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PIETERMARITZBURG

IN SOME recent issues of *Theoria* literary articles have predominated. On this occasion there happens to be a change of emphasis and more contributions by scholars in the other humanities appear in our pages. We hope that this journal will always represent a varied approach in the forum of the Arts and related subjects.

Special tribute must be paid to Dr W. G. McConkey who has retired as Publications officer after nine years in that position. Shepherding *Theoria* through the press formed only a section of his devoted work for the University of Natal, yet he made himself available to us at all times and attended with characteristic care and erudition to any problem on which he could offer advice. We wish to thank him for his unsparing interest. It is fitting that the first article in this issue should be his study of a crucial matter in Education at the present time.

THE EDITORS

# STANDARDS IN THE BANTU JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION\*

by W. G. McCONKEY

A fundamental question to which this Conference should seek an answer is: 'Has the quality of the education provided in our African schools improved, remained constant, or deteriorated under the Bantu Education system?'

The circumstantial evidence would seem to point overwhelmingly to a serious deterioration in quality. First, and in my opinion decisively, there is the evidence of the systematic reduction in financial provision *per capita*. Expenditure per pupil *per annum*, R17.08 in 1953-4, was down to R12.39 in 1966-67,<sup>1</sup> despite steady depreciation in the value of the rand over these years: the consumer index (1958 as 100) was 88.6 in 1954, 117.3 in 1966 and 121.1 in 1967. Such a drastic and persistent downward pressure led inevitably to most harmful economies. These included double sessions, involving shortened school hours for hundreds of thousands of children in the lower primary classes and contributing to the high drop-out rate in these classes<sup>2</sup>: there was one teacher for 43.6 pupils in 1954<sup>3</sup> and one for 58.5 in 1967.<sup>4</sup> The economies also included the employment of teachers of inferior qualifications. It is particularly relevant to the present inquiry that the Eiselen Commission,<sup>5</sup> in 1948, found that 60 per cent of the White teachers and 40 per cent of the African teachers in African secondary schools were graduates—and considered these proportions unsatisfactorily low—and that in 1965 only 25½ per cent of all teachers in these schools were graduates.<sup>6</sup> The Eiselen Commission also found that about 18 per cent of secondary and training college staffs were *unmatriculated*; the latest figure is in the neighbourhood of 50 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Expansion of secondary and technical education was slowed down. Provision of books, libraries, laboratories, equipment generally, was of necessity niggardly. School feeding was virtually eliminated. The occasional properly equipped and adequately staffed school (How many such could one provide and maintain on the financial provision set out above?) was not representative of a generally poverty-stricken system.

In spite of such evidence, it is insistently claimed by Government apologists that the quality of the education provided has not de-

\*Based on a paper read at the conference on Bantu Education held under the auspices of the S.A. Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg on 17 January, 1969.

teriorated. Indeed, it is often stated—at times with some effrontery—that the quality has much improved, that Bantu Education is a tremendous success story. It has been proclaimed that ‘any suggestion of inferiority or subordination is purely mischievous and does not merit further comment.’ And outsiders who show a close interest do so at risk of being derided as ‘nosey parkers’.

The Cingo Commission<sup>8</sup> found in the schools visited ‘an almost frighteningly low standard of education in all subjects’. It was ‘convinced that the facts and conditions revealed by its investigation cannot be allowed to persist.’<sup>9</sup>

In such a diversity of expressed viewpoints, where is the truth to be found?

It is obviously impossible, in the scope of this paper, to offer a comprehensive and authoritative assessment of the system of Bantu Education generally. Only a broadly based Commission empowered to investigate the system throughout the Republic could provide such an assessment. The purpose of this paper is more modest. It is to inquire into one very limited but nevertheless significant aspect of the general question, namely: ‘Has the standard for a pass in the Bantu Education Department Junior Certificate Examination been raised, been held reasonably constant, or been substantially reduced?’

*My tentative answer, in brief, is that the standard for a pass in the Bantu Education Junior Certificate Examination was relaxed, in the 1963 examinations, very substantially below the level prevailing up to 1962, and that the very substantially relaxed standard applied in the 1963 examination was retained, with incidental fluctuations, in the succeeding years. The current standard for a pass would therefore seem to be significantly below the pre-Bantu Education standard.*

To indicate the place of the Junior Certificate examination in the Bantu Education system it is recorded that the full Bantu Education course (for the less than one per cent of the pupils who stay the full course) extends over thirteen years—four years (Sub-Std. A to Std. II) in the lower primary school, four years (Stds. III to VI) in the upper primary school, three years (Forms I to III) in the lower secondary school and two years (Forms IV and V) in the upper secondary or high school. The departmentally conducted examination at the end of the Std. VI year serves, *inter alia*, to screen candidates for admission to the lower secondary school (Form I). The departmentally conducted Junior Certificate examination, taken at the end of the Form III year, serves to screen candidates for admission to the upper secondary school (Form IV) and, with a lower level of attainment, to certain teacher-training and vocational courses.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the Form V year pupils write one of two external examinations, the Senior Certificate examination of a White education department, or

the Matriculation examination of the Joint Matriculation Board of the South African Universities. Both examinations serve to screen candidates for admission to certain diploma courses, service appointments and (if passed at a level approved for university admission by the Joint Matriculation Board) for admission to degree courses at South African universities or university colleges.

While standards of achievement in Bantu Education have been a controversial issue since the introduction of the system, the standard set for a pass in the Bantu Education Junior Certificate examination came sharply into the limelight in 1964 when the results of the 1963 examination were announced. The examination record in the take-over period of the 1950s had been poor. In the years 1955-9 the average percentage of passes had been 49.3. A period of apparent stability on a somewhat better, though still unsatisfactory, level followed. In 1960, 56.1 per cent of the candidates had passed; in 1961, 54.5 per cent. (In these years African pupils still wrote the Junior Certificate examination of the White education departments.) In 1962, the first year in which African pupils had to write the Bantu Education Department's own Junior Certificate examination, 56.9 per cent passed. Then, in 1963, 78.22 per cent of the candidates passed. The sudden steep jump aroused queries and the matter was raised in Parliament.

Hansard 1964/col. 388 records that Mr Gorshel asked the Minister of Bantu Education on 28 January 1964:

'Whether he has received any complaints in regard to the standard of education administered by his Department; if so, what was the nature of the complaints?'

The Minister replied (col. 389):

'No complaints have been received but when the results of the Junior Certificate examination of 1963 were announced certain newspapers conjectured that the remarkable achievement in the examination was a result of a lowering of the standard of Bantu education.

'With a view to removing all misunderstanding in this connection I am prepared to state that the improvement in the Junior Certificate examination, as (in) the Matric, has absolutely nothing to do with a lowering of standards or lesser requirements which could have been set to candidates in the examinations.

'The standard of the Matriculation and Senior Certificate examinations is controlled by the Joint Matriculation Board and in the Junior Certificate examination the same standard as before is expected of candidates in all subjects . . .'

In reporting the Minister's speech, the Department of Information reinforced the Minister's personal guarantee of the Junior Certificate standard by misquoting him (*S.A. Digest*, February 20, 1964), no doubt inadvertently, as follows:

'The standard of the Matriculation *and Junior Certificate* examinations was controlled by the Joint Matriculation Board . . .'

The misquotation misstated the facts. The Joint Matriculation Board did not, and does not, control Bantu Junior Certificate standards.

However, there was other, apparently strong, reinforcement in the fact that in the Senior Certificate examination, whose standard *is* controlled by the Joint Matriculation Board, passes had risen from 40 per cent in 1962 to 60 per cent in 1963. (Later, it transpired that the reinforcement was less impressive than it had at first seemed. In 1962 and 1963 the schools were still adjusting themselves to the action of the Joint Matriculation Board in raising the standard required for a pass in English, Higher Grade, and also to the widespread replacement, in the Bantu Education Department, of English-speaking by non-English-speaking teachers of English. Now when it became known that practically all of the candidates of the year 1962 had written English, Higher Grade, and that only just over two-thirds of the 1963 candidates had written English, Higher Grade, it was clear that the improved percentage of passes in the 1963 Senior Certificate examination reflected, to a considerable but not precisely assessable degree, a difficulty successfully avoided rather than successfully overcome.)

But that is anticipating. So with the perhaps unnecessary comment that Matriculation Board standards and procedures in the matter are unreservedly accepted, let us return to the Minister making his statement.

In the 1962 examinations, 56.98 per cent of Junior Certificate candidates had scored passes in various categories. In the 1963 examinations, 78.22 per cent had passed. On the face of it, the Minister was entitled to tell Parliament, as he did, that the 1963 results 'show a remarkable improvement which is particularly striking when the details are analysed:

- '(a) Thirty-three candidates passed with distinction, i.e. they passed with an average of 70 per cent and higher. Against this the number of distinctions in the previous four years was never more than 11 in one year.
- '(b) The number of candidates who passed in the first class in 1963 was 1,051 (or 11 per cent of the total) against 446 (or 4.5 per cent of the total) of the previous year.

(c) Also, 3,822 pupils (or 40 per cent of the total) passed in the second class and 2,550 pupils (or 26.7) per cent of the total) obtained third class.'

The Minister went on to list five 'factors' to which 'improvement in the examination achievement in the Junior Certificate, over the past four years and particularly in 1963, must be attributed'.

1. Since 1960 only pupils who had obtained a Continuation Certificate in Std. VI were admitted to Form I. The weaker pupils, who in the past had also been admitted to secondary classes, could now obtain only a school-leaving certificate and were thus eliminated from secondary schools. With pupils better trained and scholastically grounded, better results in the secondary classes could be produced, as the Junior Certificate results for 1963 now bore out.
2. 'The 1963 Junior Certificate candidates were the first group which had received its tuition through the medium of the mother tongue throughout the entire period of the primary school. This must necessarily prove that pupils get a better grasp of the subject-matter and gain a better insight when they are taught through the mother tongue in the primary school. This is particularly noticeable in a subject such as arithmetic in which the performance of the pupils in the past was usually weak.'
3. The Junior Certificate syllabuses, which for some years had been in draft form only, had now been finally accepted and handbooks had been prepared and were now freely available to pupils and teachers.
4. 'Through the introduction in 1960 of a Division of Psychological Services and the application of scholastic and aptitude tests in Std. VI classes, standardised tests are now available to secondary schools. These tests lead to a better selection of pupils for admission to post-primary schools'.
5. 'Better educational facilities are being continuously created by the Department, more and more school buildings with properly equipped laboratories, libraries and better qualified and trained teachers are available'.

*Comment on the five 'factors'*

Before I comment on the factors, I point out that none of them could have significantly affected Junior Certificate results much before 1963. The years 1960-2 showed in any case only minor fluctuations—not a significant improvement pattern. But the Minister



was particularly concerned with 1963 and in 1963 improvement in the percentage of passes had indeed been remarkable.

Factors 1 and 4 have much force. The introduction of the School Leaving Certificate in the Std. VI examination of 1960 had made a drastic change. In the 1959 examination, 70.9 per cent of the candidates had passed and were eligible for promotion to Form I in January 1960. In the 1960 examination, while 79 per cent of the candidates had 'passed', 37 per cent of them had been awarded only School Leaving Certificates and 'were thus eliminated from secondary Schools'. Only the top 42 per cent were admissible to Form I in January 1961. Stricter selection in 1960 and subsequent years based both on higher examination achievement and on psychological tests should indeed have provided a much better intake in Form I in 1961 and subsequent years, and so in Form III in 1963 and subsequent years. From pupils thus doubly screened for achievement and aptitude for secondary studies better performance in the secondary school might confidently be anticipated.

Factor no. 3 should also have aided teaching and learning from about the same time.

Factor no. 2 is not so convincing. The Minister seems less concerned to explain the sudden jump in examination passes than to exploit the jump to 'prove' the beneficial effect of mother-tongue medium at the upper primary level. (*N.B.*—Only 17 per cent of African teachers consulted by the Transkeian Commission favoured mother-tongue medium beyond Std. II.<sup>11</sup> Bantu Education enforces it up to Std. VI). It may be admitted, however, that the beneficial effect—if any—would first have shown up at Junior Certificate level in 1963.

Factor 5 is for laughs—or tears. A Department attempting continuous creation within the financial restrictions which plagued Bantu Education must have been continuously frustrated. The Minister's reference to 'better trained and qualified teachers' should be read with the facts about secondary staffing given elsewhere in this paper. As for libraries, the Cingo Commission found no new creations. On the contrary, they reported:<sup>12</sup> 'In Secondary and Training Schools, *with the exception of the older and well-established institutions*, the position in regard to libraries can only be described as highly unsatisfactory'. And they found the rate of subsidy for high school libraries—5 cents per pupil per annum, subject to the school's raising an equal amount, subject to a maximum of R50 per post-primary school per annum,<sup>13</sup> subject to funds being available—'totally inadequate'.

But the Minister's picture, on the whole, was encouraging. And

those interested in our African schools went forward in faith with these apparently superior Junior Certificates candidate of 1963 as they, or at least some of them, went forward to the Senior Certificate course.

How did they fare in the Senior Certificate examination of 1965?

*'An unparalleled achievement'*

The official view is that they did very well. The reader is referred to an article in the official journal, *BANTU* (March 1966) entitled 'Bantu Education—An Unparalleled Achievement'. The following comparative tables are offered by *BANTU* as evidence of a *'remarkable improvement during each of the past four years in the examination results—in the junior certificate as well as the matriculation examination—irrespective of the increase in numbers'*.

**TABLE A—Full-time Matriculation and Senior Certificate Examination Candidates—Transkei Included**

Year	No. of candidates	PASSED									Total Passes	
		Exemption			School-leaving			Total				
		Class			Class			Class				
		1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd		
No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	%		
1962	910	4	108	38	—	53	171	4	161	199	364	40.0
1963	882	8	217	21	1	152	133	9	368	154	531	60.2
1964	1,033	9	265	24	—	214	124	9	479	148	636	61.6
1965	1,339	24	291	8	3	294	207	27	585	215	826	61.7

**TABLE B—Full-time Junior Certificate Examination Candidates—Transkei Included**

Year	No. of candidates	PASSED				Total Passes	
		Distinction	Class			No.	%
			1st	2nd	3rd		
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	%
1962	9,933	3	446	5,211	—	5,660	56.98
1963	9,532	33	1,051	3,822	2,550	7,456	78.22
1964	10,112	43	1,124	3,660	2,690	7,517	74.34
1965	11,644*	43	1,456	4,752	2,772	9,023	77.49

\* Includes 122 candidates of whom the results were still outstanding.

Let us look first at the Junior Certificate results for the two years relevant to our inquiry, 1962 and 1963 (italicised in Table B).

It will be observed that in 1962 successful candidates were classified under the three headings: (a) Distinction, (b) First Class, and (c) Second Class; and that in 1963 a fourth category of successful candidates appears, namely Third Class. If we were to exclude the new fourth category (Third Class) of passes, the number of successful candidates would be reduced by 2,550, and the percentage of passes would not be 78.22, but merely 51.47, or lower than in 1962.

It is relevant to our argument that the Third Class pass in Junior Certificate, though acceptable for admission to certain vocational and teacher-training courses, is not accepted for admission to Form IV. The 2,550 Third Class passes of 1963 were thus debarred from entrance to the Senior Certificate course as effectively as if they had failed the examination completely.

Now between 1962 and 1963 the minimum mark for a Junior Certificate pass was not changed. In 1962, at least 880 marks had to be scored for the lowest class of pass, then styled Second Class. In 1963, at least 880 marks had still to be scored for the new lowest class of pass, now styled Third Class, and 990 marks had to be scored for classification in the new-style Second Class, the minimum qualification for promotion to Form IV.

What would seem to have happened is that, when the Third Class category was introduced in the 1963 examination, relaxations of standard took place which in fact made it easier for weaker candidates to reach the pass total of 880 marks and so to achieve a pass—of sorts—and easier for other candidates to qualify for higher classifications. The relaxation in standard is particularly evident in the subject General Arithmetic, where there seems to have been a newly-briefed examiner, and where there was what is described in the Annual Report as a 'remarkable improvement', the number of successful candidates rising by 27 per cent. There was, the Report says, 'an improvement in most other subjects too, but it was not so marked'.

It will be shown that a score of 990 marks in 1963 did not necessarily represent a higher standard than a score of 880 marks in 1962, and that the percentage of the 1963 pupils who genuinely reached the 1962 pass level was not 78.22 per cent, but something more like the 51 per cent who, in 1963, earned at least Second Class passes and qualified for admission to Form IV. It will also be shown that the very remarkable increase of 135 per cent in the number of First Class passes, and the even more remarkable increase in the Distinctions (to both of which phenomena the Minister had drawn particu-

lar attention) were due, essentially, to an easing of the requirements for classification in these categories.

*The proof of the pudding*

Let us compare the performance of the 1964 Senior Certificate candidates (ex-J.C. 1962) with that of the 1965 Senior Certificate candidates (ex-J.C. 1963).

For easy comparison, I have reduced the total numbers of passes in the First, Second and Third Classes to percentages.

This is the table:

Year	Senior Certificate			
	First	Second	Third	Fail
1964	.9	46.4	14.3	38.4
1965	2.0	43.7	16.0	38.3

These figures show little difference between the two groups in level of achievement. In both years, the great majority of the passes was in the Second Class. In 1965, the spread was rather wider than in 1964: the proportion of Second Classes was lower; there was a spread upwards by 1.1 per cent (from .9 to 2) into the First Class, and a slightly larger spread downwards—by 1.7 per cent (from 14.3 to 16.0)—into the Third Class. Looked at Class by Class, and as a whole, these results do not sustain a claim that the 1965 candidates, as a group, fared significantly better than their predecessors of 1964.

But in one very important respect the 1965 candidates fared decidedly worse than their predecessors. The Senior Certificate examination can be taken on two levels. Taken with prescribed academic subjects, e.g. mathematics, other approved sciences, it can qualify the candidate for matriculation exemption, i.e. for admission to degree courses at universities. Taken with so-called 'soft options', or with inferior performance in the academic subjects, the certificate awarded does not carry matriculation exemption. Now of the 1964 candidates, 28.8 per cent had gained matriculation exemption and 32.7 had received senior certificates without matriculation exemption. In 1965 there was deterioration from this standard: only 24.1 per cent qualified for matriculation exemption, and the figure for certificates without matriculation exemption rose to 37.6.

Great expectations had been cherished of the 1965 Senior Certificate group. It was favoured above its predecessors of 1964. It had been much more strictly screened ex-Standard VI. It had enjoyed the alleged benefits of mother-tongue medium which its predecessors had been denied; it had had stabilised syllabuses and the necessary handbooks at its disposal. On top of these advantages, it had been more strictly screened again at Junior Certificate level. It had left behind its tail of 2,550 Third Class Junior Certificate 'passes'.

It had gone forward to Form IV on minimum scores of 990, whereas its predecessors had gone forward on minimum scores of 880. Its breakthrough in Senior Certificate in 1965 should have been at least of the order of its apparent breakthrough in Junior Certificate in 1963. As we have seen, its Senior Certificate performance was, if anything, weaker than that of its predecessors. The conclusion seems unavoidable that a score of 990 marks in the Junior Certificate examination of 1963 represented an achievement not necessarily superior to a score of 880 marks in the 1962 examination; and that a candidate awarded 880 marks in 1963 would probably have failed in the examination of 1962.

In that case, the Minister's guarantee would seem to have been based on faulty assumptions.

#### *Subsequent years*

Table C gives evidence of the continuing application of the apparently reduced 1963-style standards for a Junior Certificate pass. At the same time, it gives evidence of increasingly strict selection for promotion to Form IV.

**TABLE C—Junior Certificate Results—Percentages**

Year	(a) Passed	(b) Distinc- tions	(c) First Class	(d) Qualify for Form IV	(e) Third Class	(f) Failed
1962	56.98	.03	4.50	56.98	—	43.02
1963	78.22	.34	11.02	51.47	26.75	21.78
1964	74.34	.42	11.10	47.73	26.61	25.66
1965	77.49	.40	12.65	53.59	23.90	22.51
1966	71.75	.23	8.91	43.73	28.02	28.25
1967	67.73	.19	7.78	40.77	26.96	32.27
1968	66.60	.23	7.49	39.46	27.21	33.33

Column (d) includes all passes acceptable for admission to Form IV, i.e. passes with Distinction and in the First and Second classes. Column (e) shows the 'passes' which do not qualify for such admission.

It will be observed that while the percentage of passes (all classes) remained in the seventies until 1966, preserving a public image of

continuing satisfactory achievement, and has remained in the upper sixties since, the percentage of pupils adjudged adequately prepared for admission to Form IV has, except in 1965, steadily declined. Those allowed to go forward to Form IV from 1963 onward have tended to be more and more strictly selected groups. They all had, presumably, scored 990 or more marks in their Junior Certificate examinations. Their Distinctions and First Classes had been in impressively higher proportions than those gained in 1962. Yet, when it came to the Senior Certificate examination, none of these ostensibly superior year-groups was to equal, much less surpass, the achievement of the 'underprivileged' Junior Certificate year-group of 1962 (See Table D). A slight increase in the proportion of First Class passes (range 2 per cent: best result 66 in First Class out of 2289 candidates in 1968) reflects the work of a small number of adequately staffed and equipped schools within the generally ill-found system.

### *Summarising*

We may now summarise. After poor examination results in the period of take-over instability in the late 1950s, Bantu Junior Certificate results stabilised at a not very satisfactory level in the early 1960s. In 1960, 56.1 per cent of the candidates passed; in 1961, 54.5 per cent; in 1962, 56.9 per cent. Then, in 1963, there was the great leap forward to 78.22 per cent passes, with multiplication of Distinctions and First Classes, and this new high level was to be maintained in the immediately following years.

Obviously, one of two things had happened in 1963.

- Either (a) there had been a lowering of the standard required for a pass at the various levels in the examination;
- or (b) there had been a remarkable improvement in the scholastic quality of the Junior Certificate candidates in that year, brought about hypothetically by the five factors listed by the Minister and quoted earlier in this paper, an improvement which, because of the continuing favourable effect of the factors, was to be reflected in the maintenance of Junior Certificate results in succeeding years at approximately the 1963 level.

Now such a remarkable and sustained improvement in the scholastic quality of the candidates, *reinforced by their stricter screening for admission to Form IV*, as shown in Table C, must inevitably have been reflected in the performance of these same candidates in the Senior Certificate examination two years after their respective Junior Certificate examinations.

Table D sets out the Junior Certificate results for the years 1962-6 opposite the Senior Certificate results for the years 1964-8.

TABLE D—Percentages

Year	Junior Certificate Passes	Year	Senior Certificate passes with Matric Exemption	Total S.C. Passes
1962	56.98	1964	28.8	61.6
1963	78.22	1965	24.1	61.7
1964	74.34	1966	26.6	56.3
1965	77.49	1967	23.8	47.5
1966	67.73	1968	33.8	55.3

*The Senior Certificate results are not consistent with the hypothesis of a sustained remarkable improvement in the scholastic quality of the candidates who reached Junior Certificate in 1963 and succeeding years and Senior Certificate in 1965 and succeeding years.*

*It would seem, therefore, that the remarkable increase over the 1962 level in the percentage of passes generally, and in the percentage of passes in the two upper categories, in the Bantu Education Junior Certificate examination of 1963 and subsequent years was brought about by a lowering of the standards for a pass, for a pass in the First Class, and for a pass with Distinction.*

One may go further. Not only has the Senior Certificate achievement over the years 1965-8 failed to surpass the achievement of the 'under-privileged' Senior Certificate class of 1964, but, leaving aside for a moment the Matriculation result of 1968, one notes that the achievement in latter years has consistently failed even to equal the achievement of 1964. There is a general downward tendency which is the more depressing in the light of the increasingly strict selection at Junior Certificate level revealed in Table C. *With even promotion J. C. passes thus sagging visibly below 1962 standard, bare third Class passes have obviously sunk far below.*

The 1968 result deserves a closer look. (For favourable comment on it see the *Bantu Education Journal* for March 1969). The total percentage of Senior Certificate passes (with and without Matriculation) is higher in 1968 than in 1967, but lower than in 1964, indeed lower than in any other year since 1962. But the percentage of passes *with Matriculation* in 1968 is much higher than in 1967 and higher than in 1964.

Let us, however, set out these Matriculation results opposite the Junior Certificate results of two years earlier. Table E. shows:

- A. Percentage of Std. VI candidates who qualified in the years shown *for promotion to Form I.*
- B. Percentage of Junior Certificate candidates who qualified in the years shown *for promotion to Form IV.*

- C. Percentage of Senior Certificate candidates who gained Matriculation or Matriculation Exemption certificates in the years shown.

TABLE E

A		B		C	
1959	70.9	1962	56.98	1964	28.8
1960	42.	1963	51.47	1965	24.1
1961	47.4	1964	47.73	1966	26.6
1962	46.	1965	53.59	1967	23.8
1963	47.1	1966	43.73	1968	33.8

It will be seen that :

- (i) Of one hundred Junior Certificate candidates in 1966, about 44 so passed as to be eligible to proceed to the Senior Certificate course. If all 44 had so proceeded, 33.8 per cent of them—*say about 15 candidates*—should have obtained Matriculation certificates in 1968.
- (ii) Of one hundred Junior Certificate candidates in 1965, about 54 so passed as to be eligible to proceed to the Senior Certificate course. If all 54 had so proceeded, 23.8 per cent of them—*say about 13 candidates*—should have obtained Matriculation certificates in 1967.
- (iii) Of one hundred 'underprivileged' Junior Certificate candidates in 1962, about 57 so passed as to be able to proceed to the Senior Certificate course. If all 57 had so proceeded, 28.8 per cent of them—*say about 16 candidates*—should have obtained Matriculation certificates in 1964.

Taking both sets of results thus into account, one notes that the lead of the 1968 Matriculation group over the 1967 group is maintained but much reduced, and that its lead over the 1964 group disappears.

If one were to extend this exercise to include all Senior Certificate passes, with and without Matriculation, the lead of 1968 over 1967 would disappear.

If one were to go back to Std. VI (Column A of Table E) the percentage of Matriculation passes in 1968 would compare even more unfavourably with the percentage of 1964.

Of course, not all candidates who qualified at any stage actually proceeded to the next stage. Indeed, most dropped out (inability of family to pay for schooling, or to pay boarding-school fees, or to forgo potential earnings of pupils; inaccessibility of day schools even in large urban areas, Government restrictions on admissions to



Catholic schools etc.). But this circumstance does not affect our argument: for only candidates who got through the screens did proceed.

*Better results coming?*

In 1965, 53.59 per cent of the candidates got through the Junior Certificate screen; in 1966, only 43.73 per cent. The more tightly screened 1966 group made a better show in Senior Certificate two years on.

In 1967 only 40.77 per cent of the Junior Certificate candidates got through the screen; and in 1968, only 39.46 per cent.

Is pupil achievement at Junior Certificate stage getting worse every year? That is what the percentages of Junior Certificate passes on both levels (cols.(a) and (d) of Table C) since 1963 suggest—apart from the ‘good’ Junior Certificate class of 1965 which became the ‘bad’ Senior Certificate class of 1967. *If so, a state of affairs is revealed which calls urgently for investigation.*

And is it now policy to apply—within the framework of a still comparatively reassuring, though worsening, overall pass figure (col.(a) of Table C)—an increasingly rigorous screening for admission to the Senior Certificate course (col.(d) of Table C)? Such a policy has not been announced, but if it has been adopted it may well lead to apparent ‘better results’ at future Senior Certificate examinations. Such ‘better results’ will not necessarily reflect improved levels of achievement in African secondary classes generally.

## DISCUSSION

### (a) *Standards in other examinations*

The lowering of standards in Bantu Education’s Junior Certificate examination in the circumstances described must arouse apprehensions about standards in other Bantu Education examinations.

In the Std. VI examinations of each of the years 1964-7, for example, at least 84 per cent of the candidates ‘passed’. The figure suggests that all is very well. But over the four years the average percentage of Continuation Certificate passes was 49.2; so not quite half of the candidates were found fit for admission to Form I. Over the four years, 35.3 per cent of the candidates received School Leaving Certificates and only 15.5 per cent were classified as having ‘failed’. Now while a School Leaving Certificate given to a reasonable number of near misses might serve to give some indication of educational attainment to a prospective employer, or to indicate those who might be reasonable risks for a vocational course, if places were available, a School Leaving Certificate given to all candidates ranking from 50th to 84th out of a hundred must cover such a wide

spectrum of achievement and non-achievement as to be practically useless for such purposes. A plain certificate of attendance might be a more appropriate paper for issue to most of these pupils. One asks: Is the general level of attainment in Std. VI in African schools in the Republic, with 84 per cent of passes, *so much* higher than the general level of attainment in Std. VI in the Transkei, with 56.9 per cent of passes (1964-7) and 43.1 per cent of 'failed'?<sup>14</sup> Circumstantial evidence, e.g. *per capita* expenditure, suggests that it is not.

The 1968 results, just published, show 81 per cent of 'passes', but only 44.5 per cent of the candidates qualifying for admission to Form I in 1969.

The most popular teacher-training course in Bantu Education is now the Higher Primary Teacher's Certificate course. The scholastic qualification for admission is a Junior Certificate. The extent to which the standard for *admission to the course* may have been relaxed depends on the proportion of Third Class certificate holders taken into the student body. But whatever the quality of the admissions, the quality of the actual course must have suffered severely from the great deterioration in the qualifications of training college staffs pointed out elsewhere in this paper. (This is not to belittle dedicated work by individual teachers with low qualifications, but the Eiselen Commission, like education authorities generally, recognised that the level of a teacher's general and professional education is an important indicator of his usefulness.)

How much reassurance is there in the fact that in the 1968 examinations for the Higher Primary Teacher's Certificate no fewer than 96.2 per cent of the candidates passed? Or in the fact that in the 1968 examinations for the Lower Primary Teacher's Certificate (that low-standard course which still drags out its feeble existence although certified dead<sup>15</sup> by the Minister in 1963) no fewer than 98.3 per cent of the candidates passed? For 'effective' passes, in the sense of passes qualifying for promotion, or for salaried employment, such figures are most unusual in Bantu Education.

One is uneasy, in the circumstances, about the future of standards in the African university colleges, now about to be removed from the orbit of the University of South Africa and to become 'independent' universities. Their extraordinary, indeed unique, systems of management and of student discipline, their lack of any considerable private endowment, and their very low enrolments of matriculated students seem to make such a step indeed remarkable. Is the consoling reassurance to come, one day, that standards at these universities are fully equal to those of universities in 'other African territories'? If so, it will have a familiar ring.

What of the Joint Matriculation Board? Are these new institutions to be represented on it in the same way as the normally established and constituted universities? The Board's constitution requires that representatives of the universities must exceed by five the number of all other representatives on the Board. Five 'university representatives' from five new institutions with as yet insecurely established standards could reduce very substantially the value of this safeguard.

Or are we heading, logically enough, for a separate Bantu Matriculation Board with its own standards?

(b) *General*

Taken with the incidence of spontaneous drop-out owing to lack of progress which is found at all levels in Bantu Education, the rigorous screenings at the Std. VI and Junior Certificate stages bar all but a small minority of African children from further secondary education. Admittedly, if it be official policy to provide secondary education only for those who can make use of it in their own areas or tribal communities, it makes sense to do the elimination on the basis of school achievement. But small élites, if taught by teachers equal in qualifications and numbers to the promise of the Eiselen Report, should take Senior Certificate in their stride and with only rare failures. As things are, Bantu Education is failing to produce professional, administrative and skilled workers even in the numbers required to give the concept of separate freedoms much meaning in practice.

It was surprising and disappointing to find that the bright promise of the Junior Certificate year-groups 1963-6 had been so deceptive. In view of factors 1, 2 and 4, they should have been scholastically better grounded and mentally better equipped for secondary study than their predecessors of 1962 and earlier years, and they should have made much better Matriculation candidates. Obviously, strongly adverse factors must also have been present. Factor 5 may even have to be counted on the negative side. 'Continuous creation' manifestly failed to keep pace with the projected growth in respect of staffing and libraries, and no doubt also in other respects. As for factor 2, it is clear that the examination results do not 'prove' the superiority of mother-tongue medium in African upper primary schools and that the Minister's question-begging statement was as wrong in its premises as it was in its conclusion. The present writer would consider the unique triple-medium policy in the secondary classes a heavy educational handicap. If it be educationally advantageous to insist on the use, up to Std. VI, of *one* language only as medium of instruction, rather than of two complementary languages, how can it suddenly, in Form I, become educationally advanta-

geous to insist on the use of *three* different languages rather than two as media of instruction, and to compel pupils, where at all practicable, to study some subjects through the medium of Afrikaans, some through the medium of English, and some through the medium of Zulu (Xhosa, Sotho etc.). As the Transkeian Commission pointed out, it cannot, and the practice 'must be firmly rejected as a violation of important educational principles'<sup>16</sup>.

*The effect of increasing enrolments*

It will be remembered that *BANTU*'s 'Unparalleled Achievement' article claimed remarkable improvement in the examination results 'irrespective of the increase in numbers'. While the claim to 'remarkable improvement' has been dealt with, it may be well to inquire briefly whether the continuous increase in numbers was necessarily a cause of deterioration in standards.

It should be pointed out that, except in the years 1955-8, when the cheap double-session system was introduced—to the lasting detriment of educational standards<sup>17</sup>—expansion of enrolments under Bantu Education has not been abnormal. Increase in enrolments over the nine years 1958-1967 has been 67 per cent; but increase over the nine years preceding Bantu Education, 1945-1954, had been 60 per cent. The difference is unremarkable. Education in a country with a growing population and an expanding economy is inevitably a growth industry: first, there are more children; and second, the economy offers expanding opportunities to the educated, and parents, including African parents, are increasingly willing to make sacrifices to keep their children longer at school. 'We cannot prevent them', as the Minister of Bantu Education explained at Bethal in 1960<sup>18</sup>. (Even among our White pupils—long subject to compulsory attendance up to 15 or 16 years of age—enrolments in the two upper Forms more than doubled in the decade 1954-64). In such a situation mere increase in numbers is no achievement. The criterion for achievement is the efficiency with which the expansion is handled and standards are maintained or improved. Bantu Education had been given ample advance notice of the expansion to come. The Eiselen Commission appointed by Dr Malan had forecast the actual growth of school attendances with realistic conservatism. For their proposed ten-year plan (1952-62)<sup>19</sup> they had projected (a) a doubling of the number of primary pupils, (b) a doubling of the number of secondary pupils, and (c) an increase of two and a half times in the number of student teachers. Bantu Education failed to do justice to any one of these three programmes.

Primary enrolments increased, from 1952 to 1962, by just on a hundred per cent, as projected. The children were there. As sufficient classrooms—Bantu Education's business—were not there,

the double-session system was introduced 'temporarily', and was to remain indefinitely. More children wanted to stay to Std. III than could be accommodated and many had to give up. The increase in the number of teachers—Bantu Education's business—was also not as projected. It was only 47 per cent<sup>20</sup>. The effect of this disproportion on educational standards requires no elaboration. Now there was no shortage of suitable candidates for training. Asked in Parliament by Mrs Suzman on 20 May 1963 why money voted for bursaries had been saved while there was such a shortage of trained teachers, the Minister replied (*Hansard* 1963, cols. 6345-6), 'Actually there is no shortage in the number of candidates offering themselves for training . . . The number of candidates . . . is far greater than the number we can accommodate, and for which we can make provision in the schools'.

Another recommendation of the Eiselen Commission has also been neglected. Critical of the high drop-out rate in the lower primary school, the Commission had been 'of the opinion that a Bantu child who does not complete at least Std. II has benefited so little that the money spent on his education is virtually lost'<sup>21</sup>. It had expressed the hope 'that in the not too distant future attendance at a lower primary school will be made compulsory'<sup>22</sup>, and had calculated the substantial saving in 'effective cost' which could be brought about if such compulsion were enforced by 1959<sup>23</sup>. As of March 1969 nothing has been done to enforce compulsion even in built-up areas. The latest figures available<sup>24</sup> show that of 443,030 children who entered Sub-A in 1963, only 300,733 reached Std. I in 1965 and only 239,141 reached Std. II in 1966. As there is practically automatic promotion at this level, these figures represent continuing flagrant educational wastage. They also show, if one accepts the view of the Commission on the subject of the value of education terminating before completion of Std. II, a continuing scandalous waste of money in a field where far too little money is available and where waste is therefore particularly blameworthy.

#### *Secondary education*

Extrapolation of the established trend in the expansion of secondary as compared with primary enrolments would have suggested to the Commission very much more than a doubling of secondary enrolments in the decade ending 1962. Its Report records the percentage which African secondary enrolments had formed of total African school enrolments as 0.6 in 1935, 1.25 in 1940, 2.2 in 1945 and 2.62 in 1949<sup>25</sup>. (It was to be 3.47 in 1954 at the time of the take-over.) More parents were keeping their children longer at school. Yet the Commission had disregarded this clearly established trend and had recommended that the rate of expansion of secondary educa-

tion be only the same as the rate of primary expansion. Its recommendation envisaged State provision of secondary education only for those pupils who 'could be absorbed by the (Bantu) development plan or the present Bantu society'<sup>26</sup>. Bantu Education's professional officers must also have realised that this projected rate of secondary growth ignored existing trends, and should have prepared for a more generously conceived secondary intake. If they in fact made such preparations, their proposals were turned down by the political policy makers. Like the Commission, the Minister who introduced the Bantu Education Act conceived of secondary education as fitting the African child for service 'in his own areas'. In the general South African economy there was, in his view, 'no place for the Native . . . above the level of certain forms of labour'.

While enrolments rose—within projected limits—the decline in the proportion of pupils enrolled in all types of post-primary education from 1954 to 1963—the year of the 'remarkable improvement in examination achievement'—is revealed in the reply given by the Minister of Bantu Education to Mrs Suzman on 29 May 1964 (Hansard 1964, col. 6850):

Mrs Suzman had asked:

"What percentage of the total enrolment in Bantu schools in each year from 1954 to 1963 was enrolled in (a) lower primary classes, (b) higher primary classes, (c) secondary classes, (d) teacher training courses and (e) vocational courses?"

The Minister's reply was:

Year	Percentages				
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1954	70.94	24.65	3.47	0.73	0.21
1955	72.15	23.59	3.45	0.58	0.23
1956	73.15	22.63	3.08	0.52	0.62
1957	73.93	22.19	3.21	0.43	0.24
1958	73.72	22.58	3.09	0.47	0.14
1959	73.12	23.29	3.09	0.41	0.09
1960	72.55	23.88	3.17	0.29	0.11
1961	71.99	24.73	2.94	0.23	0.11
1962	71.54	25.12	2.98	0.23	0.13
1963	71.47	25.16	3.02	0.23	0.12

From the foregoing paragraphs it emerges clearly that there was no unforeseen demand for secondary education. Yet the foreseen demand was met only by accepting teachers of generally inferior qualifications. The number of pupils in *secondary and teacher-training* schools more than doubled in the fourteen years from 1949 to 1963. But the number of teachers increased by only 62 per cent (from 1,367 to 2,214), and the number of graduate teachers by barely 15 per cent (from 599 to 688). Such figures are not compatible with

'remarkable improvement in achievement' or even with maintenance of standards. Neither do they suggest much zeal, on the part of the policy-makers, for the maintenance of standards.

It should be recorded that secondary enrolments rose, modestly and belatedly, to 3.6 per cent of total enrolments in 1966 and to 3.8 per cent in 1967. The rising tide of demand for secondary education was overflowing barriers which had retarded its advance for a dozen years.

### *Teacher training*

As for teacher training, the performance of Bantu Education fell deplorably far short of the Commission's recommendation. The Commission had proposed specifically that the number of student teachers should be increased from the 6,000 they had found in 1949 to 8,600 in 1953, 10,400 in 1955, 12,500 in 1957 and 15,000 in 1959<sup>27</sup>. Bantu Education had on its rolls only 5,899 in 1955, 5,378 in 1957, and 5,656 in 1959<sup>28</sup> (4,299 in 1963 and 4,099 in 1967).

*It would thus appear that the fundamental cause of any deterioration in standards is not to be found in any abnormal or unpredictable increase in the number of pupils, but in Bantu Education's failure to deal efficiently with a realistically projected increase; and that the blame rests squarely on the political leadership which prescribed the policies and held expenditure at levels which made proper school provision and maintenance impossible.*

### *Why?*

314,870 African seven-year-olds enrolled hopefully in Bantu Education in 1956. Poverty, or lack of accessible schools, or disillusionment with schooling under existing conditions, had eliminated more than half of them before Std. III and almost three-quarters of them by Std. VI. Screening in Std. VI in 1963 had eliminated 53 per cent of those who reached the barrier guarding Form I. Inaccessibility of schools headed off more. Screening again at Junior Certificate level in 1966 had barred no fewer than 56 per cent of Form III from progress to Form IV. 3,718 enrolled in Form IV in 1967. In 1968, 2,289, or less than three-quarters of one per cent of the original intake, wrote the Senior Certificate examination. Of these few, much-screened survivors, 775, or not quite one quarter of one per cent of the original intake, got Matriculation certificates, 1,266, or less than one half of one per cent of the original intake, got Senior Certificates of any kind, with or without Matriculation, and 1,023 failed. Of the 775 with Matriculation passes, only 181, or

less than one-fourth, had passed in Mathematics and were thus reasonably prepared for courses in the science faculties.

How serious is our concern for 'Bantu Education'?

In education, as in other major undertakings, one gets only what one *effectively* wants, i.e. what one is prepared to pay for. We spent R17 per pupil in our African schools in 1953-4. To buy the same services and materials in 1966-7 would have required about R22. We did not spend R22 per pupil in 1966-7. We spent barely R13. That figure is the most objective indicator available of our concern, and of the qualitative retrogression in our African schools since 1954.

Total expenditure on the education of all ethnic groups has of course risen with rising costs and rising enrolments. We are happy to be able to meet this growing expenditure from a rapidly rising domestic product—the product of the combined labour of all groups. We spent about four per cent of our net national income on education generally in 1953-4, and the proportion has tended to move slightly upwards. But on the schooling of our African children—68 per cent of our potential school population—we spent only 0.57 per cent of our net national product in 1953-4. That far from extravagant percentage has not been equalled since.

The Senior Certificate examination (without Matriculation) at its lower pass levels is not a particularly searching examination. Moving the National Culture Promotion Bill in Parliament on 28 February 1969, the Minister of National Education (i.e. basically White education) indicated that only about '50 per cent of the White pupils admitted to secondary schools in any particular year did not eventually obtain a Matriculation or Senior Certificate'. (*N.B.*—Compulsory attendance to the age of 16 years now assures practically all White children entry to the secondary school and some years of secondary education.) This percentage, the Minister explained, had been in respect of 62,000 White secondary admissions in 1967. Motivating the National Culture Promotion Bill, the Minister stated further, *inter alia*, that the importance of the services provided for in the Bill became clear 'when we have regard to the fact that—

(c) numerically the non-White population groups are much stronger and that the percentage of them who reach Matriculation level and higher levels is increasing fairly rapidly and that the threat to the White man's intellectual superiority is as clear as a pikestaff'.<sup>29</sup>

In the Minister's original Afrikaans, the last phrase quoted had run '*dat die gevaar vir die blanke se geestelike meerderwaardigheid soos 'n paal bo water staan.*' (*Debatte van die Volksraad* 1969, kol. 1657). Without criticising the Hansard translation one may say



that the Minister's word *gevaar* might equally well have been translated as 'danger', and that *geestelike* might equally well have been translated as 'spiritual'; for the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* gives the word a spiritual significance which the Minister would not wish to see underemphasised.

If the views of the Minister of National Education were not fairly representative of those of the majority of the White electorate, he would not be Minister of National Education. Having in mind that the much greater numerical strength of the non-Whites is a datum of South African life not alterable by any practicable means, one may fairly ask (a): If current progress in non-White education is to be regarded by Whites as a self-evident threat, or danger, to 'the White man's intellectual (and spiritual) superiority', does not the White man's intellectual and spiritual state, as exemplified in the Ministerial statement, constitute a threat, or danger, to the non-White's educational and general progress, and thus to the health and well-being of the entire South African polity? And (b): Is the policy of *geestelike meerderwaardigheid*, of preserving intellectual and spiritual distance, of a race-determined hierarchy in matters intellectual and spiritual as well as economic, reconcilable with a 'civilising and Christianising mission'?

As expert theological opinion in South Africa would probably be divided on such questions—and not entirely along denominational lines—a layman may be content to ask them and to leave them unanswered.

But the purpose of this paper was not to explain why or how any lowering of standards in Bantu Education had come about. It was to inquire whether such lowering at one controversial level had in fact taken place. The whys and the hows are merely corroborative detail.

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# THEORIA

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# THE CONTEMPORARY THEATRE\*

by CHRISTINA VAN HEYNINGEN

Look here, upon this picture, and on this [says Hamlet]

.....  
See what a grace is seated on this brow,

and he goes on to describe his father's portrait as showing

A combination and a form indeed

.....  
To give the world assurance of a man

The story-poem *Unposted Letter* by H. W. D. Manson<sup>1</sup> shows 'A combination and a form indeed To give the world assurance of a man.' In it we feel that a man is speaking to us about men, not a professional writer about ideas. It is, above all, human. It makes us feel the very life of human beings, and feel, as Hamlet felt, the value of being, in a double sense, a man. Shakespeare had a high sense of that value. He expresses it also in *Julius Caesar*, where he makes Mark Antony say about Brutus,

His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'

The word 'man' here implies both manliness and humanness. To make us able to feel in his creation the very life beating, the very quality of a human being, that is one of the highest achievements possible to art, and in this sense Manson's poem is human. It is human too in the sense that it makes us aware of what Keats called 'the holiness of the heart's affections.'

Then Hamlet shows the second 'this', the other picture, that of his father's brother, his uncle Claudius

..... like a mildewed ear  
Blasting his wholesome brother.....

The contemporary stage and cinema are, on the whole, like the subject of the second picture, a mildewed ear, blasting, indeed, their

\*A chapter from a book on H. W. D. Manson.

wholesome brother; making, or at least helping to make work of such aesthetic and moral health as Manson's unacceptable to the taste of the public—a taste nowadays inevitably bad, in any case, because it is determined, now that small audiences can no longer provide actors and theatre people with a living, more than ever by the Lowest Common Denominator. The playwrights and producers of to-day, by pandering to that bad taste, vitiate it still further, and this degeneration is horribly progressive. It seems to have got strikingly worse even within the last five years—even within the last year. Perhaps never in history before has mere fashion had as much influence on taste and therefore on literature and drama as (because of the 'brainwashing' that everybody is subjected to by the colossal 'mass media') it has now.

Let us look at this 'mildewed ear.'

First of all, there are the distortions of Shakespeare. Popular modern critics, like Kenneth Tynan, and popular modern producers, like Zeffirelli (both much boosted in the newspapers) actually say, actually seem to believe, that, in a Shakespearean production, it is not Shakespeare's words that matter, but the actors who express their own personalities through these words, or through 'improvements' on them, achieved by much cutting and a little paraphrasing, vulgarising, or other modernisation. In Zeffirelli's film of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, Romeo and Juliet are represented in the first part in the teeth of the text, as a pair of shallow, giggling teenagers in the throes of calf-love; and in the last scenes, when, according to the text, Romeo is meant to be rushing to Juliet's tomb, and the action is meant to be rushing headlong to its tragic conclusion, the film holds us up and takes us on a kind of slow Baedeker's tour (beautiful enough in its entirely irrelevant way) of Verona. Also, Romeo is represented as a double murderer,—first, he stabs Tybalt in the back when he isn't looking, and second, he brains Paris with a heavy candlestick outside the Capulets' family vault. In a recent much-vaunted stage production of *Othello*, the once-great Olivier, ignoring what is said about Othello by all the characters in the play, represents that noble and highly-civilised Moor—highly civilised despite the savage rage of which he is capable—as a half-primitive East African (Africans are fashionable), whose long-armed loping gait resembles that of a gorilla. Still more recently, Peter Hall, praised in the newspapers as England's best Shakespearean producer gives us a coloured film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which he represents the fairies as 'wistfully sexy', though their parts are played by children (sexiness is fashionable), Titania is all but naked (nudity is fashionable),<sup>2</sup> Hermia and Helena, though both in the original text, speak much of their own maidenliness, are fashionably clad in mini-skirts

and thigh-boots, and Oberon and Puck are both hideous, bright green all over with red eyes (ugliness and jarring colours are fashionable). All these fashionable features go dead against the text. Would it surprise anyone nowadays to hear the lords and ladies of Shakespeare films talk cockney, for cockney accents seem to be fashionable too, and the Lowest Common Denominator public cares more for fashion than for Shakespeare?

The basic attitude of these, and no doubt many other, modern producers and critics is made clear by a letter from a successful theatrical agent, who in all kindness and good nature offers the following advice to a young 'colonial' dramatist whose works she has been reading with a view to possibly promoting them. 'I honestly don't think,' she says, 'I'd be able to sell your plays to the best London managers . . . ; these plays *read* very well, and our contemporary plays don't read well at all, because they are a mere blue-print for performance. I think you should try to blue-print your next plays, and stop the poet from embellishing them and colouring them' Would she have given the same advice to Shakespeare and Ben Jonson? Almost certainly! For the words of a play to this agent are mere embellishment, mere colouring. Provide the plot, she is saying, and the producer, the director, the scene-painter, the costume-designer, and the actors will make the play for you. Provide no more than the plot (even if you are Shakespeare, Zeffirelli and Kenneth Tynan, are, in fact claiming), and we will make your play for you. It is not enough that Shakespeare was a genius, the greatest dramatic genius that ever lived. We are not geniuses, but we are practical theatre people and we understand the job better than he did.

There is a fathomless lack of respect, not only for genius, but for the power of language and poetry in this attitude. The plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, is not unlike that of the artisans' *Pyramus and Thisbe* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The difference between the two plays is almost entirely a matter of language.

Even D. H. Lawrence, who, for all his wonderful quality and genius, was very wrong about many things, wrote about Shakespeare:

How boring, how small Shakespeare's people are!  
But the language how lovely, like the dye from coal-tar!

This is exactly the same kind of mistake as that made by the theatrical agent: poetry is an embellishment, a colour. And the same mistake is made by that glass of fashion, theatre fashion, and that mould of theatre form, Kenneth Tynan, when he says, apropos of *Richard II* 'Never fall into the error of supposing that highborn characters merit

attention and respect more than the rest simply because they sometimes express themselves more beautifully.'

These remarks show an extraordinary ignorance (in D. H. Lawrence it is a temporary aberration, due to a fit of irritation) of how language works—of what poetry is. Poetry is the most expressive and at the same time the tersest kind of human language that can be devised—a mathematical or a scientific formula may be equally terse, but it is not exactly human, for only a part of the person speaking it enters into it, only the intellect. Poetic language is much more full of meaning, for every part plays its rôle in expressing that meaning: the sense, the sound, the pace of the sound, the memories and associations each word, each phrase, each line evokes, limited and controlled by those evoked by all the other parts. It is a more human language than that of mathematics or science, for in poetic language the whole man speaks—intellect, senses, memory, feelings all helping to decide which words shall be spoken in which order. It is impossible to illustrate this here, but it is something that all educated people used to know, subconsciously at least, until the modern blind faith in the supremacy of mere intellect over all the other parts of the mind shook and finally shattered that knowledge.

This modern faith in the all-importance of the intellect, of ideas or theories, has led people into all kinds of unreality; and this has had a very bad effect upon the theatre. Lawrence amusingly shows the difference between ideas and reality in a poem *Ships in Bottles* about a phenomenon only too familiar to most of us, especially those of us who live largely in universities:

.....  
 Ah, in that parlour of the London pub  
 what dangers, ah what dangers!  
 Caught between great icebergs of doubt  
 they are all but crushed  
 little ships.  
 Nipped upon the frozen floods of philosophic despair  
 they lie high and dry,  
 high and dry.  
 Reeling in the black end of all beliefs  
 they sink.

Yet there they are, there they are,  
 little ships  
 Safe inside their bottles!

.....  
 Safer than in the arms of Jesus!

Oh safer than anything else is a well-corked, glassy ego,  
 and sounder than all insurance is a shiny mental conceit!

Sail, little ships in your glass bottles  
 safe from every contact,  
 safe from all experiences,  
 safe, above all, from life!

This kind of unreality has produced quite a number of fashionable plays—the kind that belong to what is known as the ‘Theatre of the Absurd’. Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* has been perhaps the most popular. It works by producing some low comedy and some poor rant, pretty obscure and apparently loaded with symbolism—these two features are said to give excellent opportunities to the actors—but its main import is the kind of self-pity that is such a marked feature of our age, and that has inspired (if ‘inspired’ is the word), among other things, the school of the Angry Young Men, such as John Osborne, John Brin and the like. Of these presently. The theme of *Waiting for Godot* seems to be that life is so entirely empty and miserable that if we had the rope we would all hang ourselves—but the only rope we have is rotten, and we haven’t the gumption to find another. Or alternatively the author means to arouse compassion for people who have this attitude. For my part compassion fails me, and I think of the words of Ulysses in Canto XXVI of the *Inferno*, knowing, however, that to-day they would fall on cold hearts and brains made inert by self-pity. ‘O brothers!’ [cried Ulysses] ‘consider your origin: ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge!’

As for other plays of this self-pitying school of the Absurd, like the one about the man who found himself lifted up by his open umbrella until he ascended high above the clouds, and when he came down again and his friends asked him what he had seen, he replied, “Nothing”—as for these, they seem to be hiding beneath a certain amount of obscure and often confused symbolism a mere incapacity for perception, thought, or feeling. If their authors really mean what they say, we feel, why don’t they throw themselves over the nearest cliff or out of the highest window in a sky-scraper. But no!

Nipped upon the frozen floods of philosophic despair  
 they lie high and dry,  
 high and dry.



Reeling in the black end of all beliefs  
they sink.

Yet there they are, still safe inside their bottles!

One need not have read more than the two Manson poems that have appeared in *Theoria* to realise, as his poetic language makes us thrillingly feel, that his ships, his seas, his tempests are real ones. His reality is felt in every part of his writing, the reality of the underlying life's experience, which a penetrating imagination has made unusually vivid to himself, and the reality with which that same imagination has helped him to create person, place and action in his work.

Another disturbing aspect of the modern theatre, as of the modern world, is the overwhelming prominence given in it to political and sociological ideas. This, again, seems to be a direct result of intellectual, sensuous and emotional poverty. And these sociological ideas are all fashionable ones, tinged, or more than tinged, with various mixtures of socialism, pacifism, trades-unionism, anti-colonialism, anti-public-schoolism, anti-gentlemanism and the whole string of -isms now popular in England's drab and crowded land, her super-complacent Welfare State.<sup>3</sup> In the London theatre to-day one is bored to death by the way these -isms pervade nearly every play and film one sees and even intrude sometimes into revivals of the classics. South African writers are expected to write only about the colour question. But political questions, racial questions are temporary; human interests, individual interests are permanent, for of course they underlie everything else. They motivate, they actuate the groups. They are felt more deeply, more violently however obscurely, even by the politicians and sociologists themselves, and so they will be, until the brainwashers (the advertisers and their kin) have succeeded in washing away everything that makes people human, their inner and personal conflicts, their passions and their sensuous life. (The process has already gone some distance.)

Kenneth Tynan, who may be said to represent fashionable theatre opinion to-day, expresses the sociological bias of the age when he says that Shakespeare's best plays are the two parts of Henry IV, because they are 'great public plays in which a whole nation is under scrutiny and on trial. . . . The first English play to set up personal fulfilment as a tragic ideal', [he goes on] 'happened, unfortunately, to be a masterpiece: *Hamlet*'. (It is clear, especially as he goes on, that he doesn't quite know what either a tragedy or a masterpiece is.) 'Here, for the first time, the Hero was an outcast, both divorced from and superior to the society around him. Here for the first time an audience was invited to sympathise with a man's apartness and to

ignore his "togetherness" . . . As Mr Miller says: "I can no longer take with ultimate seriousness a drama of individual psychology written for its own sake, however full it may be of insight and precise observation. Time is moving: there is a world to make . . ." ' As if societies mean more than individuals—as if they are not what they are because of the individuals in them! As if a writer can know anything without observing Socrates' maxim: 'Know thyself!'

The ignorance of life, the utter ignorance of the purpose of art, the complacency about the present, the bland assumption that 'time is moving' away from the values expressed in *Hamlet* towards something better than what we have known in the past, are common to many writers and critics to-day, who seem blind to the glaring fact that the modern theatre is decadent because the times are decadent, and their complacency is denser and far worse founded than that of the Victorians at their smuggest. Lord Snow, in his popular essay, *The Two Cultures*, assumes that the world is improving because technology is improving; Professor C. B. Cox of Manchester, in a *Spectator* article, condemns as 'sentimental longings for the agrarian life' Dr. F. R. Leavis's statement that 'Not having the radio, television, newspapers or literacy [the rural people of the 18th century] have speech, which, George Eliot makes it impossible not to recognise, is a creative art and an art of living.' Professor Cox seems to think he has strengthened the indictment by calling these 'sentimental longings' . . . 'common enough in the 1930's.' (One must be a NOW person—as a certain poster in London advertising 'The *Now* cigarette for *Now* people' insistently suggests—one must hold all the views and feel all the feelings that are proper now.) The same complacency appears in a later statement in the same article by Professor Cox: 'There is a wilful determination to be miserable,' he says of Dr. Leavis, 'that leads to this kind of nonsense, "America could not have produced a Lawrence; but nor will England be able to produce another."'

Nonsense? Professor Cox doesn't seem to have an inkling of the myriad subtle and powerful forces that emanate from a nation's way of living, and may lead to its decadence, a danger of which Lawrence with astonishing prophetic insight warned his generation, particularly in *Phoenix* but also in *Kangaroo*. Dr. Johnson's phrase 'Clear your minds of cant!' might have been Lawrence's motto (except in his aberrant phases).

Quick, quick, mothers of England [he cries], spank your wistful babies. Good God, spank their little bottoms; with sharp, red anger spank them and make men of them. Drive them back from their yearning, loving parasitism; startle

them for ever out of their pseudo-angelic wistfulness; cure them with a quick wild yell of all their wonder-child spirituality. Sharp, sharp, before it is too late. Be *fierce* with the little darling, and put hell's temper into its soft little soul. Quick, before we are lost.

Let us get this wide, wistful look out of our children's eyes—this oh-so-spiritual look. Let us cure them of their inordinate sensitiveness and consciousness. Kick the cat out of the room when the cat is a nuisance, and let the baby see you do it. And if the baby whimpers, kick the baby after the cat. In just mercy, do it. And then maybe you'll have a slim-muscled, independent cat that can walk with a bit of moon-devilish defiance, instead of the ravel of knitting-silk with a full belly and a sordid *meeau* which is "Pussy" of our dear domestic hearth. More important than the cat, you'll get a healthily reacting human infant, animal and fierce and not-to-be coddled, the first signs of a proud man whose neck won't droop like a weak lily, nor reach forward for ever like a puppy reaching to suck, and whose knees won't be aching all his life with a luscious, loose desire to slip into some woman's lap, dear darling, and feel her caress his brow.

Several, in fact, of the greatest writers of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries clearly show the dangers of a civilisation's being obsessed with humanitarianism. Conrad, in *A Personal Record* has a word to say about humanitarianism. The Polish gentry among whom his earlier childhood was spent, had, he says, 'an impartial view of humanity in all its degrees of splendour and misery, together with a special regard for the rights of the unprivileged of this earth, not on any mystic ground, but on the ground of simple fellowship and reciprocity of services: matters of calm and deep conviction both lasting and consistent, and removed as far as possible from that humanitarianism that seems to be merely a matter of crazy nerves or a morbid conscience.' Basil Ransom in Henry James's *The Bostonians* protests against what he calls feminisation: 'The whole generation is womanised; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, nervous, hysterical, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don't look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and the flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face, and take it for what it is—a very queer and partly very base mixture—that is what I want to restore, or

rather, as I may say, to recover.' Lawrence, in *Sons and Lovers*, and in an essay called *Nottingham and the Mining Country* protests against the mistake and the condescension of pitying the miners of his day. It would never enter their heads, he says, to pity themselves, were it not for the sentimentalists and the humanitarians, and Conrad in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* seems to have prophetically incarnated Trades-Union-dominated Britain in the detestable Donkin whose attitudes are the opposite of those of the old sailor, Old Singleton, whose life has been a succession of incredible hardships and dangers, but who would have despised anybody who pitied him, for he and the band of men he belonged to regarded the ability to have faced and endured such things as a rare privilege.

Basil Ramsom's prophecy has come true. The age of mediocrity has set in, and it is quite as pretentious but more squalid than he imagined it would be, and (partly, no doubt, owing to misunderstandings of Lawrence and Freud) instead of breeding false delicacy, it has abolished delicacy altogether. Witness the fashion for nudity of stage and screen. On the stage this kind of love of mediocrity has given rise to the Kitchen Sink school, of which Wesker seems to be the leader, and the related Angry Young Men school, initiated by John Osborne. The Angry Young Men are angry because they have inherited the world in a damaged state, or because they are neither rich, nor happy in their marriages, or because they don't belong to the upper classes and so feel inferior, or for some other such reason. Anyway, it is obviously someone else's fault, so naturally they are Angry; and their anger has found a great many sympathetic hearts in the theatre and brought them in a good deal of money.

But even the Lowest Common Denominator, though self-pity is a pleasing diet, gets tired of the squalid dullness of the Kitchen Sink and the ranting of the Angry Young Men. Fortunately there is a rich mine of entertainment (by no means new) which anybody can tap. Only last night I saw a screen advertisement for 'Our Next Attraction,' in which, apparently, 'only the abnormal is normal, and only the bizarre is to be expected,' followed by shots of actors and actresses, one of them a distinguished performer, in every stage of horror, sexual revulsion, ghastliness and terror. What is new about this is the degree and variety of the perversions exploited, usually disguised as 'psychology', so that audiences may flatter themselves that their enjoyment of these thrilling nastinesses is somehow 'scientific' and belongs to the NOW world. Pinter's plays, like *A Slight Ache*, and his film *Accident*, though disguised in respectability, belong to this class. He likes to show, what perhaps, poor fellow, he believes, that behind every kind of decency something foul, some treachery or ugly lust, is lurking. A play defending (I

am told—I had no wish to see or read it) the very prototype of Sadism, the man from whom the word itself derives, the Marquis de Sade, ran for years in London—may still be running—apparently gave great satisfaction to crowded audiences. The famous Burtons, Richard and Elizabeth, frequently appear on the screen in the dullest and stupidest of dull plays, like *The Comedians* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, of which the sole recommendation seems to be that they are full of nastiness and the latest film techniques, and Penelope Gilliat, now Mortimer, has written at least one article in *Life Magazine* with full-page photographic illustrations, in which she praises the vitality, courage and originality of plays featuring a young man stoning to death a baby in a pram (this was ‘an indictment of our society’), or the intimate life of a couple of lesbians. A farce played in Oxford once when I was there a few years ago was about a young man who had murdered his mother and stolen her money, and could find no place to hide the money except by emptying her coffin and storing it there. Consequently the corpse was being perpetually lugged about the stage or falling out of cupboards—all this supposed to be hilariously funny; and the hero was said to be so ‘sexy’ that he had got two girls pregnant while dancing the rumba.

A mildewed ear indeed, the contemporary theatre. If it does not actually blast its wholesome brother in spirit, it blasts its fortunes, its chance of being heard. A serious play—a play which demands to be listened to with ‘the very comment of (the) soul’ (and a good comedy, however gay, demands that—is serious in that sense—quite as much as a tragedy) a good play has no chance with the L.C.D. That many-headed monster has no soul to attend with, and the commercial managers know it only too well.

Now this is a tragic situation. Serious writing, in the sense in which I use the word above, demands a man’s whole life, for the concentration it requires needs to be prolonged and continuous and of an intensity far beyond the capacity of most people. Consider what is needed for the creation of a play.

A life-time’s habit of attending with peculiar intensity to people and the world around him including books have made the serious playwright feel at different times in his career that out of all life’s immense complexity and variety there are particular things that he might understand more clearly if he could only find a form in which to communicate them to other people—communicate them *alive*, for as Wordsworth says, ‘Poetry’ (and this is true of all the best literature) ‘is truth carried alive into the heart by passion.’ The playwright probably thinks about this consciously and half-consciously for months, for years, even for decades. At last he begins to write. This is a colossal task. He has to make people, who are in a

sense real living people, not reducible to a formula, whom every properly attentive reader recognises in all their variety as being in a curious way like himself, however different they may be. He decides to place them in certain situations so as to bring out a final effect, a concerted truth, but if he has imagined them well enough, if they are real enough, they will say and do things he didn't quite count on, and he is always having to give them their heads and yet control them and the plot he and they spin together. This is an inadequate account of the process, but perhaps the best way of giving an idea of its immense difficulty and the enormous concentration required is to quote from Conrad's *Personal Record* his account of what happened when he was interrupted in the writing of *Nostromo*. Now Conrad is one of the world's very greatest creative writers, and *Nostromo* is his longest and most immensely complex book, but the account holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for the concentration which needs to be given to every really serious and prolonged creative effort. I recommend my readers to turn to the entire passage, in which the humour plays like sheet lightning coming and going momentarily in a thunder cloud, or like the hint of the shadow of a smile almost lighting up for the tenth of a moment every now and then a rocky face.

Conrad has been so absorbed in the writing of the last chapters of *Nostromo* that he doesn't remember whether he has eaten or drunk or slept, or know whether he is properly dressed, but that a pair of 'grey-blue watchful eyes—would see to that'. When he goes to bed at night he is more tired than he used to be when he 'carried bags of wheat on (his) back, bent almost double under a ship's deck-beams, from six in the morning till six in the evening with an hour and a half off for meals.'

All I know [says Conrad] is that, for twenty-months, neglecting the common joys of life that fall to the lot of the humblest on this earth, I had, like the prophet of old, wrestled with the Lord for my creation, for the headlands of the coast, for the darkness of the Placid Gulf . . . and for the breath of life that had to be blown into the shapes of men and women, of Latin and Saxon, of Jew and Gentile. These are perhaps strong words, but it is difficult to characterise otherwise the intimacy and the strain of a creative effort in which mind and will and conscience are engaged to the full, hour after hour, day after day, away from the world, and to the exclusion of all that makes life really lovable and gentle—something for which a parallel can be found only in the everlasting sombre stress of a westward winter passage round Cape Horn. Into

this concentration explodes a voice 'How do you do?' [The voice is that of a lady caller—I wish I had room to quote the whole passage—who, unaware of the havoc she has caused, casually remarks:]

"I am afraid I interrupted you".

"Not at all".

She accepted the denial in perfect good faith. And it was strictly true, Interrupted indeed! She had robbed me of at least twenty lines, each infinitely more poignant and real than her own, because informed with passion, possessed of conviction, involved in great affairs created out of my own substance for an anxiously meditated end.'

This passage, even the fragments of it which I quote, gives a glowingly-vivid idea of the leisure, the opportunity for absolute continuous concentration which creative writing positively demands in order to exist. If it cannot be had, if the spiritual bread without which man cannot live, is all made of the mildewed wheat, if the wholesome wheat is not grown in that leisure and then bought and eaten, what will become of the human race? Does any serious writer get this essential leisure to-day? Can any serious writer earn a living by his writing? This seems to have been still possible, though it was usually a meagre living, until the thirties. Public taste has deteriorated since, for reasons which Q. D. Leavis foresees the worsening operation of, in her *Fiction and the Reading Public*: the commercialisation, the prostitution of literature, and the consequent almost complete usurpation of serious art by ersatz art or 'box-office stuff'. It has so deteriorated that not only does the genuine writer live in a hostile world, for ever swimming against the current, and fighting for his very breath against the hostile waves, but he has to give at least half his time to something other than writing—some comparatively lucrative work—in order to live at all. Manson, for example, has had to buy most of his uninterrupted leisure (and it is never long enough) by teaching in universities (extremely well, one gathers) living frugally and saving enough money to be able to take unpaid leave every now and again in order to write a play. It says much for the strength of his vocation and his tenacity of purpose that despite these difficulties he has in the last seventeen or eighteen years managed to write no fewer than ten full-length, three act plays in verse.

*Pietermaritzburg.*

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<sup>1</sup>Published in *Theoria* 20 (May 1968).

<sup>2</sup>This part of the article is already outdated. Instances of copulation are multiplied on the stage and the physical enactment of perversion is also shown to the audience.

<sup>3</sup>I know there is still a green and pleasant land too in that small island, but it doesn't produce the plays—it isn't heard through the deafening roar of the mass media—and perhaps, in distant South Africa, we hear only what the mass media decree.



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# FIELD RESEARCH IN ZULULAND

by C. T. BINNS

In setting out to write an authoritative history of the Zulu people the necessity of intensive field research forced itself upon the author of this article years ago. In many cases accounts of important events were found to vary to such a degree as to make them almost contradictory; the sites of great battles were vague or unknown and all traces of numerous places of historical interest appeared to have vanished completely. Thus a haze of uncertainty enshrouded much of the story of the Zulu people.

In undertaking the task of attempting to clarify the situation the difficulties were not underestimated. It would mean travelling thousands of miles over Zululand, hundreds of miles of walking to those out-of-the-way and little known spots where history was made; it would mean, in numerous cases, repeated visits to certain areas as the circle of research narrowed down till eventually success was achieved; it would mean countless interviews with chiefs, indunas, head-men, or any Zulu who was able to throw some light, however small, on the question under investigation. This was a part of the work that called for infinite patience for until one is known and *trusted* little information can be obtained from a people who have suffered so many injustices at the hands of the white man. There was also the further difficulty, even when confidence was established, that of finding and contacting those who were eye-witnesses of the events in question—an ever diminishing number for the majority have by now joined their *amadlozi* (spirits of their ancestors). If actual eye-witnesses could not be found, as was so often the case, especially regarding events of long ago, the next of kin must be traced or those to whom the accounts had been transmitted by word of mouth—that remarkable Zulu oral tradition which has saved so much of their history from complete oblivion. This in itself has proved one of the most thrilling aspects of field research and has brought to light some amazing feats of memory on the part of a number of these people, especially amongst those of the older generation. This again often meant checking and counter-checking before finality was reached.

Yet the work has been more than worth-while. The countless miles, the exhausting tramps over rugged mountainous areas, the numberless interviews with the ever-courteous Zulus, the help of Native Commissioners, old Zululand settlers, Roman Catholic and

Anglican missionaries all have brought rewards richer by far than were ever dreamed obtainable so that it is now possible to pin-point many places of great historical significance and to clear away some of the mists of uncertainty which have shrouded numerous incidents of Zulu history. Yet still much remains to be done for as one finds so one realises there is yet a wide field of research open to those who are sufficiently interested to undertake this strenuous yet rewarding work.

In this article there is only space to record one or two incidents of outstanding interest and this must be done as concisely as possible.

For many years it has been my ambition to find the actual site of the famous battle of Gqokli Hill, perhaps the greatest and most decisive battle of Shaka's career, for in this conflict not only did he inflict a crushing defeat upon the numerically superior Ndwandwes but displayed thereat such military genius as to establish himself as the supreme leader amongst the surrounding tribes.

It has long been known that this hill was in the vicinity of the White Umfolozi River but as this river is bounded by so many hills of a somewhat similar nature there was considerable uncertainty as to which was the exact one and in spite of persistent investigation absolute certainty seemed as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel.

However, in the end Dame Fortune came to my rescue and in a somewhat startling manner. Putting up for the night at that delightful little Melmoth Hotel I was greeted by the owner with a message, 'Mr Binns, Mr Pohl wants to see you at about 8 a.m. tomorrow morning.' 'Mr Pohl' I replied, 'Who is he?' 'Well,' replied my friend, 'He knows you.' I was left wondering for I could not bring to mind anyone of that name. However, the following morning I duly presented myself at his farm which is situated about two miles from the White Umfolozi bridge and was most warmly greeted by the gentleman in question who remarked after scrutinising me carefully, 'Yes, it's the same Mr Binns.' Realising my perplexity he continued, 'Think back about 50 years. Were you not classics master at the Grey College, Bloemfontein?' Like a flash memory carried me back to one of my most brilliant pupils who was later to become Private Secretary to the late General Smuts, following this up by being our Ambassador in various parts of the world. Needless to say we had a long and deeply instructive talk during the course of which it was soon ascertained that my newly found friend was greatly interested in Zulu history. Grasping my heaven-sent opportunity I asked, almost with bated breath, if he could indicate with certainty which was Gqokli Hill. Taking me by the arm he led me into his garden and pointing to a hill directly in front of us said 'There it is, on my farm and I hope you are going to lay great stress upon its importance

for I regard that as the most decisive of all Shaka's conflicts.' Never shall I forget that heart-swelling moment for not only had my long search ended but here was a man of international reputation holding the same opinion as myself regarding this battle.

Arrangements were soon completed to survey the whole area, guides were provided and everything possible done to assist me. Later as we climbed that blood-drenched hill I fired question after question at the elder guide to test his knowledge about the whole locality and to find out the source of all his information. It was the old, old story; he had lived there all his life as had his father and grandfather before him and from them he had had transmitted to him the story of Shaka's wars.

Like a homing pigeon returning to its nest he went straight to the place at the top of the hill where Shaka had directed operations during that memorable encounter, using a mound of stones as his vantage point. It was a tremendous thrill to stand on the actual spot where Shaka had stood so many years before and issued those orders which brought victory to his warriors, though at such dreadful cost: to view with one's own eyes the exact stretch of country, with the river in the distance, over which that epic struggle had been enacted. It was now possible to draw with certainty a plan of that battle which resulted in the disastrous defeat of his strongest and bitterest foe and in the death of five of his sons, including Zwide's heir to his throne.

Another place of great historical interest that had yet to be discovered was the grave of Dingiswayo, that enlightened and remarkable King of the Mthethewas whose life story has been so sadly neglected right down to the present day. As the late Dr. Bryant so justly says of him 'If Shaka was the consolidator of the Zulu nation, Dingiswayo was its first and real founder. If Shaka was the Attila of his race, Dingiswayo was its Alfred the Great.' (Olden Times, p. 171)

It will be remembered that it was the Mthethewas who befriended Nandi and her young son Shaka in the dark days of their ostracism: that it was under Dingiswayo that Shaka first became a warrior, learnt the art and science of warfare and rose to great eminence in his army.

Throughout the years every possible scrap of information regarding this Mthethewa monarch has been carefully gleaned from every available source and just as carefully stored away for future reference in the hope of one day finding his grave. The story of his murder by the Ndwandwe chief, Zwide, at the instigation of his infamous and bloodthirsty mother Ntombazi is a well established fact but what happened to his body after it had been decapitated and sundry parts removed by the witchdoctors has remained a

mystery for many years. Various reports had reached my ears that what was left of the body had been carried away by some of his faithful followers and given decent interment in the land of his birth but to obtain *definite confirmation* of these stories was another matter.

Once again a friend came to my rescue—no less a person than Major Cecil Cowley, M.C. and from him the long-sought confirmation was at last obtained. This is referred to in his book ‘Kwa Zulu’ and one cannot do better than quote his exact words:

‘After the death and decapitation of Dingiswayo, Malandela so arranged matters with Zwide that the body of the late King was brought home and buried outside his kraal, and later on, when Shaka marched triumphant to Zwide’s kraal Malandela obtained his late sovereign’s skull, had it taken home and interred in the same grave as the body.’ (Kwa Zulu, p. 76)

The quest had now narrowed down first to the finding of Dingiswayo’s O-Yengweni kraal and then to that of the actual burial place. Contact was eventually established with Temba, the present chief of the Mthethewas, through the agency of another friend living in his vicinity and negotiations were completed for an interview with this chief and his leading Indunas.

On arrival at his kraal we were duly met, first by the Indunas and later by the chief himself, all of whom confirmed the fact that the grave of Dingiswayo was in their country though situated at a spot some considerable distance away. On asking the chief if the grave was guarded we received the somewhat terse reply, ‘No, we guard the living; we do not guard the dead.’ It was suggested that we proceed to the kraal nearest to the grave, which was referred to as ‘Five Mile’, and there contact the Induna of that district who would lead us to the site, the chief’s bodyguard and one of his Indunas being duly instructed to act as our guides.

Without further delay we gaily sallied forth only to find that Five Mile Kraal was at least 16 miles away over a rough and hilly track which led us through a rich and varied type of country. However, we eventually reached our destination to find a delightful, well-kept and spotlessly clean little kraal consisting of a cluster of finely thatched huts beautifully situated overlooking a wide expanse of mountainous country. A few moments later the Induna appeared, a courteous, virile old gentleman with a keenly intelligent face and bearing the name of Pahleni Magenge. Entering into conversation with him it was discovered that he was born ‘10 years before the rinderpest’ and as this took place in 1896 he was at that time (1968) 82 years old. When asked if he could direct us to Dingiswayo’s

O-Yengweni kraal and to his grave he replied without the slightest hesitation 'Yes, about two miles.' Wondering whether the two miles would mean another ten we determined to risk it though petrol was running low and fresh supplies were unobtainable anywhere around.

Nimbly hopping into our already heavily loaded car we proceeded on our way, this time to find to our relief that his estimate of distance proved accurate for about two miles on he excitedly called out 'Stop, Stop, Stop.' We needed no second invitation and the moment the vehicle was brought to a standstill he leapt out with the agility of a young man and raced away, speeding like an arrow to its target. I was soon alongside and before we had gone more than a few hundred yards I realised we were on the site of an old kraal and questioned him accordingly. 'Yebo, mnumzana, O-Yengweni,' he replied. As we paused to look around this historic spot there could be seen away in the distance, peeping over the tops of the surrounding bush and clearly silhouetted against the blue sky the branches of a great, lone euphorbia candelabra and I knew that my quest was ended for this is the tree which invariably marks the last resting place of an old Zulu King. Seeing that my gaze was directed on this tree the old Induna smiled; 'Ithuna?' I questioned (the Grave). 'Yebo' once again he answered and then led me reverently to the spot. It gave me a wonderful feeling of elation to have reached the end of a long long search, particularly so when it was ascertained later that I was the first European within memory to have visited this spot.

After taking several photographs the old Induna quite excitedly told me that he must show me yet another place, not far distant, which was of historical importance and which he knew would interest me. Wonderingly I followed, for what else could there possibly be in this place of such significance as to fill this old gentleman with so much enthusiasm?

Walking some distance from the bottom end of the kraal we came to a wide, flat, open space, a space which even after these many years still retains its old configuration. 'Hloma Amabutho,' (The Parade Ground) exclaimed old Pahleni, 'Where Dingiswayo's soldiers stamped and drilled and danced and where Shaka first learnt to be a warrior.' This was perhaps the greatest thrill of all—possibly because it was so utterly unexpected—to stand on the actual spot where Shaka as a young man had first learnt to become a warrior. The long trip from Maritzburg to Mthethewaland had been more than worth while.

And so the search goes on; the work may be strenuous and exacting, but the rewards are great. One thinks of the finding and photographing of Cetshwayo's grave (described in the Appendix to

the Last Zulu King); the long talk with Zibebu's son on the hill overlooking the Msebe Valley where the Mandhlakazi inflicted so crushing a defeat on the Usutus; the visit to the grave of Zibebu's father, Mapita, one of Shaka's captains; the trip to the almost inaccessible area where the Emvuzane joins the Umhlatuze, the site of Shaka's second terrific encounter with the powerful Ndwandwes. The long trip to the Ndololwane mountain over in the Transvaal where he finally crushed and annihilated them as a nation; it was on the slopes of this mountain that I stood on the very spot where the brave Mgobozi, fighting to the last with the fury of a demon, sank down to earth never to rise again—the friend of Shaka and the greatest and most loved warrior in the annals of Zulu history. One remembers the arduous and difficult task of the re-discovery of Nandi's kraal and her grave set among the quiet hills of Zululand at the foot of which flows the AmaTegu stream that ran red with the blood of thousands at her death.

These and many other memories enable those who engage in field research to relive once again the stirring days of the past and inspire us to fresh efforts in our attempts to unearth the many secrets which still remain hidden from the eyes of our own day and generation.

*Pietermaritzburg.*

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF ENGLAND, 1050-1200

*by* M. G. SPENCER

To appreciate the complex military organization of post-Conquest England, it is important first to glance at the composition of the Anglo-Saxon armies of the pre-Conquest era. There are two reasons for doing so. Firstly, the military organization of England after 1066 retained certain elements characteristic of its antecedent; secondly, the “*res militariae*” of the period under discussion cannot be placed in their right perspective without some attempt (however slight) to ascertain whether or not Anglo-Saxon society, as far as warfare is concerned, was pre-feudal or proto-feudal.

By the middle of the 11th Century, the English military system was made up of two organizations, the Shipfyrd and the Landfyrd. Both had been effectively streamlined by Alfred the Great in the late 9th Century to meet the needs of a country constantly threatened by invasion<sup>1</sup>. However, by the 11th Century, two new elements were to be found within this twin branch of the Military: a body of stipendiary troops employed by the king or a great lord to fight on his behalf and above all to protect his person, and the devolvement of much of the three-fold obligation, of military service, fortress-building and bridge-repair<sup>2</sup>, onto a fairly small percentage of the population whom C. Hollister calls: “the Select Fyrd”<sup>3</sup>.

The pre-Conquest English army, as its Anglo-Norman counterpart was to do in the future, had come to rely greatly on its hired soldiers, men who served for a wage and not because of any specific military or territorial obligation. It is with the Danish conquest under Swein and Cnut that the term: “housecarl” first appears in England. The term came to embrace any kind of household warrior or retainer, and at first glance these men seem very like the “household troops” of the earlier age, such as those warriors of Earl Byrhtnoth who needed no instruction to fight alongside their lord and whose loyalty to him was unquestioned<sup>4</sup>. These men were tied to their lord by kinship and custom, but the term was also used to describe a unique, closely-knit body of professional warriors who served the kings of England from Cnut to Harold and became the spearhead of the old English army. Their numbers were swelled by large numbers of Scandanavian mercenaries employed by Ethelred the Unready, and they became the most highly-trained and battle-



ready force available to the English monarchs. Many were landholders, yet they remained essentially mercenaries and were referred to as such by the Anglo-Saxon chroniclers<sup>5</sup>. Another group of paid warriors, the "lithsmen", who fought on both land and sea, played a considerable part in the warfare of 11th Century England; so much so, in fact, that the names of some of them—Thorkell the Tall immediately springs to mind—have come down through the ages. This large-scale use of mercenaries was made possible by a financial system which gave rise to four methods of raising the money with which the troops could be paid: the Danegeld<sup>6</sup>, a special tax on towns with the specific purpose of paying soldiers' wages, the fyrd-white ( a fine for non-fulfilment of fyrd obligation— the "fyrd" being the term used to describe the army of all able-bodied free-men of the country or shire gathered together), and a commutation payment which certain towns were allowed to render in lieu of military service<sup>7</sup>. With four possible sources of revenue, therefore, it is to be expected that Anglo-Saxon kings (and, to a lesser extent, leading lords) would make the greatest possible use of these experienced, trustworthy troops.

It cannot be over-stressed that these elite soldiers were in the personal pay of the lord or king, and that they therefore owed him all service and loyalty for as long as they were employed. In other words, the lord's most important source of military strength was to be found in his own household. All his subjects owed service, but few of them felt a strong personal bond between themselves and their ruler, nor could they be expected to serve all year round as harvests had to be gathered, crops sown and families reared. The household, therefore, was the military nerve-centre for any nobleman or monarch. From there troops were summoned and given orders, there were strategies discussed and administrative details stipulated, and it is from among the men of his household that the lord tended to choose his officers. The importance of the household as an administrative and organizational unit, in matters of warfare as in so much else, remains throughout the period under discussion.

In his book *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions*, C. Hollister postulates that the Select Fyrd was a force of set numbers, recruited on a national basis and owing military service for 2 months per year. With its development in the 10th Century, the old Fyrd which consisted of all men is now split into two numerically-unequal sections—the Select Fyrd on whose shoulders the everyday defence of the kingdom now came to rest, and the rest of the free-men who were summoned only at rare intervals when danger was at its greatest. The old Great Fyrd was not only unwieldy, impossible to arm adequately and agonizingly slow to collect itself; but the growth in population and

the swift-growing needs of a maturing nation meant that King Alfred's system of a compulsory six-month period of military service for all, was actually endangering the whole well-being of the country it was supposed to be defending. Thus the Anglo-Saxons, living continually on the brink of war or actually engaged in it, evolved a more satisfactory system whereby a large experienced body of men could be summoned, despatched and deployed more efficiently. The personnel of the Select Fyrd was drawn from all ranks of Anglo-Saxon society—thegns, radmanni<sup>8</sup> and coerls. They were organized according to shires<sup>9</sup> led probably by the shire-reeve. The method of their recruitment is interesting in that it indicates that the Anglo-Saxons were by no means primitive in their military organization, which possessed an embryonic sophistication equal to most contemporary continental systems. Each unit of 5 hides of land had the military obligation of providing one man to represent the unit in satisfying the main "necessitas" of active service. In the Danelaw<sup>10</sup>, the corresponding unit was 6 carucates. The responsibility of equipping and maintaining the warrior-representative during his two-month period of service was placed on the people of the 5-hide unit<sup>11</sup>. The practice gradually evolved of the same person serving as warrior-representative of his unit year after year. As a result, there grew up a virtual class of soldiers, battle-hardened and conscious of their important military role, combining with the valuable stipendiary troops to form the elite of the Anglo-Saxon fighting force. The Great Fyrd continued to exist and perform a military function, but it tended to be used at a critical time or in defence of the local county only—note the presence of the Sussex great fyrd at the Battle of Hastings—to augment the elite fighting force with a great mass of primitive power when the need arose.

This short survey has, of course, oversimplified the picture. The Select Fyrd, as postulated by C. Hollister, can rightly be called a national institution, but many exceptions to, and contradictions within, this system were evident. Different conditions applied to the Marcher Counties, where tenants held land by a complex system of Drengage and Cornage, and where the military obligation was that of "Utware"<sup>12</sup>. Private lordship cut across the normal organizational procedure—if a lord owed 40 soldiers for the Select Fyrd out of his 200 hides, he might select them arbitrarily out of only 100 leave the remainder untouched, thus negating the concept of an *even* distribution of the system. The towns were withdrawn from the normal 5-hide recruitment procedure and drawn into a separate organization of their own whereby they combined with each other to produce a warrior-representative<sup>13</sup>. But a definite pattern can be seen to have been operating in producing by 1066 an army of some

effectiveness—although it was exclusively a force of infantrymen. No contemporary chronicle or account of a battle mentions the presence of a cavalry troop<sup>14</sup> and it is certain that, although the Anglo-Saxon forces might have ridden to the battlefield, they dismounted before they fought<sup>15</sup>.

The Anglo-Saxon fleet was of paramount importance in the kingdom's defence—Britain, an island, was open to attack from the sea at any time, and if the would-be invaders could be turned back before they reached the land itself, the danger would be removed in its early stages. The close connection between the Landfyrd and the Shipfyrd can be seen by the fact that, in the year 973, eight kings swore fealty to King Edgar “binding themselves to military service by land AND SEA”<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, the lithsmen, originally Norse mercenaries, were contracted to fight in the army and the navy. Working from this, C. Hollister<sup>17</sup> cogently argues that the selectfyrd principle worked in the navy as well as the army. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for A.D. 1008 mentions that a district of 300 (or 310) hides is responsible for producing a ship and its crew, with every 8 hides providing a helmet and coat-of-mail. Now, Alfred's naval reforms had laid down a crew of 60 men per ship<sup>18</sup>. Thus one has one man per five hides once more. Like the Landfyrd, the Shipfyrd was recruited on a shire basis, with every three hundreds<sup>19</sup> providing one ship, fully equipped. Again, one must beware of making the system seem to clearcut. As has been seen, every 8 hides had to produce a sailor-representative's armour, and 8 is not divisible by 5. Furthermore, the interior shires were often not included in this system, paying instead a shipscot<sup>20</sup>. And the Towns had a special part to play in the organization of the Anglo-Saxon navy, especially the major ports—Dover alone owing 20 ships plus a crew of 21 for each, for a period of 15 days<sup>21</sup>. But there is basically a pattern, involving a process of selection and a means of financing this important arm of the country's military might. The standing fleet was dismissed by Edward the Confessor in 1051, but the organizational apparatus was still there, and was possibly hastily resurrected by Harold in his attempt to prevent Duke William from landing in England. In fact, C. Hollister<sup>22</sup> concludes that by the time of the Conquest, the Anglo-Saxon navy was being supplied from many sources: ships owned by the king and the earls, those operated by mercenaries, private merchant ships dragooned in times of emergency, ships and crews from particular coastal towns, vessels owed by the 300-hide “ship-sokes” and manned by warriors of the shipfyrd. It is interesting to speculate upon whether William the Conqueror would have reached England at all if the English fleet had been at full strength at the time of his invasion. One chief difference between the Landfyrd and

the Shipfyrd was that the latter's period of service was probably longer, involving periods of training and "battle exercises" as well as battle duty. But in most basic organizational aspects they were similar, even to their commanders who were either great nobles (earls and bishops), experienced mercenary leaders, such as Thorkell the Tall, or the king himself under whose command the two sections were integrated into one military machine.

The third aspect of Anglo-Saxon military organization which must be briefly considered is that of the "burhs" or fortified towns. Initiated by Alfred, they were encouraged by his successors and the military services required in them systematized by the Burghal Hidage, a document issued in Edward the Elder's reign. Burh service, in fact, became part of the military obligation of the country and was one of the "trinodae necessitates". Regulations were laid down as to how many men were needed to man a wall; a system of "watch and ward" was introduced whereby the burhs could be efficiently protected. The towns were dotted at salient points—near rivers, at the crossways of important Roman roads—first in the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia, and gradually throughout the land. According to Mrs E. Armitage<sup>23</sup>, they were first and foremost defences of the local community against attack, and their protective nature and strategic siting gradually ensured for them a permanent population, so that by the 11th Century they had become full fortified towns which were expected to provide the manpower and money necessary to their own defence. But unlike the seaports, which had come into existence spontaneously as a result of the needs of a maritime nation, many of these burhs were artificial creations of the late 9th and 10th Centuries to meet a special military need, and their importance declined as the military situation changed. Yet some—Worcester and Nottingham to name but two—had such sure beginnings and were so well-placed that they became important centres of commerce and trade in the Middle Ages.

And so, in Anglo-Saxon England, military service was slowly coming to be based more and more on land—but NOT on land tenure, despite all that the red-herring of Oswaldslaw implies to the contrary<sup>24</sup>; the burh had its walls and its garrison, but it was "pro defensione communitatis" whereas the feudal castle was a privately-owned military unit, essentially the property of one man who could accept into its walls or reject anyone he chose, local or alien; the warrior-representative certainly was a man whose primary function was to fight and who was granted special maintenance privileges so that he could do so effectively, but he was certainly not similar to the knight who fought on horseback, who was always the vassal of a lord and who could never be a humble villein or sokeman<sup>25</sup>; for the

5-hide unit was NOT the fief, and “where there is not the fief, there is not feudalism”. Land-tenure and the fief, the knight and the castle; these were the characteristics of feudalism, and it is to the English feudal age that we must now turn, an age that was ushered in by the Norman Conquest, examining first of all the most fundamental representative of feudal military organization—the mounted knight<sup>26</sup>.

Approximately one-third of the land of his kingdom, William the Conqueror retained for himself. This was known as the Royal Demesne. The remainder he handed out to about 190 lay and ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief. In return for these lands, the feudal lords were obliged to bring to the field a specified number of knights, at the king’s summons<sup>27</sup>. Although the total military potential of these knights is not known, J. Beeler estimates that they were between 5 and 6,000 in number<sup>28</sup>, a number with which both C. Hollister<sup>29</sup> and Sir Frank Stenton<sup>30</sup> agree. So that a knight could maintain himself with horse and armour, a lord would grant him a unit of land (the “fief”) which varied in size from lordship to lordship, and even within the same lordship. No money changed hands in this transaction—in return for the grant, the knight would do homage to his chosen lord, become his “vassal”, swearing “fides” and “auxilium” to him only, saving his higher allegiance to the king who was “liege-lord”. This contract between lord and vassal, unwritten and non-monetary though it was, was the basis both of the Feudal System itself and the military organization it gave rise to; a vassal might break his oath, not only at the peril of his life and goods, but also at the peril of his immortal soul (for the Church could not allow so vital a proceeding to be undertaken without entering in to it herself). This theoretical fusion of mutual trust with mutual dependence, cemented as it was by a symbolic religious ritual, was the cornerstone of the social, political and economic system which Duke William introduced into his new realm. The knight’s prime duty was to fight in battle at his lord’s side, but there were other military duties he was required to fulfil—those of castle-guard service and escort service<sup>31</sup>, this latter often taking on strong war-like characteristics in times of private war or civil strife.

The knight was not expected to do year-round military service, but only for a certain annual period<sup>32</sup>. This period underwent modifications in the 12th Century. The familiar two-month period found in Anglo-Saxon times had been commuted to 60 days by the end of Henry I’s reign (1139), while in 1173 we find 40 days mentioned as the standard period in the chronicle of Jordan Fantosme<sup>33</sup>. If the king or lord wished a knight to serve for a longer period, he would pay him a wage, and in the 12th Century a knight’s wage was in-

creasing as strikingly as his service period had decreased, due to increased costs: in 1150, 6d per day<sup>34</sup> rising to between 1 and 2 shillings by the end of the century<sup>35</sup>. The third important aspect of a knight's service was its geographical limitation. He could be expected to serve anywhere in the king's dominions, either in England or on the Continent, but not outside them. We can recall that, when William the Conqueror was planning his invasion of England, he was warned in his council that no Norman was bound to follow him out of Normandy; and, looking ahead, that King John's northern barons refused to serve him with their knights in his projected invasion of Poitou because that country was now in the possession of the French king.<sup>36</sup>

It is interesting to note that the feudal organization "in toto", the whole "servitia debita" of nearly 6,000 knights, never came together throughout this, the peak feudal period. There are several reasons for this: firstly, a certain number of knights would have to be left behind as a task force or to guard castles and spearhead the garrisons in them; secondly the king would issue his writs of summons to the field, to his tenants-in-chief, not to the individual knights, and he would choose only those lords whose presence suited him at that particular moment—his favourites, or the most powerful lords with the largest contingents, or those barons whose lands lay nearest to the particular trouble-spot. And invariably there were some of his vassals who would side against the king and throw their soldiers in with the opposition.<sup>37</sup> One would obviously not expect to find the full feudal host summoned for exclusively English affairs, but the presence of large contingents of mercenaries in the English kings' continental armies does imply that the "servitia debita", as the primary feudal military organization of troops, was not completely satisfactory.

Mention of the knight brings to mind the military serjeant, another important adjunct of the fighting machine. The role of the serjeant in the military organization of late 11th and 12th Century England—indeed, his very position and status in feudal society—is very difficult to determine, for 2 reasons: firstly the origins of the serjeanty office are obscure, and secondly the variety of services which serjeanty tenants were required to perform<sup>38</sup> seems to show that there could have been no fixed plan behind their creation. Both C. Hollister<sup>39</sup> and Mrs E. Kimball<sup>40</sup> lean toward the conclusion that the serjeanty was a Norman importation and that it appears in contemporary records as "seriantia". Professor Ganshof<sup>41</sup> sees some similarity between the English "serjeant" and the French "vavassour"<sup>42</sup>. If so, it is likely that this tenure was indeed a Norman importation, and this in its turn explains why the military serjeanty (which came to

be distinguished from its manifold non-military counter parts by being accorded the accolade: “Grand”) came to have strong feudal overtones. A serjeant who fought in the host or had important garrison duties, held by Land Tenure and therefore had to perform homage. He was expected to contribute to the 4 feudal aids<sup>43</sup> upon the king’s command, to submit his estates to the feudal customs of wardship and escheat<sup>44</sup> and the payment of reliefs. A grand serjeant had to have specific equipment, and his service was commonly reckoned to be half that of a fully-armed knight<sup>45</sup>. Examples of lords (particularly ecclesiastical magnates) sending two serjeants instead of one knight to the feudal host are quoted by C. Hollister<sup>46</sup> and the scutage rate of such a serjeant<sup>47</sup> was in general half that of a knight.

Reference to “serjeants” in the chronicles and government records of the time are legion, and one can conclude that they were a large and important arm of a 12th Century army, though apparently there were never enough to go round. It has already been stressed that by no means all of those who held by serjeanty were soldiers, but even among those who did have military duties, there was much disparity in the functions they were required to perform. The most important were those who were mounted (“servientes equites”). The “servientes pedites” could be archers, crossbowmen, manipulators of siege-engines, members of castle garrisons, swordsmen, javelineers and squires. It was, in fact, a large, untidy class of fighting man. Like the knight, a serjeant was expected to serve for a set annual period, but the period varied—40 days, a month, 15 days or even eight<sup>48</sup>. Unlike the knight, his service did not extend out of England and thus he was not obliged to follow the king to Angevin continental possessions. Furthermore, a tenant who held by military serjeanty was not obliged to fulfil his obligation to the feudal host in person, but could send a substitute from his tenancy—implying that the serjeant was considered “non-skilled”, possessing none of the fighting lustre of the full knight. These latter two points would suggest a strong non-feudal element in Serjeanty Tenure, and this bastard strain, coupled with the great variety of the functions which a serjeant could perform, make his role in 12th Century society and warfare an extremely difficult one to determine with any exactness. To what do we owe this evident complexity? The explanation probably lies in the circumstances surrounding the creation of the tenure. It was an artificial grouping made by the king’s officials for administrative purposes, suggests Mrs Kimball<sup>49</sup>, not a natural classification of services on the basis of their similarity to one another. This grouping was most likely made only by the mid-12th century after many types of serjeanty had already come into being. Thus they were lumped together for administrative reasons, opportunistically,

and consequently their social (and military) standing is so obscure. Somewhere between the knight and the villein stood the serjeant, now hardly distinguishable from the former, now close to the latter, in the military organization of the times.

The knight and the serjeant must now be considered in relation to two important military considerations which rose up during the Anglo-Norman period and became part and parcel of the feudal scene. The first of these is scutage. In the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, Richard FitzNigel wrote:

“Fit interdum, ut imminente vel insurgente in regnum hostium machinatione decernat rex de singulis foedis militum summam aliquam solvi, marcam scilicet vel libram unam; unde militibus stipendia vel donativa succedant. Mavult enim princeps stipendarios, quam domesticos bellicis opponere casibus. Haec itaque summa, quia nomine scutorum solvitur, scutagium nuncupatur”.<sup>50</sup>

FitzNigel was a trusted royal servant and an expert in his knowledge of Exchequer administration, so we cannot do better than take his definition—although his statement that the king was concerned mainly for the welfare of the “domestici” implies far too much altruism on the monarch’s part. Scutage was a tax apportioned by knights’ fees rather than by hides or chattels, and in the main can be defined more closely as a monetary payment commuting the feudal military obligation. At first glance, we might see in this a harking back to the Anglo-Saxon custom of “fyrdwite”, but the resemblance is on the surface only. In the first place, scutage was inextricably bound up with the knight’s fee and serjeanty tenure, and in the second the fyrdwite was a definite fine for failure to serve, whereas payment of scutage was a legal alternative to military service. If anything, it seems to bear a closer similarity to the Anglo-Saxon custom of commuting the military service of the men of a particular town for a pre-determined amount of money; a similarity that is possibly fortuitous.

Scutage appears in the financial workings of Anglo-Norman military organization soon after the Conquest—on one memorable occasion, Ranulf Flambard summoned part of the feudal host to join William Rufus in Normandy, and when the army had obediently gathered at the sea shore, he took money from them in lieu of service and sent them all home. A charter issued by Henry I in 1100 lists scutages among the exemptions granted to the monastery of Lewes<sup>51</sup>, and a further one in 1107 is equally gracious to the abbey of Evesham<sup>52</sup>. C. Hollister concludes that scutage was assessed regularly during the second half of Henry I’s reign, and intermittently in the first half. By the reign of Henry II it had become common



practice<sup>53</sup>. In his examination of the scutages paid to Henry II in 1159, J. H. Round<sup>54</sup> concluded that there was a close correlation between the individual amounts of scutage paid in lieu of service, and the cost of a day's pay for a knight or a serjeant. C. Hollister examined the subject exhaustively and his findings substantiate Round's theories and extend them<sup>55</sup>. Round found that the usual scutage paid by a knight in 1159 was  $26/8$ , which seemed to represent 40 days' knight service at 8d per day. This conclusion finds its echo in C. Petit-Dutaillis' statement that the daily wage of a knight in mid-12th century England tended to be fixed at 8d per day<sup>56</sup>. Hollister calculated that scutage in the reign of Henry I was paid at the rate of 6d per day, gradually increasing until, by the end of the century the figure was 1/- to 1/6. A further significant conclusion he arrived at has already been mentioned—that the scutage paid by a military serjeant approximated to half that paid by the knight; an important pointer to the relative status of Knight and Serjeant in the military organization of the 12th-Century English state. Most important, the continuous use of this method of bringing money into the royal coffers (by the reigns of Richard I and John it had virtually become a recognized feudal aid), emphasises the growing importance in the army of the day of the main reason for its imposition—stipendiary troops, the second military consideration that merits examination.

It is not known exactly what percentage of Duke William's invasion force consisted of mercenaries actually in his pay, but there can be little doubt that all the 5,000 men who crossed to England with him had material gain in mind, in the form of plunder or a handsome fief; some were definitely hired for the duration of the campaign and paid off afterwards. It has already been seen that stipendiaries had been part of the pattern of Anglo-Saxon warfare for at least 2 generations before the Conquest. The pattern was therefore set for the participation of mercenary troops in the warfare of the period under surveillance, in ever-increasing numbers. In 1085, when King Cnut IV of Denmark, in alliance with Count Robert I of Flanders, was preparing a great fleet for the invasion of England, the chroniclers tell of William I importing "great numbers of mercenaries" from France and Brittany, both horse and foot<sup>57</sup>. Both William's sons were adept at squeezing money from their subjects, and both used much of their wealth to hire mercenary troops, especially for their continental campaigns. During the reign of William Rufus, William of Malmesbury noted that:

"military men flocked to him out of every province on this side of the mountains, whom he rewarded most generously".<sup>58</sup>

Henry I's victory of Tinchebrai was in part due to a numerical superiority in knights, whose ranks had been swelled by paid troops<sup>59</sup>.

And the battle of Bourg-Theroulde, though only a small action, was memorable in that King Henry I's army consisted entirely of paid troops who did not want to return to the king without having fought: "or we will lose our pay and honour"<sup>60</sup>.

Mercenary troops had not yet come into their own in England, though they were used by the English kings on the continent—Henry I was the Lion of Justice and kept effective peace in his kingdom for most of his reign. But in the chaotic 20 years of Stephen's reign "when God and His saints slept", mercenaries were in demand as never before, with both sides paying lavishly for their services. A clue to their importance is seen in a brief perusal of the career of one, William of Ypres. Leader of Stephen's Flemish mercenaries, he played a leading role in the 1137 Scottish campaign and had great success in the huge chess game of castle warfare which was being played out throughout the reign, capturing Devizes castle from the powerful Roger of Salisbury in 1139. The king rewarded him by granting him vast estates and putting him virtually in control of Kent.

Mention of William of Ypres brings to the fore an incidental, but valid, point about stipendiary troops in the Middle Ages. William was of noble birth, the grandson of Robert the Frisian, Count of Flanders, and had in fact laid claim to the county after the murder of his cousin Charles the Good in 1127. Many examples of men of noble birth becoming leaders of mercenaries could be given—in 1086, William the Conqueror hired a troop whose commander was the King of France's brother. Paid soldiers were often of high social standing, and that perfect knight William the Marshal did not disapprove of fighting for money. Any idea of stipendiaries being merely vagabonds or motley crews of criminous adventurers must be dismissed. This idea, as well as the belief that mercenaries are always FOREIGN troops, arose in more modern times.

The reign of Henry II saw the chaos of the last score years resolved, and with peace came prosperity, and with prosperity, money. A large proportion of Henry's income went to the hiring of mercenary troops on a grander scale than ever before. The king had a whole empire to keep together<sup>61</sup>, restless nobles to control, unruly sons to keep in check and two kings to keep at bay<sup>62</sup>. It is in this king's reign, in fact, when the Feudal System as a means towards creating an efficient military organization, shows up its glaring weaknesses. Nothing is more eloquent testimony of this fact than the incidence of scutage and the stream of royal mercenary bands. More money and the increasing circulation of it undermined the feudal concept that basically the number of vassals one had was a sure sign of one's wealth and power. A systematic rise in population

and the growing importance of towns with their fairs, trade, merchants and artisans, accelerated this change. The change of emphasis within the manorial economy ushered in by the concept of Profit Farming heralded the decline of importance of the fief in the socio-military sense and threw the whole idea of military service through land tenure into jeopardy. For land was no longer farmed with the object of ensuring that a lord would have a suitable retinue of knights who were adequately armed and suitably mounted, but worked (and worked more intensively) to bring into the lord's pockets sufficient money to be able to afford to maintain his traditional standard of living in the face of ever-spiralling costs. All this had been a gradual process present in its earliest stages at the time of the Conquest itself, but in the last 30 years of the 12th Century the changes were snowballing, encouraged by a powerful and grasping monarchy, and commutations of military service for ready cash were on the increase. Many of the knights and landed gentry had no wish to fight anyway, as comfort, respectability and local politics became increasingly important in their eyes. But wars were still being fought in great numbers—the very size of the Angevin Empire made it vulnerable—and troops were still needed, if anything for longer periods than ever before, now that castles had become so well-fortified and so important that full-scale sieges of long duration had become a necessity. Mercenaries were the obvious answer. They were valuable in themselves, not merely as alternatives to the tenurial knights and serjeants. They were not subject to the usual, curtailed, length of annual military service, but would fight for as long as they were paid. Furthermore, they were highly effective fighters, as a study of the manifold successes of Stephen's band of Flemish, or Henry II's troop of Brabantine, stipendiaries would show. And their loyalty to their employer was unquestioned, while the selfishness and treachery of the feudal vassals had been displayed for all the world to see in Stephen's unhappy reign. Writing of the 1173-4 rebellion against Henry II, William of Newburgh states that the king's Brabantines "*fideliter illi serviebant*"<sup>63</sup>, and Roger de Hoveden goes further: "*de quibus plus caeteris Henricus confidebat*"<sup>64</sup>. Stipendiaries seem to have evolved their own code of rules—"If you pay us well, we will fight well; if we don't, don't pay us." An example of this has already been given from the battle of Bourg-Theroulde. In 1173, King William of Scotland's Flemings promised to destroy the castle of Prudhoe "or wrongly will you give us pay and provisions."<sup>65</sup> So it is easy to understand why mercenary troops were in such demand among the various leaders, lords as well as kings, bishops like Hugh de Puiset as well as earls such as Roger de Bellesme. And small wonder that Henry II hired some 10,000 Braban-

tines in 1173-4, both knights (at a cost of up to 1/- per day) and infantrymen (ranging from 4d to 8d per day). His policy was continued by his two sons Richard I and John, who desperately tried to meet the rising costs of such hire by constant recourse to such established money-making systems as feudal aids, or profits from justice and forest offences. Even these were not sufficient to meet their needs and John was forced to extend the principle of commutation into one of fines for failure to complete the required service period and to introduce his highly-unpopular tax of moveables in the early years of the 13th Century.

Brief mention should be made of the money-fief, which was a grant, not of land, but of money paid at regular intervals. According to F. Ganshof<sup>66</sup> and M. Bloch<sup>67</sup>, these were common in the Low Countries, Germany and France (where the first king to grant such a fief was Louis VII in 1155), but not in England. J. Beeler concludes that in England money-fiefs were granted only by the king, and he likens such a payment to a retainer or a grant made to cement friendly relationships rather than to obtain military aid in time of war, although the latter was sometimes implied in the agreement. And such fiefs seem to have been heritable—in 1172 Baldwin V of Hainault succeeded to the small fief of 100 marks which had been granted to his father by Henry II. A larger fief of £1,000 was conferred by the same king on Count Matthew of Boulogne in 1166<sup>68</sup>, although this did not prevent the latter from siding with the Young King in the 1173 rebellion. The system went back to William I's day, for in return for homage, counsel and military aid (which never materialized) William granted to Count Baldwin V of Flanders a fief of 300 marks annually. But the money-fief played no significant part in the military history of England in the 11th and 12th Centuries. In effect, it seems to have been little more than a variation of the stipendiary theme, although the strong feudal connotations in which it was draped—the word "fief", its possible heritability, a solemn agreement between princes, an oath of homage—kept it quite distinct in theory. Unlike the normal bargain between lord and vassal, money quite definitely came into the picture.

One vital outgrowth of feudalism which was found in England and throughout Europe in the period under discussion, was the castle, "ossa regni", as William of Newburgh had it. Its military importance throughout was tremendous. Not only did it serve as the Household, or nerve centre of any organization, but it would be fair to say that, as the 12th century progressed, it came to dominate warfare more and more. The story of the civil war of Stephen's reign is a tale of sieges and counter-sieges, of castles being built or changing hands with bewildering speed. In the 1173-4 rebellion, field actions were rele-

gated even further than previously to a secondary role, as the King of Scotland besieged, begged and threatened the garrisons of the castles of the North, while in the midlands the rebellious Earl of Leicester and the loyal Richard de Lucy fought for the control of castles and fortified towns until the former was captured in one of the few field actions of the war, the Battle of Fornham<sup>69</sup>. In the field of military organization, two aspects of castle warfare are relevant to us: castle expenditure and castle garrisoning.

With the former we can deal briefly. The Bayeux Tapestry gives us a good indication of the castles built in the Conquest period—mainly motte-and-bailey affairs, cheap to construct and swift to build.<sup>70</sup> Compare these with the fortresses of just over a century later, with Orford, Newcastle-on-Tyne and (more strikingly yet) with Dover and Chateau-Gaillard<sup>71</sup>, great masses of stone with huge keeps and manifold walls. Not only castle warfare, but castle building had become an art, and a highly specialized and expensive one at that. A glance at the Pipe Rolls of the late 12th Century will give some idea of how much of the royal expenditure was being lavished on this particular aspect of the military organization of the realm. In 1171-2, £1,330/5/1 was spent by Henry II on his castles. The figure for 1172-3 is almost double this. In the first four years of the 1170's, nearly £500 was devoted to Winchester Castle alone, and even in the comparatively quiet years of 1168-9 and 1176-7, £422 and £537 respectively was spent on the royal castles; at a time when £500 would probably have fed the whole of the population of York for a year. £7,000 was spent on Dover Castle between 1179 and 1191 and the building costs for Chateau-Gaillard and its outworks came to about £11,500<sup>72</sup>. The Earl of Norfolk's castle at Framlingham reminds us that the nobility were not lagging behind the king in this respect. Remembering too the huge sums lavished on mercenaries throughout the century, it does not seem unlikely that the realm's financial organization had become the slave of its military counterpart.

The great percentage of these sums devoted to castles went on the actual building, or improvements and repairs, but the castle garrisons had to be looked after—and paid, for castles had to be served all year round, not only during the period of compulsory military service which was in any case undergoing an anti-feudal metamorphosis to commutation. Furthermore, castle guard service had always been subject to local variation, unlike its feudal twin, host-service (possibly owing to the personal relationship that existed between many a lord and the men who guarded his home) so that by the mid-12th Century, 40 days, though the normal period, was by no means universal. This factor was further complicated by the

large serjeanty representation in a garrison. As has been shown, the serjeant's length of service had never been fully systematized and could run to anything from a week to the full 40 days. And the garrison serjeant's wage was variable (unlike the serjeant who served in the actual feudal host, whose wage was regularly calculated as half that of a knight's), ranging from (presumably) 4d or, by 1190, 6d, down to 1d (which, according to J. Beeler's calculations, is what many a serjeant received per day at Dover Castle in the year 1166-7).

The actual size of the garrison varied from castle to castle, depending presumably on the strategic importance of the fortress, its size, and whether or not it was in danger of being invested—when Robert of Bellesme's castle of Shrewsbury was being threatened in 1101, the regular garrison was augmented by 80 stipendiary men-at-arms<sup>73</sup>. C. Hollister writes:

“Castle-guard cannot have been organized throughout the kingdom according to one uniform pattern. It was a maze of local arrangements adapted to the needs of particular castles in particular districts”.<sup>74</sup>

Coastal and frontier castles especially might require large permanent garrisons, but in times of peace or if the castle was unstrategically positioned a few serjeants or household knights would suffice. In 1173, Richmond castle was held by 42 knights in the summer months when the Scottish danger was greatest, but only 26 remained there in winter. In fact, this great variety in garrison size minimizes any reliance that can be placed on individual castle-guard figures, unless those figures are taken together with the military picture prevailing throughout the realm at that time. What we can conclude is that in wartime a castle garrison would consist of a number of household knights and serjeants, a group of infantrymen (archers, light-and heavily-armed footsoldiers) and a group of humble serving men to perform the menial tasks, with a constable in overall control. An important castle might have more than 100 knights and serjeants (often stipendiaries, and with the latter usually in the majority) in times of crisis, but a castle of less worth would be considered well guarded if it had between 20 and 30—as was the case at Wark in 1173, where the constable managed to hold out with this number against King William of Scotland<sup>75</sup>; with the very small fortresses having merely sufficient to keep them as going concerns rather than to withstand a siege. Warkworth, Appleby and Burc all had less than 6 knights each in 1174.

Castle-guard duties were based on the same principle of “watch and ward” that had operated in the old Anglo-Saxon burhs; though the system was now far more streamlined, since the coming of the mounted knight had given the garrison not only a strong cavalry

arm, but also an efficient messenger and food-collector and a swift, effective raider. Just as the burh's garrison was drawn from the neighbourhood, so the castle had its castelry, a group of fiefs bound together to provide armed men and general support for a particular fortress. However, there was one difference between the two, over and above the more obvious feudal one; sometimes a fee might owe guard at a very distant castle rather than the castle it was nearest to geographically. The manor of Hartwell in Northamptonshire owed castle-guard at Dover. This phenomenon might be explained by the fact that, in many cases, a royal castle guard was provided by a group of barons who had holdings throughout the country. Turning once more to Dover Castle, nine baronies provided the castle-guard for this one royal fortress, owing all told more than 170 knights, for 15 to 40 days per year per barony<sup>76</sup>. Often a lordship would owe guard at a distant fortress, and consequently the tenant who undertook this service would have far to travel. But with the growing practice of commutation of service, this difficulty tended to become of theoretical interest only as the century progressed. Finally, it is important to place castle-guard in its feudal setting. Most fiefs owed both host and castle service, and the latter was performed at either a royal or a baronial castle, but not at both. Castle-guard-obligation could be greater than the obligation to provide knights for the host—in 1212 Hugh de Baliol owed 5 knights to the host, but had to provide 30 knights for castle-guard service at Newcastle-on-Tyne. With some other lords the situation was reversed—Earl Patrick of Salisbury owed 40 knights “in exercitu” and 20 to guard Salisbury Castle. Commutation of services at most castles was clearly arbitrarily arranged, according to C. Hollister<sup>77</sup>, but he suggests that it tended to conform with the typical knight's or serjeant's wage of any given period of the 12th Century, and stipendiaries would be hired for garrison duties at the same rates.

Attention must now be turned to those elements of late 11th and 12th Century English armies which were not strictly “feudal”, although they had become part and parcel of the warfare of the period. On the subject of infantry, Christopher Brooke<sup>78</sup> is quite definite:

“Most of the archers and foot-soldiers in the English army, at least in the late 11th and 12th Centuries, were paid men”. This is to be expected, since the infantryman's service (except for the serjeants who served in the feudal host and on castle-guard) was not based on land tenure. The infantry consisted of archers, swordsmen, men armed with maces and spears, miners<sup>79</sup> and men who worked the huge siege-engines. In a normal army, they would far outnumber the mounted section. Despite the decline in the number

of field actions (particularly large ones) after the Battle of Hastings, such actions did take place in the 130 years under discussion and certain of them had decisive results—such as Tinchebrai, the Battle of the Standard, Lincoln I and Fornham—and in the first three of these the infantry played a significant role. The importance of foot-soldiers is seen from the fact that at both Tinchebrai and the Battle of the Standard, groups of knights were turned into footsoldiers for the occasion<sup>80</sup>. Furthermore, in the words of J. Beeler:

“few medieval generals understood, as the Norman kings did, that in siege warfare the role of the footsoldier was decisive.”<sup>81</sup>

This is especially true in the case of archers and crossbowmen. Interesting to note, the 1181 Assize of Arms did not deal with the feudal host exclusively, but specified also the service and armour of infantrymen:

“... omnis miles habeat tot loricas et cassides, et clypeos et lanceas quot habuerit foeda . . . quicumque vero liber laicus habuerit in catallo vel in redditu ad valentiam de xvi marcis, habeat lorica et cassidem et clypeum et lanceam; quicumque vero liber laicus habuerit in catallo vel redditu x marcas habeat aubergel, et capellet ferri et lanceam.”<sup>82</sup>

(Noteworthy too is the importance which this Assize attached to a man's financial worth rather than simply the land he held.) C. Hollister suggests that this order was given in connection with the Great Fyrd obligation which was a hangover from Anglo-Saxon times. He goes further and tries to resurrect the Select Fyrd, but comes to no definite conclusion on the matter, possibly because by 1181 the Select Fyrd as such was but a memory of the past. But there can be no doubt that the freemen of a locality would come to swell the ranks of an army's infantry force if their lives or property were in danger. The peasants' activities at Fornham were a rather crude example of this<sup>83</sup>. In the towns it was only common sense for the inhabitants to have weapons at hand in case of a surprise attack on their walls. The infantryman as such is almost never mentioned in the chronicles of the times, being overshadowed by his social and political superior the knight—and, to a certain extent, the serjeant—but the financial records bear eloquent witness of his importance in the military organization of England.

The Great Fyrd (or shire levies) did not die with Harold at Hastings. William the Conqueror was soon making use of this military arm, commanded sometimes by the few remaining Anglo-Saxon thegns, but the fyrd was too cumbersome and unsophisticated a military force to be utilized frequently. It was summoned in 1075, 1088, 1101 and 1102 when it was used to great effect, but after this it went into a steady decline as a military force, except along the



frontier of Scotland where it persisted—as “Utware” or “Endemot”—far into the later Middle Ages. There are isolated examples of the shire levy being called out to defend its county from attack—the English force at the Battle of the Standard in 1138 consisted mainly of the Yorkshire fyrd commanded by the sherrif, but even by this stage its appearance seemed to have been the exception rather than the rule. In 1173, when the Justiciar Richard de Lucy was extremely hard-pressed for troops (“Not more than 10 barons in the whole midlands are loyal” he complained to King Henry) there is no mention of him summoning the men of the shire to swell his army. The Great Fyrd remained as a potential force to be used in times of crisis, but it slowly suffered the same fate as that other Anglo-Saxon institution, the Danegeld. In Scotland, however, financially and politically far less advanced than England, it continued to play a significant role in the armies of the time, much to the distaste of the English chroniclers, one of whom considered the rough hordes from Galloway and Lothian who poured over the border in 1173 and 1174 as “barbarians, if not children of the devil himself”.

The towns were not without their place in the military scheme of things, non-feudal (if not anti-feudal) though they were. The burghal militia which had been a component of the Great Fyrd in Anglo-Saxon times had its counterpart in the activities of warriors from the towns who were active in the crises of the 12th Century; though possibly only London had a properly-organized civic militia as such, which sent 1,000 soldiers to help King Stephen and Queen Mathilda during the civil war, and whose basic unit of organization was the ward of which there were 24. In both 1141 and 1147, the citizens of Lincoln, in their capacity of burghers, turned out in some force to help Stephen. The citizens of most towns, though lacking a closely-knit military organization and the obligation to serve in the feudal host, proved themselves willing and able to defend their walls in order to protect their goods and prosperity; the town castles were in the main left to the garrisons to defend. Jordan Fantosme tells of how the burghers of Dunwich refused to allow the Earl of Leicester into their town in 1173, and when he armed serjeants and esquires in preparation for an attack, the burghers let loose bows and darts and erected a palisade. The townsmen of Nottingham refused to open their gates to Prince David of Scotland in 1174 and continued to defy him unaided. So this was evidently common enough in practice, and the loyalties of the towns (though their populations were mainly inexperienced in military skills and their organization was not yet mature) were not without significance in the warfare of the time.

C. Hollister is quite positive of the fact that there was no such thing

as a feudal navy<sup>84</sup>. As a military entity the English fleet was in eclipse from late Anglo-Saxon times until the reign of King John (1199-1216) when it was reassembled to foil the invasion plans of the French dauphin. One brief skirmish did take place in William Rufus' reign, when the royal ships intercepted a group of Norman transports en route to England with an invading force on behalf of Duke Robert of Normandy, and sent them packing; but the only other naval event of any significance did not even involve English ships—in 1136 Queen Mathilda ordered her fleet from Boulogne to blockade Dover, which it did successfully. Ships seem to have been used only incidentally—to transport leaders and soldiers from England to France and vice-versa. Their importance to England at this time was in the economic sphere. It comes, therefore, as no surprise that the second part of King William of Scotland's request to the Young King in 1173 for "your Flemings with a navy", should have gone unanswered. The lack of an adequate navy may seem amazing when one considers that England was a vulnerable island and that there was such a strong naval tradition in the country dating from Anglo-Saxon times. But the answer must simply be that the English kings saw no need for one. The threat of invasion from Scandinavia disappeared shortly after the Conquest, and threatened attacks from France were fitful and rare at best—indeed, the threat was all the other way. Furthermore, when one considers that the post-Conquest military organization of the realm was based firmly on land and around Land Tenure, it is understandable that naval matters would not normally come into the picture.

So this feudal army, with its vital non-feudal elements, whose activities tended to pivot round castles and towns or take it winging to the Angevin continental possessions and whose maintenance depended heavily on the efficiency of another organization, the Exchequer, what was its full strength? We cannot say. Even the numbers of soldiers in the armies that WERE gathered together are elusive, for the chroniclers are notoriously inaccurate in this respect<sup>85</sup> and administrative records cannot give the whole story. It would be fair to say that an army of 5-6,000 men (the size of Duke William's at Hastings) would be considered a strong force for this period. The total strength of both sides at the battle of Bourg-Theroulde probably did not equal 1,000 soldiers, and we gather that the victorious royalist force at Fornham totalled little more than 300. King Henry's total force in Normandy in 1173 possibly came to 30,000 but they do not seem to have ever been utilized as one army, and King William of Scotland's collective strength was considerable, if Jordan Fantosme is to be trusted. But most of the warfare of the

time revolved around sieges and numbers here are impossible to come by.

To quote J. Beeler once more:

“As far as Anglo-Norman warfare is concerned, the traditional view that heavy cavalry was the decisive factor in military operations must be modified, if not completely abandoned.”<sup>86</sup>

C. Hollister adds his voice to this:

“Whatever the impact of the feudal knight on English society may have been, his military contribution was surprisingly modest.”<sup>87</sup>

To substantiate their like statements, both cite the four battles of Tinchebrai, Bremule, Bourg-Theroulde and the Standard, where, as has been said, the cavalry fought on foot. One cannot overstate the truism that much of 12th Century warfare was castle warfare, involving long sieges where the infantry played a role of equal if not greater importance to the mounted knight whose horse was of little use to him in an operation calling for much patient inactivity. However, one must confine these remarks to the military field only, for the entrance of the knight onto the English socio-political stage had the force of a revolution. The vital reason for the gradual erosion of the knight's dominant position in English military warfare, which was taking place virtually from his introduction in 1066 onwards, was economic; the imposition of scutage (and, later, fines), the consequent commutation of feudal military service and the resultant rise in the employment of mercenaries; and gnawing away at the base was the growing concept of utilizing land for Profit Farming to take advantage of the rise in prices and swell the markets of the flourishing towns. The military organization of the country, which bore witness to these changes, had changed with them in ways which were so gradual that they often went unnoticed.

In conclusion, let us turn briefly to the problem posed in the introductory paragraph of this essay: what contribution, if any, did the military methods of Anglo-Saxon times make to the post-Conquest organization? It has already been indicated, by the definition we applied to the term “feudal”<sup>88</sup> that basically the two systems were quite different. However, it would have been truly amazing if there had been no similarities between the type of warfare waged by the Normans, and those methods used by the English up to 1066. We do find elements common to both—the use of mercenaries, the twin obligations of Military Service and Watch and Ward, the increasing reliance on select bands of warriors rather than the total manpower of the whole country. And some techniques the Normans, with their genius for recognizing worth and fashioning it to their

own ends, retained—the Great Fyrd, the Danegeld and (possibly) the principle of commutation<sup>89</sup>. In introducing the Knight's Fief into England, William I imposed a new military system on top of the old one, crushing most of the latter in the process but retaining some; and the resultant lop-sided fusion produced a military organization which at least allowed himself and his successors throughout the 12th Century<sup>90</sup> to maintain their royal power, strengthen royal control, keep invasions away from England's shores and, in general, prevent private warfare from becoming rampant within the land.

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#### REFERENCE NOTES

<sup>1</sup>cf. C. Hollister: *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions*, pp. 85 and 103.

<sup>2</sup>This triple obligation of warfare was commonly known as the "trinoda necessitas", and was originally due from all free-men. The phrase appears regularly in Anglo-Saxon land charters, and on its full usage and application see: W. H. Stevenson, *Trinoda Necessitas* in vol. xxix of the *English Historical Review*.

<sup>3</sup>C. Hollister, op. cit. CH.IV.

<sup>4</sup>The story of Byrhtnoth's defeat by the Norsemen is found in the fascinating Anglo-Saxon poem *The Song of Maldon*, found in its entirety in vol. I of *English Historical Documents*, Douglas & Greenaway, ed.

<sup>5</sup>Generally by the word: "stipendiarius". We should beware of giving the term: "mercenary" its modern connotations when referring to the paid warrior of the Middle Ages. For one thing, an 11th or 12th Century stipendiary was as often as not a compatriot of the very person who was employing him. The tradition of hiring one's own vassals to fight after their official service term had expired, had been used as early as the Battle of Bremule (1119). The Pipe Rolls of the 12th Century contain many references to paid castle garrisons and there is no reason to suppose that these men were not English—indeed, in dealing with the 1173-4 rebellions, the chroniclers tend to state when foreign troops were used as if this was something worth special mention. See further page 55 of this essay.

<sup>6</sup>Originally a tax levied on his people by Ethelred in 991, to be used as a bribe to keep the fierce Norsemen from invading his realm. After 1012 it was used to pay soldiers, rather than as a tribute to the Danes.

<sup>7</sup>For example, 20/- a man from Malmesbury. cf: *Domesday Book* i, 64b.

<sup>8</sup>The radmanni comprised an intermediate class between the more aristocratic thegn and a humble ceorl. Their wergild was 600/-. The wergild (the payment due to a murdered man's family from his murderers) gives some indication of a man's status in Anglo-Saxon society; the higher it was, the more eminent the person's social class. cf. Dorothy Whitelock: *The Beginnings of English Society*, pp. 39-47 and 83-6.

<sup>9</sup>Note the references to "the men of Kent" etc. in the later entries of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

<sup>10</sup>North-eastern and middle-eastern England, so often under the control of the Danes that its people were more familiar with Danish law and custom than with Anglo-Saxon.

<sup>11</sup>According to *Berkshire Domesday*, each unit had to present the chosen man with the necessary armour and give him 4/- for his keep. cf. C. Hollister, op. cit., pp. 43-4.

- <sup>12</sup>Service directly to the king and not to the immediate lord.
- <sup>13</sup>Barnstaple, Lidford and Totnes in Devonshire combined to produce one warrior, despite their geographical separateness.
- <sup>14</sup>Do not be put off by R. Glover's article: *English Warfare in 1066*, which is a master of surmise. And Snorri Sturlusson's *Heimskringla* was written in the 13th Century. It can, therefore, not be taken as an authoritative account of an 11th Century battle.
- <sup>15</sup>See J. Clapham's article: *The Horsing of the Danes*.
- <sup>16</sup>*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, A.D. 973, col. D. Capital letters my own.
- <sup>17</sup>Op. cit., CH.VI.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 111.
- <sup>19</sup>A "hundred" is the name given to the basic judicial and administrative unit of Anglo-Saxon society. See W. O. Ault: *Europe in the Middle Ages*, pp. 295-6.
- <sup>20</sup>Whose existence is borne out by an 11th Century document of the Bishop of Sherborne complaining that he could not fulfil his shipscot obligation. cf. *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 483.
- <sup>21</sup>J. H. Round: *Feudal England*, pp. 552 ff.
- <sup>22</sup>Op. cit., pp. 122-3.
- <sup>23</sup>*Early Norman Castles*, Chs. 1 and 2.
- <sup>24</sup>For a summation of opinions about this celebrated case: "The Triple Hundred of Oswaldslaw", see C. Hollister, op. cit., pp. 98 ff.
- <sup>25</sup>A "sokeman" is a free-man who is not of noble or exalted birth.
- <sup>26</sup>The word "feudal" comes from the Latin "foedum" which means "a fief". From this it is reasonable to conclude that the fief was the basic pillar of the Feudal System. No-one doubts that the system itself originated in Northern France, where land was given *in return* for military service, and not, as in Anglo-Saxon England, where the person served because he *happened to inhabit* a certain piece of land. See Lynn White Jnr.: *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, in this respect. Furthermore, all agree that the Knight, as well as the Fief was imported into England by the Normans. Thus, to talk of a pre-Norman Feudal System existing in an England that had neither the fief, nor the mounted knight nor the castle is to read into the Anglo-Saxon system a parity with Normandy which did not exist, no matter how alike the two seemed on the surface.
- <sup>27</sup>For example, the Archbishopric of Canterbury and the Abbey of Peterborough had an original quota of 60 knights each. Interestingly, ecclesiastical fiefs accounted for 13% of the whole "servitia debita" (total number of knights in the country). See J. H. Round, op. cit., p. 252.
- <sup>28</sup>*Warfare in England 1066-1189*, p. 266.
- <sup>29</sup>*The Military Organization of Norman England*, p. 188.
- <sup>30</sup>*The First Century of English Feudalism*.
- <sup>31</sup>Mounted service to the lord on occasions other than those of a royal summons to the feudal host; very similar, in fact, to the French "chevauchée" (for which see F. Ganshof: *Feudalism*, p. 88).
- <sup>32</sup>Note the similarity to the Anglo-Saxon Select Fyrd here; an example of some fortunate continuity between the old and the new.
- <sup>33</sup>*The Metrical Chronicle of Jordan Fantosme*, Richard Howlett, ed.
- <sup>34</sup>J. Beeler, op. cit., p. 282.
- <sup>35</sup>W. L. Warren: *King John*, p. 263.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid, p. 118; Ralph of Coggeshall: *Chronicon Anglicanum*, p. 167.
- <sup>37</sup>An early example of what is now known as the problem of Conflicting Interests. Unless he came from the Royal Demesne, a knight had two lords: his immediate lord who had enfeoffed him, and the king, his liege-lord. If these two were on opposite sides, theoretically at least the knight was in a very difficult position. In fact, most seemed to follow the former, who was, after all, the person on whom a knight immediately depended.
- <sup>38</sup>Serjeanty tenants did not have exclusively military duties. Butlers, stablers, blacksmiths, clerks—in fact, a great many manorial servants of all descriptions—held by this tenure. Military serjeanty was but one aspect of the tenure.
- <sup>39</sup>Op. cit., pp. 129 ff.

<sup>40</sup>*Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England*, pp. 5 ff.

<sup>41</sup>Op. cit., pp. 120 ff.

<sup>42</sup>Who, according to Marc Bloch, holds a tenement which is half-fief, half-villain; in other words, a status more lowly than the knight's but more eminent than that of the average sokeman. *Feudal Society*, vol. 1, p. 177.

<sup>43</sup>An "aid" is a monetary gift due to the king from his vassals at four certain times: on the knighting of the king's eldest son, the marriage of his eldest daughter, when the king was being held to ransom, and at a time of extraordinary danger to the country. This last fell away in 1215—the barons probably considered that the king had been using it as an excuse for extortion. *Magna Carta*, Cl. 12, in *A Documentary History of England*, J. Bagley & P. Rowley ed. p. 103.

<sup>44</sup>Escheatment was a process whereby the king took over an estate whose owner had died without leaving an heir.

<sup>45</sup>From the evidence of the Pipe Rolls, wherein a mounted serjeant's wage tends to be half that of a knight's. See A. L. Poole: *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 96. However, this was not so in all cases and no dogmatic conclusion can be made. A mounted serjeant was but one type of military serjeant.

<sup>46</sup>Op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>47</sup>"Scutage" is a payment made in lieu of actual "service d'host". See pp. 53 and 54 of this essay.

<sup>48</sup>cf. Assize Roll no. 802: "per octo dies ad custos suos proprios . . ."

<sup>49</sup>Op. cit., CH. I.

<sup>50</sup>W. Stubbs: *Select Charters*, p. 201.

<sup>51</sup>W. Morris: *A Mention of Scutage in 1100*", pp. 45-6.

<sup>52</sup>C. Hollister, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 203-4.

<sup>54</sup>*Feudal England*, pp. 270 ff.

<sup>55</sup>Op. cit., CH. VII

<sup>56</sup>*Feudal Monarchy*, p. 143. Petit-Dutaillis is possibly hasty in making this wage applicable throughout Henry II's long reign.

<sup>57</sup>Cited by J. Beeler, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>58</sup>*De Gestis Regum*, ii, p. 368.

<sup>59</sup>Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vol. iv, p. 229.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 455-64. F. Lot comes to some significant conclusions on military tactics from this battle. See: *L'Art Militaire*, i, pp. 318-9.

<sup>61</sup>Besides England and (theoretically) Wales and Ireland, Henry was lord of Normandy, Maine, Anjou (hence the name: Angevin Empire), Touraine and Aquitaine; holding more land in France than the French king.

<sup>62</sup>Those of France and Scotland.

<sup>63</sup>*Historia Rerum Anglicanum*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, etc.* vol. i pp. 160, ff.

<sup>64</sup>*Chronica*, vol. ii, pp. 50, ff.

<sup>65</sup>Jordan Fantosme, op. cit., pp. 290, ff.

<sup>66</sup>Op. cit., Part 3, CH. 2.

<sup>67</sup>Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>68</sup>T. Rymer: *Foedera*, I, i, pp. 22-3.

<sup>69</sup>For a description of which see: Jordan Fantosme, op. cit., pp. 310, ff.

<sup>70</sup>See plates 1, 4, 14, 23, 24, 26 and 28 in *The Bayeux Tapestry*.

<sup>71</sup>Cf. R. Allen Brown: *English Castles*, plates 19 and 36 respectively.

<sup>72</sup>Figures taken from R. Allen Brown: *Royal Castle-Building in England*.

<sup>73</sup>C. Hollister, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>75</sup>Jordan Fantosme, op. cit., pp. 244-8.

<sup>76</sup>*Red Book of the Exchequer*, ii, pp. 716-7; as quoted in: C. Hollister, op. cit., pp. 150-1.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>78</sup>*From Alfred to Henry III*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>79</sup>Mining was a common method of attempting to penetrate a castle's defences. The foundations would be tunnelled in a vulnerable spot, a fire would be started

and the resultant flames would engulf the foundations, bringing a section of the wall crashing down. See: R. Allen Brown, *English Castles*, 148-9, 158-9, 161, ff.

<sup>80</sup>For Tinchebrai see n.59; for the Battle of the Standard see Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 264 and F. Lot, op. cit., pp. 286-7.

<sup>81</sup>Op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>82</sup>W. Stubbs, *Select Charters*, p. 154.

<sup>83</sup>Jordan Fantosme, op. cit., p. 294.

<sup>84</sup>Op. cit., p. 268, where he stresses that the neval obligations of the Cinque Ports were continued into Norman times, but no other.

<sup>85</sup>J. Beeler, for one, makes a special point of emphasising that the number 60,000 when met in the chronicles of the 1173-4 rebellions, must be taken merely as signifying "a very large force". No army could have been anywhere near this size. For an excellent introduction into the virtues and vices of chronicle writing, see: R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, Chs. VII-X, J. Beeler, op. cit., C. Hollister, op. cit., W. J. Warren, op. cit., Ch. I, and V. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*; and, of course, the 11th and 12th Century chronicles themselves.

<sup>86</sup>Op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>87</sup>Op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>88</sup>See pp. 49 and 50 of this essay.

<sup>89</sup>For example, the possible connection between the Anglo-Saxon "ward-penny" system and post-Conquest castle-guard service commutation is discussed by C. Hollister, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>90</sup>With the possible exception of King Stephen. Even he, however, contrived to keep his crown for 20 years and end his days naturally. An excellent study of this monarch and his reign has recently been published. See: R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*.

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# HOMER AND HISTORY: THE BACKGROUND TO THE TROJAN WAR

by G. H. A. CHAPMAN

My purpose is to outline the main sources of historical evidence which have encouraged most, if not all, modern scholars to regard Homer's story of the siege and capture of Troy as based upon an actual historical event. We shall see that the problem is not so much whether a city called Troy was actually destroyed at roughly the right time in early Greek history, as whether its destruction was the result of an expedition from mainland Greece, or indeed, whether Greeks were involved at all.

There is considerable dispute about the extent to which we can rely on Homer's historical integrity, and after all, his purpose was primarily to entertain. (For convenience let us regard 'Homer' as the single author of the Homeric poems, since the question of multiple authorship is not strictly relevant). The mere fact that it was Homer who set historians and archaeologists on the trail of ancient Troy and Mycenae is no guarantee of the historical accuracy of the *Iliad* as a whole or in detail. On the contrary there are many instances where no-one would claim that the poet was trying to give accurate information, and some historians have gone so far as to deny any basic historical truth behind his account of the war between the Greeks and the Trojans. Clearly we must look elsewhere for evidence, assess it in its own right, and not interpret it in the light of what may itself be suspect—that is, Homer's story and the old Greek traditions. There may, of course, come a time when we can throw Homer into the scale, but this ought to be at the end rather than at the beginning of the inquiry.

Let me say right at the outset that there is neither proof nor disproof of the capture of Troy by the Greeks, but a certain amount of circumstantial evidence will come to light which you are at liberty to accept or reject; and eventually you will be able to decide in your own minds whether—to cut a long story short—Homer got the venue correct but the teams wrong, so to speak. At least one modern historian argues from parallels in other more recent epic poetry that the poet may have introduced into Greek tradition an event completely alien to Greek history. Troy may indeed have fallen after a memorable siege, he says, but the Greeks had no business there and in fact were only present in the later and fanciful imagination of

Greek court poets who chose to heroise their listeners' ancestors. Such a theory would be more convincing if there existed no evidence of Greek contact with Troy, and if more likely aggressors could be found—but let us examine what evidence we have.

My aim will be to use the information at our disposal to establish three basic historical facts:

- (a) that there was a city of Troy in Asia Minor, whose site has been discovered, and which was destroyed during the 13th century B.C.
- (b) that the city was known and accessible to mainland Greeks.
- (c) that there were occasions on which a militant Greek force operated along the coast of Asia Minor.

If these three facts are established beyond reasonable doubt, we shall be able to conclude, quite independently of Homer that there is no reason why the Greeks should not have been responsible for the destruction of Troy; and that is about as far as we can safely go, though I imagine most of us will want to turn at last to Homer for what appears to be striking confirmation of an otherwise quite plausible theory. It is at this stage that we shall be committed to an 'act of faith' in the basic truth behind the Homeric story, but such credulity will not seem unreasonable, I suggest, especially in view of the absence of any more plausible theory.

We are to a certain extent at the mercy of archaeologists concerning the location and excavation of the site of ancient Troy. To the best of my knowledge, however, none of the evidence which I am about to describe is seriously questioned by historians or indeed by archaeologists themselves, though there is, of course, scope for different interpretations of the various archaeological findings.

The story of the finding and excavation of Troy by Heinrich Schliemann is well known. In fact more important work has been done this century by American archaeologists, and especially the team led by Professor Blegen, whose findings were published as recently as 1962. A brief summary in general terms will not be out of place.

The site revealed nine distinct strata marking nine stages in the city's development from the Early Bronze Age, that is from about 3000 B.C., down to Roman times. The earliest settlement has been called Troy I, and the successive cities are numbered in order, Troy VII being divided into periods (a) and (b). Of the cities which were roughly contemporary with the mainland Greek civilisation, centred at Mycenae, both Troy VI and Troy VII were wealthy, powerful and well fortified. Both were destroyed by outside agency—that is not merely by accidental fire. Both imported large quantities of Mycenaean pottery, and were therefore apparently in contact with

Mycenaean Greeks. Since it is no longer seriously doubted that the site discovered at Hissarlik is, in fact, the actual site of ancient Troy—just as the site of Mycenae is beyond dispute—we may safely examine some of the evidence more closely.

The walled fortification of Troy VI, though notable for its reinforced towers, was never completed. Houses outside the walls were occupied down to the time of its destruction and there is no sign of a mass influx to within the city walls which might have indicated the presence of an attacking force. In fact the destruction of Troy VI is attributed to earthquake in about 1300 B.C., as we shall see when we come to discuss the question of chronology.

Troy VIIa was rebuilt from the ruins of Troy VI with no sign of a break in continuity, or a change in culture which might have resulted from occupation by an outside force. The houses outside the walls were not reoccupied and it may be that the earthquake disaster had aroused the interest of Troy's enemies, who looked greedily at the available plunder. It may also be, of course, that the Mycenaeans were among the lookers-on. Certainly from about 1250 onwards there are signs of overcrowding within the city, and the presence of abnormally large numbers of storage-jars inside houses suggests that supplies of food and liquid were being stored in bulk. From this one might reasonably infer the existence of an external threat to safety. Eventually Troy VIIa was destroyed by fire and several individuals seem to have met untimely ends since unburied human bones were found in the street and in two of the houses; a fact which suggests that the deceased had not died under entirely normal circumstances.

Since I have already found it necessary to mention one or two approximate dates it would be as well to examine the system of chronology which makes even these dates possible, and then we may be justified in regarding the first basic fact as established: namely that there was a city of Troy in Asia Minor, which was destroyed in or shortly after the 13th century B.C.

The study of the style, development and relative chronology of pottery, bronze-work and other non-perishable material has reached a remarkable degree of refinement. Decorated pottery forms the hard core of the archaeologists' subject-matter, because fired clay, although it is breakable, is virtually indestructible. Since the pieces of such pottery were to all intents and purposes useless they were left lying around or were collected and dumped. Thus they remained to be examined by 20th century archaeologists. In fact where the evidence is most abundant, that is for the 6th and 7th centuries B.C., not only can dates be assigned, but regional studies can lead to the attribution of pottery to particular cities, and even to individual workshops, painters and potters.

The pottery of the period which concerns us is that of the third and final stage in the development of Mycenaean pottery; this stage has been further sub-divided into sections (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*), and I shall refer to them as Mycenaean IIIa, IIIb and IIIc. Early Greek pottery has been found in Egypt in the same context as remains of the better attested Egyptian dynasties, and from such cross references as these supply, rough dates have been assigned to the above-mentioned periods of Mycenaean pottery, as follows:

Myc. IIIa roughly 1400-1300 B.C.

Myc. IIIb roughly 1300-1230 B.C.

Myc. IIIc roughly 1230-1150 B.C.

It goes without saying, of course, that pottery periods are at best only a rough guide; the periods of transition are especially difficult to date since new styles were obviously introduced only gradually. There is however a notable unanimity among archaeologists today concerning the distinguishing features of successive styles; and I propose to accept their word for it.

Now, to apply this basic chronological pattern to the site of Troy, we are able to link the various cities with corresponding periods of Greek pottery. Fortunately Mycenaean pottery found its way to far corners of the Mediterranean, and not least to Troy. A great many fragments of Mycenaean pottery were found in the stratum of Troy VI; a fact which encouraged early archaeologists to identify it as Homer's Troy. This equation has more recently been revised, especially since the upper level of Troy VI has revealed huge masses of stone fallen from the upper part of the fortification, and Professor Blegen believes that the debris is far too extensive to have been thrown down by human agency. He concludes that the end of Troy VI was brought about by a severe earthquake.

Troy VI, then, was destroyed, probably by earthquake, at a time when Myc. IIIb pottery was beginning to replace IIIa, so the destruction can be roughly dated 1300. In Troy VIIa pottery of type Myc. IIIb predominates, and there is a chance that some IIIc was also present. Regrettably, because of a certain amount of careless excavation at the outset, there is a chance that some pieces of Myc. IIIc pottery were dislodged from a higher level. For this reason some archaeologists believe that Troy VII had been destroyed before the transition to Myc. IIIc had begun. Blegen in fact puts its destruction at about 1250; but it has been pointed out that the pottery of the reoccupied site was almost exclusively IIIc, which would indicate that the transition took place soon after Troy VIIa's destruction. Thus we may be able to date the event slightly later, that is between 1250 and 1230 B.C. The general conclusion of Professor Blegen concerning Troy VIIa was as follows:

We believe that Troy VIIa has yielded actual evidence showing that the town was subjected to siege, capture and destruction by hostile forces at some time in the general period assigned by Greek tradition to the Trojan War, and that it may safely be identified as the Troy of Priam and Homer. (Troy vol. IV p. 13).

As a matter of fact ancient authorities vary considerably in their dating of the fall of Troy, and the traditional date, most widely accepted in school books today, is no more likely to be correct than a number of others. Eratosthenes, who lived in the 3rd century B.C. is quoted by later authors as having dated the fall of Troy to 1184. This date was almost certainly arrived at by a calculation of generations between the author's own time and the event in question. This process is probably to be seen more clearly in another ancient source, the *Marmor Parium* or *Parian Chronicle*. The dates given to historical events on this document all appear to be relative to the year 264 B.C., when the list of dates was compiled. The *Parian Chronicle* dates the fall of Troy to 1209 B.C., that is 945 years before the author's time; but since the ancients often reckoned on a figure of 35 years per generation, this seemingly precise date need be no more than the result of taking the fall of Troy to have occurred 27 generations before the author's time ( $27 \times 35 = 945$  years). The calculation was probably based upon a list of genealogies which placed Agamemnon, or some supposed contemporary of his, 27 generations earlier. Herodotus, probably by the same process, implies a date nearer 1250 for the fall of Troy.

Thus our suggested date of 1250-30 for the destruction of Troy need not clash with the estimates, rough as they are, of ancient authorities; and we must accept the futility of attempting to fix the event to any given year.

In discussing the chronological problem, we have in passing gone most of the way to establishing the second of our basic facts: namely that the city of Troy was known and accessible to the mainland Greeks. The large quantity of Mycenaean pottery which was imported into Troy, while it may have passed through Greek settlements on the coast of Asia Minor, came directly from the mainland and was certainly not the result of local imitation. Moreover the occurrence of Mycenaean pottery as far afield as Syria and Egypt can leave us in no doubt that the city of Troy, some four miles from the coast of the entrance to the Hellespont, was eminently accessible to Mycenaean traders. In fact this clear evidence of friendly trade relations has been used by some to doubt the tradition of the Trojan War on the grounds that there appears to have been no motive for the Greek attack. Indeed the motive for the invasion, if there was an

invasion, is one of the most difficult problems, since most historians are, rather unromantically, not inclined to believe in the abduction of Helen and subsequent launching of a thousand ships and so on. However it appears quite plausible that, even if the errant wife of Menelaus did not reach Troy, other mainland Greeks, probably using Mycenaean outposts such as Miletus, Rhodes and possibly Lesbos, as bases were able to visit Troy or at least contact the Trojans for peaceful purposes or otherwise. The mere fact that Troy was within range, regardless of whether Greeks can be shown to have visited the city, is quite sufficient for our purposes so far.

For more evidence of the Greeks in Asia Minor, we must look elsewhere. To the east of Asia Minor, in central and eastern Anatolia the kingdom of the Hittites flourished from the 19th to the end of the 13th century B.C. The geographical boundaries of the various peoples of western Asia Minor are notoriously hard to fix in this period. It is not clear how far west for example the Hittite kingdom stretched, but it does seem to fall considerably short of the coast. However through the greater, and certainly later, part of the era of Hittite domination of Anatolia, we can assume that such people as did occupy the area between the Hittites and the sea were in some degree subject to them, or at least treated them with the utmost respect. Thus when the nations of Arzawa and Assuva appear in Hittite records, they are in revolt somewhere in the west of Asia Minor and are duly crushed. Clearly the Hittites regarded them as something less than equals.

Hittite expansion in the east and south had brought them into contact and conflict with the Egyptians, and led to a long-drawn-out struggle over the territory of Syria and Palestine, but by about 1270 there existed an uneasy peace between the Hittites and Egyptians in this quarter. It is from this time that events in the west claim the attention of Hittite kings; these events are fortunately recorded, but in varying degrees of detail, in the royal Hittite chronicles.

Monuments and tablets containing Hittite writing in either hieroglyphic or cuneiform style have been found over wide areas of Anatolia. Some 10,000 cuneiform tablets alone were found on the site of the Hittite capital, Hattushash, better known perhaps as Boghazkooy. These were translated by about 1930, and turned out to be the royal archives. It is to these that we must turn for what may be more evidence of the Greeks in Asia Minor. It must be admitted that the fragmentary state of many tablets left much room for conjecture, but the general interpretation of the better preserved passages is agreed. The proper names in the texts give most cause for excitement and dispute. They are normally represented transliterated into the modern Turkish alphabet, and some of them appear below with

their possible Greek equivalents :

Ahhiyawa—Achaëa (mainland Greece ?)

Millawanda—Miletus

Lazpaz—Lesbos

Taruisa—Troy

Wilusiya—Ilios

Aleksandus—Alexander

Assuwa—Asia

Lukka—Lycia

cf. also Atarrysias—Atreus ?

Tawagalawas—Eteuocleues—Eteocles ?

By far the most important and controversial of these names is that of the land called Ahhiyawa. The point, quite simply, is whether this is the Greek Achaëa, that is the territory of the Mycenaean Greeks, or not. Even if the equation is linguistically sound, did the Hittites when they referred to men from Ahhiyawa mean mainland Greeks or their kinsmen occupying sites on the coast of Asia Minor ? The balance of probability favours the hypothesis that the people of Ahhiyawa were Greek, but controversy still rages over the question of the locality of Ahhiyawa; whether it is overseas or in Asia Minor itself. Certainly no non-Greek rival claimants have appeared so far, and the similarity of names seems to be more than mere coincidence. Moreover it is not wishful thinking, I hope, to notice that the people of Ahhiyawa where they appear in Hittite records, behave in a manner well suited to a nation which had close contact with the powerful kingdoms of the East and yet was sufficiently strong herself to command respect from them. Thus even without knowledge of the Homeric tradition one might be strongly inclined to suppose that the land of Ahhiyawa was mainland Greece, while admitting that for the Hittites 'men of Ahhiyawa' need not mean more than 'Greeks', whether from abroad or not; that is, that from the internal evidence of the Hittite records there is no way of telling the difference between Greeks of the mainland and Greeks living on the coast of Asia Minor.

If then the Greeks are represented in Hittite royal chronicles, we shall be able to build up the circumstantial evidence quite considerably, and several opportunities for their capture of Troy will appear. The time has come therefore to examine what the Hittite records have to say about Ahhiyawa. Once again we have to rely on cross-reference to Egyptian kings for a chronological framework (for example Suppiluliumas, the first king to mention Ahhiyawa as far as we know, died four years after Tutankhamun), but all dates are bound to be approximate, though this need not necessarily worry us.



In about 1350 Suppiluliumas banished someone, perhaps his wife, to the land of Ahhiyawa. We can perhaps infer fairly friendly relations between the two countries, since the exile might have stirred up trouble; but we are hardly at liberty to draw any conclusion about the location of Ahhiyawa, except perhaps that, from the king's point of view, the farther the better.

Mursillis II, c.1335, in his annals mentions a connection between Ahhiyawa and a town called Millawanda; later we shall see that someone escapes from Millawanda by sea. Unfortunately it is not clear whether Ahhiyawa is overseas from Millawanda, since the tablet is mutilated after an apparent reference to a ship. Clearly, Millawanda is on the coast but the mere mention of a ship tells us nothing about the locality of Ahhiyawa, since Ahhiyawa might simply have been the district of which Millawanda was the chief port. It is not impossible that Millawanda was none other than Miletus, which was an important Mycenaean centre and remained under the influence, if not direct control of the Mycenaeans until the end of the 13th century. Later in his reign Mursillis had the misfortune to fall ill and so serious did the matter seem that the gods of the Hittites could not manage the crisis alone. Mursillis accordingly summoned the gods of Ahhiyawa and of Lazpaz to his assistance. Here we have more evidence of friendly relations between the countries, since even in extremities the king is hardly likely to have summoned hostile deities. Let us now take a further step with our linguistic equations and make Lazpaz Lesbos, which admittedly seems almost too good to be true; now we have a third site which we know to have been under Greek control some time in its early history, that is in pre-Homeric times, but as yet no Mycenaean pottery to my knowledge, has been identified on the island. This latest equation is obviously less well substantiated, but, in fact, Lesbos is of little importance for our present purposes.

At about this time, perhaps a little later, the Hittite king found it necessary to write a famous letter of complaint to the king of Ahhiyawa. The particular Hittite king is not mentioned but reference to other contemporary figures, coupled with the fact that the king was admitted to be an old man at the time, fix the date of composition at the end of the reign of either Mursillis II himself, or of his successor Muwatallis, that is, between 1310 and 1280. (The dates of the relevant kings are as follows:

Suppiluliumas	1375-1335 B.C.
Arnuwandas III	1335-1334
Mursillis II	1334-1306
Muwatallis	1306-1282
Urhi-Teshub	1282-1275

Hattusilis III	1275-1250
Tudhaliyas IV	1250-1220
Arnuwandas IV	1220-1190)

To return to the letter: there are two themes within the one letter. Firstly there is the complaint about the 'terrorist' activities of a man operating from Millawanda; secondly, there is reference to an earlier diplomatic incident which the king seems to feel may have led to ill-feeling between the two nations. The king complains that a certain Piyameradus, once a high-ranking Hittite subject, had turned pirate and was raiding Lukka (Lycia?) on the borders of Hittite territory, using Millawanda as a base. Millawanda thus appears to have been outside Hittite control, but under the control or influence of the king of Ahhiyawa, who was duly requested to extradite Piyameradus. The turmoil in Lukka had been caused by an earlier incident involving a relative of the king of Ahhiyawa called Tawagalawas. (Incidentally one ingenious French scholar has managed with judicious use of the old Greek digamma—corresponding roughly to 'w'—to see the Greek name Eteocles—Etwoclewes—in 'Tawagalawas'!) He had been summoned by the people of Lukka from Millawanda, and after establishing himself as king of a small vassal state had been duly recognised by the Hittite king. From this it is clear that Lukka was a buffer-state or no-man's land between the Hittite kingdom and the coastal district; and that the Hittites are concerned only that it should enjoy internal peace while recognising Hittite authority. However there had been an incident between Tawagalawas and the king; Tawagalawas had been insulted and withdrew leaving the area to its present internal disorder, which Piyameradus was now exploiting. The Hittite king, thus, in complaining about the activity of Piyameradus had found it expedient to explain his side of the Tawagalawas incident since the latter was of course of some standing, being related to the king of Ahhiyawa himself. It appears that this tactful approach paid off, because the king of Ahhiyawa agreed to hand over Piyameradus, and the Hittites settled affairs in Lukka to their satisfaction.

The story did not end quite there, however, because when the king of the Hittites reached Millawanda, Piyameradus had escaped by sea. This fact was the subject of a further written complaint and this fact alone suggests that wherever the king of Ahhiyawa was, he was not in Millawanda itself. This time the Hittite king offered a hostage as surety for the safety of Piyameradus; clearly it was now a matter of saving face since he had no intention of executing the culprit, who may well have been a man of considerable importance in Millawanda. The hostage was to be the messenger, who was no mere courier, but had been the royal groom since the king's boyhood

and had ridden out not only with the king, but with the brother of the king of Ahhiyawa and with Tawagalawas! Here, then, is certain evidence of intimate connections between the two royal families. It might then be suggested that Ahhiyawa was close by, but note that the king himself had not been present, and there is no need to suppose that his brother and Tawagalawas had come from any farther away than Millawanda; nor need we be unduly surprised to find members of the Mycenaean royal family at Millawanda. The town may even have been ruled by a Mycenaean noble, if not the king's brother himself. One could get quite carried away on this line of thought and transfer the whole rape of Helen from Sparta to Miletus, since the Trojan Paris has rather more excuse to be visiting Mycenaean royalty in Asia Minor than in the Peloponnese. Naturally the wife of Menelaus would be rather more susceptible to foreign charm in this outpost of the empire, and so on; but this is all guesswork since it is probably impossible to unravel history and legend in the Helen story. We cannot assume that any of Homer's characters are real historical figures, so it is fanciful in the extreme to imagine that Agamemnon is the king of Ahhiyawa and Menelaus his brother temporary regent of Miletus. But if we set aside our Homeric heroes and their romances, a general hypothesis of a sounder historical nature may emerge. That is, that the mainland Greeks may have been embroiled in political and military enterprises by their kinsmen in Asia Minor. We have already seen the diplomatic side of such an involvement in the Tawagalawas letter. We know that Tawagalawas was of royal descent; what more natural than that he or someone like him should call up the big guns, so to speak, from back home, when a major operation, like perhaps the conquest of Troy, was undertaken?

To return to the Tawagalawas letter: the tenor of the letter is respectful and to a certain extent conciliatory. The Hittite king believes that his opposite number will bow to reason and makes no attempt to threaten or to pull rank—a fact which would suggest that Ahhiyawa was not one of the smaller coastal districts of Asia Minor. Indeed the king of Ahhiyawa seems to be remote in that the events in Lukka are explained to him in detail as though he may not be aware of them; besides, his control at Millawanda seems to be less than complete, since he is asked to assert his authority (and fails, incidentally) in a way which suggests that he is not king *at* Millawanda. Finally the respect with which he is treated coupled with the reference to friendship between the two royal families seem to put the king of Ahhiyawa on very much the same level as the Hittite king. There seems to be no other nation than Mycenaean Greece which could claim such a status at this time. Professor Page

has suggested Rhodes as a possible candidate, but the island seems too close, too vulnerable and has not revealed evidence of being sufficiently developed to rate with the Hittite empire at such an early date.

Eventually the Hittite king succeeded in bringing Piyameradus to justice as appears in a subsequent letter. This letter also shows that at some time not long after the Tawagalawas affair, Millawanda became a subject state to the Hittites early in the first half of the 13th century. Perhaps the king of Ahhiyawa had acknowledged Hittite supremacy in this part of the world, since his control and influence at Millawanda was at best rather tenuous. This need not mean that the ruler of Millawanda was no longer a Mycenaean Greek or even a member of the royal family, since we have seen that Tawagalawas was prepared, albeit for a short while, to play a similar role in Lukka. In fact we need see no direct Hittite control in Millawanda, merely the vague acknowledgement of Hittite supremacy as was probably shown by most of the border territories. That there was no antagonism between the two nations is shown by the record of gifts received by Hattusilis from the king of Ahhiyawa between 1275 and 1250.

Thus far the relations between the Hittites and the people of Ahhiyawa have been friendly. From now on the Hittite kingdom comes under pressure from various quarters, and in the turmoil of the succeeding years the king of Ahhiyawa becomes more aggressive in Asia Minor. More significantly from our point of view, we are now within the span of years reasonably suggested to have witnessed the destruction of Troy VIIa by persons as yet (for the sake of argument) unknown.

Tuthalijas IV who came to power c.1250 recorded the presence for the first time of the king of Ahhiyawa in person with his army. A fact which is surely significant if we believe, as we have every reason to believe, that he was not merely some petty local ruler. Indeed to my mind we now come to the final and conclusive proof of the status of the king of Ahhiyawa, showing once and for all that we are dealing with the king of Mycenaean Greece. Tuthalijas gives a list of kings of equal rank to himself; here we find the king of Ahhiyawa, but this is not so surprising, perhaps, as the company he keeps. There are only three other kings on the list, the kings of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria—no petty chieftains here! The issue has been complicated for some by the fact that the name of Ahhiyawa has been partially erased and that the erasure seems to have been deliberate. Surely no-one can imagine that its original inclusion was a mistake—a sort of typist's error? Much more likely that the name was erased after a clash of interests—perhaps the breakaway of Millawanda—when

diplomatic relations had been broken off; and we have already seen that the king of Ahhiyawa was active with his army in Asia Minor itself in the reign of Tuthaliyas.

Also recorded in this reign is the presence of ships of Ahhiyawa along the Syrian Coast, although the king himself withdrew from the Land of the River Seha which was under the control of Arzawa— itself a Hittite dependency in South West Asia Minor. This incursion seems to be similar to the earlier activities of Tawagalawas and Piyameradus, and may have been thwarted by the Hittite army itself. We have, by the way, shown the third and final piece of circumstantial evidence which it was necessary to establish; namely that there were occasions, of which this is the first, when a militant Greek force was present in Asia Minor. If then it is agreed that the king of Mycenaean Greece was campaigning in Asia Minor shortly after 1250, there is no reason why at some time or other he could not have besieged and captured Troy. It is at about this time, indeed, that we may have a reference to Troy itself in the Hittite records. Tuthaliyas put down a revolution of Arzawa and Assuva which were probably to the North West of Lukka. The individual towns of Assuva are listed, and the identifiable names suggest that the towns are named in order of proximity to the Hittite kingdom. The last of these and therefore the most distant is Taruisa, moreover the name before Taruisa is Wilusiya which has in turn been likened to the Homeric Ilios. The coincidences build up, since the king of Wilusiya when it was mentioned earlier in the reign of Muwatallis was Aleksandus, which gives us a striking parallel with the Homeric Alexander (alias Paris) prince of Ilios. If then Troy was directly involved in this rebellion which was eventually crushed, we have two possibilities; either the Hittites besieged and captured Troy, or the Greeks or someone else took advantage of her temporary weakness to plunder her famous riches.

Towards the end of the reign there was further trouble for Tuthaliyas in the west and again Ahhiyawa is involved. Attarysias, a man of Ahhiyawa, had driven out a Hittite vassal, Maduwatash, from an unnamed territory. Maduwatash was given land closer to the Hittites but Attarysias pursued him even there until the Hittite army intervened. Before we get too excited over the similarity between Attarysias and the Greek name Atreus we might note that the man in question is nowhere called king of Ahhiyawa. It is, however, unlikely that he was operating without the king's knowledge. It is also significant that there were no complaints or retaliations this time, and the last we hear of Attarysias is in the reign of the next king, Arnuwandash, when he has joined forces with his old enemy Maduwatash to attack another Hittite dependency. This too is the last we hear of Ahhiyawa,

but it is not impossible that Troy could have fallen at some stage in the skirmishing between Attarysias and his neighbours, although the area of these operations is entirely unknown.

In Egyptian records, finally, there occurs mention of the Achiwasha, a nation which joined with the 'peoples of the sea' to invade Egypt in 1219. It ought not to be beyond the bounds of credibility to identify these invaders with the Mycenaean Greeks. In the next campaign they are not mentioned, but it is a little fanciful to guess that they must have been besieging Troy at the time. In 1174 Rameses III met and defeated at great loss to himself a mass movement of whole nations against Egypt, and this is not the last occasion when, in the turmoil of war and migration, Troy could have been destroyed by foreign invaders *and* these invaders could have been mainland Greeks. However we cannot downdate the destruction of Troy VIIa on present evidence to later than 1200, and so any attempt to attribute its fall to Dorian invaders or Northern marauders who came southwards in the two succeeding centuries is highly conjectural and surely unnecessary.

Admittedly it is useful to examine an accepted tradition like the Homeric Story, in a critical light, but to deny it basic historical truth seems to be to ignore a great wealth of independent evidence. We have done our best to put the Homeric tradition into the background, but there must come a stage when we can say that since all these things are so and since we have the tradition recorded by Homer, we see no reason to disbelieve the basic historical fact of the siege and capture of Troy by Mycenaean Greeks.

The time has come to try to summarise the whole question and to point out areas where there still might exist reasonable doubt. I hope it is not over rash to claim that our first two facts have been established; that there was a city of Troy in Asia minor, that it has been correctly located, and that one of the cities on this site was destroyed during the 13th century B.C.; that the city was known and accessible to the mainland Greeks is proved by the mere presence of Mycenaean pottery in Troy VI and VIIa, but to my mind the evidence of the Hittite documents is at least as important. The third fact stands or falls with the equation of Ahhiyawa and mainland Greece in these documents; but I suggest that the presence of a militant Greek force in the vicinity of Troy has been shown beyond any reasonable doubt.

Finally let us say a few words about the Homeric tradition in the light of external evidence. Some people claim that if our incomplete archaeological evidence does not accord with Homer in *all* respects, then the tradition must be unhistorical; at least this is the assumption behind arguments based on the fallibility of Homer, the absence of

a plausible motive for the war, and the undoubted tendency of poets to heroise their characters. However, the basic Homeric tradition has some external confirmation, whereas no other theory about the fall of Troy VIIa has. Homer says Troy was sacked, and the archaeological findings fit this story. The position of Mycenae in Greece and its contact with Troy have likewise been confirmed. The Homeric narrative has a continuous history back into Mycenaean times, and must have begun very near the time of the actual events depicted; it is therefore unlikely that the poets would tell tales about great families which the audience would know to be pure invention. The poet must have people and events before he can heroise them!

Thus Homer's basic narrative, even if we disregard the Hittite documents, is confirmed rather than contradicted by outside evidence. The documents are to my mind conclusive, but even if they were not I should see no need to substitute theories of an entirely unprovable nature for a story which is at least partly confirmed.

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