings and Judwal second, except in S407 when Judwal is listed third behind Morcant. Morcant witnesses three other charters and in all three he attests in third position behind Judwal<sup>255</sup>. Wurgeat attest twice, once in 928 and once in 932. The two remaining Welsh underkings Teodor and Eugenius witness one charter each. S407 and S416 are attested only by the underkings Howel and Judwal. The other Welsh "subreguli" never attest a charter which is not witnessed by these two. However, Constantine of Scotland is the only underking attesting S426. Other underkings may have been present but

as the witness list is abbreviated, recording only the witness of the kings Athelstan and Constantine, this is not possible to establish with any certainty.

The frequency with which Howel and Judwal attest, together with their pre-eminent position amongst the underkings in the witness lists, indicates that they were the most important of the "subreguli" present at the Anglo-Saxon assemblies. This was evidently because they were the most powerful of the Welsh kings. The size of their respective kingdoms is clear evidence for this. Howel as king of Deheubarth and Judwal as king of Gwynedd ruled the two largest and most powerful Welsh kingdoms of the early tenth century.

The underkings who attended Athelstan's assemblies came presumably because they had submitted to him in 927. In so doing they had placed themselves under Athelstan's protection against outside threats, most obviously at this time the incursions of the Vikings based at Dublin<sup>256</sup>. Also, the meeting of the "witenagemot" would be an obvious venue for the Welsh kings to surrender to Athelstan the tribute agreed at Hereford in 927. Finally, by summoning the underkings to attend his Assemblies each year and giving them a position of influence and dignity at these assemblies, Athelstan was able to reinforce his influence and political leadership over them. The contact between the Welsh and English kingdoms as seen through the attendance of



the Welsh kings at the Anglo-Saxon assemblies was first established in Athelstan's reign. It continued throughout the tenth century into the reign of King Eadwy.<sup>257</sup> Part of the reason that Athelstan had more effective control over the Welsh underkings than the Scottish underkings was because Wales was closer than Scotland to Wessex, the heartland of the West Saxon dynasty. The influence of Anglo-Saxon governmental method upon the Welsh rulers is proof of close contact between the Welsh and English kings. Lloyd argues that this is seen in the law codes attributed to Howel Dda whose contents show signs of influence from the English legal system.<sup>258</sup>

The underkings cease to attest Athelstan's charters after the year 934. The reasons for this are not absolutely clear. S400, a charter from the year 928 is the earliest charter attested by any of the underkings. It is one of the first two examples of a charter in the developed hermeneutic style typical of the early 930s. This type of charter was issued until the end of 934 when a less flamboyant style replaces it and the witness lists become shorter in length and contain clergy and laity from the south of England only. This may reflect a change in the political situation, although none is mentioned in the documentary evidence, a change in the type of assembly with fewer "witan" present or it may be merely a result of the change in the charter style. This problem involves all the ranks of the personnel

who attest King Athelstan's charters and as such is not discussed under this sub-heading because it refers to only one section of the witness list. Instead it will be dealt with in the concluding section of this chapter.

### 3. The Bishops

If one discounts the abbreviated charters there are twenty-three charters whose witness lists record the presence of bishops. Four more only record the first one or two bishops witnessing before the list is curtailed. These latter four are all dated to the 935-9 period. The earliest charter of King Athelstan, S395 of 925, has only four bishops attesting, but of the other unabbreviated charters, excluding the 928-34 period, seven record the witness of eight bishops and three are attested by seven. Between 928 and 934 the number of attesting bishops rises noticeably, with an average of thirteen witnessing each charter. The actual numbers range from eight attesting S422 to seventeen witnessing each of the charters S416, S417 and S425.

The increase in the numbers of bishops witnessing in 928 is reflected in the other ranks of the witness list where a similar increase in numbers is seen and the two new categories of underkings and abbots appear. To ascertain why the situation changes so much for the years 928-34, I have first examined the identity of the bishops who attest those charters outside the 928-34 period in order to

discover which bishops are witnessing during this time in relation to the bishops who attest between 928 and 934.

Before the year 928 there are only three charters surviving which have full witness lists and two of these, S396 and S397, are identical in text. They were probably issued at the same <sup>260</sup> "witenagemot". It is consequently not possible to state which bishops were generally in attendance before 928. For the 935-9 period eight charters with full witness lists survive. <sup>261</sup> They are all attested by Alfheah of Winchester, Theodred of London, Cenwald of Worcester and Oda of Ramsbury. Aelfheah of Wells attests all the charters until he he was succeeded by Wulfhelm who witnesses from 938 onwards. Thus the see of Wells is represented in every charter of 935-9. Burgric of Rochester attests all charters other than S430 of 935, but it is not certain that he held the see of Rochester at this date. <sup>262</sup> Aethelgar of Crediton attests six of the eight charters. The two he does not witness, S411 and S430, both have seven rather than the usual eight attesting bishops. Wulfhun of Selsey witnesses five charters, he is not listed in S430 or S438, which list only seven bishops. The other charter not attested by Wulfhun is S392 of 939, the only charter to be witnessed by Aelfric of Hereford, who was consecrated in that year. Alfheah of Winchester is listed in all the abbreviated charters of the 935-9 period and Theodred of London is present in one of these, S437. In conclusion one can say

that from 935 to the end of Athelstan's reign in 939 his charters were regularly attested by the same group of bishops; those who held the sees of Winchester, London, Worcester, Ramsbury, Rochester, Crediton, Wells and Selsey. All these sees are in Wessex or English Mercia and Kent, that part of England which was retained under English rule after the creation of the Danelaw which came about after King Alfred's victory at Edington in 878.

When one turns to the 928-34 period it is obvious that there are many more bishops attesting the charters but those who are regularly present in the witness lists are the bishops who held the sees of Winchester, London, Worcester, Ramsbury, Rochester, Crediton, Wells and Lichfield. This list is practically identical with that of the later period of Athelstan's reign. The individual holding the bishopric may be different, but the sees are the major ones of Wessex, English Mercia and Kent.

The bishops who provide the increase in the numbers attesting between 928 and 934 are from Sherborne and Selsey in the Wessex heartland, Berkshire, Dorchester and Hereford in Mercia and possibly the East Anglian bishopric of Elmham. The other bishops who attest come from areas which were not fully controlled by the West Saxon kings of the early tenth century. These include Conan and Mancant from Cornwall. Cornwall was a Celtic area brought very much under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom during Athelstan's

reign. He is credited with expelling the Cornish from the city of Exeter, creating the see of Cornwall and establishing the river Tamar as the boundary between Cornwall and the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devon.<sup>263</sup> The four remaining bishops who attest between 928 and 934 are from Northumbria. They are Wigred of Chester-le-Street and three suffragans of the Archbishopric of York, Aescbryht, Eadward and Seaxhelm. The two unidentified bishops Benedictus and Buga only witness within this period also. Thus it appears that a deliberate effort was made to have more bishops, from different parts of the country attending Athelstan's assemblies between 928 and 934 than in any other period of his reign. When one examines the other sections of Athelstan's witness lists this wider representation is seen to have occurred amongst the other ranks as well.<sup>264</sup> The significance of this will be dealt with in the conclusion to this chapter.

Before 935 there is no regularity in the order of attestation other than the fact that the northern bishops are always put in the lower half of the list of the attesting bishops. This presumably indicates that they were of less importance than their southern counterparts. After 934 a regular pattern does emerge. The order of attestation is as follows:

1. Winchester.
2. London.

Occasionally London is placed before Winchester but the general rule is to give Winchester precedence.<sup>265</sup>

3. Worcester.
- 4, 5, and 6 alternate between the three Sees of Ramsbury, Selsey and Wells.
7. Rochester.
8. Crediton.

The eight sees listed above were all situated in Wessex, English Mercia and Kent, the power centre of the West Saxon kings. They are not listed according to the seniority of the holders office. Since Winchester was the capital of Wessex and an important religious and royal centre and London was emerging as a major town, it may be that the bishops were attesting according to the importance of each individual see.<sup>266</sup> The most prestigious and powerful sees would come at the head of the list and they descended in order of influence and importance. This may be reflected in the importance of Winchester and London amongst the bishops of the witness lists. Towards the end of Athelstan's reign they always head the list of attesting bishops. There is a similar situation as regards the ealdormanries, the ealdormen of Wessex always take precedence over the others.<sup>267</sup>

The regular attendance of the bishops of all the major sees of Wessex and English Mercia at the meetings of the

"witan" indicates that they were an important section of the king's "witan". The date clauses of the charters of the 928-34 period show that the bishops were present at assemblies held in all parts of the country.<sup>268</sup> One can conclude from this that they spent a substantial amount of time in the company of the king. Also evident from the 928-34 period is the existence of suffragan bishops. Conan of Cornwall was a suffragan of the bishop of Crediton and Mancant is another possible Cornish suffragan. Cynesige held office in Berkshire under Oda of Ramsbury and Wulfhelm in Hereford under Tidelm of Hereford. There are also the three York suffragans who were presumably under the supervision of Wulfstan, the archbishop of York. The presence of suffragan bishops in the various bishoprics would be one explanation why so many bishops were present on a regular basis at the meetings of the king's "witan". The suffragans would be able to aid in the government of the see in which they served during the absence of their bishop.

The election of a bishop was the concern of both the Church and the king. The king appointed the bishops but the consent of the Church was needed for their acceptance and consecration.<sup>269</sup> The earliest "Life of Dunstan" states that he was elected archbishop of Canterbury by King Eadgar and his council.<sup>270</sup> The same process probably functioned during Athelstan's reign as well. The work of Robinson and Barker shows how much influence the king had in the appointment of

a bishop. Robinson has identified the bishops Alfheah of Winchester, Aelfheah of Wells and Byrnstan of Winchester as clergy who, before their appointment to a bishopric, held office as royal priests, that is as chaplains of the royal household.<sup>271</sup> Barker has added Cenwald of Worcester and Oda of Ramsbury to this list.<sup>272</sup> All four sees mentioned were important ones within the West Saxon kingdom. It is also noteworthy that Cenwald was the leader of the 929 mission to the German monasteries and Oda is said to have lead a mission to the Continent in 936.<sup>273</sup> This indicates that Athelstan was making active use of his bishops in the government of his kingdom. In this respect, the presence of Theodred of London at Brunanburgh and his involvement in the promulgation of legislation is another clear indication of the importance of the bishops for the government of the kingdom outside the sphere of their spiritual authority.<sup>274</sup> Oda, Cenwald and Alfheah all became monks either before or after their consecration as bishops and they are all associated with the beginnings of the monastic reform movement in England. Thus the king was appointing men of his own household to ecclesiastical offices of great power and influence. In so doing Athelstan was strengthening his own governmental power and directly aiding the process of monastic reform. The resurgence of the English monasteries took place during the reigns of his successors.<sup>275</sup>



#### 4. The Abbots

All the monastic houses mentioned in the prosopography as possible abbeys to which the abbots of the witness lists belonged are in the south of England, which was the area under the direct control of the West Saxon royal family. There is very little surviving evidence about the monastic houses of the North of England at this time because these abbeys suffered a more violent and lasting disruption owing to the Viking activity of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Consequently they are unlikely to be present in the witness lists.

The abbots attest Athelstan's charters in a group generally positioned after the bishops but before the laity. They are recorded as attending the "witenagemot" only during a four year period from 930-34, with the single exception of abbot Cynath who attests once, in 925 (S395). Why Cynath should be the only abbot to attest outside the 930-34 period is not clear. He does not attest during that period because his successor Eadwine was by that time the head of the abbey of Evesham. It is significant that the group of seven abbots should attest only from 930 to 934 because their appearance coincides with the use of developed hermeneutic Latin formulae and the recording of extremely long lists of witnesses. This is discussed further in the conclusion to this chapter.

A strict order of precedence is observed in the attestations of the abbots. Aelfric always attests first except in S417 where his presence is not recorded and Eadwine takes precedence. In S417 the final bishop who witnesses before the abbots is listed as bishop Aelfric. There is no known bishop named Aelfric who held a see in 932, the year S417 was issued. It is probable that this bishop Aelfric is present as a result of an error on the part of a copyist and he is in fact the abbot Aelfric who heads the abbots in all the other six charters which record the witness of the abbots.<sup>276</sup> The order of the abbots following Aelfric in the witness lists is as follows:

2. Eadwine of Evesham.

He always attests second except in S417 where Aelfric is wrongly listed as a bishop.

3. Aethelnoth.

He attests every charter other than the earliest S412. In this charter only three abbots attest and the third position is taken by abbot Seaxhelm.

4. Biorhtsige.

He attests every charter which includes abbots in its witness list other than S412 and S422. S422 has only four abbots attesting and the fourth abbot is Aldred who only appears in this one charter.

5. Seaxhelm.

He attests four charters between 931-32. (see the comments about S412 under Aethelnoth).

6. Eadred\Aldred

He attests only once in 932 unless, as previously suggested, he and abbot Aldred are the same person. In that case he also attests S422 of 933.

The strict regularity in the order of attestation for the abbots must be deliberate. Possibly it is indicative of their relative importance. They are not listed by seniority of appointment because Eadwine who was not elected until 929-31, occupies a prominent position in the list and it is improbable that all the abbots who attest after him in the witness lists were elected after him. Aelfric is recognised as one of the abbots who accompanied Cenwald to Germany in <sup>277</sup>929. This shows a high degree of involvement in the affairs of the king and I would suggest that it is for this reason that he always heads the list of attesting abbots.

There are three examples of monks who became bishops during Athelstan's reign. They are the bishops Cenwald of Worcester, Oda of Ramsbury and Alfheah of Winchester. However it is not certain whether they were all tonsured before their consecration as bishops. Oda possibly did not become a monk until he became the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>278</sup> This indicates that it was not customary for bishops to be selected from amongst the members of the various monastic

houses. None of the abbots of Athelstan's charters who appear as witnesses can be firmly identified as bishops at a later date. There are two possibilities, recognised as such because of the rare occurrence of their names as ecclesiastics in the early tenth century. The first is abbot Biorhtsige who may be identified with the bishop Beorhtsige mentioned by Stubbs who was attesting charters from 949-51.<sup>279</sup> His see is not known, but Searle suggests Rochester as a possibility.<sup>280</sup> The other is abbot Saexhelm who shares the same name with a suffragan bishop of York in the 930s and with the bishop who held the bishopric of Chester-le-Street briefly in 944.<sup>281</sup> 944 was the year in which King Edmund drove the Scandinavian rulers Olaf and Ragnald from Northumbria and it is conceivable that as a result of this action he had enough influence with the Northumbrian church to have some say in the election of a new bishop of Chester-le-Street.<sup>282</sup> However, the suffragan bishop of York named Saexhelm who attests Athelstan's charters in the early 930s is another possibility for the identity of the bishop who was elected to Chester-le-Street in 944. As a Northumbrian bishop Saexhelm is a more likely candidate than the abbot Saexhelm of Athelstan's charters.<sup>283</sup>

This section on the abbots who attest Athelstan's charters shows that their attestations occur only in the limited period of 930-4 and that positive identification is in most cases not possible.<sup>284</sup> However, it has been shown that

abbots such as Aelfric and Cynath were taking an active part in events outside their respective monasteries and are seen to be working for the king as well as being members of his "witan". It is unlikely that an abbot without some degree of wealth and influence would be employed in such tasks and it is reasonable to conclude that the abbots witnessing Athelstan's charters were in charge of the most wealthy and influential tenth century monasteries, present because of their temporal standing as much as their ecclesiastical position.

#### 5. The Ealdormen

The number of ealdormen witnessing each charter is not consistent. Only two genuine charters of 924 to 930 have full witness lists; S396 attested by four ealdormen and S400 attested by three. Twelve charters are dated to the years 930-4 and the number of ealdormen witnessing them is greatly increased. The average number of ealdormen per charter rises to eleven, although the actual figures range from four in S422 of 933 to fifteen in S416 and S417 of 931 and 932 respectively. Three charters for 937-8, S411, S438 and S441 have full witness lists which are attested by the same two ealdormen Aelfwald and Uhtred 2. In 939 the four charters with surviving witness lists are each attested by the same four ealdormen, Aelfhere, Wulfgar, Athelstan and Uhtred 2. S446 of 939 has two extra ealdormen recorded as present,

Odda and Wulfstan. Only Wulfstan is accepted as a genuine "dux", Odda is a "minister" given the wrong title. There is some evidence to show that ealdormen were also witnessing the abbreviated charters. S392 records the presence of seven unnamed ealdormen and an unspecified number of ealdormen are recorded as witnesses of charters S395 and S397. The corroborative clause of S419 states that it was witnessed by "episcopis, abbatibus, ducibus patriae procuratoribus", thus giving further evidence for the attestations of the ealdormen.

It is noticeable that the numbers of "duces" attesting rises steeply between 930-4 and drops to a much smaller figure for the remaining years of Athelstan's reign. The names of the "duces" who attest are given in the table below in chronological order, together with the dates of their first and last attestations during Athelstan's reign.<sup>285</sup>

Name	First witness	Last witness
Aelfwald	926	938
Ordgar	926 only	
Osferth	926	934
Wulfgar 1.	926 only	
Guthrum	928	932
Aelfred	930	931
Aelfstan	930	934
Aelred	930 only	

Name	First witness	Last witness
Grim	930 only	
Regenwald	930	934
Styrcaer	930 only	
Uhtred 1.	930	934
Urm	930	934
Aescberht	930	934
Fraena	930 only	
Thurferth	930	934
Hadd	931	934
Scule	931	934
Uhtred 2.	931	939+
Ealdred	931	932
Haward	931 only	
Gunner	931 only	
Athelstan	932	939+
Inwaer	932	934
Aedelred	932 only	
Hatel	932 only	
Tiesberd	932 only	
Halfden	934 only	

Name	First witness	Last witness
Osulf	934 only	
Aelfhere	939+	
Wulfgar 2.	939+	
Wulfstan	939 only	

There are thirteen "duces" with Scandinavian names listed and all their attestations are restricted to the 930-4 period, other than Guthrum who attests once before 930 as a witness to S400 of 928. Outside the years 928-34, only nobles with Anglo-Saxon names attest as "duces". I have accepted Chadwick's argument that "duces" with Scandinavian names must, in the early tenth century, be inhabitants of those areas of England under Scandinavian control or recently under Scandinavian control. <sup>286</sup> Thus they are all assigned to either the kingdom of Northumbria or the Danelaw. The "duces" with Scandinavian names are never given priority in the witness lists. They generally attest beneath the main Anglo-Saxon ealdormen. There is no indication of any order of precedence amongst the Scandinavian witnesses because they do not attest in any particular order. Guthrum, Hadd and Scule attest most frequently and Hadd and Scule always appear next to each



other in the witness lists. An examination of the table of "duces" shows that six of the Scandinavians attest in one year only. Grim, Styrcaer and Fraena attest in 930, Haward and Gunner in 931 and Halfden in 934.

There is a group of eight "duces" with Anglo-Saxon names who only attest between 930-34. Three of these, Ealdred, Uhtred 1 and Osulf have been identified as members of the ruling family at Bamborough. Aelred, *Aedelred* and *Aescberht* have not been identified. *The former two attest only one charter each, but Aescberht attests six.* The two remaining ealdormen are Aelfred of East Anglia and Aelfstan of Mercia. It is surely significant that the attestations of the lords of Bamborough are, like those of the Scandinavian "duces", restricted to the 930-34 period. The East Anglian ealdorman Aelfred ceases to attest in 931 because he is replaced by ealdorman Athelstan in the following year, but the reasons why four other "duces" with Anglo-Saxon names attest only during this period are not known.

Hart has argued that the "duces" who attest Athelstan's Nottingham charter S407 in 934 were members of the army which campaigned in Scotland that year and those who cease to attest after S407 were killed in the course of the campaign. A list of the "duces" who last attest in S407<sup>287</sup> consists of Aelfstan, Osferth, Hadd, Halfden, Inwaer, Osulf, Regenwald, Scule, Thurferth and Uhtred 1. In the case of Osferth of Wessex and Aelfstan of Mercia no successor to

either of them appears in the witness lists until 939, but as only the two ealdormen Aelfwald and Uhtred 2 attest from 935-8, it is not possible to show whether Osferth and Aelfstan were alive after the year 934. Their absence from the witness lists which they had previously attested regularly, Osferth from 926 and Aelfstan from 930, is a possible indication that they were killed in 934. All the other "duces" whose last attestation is to S407 have Scandinavian names. However, the last charter of 934, S426, has a witness list abbreviated to two names only and one cannot say whether any of the "duces" who attested S407 also attested S426.<sup>288</sup> 934 is also the last year that the underkings appear in the witness lists.<sup>289</sup> Their absence after this date coincides with that of the Scandinavian "duces" as well as all but six of the Anglo-Saxon ealdormen. The reason why so many "duces" cease to attest after the year 934 must be concerned with the changes in other sections of the witness lists and in the style of the charters themselves, a point which is discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

It is reasonable to assume that the "duces" who attest infrequently are less important as members of the king's "witan" than those who regularly attended his assemblies. The four most frequent witnesses amongst the "duces" are Aelfwald, Osferth, Aelfstan and Uhtred 2. None of them attests every charter issued by the king but they are present with greater regularity than any of the other

"duces". This argues that these four were the four ealdormen in closest contact with the king and therefore the most influential "duces" in the "witan". Having said this, it must be remembered that Ordgar who attests only once in 926 frequently attested the charters of Edward the Elder and may have been an important member of Athelstan's "witan" who died soon after his accession. Similarly Aelfhere and Wulfgar were appointed in 939 and as they attested every charter of that year and continue to attest Edmund's charters, it is possible that they were more important as members of King Athelstan's "witan" than the number of their attestations would indicate.

There is no strict regularity in the order in which the "duces" attest other than in the top three positions. Osferth and Aelfwald alternate in first and second position in every charter they witness except in 926, when Aelfwald is second and Osferth third because Ordgar takes precedence with his only attestation to a charter of King Athelstan. The "dux" Athelstan always attests in third position behind Aelfwald and Osferth. He does not witness any charters of 935-8, but appears in the 939 charters when both Aelfwald and Osferth have ceased to attest and still keeps his third position, this time behind Aelfhere and Wulfgar. This appears to argue against the "duces" attesting according to seniority of tenure, as is the case in Aethelred II's reign, because Athelstan was made an ealdorman before either

Aelfhere or Wulfgar.<sup>290</sup> However Aelfwald and Osferth, and later Aelfhere and Wulfgar, were all ealdormen of Central Wessex, the heartland of the West Saxon dynasty. They may have been given precedence in the charters for this reason. If the "duces" were listed according to seniority or individual power, both Aelfhere and Wulfgar would surely have been preceded by Athelstan Half-king of East Anglia.

Wessex under King Alfred had an ealdorman for every shire and this may be true of Edward the Elder's reign also.<sup>291</sup> The evidence for Athelstan's reign does not show the same pattern. Chadwick has concluded that Athelstan never had more than six ealdormen within his kingdom at any one time.<sup>292</sup> This limited number of ealdormen held power in a kingdom which had been greatly enlarged by the conquests of Edward the Elder and consequently they controlled far larger areas than their predecessors had done. The obvious example of such a powerful ealdorman in King Athelstan's reign is Athelstan Half-king of East Anglia.<sup>293</sup>

Ealdormanries in Wessex, Mercia and East Anglia are represented in the witness lists for Athelstan's reign but no ealdorman has been identified for Kent. The problem of identification is complicated by the possible presence of sub-earls, suggested by Hart for the ealdormanry of East Anglia.<sup>294</sup> Hart argues that Athelstan Half-king had at least six sub-earls working under him within his ealdormanry. They are Scule, Hadd, Thurferth, Uhtred 2, Halfden and

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Hereric. All but Hereric attest King Athelstan's charters. The size of the East Anglian ealdormanry makes it probable that Athelstan would require some help in maintaining effective control and the identification of many of the individuals suggested as sub-earls as resident in and around the East Anglian district supports the likelihood of such a system. This system may have been operating elsewhere in the kingdom also and could account for the unidentified "duces" in the charter witness lists.

There remain the "duces" who have been assigned to the North. Each is listed as a "dux", the term used to describe Athelstan's ealdormen, but they could not have held the same position in relation to the king as did the ealdormen of the South. The northern "duces" in the witness lists must be those who accepted Athelstan as overlord after he had driven King Guthfrith from Northumbria in 927. This argument is strengthened by the first appearance of a Scandinavian "dux" in the witness lists in the following year 928. The Scandinavians of the Danelaw are also referred to as earls because they include "duces" such as Thurferth who transferred his allegiance to the West Saxon king Edward the Elder, but was not elected by him. The appearance of northern "duces" as witnesses between the years 928 and 934 does not imply that Athelstan had the same power to decide who would be appointed to the northern earldoms as in deciding the allocation of the ealdormanries in the South.

It is more likely that he recognised the northern earls who already held power provided that they in turn acknowledged his over all authority.

The ealdormen who held Southern ealdormanries which were directly under Athelstan's control must have worked more closely with the king. The king chose them to govern regions of his kingdom and with the expansion of Wessex during the early tenth century, Athelstan had a far larger kingdom to control than did any of his predecessors. On Athelstan's accession in 924, he inherited the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia as well as the area of the Danelaw which had been reconquered during the reign of his father Edward the Elder.<sup>299</sup> Consequently he relied more heavily upon his regional officials. In Athelstan's reign the system of one ealdorman governing one shire fell into disuse and the subsequent creation of larger ealdormanries gave the individual ealdormen more power and influence.<sup>300</sup> There is no sign that this led to any rebellion against his authority as king. At least three of his ealdormen, Osferth, Aelfstan and Athelstan, were his relations and this may have strengthened his control over them.<sup>301</sup> The external threat to the English kingdom in the early tenth century was still great and all parts of the kingdom would benefit from stable and central control exercised by the king.<sup>302</sup> There is no indication that the ealdormanries were hereditary during Athelstan's reign and it appears that he had sufficient

control over his most powerful nobility to prevent any inclinations towards separatism. In the South and in the Danelaw, King Athelstan could rely upon the continued loyalty and support of the nobles to whom he had entrusted his regional government..

#### 6. The Thegns (Ministri).

The documentary sources for the early tenth century make little mention of people of the rank of "minister". When one can suggest an identity for an individual "minister" it is often as that of a beneficiary of one of Athelstan's charters. If the identification of charter beneficiaries as members of the "witan" is valid, than the area in which they received land may indicate the area in which that particular "minister" lived. This gives all the identified "ministri" a provenance in the South of England. Another way of identifying the "ministri" is by accepting the probability that the king appointed his ealdormen from amongst the "ministri" of his "witan".<sup>303</sup> Thus the "minister" Aelfhere who appeared in charter witness lists until 938 may appear as an ealdorman in 939 and the "ministri" Aethelwold, Eadric, Athelstan and Aethelmund who frequently witnessed King Athelstan's charters may be the ealdormen of the same names who were charter witnesses during the succeeding reign of King Edmund.<sup>304</sup>

There is one exception to the rule that Athelstan's charters were not witnessed in any particular order by the "ministri". Odda attests every one of Athelstan's charters which record the presence of "ministri" and in seventeen of them he attests at their head. In the two remaining charters S412 and S425 he appears much lower down in the list. However his frequent presence as the first "minister" to attest indicates that he held a position of special dignity. There are signs that a more regular order of attestation is being developed towards the end of Athelstan's reign. In 939 the first four "ministri" are the same in all the four charters of that year. They attest in the following order, Odda, Aelfric, Eadmund and Wulfsige. The only difference is in S446 when Eadmund attests before Aelfric.

The group of "ministri" who attest Athelstan's charters most frequently is small. Their names are Odda, Wulfhelm, Athelstan, Aelfneah, Wulfsige, Aelfred, Wulfgar, Aethelmund, Witgar, Aelfric, Eadric, Alfsige and Aethelwold. After 935 they are joined by Ordeah, Athered and Sigulf. This group of regular witnesses possibly represents those "ministri" who were working most closely with the king.

The number of "ministri" attesting varies from nine in S395 to fifty-nine in S416. The largest numbers are recorded in the charters of the early 930s, but not all the charters of this period have more witnesses than the rest.



S400, S412, S418 and S422 all have less than twenty attesting "ministri" and most of the charters outside the 930-4 period have between fifteen and twenty-five. The charter copy S407, after listing twenty-four "ministri" by name, concludes with the words "et plures alii milites quorum nomina in eadem carta inseruntur, consenserunt et subscripserunt".<sup>306</sup> This indicates that, in the charter copies at least, not all those "ministri" recorded as present at the time the charter was issued were necessarily included when the charter was recopied. This could explain why the number of "ministri" witnessing the different charters is not consistent, but there may still be some significance in the larger numbers attesting the charters of the early 930s. It is notable that the original charters S416 of 931 and S425 of 934 both have over fifty "ministri" attesting whereas the two originals of 939, S447 and S449, have only nineteen. There are no "ministri" with Scandinavian names whose presence is linked specifically with the 928-34 period only, but the increase in the numbers of "ministri" attesting during this time may be connected with the changes evident in other sections of the witness lists of the charters of the 928-34 period.<sup>307</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon word "thegn" is the nearest equivalent to the Latin "minister". The status of a thegn is not absolutely clear. Thegns were not as powerful as the underkings and the ealdormen, the other lay members of the

king's "witan". The word thegn denotes service, one who serves without being servile and thus a freeman who gave his personal loyalty to a lord.<sup>308</sup> The qualifications for thegnly status as shown in the tenth-century law codes reveal that the thegn was a landowner who was involved in the maintenance of law and order in his locality in the shire.<sup>309</sup> The Latin word "miles" was also translated as thegn and this suggests that some thegns, but not necessarily all, had military duties also.<sup>310</sup> A thegn was therefore a member of the landed nobility concerned with local government and in the service of a more powerful lord.

Chadwick argued that most of the thegns witnessing the charters of the tenth century came from a restricted group of families who were related to the king.<sup>311</sup> Not enough is known about the thegns of Athelstan's charters to prove this for his reign. The two thegns Eadric and Aethelwold, as members of Athelstan Half-king's family were related to King Athelstan, but one cannot show that this was the case for the numerous other "ministri".<sup>312</sup> It appears that the thegns who attest Athelstan's charters were connected to him by ties of personal loyalty rather than kinship.

The charter S396 of 926 has Wulfhelm "discifer regis" at the head of the list of "ministri" and S397, a charter from the same assembly, has an abbreviated witness list which mentions "disciferi" amongst those present. The word "discifer" is the Latin equivalent of seneschal, an

important officer in the king's household. These are the only explicit references to the king's household officials in the witness lists of Athelstan's reign.

It has been argued in the prosopography that the "discifer" Wulfhelm of S396 appears in later charters as a "minister" and it is probable that other members of Athelstan's household were witnessing his charters under the general title of "minister". Such officials are recorded as witnesses to charters of the later tenth century, and especially during the reign of the eleventh century king, Edward the Confessor. The wills of King Alfred and King Eadred show the importance of the king's household officials to the king in the bequests made to various members of that household. The household officials are obvious candidates for membership of the "witan". They were directly in the king's service, many holding positions of trust and influence near the king. They accompanied him in his travels around the kingdom as members of his entourage, thus being present at the meeting places chosen for the "witan". It is possible that the group of "ministri" mentioned above who regularly attested Athelstan's charters are in fact members of his household.

Keynes' examination of the charters of King Aethelred the Unready led him to the conclusion that the thegns present represented firstly the members of the king's household and, in the lower part of the lists, thegns of the locality in

which the assembly was held. There is no reason why the composition of King Aethelred's "witan" should differ materially in this respect from that of King Athelstan and I have assumed that the same type of thegns were included in the "witans" of both kings. Since there is no indication in the witness lists whether the "ministri" were serving the king or not, various different opinions have arisen on this

<sup>316</sup>subject. In the eleventh century there was a distinct difference between the rank of a thegn and a king's thegn, the latter being a thegn in the king's service. This is seen during Cnut's reign in the greater value given to the heriot of the king's thegn.<sup>317</sup> However, this difference in social status cannot be proved for the early tenth century.

There is not sufficient material surviving which refers to the status of the thegn during Athelstan's reign to discover whether all those thegns who attest his charters were king's thegns and of a higher social status than the ordinary thegn. The thegns who attested his charters were either members of his entourage or important figures of the locality in which the assembly was summoned. Since thegnly status involved maintaining the king's law in the shires, those thegns who were not actually amongst the king's entourage were still, in a sense, working on behalf of the

<sup>318</sup>king. Athelstan's laws clearly state that attendance at an assembly was the duty of those summoned and non-attendance

<sup>319</sup>was punishable by a fine. This shows that the king was

firmly in control of his assembly and chose who was to attend it. Consequently it can be said that all the "ministri" at a "witenagemot" were present at the request of the king and in this broad sense they were all the king's men. This problem is considered further in the conclusion to this chapter by comparing the evidence with that known about the Carolingian system.

## CONCLUSION

### 1. The Composition of the 'witan'.

The examination of the witness lists of Athelstan's charters has shown that the medieval copyists tended to abbreviate them. This means that the lower categories of witnesses are recorded in far fewer charters than the leading attestors. When charters with a full range of witnesses survive, they show that in all the categories of the 'witan' there was a central core of regular witnesses who attested charters repeatedly at different meetings throughout Athelstan's reign. These witnesses can be divided into four categories, two which represent the Church and two the laity. The prosopography has shown that the witnesses in these four categories are :

1. Wulfhelm, archbishop of Canterbury.
2. The bishops of Winchester, London, Worcester, Ramsbury Rochester, Crediton, Wells and Selsey, with the possible inclusion of Lichfield before 934.
3. The ealdormen of Wessex, ealdorman Uhtred of Sussex and ealdorman Aelfstan of Mercia.
4. The 'ministri' Odda, Wulfhelm, Wulfsige, Athelstan, Aelfheah, Aelfred, Wulfgar, Aethelmund, Witgar, Aelfric, Eadric, Aelfsige and Aethelwold.

All the witnesses in this list who have been identified are from the south of England. This is undoubtedly because it was the area in which nearly all Athelstan's 'witenagemots' were held and the area over which he held direct control throughout his reign. The importance of the two categories of clergy as members of the 'witan' is clearly seen in the discussions about the archbishops

and bishops earlier in this chapter. Not only were they regularly present at the 'witenagemots' but they were also involved in drawing up Athelstan's law-codes. Two missions to the Continent were led by bishops during Athelstan's reign. The one in 929, led by Cenwald of Worcester, included the two abbots Cynath and Aelfric.<sup>322</sup> The one in 936 was led by Oda of Ramsbury who became archbishop of Canterbury in 942.<sup>323</sup> When one adds to this the fact that at least five of Athelstan's bishops were appointed from amongst the priests of his household, it is apparent that the Church was closely involved in governmental business and that the king had great influence over the appointments to important ecclesiastical positions.<sup>324</sup> The close relationship between the king and the Church is reflected in Athelstan's reputation for piety and generosity towards the Church.<sup>325</sup> The monastic reformation of the later tenth century has its beginnings in Athelstan's reign, when many of the bishops appointed to important ecclesiastical sees were interested in church reform.<sup>326</sup>

There are also close connections between the laity of the witness lists and King Athelstan. An ealdorman was, in effect, a regional governor and the king naturally appointed to such powerful positions people upon whose loyalty he could rely. At least three of King Athelstan's ealdormen, Aelfstan, Osferth and Athelstan, were related to him and Osferth and Aelfstan are amongst the regular core of charter witnesses.<sup>327</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that ealdorman Athelstan of East Anglia is not included in the central core of witnesses mentioned above, despite his relationship to the king and the great

amount of personal power he held as ealdorman of East Anglia. His presence at the 'witenagemot' was possibly limited by the demands of an ealdormanry which consisted of a large part of the Danelaw only recently brought under West Saxon control.<sup>328</sup>

It is possible that the ealdormen were appointed from amongst the 'ministri' of Athelstan's 'witan'.<sup>329</sup> One can trace the promotion of several individuals from the rank of 'minister' to that of 'dux' in the 930's and 940's. The two most obvious examples of this are the two brothers of ealdorman Athelstan, Aethelwold and Eadric.<sup>330</sup> The main problem with the word 'minister' is that it is a general title which makes no mention of the actual position or role of the 'ministri' as individuals. In the discussion about the 'ministri', the word has been defined as referring to the thegns of the king's household and important thegns in the locality of the shires.<sup>331</sup> Some further information is available when one considers the corroborative clauses of the 928-34 charters. In the earliest of these, in the charters S400 and S399, it is stated that they were witnessed 'in arce regia quae calatur Execaster rege Adelstano suos subregulos, episcopos, duces, iudices, proceres, dignitates gaudio cum magno pascendo'.<sup>332</sup> S416, amongst others,<sup>333</sup> lists 'episcopis, abbatibus, ducibus, patriae, procuratoribus'. S422 states that it was witnessed by 'tota procerum generalite', S407 by 'tota optimatum generalite' and S426 by 'tota magnatorem generalite'.<sup>334</sup>

All the charter witnesses were evidently leading men of the kingdom because they are referred to as 'proceres', 'optimates', and 'magnatores'. The corroborative clause type



represented by S416 speaks of bishops, abbots, ealdormen and 'procuratores patriae'. S399 and S400 are especially interesting in this respect because they list underkings, bishops, ealdormen, 'judices', 'proceres' and 'dignitates'. The specific listing of officials such as 'judices' and procuratores is surely significant for the composition of Athelstan's 'witan'. They were not descriptions of the ealdormen, as this category of the laity is referred to as the 'duces' in the corroborative clauses of S399, S400 and S416. I would suggest that the terms used to describe such officials may be an indication of the positions held by at least some of the attesting 'ministri'. This is the only evidence the charters contain, other than the mention of the household official the seneschal in S396 and S397, that the 'ministri' were in fact officials with a role in the government of the country.

To conclude, present as members of the 'witan' were the leading officials of the Church, the ealdormen and the 'ministri'. This last category consisted of lesser officials involved in local government and members of the king's household. They were all people in positions of power and influence with an interest in the smooth running of the kingdom.

There are interesting parallels available if one compares the 'fideles' of the Carolingian kings, as defined by Charles Odegaard, with the 'witan' of King Athelstan.<sup>335</sup> Odegaard discusses the terms 'vassi' and 'fideles' in Carolingian Europe and this discussion led him to two conclusions. Firstly, that the 'vassi' were armed retainers used to maintain order in the Empire and especially obliged

to give military service. The privilege of having 'vassi' was not confined to the king but the royal 'vassi' had greater status than the 'vassi' of the leading Church and lay nobility. It was even possible for the royal 'vassi' to have their own 'vassi'.<sup>337</sup> The 'fideles' Odegaard interprets as the generality of the king's servants, those who had commended themselves to the king and entered his service. They included amongst their number 'all the regular members of the administrative hierarchy such as bishops, abbots, dukes, counts, vassals and other officials as well as princes who admitted their subservience to the king'.<sup>338</sup> Thus the king's 'vassi' were numbered amongst the king's 'fideles'.

When one considers the witnesses of Athelstan's charters, it is evident that the ranks of the people attesting correspond closely to those men described as Carolingian 'fideles'. Archbishops, bishops and abbots are numbered amongst the Carolingian 'fideles' and all these three ranks of ecclesiastics appear as witnesses to Athelstan's charters.<sup>339</sup> The 'subreguli' of Scotland and Wales must surely resemble the princes who became 'fideles' of the Carolingian kings by admitting their subservience to them.<sup>340</sup> The counts and dukes of Carolingian Europe acted as representatives of royal authority in a particular area. This would appear to be an accurate description of the function of an Anglo-Saxon ealdorman.<sup>341</sup> If the identification of the 'ministri' of Athelstan's charters as household thegns and men holding official positions in the shires is correct, then they may loosely correspond to the officials who constituted the lower ranks of the

Carolingian 'fideles'. Also, the 'vassi' of the Carolingian kings were counted as his 'fideles'.<sup>343</sup> Since the 'vassi' were armed retainers, there is a possible equivalent of the term 'vassi' in the Anglo-Saxon evidence.

The Latin word 'miles', like the word 'minister', is translated into O.E. as thegn.<sup>344</sup> Loyn argues that the word 'miles' has military connotations and the Anglo-Saxon 'miles' was a thegn with a special military obligation.<sup>345</sup>

This bears comparison with the function of the Carolingian 'vassus' as an armed retainer. However, it is impossible to distinguish individual 'milites' in the witness lists to Athelstan's charters because all the thegns are described as 'ministri'. Only in S407 does it state that 'milites' were amongst those witnessing.<sup>346</sup> This in itself is interesting because S407 is a charter from the year 934. It was issued at Nottingham just before Athelstan went North on his Scottish campaign. Since it has been suggested that the witness list of S407 shows the leading members of the army that went to Scotland, the presence of 'milites' amongst their number may be indicative of the military nature of the 'witenagemot' at Nottingham.<sup>347</sup>

Consequently one can observe that Odegaard's description of the Carolingian 'fideles' has an obvious resemblance to those people listed as witnesses to Athelstan's charters. It is reasonable to suggest that Athelstan's 'witan', as represented in his charters, may be the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of the Carolingian 'fideles' and thus consist of men who had commended themselves into Athelstan's service. I put forward this suggestion with the proviso that one cannot judge the degree of subservience

of many members of the 'witan' to King Athelstan.

Certainly the Northumbrian laity and clergy were not as firmly under Athelstan's control as were their southern counterparts. The 'subreguli' attest Athelstan's charters for only part of his reign so Athelstan's control over them was quite possibly limited.<sup>348</sup>

The Carolingian assembly is described by Hincmar in his treatise 'De Ordine Palatii' and was apparently attended by the king's 'fideles' in Odegaard's sense of the word.<sup>349</sup> This further evidence that there was close similarities between the Anglo-Saxon 'witenagemot' and the Carolingian general assembly, since they were attended by the same type of person. Hincmar's treatise dealt with the assembly during the ninth century and it makes evident the fact that the assembly was firmly under the king's control.<sup>350</sup> Rosenthal's study of the general assembly in the reign of Louis the Pious concludes that it was not essential for the Carolingian king to govern through the assembly, but that he did so by choice.<sup>351</sup> The assembly had an essentially passive role in any discussion of the king's decrees. It was a method of public government manipulated and controlled by the king.<sup>352</sup>

It has been established that Athelstan summoned his 'witan' to a place of his own choice on his own estates and that the meeting-places chosen were similar to those chosen by the Carolingian king's for meetings of their assemblies.<sup>353</sup> Little is known about the topics discussed by the Anglo-Saxon 'witan'

during Athelstan's reign. It can be shown that they were involved in the issue of law-codes and charters and also, in 934, in a military campaign.<sup>354</sup> It is possible to argue from this evidence that the matters known to have been dealt with at Athelstan's 'witenagemot' appear to be those which needed publication in order to be effective and which were of importance for the kingdom as a whole. Thus one function of the 'witan' may have been that of public government, similar to the role of the Carolingian assembly during the reign of Louis the Pious, as interpreted by Rosenthal.<sup>355</sup> I have argued that the 'witan' were similar to the Carolingian 'fideles', and it is not surprising that the 'witenagemot' should appear to be firmly under Athelstan's control. The 'fideles' gave support and obedience to the king, not opposition.<sup>356</sup>

## 2. The Charters of the 928-34 Period and the Chronological Framework for Athelstan's Reign.

There are several distinct differences between the charters of the 928-34 period of Athelstan's reign and those that were issued outside this period. The differences lie firstly in the increased length of the witness lists within the period. The charters are attested by a greater number of witnesses in each category, and these include the archbishop of York and several of his suffragans, the 'duces' with Scandinavian names and the presence of a larger number of 'ministri' than is usual outside the 928-34 period. There are also two new categories peculiar to this period, those of the underkings and abbots. Secondly, this expansion of the witness lists is paralleled by the

development of an advanced hermeneutic style in the text.<sup>357</sup> The charters of this period thus form a definite group in Latin style and length of witness list. Far more witnesses from a greatly extended area attest these charters, including underkings from Wales and Scotland and 'duces' and clergy from Northumbria. From 934 to the end of Athelstan's reign in 939 a more economical, less florid type of formula is used in the charters and the witnesses are confined to the southern regions of England : Wesseæ, Kent and Mercia.

One possible explanation for this change in 928 is that a different scribe, or scribes, was drawing up the charters and created a more inflated type of Latin prose than that used by his predecessors. The lengthier witness lists might represent a more conscientious effort to record all the members of the 'witan' present on the part of the scribe, rather than an increase in the size of the assembly. However, this does not explain why a category as important as the underkings was omitted before 928, nor why the abbots were not generally recorded prior to this year. It also does not explain why the scribes should use the advanced hermeneutic style for the 928-34 period only.

The style of Latin prose appears to be a conscious attempt to create an impressive document, presumably to reflect the dignity of the grantor, in this case the king. The increased number of witnesses from all parts of the country would also reflect kingly power, in that Athelstan was able to demonstrate this power by calling together people from widely different areas to attend his

'witan' on his estates in the south of England. If one looks at the historical framework of Athelstan's reign the argument that the change in charter style and witness list is a deliberate reflection of his power and prestige, receives strong support.

Athelstan was the successor of King Edward the Elder who, throughout his reign, had expanded the dominion of the West Saxon kings into the Danelaw.<sup>358</sup> This policy of expansion, bringing as it did increased political and military power to the West Saxons, was in effect an imperial policy once the immediate threat to Wessex had been overcome with the unification of Wessex and Mercia under the control of one king in 918.<sup>360</sup> Athelstan's interest in establishing his influence and power in the North of England is evident early in his reign. The charter evidence of S396 and S397 states specifically that the lands in the grants were given to the beneficiaries Ealdred and Uhtred 'quam proprio condignaque pecunia id est XX libras inter aurum et argento a paganis emerat jubente Eadweardo rege necnon et dux Aethelredo'.<sup>361</sup> This surely indicates a policy of expansionism which followed the example of Athelstan's father Edward the Elder.<sup>362</sup> The marriage between Athelstan's sister and Sihtric of Northumbria is another indication that Athelstan was interested in expanding his power to the kingdom of Northumbria. The alliance failed because Sihtric died in 926 and his successor Guthfrith had no ties of kinship with Athelstan.<sup>363</sup> However, Athelstan's relationship to Sihtric through the marriage of his sister gave him an excuse to intervene in Northumbrian affairs. A battle for control of Northumbria followed

and this culminated in the events of 927, during which year Athelstan ousted Guthfrith from the throne of York.<sup>364</sup> Guthfrith went to Dublin and this left a gap in the power structure of the Northumbrian kingdom.<sup>365</sup> I suggest that Athelstan filled this gap by gaining the submission of the powerful men of the region. It is noteworthy that in the following year of 928, the first Scandinavian 'dux' appears in the charter witness lists.<sup>366</sup> In 927 'all the kings who were in this island' submitted to Athelstan at Eamont.<sup>367</sup> Those named in the documentary evidence are Constantine of Scotland, Owain of Strathclyde, Ealdred of Bamborough, Howel of Deheubarth, Idwal of Gwynedd and Owain of Gwent.<sup>368</sup> In the same year Athelstan met the Welsh kings at Hereford and established a yearly tribute from them.<sup>369</sup> It was also about this time that the boundary between the West Welsh of Cornwall and the Anglo-Saxon shire of Devon was established at the Tamar river and the boundary between England and Wales along the river Wye.<sup>370</sup> It is interesting, therefore, that the first attestations of the 'subreguli' as well as the Scandinavian 'duces' occur in 928. Athelstan's position as overlord of Northumbria made him the obvious protector of the Northumbrian church. Again the first attestation of the bishop of York to one of Athelstan's charters occurs in 928 and is probably the result of the establishment of Athelstan's supremacy.<sup>371</sup> By the end of 927 Athelstan was the single most powerful figure in the island of Britain.

The presence of the most powerful of those who acknowledged Athelstan as king or overlord, as members of his 'witan' adequately expressed the imperial nature of his



power. The presence of a large number of the leading clergy of England similarly expressed his supremacy but also demonstrated his position as a Christian king. Athelstan's generosity to the Northumbrian church included gifts to the major northern ecclesiastical centres at Ripon, Beverley, Chester-le-Street and York.<sup>372</sup> His active support and generosity to the church in Northumbria was an obvious way in which to consolidate his control over the region. If Athelstan had the backing of the Church, he would have an effective power base from which he could control the rest of Northumbria. The summoning of the 'witan' between 928-34 was quite possibly, as Stenton has suggested, the summoning of a new type of Great Assembly, but it did not represent the Anglo-Saxon people.<sup>373</sup> It reflected the newly acquired imperial status of the West Saxon king. I suggest therefore that the advanced hermeneutic style and lengthy witness lists characteristic of the charters of the 928-34 period arose as a result of Athelstan's success in 927 and that they gave expression to his power in an imperial style.

Ceremony and ritual had a great and immediate importance for the early medieval kings.<sup>374</sup> They were methods by which kingly power was expressed to the people in a form which emphasised both temporal and spiritual supremacy. The phrase 'gaudio cum magno pascendo' found in the corroborative clauses of S399 and S400 must indicate the ceremonial nature of the meeting of the 'witan' in 928. The king provided a feast for his 'witan' and thus emphasised his power through his generosity. In a sense, the greater the number of subordinates present at an assembly

the greater the king's power would appear. The 'witan' therefore had an element of propaganda in their function, not least because the yearly summoning of the underkings and Northumbrians to Athelstan's royal estates in the South ensured that his pre-eminence was emphasised to those of his subordinates over whom he had no other permanent methods by which he could impose any regular form of control.

The year 934 is the last year the advanced hermeneutic type of charter was used in Athelstan's reign and the last year that the extremely long witness lists appear.<sup>375</sup> The reason why the charter style changed after this year may be connected with the Scottish campaign of 934.<sup>376</sup> The campaign was a success, as is shown by the only surviving attestation of Constantine of Scotland in a charter from the autumn of 934.<sup>377</sup> Yet the need for a campaign against the Scots shows that the conditions established in 927 were breaking down and although Athelstan was successful in 934, Constantine was at the head of the great army which opposed him three years later at Brunanburgh.<sup>378</sup>

It would appear from the charter evidence that Athelstan's overlordship was on the decline after 934. The style of the charters is less florid and the number of witnesses decreases, all the identifiable witnesses coming from the South of England. The Welsh underkings were present at the two meetings in 934 which took place before the Scottish campaign, but it is not known whether they took an active part in it.<sup>379</sup> Their disappearance from the witness lists is further evidence for an apparent decrease in Athelstan's influence outside his own kingdom.<sup>380</sup>

The Welsh took no part on either side at Brunanburgh, which together with their disappearance from the witness lists in 934 may indicate that Athelstan's influence over the Welsh 'subreguli' was also on the decline.<sup>381</sup>

The silence of the sources concerning the years 935-7 makes it difficult to account for the events which led up to Brunanburgh. In the Anglo-Saxon chronicle the annal for 937 celebrates Athelstan's victory there with a laudatory poem unlike any other chronicle entry for his reign.<sup>382</sup> Even the submission of the kings of Britain in 927 is recorded in the chronicle briefly and in prose.<sup>383</sup> It is possible that the unique nature of the poem celebrating the battle of Brunanburgh reflects the threat facing Athelstan's kingdom in 937. The combined army of the Scots, the Scandinavians and possibly the Northumbrians was a far greater threat than any others of Athelstan's reign and the outcome of the battle was by no means certain.<sup>384</sup>

Despite the fact that Athelstan was victorious at Brunanburgh, his success did not lead to the renewed attestations of the Scottish kings or the leading men of Northumbria. After 937 the charter witness lists continue to record the presence of witnesses from the South of England only. This may indicate that Athelstan succeeded in maintaining the 'status quo' through the defeat of the great army at Brunanburgh but that he did not restore the same degree of imperial power which he had held earlier in his reign.

In the remaining years of Athelstan's reign there is no record of any other external threats to the Anglo-Saxon

kingdom. Fighting for the control of Northumbria broke out again in 940, the first year of the reign of Athelstan's successor King Edmund and Northumbria did not become a part of the West Saxon kingdom until the defeat of Eirik Bloodaxe, the last Scandinavian king of York, in 954.<sup>385</sup> What the charter evidence has shown is that Athelstan was deliberately pursuing an imperial policy. This is combined with his use of the 'witenagemot' as a method of publicizing governmental decisions and as a propaganda base to maintain his 'imperium'. His imperial attitude provided the initial impetus which led finally to the unification of England as one kingdom in 954.

FOOTNOTES - Chapter 4

1. For a list of abbreviated charters see Chapter two, p. 1+2
2. S446 is discussed in chapter two pp 68-9 and S407 on pp 61-2
3. There is the possibility, expressed in S.Keynes, The Diplomas of King Aethelred the Unready (Cambridge, 1980), pp.154-5, that the number of witnesses recorded at the foot of the charter depends upon the space available after the main body of the text had been written. Thus not all members of the 'witan' were represented in the witness lists. I have assumed that the witness lists which show no signs of abbreviation are representative of the type of person who would be a member of Athelstan's 'witan', even if not every member is listed in each charter.
4. For an example of the differentiation between two witnesses with the same name see Category 3. Bishop under the names Aelfheah and Alfheah.
5. See chapter two, charter S446 p. 68
6. See Category 6. Minister, the entry under Wulfhelm and the discussion pp 237-8
7. S400 is a charter copy and the position of the archbishops below the underkings may be a result of a scribal error.
8. All the episcopal dates and identities of the bishops and archbishops in this prosopography are taken from the following sources:  
W. Stubbs, Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1897).  
W.G. Searle, Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles, (Cambridge, 1899) and  
Handbook of British Chronology, ed F.M.Powicke and E.B.Fryde, (London,1961) when possible they have been revised, according to M.A. O'Donovan, 'An Interim Revision of Episcopal Dates for the Province of Canterbury', A.S.E. I, (1972), 23-44, and A.S.E. 2 (1973), 91-115.
9. The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops II, ed J. Raine, R.S. (London,1886), 339-40.
10. A.S.C., ann. 927.
11. Raine, Historians of York, II, 339-40, 518.
12. The exact date of Wulfhelm's accession to Canterbury is not known for certain but I have followed O'Donovan 'Episcopal Dates' I, 32 in placing it in 926.

13. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates'. I, 33. Stubbs, Sacrum, p.25, places Wulfhelm's death wrongly in the year 942.
14. D.Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', The Anglo-Saxons, ed P. Clemoes, (London, 1959), pp.71-5.
15. Note deleted.
16. See chapter two, S400, pp 70-1
17. M.O.Anderson, Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland (Edinburgh, 1973), p.251.
18. A.S.C., ann 927.
19. A.S.C., ann 920.
20. Sym/D I, 76 and II, 124.
21. A.S.C., ann 934.
22. A.S.C., ann 937.
23. Anderson, Kings and Kingship, p.267.
24. *ibid.*, p.267.
25. W/M G.R. I, p.147, nl.
26. A.S.C., ann 927.
27. Sym/D II, 93.
28. W/M G.R.I, 147.
29. S426.
30. S413.
31. A.S.C., ann. 927.
32. J.E.Lloyd, A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Norman Conquest, 2nd. ed. (London, 1912) p.353. On page 353 there is a chart showing all the attestations of the tenth century Welsh Kings to the Anglo-Saxon charters.
33. These laws are printed in:-  
Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Northern Ireland I, ed A.W.Haddan and W.Stubbs (Oxford, 1864), 219-83.
34. Lloyd, History of Wales, pp.336-7.
35. *ibid.*, p.333.
36. A.S.C., ann. 942. See also the entry in the prosopography under Judwal Underking.

37. Lloyd, History of Wales, p.337.
38. Brenhinedd Y Saesson, ed and trans. T.Jones (Cardiff, 1971), p.33.
39. The last Anglo-Saxon charter attested by Howel Dda is S544.
40. A.S.C., ann. 942; and Lloyd, History of Wales, p.336.
41. See above under Howel, underking.
42. Anglo-Saxon Charters, ed. A.J. Robertson (Cambridge, 1939), p.313.
43. The last Anglo-Saxon charter Morgan attests is S633 in 956. For a comprehensive list of all the Anglo-Saxon charters attested by Morgan see : Lloyd, History of Wales, p.353.
44. Lloyd, History of Wales, p.336. Also, H.R.Loyn, 'Wales and England in the Tenth Century : The Context of the Athelstan Charters', Welsh Historical Review 10 (1983), 291.
45. W.Davies, Wales in the Early Middle Ages (Leicester, 1982), p.234 n.110.
46. Loyn, 'Wales and England', 292.
47. Jones, Brenhinedd, p.13.
48. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 105-6.
49. O'Donovan, *ibid.*, 105.
50. Robertson, Charters, pp.306-7.
51. S407, S425.
52. Aelfred's successor at Sherborne is bishop Wulfsige.
53. W/M, G.P., p178.
54. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 35 and E.C.N.E.N.M., pp.265-6.
55. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 42-3.
56. See Category 4, Abbot under Aelfric and the discussion.
57. See F/W, 242.
58. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.208.
59. S401 is printed in C.S.II, 343-4, no.665.
60. See Wigred, bishop p.177
61. Aethelgar's first attestation is to S438.

62. Stubbs, Sacrum, p.27.
63. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.283.
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64. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 111-2.
65. *ibid.*, p.111.
66. A.S.C. (A) ann. 951.
67. J. Armitage Robinson, The Saxon Bishops of Wells, B.A.Suppl.Papers (London,1918), p.33.
68. For Cenwald, see E.E. Barker, 'Two Lost Documents of King Athelstan,' A.S.E. 6 (1977), 139 and for Oda: Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiesis, ed. W.Dunn Macray, R.S. (London 1886), p.15.
69. F/W, 132
70. See M.Wood, 'The Making of King Athelstan's Empire : An English Charlemagne?', Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society, ed P.Womald, D.Bullough and R.Collins. (Oxford,1983), p.258.
71. W/M G.R.I.,141.
72. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 102.
73. J. Armitage Robinson, The Times of St.Dunstan (Oxford,1923), pp 19-20
74. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 110.
75. Stubbs, Sacrum, p.26.
76. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 111.
77. Stubbs, Sacrum, p.26.
78. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 101.
79. S510
80. F/W, 131.
81. E.C.N.E.N.M., pp.310-1, Hart suggests that this mission was connected with the marriage of Athelstan's sister Edith to Otto of Germany.
82. The record in the St.Gall confraternity book of Cenwald's visit is printed in Robinson, Saxon Bishops, pp.60-1.
83. Barker, 'Lost Documents', 139.
84. Adam de Domerham Historia de Rebus Glastoniensibus, ed T.Hearne (Oxford,1727), p.94.



85. S675.
86. 'The Crawford Collection of Charters and Documents', Anecdota Oxoniensia, ed. A.S.Napier and W.H.Stevenson (Oxford, 1895), p19, pp.106-7.
87. See ibid., p.104 n6. H.P.R. Finberg, Lucerna (London, 1964), p.112 and notes. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 35 points out that there is an alternative date of 936 for the foundation of the see of Cornwall. Conan's earliest charter attestation is in 931 and so the year 926 is preferred as the date for the foundation of his see.
88. See under 'Aethelgar bishop' for further information on the status of Conan as bishop of Cornwall.
89. The next Cornish bishop recorded is bishop Daniel, he first attests S582 of 955.
90. B687 is a land grant made by Athelstan 'senator'. It is printed in C.S.II, 376-7. See also Memorials of St.Dunstan, ed. W.Stubbs (London, 1874), plxxxviii n8.
91. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 95.
92. See ibid., 95 and Robertson, Charters, p.305.
93. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.138-9.
94. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, p.41.
95. Robinson, Saxon Bishops, pp.7-24.
96. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 36.
97. See under Conan, bishop.
98. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.208. However Napier and Stevenson, 'Crawford Collection', p.73 point out that S405 is attested by bishops from the south and west of England. Eadward is the only northern bishop present and thus he may in fact come from the south with all the other bishops of S405.
99. See Wood, 'Athelstan's Empire', p.258.
100. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 109-10.
101. A.S.C. (A), ann. 931.
102. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 110, 111.
103. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.219. See also Haddan and Stubbs, Councils I, p.676. This has another suggestion for the identity of Mancant as well as that of a Cornish bishop and that is as Marchlwyd, bishop of Llandaff.

104. See Macray, Abbatiae Ramesiensis, p.15. W/M G.P. p.21. states that Oda did not become a monk until he became archbishop of Canterbury in 942.
105. See F.M.Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 3rd. ed. (London,1971), p.347.
106. 'Vita Odonis', Anglia Sacra II, ed H.Wharton (London,1641), pp.78-87.
107. Wharton, 'Vita Odonis', p.78. See also E.C.N.E.N.M., pp.347-8.
108. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.349.
109. Macray, Abbatiae Ramesiensis, p.15.
110. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.348.
111. Barker, 'Lost Documents', 139.
112. Robinson, Saxon Bishops, p.61.
113. See Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.208.
114. Sym/D I, 77.
115. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 105.
116. W/M G.P., p.144.
117. The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, ed F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge,1922), p.169, VI Ath 12.1.
118. See Anglo-Saxon Wills, ed D.Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), pp.2-5.
119. D. Whitelock, Some Anglo-Saxon Bishops of London, The Chambers Memorial Lecture (London,1975), p.18.
120. *ibid.*, p.19 n4.
121. *ibid.*, pp.19-20.
122. See Wulfhelm bishop for further details.
123. The two manuscripts in question are:  
York, Dean and Chapter Library, 'Magnum Registrum Album' pt. 1 fo. 59<sup>r</sup>v (Frohelm). York, *ibid.*, pt. 2, fos. 78<sup>v</sup>-9<sup>v</sup> (Tidelm).
124. For Wilfrith's appointment as bishop see O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 113. For his name, see W.G. Searle, Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum (Cambridge,1897), p.496. There are several variants of the name Wilfrith listed and Searle refers them all to Wilfrith when speaking of the bishop of Worcester.
125. See Cenwald, bishop.

126. In W/M G.P., p.403 he is listed as the bishop of Leicester on the basis of a forged charter of 937, S436.
- ~~127. Sym/D I, 75.~~
128. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 2, 107.
129. O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates' 1, 41-2 Robertson, Charters, p.306.
130. See also, E.C.N.E.N.M., p.265.
131. J. Armitage Robinson, 'The Saxon Abbots of Glastonbury', Somerset Historical Essays (London, 1921), pp.42-5 and Hearne, Adam of Domerham, p.204.
132. Robinson, Saxon Abbots, pp.42-3.
133. *ibid.*, p.43.
134. Robinson, Saxon Bishops, p.61.
135. Barker, 'Lost Documents', p.140.
136. Monasticon Anglicanum I, ed. W.Dugdale (London, 1817), 267, see also W. de Gray Birch, Fasti Monastici Aevi Saxonici (London, 1873), p.34.
137. Dugdale, Monasticon, 267.
138. S418.
139. Robinson, Times of St.Dunstan, pp.36-40.
140. *ibid.*, p.39.
141. Robinson, Saxon Bishops, p.61.
142. S412.
143. See Aldred, abbot.
144. Birch, Fasti Monastici, p.65.
145. See Thomas of Elmham, Historia Sancti Augustini Cantuariensis, ed C.Hardwick (London, 1858), p.19.
146. See Cynath abbot.
147. Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham, ed W.Dunn Macray, R.S. (London, 1863). pp.76-7.
148. Birch, Fasti Monastici, p.93.
149. S392, S395, S397, S399, S426, S429, S431, S437, S442, S458.
150. See H.M.Chadwick, Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions (Cambridge, 1905), p.161.

151. See C.Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king and his Family', A.S.E. 2 (1973), 119, n1.
152. *ibid.*, 121.
153. *ibid.*, 116.
154. *ibid.*, 118.
155. *ibid.*, 118.
156. *ibid.*, 118. The only other information about Aelfstan's death is to be found in Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, ed F.E.Hamer (Cambridge, 1913), p.33. It contains the will of Aelfstan's brother Aethelwold, dated to 946. In it, Aethelwold leaves a bequest to his brother Aelfstan's son, presumably because Aelfstan was dead by the year 946.
157. See A.P.Smyth, Scandinavian York and Dublin, the History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms, 2 vols, I (Dublin, 1975-9), 98-9. Sym/D I, 210 places this event wrongly in 923.
158. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.281. Two years earlier in Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 119, n2, Hart assigned Aelfwald to the ealdormanry of Kent and its adjacent shires. I have taken his later identification in E.C.N.E.N.M. to be the correct one.
159. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king' 116. Napier and Stevenson, 'Crawford Collection', p.83.
160. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 118.
161. *ibid.*, p.
162. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.299. Napier and Stevenson, 'Crawford Collection', p.83 speak of the tradition that Athelstan retired to Glastonbury in 956 but have identified him as a witness to charters up to the year 958. Thus the date of his retirement may be incorrect.
163. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 121.
164. Stubbs, Memorials, pp.44-5, 275, 276., and Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
165. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.299.
166. See Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 123.
167. Chadwick, Institutions, p.185
168. See A. Campbell, 'Two Notes on the Norse kingdoms of Northumbria', E.H.R. 57 (1942), 85-97. Sym/D I, 209 places these events in the 920's.
169. F/W, 131.

170. Chadwick, Institutions, p.185-6.
171. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.365.
172. A.S.C. ann. 927.
173. See Chadwick, Institutions, p.185-6.
174. *ibid.*, p.186.
175. *ibid.*, p.186.
176. A.S.C. (D), 966.
177. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.422.
178. Chadwick, Institutions, p.186.
179. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
180. *ibid.*, 118 n5.
181. S417 has the name Hatel in the witness list and no record of Hadd. However, I have followed Chadwick, Institutions, p.184 in identifying Hatel as a variant of the name Hadd.
182. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
183. The will is that of Aethelgiva, printed in C.S.II, 571 no.812.
184. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
185. *Note deleted.*
186. Chadwick, Institutions, p.186.
187. *ibid.*, p.186.
188. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 118 n5.
189. See Category 6, Minister under Odda minister.
190. Ordgar attests the following charters of Edward the Elder: S359, S362, S364, S367, S368, S372, S373, S374, S375, S376, S377, S378, S381, S382, S383.
191. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 129.
192. E.C.N.E.N.M. p.355.
193. *ibid.*, p.281.
194. Harmer, Select Documents, p.13.
195. Barker, 'Lost Documents', 140.
196. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 118 n5.

197. Chadwick, Institutions, p.185.
198. *ibid.*, p.185.
199. *ibid.*, p.185.
200. Sym/D II, 94
201. *ibid.*, 197. See also Whitelock, 'Dealings with Northumbria', pp.77-8.
202. Chadwick, Institutions, p.185.
203. In the introduction to the A.S.C., Whitelock, p68, n3 places this event in the year 919, suggesting that the Chronicle's chronology is inaccurate.
204. Smyth, York and Dublin I, 104.
205. Chadwick, Institutions, p.186.
206. Liber Eliensis, ed E.O. Blake, Camden, 3rd. ser. 92 (London, 1962) pxiv, lll.
207. The will is in C.S.II, p.571 no. 812. See Scule dux.
208. See Sym/D I, 209. See also P.H.Sawyer, 'Some Sources for the History of Viking Northumbria', Viking Age York and the North, ed R.A. Hall, C.B.A. Res.Report 27 (London,1978), 4. Smyth, York and Dublin I, 97-8 places these events in 914.
- 209 Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
210. Chadwick, Institutions, p.186.
211. *ibid.*, p.186.
212. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 118 n5.
213. *ibid.*, 122, Chadwick, Institutions, p.185.
214. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 122.
215. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.362.
216. Chadwick, Institutions, p.185. See under Ealdred dux in this prosopography.
217. Chadwick, Institutions, p.188.
218. Chadwick, Institutions, p.186.
219. *ibid.*, p.188.
220. *ibid.*, p.188.
221. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.365.

222. Robertson, Charters, no. xxvi notes p.307.
223. See under Odda 'minister', category 6.
224. Blake, Liber Eliensis, p.84.
225. See T.J.Oleson, The Witenagemot in the Reign of Edward the Confessor (Toronto, 1955), pp.56-60 and Keynes, Diplomas, pp.132-4.
226. No attempt has been made to standardize the spelling of the names of the 'ministri' because in most cases it is not possible to ascertain whether the marginal differences of spelling in many names is done deliberately or as the result of an error. For example, see Alferd and Alfred.
227. See under Aelfhere dux.
228. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.297.
229. Aelfred's will is printed in C.S.II, p.328 no.649.
230. E.C.N.E.N.M., p.285. Liber Vitae de Hyda, ed W. de Gray Birch, Hampshire Record Society (London, 1892), p.22.
231. Chadwick, Institutions, p.188.
232. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 119.
233. *ibid.*, 119.
234. Harmer, English Historical Documents, p.33.
235. Chadwick, Institutions, p.188.
236. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.410.
237. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 20.
238. *ibid.*, 118.
239. Chadwick, Institutions, p.188.
240. A. Williams, 'Principes Merciorum Gentis : The Family, Career and Connections of Aelfhere, Ealdoman of Mercia', A.S.E. 10 (1982), 145.
241. See under 'Wulfgar dux'.
242. See the discussion below for the importance of 'Wulhelm discifer regis' as a witness.
243. S458.
244. P.H.Sawyer, 'The Charters of Burton Abbey and the Unification of England', Northern History 10 (1975), p.37.

245. This is the explanation put forward by O'Donovan, 'Episcopal Dates 1', 32.
246. A.S.C. ann. 927, and W/M G.R. I, 147.
247. Whitelock, 'Dealings with Northumbria', p.72 for the argument about Westmorland and Cumberland and E.H.D., p.548 for the suggestion that the grant was made to gain the support of the archbishop of York.
248. For further discussion of the relationship between Church and state see H.R. Loyn, 'Church and State in England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, ' Tenth Century Studies, ed D. Parsons (Chichester, 1975), pp.94-102.
249. A.S.C., ann. 927.
250. See A.S.C., ann 927 and W/M GR I, 148.
251. Loyn, 'Wales and England', 288.
252. Sym/D I, 76.
253. Sawyer, 'Viking Northumbria', 4.
254. Sym/D,II, 93.
255. For the numbers of these charters see the prosopography Category Underking.
256. See Loyn, 'Wales and England', pp.281-30, espec.283-90.
257. S633 is the last charter to be attested by a Welsh king in the tenth century, in the year 956. See Morcant, underking.
258. Lloyd, History of Wales, p.336 n17.
259. The four charters which record only a limited number of bishops are : S429, S431, S437 and S445.
260. See chapter two, the discussion of S396 and S397, p.64-5
261. S392, S430, S438, S441, S446, S447, S448 and S449.
262. See under Burgric bishop.
263. W/M G.R. I., 148-9.
264. See the discussions in all other categories of this prosopography.
265. This occurs in S430 and S438. See also Whitelock, Bishops of London, pp.20-1 n2 for Winchester's prominence from 935-9.



266. For Winchester as the capital of Wessex, see M. Biddle, 'Felix Urbs Winthonia', Tenth Century Studies, ed D. Parsons (London, 1975), pp.125-40.
267. See Category 5. Dux, the discussion.
268. See chapter three, p.123
269. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp.546-7, speaks of the interdependence of Church and State seen through the appointment of bishops during and after the monastic reformation. There is no reason to presume a different situation for Athelstan's reign.
270. Stubbs, Memorials, p.38.
271. Robinson, Saxon Bishops, p.33.
272. Barker, 'Lost Documents', 143.
273. See under Cenwald bishop.
274. See under Oda bishop.
275. See under Theodred bishop.
276. See Category 3 Bishop, under Aelfric and Aelfric abbot.
277. See under Aelfric abbot.
278. W/M G.P., p21.
279. Stubbs, Sacrum, p.27.
280. Searle, Anglo-Saxons, p.229.
281. Sym/D I, 77.
282. A.S.C. ann. 944.
283. See under Saexhelm bishop, Category 3.
284. With the exception of abbot Cynath of Evesham.
285. This table is similar to the one given in Chadwick, Institutions, pp.183-4, which concerns the ealdormen of the early tenth century. The differences are :  
 1) In this table only the ealdormen who held office during Athelstan's reign are listed.  
 2) Only the witnesses of the charters proved to be genuine are listed.
286. Chadwick, Institutions, pp.185-6.
287. Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 118 n5.
288. The two names are : King Athelstan and Constantine, king of the Scots.

289. See Category 2 underking.
290. S.Keynes, The Diplomas of King Aethelred the Unready (Cambridge, 1980), pp.156-7.
291. Chadwick, Institutions, pp.194-5.
292. Chadwick, *ibid.*, pp.194-5.
293. See Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 115-45.
294. *ibid.*, 122-3.
295. *ibid.*, 122-3.
296. A.S.C. ann. 927.
297. S400 is witnessed by Guthrum dux.
298. A.S.C. ann. 917 is when Thurferth submitted to Edward.
299. Robinson, Times of St.Dunstan, pp.26-8 discusses the date of Athelstan's accession, suggesting he came to the Mercian throne in 924 before he came to the throne of Wessex.
300. Chadwick, Institutions, p.194.
301. *ibid.*, p.294. Chadwick also suggests that most ealdormen of the tenth century were related in some way to the royal dynasty of Wessex.
302. The most obvious example of this is the battle of Brunanburgh in 937 when a coalition of Scandinavians and Celts were defeated by King Athelstan's army.
303. Chadwick, Institutions, p.188.
304. *ibid.*, p.188.
305. S446, S447, S448 and S449.
306. C.S.II, 405-7 no 703.
307. This is discussed in greater detail in the conclusion to this chapter.
308. H.R.Loyn, 'Gesiths and Thegns in England from the Seventh to the Tenth Centuries', E.H.R. 70 (1955), 546.
309. *ibid.*, 541.
310. *ibid.*, 543-4.
311. Chadwick, Institutions, p.296.
312. See under Aethelwold minister and Eadric minister in the prosopography, category 'Minister'.

313. Oleson, Edward the Confessor, p.56.
314. See Harmer, English Historical Documents, pp.15-19, for Alfred's will and pp.34-5 for Eadred's will.
315. Keynes, Diplomas, ppl60-1 and pl60,n26.
316. Chadwick, Institutions, p.312 believes all the thegns witnessing charters were king's thegns, but Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p.533 believes some of the thegns attesting a 'witenagemot' may have been more independent of the king.
317. See The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I, ed A.J. Robertson (Cambridge,1925), II Cnut 71 (1-3).
318. Loyn, 'Gesiths and Thegns', 541.
319. Attenborough, Laws, II Ath. 20.
320. See Chapter 2, p. 28
321. See the prosopography under the categories of archbishop, bishop.
322. See the prosopography under bishop for Cenwald and under abbot for Cynath and Aelfric.
323. See Oda bishop.
324. The five bishops known to have been members of the king's household are; Alfheah of Winchester, Beornstan of Winchester, Aelfheah of Wells, Cenwald of Worcester and Oda of Ramsbury.
325. W/M G.R. I, 142.
326. These bishops are Oda of Ramsbury, Alfheah of Winchester and possibly Theodred of London. See the prosopography, category bishop, for further information on these three bishops.
327. See Aelfstan dux, Osferth dux and Athelstan dux in the prosopography, Category Dux.
328. See Hart, 'Athelstan Half-king', 121.
329. Chadwick, Institutions, p.295.
330. See Aethelwold and Eadric in the prosopography, category 'Minister'.
331. See the discussion about the 'ministri', this chapter pp. 272-3
332. C.S.II, S399 pp.342-3, S400 pp.340-2.
333. *ibid.*, 663-6. The other charters which use the same phrase in the corroborative clause are: S403, S412, S417, S418, S419.

334. For S422 see *ibid.*, 392-4 and for S426 *ibid.*, 407-8. S413, printed in CS.II, 360-2 has the phrase 'tota plebis generalitate ovanti perscripta est'. Owing to the evidence from the corroborative clauses of the other charters and the personnel of the witness lists, I have taken the phrase 'tota plebis generalitate' to refer to the leading figures of the kingdom and not to every section of society.
335. See C.E. Odegaard, *Vassi and Fideles in the Carolingian Empire*, Harvard Historical Monographs 19 (New York, 1972).
336. *ibid.*, 22.
337. *ibid.*, 17.
338. *ibid.*, 68.
339. *ibid.*, 62-8 for a discussion of the Carolingian clergy who were 'fideles'. For the Anglo-Saxon evidence, see the prosopography under the categories of archbishop, bishop and abbot.
340. *ibid.*, 62.
341. For further information about the Anglo-Saxon ealdormen, see pp. 260-70 of this chapter.
342. Odegaard, '*Vassi and Fideles*', 68.
343. *ibid.*, 70.
344. Loyn, '*Gesiths and Thegns*', 453.
345. See *ibid.*, 454 for the military obligations of the thegn.
346. S407 is discussed and the concluding phrase of the witness list is recorded in the appendix to Chapter 2, pp. 61-2 of this thesis.
347. For the military nature of the Nottingham '*witenagemot*', see Sawyer, '*Viking Northumbria*', 4.
348. For the attestations of the subreguli and the Northumbrians see the prosopography under the categories of archbishop, bishop, dux and underking.
349. See Hincmar of Rheims, '*On the Governance of the Palace*', The History of Feudalism, trans. and ed D. Herlihy (New York, 1970), p.222, for the membership of the Carolingian assembly.
350. See *ibid.*, pp.225-6.
351. J.T. Rosenthal, '*The Public Assembly in the Time of Louis the Pious*', Traditio 20 (1964), 40.

352. *ibid*, 38-40.
353. See Chapter 3, pp. 134-5
354. For the evidence of the involvement of the 'witan' in the issue of the law-codes, see Attenborough, Laws, p.143, 147, 153, 157 and 169. The 'witan's' presence when charters were drawn up is to be seen in the charter witness lists and the witness lists of S407 and S425 contain the evidence for their involvement in a military campaign.
355. See Rosenthal, 'Louis the Pious', 40.
356. Odegaard, 'Vassi and Fideles', 55.
357. See Chapter 2, p. 45
358. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp.323-35.
359. *Note Deleted*.
360. See A.S.C. ann. 918 which records the death of Aethelflaeda, Edward the Elder's sister and ruler of Mercia. After her death Edward took control of both Wessex and Mercia.
361. S396; C.S.II, 334-6, S397; *ibid.*, 333-4.
362. Sawyer, 'Unification of England' 31.
363. A.S.C. ann. 926 and ann. 927.
364. A.S.C. (E) ann. 927.
365. Smyth, York and Dublin II, p.11.
366. Earl Guthrum who attests S400.
367. A.S.C. ann. 927.
368. These kings are named in the A.S.C. ann. 927 except for Owain of Strathclyde. He is included on the authority of William of Malmesbury in W/M G.R.I, 147.
369. *ibid.*, 148.
370. Loyn, 'Wales and England', 288.
371. See Hrothwald archbishop in the prosopography.
372. Whitelock, 'Dealings with Northumbria', p.72.
373. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, p.352.
374. This is most clearly seen in the inauguration rituals developed for the king at his coronation ceremony. This

is discussed in:

P.H.Sawyer, From Roman Britain to Norman England (London, 1978), pp.184-8, J.L.Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals', Early Medieval kingship, ed P.H.Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds, 1947), pp.50-71.

375. Chapter 2, pp 32-3

376. A.S.C. ann. 934.

377. S426.

378. A.S.C. ann. 937.

379. S425, S407.

380. There is a treaty between the Welsh and the English printed in : F. Liebermann, Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen I (Halle, 1898), 375-9. Liebermann dates the treaty to c935. If this is correct it may be indicative of a new agreement made between Athelstan and the Welsh 'subreguli' after the events of 934.

381. Loyn, 'Wales and England', 290.

382. A.S.C. ann. 937.

383. A.S.C. ann. 927.

384. The role the Northumbrians played at Brunanburgh is not clear. See Whitelock, 'Dealings with Northumbria', p.71 and Smyth, York and Dublin II, 42.

385. See A.S.C., ann. 940 for the outbreak of fighting in Northumbria and Smyth, York and Dublin II, 174-5 for Eirik Bloodaxe.

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