

Excerpt from “The Chronicle of Brihtwold” (c. 1050–1080 AD)

“Lo, in the year of our lord, the thrall of King Æthelred didst wander beyond the Fen, where bogs clutched the boots of steel. Oft did the raven croak ere the dawn, and forthwith the fyrd assembled—each noble bearing his byrnie and his fyrd-blade. Yet ’twas in the still of Eadwig’s eve that the wyrm of Wessex didst rise, its blood-red coils eclipsing the moon, so that no man knew hope but in prayer.”

Annotations:

- “fyrð” → common levy
- “byrnie” → mailshirt
- “fyrð-blade” → any single-edged sword
- “wyrð” → serpent or dragon