THE CHURCH OF WINCHESTER AND THE TENTH-CENTURY REFORMATION

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The narrative sources which deal with the English monastic revival in the tenth century are meagre and inadequate. This is especially true of those which deal with the life and career of St. Æthelwold. We have only a few dramatic details of the revolution at Winchester, for instance, which he carried through soon after his election as bishop. This is an unfortunate lacuna in view of the importance of Æthelwold and Winchester in the reform movement in general. The narrative sources can be supplemented a little, however, both by archaeological study,1 and by what is my present concern, the alleged tenth-century charters. Almost all the documents which bear on the problems come from the early twelfth-century Winchester cartulary, the Codex Wintoniensis,2 which has an unsavoury reputation. Stubbs, for instance, thought it a cartulary of the lowest possible character 3 and later scholars have tended to follow him. This judgement is premature. Certainly the cartulary contains some obviously corrupt charters, as do most other similar cartularies of much higher repute. What distinguishes the Codex Wintoniensis is the number of documents which seem remarkably eccentric in form and content, many of which relate to the reform of Winchester by Edgar and Æthelwold. If “normal” diplomatic criteria are

1 R. N. Quirk, Archaeological Journal, cxiv (1957), 28-68.
3 Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents, ed. A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (Oxford, 1869-78), iii. 638.

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applied indiscriminately the charters will be dismissed out of hand. But it is very unwise to do this. The evidence is very suggestive that Æthelwold was something of an innovator in English diplomatic forms and it is beyond question that the monastic revival expressed itself in some comparatively unfamiliar diplomatic instruments. It is necessary to study these Winchester documents in the context of the monastic revival. When we do this it is difficult to suppose that these charters are anything other than substantially authentic.

It is easiest to begin with the narrative sources. Their story is soon told. Æthelwold was "elected to the episcopal church of Winchester by King Edgar", as his disciple Abbot Ælfric put it, late in 963. He was consecrated the first Sunday in Advent and he chose the first Sunday in the Lent following to begin the conversion of his cathedral, familiarly known as Old Minster, to monasticism. The precise sequence of events thereafter is not quite clear. It seems most likely that the clerks in possession of the cathedral endowment at Æthelwold's accession appealed to the king, and that Edgar heard and dismissed this appeal in a synod held at Easter, 964, probably at Winchester. As a result some of the former members of the cathedral "familia" were forced to withdraw and forfeit their prebends. In future the community at Old Minster was to be made up of monks drawn from those former cathedral clerks who elected to accept the monastic habit, stiffened by a contingent of experienced monks from Æthelwold's own abbey of Abingdon. This is almost all that the narrative sources have to say about the conversion of Old Minster.

The principal charters which supplement these sources are printed in the Cartularium Saxonicum, nos. 1146-59. They occur

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1 RB, lxxiii (1963), 83, n. 3 and lx (1960), 333 ff.
3 Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1892), i. 115.
4 Chron. Abingdon, ii. 260.
5 JEH, ix (1958), 167, n. 4: Bulletin, xlii (1959), 70. This chronology was criticized by Dom Hubert Dauphin, RB, lxix, 189, n. 4 and M. Deanesly, The Pre-Conquest Church in England (London, 1961), pp. 314-19. I have replied to these criticisms, RB, lxxiii (1963), 74-88.
in the same sequence in the *Codex Wintoniensis* and they all explicitly relate to the conversion of the cathedral community: all but one of them are in Latin. They share a number of diplomatic features. They all begin with unusual and conventionally long-winded “arengae”: each differs from the others in points of substance but they express common sentiments and have a common latinity which is quite acceptable in documents of Edgar’s reign. They all have anathemas which raise no suspicions. But none of them has a dating-clause, a witness-list, or a set of boundaries. This is unusual in tenth-century diplomas and, of course, greatly increases the difficulty of testing their authenticity. More positively the charters include some peculiar features of their own. In the most important of them are embedded pieces of narrative about the iniquities of the clerks who had been expelled, embellished with privileges for the monks who replaced them. These charters seem, too, to have been designed as a series since the last of them, CS 1159, which sums up and reaffirms the principal privileges conferred in the other charters, says in its disposition: “Hujus rei gratia rura omnia predicta et superius distinctis locis ordinatim novis litterarum apicibus designata.” No places have yet been mentioned in CS 1159 and the text refers to the earlier charters in the series as its later sections show. In any case the common peculiarities and the common differences from other surviving charters, authentic or not, suggest a common origin, purpose and date: the whole tenor of CS 1159 suggests it is a summary of more explicit documents which have just been composed. The other charters suggest that there was to be a witness-list somewhere. CS 1152 says it was given “cum meorum auctoritate procerum” and CS 1149 speaks of “meorum testemonio functus procerum quorum nomina in ultima hujus scedulae pada [sic] caraxata.” It is not the custom of the scribes of the *Codex Wintoniensis* to omit witness-lists in their transcriptions. Now the evidence of date suggests these documents must be dated towards the end rather than the beginning of Edgar’s reign. The royal title of CS 1158 seems to owe something to the beginning of the *Regularis Concordia*: it is unlikely the borrowing was the other way. The same charter speaks of “rex gloriosus sancti spiritus carismate”, which seems
to be a reference to Edgar’s coronation in 973. Dr. Finberg has suggested that the documents were authorized at the very end of Edgar’s reign and were left incomplete at his death. If this is true then we have a draft of some kind which was later incorporated in the Codex Wintoniensis. It is very difficult to imagine, however, what the completed documents would have looked like.

The diplomatic of the charters suggests they were intended to be separate instruments: the disposition of the last of them that they were to form in some sense a unity. But whatever the original status of the charters which survive, what matters is how far we may give credence to their contents as contemporary evidence for the conversion of Winchester.

These diplomas are not conventional landbooks at all. A landbook grants title, and hereditary, permanent, title at that, so naturally it is the landbook which was the forger’s favourite subject. But these charters confer none of the privileges of the conventional landbook. Edgar “gives back” estates: restores the state of things “juxta priorum decreta regum”; renews earlier grants; and collects them “in una scedula” or in a “nova cartula”. In almost every case it is stated or implied that an earlier king had originally booked the estate in question to Winchester. Nothing in the wording of these charters suggests that they were intended to defend or create title to estates. In every case the monks had title-deeds doing just this, all of them allegedly much earlier than Edgar’s reign. It does not follow that these earlier charters were genuine but it is they, genuine or not, which were needed to defend the cathedral’s titles to its estates. What the Edgar series does is to confer all this on a community of monks who have displaced a set of clerks described in most unflattering terms. It cannot be doubted that the transfer of the endowment was the main reason for the drafting of this series of charters.

1 Mr. Richardson and Dr. Sayles, The Governance of Medieval England (Edinburgh, 1963), Appendix I, have argued that no credence can be put on the account of Edgar’s coronation given in the first Life of St. Oswald, ed. J. Raine, Historians of the Church of York, i (Rolls Series, London, 1879), 436-8 and that Edgar’s first coronation occurred in 957. Their arguments are not altogether convincing, however.

2 Was a splendid codex on the lines of the New Minster foundation charter intended?
The bulk of the series is concerned with a number of estates of
great extent which are in some sense to be restored to the church
of Winchester. These we may call for convenience the "external" provisions; alongside these are a number of privileges for
what is plainly a recently established community of monks which
provides that the restored estates shall be enjoyed by these monks
and gives some direction as to just what they may or may not do
with them. These may be called the "internal" provisions.
The internal provisions occur in only two charters, the summing-
up charter, CS 1159, and the charter which restores Chilcomb,
CS 1147, together with its vernacular companion, Charters,
xxxviii. The charters are more easily understood if the external
provisions are studied first.

The first charter CS 1146 is concerned with the cathedral's
title to Downton, into which a short passage concerning Chilcomb
has been inserted. The next charter CS 1147 restores Chil­
comb and confirms its hidation of one hide; CS 1149 restores
Taunton. These three estates are all hundreds; then follows a
number of charters restoring a number of lesser, but still, extensive
estates. Most of these charters have preambles taken from
earlier Winchester charters and a mixture of conventional and
original formulas which proves nothing more than that they were
not chancery products and could have been composed in the
tenth century.

Although not the first estate in the series to be dealt with, it is
obvious that the hundred of Chilcomb, which lay next to
Winchester itself, occupied a special position in the thoughts of
its compiler. It is certainly the most difficult part of the transac­
tion to elucidate.

There is no question that Chilcomb was amongst the most
ancient possessions of the church of Winchester, but a special
problem is raised by its fantastically generous hidation, and the
very obvious fact that the rating of one hide, however it arose, was
supported by a series of fabricated charters.

We are on firm ground only in 1086 when Domesday Book
proves that Chilcomb was rated at one hide and was assigned to
the mensa of the monks as Edgar's charters claim.¹

¹DB, i. 41a
again no reason to doubt that Chilcomb had always been the source of the community’s—as distinct from the bishop’s—victuals, as the tenth-century charters imply. Again there is no reason to doubt that Chilcomb had once been rated at 100 hides. In 1086 Chilcomb had nine churches; land for sixty-eight ploughs—with twelve in demesne, and it brought in £80 a year for the monks. Clearly there had been a drastic reduction of the hidage of Chilcomb when all this answered for only one hide. Comparison with neighbouring Alresford suggests that the original hidation of Chilcomb must have been about 100 hides, irrespective of the Winchester evidence. T. R. E. Alresford had forty ploughs, three churches, but answered for fifty-one hides.¹ Nor are other cases of beneficial hidation unknown.² There are

¹ DB, i. 40a.
² Dr. Harmer lists some Writs, p. 375. The problem is complicated by the inferences drawn from the single-sheet parchment purporting to be a contemporary text of a grant of Æthelstan to the see of Crediton (Crawford Charters, ed. A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1895), no. iv). It remits the common burdens on the estate concerned in unambiguous terms "ut illa eam sine expeditio­nis profectione arcis pontis constructione omnique regalium uel secularium tributorum seruitutis exactione liberaliter ac eternaliter in perpetuum habeat." This is not beneficial hidation but a complete remission of the common burdens amounting to a grant in free alms. This charter has been given great weight. Stevenson cited it as the "one clear and indisputable case" of such remission and cited it against those scholars who denied that Anglo-Saxon kings granted such exemptions (EHR, xxix (1914), 702). Stevenson went on to argue that beneficial hidations "were unknown before the introduction of the Danegeld" (Asser’s Life of King Æl­fred (Oxford, 1904), p. 322, n. 6). Thus he seems to have supposed that early kings gave total exemptions but not beneficial hidations. But Crawford Charters, iv, seems to me to be a forgery. Exemption from the common burdens is not the only immunity to be enjoyed by Crediton. The estate is exempt from judicial forfeiture, it is never to be alienated, it is attached to the "mensa" of the community. The restrictions on alienation and the mensal provision can be matched by other charters of the period. I have not found any similar exemption from judicial forfeiture before the reign of Edgar. The complaints of St. Æthelwold suggest such forfeitures were routine matters in his day. The first charters in which exemption from these forfeitures regularly appear are St. Oswald’s laens, which are very exceptional documents in many ways. Crawford Charters, iv, then, contains two unique privileges for its date; charters moreover which convey such a mélange of privileges are rare before the monastic reformation. I have not seen the charter but Mr. N. R. Ker has kindly ex­amined it for me and says of the hand "that it may not be very much earlier than the piece on the dorse which is clearly eleventh-century". There is no question of it being a contemporary Æthelstan charter and it seems very much
in addition some reasonably authentic pre-Conquest Winchester documents confirming the reduced hidation. Unfortunately the line between what is false and what is true in these documents is not easy to draw.

The best discussion of these Chilcomb charters is found in Dr. Harmer's Writs. She offers as a working hypothesis the suggestion that Æthelred II confirmed the reduction in a writ which depended for some of its text, and its justification, on a charter of Ælfred, now lost. This Ælfredian charter had something in common with the vernacular version of Edgar's Chilcomb charter, Charters, xxxviii. The obvious conclusion is that Charters, xxxviii and perhaps, too, its Latin parent CS 1147, was based on the Ælfredian charter likewise. The other Chilcomb charters, CS 493, 620 and 713, are wholly or in part dubious. like a later and unusually competent fabrication. Since there is no other case known of total remission of the common burdens—and very few fabricated claims to such remissions—since the Chilcomb privilege represents the most generous known to have been given by any Anglo-Saxon monarch, since even Chilcomb still rendered one hide's worth of service, it seems probable that total remission was never given and that reductions of the hidage were the usual way of relieving churches of some of the burdens of military service.

It is perhaps worth drawing attention here to the significance of the Chilcomb evidence for the connotation which the word "hide" had for the authors of Anglo-Saxon charters. The Chilcomb charters assume that the word "hide" means a certain amount of what we should call taxation and not an area of land. The folly of trying to assign a number of acres to a hide is well-shown by Chilcomb where one hide covered several square miles. More important is the obvious disregard for any notion of a hide as a unit of area at all: had there been ambiguity, had there been any possibility that anyone would think that the reduction of the hidage of Chilcomb meant the reduction of the size of the manor, this would have been cleared up. But the charters assume that everyone knows that Chilcomb covered the same area before and after the reduction. This raises problems where two sources assign different hidages to the same estate. We commonly assume that the lower figure is the more honest one, but in fact it may be that a forger is trying to reduce the burden of taxation on an estate rather than trying to increase its extent. We are very far from understanding yet what the simple phrase "hides of land" meant to Anglo-Saxons but it does seem more and more misleading to contrast "feudal" charters, imposing precisely defined amounts of service on land, with landbooks which grant land free of services as a condition of tenure.

CS 620 is the most respectable of them but the Chilcomb passages seem like interpolations. CS 493 is an alleged charter of Æthelwulf. It is in the vernacular, but does not resemble other vernacular charters and follows Latin formulas closely. Its "dictator" seems to have been familiar with the notification charter.
To sum up: CS 1147 says nothing which is not true about the
hidation of Chilcomb or which had not been true for a long time,
but equally we are compelled to believe that for a very long time
this privilege had been unwritten and that it is not until the reign
of Æthelred II that we can be sure it was set down in writing. It
is not then possible to determine the authenticity of CS 1147 on
this point either way; we shall have to make a decision in the
light of the other provisions and the other charters.

Along with Chilcomb, the monks of Winchester held the
hundred of Downton in Wiltshire. Its early history does not
concern us here: everything suggests that it was an early part
of the Winchester endowment over which the church had little
control by the tenth century. In 948 Eadred granted a charter
restoring Downton, which he said had been unjustly resumed
by his predecessors, CS 862. This is a good charter. Its
existence is mentioned in a very respectable Downton charter of
Æthelred II.¹ We are not dependent for its text on the Codex
Wintoniensis since there also exists a single sheet parchment
which Dr. Whitelock thinks is an original.² The hand seems to
have some eleventh-century characteristics, however,³ but there is
nothing at all against its substance, even if Eadred later left
Downton to Winchester in his will.⁴ It would be naive to assume
that because Eadred restored Downton to Winchester in a charter
that the church necessarily got possession of the estate as well.
We may compare the grant of Worth to Abingdon by Eadred
which cannot be dated before Æthelwold’s pontificate (RB, lxxiii. 83, n. 3). It
claims that the freedom of Chilcomb was renewed by Æthelwulf before the pope
and claims that Æthelwulf was present at Ælfred’s anointing by the pope. But
Ælfred was “consecrated” by the pope in 853 (Chronicle, A, s.a. 853; Asser,
C.8) and Æthelwulf did not go to Rome until 856. CS 493 seems a later forgery
based on a hasty reading of either the Chronicle or Asser. CS 713 is a reputed
charter of Æthelstan but refers back only to Æthelwulf’s charter, ignoring those
of Ælfred and Edward. It claims that Æthelwulf gave his charter “cum con-
sensu 7 benedictionem universalis pape.”. It looks like an inflation of CS 493.
No later Chilcomb charter mentions Æthelstan’s confirmation and CS 713 is
probably a later forgery, perhaps by the same man that composed CS 493.

¹ KCD, 698. ² EHD, p. 340. ³ I am indebted to Mr. N. R. Ker for pointing this out.
⁴ Select English Historical Documents, ed. F. E. Harmer (Cambridge, 1914),
no. xxi.
recorded in CS 906. The monks did not get the estate until 958 and by a rather complicated route. In 997 it is apparent that Downton had again come into the hands of the king, presumably in the disorders of the early part of Æthelred's reign, since he says in KCD 698 that now he is of mature age he proposes to remedy the sins of his youth. Æthelred mentions both the charters of Eadred and Edgar, whom he says ordered the restoration of Downton "cum certa litterarum adstipulatione". He says again: "nouissime uero ab ipso patre meo satis clara demonstratione renouatum est ob deuotionem uidelicet, ac famulatum sancti Æthelwoldi tunc temporis eandem regentis aecclesiam." Thus there is nothing in CS 1146 or CS 1159 relating to Downton which need raise the slightest suspicion.

The third of the Winchester hundreds was Taunton in Somerset. By 1086 its rating had been reduced to fifty-four hides together with twenty carucates which had never been gelded. Some incidental allusions show that Taunton was still the centre of an area of hundredal jurisdiction. The Domesday account of Taunton shows that the bishop of Winchester held the hundred pennies and that the military service of Taunton was done with the men of the bishop. Manors held by others belonged to the "hundred of Taunton", Roger of Arundel's manor of Halse for example. Another passage speaks of the hundreds of Taunton and Pipeminstre. Thus there can be no doubt that hundredal jurisdiction was combined with bishop's proprietary rights over the estate of Taunton. The origins of the church of Winchester's claim to Taunton are very uncertain although it was supported by charters claiming to go back to the eighth century, some of which must be at least partly genuine. But these need not detain us since there are other Edgarian documents which amply confirm what CS 1149 and 1159 have to say. CS 1219 and its vernacular equivalent Charters, xlv have not survived without some, mainly formal, adaptation but are unlikely to be "without a substantial basis of fact". From these we learn that: "King Edgar, with the advice of his magnates,

1 CS 1028; Chron. Mon. Abingdon, i. 245.  
2 DB, i. 87b.  
3 DB, iii. 412.  
4 Ibid. p. 67.  
5 Writs, p. 524.
renewed the freedom of Taunton for the episcopal see of the Holy Trinity and St. Peter and St. Paul at Winchester, exactly as King Edward had freed it". The Judicial fines were all to go to the church as also the "portgerihta". It is recorded that Æthelwold paid a high price for this restoration. We have also the record of a somewhat later lawsuit, *Writs*, 108, which arose out of this transaction. The letter was written between 995 and 1002 by Edgar's widow. She recalls that Edgar actually "relinquished" Taunton. This meant that Edgar ceased to be head of the hundred and was replaced by Æthewold to whom all the thegns had to submit or lose their estates. She also notes that this was actually carried out. Turning to the main Taunton charter of the Edgar-Æthelwold series, CS 1149, it is apparent that it claims no more than the other Taunton documents can confirm. It says that Edgar's predecessors had allowed the liberty to be violently abstracted from the church of Winchester and that he has restored it. CS 1159 says the same thing more briefly. Thus for Taunton, as for Downton, the essential truth of what the series says can be convincingly vindicated.

In addition to the three hundreds a number of separate charters restore some lesser estates. Most of these estates were still held by Winchester in 1086 and most of them are supported by at least one charter to which no conclusive exception may be taken. In one case, Alresford, we have a number of earlier charters which support the Edgarian text and reveal in precious detail what lay behind the "restoration".

Alresford gets a charter to itself, CS 1150: it is also included amongst CS 1159's list of abstracted and restored estates. CS 1150 rates the estate at forty hides, and it was rated at forty-two hides in *Domesday Book*. CS 1150 gives something of the history of the estate which can be checked at a number of points. Bishop Denewulf, who died in 909, granted the estate to a relative of his named Ælfred in return for an annual rent.

Denewulf's kinsman, Ælfred, did not enjoy Alresford for long. He committed adultery and the king duly confiscated his estates, neatly illustrating another of the reformer's complaints about the royal habit of confiscating the estates of the churches as

1 *DB*, i. 40a.
punishment for some indictable offence. Denewulf got the estate back however by paying 120 mancuses of gold. But when Ælfred died his claim was inherited by his son who got a charter from Eadred. It does not seem that Winchester held Alresford before Edgar restored it.

CS 1150's narrative can be checked at several points. The text of Denewulf's laen to Ælfred survives, Charters xv. This shows that the rent Ælfred paid the church was £3 per annum, although in 1086 Alresford found £6 a year for the bishop as well as other sources of profit. Charters, xv also reveals that Ælfred's parents had held the estate on the grant of Bishop Tunbriht. It will be apparent how precarious was the hold of the Church on some of its greatest estates at this time and how real was the "secularium prioratus" of which the reformers complained so bitterly. The story is carried on in CS 623, which is a charter of Edward the Elder for Frithestan. It is here confirmed that Denewulf had "let" Alresford, which had been confiscated and lost to the church of Winchester, until the bishop had paid "centum auri siglis" to the king. This is a slightly smaller sum and is expressed in a different way from CS 1150 but an accretion of 20 per cent in the value of the gold after half a century of brooding over its loss is a comparatively venial sin; what is more it shows that CS 623 and CS 1150 are independent witnesses to the same transaction.

CS 623 is an interesting charter in the history of the reform of Winchester in its own right: its relationship to the Edgarian series is an important problem. The purpose of the Edwardian charter was not simply to confirm the restoration of Alresford. The king supported by Archbishop Plegmund ordered: "ut nulli secularium militum nec ipsum rus nec aliud aliquot ad aecclesiam Dei pertinens pro munere quolibet ne talis perturbatio aecclesiae Dei contingat ut per stuprum prefati militis contigit dare vel accomodare praesumat." CS 620, the dubious Chilcomb charter, has an identical formula which continues: "Seculares igitur episcoporum dicione subjecti intra ambitum hujus spatiosae telluris diversis in villis degentes censum episcopali sede persolvant."

1 EHD, p. 849.
There is an echo of all this in CS 1159 which concludes its sermon on the proper bearing of a monk-bishop with the words: “Rura tam a regibus quam a diversis catholicis ad usus fratrum domino largiflue collata hujus seculi militibus sive propinquis carnalibus pro munere quolibet adulando tribuens”, but nothing closer. The formula “nee alicui secularium pro munere quolibet eam dare presumat” also occurs in CS 1147, the Edgarian Chilcomb charter.¹ Now a number of the Winchester estates mentioned in the Edgar series were the subject of charters allegedly granted by Edward the Elder to Frithestan. Although only CS 620 and CS 623 contain the above formulas and echoes of the Edgar series, the similar intention behind the charters is clear. CS 625 notes that Overton has been recently recovered by Winchester and freely renews the grant. CS 1152 deals with the same estate: the two charters have no formal similarities. CS 627 may likewise be compared with CS 1154; CS 628 with 1151, CS 629 with 1158. The “Frithestan” group all claim to be issued at the same time and have closely similar—and authentic—witness-lists. The intention behind all of them—with their attacks on alienations and their insistence on the duty of tenants to pay their church dues—is obviously the same. In the Edgar series, however, there is much less emphasis on the secular thegns and the dangers they represent, here it is lascivious canons who are the villains of the piece. Yet both series refer to largely the same estates without there being more than the slightest of parallels. It seems to follow that the two series are largely independent.

With the exception, moreover, of CS 620, which may have a reference to the beneficial hidation of Chilcomb fraudulently inserted into it, the Frithestan charters have much to be said in their favour. There is nothing obviously against any of them being authentic and something in favour of CS 623, the Alresford charter. Its narrative is much in agreement with the other Alresford charters discussed above: it contains a reference to the

¹ The “secular” of CS 1147 is rendered as “townsman” in Charters, xxxviii. Chilcomb lay around Winchester and the two texts are interesting evidence that a town like Winchester contained men rich and powerful enough to appear threatening to a great landowning corporation like Old Minster.
division of the see of Winchester into two which dates the division correctly and seems to connect the subject of the grant with the division of the see; forgers seldom get the dates of these things right. It contains a rare formula "Edward divina indulgentia clementia Angul Saxonum rex" which recalls Asser's "Ælfred Anglorum Saxonum regi". ¹ It looks very much as though by following through the history of Alresford we discover that Edgar and Æthelwold were not the first to attempt a reform of the Winchester endowment on the lines of a resumption of alienated lands. In Edward the Elder's reign, Bishop Frithestan had tried the same thing. Less tactful than Edgar and Æthelwold, who never blame previous bishops of Winchester, he put some of the blame on his predecessor Denewulf in CS 620, where he says Denewulf alienated the church's estates to the peril of his soul. Thus we may perhaps date the appearance of a "reforming conscience" at Winchester even before the succession of Ælfheah monk and bishop in 934. This would mean that Winchester had been ruled by known reform-minded bishops from 909 onwards excepting between 931-4 and 951-63 only. We must not discount the possibility, therefore, that Æthelwold found lingering traces of a reforming spirit in his chapter and his diocese when he began his more radical and enduring revolution.

So far then the examination of the treatment of these great estates in the Edgarian series of charters shows nothing serious against the alleged restorations of the estates named in any of them, and some positive reasons for believing what is said about Downton, Taunton, and Alresford even if some uneasiness remains about the hidation of Chilcomb. There is moreover a precedent from early in the century for a similar attempt to defeat at least the "external" effects of "secularium prioratus". But what distinguishes the later charters most is the context of these massive restorations. They are not very strenuously against secular thegns—very obviously because the king was well prepared to take care of them—but they were against lascivious clerks. It is with the "internal" provisions that in the last resort these charters stand or fall and it is to an examination of these that we must now turn.

¹ Asser, Dedication and c. 83.1.6.
The easiest place to begin is again with difficult Chilcomb. All the references to the monastic conversion of Old Minster occur in the last charter, CS 1159, it will be remembered, except for the Chilcomb charter, CS 1147. The reason for this singularity and the special position of Chilcomb is soon found.

The first of the Chilcomb provisions is inserted in the Downton charter, CS 1146. It certainly sits awkwardly in its present position and would more plausibly go into CS 1147, although CS 1146 still makes sense with it. This is not in itself a proof of forgery. It is clear that the series was planned, and probably executed, as a whole and it would have been as easy for a genuine, as for a criminous, dictator to have made a mistake. The provision is interesting and has something to be said for it. It reads:

Identidem suburbana ejusdem precipuae civitatis Ciltancumb videlicet cum suis appendiciis benignissime renovare cupiens eadem dito libertate qua a rege uti dicam primogenito ejusdem ecclesiae neophito perhibetur temporibus. Pastus igitur predictæ familie nullatenus presumptuose minuatur sed fideliter ut olim constitutum fuerat a presule dispensando largiatur.

The matter recurs in CS 1159, which says:

In nomine almae trinitatis ac individuae unitatis precipio ut succedentium temporum episcopi ita gregem durochæo id est duplici pastu nutriant monachorum ut nostris temporibus per sapientium ordinatum est providentiam et alimenta ex Ciltancumbe monachis copioso tribuant et sine ulla retractione hilariter subministrent et nullius nimietatis inquietudine perturbent. Ne a vita theorica vel immoderata superfluitas vel intolerabilis paupertas cum magno animi detrimento illos amoveat omnia in victu et vestitu secundum regulæ modificet preceptum.

These passages need to be taken with another provision from CS 1159 which requires that all the estates which had once maintained canonici¹ were now to maintain monks. In particular all the estates “mentioned above”—this means here Downton,

¹ Dr. Robinson, in seeking to deny the authenticity of Wulfstan’s Life of Æthelwold (The Times of St. Dunstan (Oxford, 1923), pp. 107 ff.), maintained that “the ‘Priests’ or ‘clerks’ whom the monks superseded are never called ‘canons’ in the tenth century, nor is that term found except in some foreign context until its occurrence in the Laws of K. Ethelred in 1008”. Dr. Robinson overlooked the contemporary New Minster Codex, CS 1190, which has “vitiosorum cuneos canonicorum” in a section headed “Qua ratione clericos eliminans monachos collocavit”, and “dejecti canonici”.
Taunton, Alresford, as well as several other manors—go to the special use of the bishop. The passage deserves quotation.

Rura omnia superius notata episcoporum usui peculiariter ad votum deserviant. Illa vero quæ canonici olim cum preposito sine peculiari presulis dominio usu possederant veterano. Hec eadem monachi communiter ad necessarios usus iure possessaet perpetuo et cum antiestitis consilio ac iuviuane bene regant et per prepositum fratibus cunctis necessarium episcopoque uti regula precipit cum omni humilitate subjectum sapienter disponent.

These three passages seem to be genuine and contemporary. A special portion of the endowment set aside for the community as distinct from the bishop was commonplace in England before the reign of Edgar, and there is no evidence that the reformation itself attempted to alter these arrangements.¹ The great bulk of the estates mentioned in this series of charters was still assigned to the bishop in 1086. The only certain exception is Chilcomb. Thus the series, so far as the mensal provisions are concerned, is weighted overwhelmingly in favour of the bishop. Only Chilcomb is earmarked for the monks and even then its administration is strictly under episcopal supervision. The reason for the exception of Chilcomb is clear enough. It had presumably formerly fed the "lascivious clerks". It is clear enough that these prebends had been held individually before the reformation and were hereditary.² Æthelwold had ejected a number of the holders of these prebends and "communalized" the lot. He must have offended the local establishment powerfully and it was only wise to continue the distinction in some form between the land of the community and the land of the bishop. In this way the new monks were guaranteed their proper sustenance, although the warning against having too much to eat strikes a suitably austere note: it is difficult to imagine a forger adding "immoderata superfluitas" to his fabrication. The precise meaning of the "double ration" I do not understand, but whatever it was it came out of Chilcomb. This compares very favourably with the interpolated passage in CS 705 which required the bishop of Winchester to feed his monks out of his episcopal demesne and the related passage in Charters, xxv, which exempted the monks' estates from the burden of supporting the community.

The arrangements for disposing of the surplus are also of interest. CS 1159 requires:

Pastum ex monachorum villis nequaquam presul dioecesim lustrando avidus exquirat. Emptis necessariorum indumentis quicquid ex lucro villarum superfuerit unito episcopi fratumque consilio ob æternæ beatitudinis premium Christi erogetur pauperibus et non loculis episcopi peculiaribus ad animæ detrimentum reclusum custodiatur.

It is difficult to imagine a forger exhibiting such concern for the poor. The provision may be compared with the Concordia on the disposal of any surplus from the abbot/bishop’s portion at his death where the new bishop was ordered to dispose of the surplus: “necessitatibus fratum ac pauperum subveniendo ordinans, cum fratum consilio.”

CS 1159 also arranges for the election of future bishops of Winchester: it commands the election of monks and monks only, preferably from Old Minster. The provision has every mark of authenticity. It reads:

Post unius episcopi obitum alter ex eadem monachorum congregatione qui dignus sit pontificatus ordine fungi et non aliunde eligatur. Si autem impedientibus peccatis vel imperitia in eodem monasterio talis qui dignus sit inveniri nequiverit ex alio noto monasterio monachus non autem canonicus ad tanti gradus dignitatem qui dignus sit secundum meritum atque doctrinam unanimi regis et monachorum ejusdem monasterii consilio sapienter eligatur.

The Concordia ordered that bishops should be elected like abbots where the cathedral had been converted into a monastery. There are interesting parallels with CS 1159 in the actual text:

Si autem, imperitia impediente uel peccatis promerentibus, talis qui tanti gradus honore dignus sit in eadem congregatione reperiri non potuerit, ex alio noto monachorum monasterio, concordi regis et fratum quibus dedicari debet consilio eligatur.

The echoes of the Concordia in CS 1159 do not seem close enough to suggest direct borrowing. The dictator of CS 1159 must then have known the Concordia very well. If it can be accepted that CS 1159 is authentic might it not, like the Concordia, be the work of Æthelwold himself? The title of CS 1158 likewise echoes the Concordia. But every point made in the election

2 Ibid. p. 6.
3 Bulletin, xlii. 68. I do not find Dom Symons’s remarks to the contrary (Downside Review, lxxx (1962), 140 f.) persuasive.
decree in CS 1159 can be justified from the *Concordia*. Similar decrees are found in other contemporary charters from the Æthelwold connection.¹ The last element in this series of charters which must be examined is the invective against the canons. It is this invective which can give us most help in dating the composition of the charters. It is found in two charters only, the Chilcomb charter, CS 1147, and CS 1159 itself. In CS 1147 it comes after the confirmation of the beneficial hidation:

Et ut nullus episcopus ejusdem loci illam terram de ipso monasterio tradere audeat nec alioi secularium pro munere qualibet eam dare presumat. Hoc quoque provida consideratione super addidi et mandavi ut nullus filiorum vel nepotum nec aliiquis successorum illorum ad predictum sedis episcopalis coenobium clericos umquam introduct sed locus idem semper monachis Christo ibidem servientibus deputetur sicut ipse ego cooperante Dei omnipotentis auxilio constitui quando superbos clericos qui Deo servire contemperunt pro nefandis suis actibus et detestandis spurcitiis inde eliminatos expuli ibique sacram coenobitarum congregationem qui in hymnis et laudibus domino voluntarie servirent devotus aggregavi.

In CS 1159 the invective again follows a section concerning Chilcombe and the arrangement for the victualling of the new monks from Chilcomb. This is no coincidence. It is Chilcomb which had been the mensal land of the old clerks. CS 1159 yields in no way to CS 1147 in the strength of its sentiments:

Certe canonici omni viciorum nevo deturpati inani gloria tumidi invidiae livore tabidi philargiriae maculis obcecati luxuriae facibus libidi gulae omnimodo dediti regi terreno non episcopo subjecti præfati ruris usu veterano moderno tempore pascebantur alimentis. Ebrietatem siquidem et homicidia sectantes conjuges suas turpiter nimia et inusitata libidine amplectentes æcclesiam Dei raro et perpauci frequentare volebant nec horas celebrare canonicas dignabantur. Quo reatu ejectis cum preposito canoniciis et eliminata immundorum spurcicia monachi in sede constituti sunt episcopi qui sanctis adornati virtutibus humilitate precipui vigiliis hymnis et orationibus assidui abstinentia martis castitate perplecti legitime viverent et obsequium æcclesiae regulariter implerent.

There are further comments on the immorality of the canons after the section confirming the restoration of the "abstracted" estates. Then again, after the manner of electing a bishop-abbot

¹ RB, lxx. 339, 358, n. i.
² Edgar had no nephews but "nepotes" is used in its general sense of family here. This usage is found in Frankish sources and cf. CS 1190, "succeedent nepotum prosapia". The passage is rendered in *Charters*, xxxviii, "neither his children nor their successors".
has been laid down, there follows a short homily on the way he is to conduct himself:

Electus vero nulla superfluitate monachos perturbet vel inquietet nec clericos sive laicos in claustra vel refectorium introduct vel missam celebrans monachorum reverenter fungatur officio ac in refectorio quotiens voluerit comedens eorum et non canonicorum vel laicorum inibi utatur obsequio.

The positive content of all this is thoroughly contemporary. The Concordia claims of Edgar:

eiectis neglentium clericorum spurciis non solum monachos uerum etiam sanctimoniales . . . ad Dei famulatum . . . constituit.

Abbot Ælfric, Æthelwold's principal disciple, in his account of Old Minster before the reform confirms that the clerks were idle, fond of luxury and good-living. The author of the Vita Oswaldi recording Oswald's stay in a Winchester monastery—it was not Old Minster—says:

sed erant religiosis et dignissimi clerici qui tamen thesauros suos, quos avidis acquirebant cordibus, non ad ecclesie honorem, sed suis dare solemant uxoribus.

CS 1190 supplies several parallels. There is a reference to the monks' functions:

ac veros Dei cultores monachico gradu fungentes qui pro nostris nostrorumque inibi quiescentium excessibus sedulo intercederent servitio quo eorum intercessionibus nostri regminis status vigeret munitus abbatem Christo cooperante eligens altithrono subjectus illic devote ordinavi.

There are other passages in the same vein. Like CS 1159 laymen are not to be entertained in the monastic refectory, and the abbot must eat with the monks. Edgar seeks to bind his successors to maintain his work:

Reges itaque quicumque nostri fuerint successoresn ullam exstraneam personam jus tirannidis super monachos exercentem imponant ne forte Deus eos damnans et regno deponat et vita.

There is nothing, then, in any of the Old Minster charters on the clerks which has not support from the other sources. But only CS 1190 can equal CS 1147 and CS 1159 in the scale of their invective and the force of their concern. It is especially noticeable that the first lives of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald have very little indeed to say about the expelled clerks. But to the man who wrote CS 1147 and 1159 and the man who wrote CS

1 p. 2.  
3 Raine, HCY, i. 411.
1190, the New Minster charter, the vices of the clerks were a recent memory. How else can we explain the scale of the invective and the very obvious points made—the function of monks is to pray, say the office, and so on. Both Old and New Minster charters even think it worth while to remark that the monks follow the rule of St. Benedict.

What is perhaps most significant for the dating of the Old Minster charters is the obvious fear—which they share with the New Minster charter—that a less well-disposed king than Edgar might restore the clerks and eject the monks. On the death of Edgar the *Vita Oswaldi* reports that some monks were expelled and some clerks restored, but he also implies that this was stopped by Ealdorman Æthelwine, although some, notably Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia, kept considerable revenues which rightly belonged to the monks. Some Mercian monasteries, such as Evesham, suffered badly but as Miss Duckett points out: “The settling of the conflict regarding the succession was followed by peace between monks and their accusers.” The acceptance of the monks was complete by 980 when the rededication of Old Minster by Æthelwold was the occasion of a general reconciliation.

By Æthelwold’s death the monks were safe enough. The monastic writers were not slow to connect Edgar’s political success and the peace of his reign with his support of the monks: likewise the reaction after his death was offered as a reason for the renewal of the Viking attacks and the failure of the English to cope. At the same time the secular magnates found other ways of renewing their “secular tyranny”. Ealdorman Ælfric bought Æthelwold’s Abingdon from King Æthelred for his brother Edwin. It is true Æthelred repented and Edwin was expelled from the abbacy, but it is unlikely that this was the only such case. Many of the “restored” estates were simply taken back from the monks into the hands of laymen, without the intervention of any secular clerks. The church of Winchester lost Downton in this way for a time in Æthelred’s reign.

1 Raine, *HCY*, i. 445.
3 loc. cit. 4 KCD, 684. 5 KCD, 698.
There is thus nothing which can be shown to be false in the Old Minster charters and much which has support from other sources. The emphasis in the series on the expulsion of clerks, the signs that monasticism is still a novelty, all suggest a comparatively early date. The absence of the many features of the known fabricated foundation charters such as the Ramsey forgery—fear of the sheriff, desire for exemption from episcopal and archidiaconal control, concern on the part of the monks to augment their mensal lands and the extent of their control over them—is also significant. It is hardly possible that the Edgarian series could have been put together later than 1000 and very probable that it does date, as it claims, from Edgar's reign. The documents, then, deserve to be taken more seriously than they have been in the past. They can throw a good deal of precious light on Edgar's important and still little-understood reign.

The charters seem to place special emphasis on Chilcomb, Downton, and Taunton, giving them more prominence than the other estates. All three are in a sense hundreds. So far as the wording of the charters is concerned, at a first glance it would seem that these three estates differ from the rest simply because they are larger: that, for instance, Taunton differed from Alresford in being about double the size. But in fact it is clear that the rating of an estate at one hundred hides implied considerably more than mere "landlord rights". The other Taunton charters, CS 1219 and Charters xlv, show that the bishop of Winchester had extensive rights of jurisdiction in Taunton. CS 1219 says:

Omnia enim secularium rerum judicia ad usus presulum exercere eodem modo diligenti jussi examine quo regalium negotiorum discutiuntur juditia.

From Domesday Book we know that this meant that the men of the hundred must attend the bishop's court three times a year without special summons, and that they must likewise do their military duties with his other men.¹ We have no such detailed information about Downton and Chilcomb but that something of the sort is implied is suggested by the treatment of Chilcomb which "summa centum cassatorum portio est" but also "pro una tantummodo mansa ab omnibus posteris reputetur". This can only mean that the monks enjoyed the privileges of hundredal

¹ DB, i. 87b.
authority over their tenants but the privilege of virtual exemption from the burden of hundredal responsibility to the king. At any rate the rating of an estate at 100 hides and its concession or restoration to a church meant more than the conveyance of landlord-rights.

The fact that these charters concern three hundreds prompts the question: did they together form a shipful like Oswaldlow? It is true that this is not said in so many words. But although many if not all bishops had such liberties, including Winchester's neighbour, Sherborne,¹ only Worcester recorded the details in a surviving charter. This is perhaps partly due to St. Oswald's exceptionally businesslike approach to the running of his diocese and partly to the fact that Oswaldslow was not simply made by putting three hundreds together as part of general policy but followed some kind of plea and consisted partly of hundreds made up for the occasion.² I do not think the failure to mention the shipful in the Winchester charters is a fatal objection. Now shipfuls were clearly desirable for reforming bishops: Æthelwold was one of the men who interceded for Oswald in the creation of Oswaldslow;³ his neighbour of Sherborne had one. It is difficult to think he did not too, especially as it can be shown that he held like privileges in one of his hundreds, Taunton, although nothing is said of this in the main Taunton charter. The hundred of Chilcomb raises a difficulty however.

The charters all agree that although Chilcomb is a hundred it answered to the king for one hide only. This can only mean that Chilcomb was virtually exempt from "fyrd"-service and can have contributed little to the bishop's ship. Have we then only two hundreds here? Some caution is called for. Domesday Book does not know of any Chilcomb hundred. It puts Chilcomb at the head of the monk's mensal estates and assigns it to Falemere hundred. No other reference to Falemere is known and we must conclude that it is "in all probability a mere error".⁴ What the scribe should have written was Fawley hundred: this is suggested

alike by the similar name and by local topography. Fawley appears "eo nomine" in Domesday Book for the first time: all the estates which make it up belonged to Winchester. At the same time Chilcomb disappears from view as the name of a hundred. Dr. Cam therefore concludes "in the hundred hides belonging to Chilcomb is to be found the origin of the hundred of Fawley". The change of name can easily be accounted for if we take note of a point made by O. S. Anderson to the effect that:

In the south-western counties the association of a hundred with a certain manor is the rule... the hundreds take their name from the manors to which they were appurtenant, rather than their meeting-place. There is also a tendency for primitive hundred names taken from the meeting-places of hundreds, to be supplanted by the name of hundredal manors. But occasionally the reverse is the case, the names first evidenced being that of the caput of the hundred, the name of the meeting-place appearing later.

Chilcomb was thus the name of the capital manor of the hundred which met at Fawley Down.

Once the hundred of Chilcomb has been so identified it is clear that a full hundred hides' worth of service was still exacted from Fawley hundred. In Domesday Fawley consisted of Alresford and six smaller estates, all except two of which can be identified with places in the Edgarian charters. The two exceptions are probably due to changes of names or revisions of the monk's administrative arrangements between the time of Edgar and that of the Conqueror. We must now take into account a memorandum appended to a writ of Ethelred II in the Codex Wintoniensis, which is printed as a footnote to Writs, 107. This seems to distinguish between "the land belonging to Chilcomb" and "that which lies round about it". The lands listed as lying about Chilcomb amount to exactly ninety-nine hides which suggests that together with the one hide represented by the land belonging to Chilcomb, they made up a complete hundred, what was later termed the hundred of Fawley. The matter is complicated by the fact that the estates listed as lying about Chilcomb do not exactly tally with the Domesday hundred of Fawley; since some of the estates listed do lie in Fawley hundred in 1086 there must have been some re-arrangement. The main difference

1 Quoted Writs, p. 374, n. 3. 2 loc. cit. 3 Writs, p. 377.
between the memorandum's account of Chilcomb-Fawley and Domesday Book's is that Alresford has come into Chilcomb by 1086. It is not possible to date the memorandum at all precisely but it does seem that even in Edgar's day Chilcomb's single hide was combined with other estates listed in the charters to make a full hundred. There is no reason to doubt that a full three hundreds were dealt with in these charters, and that Æthelwold as well as Oswald presided over a shipful.

But interesting, important, and as little understood as pre-Conquest military arrangements are, it is what Edgar was doing for Æthelwold that really matters. In a sense he was restoring a former state of things. There is no reason to doubt that Æthelwold could have produced a title-deed for almost everything he claimed in these charters and evidence of customary practice where he could not. But there is a difference. Æthelwold was taking his charters and their formulas literally. They gave land to the Church, they promised free disposal for the bishop of Winchester for the time being. But whatever the charters said they had never, or not since the early days of the conversion, been taken to mean all this literally. The portion set aside for the community had been held in some sort of hereditary prebends for all intents and purposes outside the bishop's control. The portion which supported the bishop was very far from his in practice. Any study of the tenth-century Winchester charters reveals how little of the supposed domains of the church of Winchester actually fell to Æthelwold on his succession. Taunton plainly did not—the earlier charters raise doubts as to whether the church of Winchester had ever held more than the title. Downton had long been alienated from its nominal

1 This would seem to follow from the character of English "monastic" landholding before the reform. It may be inferred from CS 1146 which subjects Chilcomb "ad usum presulis" and immediately requires that he feed the monks properly out of it. This is in fact a grant, not to the bishop as such, but to the mensa of the monks. It is significant of the previous state of affairs that the grant should be expressed in this way. CS 1159 makes this explicit when it says the former clerks living off Chilcomb were "regi terreno non episcopo subjecti". The reference to the king probably indicates the virtual exemption of Chilcomb from the common burdens. Both these passages have a strong contemporary ring.
possessor, unless it was momentarily restored by Edward the Elder. CS 1159 says bluntly that Taunton, Downton, Alresford, and five other estates were actually given back into Æthelwold’s possession by Edgar, and that Chilcomb, it is implied, came under proper ecclesiastical control for the first time.

It is not possible to calculate exactly the hidage of the estates restored by CS 1159 but it cannot be far short of 500 hides. The effect of Edgar’s generosity—generosity as much at others’ expense as at his own—was to provide the bishops of Winchester with a truly princely income, which for the most part they kept long after Æthelwold and Edgar were forgotten. It is this generosity that founded the fortune that supported a line of churchmen who played a part in English life second only to the archbishops of Canterbury. There is, of course, no question what Æthelwold himself did with his money: he ploughed it back into the Benedictine order. It must be from here that the great sums of money he used to set such houses as Ely on their feet came. The consequences for the royal house of Wessex were perhaps less fortunate.

The effects of Edgar’s generosity and Æthelwold’s reform were felt throughout Wessex. Wholesale expulsion of clerks from Winchester meant the deprivation of local landowners in Chilcomb—in the very heart of Wessex, lying as it did around Winchester. In Taunton the bishop asserted himself over an important piece of Somerset. He dispossessed or reduced the local landowners with a firm hand.1 Something similar must also have happened in the middle of Wiltshire, at Downton. All the restored estates meant some dispossession or reduction of lay land-holders somewhere. Many of these men must have been related, given the comparatively small and very intimately connected Anglo-Saxon upper-class which met at councils of magnates or shire-courts, and doubtless on social occasions as well: Edgar’s action cannot but have reverberated all over Wessex. Let us remember, too, that the reform of Winchester did not exhaust Æthelwold’s capacity for conversion. New Minster, too, was reformed: there is a suggestion that the houses of lay people were pulled down to make suitable boundaries between the Old

1 Charters, xlv and Writs, p. 108.
and New Minsters. Winchester itself saw the reform of a third house, Nunnaminster. In the county, not far away, Romsey was founded. In Dorset monks replaced clerks at Milton. At one end of Wessex, Chertsey, in Surrey was reformed, at the other Cerne. We are not so well informed about the "restorations" and expulsions involved, but the nature of the reform movement made some inevitable. By Edgar's death there must have been a substantial number of aggrieved thegnly families in Wessex. It is not then surprising to find that the close relations between the West Saxon royal house and the more powerful of their West Saxon subjects seem to die with Edgar. It is hardly necessary to stress the loyalty of the West Saxon thegns to Ælfred or to point out that without that loyalty the dynasty must have disappeared from history with the Vikings. More striking, perhaps, is the loyalty of Wessex to the young Eadwig in 957. By that time for reasons we shall probably never fully understand, Eadwig had lost the confidence of a large section of the English nobility. So much so that the English north of the Thames repudiated him, but Wessex significantly did not. Nothing suggests this was due to personal preference. The Church was plainly for Edgar, even though men like Archbishop Oda and Abbot Æthelwold stayed with the West Saxon ruler, Eadwig. Their sympathies obviously lay elsewhere, and Æthelwold's loyalty to Eadwig was never any bar to his promotion under Edgar. Once Eadwig was dead, West Saxon loyalty was transferred to Edgar. Nothing, then, suggests that the West Saxons had any more reason for loving Eadwig than anyone else, but they stayed with him. This loyalty to the traditional house is not found after Edgar's death. In 975 Edward the Martyr was murdered in the heart of Wessex. His brother Æthelred did not inherit the old West Saxon loyalty either. No doubt given time and no renewal of the Viking

1 CS 1302, v. Duckett, St. Dunstan, p. 122.  
2 BULLETIN, xlii. 65-66.  
3 The persistent treacherous cowardice of Ealdorman Ælfric of Hampshire is noted Chronicle, C, E, 992 and again C, E, 1002. The king thought it necessary to have Ælfric's son blinded, E, 993. Exeter was destroyed through treachery in 1003, C, E, 1003. The campaign of 1006 shows the Vikings ensconced in the Isle of Wight and moving at will over Wessex, C, E, 1006. In 986 Æthelred laid waste the see of Rochester, C, 986. Kent had been a most loyal part of Wessex since the time of Ecgbehrt inter alia.
invasions, the old bitterness would have died and old habits and sympathies would have been resumed. But there was no respite and after 975 no head of the West Saxon royal house found much comfort in what ought to have been his homeground. Edgar's confiscations contributed to an instability which was scarcely overcome before the Norman Conquest.

Whether Edgar and Æthelwold were altogether wise in going so far so fast hardly matters at this distance—the money was after all well spent, as the strong Winchester strain in the culture of late Old English society shows. But the consequences of what they did matters and ought to be taken into account.