Though Alfred the Great has always been a subject of intense study, the last two decades of the last millennium seem to have produced more books on the famous Anglo-Saxon monarch than the entire previous century. S. Keynes' and M. Lapidge's *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources* (1983) apparently opened the floodgates by making some sources on Alfred's life available in English, and in short order followed Alan Frantzen's *King Alfred* (1986), Alfred P. Smyth's *King Alfred the Great* (1995), David Sturdy's *Alfred the Great* (1995), Richard P. Abels' *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (1998), and finally the book here under review. It is, without doubt, difficult to find something new to say on Alfred after he has been so thoroughly examined by so many outstanding scholars. By concentrating on Alfred's military campaigns, Peddie does find a field that has been left at least partially fallow. He does not entirely neglect Alfred's literary and educational endeavours, but he explores them only to the extent to which they can shed light on his main topic: Alfred, the *Warrior* King. Peddie, for instance, quotes from Alfred's preface to the translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, not to muse about ninth-century manuscript production nor about the choice of texts "most necessary for men to know", but to make the eminently practical point that if Anglo-Saxons in leadership positions could read, they could "be informed in detail, and with accuracy, of [Alfred's] instructions". (161) Improved communication between the king and his underlings, in turn, would provide a speedier, and better co-ordinated response to Danish threats. Within the context of his book, Peddie is right to emphasize the military aspect of Alfred's educational reform.

The book is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1, "Alfred of Wessex", provides a brief biography of Alfred, concentrating on the more contentious stories in Asser, such as the improbability of the older brothers competing with Alfred for the book his mother promised to whoever could first read it, or on young Alfred's two journeys to Rome. Alfred's later life is not discussed in the same detail, for the obvious reason that his later life was consumed by military campaigns, and these are recounted and analyzed in full in chapters 4 to 8.

Chapter 2, "Devils of the Sea", traces the attacks of the Danes on Francia and, after they had been bought off by Charles the Bald, on East Anglia, Northumbria, and Mercia, i.e. roughly the period between 845 and 870. The special merit of this chapter for Anglistics lies in the fact that Peddie looks beyond the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to include Frankish and Danish history to provide the background for the 'Great Army'.

The military strengths and weaknesses of the Danes and Anglo-Saxons respectively are examined in chapter 3, "The Opposing Forces". The strength of the Danes lay in their mobility which was provided by ships on the sea and by horses on land; it lay in their courage and professionalism; and it lay in their tactics, which almost invariably consisted of establishing a stronghold, one that could withstand a siege by the Anglo-Saxon *fyrd*, and raiding the countryside from it. Their weakness lay in the fact that they had to live off the land, and that their troops, if decimated in pitched battle, could not easily be replenished.
The Anglo-Saxons, in contrast, had a much larger number of men to draw on. Because their army, however, congregated only when called together, they lacked the Danes' professionalism, and, because they were primarily farmers, they lacked incentive to pursue or besiege an enemy during periods when the fields needed to be sown or harvested. Moreover, the national fyrd had been called up only infrequently before the attack of the Danes; as a result, the shirefyrd had become the most effective fighting unit, but their enthusiasm for battle waned in proportion to the distance they were away from home. And finally, in the early periods at least, the Anglo-Saxons lacked a navy. In this chapter Peddie also touches on the hotly disputed topic of the size of the Danish army: with good reason he tends to agree with the camp that argues that it should be numbered in thousands rather than in hundreds.

With the opposing forces analysed, Peddie in chapter 4, "Wessex under Siege", has the armies clash at Englefield (West-Saxon victory), Reading (Danish victory), Ashdown (West-Saxon victory), Basing (Danish victory), and Meretun (Danish victory), and in chapter 5, "That Oft-Defeated King", at Chippenham (Danish victory). The exact location of some of these places (e.g. Meretun) cannot be determined. Peddie, however, by examining the geography of Wessex, in particular the roads in existence at that time, as well as the royal strongholds, makes a good case for the most likely advance of the Danish army, and hence for the likely battle-sites. At the same time, he provides a steady commentary on what Alfred could learn from his victories and defeats, especially when he was forced to seek refuge in the stronghold at Athelney.

Alfred finally breaks the Danish stranglehold on Wessex in Chapter 6, "Wessex Reconquered", at the battle of Edington, which Peddie, again with good reason, declares to have been less successful on the battlefield than Asser suggests. Even after the defeat, the Danish army still remained at Chippenham for another year, and the king "bestowed many treasures on them", hardly, Peddie argues, necessary if the slaughter of the Danes was as great as Asser had suggested. Peddie suspects more of a stalemate, with Guthrum realizing that his battle-weary army was confronting a newly energized enemy, and Alfred realizing that the Anglo-Saxon troops with their bad record of siege warfare would find it difficult to dislodge the Danish army from Chippenham. Even if the Danes had not been slaughtered in as large numbers as Asser maintains, however, Alfred's victory at Edington, according to Peddie, did shift the psychological balance in favour of the Anglo-Saxons.

Chapter 7, "Fortress Wessex", and chapter 8, "The Final Campaign", outline Alfred's efforts at building a navy so that he would be able to meet and pursue the enemy at sea, and at denying the Danes mobility as well as food supplies by establishing a string of strongholds, in which food could be stored and whose troops would pose a constant threat to marauding Danes. Moreover, by instituting a rotating period of service, with half his army in service, and half at home, he made it easier for the farmers to tend to their fields. The success of these measures became apparent in 892, when the Danish army returned from Francia, was defeated at Farnham, and subsequently found itself constantly on the defensive. In 896, the Danish army dispersed, and was no longer a threat to Wessex during Alfred's lifetime. Chapter 9, "Warrior King", concludes the book by reviewing and paying tribute to Alfred's military achievements.

Summaries never do full justice to the subject summarized, and many details have perforce been left out of this summary as well. Suffice it to say that Peddie succeeds in the task he sets himself. He may not always achieve new insights, but the synthesis of old material with eminently practical considerations makes this book worthwhile. Peddie's careful examination of the Anglo-Saxon road system is one of these practical considerations. Another is his statistics on the amount of faeces and urine horses produce: 500 horses retained within the cramped quarters of a stronghold, producing a ton of faeces and 280 gallons of urine per day (p. 60), would pose a considerable health risk, and the horses were therefore in all probability not kept in the stronghold. A third is his analysis of the topography: where is the most strategic point to stop the advance of the enemy? That, in conjunction with local tradition, often points to the probable site of a battle which otherwise cannot be localized.

Some of Peddie's assumptions can, and should, be questioned. He argues, for instance, that the Danes on landing in East Anglia "already knew that their need for horses would be met without great difficulty" (33) or that even before landing in Northumbria they had "considerable knowledge of local topography" (34), but he does not say how the Danes acquired this knowledge. Did they have Danish spies in place in Northumbria and East Anglia? Did their traders roam the countryside before the attack and determine the strategically important places? Did they have friends among the Anglo-Saxons who made common cause with them? Or could it be that they had no knowledge in advance, but gained the knowledge as they proceeded? Too many questions are left unanswered here.

Another assumption is that the Danish land army had logistical support from Danish longships, even when the sources do not mention the presence of any such ships. Despite the fact that neither Asser nor the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle have anything to say about a Danish naval presence at Reading in 871, Peddie not only toys with the idea that ships may have been present, but categorically states that Danish "field operations were invariably closely linked to their longships". (88) One can, of course, not rule out the possibility, but such a categorical statement simply cannot be maintained considering the silence of the sources. For the year 871 Asser does mention that "another Viking army came from overseas and attached itself to the band," but this is after the battle of Reading. Since Asser mentions longships appearing after the battle of Reading, would it not be fair to assume that he would have mentioned them before as well if there had been any?

One of the main sources for Peddie's book is Asser's Life of Alfred, which he uses critically, but maybe not critically enough. Peddie is aware of Smyth's King Alfred the Great, but does not attempt to refute his argument that the author of the Life is a tenth-century forger claiming to be 'Asser'. Maybe he feels that the argument against Smyth has already been made, but then he should at least have included a learned note to e.g. Richard P. Abels' Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in
Anglo-Saxon England, whose Appendix does confront Smyth's ideas. As it is, Peddie relies on a source which he himself has to acknowledge as unreliable.

Peddie has added a six-page appendix to his book, which is useful if one wishes to find out about 'horses', 'Roman roads', 'weapons', etc., but provides no help if one looks for Peddie's quotations or analyses of Alfred's literary works. Though Peddie quotes from Alfred's Preface to his translation of Gregory the Great's Pastoral Care, this work cannot be found in the appendix under 'Gregory the Great' nor under 'Alfred', and there are no entries for 'Pastoral Care', nor for 'translation of the Pastoral Care'. And yet the connection between literature and military endeavour is an interesting one.

The book contains 15 maps, 32 illustrations, and 12 colour plates, which are not separately listed. The maps illustrate the topographical features Peddie speaks about (roads, hillsides, rivers), and are therefore integral to the book. And so are most of the black-and-white photos illustrating battle sites, Anglo-Saxon coffins and coffin-lids, various coins, etc., most of which are mentioned in the text. How the colour plates, however, with mostly Victorian illustrations of Alfred and the Danes, illustrate aspects of the book is not immediately clear. The value of the book would not have been lessened if some of the illustrations and most of the colour plates had been omitted.

Despite these few shortcomings, the book is interesting to read and does provide a careful look at Alfred's military campaigns. Peddie is most convincing when he combines the words of the sources with topographical and practical military considerations. His is not an iconoclastic book such as Smyth's, but is solidly grounded on the--alas too few--facts we have of the period. Nor is it a book extolling virtues Alfred never had: it is matter-of-fact, practical, analytical, down-to-earth. Alfred is not 'mighty hero', or 'unsurpassed ruler' but simply 'warrior king'. The simplicity of the epitaph suits Alfred, and reflects well on the author.
Each of the islands has its own civilization and different clan. Every four years, a representative from each clan battles to decide the next king. Eight brave men gather on this island for a sacred battle! Licensed by SuBLime. Each of the islands has its own civilization and different clan. Every four years, a representative from each clan battles to decide the next king. Eight brave men gather on this island for a sacred battle! Licensed by SuBLime. Read Peerless Warrior King for free. "Continue being the warrior king." "No." "There will be salary increase and promotion." "No." "Then what do you want?" "A pretty girl." It never occurs to Nanfeng Lu that his dream comes true, however, the beauty… "Continue being the warrior king." "No." "There will be salary increase and promotion." Ch. 29. 2019-11-14 13:50:00 61. Ch. 30. 킹스메이커; Kings Maker; King's Maker: Triple Crown; Kings Maker: Triple Crown. Read online Vol 2 Chapter 49. Viewed today: 4099.