

THE FOUNDATION OF THE OLD MINSTER AND THE STATUS OF WINCHESTER IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES

By B. A. E. YORKE

ABSTRACT

The early Anglo-Saxon sources do not make it entirely clear when the Old Minster was founded or why it was built in Winchester. However, the idea that the minster was founded in 648 and existed for some years before becoming a cathedral is based only on late and unreliable sources and it seems likely that the Old Minster was built for Wine when he became bishop of Winchester in 660–63. It does not appear that Winchester was chosen as the site of the see because it was already a centre of royal administration as the local centre of royal authority seems to have been at Southampton. Nor were the West Saxon kings of the seventh and eighth centuries closely associated with the Old Minster, except for those who were descendants of its founder, Cenwalh. Winchester was probably chosen as the site of the new see in accordance with the wishes of the West Saxon clergy.

INTRODUCTION

The excavations in Winchester during the 1960's naturally re-awakened interest in the early history of Winchester and particularly in the history of the most important seventh-century structure located in the excavations, the Old Minster. Unfortunately the small number of surviving written sources and the enigmatic nature of many of these mean that there is no immediate explanation of why the Old Minster was built in Winchester or clear indication of the status of the city in the early Saxon period. The director of the excavations, Professor Martin Biddle, has proposed that the Old Minster was originally founded as a royal chapel to serve an adjacent royal palace. He has described Winchester as 'the seat of an emergent royal power' in the sixth and seventh centuries and has suggested that after it became a bishopric, if not before, it was 'the traditional centre of the itinerant Wessex kings ... and site of the major ceremonies of the royal house' (Biddle 1972,

237–48). As Professor Biddle has been at pains to point out, such statements are hypotheses based on available evidence, but not fully supported by it. Other interpretations are possible and the purpose of this paper is to explore some of them and review the evidence on which our view of Winchester in the early Saxon period must be based.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE OLD MINSTER

It is important that we should distinguish between sources for Winchester produced before and after the late tenth century. The reign of Edgar (959–75) saw the climax of a reform movement within the English church in which Aethelwold, the bishop of Winchester (963–84), played a leading role. In many ways Winchester became a showcase for the reformers' ideals. The secular clerks were expelled from the Old and New Minsters and replaced by Benedictine monks; the Old Minster was rebuilt in the latest architectural styles, a glowing tribute to the power of the church and the dominance it should play in men's lives, including the king's, for the royal palace in Winchester at this date seems to have stood directly in front of the cathedral (Biddle 1976, 289–92). Many things were overhauled and changed in Winchester as a result of the monastic revival and among them was the history of the Old Minster itself. The activities of the monks can be seen most clearly today in the title deeds that they rewrote, most of them intended not so much to lay claim to land and privileges to which the community was not entitled, but rather to make good lost or inadequate charters or simply to make many of their grants and rights appear to be of greater antiquity than they in fact were (Finberg 1964, 214–44).

Consequently, although many of the historical accounts of Winchester in the early Saxon period produced after the tenth-century reformation may be based on genuine records, there must always be the fear that they have been contaminated by the new views on Winchester's past that were propounded by the monks of the reformed Old Minster.

The outline of the early history of the West Saxon see is given by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History* (III, 7) completed in 731. Bede describes how the first West Saxon bishopric was founded at Dorchester-on-Thames for Bishop Birinus by King Cynegils of Wessex and his godfather and overlord, Oswald of Northumbria. After his death Cynegils was succeeded by his son Cenwalh, a pagan, who was soon expelled by Penda of Mercia. After three years Cenwalh was able to return and resumed his reign as a Christian having been converted while in exile in the kingdom of the East Angles. Soon after his return a Frankish bishop called Agilbert arrived in Wessex and attached himself to the king who eventually asked him to fill the vacant bishopric at Dorchester-on-Thames. However, after a number of years, according to Bede, Cenwalh grew tired of Agilbert's Frankish speech and found himself a bishop of Anglo-Saxon birth, (though apparently trained in Gaul), called Wine, for whom he provided a new diocese with its episcopal seat in the city (*civitas*) of Winchester. Agilbert, offended by this, left the kingdom and not many years later Wine was expelled by Cenwalh, though we are not told why. The West Saxons then remained without a bishop until Cenwalh began to equate his lack of military success with the lack of a bishop and asked Agilbert to return; as Agilbert was not free to do so, he sent his nephew Leuthere instead. Leuthere presumably also had his seat at Winchester, though we are not specifically told so, but his successor, Haedde, was certainly based there and had the body of Birinus transferred from Dorchester to the church of St Peter and St Paul in the city.

Although this account contains much useful information it has some obvious shortcomings as well. No dates are given and some passages, notably the equation of failure to support the

church with lack of military success, bear the stamp of Bede's editorial hand. The suggestion that the see was founded at Winchester because Cenwalh objected to Agilbert's speech is singularly unsatisfactory, particularly as Cenwalh apparently had no qualms in acquiring another Frankish bishop at a later date. A more convincing explanation may be provided by known Mercian military successes in the Dorchester-on-Thames area which may have made it impossible for Agilbert to continue to function as bishop of all Wessex (Finberg 1964, 215). Whatever the reason, Bede was presumably reproducing the version that was current in Winchester in his own day for Bishop Daniel of Winchester was one of his informants (*EH* Preface). That Bede has so little to say on the early history of the church at Winchester invites the conclusion that there was little available evidence for Daniel to send him.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* has little additional information, but does provide some dates. Although these dates should often be regarded as only approximate, it seems likely that contemporary annals were kept for much of Cenwalh's reign, though, of course, these only survive as part of the *Chronicle* that was put together in the ninth century (Stenton 1926, 163-4). The *Chronicle* places the baptism of Cynegils in 635. The accession of Cenwalh is dated to 641 or 642 and included in the notice of his accession is the information that he had the church (*cyricean*) at Winchester built. Agilbert's appointment as bishop of the West Saxons is dated variously to 649 or 650 and his departure placed in 660. Wine is given a period of tenure of three years from this date and Leuthere's succession is given under the year 670. The *Chronicle* account does not give any indication that the West Saxon see moved from Dorchester-on-Thames to Winchester and Wine is represented as succeeding Agilbert rather than, as Bede implies, overlapping with him. It would seem likely that an episcopal list with the number of years each bishop was in office lies behind these *Chronicle* entries which would explain why they are so brief and uninformative. The only reference to Winchester is the attribution of the construction of its church to Cenwalh in the note on his accession and this

does not necessarily derive from a seventh-century annal, but could have been added when the whole *Chronicle* was put together, probably in the reign of King Alfred.

The Later Sources

All other information about the foundation of the Old Minster comes from sources of a much later date. This includes the date of 648 that is often quoted for Cenwalh's foundation of the Old Minster. The date comes from a bilingual version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* known as 'F' which was produced at Christ Church Canterbury in the late eleventh or early twelfth century (Whitelock *et al.* 1961, xvii). The entry for 648 records that, 'In this year the minster in Winchester was built, which Cenwalh caused to be made and consecrated in St Peter's name' (*Chronicle* I, xli). It is one of six entries in 'F' which show an interest in Winchester and is the earliest source to imply that the minster was in existence before Winchester became a see. The main problem in assessing it is that we do not know from where the Christ Church chronicler got his information. As there are a number of Winchester entries in 'F' a Winchester source is likely and there were close connections between Winchester and Canterbury in the late Saxon period, but if a genuinely early source did survive at Winchester until this date it is surprising that it was apparently not known to Bishop Daniel in the eighth century or to the ninth-century compiler of the original *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Further light is thrown on the 648 entry in 'F' by the existence of a more developed tradition that the church at Winchester was built very early on in Cenwalh's reign. The fullest account of this version is to be found in the *Winchester Annals* (Luard 1865, 2–15) whose pre-Conquest entries are believed to have been put together in the later twelfth century (Biddle 1976, 189 n.3) and make use, among other sources, of a number of the dubious charters produced after the tenth-century reformation. According to this version the foundation of the West Saxon see at Dorchester-on-Thames was merely a temporary expedient until a suitable church was built in Winchester. Cynegils did not live long enough to

carry out his intentions and the obligation to fulfil them passed to Cenwalh who, as soon as he had dealt with Penda, built an *ecclesiam pulcherriam* in the city and the transfer took place (Luard 1865, 4–5). This version of Winchester's early history had probably been in existence sometime before the twelfth century as there are allusions to it in some of the forged charters (e.g. Sawyer 325) and it fits in with one of the apparent aims of these documents, namely the desire to give the Old Minster a greater antiquity than it was entitled to. The *Winchester Annals* also record that Cynegils decided to endow his new see with all the land within a circumference of seven leagues of the city and that Cenwalh fulfilled this intention as well.

Discussion

None of this information is implausible as it stands. We know that the hundred of Chilcomb, to give Cenwalh's endowment its later name, was one of the most important possessions of the Winchester clergy and in their possession by the tenth century (John 1965, 408–11). As the practice of writing charters was not established when Cenwalh endowed his see we have no early record of what his grant may have consisted. It is certainly plausible that Cenwalh would provide his bishop with land close to his episcopal seat and Biddle has argued that the hundred may represent the *territoria* of the Roman town (Biddle 1972, 241). The tradition may be correct, but unfortunately we can never be sure as we do not know on what evidence these later claims were made. In the case of the traditions about the building of the minster in Winchester we can be rather more suspicious as this is a subject with which Bede deals. As we have seen, Daniel was only able to provide Bede with a story about Agilbert's Frankish speech as a reason for the division of the see and could provide no dates (as Bede would surely have included them if he had). The ninth-century compiler of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* apparently did not realise that the see had ever moved and had no separate date for the building of a church in Winchester. In view of this, and the apparently poor tradition of record keeping in early Saxon Winchester, can we believe that the date of 648

in 'F' comes from a genuinely early source that was unknown to writers in the eighth and ninth centuries? In fact, if one wanted to provide a date for the foundation of the Old Minster based on the premise that Cenwalh founded the church as early as he possibly could in his reign and using the information contained in the early sources then 648 is the date that would be arrived at. Cenwalh is known to have been a pagan at his accession; the *Chronicle* records he was expelled in 645 and Bede says that he returned three years later as a Christian. Therefore on this calculation 648 is the first possible date for Cenwalh to have built the Old Minster.

The possibility that there was a church in Winchester before the see was transferred there must be admitted, but it should be appreciated that the only suggestion of it is in late sources where it keeps rather dubious company. If we restrict ourselves to pre-tenth-century accounts we would assume that the Old Minster was built when Wine was appointed bishop. The *Chronicle* dates Wine's appointment to 660 and gives him a period of only three years in office. This date is likely to be broadly correct for the foundation of the see as Agilbert must have left Wessex in or not long after 660 as he stayed in Northumbria 'some time' (*aliquandiu*) before the synod of Whitby (664) in which he played a significant part (*EH* III, 25). On the other hand, Wine was still bishop of Wessex in 664 as Chad was consecrated by him in that year (*EH* III, 28), and a post-Conquest chronicler, who used a different version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* from those surviving, places Wine's expulsion in 666 (*Chronicon* I, 27–8) though not too much reliance should be placed on this as post-Conquest chroniclers are notoriously unreliable about dates. All this suggests that we should place Wine's appointment as bishop of Wessex in the date range 660–663 and this, if we let ourselves be guided by our earliest and most reliable sources, is probably also the date for the foundation of the Old Minster. Unfortunately the recent excavations produced no dating evidence for this stage of the Old Minster, but they have shown that there were no major alterations to the main structure of the church from the time of its foundation until the tenth century (Biddle 1968, 271–2),

which could be seen as supporting the suggestion that it was designed as a cathedral from the start.

It is not only the date of foundation that is uncertain in the early history of the minster; we are also not told what type of religious foundation it was, that is whether the cathedral was served by secular clergy or by monks. The term 'minster' is no help because it could be applied to either type of foundation (Deanesly 1941, 25–69), and in any case is not applied to the cathedral until the tenth century. The tenth-century reformers claimed that they were merely returning the Old Minster to its former condition when they expelled the clerks and replaced them with monks (Finberg 1964, 226). However, there is nothing in the early accounts of the see to suggest that there was originally a monastic foundation in Winchester and of its early bishops only Haedde is thought to have been a monk (Farmer 1978, 187). By the time of Swithun (c. 852–62) the foundation was served by secular clergy (Sheerin 1978, 269–70), and as the early accounts refer to a 'church' rather than a monastery in Winchester it is reasonable to assume that the cathedral was served by clerks from the start.

THE STATUS OF WINCHESTER IN THE EARLY SAXON PERIOD

Neither Bede nor the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* offer any explanation of why Winchester was selected as the site of the new West Saxon see. The *Winchester Annals* explain that Winchester was a *regia civitas*, but this is a statement that needs to be examined carefully, for while Winchester could be described as a 'royal city' with some justification after its rapid growth in the tenth century, we must not assume that it had always held the same status. Before we examine the connection between Winchester and the early West Saxon kings it is worth stressing that several of the early Anglo-Saxon bishoprics were also situated in what had been important Roman towns (Hill 1977, 300–2). A number of factors might account for this choice of site: the Roman walls could provide some security, building materials would be readily available and the towns would be at the centre of well-defined routeways.

However, the most important factor was probably the Continental example, for in Italy and Gaul the Christian church established during the Roman empire had survived the inroads of the Germanic and other barbarian peoples and the bishoprics had endured in their urban settings. The importance of missionaries from Gaul and Italy in establishing the Anglo-Saxon church is well known and the Gregorian mission had come with the intention of restoring the Roman diocesan system (*EH* I, 29). The church in Wessex had strong links with both Italy and Gaul. Birinus came from Italy, possibly of Lombardic stock, and had the former Roman town at Dorchester-on-Thames as his episcopal centre. Agilbert came from Gaul and was later bishop of Paris, and Wine, although an Anglo-Saxon, was consecrated there. Therefore if Dorchester had to be abandoned Winchester may have appeared to the ecclesiastics as an obvious successor.

Some of the Roman towns in England selected to become bishoprics were also centres of royal administration. The most obvious examples are London and Canterbury, both of which Bede describes as a *metropolis* by which he seems to have meant the capital of a kingdom (Campbell 1979b, 119). A similar status has been claimed for Winchester by Biddle who has also proposed that the Old Minster was originally founded as a royal chapel to serve an adjacent palace (Biddle 1972, 239–41). This argument depends partly on the belief that the Old Minster was built some years before Winchester became the centre of a diocese and as we have seen this is not an assumption that can be readily supported. Nor can it be assumed that there was a palace in Winchester as early as the seventh century. The first reference to a palace in the city is from the late tenth century when Bishop Aethelwold is said to be living in the royal palace in the early years of his episcopate (Biddle 1976, 189). The earliest direct reference to a king conducting royal business in Winchester is the *Chronicle* entry for 896 when Viking prisoners were brought to King Alfred in the city for him to decide on their fate.

Nevertheless the suggestion that Winchester was a royal centre before the see was transferred there is one that needs to be considered seriously,

though the lack of written sources for the West Saxons in the seventh century means that definite conclusions will be hard to draw. It has been suggested that the cluster of early Saxon cemeteries around Winchester indicates that the city was a focal point for settlement in the region (Biddle 1972, 237). This may be so, but the settlements represented by these cemeteries could also be said to cluster round the Itchen valley, an area of good farming land and probably the routeway of the Saxon settlers into this part of Wessex. One burial of particular interest is the isolated burial in a corner of the earthwork at Oliver's Battery (Andrew and Smith 1931). The male burial was furnished with a spear, knife and a bronze hanging-bowl, and, though rather sparsely furnished, seems to belong to a distinctive group of rich male burials of the late sixth and early seventh centuries, often referred to as 'princely burials' (Arnold 1979, 135). The burial is the nearest we can come to any sort of royal presence in the vicinity of Winchester in this period. The great stumbling-block to seeing some form of occupation within the walled city acting as a magnet for settlement is the lack of sufficient finds from the sixth and early seventh centuries in spite of several seasons of excavations. That Saxons were living in Winchester for part of the fifth century has been demonstrated (Biddle 1972, 234–6), but the only evidence for sixth-century occupation discovered so far is the few sherds of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon pottery from Lower Brook Street (Biddle 1975, 303). The material is insufficient to support a case for continuity from the fifth to the seventh centuries and Winchester compares unfavourably in this respect with some other town sites, including Canterbury and Dorchester-on-Thames (Hill 1977, 294–300). Such seventh-century finds as there are from Winchester are for the most part compatible with the idea that reoccupation of the area within the walls recommenced only after the see had been transferred there, though it is hard to date some of the sites, for instance the South Gate, with any precision (Biddle 1975, 116–19). However, it must remain a very strong possibility that the needs of the Church were responsible for the resettlement of Winchester.

Even after the establishment of the Old

Minster it is hard to demonstrate that Winchester was a centre for any form of royal administration. Particularly significant is the fact that it was not Winchester that gave its name to the shire in which it was situated but the nearby settlement of *Hamton*, the early Saxon precursor of Southampton. The name *Hamton* is of particular significance itself as the element *tun*, although it could convey a variety of meanings, seems often to have indicated in early place-names 'a royal habitation' or 'a centre of authority' (Campbell 1979a, 48–50). *Hamton* is described as a *villa regalis* in a ninth-century charter (Sawyer 288) and when we also find it giving its name to the shire it seems reasonable to assume that it was *Hamton*, not Winchester, that was the centre for royal administration in the locality. This idea is further supported by the fact that in the period c. 750 to c. 850 first sceattas and then pennies seem to have been minted at Southampton, while Winchester does not seem to have become a mint until the reign of Alfred (Dolley 1972, 57–61). *Hamtonscir* is first recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.a. 757, but the laws of Ine (688–726) show that shires were in existence during his reign and there are good grounds for thinking that the system may go back well into the seventh century at least (Chadwick 1905, 282–90). Even if the shire system was not formally in existence by the middle of the seventh century royal villas are likely to have been used for the control and exploitation of the surrounding countryside (Campbell 1979, 11–12). *Hamton* may already have been operating as a local centre of royal authority when the Old Minster was founded in Winchester and the closeness of Winchester to *Hamton* could have been a factor in the selection of the former as the new site of the West Saxon see.

It has also been suggested that Winchester was 'a ceremonial centre' of the early West Saxon kings (Biddle 1972, 246). This claim is difficult to assess because we know so little of the rituals of early Anglo-Saxon kingship. We know, for instance, virtually nothing about the inauguration ceremonies of kings or where they took place or how far the church was involved in them, though it seems unlikely that West Saxon kings were anointed at their accession in the

seventh and eighth centuries (Nelson 1977, 66–70; Sawyer 1978, 187). One royal ceremonial which the church did appropriate from an early date was that of burial. Our early sources only record the burial of one king of the seventh and eighth centuries in Winchester, namely Cynewulf (*Chronicle* s.a. 757). The *Winchester Annals* claimed that Cerdic (d. 534), Cenwalh, Aescwine (d. 676) and Centwine, son of Cenwalh (d. c.686) were all buried in Winchester, and one of the sixteenth-century mortuary chests in the present Cathedral claims to have the bones of Cyneigils (though of none of the others except Cynewulf) (Bussby 1979, 32–3). Some seventh- and eighth-century kings are known to have been buried elsewhere. Caedwalla and Ine both died and were buried in Rome (*EH* V, 7), Beorhtric was buried at Wareham (*Chronicle* s.a. 786) and the brother of a king was buried at Axminster (*Chronicle* s.a. 757). The place of burial of others is not known, but it does appear that West Saxon kings were not invariably buried in Winchester and the number of West Saxon kings of the seventh and eighth centuries that we allow to have been buried there depends upon the credence that we are willing to give to the *Winchester Annals*. In many of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, for instance, Mercia and Northumbria, kings were buried in a variety of ecclesiastical centres and not necessarily just in those that were bishoprics (Sawyer 1978, 238). Just as in life kings travelled continuously through their kingdoms to ensure that the royal presence was felt in all the realm, so were royal corpses not necessarily concentrated in one place, but placed in different centres so that they too could stress the omnipresence of royal authority.

Another way in which we can measure the strength of royal attachment to the Old Minster is by looking at the number of grants of land made to it by West Saxon kings of the seventh and eighth centuries. This approach is complicated by the fact that so many of the Winchester grants covering this period are forgeries and it is often hard to distinguish between a complete fabrication and one that has a genuine base. Nevertheless it does not appear that the kings who ruled between Cenwalh and Ecgrith (acc.

802) were particularly generous in their gifts to Winchester. Only the two grants from Cuthred (740–56) can be accepted as genuine as they stand (Sawyer 258, 259). Most of the kings of this period reserved their patronage for foundations in the diocese of Sherborne (founded 705), such as Glastonbury, Wells and Sherborne itself (Finberg 1964a, 95–115). In many ways this policy is not surprising. Apart from a few attempts to establish control of Sussex and Surrey most of West Saxon military activity in the late seventh and eighth centuries was concentrated on the conquest of the West country and, as in other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, political conquest and royal patronage of local religious foundations would have gone hand-in-hand.

However, some kings appear to have gone out of their way to avoid making gifts to Winchester. For instance, Caedwalla entrusted land on the Isle of Wight and in the province of the South Saxons to the itinerant Bishop Wilfrid rather than to the bishop of Winchester (*EH* IV, 15 and 16). One reason for a lack of generosity towards the Old Minster may be found in the rivalries within the West Saxon royal line. Although it is common to speak of the West Saxon royal house as one unit, it was in fact composed of many different branches linked only by having Cerdic as a common ancestor. At any one time during the seventh and eighth centuries several kings from the different branches might be ruling, though one of these would be dominant and only his name would appear in the West Saxon regnal lists. When Cenwalh came to the throne his branch of the royal family had been dominant for several generations and although his son Centwine held the same position for a while, the family lost its predominance to rival branches in the late seventh century (Yorke 1978, 139–54). The Old Minster may therefore have suffered because of its close association with Cenwalh's line, particularly as in early Anglo-Saxon England religious foundations of all types tended to be regarded as the property of the family who founded them. Caedwalla, for instance, would have little love for anyone connected with Cenwalh's kin as he had been sent into exile by Centwine (*EH* IV, 15). He and kings drawn from other kin groups would prefer to patronise

religious foundations that could be specially associated with their own families. The only eighth-century kings who are known to have taken an interest in the Old Minster are Cynewulf, who was buried there, and Cuthred, who made two grants in favour of the Old Minster. Both of them have names compatible with being descendants of Cenwalh's kin—Cuthred was the name of a nephew of Cenwalh (*Chronicle* s.a. 648) and both *Cyne* and *wulf* are common name-elements in that branch of the royal house.

CONCLUSIONS

This survey suggests that Winchester was not a place of special significance to the West Saxon kings of the seventh and eighth centuries, though individual rulers might differ in the degree of attention they paid to the settlement. It would not appear that Winchester was selected as a site for the new bishopric because it was already a centre of royal administration and the preferences of ecclesiastics in Wessex may be sufficient to account for the choice of site. Of course, once established as a bishopric a certain degree of royal interest was assured, if only in the form of a royal official to keep an eye on the activities of the bishop and supervise traffic to and from the city which the presence of a bishop naturally attracted. Eighth-century kings might not be enthusiastic patrons of the Old Minster, but as Christianity became more firmly entrenched in Anglo-Saxon society bishops could not be ignored entirely and their influence increased steadily. The ninth century saw important dynastic changes in Wessex and important developments in the growth of the Old Minster's endowment and in the fortunes of Winchester itself. In the ninth century the family of Ecgrith attempted (successfully) to make their's the only branch of the royal family from which kings could be chosen. The bishops' moral authorisation of such a move was naturally vital and it is not surprising that Ecgrith and his family were generous patrons of the Old Minster, though not all the grants ascribed to them are genuine. One particularly revealing grant was made on the condition that the bishop and his clergy sup-

ported the claims of Ecgrith's son Aethelwulf to the throne (Sawyer 281). Of course, Ecgrith's desire for the support of the bishop was not the only reason why Winchester thrived in the ninth century. Other factors, such as Ecgrith's new conquests to the east which placed Winchester at the centre of Wessex, instead of on the periphery, and the attacks of the Vikings which temporarily put the settlement at Southampton out of action (Holdsworth 1976, 60) and interested Alfred in the defensive potential of Winchester's Roman walls (Biddle 1972, 250-1), are of immense importance in the growth of Winchester as a town.

But the presence of the bishop did provide a secure and enduring base from which Winchester could grow and, while royal support and interest waxed and waned according to preferences and prejudices of individual monarchs, the presence of the bishop meant that they could not ignore Winchester completely. The history of Winchester suggested here is less regal than has been proposed elsewhere, but it is not necessarily less interesting or important, for it can be seen to reflect the great changes and upheavals that took place in the West Saxon royal house between the seventh and the ninth centuries.

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Author: Dr B A E Yorke, King Alfred's College, Winchester, SO22 4NR.