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THE DAY OF THE BATTLE OF ÆTHELINGADENE  
(ASC 1001 A)

The eleventh-century kalendar (1023-1035) in the Cottonian MS. Titus D xxvii, which comes from the New Minster (later Hyde Abbey), Winchester, has a number of obits, some of which are of more than local interest. One of these, given under 23 May, runs

*Memoria Æðelwerdi 7 aliorum multorum.*<sup>1</sup>

We may understand *cum eo occisorum*, as in an entry further on in the kalendar:

*Memoria Wulfnoði 7 Æþelwini fratrum 7 aliorum multorum cum eis occisorum.*<sup>2</sup>

There is no indication that this Æthelweard was a monk or in ecclesiastical orders of any kind, and a lay benefactor of the name is to be found in the *Æþelwerd Minister*<sup>3</sup> who occupies the twenty-fifth place among the "Nomina familiariorum. uel Benefactorum. qui se nostris commendauerunt orationibus" at pp. 39-40 of the Hyde Register (BM. Stowe MS. 944); there is no other Æthelweard in this list of benefactors of the abbey.<sup>4</sup> Lay benefactors of the New Minster who were neither members of the royal house nor great nobles are likely to have been Hampshire men, and KCD 642 of c. 984 provides another *Æðelweard* associated with Hampshire; in it Æthelred II greets ealdorman Ælfric, and Wulmer, and Æthelweard, and all the thegns in Hampshire. This suggests that Æthelweard held some official position, and the editors of *The Crawford Charters*

<sup>1</sup> See W. de Gray Birch, *Liber Vitae* . . . , p. 270 (Hampshire Record Society 1892).

<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that the brothers Wulfnoth and Æthelwine, with their comrades, fell in the battle of Ashingdon on 18 October 1016. Their *Memoria* is actually written (on an erasure) in the space opposite 19 October, but the space above is fully occupied. Probably with this in view, but without comment, Birch (*op. cit.* p. 272) gives it under 18 October.

<sup>3</sup> Birch, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Birch (*op. cit.*, p. i) incorrectly gives the class-mark of the Hyde Register as Stowe Manuscript, No. 960.

(p. 119) have already proposed that he be identified with the king's high-reeve who fell in battle at *Æþelinga dene*, where the men of Hampshire were defeated after a stubborn struggle with the Danes, losing in slain *Æþelweard* and eighty others, four of whom are named in ASC 1001 A:

M.I. Her on ðysum geare wæs micel únfrið on angelcynnes londe þurh sciphere 7 welgehwear hergeden 7 bærndon swapæt hy upp asetton on ænne siþ þæt hy coman to æþelinga dene 7 þa com þær togeanes hamtunscir 7 him wið gefuhton 7 ðær wearð æþelweard cinges heahgerefa ofslegen 7 leofric æt hwitciricean 7 leofwine cinges heahgerefa 7 wulfhere bisceopes ðegn 7 godwine æt worðige ælfsiges bisceopes sunu. 7 ealra manna an 7 hundeahtatig. 7 þær wearð þara denescra micle ma ofslegenra. þeahðe hie wælstowe geweald ahton.

Hampshire is the only shire named as concerned in this encounter, and we may take it that *Æþelinga dene* was actually in Hampshire or not far from its boundaries. The battlefield should not too readily be identified (as by Freeman and Ramsay) with the *Æðelingedene* of KCD 707, of which we can merely say that it was in Sussex and was granted to the nuns of Wherwell in 1002.<sup>5</sup>

The precise functions of a *cinges heahgerefa* have not been satisfactorily defined, but see E. A. Freeman, *English Historical Review* II, 780-1, and H. M. Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, pp. 228-39. Chadwick (p. 237) is "inclined to think that this official was really the reeve of a large borough-district. If so we can understand how two such persons came to accompany the Hampshire militia in 1001". Freeman (EHR II, 780), on the other hand, took *Æthelweard* and *Leafwine* to be the *scirgerefan* of Hampshire and Sussex respectively; but this surely depends on the identification of the battlefield with the place mentioned in KCD 707.

Lettering these four *Æthelweards* A B C D in order of

<sup>5</sup> It may have been sold, exchanged or lost before 1086, when Wherwell held no land except in Hampshire.

mention, one may set forth as follows the probability of their being one and the same person:—

1. The name Æthelweard is not uncommon in the late Old English period, but A B C D have all Hampshire associations.

2. B (*Minister*), C (listed between the ealdorman and the thegns of Hampshire) and D (*cinges heahgerefa*) are all of thegny rank at least but not ealdormen.

3. A (a lay benefactor of the New Minster) = B (the only Æthelweard noted in the list of friends and benefactors in the Hyde Register); similarly C probably = D.

4. A and D are both killed in battle.

Dogmatic assertion is impossible on the evidence, but there is a fair presumption that the Æthelweard celebrated on 23 May in the kalendar from the New Minster is to be identified with the *cinges heahgerefa* who fell in battle against the Danes in 1001. We may conjecture therefore that the battle of *Æthelingadene* was fought on 23 May 1001, perhaps on or near the Hampshire boundary of Sussex.

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