



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

**Wednesday 24 May 2023 – Morning**

**A Level History A**

**Y302/01 The Viking Age c.790–1066**

**Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes**



**You must have:**

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

**INFORMATION**

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [ ].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (\*).
- This document has **4** pages.

**ADVICE**

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

## SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of King Alfred's response to Viking raids. [30]

**Passage A**

The mention of naval activity in the records for the 880s suggests that Alfred was systematically organising the first coastal defensive fleet to have sailed English waters since the late Roman period. As with so much of Alfred's work in rebuilding his nation, the genius in this lay not in sudden inspirational ideas but in a careful examination of the problems and solutions of the past, followed by an honest attempt to adapt those old solutions to the needs of the present time. It was obvious to Alfred that combatting Viking naval power was the key to maintaining the peace. Asser, when writing of later naval engagements, however, refers very specifically to Alfred's fleet, implying that the rather haphazard arrangements of earlier years were being replaced by a small but professionally organised coastal force. When Alfred took these steps towards defending the Wessex coast, it may not have been with the explicit intention of founding a navy. Alfred had nothing like the nineteenth-century imperial navy in mind when he organised it, but he might, in his own modest way, still be credited with having founded the Royal Navy. The success of his strategy, at least on a small scale, might then be judged from the relative absence of recorded small raids (by one or two Viking ships) in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

**Adapted from: J. Pollard, Alfred the Great: The Man Who Made England, published in 2005.**

**Passage B**

The key to West Saxon success – and one for which Alfred himself must be given credit – lies in the effectiveness of West Saxon fortifications. He adopted a new defensive strategy, moving away from risking his warriors in a pitched battle or from trying to dislodge Vikings from their own defended positions. A Viking army which briefly attacked Kent in 885 laid siege to Rochester, whose defences held until Alfred arrived with an army and drove the invaders back to their ships. Exeter, in 893, also successfully withstood a Viking siege, which suggests that the crumbling Roman walls of those towns had been put in a proper state of defence under Alfred's supervision. The king had detailed a specific section of his army for the defence of his forts and fortified towns. In other words, by 893, fortifications were no longer isolated experiments in Alfredian defence, but had become part of an established system. Garrisons attached to a burg\* need not necessarily have been a static force anchored in their fortresses.

Chichester, which appears in the Burghal Hidage\*, is mentioned in connection with its 'citizens' or burgware who drove off Danish attackers in 894. But the burgware who slaughtered Danes and who captured their all-important ships were no ordinary citizens – they must have been the men specifically detailed to guard the burg. This term burgware – so used of Londoners who attacked a Danish fort on the Lea in 895 – is surely further evidence that Alfredian towns had already been provided with their own special defending force by 894–5.

**Adapted from: A. P. Smyth, King Alfred the Great, published in 1995.**

\* burg – a fort or fortified town

\* Burghal Hidage – an Anglo Saxon document listing over 30 fortified places, mostly in Wessex

**SECTION B**

Answer any **two** questions.

- 2\*** 'Scandinavian land and climate was the most important factor in the development of Viking society throughout the period from c.790 to 1066.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3\*** 'Warfare was the only effective way of dealing with troublesome Vikings in the period from c.790 to 1066.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4\*** To what extent did rituals and codes of conduct change in Viking culture in the period from c.790 to 1066? **[25]**

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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