

WHY GRATELEY? REFLECTIONS ON ANGLO-SAXON KINGSHIP IN A HAMPSHIRE LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the context of the promulgation of the first 'national' lawcode of King Athelstan at Grateley (c.925x30; probably 926x7). A localised context allows a consideration of the arrangements of the royal resources which supplied the Anglo-Saxon 'national' assembly, the witanagemot. In so doing, the paper looks at royal estate organisation in Andover hundred in north-western Hampshire, making a case for the significance of Andover itself. Finally, the role of the landscape in the political ritual of lawmaking is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the exercise of Anglo-Saxon kingship, manifested in land organisation in the hundred of Andover (see Fig. 1). For the most part, the area under discussion is an undulating chalk downland landscape to which some distinctive character may be ascribed (Crawford 1922, 10–11). It is dominated by pasture and the River Anton and its tributary, the Pilhill Brook. Field names indicate that the area was formerly characterised by woodland; indeed in the twelfth century the region was part of the Forest of Chute, which may have had pre-Conquest origins (Bond 1994, 122).

Michael Wood has suggested that north-west Hampshire can be seen as areas organised initially from hillforts and later from royal villas, with relicts of that organisation surviving in the landscape over at least a millennium (Wood 1986, 76–9; see also Hase 1994). Although Wood was writing before the term became common currency amongst archaeologists and historians (and, given the wide audience for whom he wrote, specialist

jargon may have been undesirable), it is evident that what he refers to are *regiones*, the quasi-'proto-kingdoms' of early Anglo-Saxon England. The relicts of such a landscape are therefore useful for understanding manifestations of royal control of the landscape. Although this article may not concur with Wood's tentative designation of Andover and Grateley as separate territories, each focused on hillforts, it is intended to build on his proposition, addressing the question of the royal territory – arguably an early royal territory – in the expression of authority on a 'national' scale.

This paper uses a specific event as a focal point for the examination of the landscape. During the first few years of his reign, King Athelstan issued what was probably his first lawcode at a place which is toponymically identifiable as Grateley, some 8 km west of Andover (Gover 1961, 166). Known as *II Athelstan*, the lawcode, and subsequent references to it provide the only documentary indications of Grateley's appearance in Anglo-Saxon history (Liebermann 1903, 150–67; Whitelock 1979, 417–22). The lawcode can be located on the basis of the epilogue to its Latin version, recorded in the early twelfth-century *Quadripartitus* text, which referred to a 'great assembly at Grateley' (*magna synodo apud Greateleyam*) (Liebermann 1903, 167). There was no reason for this clause to have been fabricated in the twelfth century, as the primacy of a lawcode from Grateley can be ascertained by references to it in Athelstan's later codes (Liebermann 1903, 166–7, 170–1, and 173).

II Athelstan included a variety of clauses associated with the direct implementation of justice in criminal law and a reorganisation of the burghal system. Even by the high standards of the West



Fig. 1 Location map of Grateley and Andover in Hampshire

Saxon dynasty, in which the promulgation of legislation was one of the central tenets of the expression of Christian kingship, it was an important and ambitious text, the 'major "official" statement of the reign', as Patrick Wormald described it (Wormald 1999, 300). Such a legislative statement is hardly unsurprising in view of Athelstan's later achievements. However, one might be more surprised at the choice of Grateley, now an unassuming village, for the site of such a lawcode. The reference to the 1133 grant of a chapel (*capella*) at Grateley alongside a church at Over Wallop in a charter of Henry I (Farrer 1914, no. 132) does not fill one with confidence for the site of an important royal vill and minster church complex of the sort associated with, for example, Cheddar (Blair 1996). Certainly, as will be addressed below, the amount of evidence for

Grateley compares poorly with the more prolific location of Andover.

This leads to the question proposed in this paper's title, to which a simple response could be made: why not Grateley? After all, the peripatetic nature of Anglo-Saxon kingship is well documented, probably including the use of tents (see below, p. 157), and Athelstan's travels are better recorded than most (Hill 1981, 87). It seems only natural that the king would have been documented as staying in 'minor' places of the nature of Grateley just as much as, if not proportionately more than, in such important royal/ecclesiastical centres as Winchester. However, the promulgation of the Grateley lawcode was an event of a calibre which required more than an overnight sojourn of a king and his family. Assemblies which resulted in lawcodes were evidently major

political events. In view of the manner in which early medieval kings operated with a sense of ritual and drama, the landscape in which the law could have been promulgated should not be overlooked, just as the landscape in which the law operated was an important part of its 'meaning' (Reynolds forthcoming). In the process of investigating this, I hope to address the manner in which royal power could be expressed in the landscape and the question of how such assemblies could be resourced through the organisation of West Saxon royal estates.

KINGS AND ASSEMBLIES: GRATELEY AND THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ROYAL POWER

The Grateley lawcode can be usefully considered as a manifestation of the peripatetic nature of Anglo-Saxon kingship. In calling for a legislative assembly, Athelstan, like his predecessors and indeed his successors, was showing that he could command resources and feed his people (or at least those people who were important). The king called his council to a range of different places in order to conduct the affairs of state, the locations of some of which were recorded in charters and lawcodes (Fig. 2). The purpose of an assembly may have determined its scale, with 'legislative' assemblies requiring greater logistical attention due to higher attendance. Although the disposition of land may only have been one relatively unimportant element of the business conducted at some assemblies, locations of assemblies at what seem to be a 'national' level are mostly known from land charters, which due to the assiduous work of a scribe known to diplomatists as 'Athelstan A' are comparatively well recorded during the reign of Athelstan. Such assemblies are known from Exeter, Buckingham, Lyminster (Sussex), Chippenham, Colchester, Worthy (Hants.), Wellow (Hants. or Somerset), Lifton (Devon), Milton (Kent or Dorset), Amesbury, Wilton, Winchester, Nottingham, Frome (Somerset), Cirencester, Dorchester, Abingdon and Hamsey (Sussex) (Keynes 1995, tables 36–9; Sawyer 1968, nos. 1208, 1211), a mixture of rural estates, urban and ecclesiastical centres. In

addition to Grateley, assemblies known to have involved lawmaking (although of course we do not know if they excluded land transactions) were held at Exeter, Thunderfield (Surrey), Faversham (Kent), London and Whittlebury (Northants.) (Liebermann 1903, 150–83). Therefore, Grateley was the only such Athelstan assembly that is known of in the Wessex 'heartlands', although with Chippenham, Worthy, Wellow, Amesbury, Wilton, Winchester, Frome and Dorchester amongst the locations of other assemblies, such West Saxon locations were hardly uncommon in what was otherwise a relatively even geographical distribution. In terms of assemblies at non-urban locations, probably in the open air, such as at Lifton, Thunderfield and Whittlebury, the manifestation of Anglo-Saxon kingship at Grateley does not appear to have been extraordinary.

Given the need for Anglo-Saxon kings to take counsel and to be seen to take good counsel, assemblies were an integral part of Anglo-Saxon kingship, an issue of Old Testament significance. As some of the better-recorded witness lists show (e.g. for Hampshire, Sawyer 1968, nos. 370, 413, 425, 779, 876), particularly large assemblies could result in attendances of some forty or more nobles, many, if not all of whom, were presumably accompanied by their respective retinues. Of course, it is not entirely possible to estimate how many such 'hangers-on' this would have entailed but, if we consider an arbitrary ratio of ten to every one notable, a very rough estimate of at least some four hundred cannot be unrealistic. Assuming that a well-fed, wealthy man would need some 2,000–2,500 calories per day and that a large portion of meat would provide a sizeable element of that intake, such a large party could easily have been supported by a render including the likes of the two cows or ten wethers, and 300 loaves which are specified in King Ine's lawcode from every ten hides (Liebermann 1903, 119–20; Whitelock 1979, 406). While this is not the place to discuss the relationships between a seventh-century lawcode and late Anglo-Saxon estate organisation (See Lavelle 2003), it should suffice here to say that a large royal estate at Andover was more than capable, should it have been necessary, of providing enough to supply a royal assembly.



Fig. 2 The locations of royal assemblies during the reign of King Athelstan (924-39). The locations of assemblies which resulted in a lawcode are underlined

There is precious little evidence on the practicalities of Anglo-Saxon assemblies. However, with regard to a rare record of the Bishop of Chester-le-Street staying in a tent south of Woodyates at Oakridge (Dorset) in 970, Wormald (1999, 437) suggested that such conditions could have been standard practice for most of the Anglo-Saxon nobility. While Grateley's proximity to Andover (about an hour's ride) offered advantages, an assembly did not necessarily require the permanence of a royal palace: large numbers of people could be accommodated under canvas

where necessary, and in high quality tents this did not have to be a Spartan existence. Presumably the manner in which resources from the surrounding royal lands (of which Grateley was probably a part) could be brought together made Grateley a practical location, whether or not those summoned to the assembly were also required to supply part of the render. It is especially interesting that the legislative assembly was held at Grateley rather than the assumed hundred meeting-place at Andover.

In terms of the context of the Grateley lawcode,

we must turn once more to the epilogue recorded in the *Quadripartitus* text:

All this was established [*totum hoc institutum*] at the great assembly at Grateley, at which Archbishop Wulfhelm was present [*cui archiepiscopus Wulfhelmus interfuit*] and all the chief and wise men [*omnes optimates et sapientes*] whom King Athelstan could gather [*congregare potuit*].

Although the phrase *congregare potuit* may hint at limited attendance, the naming of Wulfhelm, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 925 or 926 to 941, lends authority to the lawcode. This even led Patrick Wormald, ever aware of the eleventh-century importance of Archbishop Wulfstan of York, to wonder whether here the archbishop of Canterbury was acting in lieu of the king himself (Wormald 1999, 295); certainly the term *interfuit* which is applied to Archbishop Wulfhelm of Canterbury hints at more activity than Whitelock's translation 'was present' allows. However, taking into account the prominence of royal authority in the making of Anglo-Saxon law and the implicit agency of the king in the phrase *congregare potuit*, the presence of the king in person cannot be ruled out.

Furthermore, while the brief *Quadripartitus* addition may have been the work of a twelfth-century scribe under conditions similar to those which led to the mutilation of the witness list of the Whittlebury lawcode (Wormald 1999, 438), had the archbishop of York as well as all those British kings who submitted to Athelstan after 927 also been present at Grateley, it is likely that they would have been at least noted (Whitelock *et al.* 1961, 68–9; Sawyer 1968, nos. 399 and 400; Keynes 1995, table 36). After all, attestations in charters which can be dated to before 928 in Athelstan's reign do not compare with the number of attestations in charters from after this date. The archbishop of York is noticeable by his absence in many of these pre-928 charters (Keynes 1995, tables 37–9), perhaps indicating the relative weaknesses of Athelstan's kingship north of Mercia during this period – or indeed the strength and independence of the archbishop of York (Rollason 2003, 228–30).

Even if we cannot ascribe a precise date to the promulgation of laws at Grateley, the political interests of the archbishop of York may explain

his probable absence. Athelstan may have been in a precarious position in the first few years of his reign: the 926 peace agreement between Athelstan and Sihtric, the 'King of the Northumbrians' (Whitelock *et al.* 1961, 68), may have relied more upon the survival of Sihtric than a broader level of Northumbrian consent. Moreover, with a king whose childhood influences may have been more Mercian than West Saxon, the West Saxon nobility can hardly have been entirely supportive, especially when their interests had been invested in the very short reign of Athelstan's step-brother, Ælfweard (Mynors *et al.* 1995, 210–11 and 224–9; see here Miller 2001, xxviii–xxx, although he is understandably cautious in drawing conclusions from William of Malmesbury). Athelstan's achievements may have been directed northwards and indeed across Britain in 927, if not before, but equally he needed to consolidate the West Saxon face of his kingship. If the Grateley lawcode was directed towards such a consolidation and a welding of southumbrian administration with that of the royal heartlands of Wessex, its promulgation in Hampshire close to – but not uncomfortably close to – the seat of power of West Saxon episcopal authority may have served as part of this function at a significant time. Like a number of other assemblies, Grateley was emphatically within Wessex. This may have stood in contrast to the locations of other meeting places in the Wessex/Mercia 'boundary' zone, at Chippenham, Kingston and Cirencester. However, as will be discussed below, it may even be suggested that the part of the estate in which Grateley lay allowed a degree of visual unity across northern Wessex to the Thames basin.

GRATELEY AND THE ANDOVER ESTATE

By contrast with Grateley, references to Andover are far more prolific in Anglo-Saxon sources. King Edgar (959–75) declared a lawcode at Andover (Liebermann 1903, 195–206; Whitelock 1979, 431–3) and along with Wherwell and Kingsclere it is also recorded in King Eadred's will, dating from between 946 and 955, as part of the bequest to the New Minster. Although this donation does not seem to have lasted or even to have been

enacted, as Andover remained in royal hands thereafter (Sawyer 1968, no. 1515; Miller 2001, 78–81). Keith Lilley has made a good case for the promontory on the River Anton being the area of the grant, and if this part of Andover was indeed a significant minster church, it was one which was close to royal control (Lilley 1999, 26–7; see also Hase 1994, 63–5). Royal presence in Andover is indicated by a salacious record of King Edgar's sexual exploits in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (Mynors *et al.* 1998, 258–61). According to the *Narratio Metrica de Sancto Swithuno*, Æthelred II's councillors assembled at Andover in October 980 before moving on to Winchester for the dedication of the New Minster tower (Campbell 1950, 67). A peace treaty, *II Æthelred*, which can be located by its record in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, was also made between a group of Vikings and King Æthelred and his councillors at Andover in 994 (Whitelock 1979, 437–8; Liebermann 1903, 220–5; Whitelock *et al.* 1961, 83).

The Domesday evidence shows that Andover can be considered as the centre of a royal hundred (Fig. 3), which may well be coterminous with the royal territory under consideration here. With six mills and one hundred people recorded on the estate by 1086 (Munby 1982, 1:41), the Domesday manor of Andover clearly commanded considerable resources. Arguably, and perhaps crucially, as may be suggested by the absence of an entry for Grateley in Domesday Book, this included a control of the site of Grateley.

Domesday Book also indicates that many of the manors in Andover hundred surrounding the royal vill of Andover (i.e. those between Andover and Grateley) were manors with royal connections. It seems likely that, like Nether Wallop, the land at Quarley was one such manor and that its private ownership – by the Godwine family before the Conquest – was relatively novel, especially in view of Robin Fleming's suggestion of what could be perceived as a privatised defensive policy. Quarley may have been one of many southern English 'official' lands formerly under royal control containing strategically placed and potentially useful hillforts which were alienated to the Godwine family (Munby 1982, 1:40; Fleming 1991, 94). The material investment in a church at

Quarley, of which some late Anglo-Saxon fabric remains (Taylor & Taylor 1965, 500–1), may also equate with the Godwinist appropriation of property in this vill, in a similar manner, though lesser scale, to their appropriation of land in the neighbouring Wallops – which also had a hillfort – and probably commensurate investment in the church at Nether Wallop (Gem *et al.* 1981). Monxton, to the east of Grateley and recorded as in royal hands in 1086, was held from royal demesne in 1066 by a certain Wulfifu, a woman who also held land at Fyfield which had been granted to a royal thegn years before, in 975 (Sawyer 1968, no. 800). Land at Penton Grafton was held by Queen Edith in 1066; this land may have been especially significant considering that it included Weyhill, a place known from at least the sixteenth century as the site of a fair (Page 1911, 396–7), with the place-name element *weoh* recording a pagan temple or shrine (Gover 1961, 169). Edith was also the tenant-in-chief of a manor at Shoddesden, a land whose subtenant was a royal agent recorded amongst the royal thegns' (*taini regis*) holdings (see Lavelle 2004). Given the propensity of royal lands to be closely controlled in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, the evidence for a well-established royal estate in Andover hundred is collectively persuasive.

It is possible that some land in Andover hundred beside that in the vill of Andover remained part of the Andover estate as late as 1086 and therefore went unrecorded under any other manor. To address this, comparisons have been made between the acreages of productive land in each of the Andover parishes and the appropriate Domesday hidages and monetary valuations (Table 1, Fig. 4). The acreages have been taken from the nineteenth-century measurements for tithe assessment and glebe land – in effect, the sum of productive land – in each parish (H.R.O. 21M65/F7). The graph shows the relationship between the acreage of the parishes and the value of the manors, as well as their liability for geld (i.e. hidation) in Andover hundred recorded in Domesday Book for 1065–6. In some cases, because the precise locations of manors are not known, the sums of hidages within certain manors have been used to make a total assessment which can be compared with the acreage of

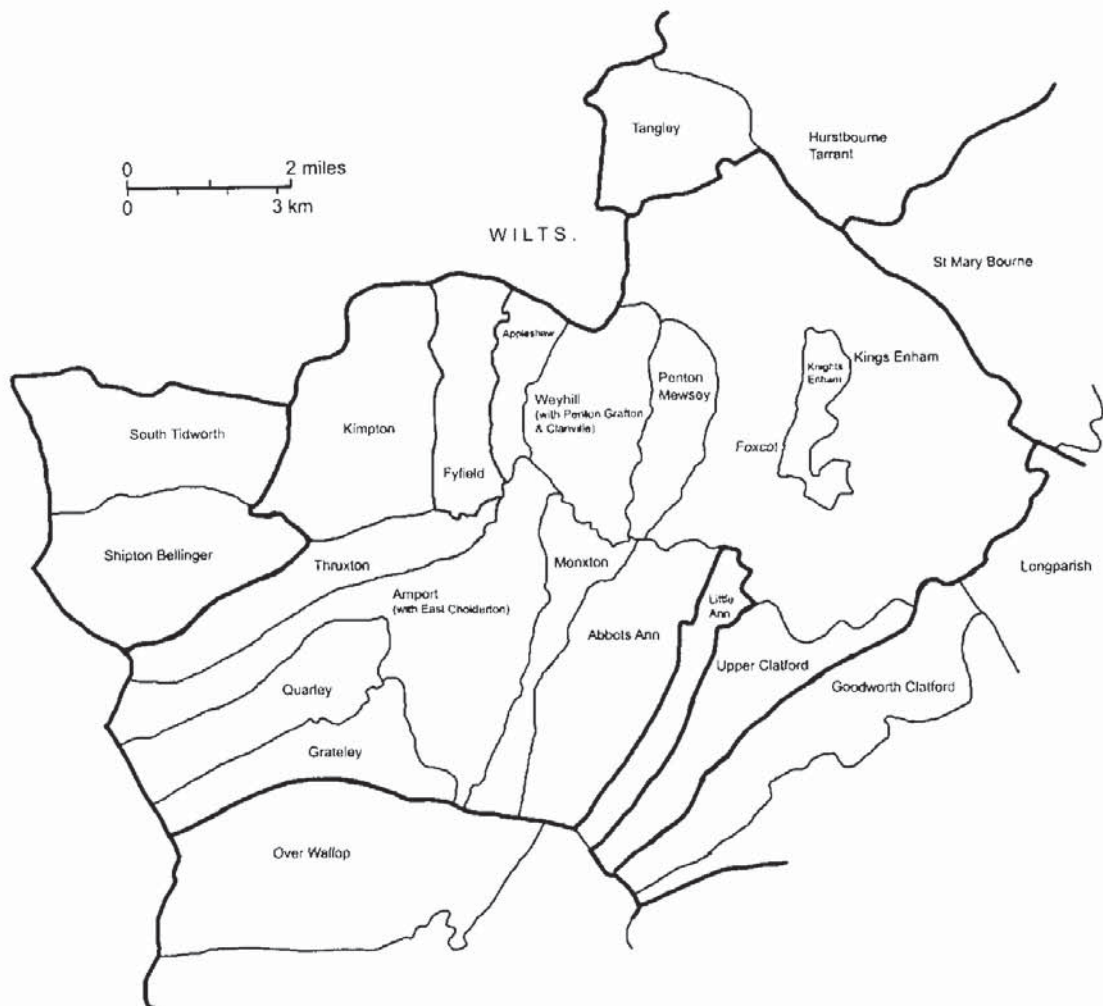


Fig. 3 The constituent parishes of Andover hundred and its neighbours (after Hase 1994). The positions of Foxcote and Kings Enham are marked within the parish boundaries of Andover.

a whole parish. These are Amport and Appleshaw with East Cholderton, Kimpton with Littleton and Shoddesdon, and the later parish of Weyhill, which covered the Domesday manors of Penton Grafton and Clanville. The Victoria County History's record of Foxcote's acreage has also been used to distinguish the area from the nineteenth-century parish of Andover-cum-Foxcote (Page 1911, 345).

Determining a number of acres per hide is a longstanding issue amongst medieval historians. Therefore, where the number of acres per hide is high, yet the number of acres needed to yield one pound of revenue for the estate is proportionately lower, taken here as fifty per cent or less, we may be able to surmise beneficial hidation for the landholder. This is the case for the manors at Quarley, Penton Grafton, Upper Clatford, and probably

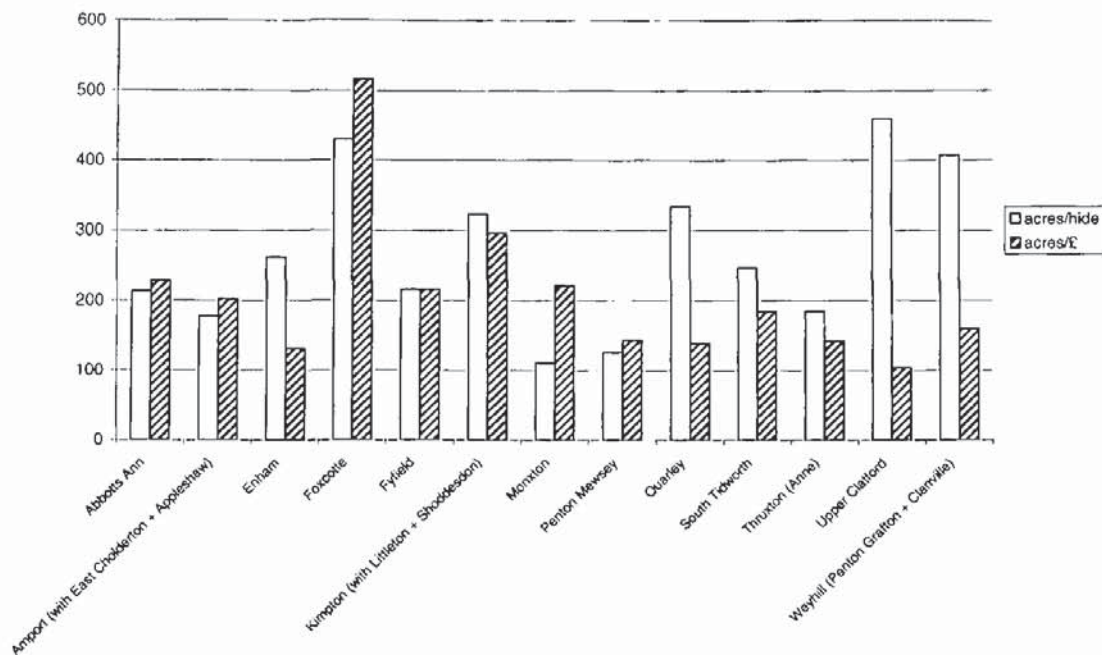


Fig. 4 Graph showing the relationship between the areas of parishes and Domesday hidage assessments and values of estates in Andover hundred

also for (Knight's) Enham. However, of greater significance for the purposes of this study, where the number of acres per hide is relatively high (taken as 200 acres or more) and the number of acres to provide a pound's worth of revenue is also high, we may be able to surmise that liability for geld was either based upon the quality of the land or that not all the land in a nineteenth-century parish was under the cultivation of the eleventh-century villis in that area. Areas to which this can be applied are Foxcotte, Kimpton (here including Littleton and Shoddiesdon), Abbots Ann, and Fyfield. Although at first glance this may also have applied to South Tidworth, if a third manor recorded under neighbouring Broughton hundred (Munby 1982, 28:3) is included in the calculations, the levels of hides and pounds per acre are brought to lower proportions, and therefore South Tidworth should be discounted here.

Such calculations may result from the fact that

some land within the bounds of the later parish was still uncultivated at the edge of the demesne and of course a characteristic of the succeeding centuries across Western Europe was the process of bringing such land under cultivation. However, given that the assessment for hidage included waste land within the estate, some equality can be claimed across all of the calculations. There is another possibility, especially evident in the case of Foxcotte, the post-medieval area of which does not appear to have been commensurate with the manors recorded there in Domesday Book (for remarks on the area of Foxcotte, see Russel 1985, 150-1). In view of its proximity to Andover, it is likely that part of Foxcotte was part of the royal estate at Andover in Domesday Book.

This is therefore a potentially significant aspect of the study of the royal estate at Andover. The limits of the parish of Andover itself may not provide the complete picture of the royal estate of Andover. As there are only two entries for Enham

Table 1 Domesday lands in Andover hundred and their relative acreages from nineteenth-century parishes

<i>Land</i>	<i>Phillimore code</i>	<i>1066 holder</i>	<i>1086 holder</i>	<i>Hidage assessment hides (h), virgates (v)</i>	<i>1066 value (£)</i>	<i>Parish acreage Acres/hide</i>	<i>Acres/£</i>
Abbotts Ann	6.11	New Minster	New Minster	15 h	£14	3195	213
Amport	23.44	Eadric	Hugo de Port	10 h	£4	4378 (including 655 acres in Appleshaw)	177.8
Amport	29.15	Eadric	Robert fitz Gerald	5 h	100s		228.2
East Cholderton	23.46	Eadric	Hugo de Port (Ralph 3 h subtenant)	3 h	30s		202.5
East Cholderton	50.02	3 free men <i>de rege</i>	William fitz Baderon	3 h, 2.5 v	£4 10s		
East Cholderton	68.10	2 free man <i>de rege</i>	Robert fitz Murdoch	3 h, 1 v + 1.5 acres	60s		
East Cholderton x4	43.01	4 free men <i>de rege</i>	Gilbert de Breteuil (Ralph sub-tenant)	4 h, 3 v	67s 6d		
Andover	1.41	King	King	-	72 s 6 d (for mills)	7332	n/a
Enham	69.27	Alwin	Særic	1.5 h	60s	785.5	261.8
Enham	69.28	Wulfeva	Alsige, valet (<i>berchemistrus</i>)	1.5 h	60s		130.9
Foxcotte (2 manors)	45.03	2 free men <i>de rege</i>	Waleran, huntsman (<i>uenator</i>)	3 h	50s	1290	430
Fyfield	35.09	Wulfifu	William Mauduit	5 h	100s	1078	215.6
Kimpton	23.47	Wynsige	Hugo de Port	2 h	60s	2664	322.9
Littleton	23.45	Azur	Hugo de Port	5 h	100s		296

Table 1 (cont.) Domesday lands in Andover hundred and their relative acreages from nineteenth-century parishes

<i>Land</i>	<i>Phillimore code</i>	<i>1066 holder</i>	<i>1086 holder</i>	<i>Hidage assessment hides (h), virgates (v)</i>	<i>1066 value (£)</i>	<i>Parish acreage Acres/hide</i>	<i>Acres/£</i>
Shoddesdon	45.04	Godric <i>de rege</i>	Waleran huntsman	1 v	5s		
Shoddesdon	69.26	Aghmund from Queen Edith	Aghmund <i>de rege</i>	1 h	15s		
Monxton	1.39	Wulfifu	King	10 h	100s	110.8	221.6
Penton Grafton	13.01	Queen Edith	Grestain Abbey	3 h	£10	1834.5	407.7
Clanville	23.48	Azor	Hugo de Port	1.5 h	30s		159.5
Penton Mewsey	21.03	Osmund	Earl Roger (Turold subtenant)	8 h	£7	1008	126
Quarley	1.40	Earl Harold	King	5 h	£12	1673	334.6
South Tidworth	28.06	Earl Harold (Cuthwulf subtenant)	Robert fitz Gerald	7 h	£10	2220.5	246.7
South Tidworth	60.01	Alwin	Croch	2 h	40s		
Thrupton (Ann)	61.01	Saxi	Jocelin de Cornailles	10 h	£13	1852	185.2
Upper Clatford	1.25	Saxi	King from Earl Roger	4.5 h	£20	2071	460.2
							103.6

in Domesday yet both are identified with Knight's Enham, we can be reasonably certain that Kings Enham – the royal estate of the 1008 lawcode and known as such in the later middle ages – was also included under the Domesday record for Andover (Hase 1994, 64). As mentioned above, there was no entry for Grateley in Domesday Book, which Peter Sawyer saw as one reason for including it in his gazetteer of royal *tuns* (Sawyer 1983, 294) but in these circumstances Grateley may also be better considered as part of the royal estate of Andover.

The Anglo-Saxons' memorialisation of the name of the local place of Grateley rather than the nearest major settlement is an interesting aspect of the sense of mental geography within the landscape. While the significance of recording a location of an assembly at, for example, Woodyates in Dorset or Woolmer in Hampshire, not to mention the Sussex 'hoary apple tree' of 14 October 1066 (Battle, *Senlac*, and Hastings are all later coinages for the battle's location), could provide an interesting aspect of study, it does not bear particularly heavily upon our discussion here. What is perhaps significant is the fact that like Grateley in Athelstan's reign, during the reign of Æthelred II, a lawcode was promulgated at Enham (Liebermann 1903, 260–2), again close to Andover. As with Grateley, Andover itself was not named in the lawcode, despite the fact that Enham was part of the estate organisation of Andover. This may suggest that while the royal manor was important in practical terms for the organisation of this event, the memory of the local place in the landscape is equally significant, perhaps, as we shall see, because of its 'ancient' aspects.

The five royal agents in Andover Hundred recorded in Domesday Book as royal thegns and sergeants (*taini regis* and *seruienti regis*) may have been at similar levels to those around the estates recorded as providing the 'Farm of One Night' (Lavelle 2004). Many of the estates in Andover hundred seem to have been alienated from royal territory for royal service. Coupled with Andover's non-hidation, it may even be surmised that Andover had formerly been part of such royal estate organisation and perhaps had only ceased to provide such renders relatively soon before the Norman Conquest. Although

Tidworth and Clatford indicate that there may have been some subdivision on edges of the hundred, for the most part the hundred of Andover was relatively coherent in the eleventh century (more so than the many Hampshire hundreds which were characterised by detached portions). If land at Andover was bequeathed by King Eadred to New Minster as bookland (Sawyer 1968, no. 1515), it may not necessarily have been alienable land; the evident failure (or refusal) of his successor, King Eadwig, to fulfil the bequest may reflect such a 'protection' of inalienable land designated for the royal family's *feorm* (Sawyer 1968, no. 1515; Lavelle 2002). In the early tenth century, therefore, it can be posited that there were well organised, flexible renders of food and drink provided by estates in this area, which would have allowed provision for a group of nobles even similar to the size of the assembly recorded later in Athelstan's reign, in the massive witness list of a charter associated with the royal vill at Kings Worthy (Sawyer 1968, no. 413).

THE LANDSCAPE IN CONTEXT

In considering the perception of the landscape by those moving through it, the presence of the Iron Age hillfort on Quarley Hill warrants mention, lying only 1.5 km to the north-west in a direct line of sight from what is now Grateley parish church. Although within the parish of Quarley rather than Grateley, it should also be noted that the hillfort lay directly on the boundary between the two parishes. The domination of the hillfort over the landscape here is remarkable and provides a prominent landmark – as was indicated on John Ogilby's seventeenth-century road maps of Hampshire – right by the Roman Road, the Portway (Ogilby 1675). It was via this road that participants in the assembly would have had to travel from Andover or from the Wiltshire royal estate at Amesbury. Quarley Hill's antiquarian identification and indeed its pre-1938 identification seem to have been Roman. In his seventeenth-century *Monumentia Britannica*, John Aubrey identified it as a Roman camp (Hawkes 1939, 138) and as late as 1915, J.P. Williams-Freeman described it in a similar fashion, considering it, on the basis of its entranceways, to



Fig. 5 A view across northern Hampshire to the Thames basin from Quarley Hill (photo by author).

be 'a British camp being adapted for Roman occupation' (Williams-Freeman 1915, 122).

A Roman villa was excavated at Grateley in the early twentieth century (Williams-Freeman 1910) and while we cannot expect West Saxons to have been aware of its former existence, the possibilities of its visibility as a ruin in the early medieval landscape should not be overlooked. As was the case elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England, the presence of such monuments in the landscape may also have manifested itself as part of an Anglo-Saxon awareness of their past. By the tenth century, at least in courtly circles, the civilisation and Christian *imperium* cognate with the Roman past had moved beyond the simple wonderment at the work of 'giants' expressed in the poem *The Ruin*. Arguably,

the West Saxon *burhs* were reflections of such a Roman past, and thus hillforts, formerly the preserve of British power in the landscape (Dark 1994, 178–81), could be appropriated for statements of control of the landscape. While not necessarily perceived as Roman per se, Quarley Hill's connotations of Roman grandeur could not have been lost on an Anglo-Saxon audience, especially when coupled with the Portway, remarked upon in the seventeenth century as a paved Roman road (Gough 1789, 192). It certainly seems plausible that this would have been the Anglo-Saxon association – an association useful for the political ends of Athelstan, the aspiring 'King of the whole of Britain' (*Rex Totius Britanniae*) (Wood 1981, 126–50; Dumville 1992).

To take this argument further than may be necessary here, Quarley Hill itself provides a clear, uninterrupted viewshed of the landscape all around it, more than other hillforts in the area, including those which are actually higher (Fig. 5). As C.F.C. Hawkes observed, while being 'characteristic of many such hillforts ... few of the same natural elevation can command such wide uninterrupted views in all directions' (Hawkes 1938, 138). This allows one to see north as far as the Thames basin on a clear day, a matter of near visual unity which does not appear out of place with Athelstan's Mercian background and northern ambitions.

Such a place could usefully have symbolised kingship for Athelstan at the point of issuing the laws. It may not be unreasonable to speculate – indeed it would be unreasonable not to speculate – that the site of the hillfort itself would have been the most suitable assembly place for a large number of people, as assemblies and the procedures of law often appear to have been held in the open air, at a significant landscape site, rather than necessarily in a hall (Meaney 1994, 35–7; Reynolds, 1999, 78–80). It should be noted that the hillfort at Badbury Rings in Dorset played such a role for the assertion of West Saxon royal power against the rebellious West Saxon *ætheling* Æthelwold (Whitelock *et al.* 1961, 58–9) and in a forest landscape not entirely unlike the one under consideration here, the east midland royal estate at Whittlebury (Northants.), at which Athelstan held another assembly resulting in a lawcode (c.935), is also characterised by the presence of a hillfort (Jones & Page 2001, 23). Records of legal cases from the tenth to the twelfth centuries regarding the jurisdiction of lands in 'nine hundreds' decided at the Iron Age hillfort at Wandlebury, Cambridgeshire, may also fall under such a context (Hart 1966, nos. 54 & 73). For such a lawcode as that of Grateley, which highlights – or re-emphasises – the significance of the repair of burghal defences and the importance of moneyers in burhs (Liebermann 1903, 156–9; Whitelock 1979, 419–20), a place perceived as a former Roman camp could hardly have been insignificant in an Anglo-Saxon sense of the 'drama' of law.

Such suggestions have implications for the reuse of hillforts in the southern English land-

scape. Even if this was purely as functional as a convenient place in the landscape, in the manner of the possible re-use of the site of Walbury Hill (Berks.) suggested by eighth-century Anglo-Saxon coin finds (Metcalf 1974, 2–3), the significance of hillforts for assemblies in an Anglo-Saxon landscape is worthy of consideration.

Under these circumstances we may logically question why Quarley should not have been named as the site of the promulgation of the lawcode, rather than Grateley. However, equally, one may conjecture that Quarley Hill had been considered as part of the land at Grateley, being on the edge of both parishes. Nonetheless, there are also other considerations for the significance of the landscape in the promulgation of the Grateley lawcode and the organisation of its assembly. Although Norman kings are much associated with the pleasures of the chase, we should not overlook its significance for Anglo-Saxon kingship. In Domesday Book, rights of pannage were not recorded with the woodland at Quarley, suggesting that if this was not land cultivated for pollarding it was probably used for hunting, especially as there were otherwise few wooded areas in northern Hampshire (see Colebourn 1983, 8–13). The landscape here was probably dominated by woodland, as perhaps evinced by the later hunting grounds of Chute, and local place-names and place-name elements indicate woodland, including those of Grateley and Quarley themselves: Furze, Morrells, Eastover, Stonehanger, Hurst, Groves and Oakleigh are amongst the field names recorded in parishes in the hundred (Gover 1961, 162–70). Although of course, Grateley's accessibility by road from both Andover, Winchester and Amesbury attests to Wormald's judgement that accessibility was what counted in the choice of assembly places (Wormald 1999, 438–9), Grateley's location suggests that in this case one Anglo-Saxon king was as interested in the 'passions of the chase' as his post-Conquest counterparts. Such hedonistic pleasures were significant elements in the king's ability to bring together large assemblies and provide them with food and entertainment; the very essence of the Anglo-Saxon notion of *feorm*, no less.

In such terms, comparison may be made once

more with Enham, a place which may have reflected the Pentecostal nature of Æthelred II's lawcode *VIII Æthelred*. As M.K. Lawson has observed, the intended rebirth of the English kingdom under God's grace, which consciously used the Pentecostal symbolism of the lamb of God, *Agnus Dei*, was reflected in the new-born lambs in the north Hampshire downs. The place was either previously known as – or became known as – 'place of the lambs', *Ean-ham*, in a reflection of the importance of place in the political events of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, seen also in the issue of the commemorative *Agnus Dei* penny (Lawson 1992, 576; however, cf. Wormald 1999, 453). The fact that both Enham and Grateley were in Andover hundred and thus, as has been suggested, within a royal territory, may show the arrangements of royal estates for the provision of such large assemblies.

CONCLUSION

To return once more to the question posed in this paper's title, such a response as was addressed in perhaps overly facetious terms at the beginning of the paper – why not Grateley? – can still stand as a valid one. Athelstan used Grateley as a location for his lawcode because he could: it represented his control over a West Saxon landscape which was such an important element to the consolidation of his kingship in the early years of his reign. Grateley was a location within a large royal estate focused on Andover, an estate which in the tenth century was able to provide a surplus large enough for a sizeable group of Anglo-Saxon nobles and their respective entourages. Grateley was conveniently located, both in terms of ease of communication

and in terms of what the landscape could provide; it was a royal landscape which could display all the indications of a sophisticated state despite its non-urban nature (Reynolds forthcoming). None of these aspects are individually overwhelming but collectively they represent the control of the landscape by Anglo-Saxon kings. Grateley was one of a number of assemblies, perhaps a number of assemblies which had to be called and had to take place around the countryside each year, and as a king akin to a tenth-century Henry II, Athelstan may have been more active than most in the variety of places which he chose. The finer points of the king's strategies in choosing his sites may remain unknown to us. However, the analysis of one lesser-known place within its wider landscape context allows a view of the level of the intense control and logistical organisation which were an integral part of the kingship of the later West Saxon rulers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Work on this paper has benefited greatly from discussions with a number of people, to whom I owe a debt of thanks. I am grateful to colleagues at the University of Winchester, Clive Bond, Richard Greatorex, Mark Stedman, and Barbara Yorke for discussions, as well as to David Hinton of the University of Southampton, Andrew Reynolds of University College London, and Janine Shepherdson for reading earlier versions of this paper. I also wish to thank Mark Page for information on excavations at Whittlebury (Northants.) and Stephen Goddard of Albedale Farms, Manor Farm, Grateley, for his kind permission in allowing me to visit Quarley Hill in order to take photographs for this article.

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