

# Danegeld

The Land Tax in England, 991-1162



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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

*Doctor of Philosophy*

Trinity 2018

## Short Abstract

This thesis examines the genesis and development of the English land tax, commonly known as *geld* or *Danegeld*, from 991 until 1162. The thesis begins with an analysis of tribute money (*gafol*) paid by King Æthelred to Viking invaders, and the evolution of that tax into *heregeld*, an annual tax paid to maintain a standing Scandinavian fleet. It examines the feasibility of paying large tributes, given the size of the English economy and availability of silver coin. The thesis then moves on to show how, although Edward the Confessor abolished *heregeld* in 1051, land taxation continued right up until 1066 to serve other purposes.

One of William the Conqueror's first acts as king was to levy *geld*, and he probably continued to do so in every year of his reign. The thesis extensively examines some of the rich sources of his reign, most especially Domesday Book and its 'satellite' texts. William Rufus and Henry I followed in their father's footsteps, probably levying gelds of 2s per hide in most years, helping finance numerous wars against their brother Duke Robert of Normandy. The Pipe Roll of Henry I is our single most detailed source about the tax on a national basis; this receives a close examination especially regarding the nature of exemption. King Stephen appears to have continued levying Danegeld, as it was invariably called by this point, in the areas in which he had control during the Anarchy. Henry II only levied Danegeld twice, as other taxes and feudal sources of income gradually became more important as the twelfth century progressed. After aborted attempts to revive and reform the land tax system in the reigns of Richard, John and Henry III, the land tax was abandoned for good.

## Full Abstract

This thesis examines the genesis and development of land taxation, commonly known as *geld* or *Danegeld* from 991 until 1162. Since from the time of King Ine in the late seventh century at the latest, kings had the ability to extract goods from the populace through an assessment system based on fiscal units of land, namely hides, sulungs and carucates. While these systems developed in sophistication during the ninth and tenth centuries, it was with the coming of the Second Viking Age in England when King Æthelred (AD 978 – 1016) started frequently employing assessment systems to raise taxes on a large scale in order to pay tribute to Viking invaders. The first levy, known as *gafol* (tribute) was of £10,000 in order to pay the Viking army after the Battle of Maldon in 991. Further tribute payments were made in 994 (£16,000 or £22,000), 1002 (£24,000), 1007 (£36,000), 1012 (£48,000) and 1018 (£82,500). The figures at the higher end of this sequence have been rejected by Gillingham on the grounds that the country could not have afforded it, but they have been defended by Lawson and Metcalf. Most estimates of English GDP at the time suggest England was economically able to bear such burdens from its agricultural surpluses, and, crucially, numismatic evidence suggests that enough coin was minted at the time to make the payments in the form of silver. Any shortfall of silver among the general populace may have been mitigated by very large stocks of bullion in church treasuries and among the aristocracy. From 1002 at the latest, it appears that these tribute payments were national in scale and were raised primarily by land taxation.

The *heregeld*, instituted in 1012 and first paid in 1014 (£21,000) was different from *gafol* in that it had a stipendiary purpose - the payment of a professional Scandinavian fleet in the king of England's service - as opposed to the merely tributary purpose of paying the invaders to go home. While at first a fleet under the Danish lord Thorkell the Tall was employed to defend England from other Scandinavian invaders, under King Cnut (AD 1016 – 1035) and his sons Harold Harefoot (AD 1035 – 1040) and Harthacnut (AD 1040 – 1042) the *heregeld* was used to pay a standing professional fleet of *lithsmen* (fleet-men), probably on an annual basis. The lawcode II Cnut and Hemming's cartulary

both point towards a punitive system in operation during this period of land confiscation and re-allocation if a land-holder did not pay *heregeld*. There is a suggestion that the already rich were able to enrich themselves further by acquiring lands cheaply from defaulters of *heregeld*, by paying the tax outstanding to the king.

By the time of Edward the Confessor's accession in 1042 there were already signs that *heregeld* was becoming politically difficult to continue. The rebellion of Worcester in 1041 that met the sudden quadrupling of the *heregeld* by Harthacnut to yield nearly £21,000 was quashed only with extreme violence, and it is unlikely that the Confessor was ever able to raise sums considerably more than £11,000. In 1050, Edward dismissed the last of the mercenary ships, and in the following year he abolished *heregeld* altogether. However, other forms of land taxation (known generically as 'geld') continued to be levied. Domesday Book attests to other types of geld being levied until 1066. These included a geld to pay for housecarls, the king's household military retinue, as well as a geld for inland shires to pay for the construction of ships, and perhaps a separate 'common geld' paid across the country.

In 1066, the conquering King William acquired a wealthy nation with a well-developed system of direct taxation, unique in Western Europe. He immediately exploited this, levying gelds in 1066 and 1067, and probably levying them every year until his death in 1087. By 1084, William was able to levy gelds at 6s on the hide, a higher rate than either of his sons could demand in the coming decades, and possibly similar to that of Harthacnut's 1041 levy. However, the amount of money actually raised was heavily compromised by a new system of exemption for the demesne portions of manors directly held by tenants-in-chief, and in 1086 at least, by large-scale non-payment by royal manors.

The Domesday survey and its satellite texts provide us with insights on how the taxation system was administered. The Geld Accounts bound up in Exon Domesday contain important clues about how geld was collected in the south west of England: hundredal gatherers collected money from

individual land holders or their estate managers and transported it to a shire centre – most likely the shire town or another fortification - where draft records were made of how much had been collected from each hundred and which landholders had not paid, legitimately or illegitimately. These records were sent along with all the shire's geld money to the treasury at Winchester, where fuller accounts were drawn up. The mechanics of collection seem to have involved written records at every stage of the process, not only at the level of treasury officials and shire officials, but also at the level of the local, hundredal tax gatherers.

The 'ploughland' appears ubiquitously in estate descriptions for most shires in Domesday Book. There has been intense debate about whether these were literal measures of arable land or whether they were some kind of new unit of tax assessment, one which was ultimately abandoned either in the final years of the Conqueror or the early years of Rufus. While Harvey's idea of a new type of land tax assessment is interesting, there is no direct evidence suggesting that this was what the ploughland represented. While in many shires the evidence points strongly towards the conclusion that the 'ploughland' was meant as an actual measure of arable, evidence from some other shires lends credence to Harvey's secondary argument that the 'ploughland' was meant to be a measure of total agricultural capacity that took into account livestock and the quality of soil as well as the area that could be ploughed by so many oxen.

The long-standing question of why so much material information was demanded by the king in the form of the Domesday survey and Book is still open. The answer to it can perhaps be best approached through the lens of the new tenurial system introduced by the Conqueror in 1066. William claimed to have inherited the entirety of England from Edward the Confessor, thereby meaning he was the ultimate source of all tenure. Under this system, the king could take into his hand estates of those who had died intestate (escheats) or confiscate the lands of traitors (forfeitures). He could also charge large payments for the right to inherit land (reliefs), or the right to marry into property. Acquiring information surrounding ploughlands, current ploughs actually

operating, as well as land values and geld assessments would have been useful information for the king and his treasury in deciding how much to charge new landholders, or how much to instruct royal officials to exploit estates freshly acquired by the king.

Under Henry I a new system of Danegeld exemption replaced the old form of demesne exemption for tenants-in-chief. Exemptions were now granted by the king to particular individuals in each shire. This was a more personal exemption system which afforded the king a new means of patronage: he could reward good behaviour with exemptions from geld or punish bad behaviour by withdrawing them. This echoes some of the benefits from the new income streams from feudal incidents: by charging large amounts and forcing barons to pay over a number of years, the king kept them in his debt, and therefore subservient.

Although financial sources for the reign of King Stephen are sparse, he appears to have continued levying Danegeld in the areas that he controlled during the Anarchy of 1135-54. Early in his reign, Henry II levied Danegeld twice, and after a seemingly aborted attempt to levy it again in 1174-5, the term 'Danegeld' disappears from financial records. King Richard I temporarily revived the land tax by levying a 'carucage' of 2s per hide to help pay for his ransom, and then in 1198 attempted to reform it by standardising hides so that they each represented 100 acres of tillable land - hides and other assessment units having been very varied in size and value for centuries. The attempt appears to have been a failure. King John, and then the minority government of Henry III, both attempted a different type of reform, so that hides were based on ploughteams of oxen, but after 1224 the land tax was abandoned altogether, as other forms of taxation, especially that on moveables, began to earn much more money for the treasury.

## Acknowledgements

The original idea for this thesis was suggested by George Garnett at a snow-covered St Hugh's College Oxford in December 2012. He said that it was high time somebody had a go at writing a history of Danegeld, if only a PhD student could be found willing to do so. Returning to King's College London, I discussed the idea with my MA tutor Stephen Baxter, who offered to be my supervisor. To both George and Stephen I am very grateful, as well as to the Arts and Humanities Research Council who agreed to fund the project.

Stephen has been a tremendously helpful supervisor; he has helped to shape and form the thesis, as well as read through all of the drafts multiple times with an eye for detail that has helped develop my scholarly writing considerably. David Carpenter acted as my second supervisor, and I thank him for his fresh insights on drafts of numerous sections.

My thanks are due also to Rory Naismith, especially for his comments on the numismatics section of the thesis, as well as Richard Sharpe, Brendan Smith, John Hudson, David X. Carpenter, John Maddicott, John Blair, Mark Hagger, Julia Crick, Daniel Haddas, Chris Lewis, Alex Dymond and David Austin for their various answers to requests for help over the last five years.

Finally, special thanks are reserved for my mother, Claire Cohen, who, together with my late father, Philip Cohen, has helped guide me through more than two decades of education. The thesis is much the richer for her contributions, and much the poorer without his. It is appropriately dedicated to them.

## Contents

Short Abstract .....	2
Full Abstract .....	3
Acknowledgements.....	7
Introduction .....	12
Tribute and Taxation from 991 – 1066 .....	19
‘Gafol’: Tribute payments from 991 – 1014.....	19
‘Heregeld’: Payments to Scandinavian mercenaries, 1012-1051 .....	36
The beginnings of national land taxation.....	41
Land alienation and confiscation during the gafol and heregeld era .....	48
The English economy and the source of silver.....	59
Coins and taxation .....	69
Mint output.....	69
Coin finds in Scandinavia .....	82
Taxation on the eve of the Norman Conquest .....	89
Taxation after the abolition of heregeld.....	89
A housecarl tax.....	90
The ‘common geld’ in Domesday.....	92
Ship tax.....	96
Conclusion.....	97
Assessment systems .....	98
Hides and carucates .....	100
Hundreds and wapentakes .....	109
East Anglian assessment .....	111
Kentish sulungs .....	112
Reduction of assessment before 1066: The County Hidage .....	114
Tax liability of demesne before and after 1066.....	118
The fiscal status of Edwardian royal demesne .....	132
Taxation in conquered England: the reign of William the Conqueror.....	135
Land taxation, 1066-1087 .....	135
1086 and the Conqueror’s obituary.....	142
The fiscal purposes of Domesday .....	145
The Geld Accounts of Exon Domesday .....	151

Geld collection .....	158
Royal tax liability in the reign of William the Conqueror.....	168
Royal tax liability at the time of the Northamptonshire Geld Account .....	168
Royal tax liability in 1086 .....	173
Taxation and the ‘ploughland’ .....	175
Land Taxation, 1087-1162.....	191
Land taxation reported in narrative sources of William Rufus, 1087-1100.....	191
Demesne exemption under Henry I.....	205
Financing war and peace: Danegeld under Henry I .....	207
Taxation in the Duchy of Normandy .....	217
Royal income in 1129-30: Henry I’s Pipe Roll .....	220
Direct taxation in the Pipe Roll .....	225
Exemption in the 1129-30 Pipe Roll.....	231
Royal demesne.....	240
Conclusion – How much could Henry I raise from Danegeld?.....	240
Danegeld in the reign of King Stephen .....	242
Danegeld in the reign of Henry II.....	244
The demise of the land tax .....	251
Conclusion.....	256
Bibliography .....	262

## List of Tables

Table 1. Gafol and Heregeld payments recorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.....	20
Table 2. The Estimated Volume of Mint Output (Allen, 2006) .....	72
Table 3. Histogram of coins in the Stockholm Systematic Collection.....	83
Table 4. Histogram of coins from Helsinki and other Finnish Collections .....	83
Table 5. Histogram of Anglo-Saxon coins in West Slavic hoards .....	84
Table 6. The Anglo-Saxon element of five Danish hoards deposited between 1024 and 1030.....	84
Table 7. Anglo-Saxon elements of five Gotland hoards deposited between 1005 and 1048 .....	85
Table 8. County Hidage assessments vs Domesday Book hidages and hundreds.....	116
Table 9. A comparison of non-gelding hides TRE and demesne hides in 1086 in Cornwall (Salzmann, 1924) .....	127
Table 10. The Hidages of Royal land in Northamptonshire Hundreds in the Northamptonshire Geld Account and Domesday Book (Hoyt, 1950) .....	171
Table 11. The Estimated Volume of the Currency according to single coin finds (Allen, 2006) .....	212
Table 12. The Estimated Volume of the Currency according to single coin finds (Fairbairn, 2013)...	212

Table 13. Items of revenue from matters arising in 1129-30 (Green, 1982).....	222
Table 14. Items of revenue carried over from previous years (Green, 1982) .....	223
Table 15. Items of Revenue, All Years (Green, 1982) .....	224
Table 16. The hidage of shires inferred from Domesday Book and the Pipe Roll of 1129-30.....	226
Table 17. Implied Hidages in 1129-30 Pipe Roll compared with Domesday Hidages.....	230
Table 18. Danegeld Liability under Henry I and Henry II .....	247

*The common geld is laid on the town, which no-one can escape.*

(Great Domesday Book, fol. 30)

## Introduction

The ability of a state to tax its population systematically is a measure of that state's sophistication and power; in political science terms, of its 'state capacity'.<sup>1</sup> While virtually all modern nation states tax, this was not the case in earlier or high middle ages Europe, when few polities did so systematically. As the Roman Empire retreated from the west in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, the taxation structures it had instituted in Western Europe gradually collapsed. Although taxation remained a crucial feature of governance and warfare in the Byzantine Empire and were important in some of the Muslim states of first millennium Europe, most notably in Sicily, direct taxation disappeared as an institution in all of the polities of Western Europe for several centuries.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of all Europe during the period from the fifth century until the end of the twelfth century, Chris Wickham has distinguished between 'strong states' and 'weak states', with 'the basic difference being in the role of taxation'.<sup>3</sup> The advantage of a tax system is that, in its ideal form, it 'provides an independent basis for political power, separate from the goodwill of the aristocracy, for the army is paid directly from public coffers, and complex bureaucracies, themselves usually salaried, handle the process of tax collection'.<sup>4</sup> He observes that after the fall of the Western Empire, taxation never really recovered in continental Western Europe until the late twelfth century, thereby fundamentally weakening the power of most rulers and governments.<sup>5</sup> The exception, however, was England, which had a fully functioning direct land taxation system from the late tenth century at the latest, and which, despite being conquered twice in 1016 and 1066, is widely held to have been one

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<sup>1</sup> C. S. Hendrix, 'Measuring state capacity: Theoretical and Empirical Implications for the study of civil conflict' *Journal of Peace Research*, 47 (2010), 273-285.

<sup>2</sup> W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997), 113-116, 385-6; J. Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily: The Royal Diwan* (Cambridge, 2002), 22-30

<sup>3</sup> C. Wickham, *Framing the Earlier Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2006), 56-9.

<sup>4</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Earlier Middle Ages*, 58.

<sup>5</sup> C. Wickham, 'Lineages of Western European Taxation, 1000-1200', in M. Senchez and A. Furio (eds.), *Colloqui Corona, Municipis i Fiscalitat a la Baixa Edat Mitjana* (Lleida, 1997), 25-42.

of Europe's most powerful states in terms of kings' ability to coerce and exploit their population, and to exercise power at least to some extent independently of the aristocracy.

Given its exceptional nature and importance, therefore, it is somewhat surprising that the only academic work encompassing the whole history of English land tax, known as 'geld' or 'Danegeld', is still Philip Webb's short paper of 1756, in which he presented an annotated narrative of the levying of the taxes.<sup>1</sup> Webb's work was extremely impressive for its time; little that he said can now be shown to be wrong, and most can be positively justified. Even the famously vituperative John Horace Round said that 'allowing for the fact that the criticism of authorities was a study yet in its infancy, Mr Webb's essay is a marvellous piece of careful and conscientious work'.<sup>2</sup>

However, for the two and a half centuries since Webb's paper, historians have been shy to approach the subject of geld in its *longue-durée*; in fact, no less a figure than F. W. Maitland once said that 'a detailed history of that tax cannot be written'.<sup>3</sup> Maitland may have meant here that in the great majority of years, the sources tell us nothing of the levying or rate of taxation. While this is true, and indeed we only have one document that shows us in detail how much tax was demanded, collected and exempted nationwide in one year (King Henry I's Pipe Roll of 1129-30), this is an unnecessarily pessimistic verdict. *Chronicles*, charters, coins, Pipe Rolls, and of course Domesday Book and its satellites, not least of which are the Geld Accounts of the southwestern shires, all shed considerable light on taxation in England in the period 991-1162. This is what I intend to demonstrate 250 years after Webb's *Short Account*.

Despite the lack of a modern, broader work, several rich and detailed studies of certain aspects of the history of the land tax have been undertaken, and in many places in this study I stand firmly on

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<sup>1</sup> P. C. Webb, *A Short Account of Danegeld, with some further particulars relating to William the Conqueror's Survey* (London, 1756), 1-27.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Round, 'Danegeld and the Finance of Domesday', in P. E. Dove (ed.), *Domesday Studies*, 2 vols (London, 1888), vol. i, 77.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge, 1897).

the shoulders of these scholars. Chapter 1 of this work reconsiders the early period of the development of land tax, under Æthelred II, from tributary *gafol* payments made to Scandinavian invaders to stipendiary *heregeld* paid to Scandinavian mercenaries that continued until 1051, a subject well treated by Lawson in his article of 1984.<sup>1</sup> This article was followed by a very lively debate between Lawson and Gillingham, in which the latter attacked the blind faith of historians in accepting the veracity of the larger figures of tribute that the English are said to have paid to Vikings in the early eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> Numismatists later contributed to the debate, most notably Metcalf and Jonsson; the former finding the high figures quite believable and the latter being sceptical of them.<sup>3</sup>

Others have questioned whether these early payments were made mainly by coin acquired by trade, or from church stocks of silver. While Sawyer thinks that trade was the most important source of silver, Hodges and Keynes think it more likely to have come from church treasuries.<sup>4</sup> A corollary to this debate is whether the money for the payments was raised by formal taxation of coin from the population, or from taxation, gift or seizure of precious metal held by the church. I explore these

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<sup>1</sup> M. K. Lawson, 'The Collection of Danegeld and Heregeld in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut', *English Historical Review*, vol. 99 (1984), 721-738.

<sup>2</sup> J. Gillingham, "'The Most Precious Jewel in the English Crown': levels of Danegeld and Heregeld in the early eleventh century', *English Historical Review*, vol. 104 (1989), 373-84; M. K. Lawson, "'Those Stories Look True": levels of taxation in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut', *English Historical Review*, vol. 104 (1989), 385-406; J. Gillingham, 'Chronicles and coins as evidence for levels of tribute and taxation in late tenth and early eleventh-century England', *English Historical Review*, vol. 105 (1990), 135-50; M. K. Lawson, 'Danegeld and Heregeld once more', *English Historical Review*, vol. 105 (1990), 951-61.

<sup>3</sup> D. M. Metcalf, 'Can we believe the very large figure of £72,000 for the geld levied by Cnut in 1017?', in K. Jonsson (ed.), *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage* (Numismatiska Meddelanden 35, Stockholm, 1990), 165-76; K. Jonsson, 'The Routes for the Importation of German and English Coins to the Northern Lands in the Viking Age', in B. Kluge (ed.), *Fernhandel und Geldwirtschaft. Beiträge zum deutschen Münzwesen in sächsischer und salischer Zeit. Ergebnisse des Dannenberg-Kolloquiums 1990* (Sigmaringen, 1993), 205-230.

<sup>4</sup> P. Sawyer, *The Wealth of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2012), 10-31, 100-114; P. Sawyer, 'The Wealth of England in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, 15 (1965), 145-64; R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics* (London, 1982), 179-83; S. Keynes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon' in D. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, (Oxford, 1991), 100-102.

debates in Chapter 1, and engage with some of the large output of numismatic research published since 1990.

A debate over the supposed 'abolition' of *heregeld* recorded by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 1051 has never quite come to the boil, although it has long been simmering. Many historians have taken the annal to mean that King Edward the Confessor abolished land taxation entirely for the rest of his reign, but others such as Vinogradoff, Barlow and Keynes have expressed doubt, suggesting that it may have been re-established at some point before 1066.<sup>1</sup> The final part of Chapter 1 examines the *Chronicle's* statement in its historical context, as well as the evidence of Domesday Book and charters both pre- and post-1066, and argues that while *heregeld* was indeed abolished, land taxes raised for other purposes continued to be levied, including the finance of military expeditions and the maintenance of *housecarls*, the king's household warriors.

Chapter 2 briefly describes the various fiscal assessment systems in use in Domesday England, and touches on their origins and development from the more distant past. The pre-history of assessments and their roles in measuring military service, labour dues, and possibly taxation before the late tenth century is a fascinating question that may benefit from more research, but will probably only ever yield speculative answers, and is outside the scope of this thesis. Similarly, a major part of another thesis could be devoted to the intricacies of assessment systems in different regions of eleventh-century England; these are sampled but not exhaustively treated here. The chapter moves on to an analysis of the early eleventh-century list of assessments known as the County Hidage, before concluding with a more detailed study of tax exemption before 1066. Here I critique David Pratt's recent argument that the demesne estates of Anglo-Saxon landholders were not ordinarily exempted from taxation and other dues; while I still find his view more credible than

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<sup>1</sup> P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford, 1908), 141; F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (New Haven, 1970), 106 n.5; S. Keynes, 'Heregeld' in M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes and D. Scragg (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1999), 235.

the alternatives, some of his key arguments are not persuasive.<sup>1</sup> The question of the tax liability of King Edward's demesne is also addressed.

Chapter 3 examines taxation during the reign of William the Conqueror. It starts by reviewing what chronicles say about the taxes that William levied on conquered England. I then explore how the Domesday Survey and Book may have contributed to William's dual fiscal and feudal aims; although Domesday Book was not manifestly a 'geld book', as Maitland famously argued, its compilers clearly had an intimate interest in taxation.<sup>2</sup> There is also very revealing evidence about the collection of taxes provided by the Geld Accounts of south west England bound up in Exon Domesday Book, an early draft of Domesday Book for the southwestern shires.<sup>3</sup> While I engage to some extent with the decades-long debates surrounding the dating and provenance of these Geld Accounts, such considerations are not the most important facts about them; rather, the Geld Accounts are unique and invaluable documents because they illuminate the actual mechanics of the eleventh-century taxation process, from its collection in the localities to its delivery to the treasury at Winchester.

Chapter 3 concludes with a scrutiny of one of Domesday Book's more deceptively opaque terms, the 'ploughland'. I engage with numerous theories about what this might have been, but especially with Sally Harvey's theory that it was a new measure of tax assessment soon aborted.<sup>4</sup> After a survey of the term's use by Domesday Book around the country, I suggest an explanation of 'ploughland' which has Domesday Book's feudal purposes at its heart.

Chapter 4 then moves into a study of taxation during the reign of William Rufus. There are fewer direct sources for this period - we are almost entirely reliant on our knowledge of direct taxes from

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<sup>1</sup> D. Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption from Royal Taxation in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England', *English Historical Review*, 128 (2013), 1-34

<sup>2</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 3; *Domesday Book*, ed. J. Morris (38 vols., Chichester, 1975-1992), henceforth, 'GDB/LDB, [fol.] XX, (Anyshire YY, ZZ)'; translations from *Domesday Book: a complete translation*, eds. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3500, printed in 'Exon Domesday', in *Libri Censualis vocati Domesday Book, Additamenta ex Codic. Antiquiss* (Record Commission, 1816), 1-493, henceforth, 'Exon Domesday'.

<sup>4</sup> S. P. J. Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland in Domesday Book' in P. Sawyer, *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* (London, 1985), 86-103.

the chronicles of 1087-1100 - but these do contain some very colourful and at times extraordinary entries that greatly illuminate the near autocratic power of the Anglo-Norman kings. The chapter then examines the rich sources available to us concerning royal revenue under Henry I, and builds on the important work of Judith Green in this field.<sup>1</sup> Although the chronicles are not especially illuminating during Henry's reign, they do at least testify to the power of the English king who, heavily aided by the taxable wealth of England, ultimately overcame his brother and rival Robert Duke of Normandy in 1106 at the Battle of Tinchebrai, securing Henry the duchy. I offer an analysis of the Pipe Roll of 1129-30, which shows us how, in addition to the lucrative new revenue streams of feudal incidents and profits from justice and governance, Henry was able to continue exploiting the English land tax at 2s per hide, raising significant sums per year. Furthermore, the chapter includes an analysis of Pipe Roll exemptions, which seeks to determine whether the demesne exemption system instituted by the Conqueror had been scrapped in favour of a system based on widespread individual favours. This analysis goes beyond Judith Green in showing that this was indeed the case; it also examines some of the advantages and disadvantages of such a personal system of tax exemption compared with more universal systems.

The thesis finishes with an examination of the sparser historical record of Danegeld during the reigns of King Stephen and Henry II. While references are very scant during Stephen's reign, some administrative documents suggest that he did levy Danegeld on occasion. Two Pipe Rolls detail the Danegeld levies of Henry II; these are taken together with testimony from Richard Fitz Nigel, Henry's treasurer and author of the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, the 'Dialogue of the Exchequer', to shed light on the assessment and forms of exemption of the last Danegelds of the era. Taxation from the 1180s onwards has been much more thoroughly explored by historians; the chapter concludes with a brief description of attempts to revive and reform the land tax by Richard I, King John, and the

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Green, 'The Last Century of Danegeld', *English Historical Review*, 93 (1981), 241-58; J. A. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (1986), 51-94; J. A. Green, "'Praeclarum et magnificum antiquitatis monumentum": the earliest surviving Pipe Roll', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 1-17.

government of Henry III, as well as a summary of taxes such as 'aid', scutage and taxes on moveables that began to proliferate from the mid twelfth century, probably to the final detriment of the land tax.

## Tribute and Taxation from 991 – 1066

### ‘Gafol’: Tribute payments from 991 – 1014

In the poetic account of the Battle of Maldon in 991, before the battle commences a messenger from the attacking Scandinavian force is reported as telling Earl Byrhtnoth, the leader of the English army, that:

“Bold seafarers have sent me to you, commanded me to tell you that you must quickly send gold rings in return for protection. And it is better for you all that you should buy off this onslaught of spears with tribute money (*gafole*) than that we should join battle so grievously. We need not destroy each other if you are sufficiently wealthy: we are prepared to establish a truce in return for gold. If you [Byrhtnoth] who are the richest man here decide that you are willing to ransom your people, willing to give to the seafarers, in an amount determined by them, money (*feoh*) in exchange for peace, and to accept protection from us, we are content to embark with the taxes (*sceattum*), to set sail across the sea, and to keep the peace with you all.”

“Sea raider, can you hear what this army is saying? They intend to give all of you spears as tribute (*gafole*), deadly points and tried swords, payment in war gear which will be of no benefit to you in battle. Messenger of the seamen, report back! Tell your people a much less pleasing tale, that here stands with his company an earl of unstained reputation, who intends to defend this homeland, the kingdom of Æthelred, my lord’s people and his country. They shall fall, the heathens in battle. It appears to me too shameful that you should return to your ships with our money (*sceattum*) unopposed, now that you have thus far in this direction have penetrated into our territory. You will not gain treasure (*sinc*) so easily: spear and sword must first arbitrate between us, the grim game of battle, before we pay tribute (*gofol*).”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The Battle of Maldon’, ed. D. Scragg in D. Scragg (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, (Oxford, 1991), 19-21.

The ensuing battle marked the beginning of a remarkable period in Anglo-Saxon history, where successive Viking invasions led to greater and greater amounts of tribute money being paid to stop their destructive activities. By 1014 at the latest, the payments had become a nationwide tax, collected on a systematic basis for the maintenance of a foreign fleet. This tax, known as *heregeld* ('army-tax'), has always been held as the precursor of Danegeld (or simply *geld*), the regular land tax assessed on the hide, which lasted well into the twelfth century.

Until 1014, however, these payments to Vikings took on what Philip Webb described as a 'tributary' nature, as opposed to the later 'stipendiary' nature of *heregeld*.<sup>1</sup> Tributary payments were, in essence, payments for no service other than the promise of the cessation of violence. These earlier payments are called *gafol* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and their relationship with the later *heregeld* taxes is not altogether obvious. Table 1 charts those tributary *gafol* payments recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, as well as the three known stipendiary *heregeld*.

**Table 1. *Gafol and Heregeld payments recorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle***

Year	Gafol	Heregeld
991	£10,000	
994	£16,000 <sup>2</sup>	
1002	£24,000	
1007	£36,000 <sup>3</sup>	
1009	£3,000 (East Kent)	
1012	£48,000 <sup>4</sup>	
1014		£21,000
1018	£82,500	
1041		£21,099
1041 (or later)		£11,048
1049/50		(unknown) <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Webb, *Short Account of Danegeld*, 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> The peace treaty 'll Æthelred' puts the figure at £22,000. See below, 24.

<sup>3</sup> The 'E' text says it was £30,000, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition, Volume 7, MS. E: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. S. Irvine, (Cambridge, 2004), henceforth 'ASC MS E, s.a. xxxx, ed. Irvine'.

<sup>4</sup> The 'E' text says it was £8,000, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1012, ed. Irvine, 69.

<sup>5</sup> King Edward is said by the 'C' text to have 'paid off nine ships' (*scylode ix. scypa of male*) in 1049, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition, Volume 5, MS. C: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices s.a. 1049*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keefe, (Cambridge, 2001), 111, henceforth 'ASC MS C, s.a. xxxx, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe'; trans. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, trans. D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas and S. I.

The primary chronicles that concern us during this period are the variants of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Latin chronicle of John of Worcester. For the period of *gafol* from 991 to 1018, the ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ variants of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are all very similar; the author of the text on which they are based was probably writing between 1016 and 1023.<sup>1</sup> ‘F’ is a bilingual version of ‘E’, with no content differences to ‘E’ in the *gafol* period. ‘A’ is separate from the others during this period, but its entries are sparse, and only those for 991 and 1001 contain details about the Viking invasions. Meanwhile John of Worcester, whose chronicle dates from the early twelfth century and was probably largely compiled by his contemporary Florence of Worcester, relies heavily on the D-text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and a lost northern variant of the *Chronicle* closely related to ‘D’.<sup>2</sup> John also includes some material only found in ‘C’, and some from sources outside of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which is particularly important regarding Harthacnut’s *heregeld* of 1041.

According to the ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ texts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, after the Battle of Maldon:

man gerædde þæt man geald ærest gafol denescum mannum for ðam miclan brogan þe hi worhton  
be ðam særiman, þæt wæs ærest x. ðusend punda. þæne ræd gerædde ærest Syric arcebisceop.

it was determined that tribute (*gafol*) should first be paid to the Danish men because of the great  
terror they were causing along the coast. The first payment was £10,000. Archbishop Sigeric first  
advised that course.<sup>3</sup>

Although the ‘A’ text itself does not mention the payment, it names the leader of the Viking army as Olaf, presumably Olaf Tryggvason, King of Norway.<sup>4</sup> The ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ texts state the payment was

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Tucker (London, 1961), 114, (henceforth ‘ASC MS A/C/D/E’, s.a. xxxx, trans. Whitelock’); The ‘E’ text places this event in 1050, ASC MS E, s.a. 1050; trans. Whitelock, 115. Below, I estimate how much this might have cost, 38.

<sup>1</sup> S. Keynes, ‘The Declining Reputation of King Æthelred the Unready’, in D. Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (BAR British Series 59, 1978), 232.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: The Annals from 450 until 1066*, eds. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, and trans. J. Bray and P. McGurk, II (Oxford, 1995), 439-559, (henceforth ‘John of Worcester, s.a. xxxx, eds. Darlington and McGurk’); ASC, ed. Whitelock, xx.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS C, s.a. 991, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 86; trans. Whitelock, 82.

<sup>4</sup> ASC MS A, s.a. 991, trans. Whitelock, 82.

to unspecified Danes.<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, however, said that the tribute was paid to the Danish army of Justin and Guthmund, son of Steitan, and also recorded Archbishop Sigeric as having acted in tandem with Ealdorman Æthelweard and Ealdorman Ælfric regarding the proposal to pay the army tribute.<sup>2</sup> While the 'A' text does not mention the tribute, a later Canterbury scribe included in the margin an addition saying it was made 'through the advice of Sigeric, bishop of the people of Kent, and of Ælfheah, bishop of Winchester' (*ðurh Sirices lare Cantware bisceopes 7 Ælfeages Wincæstre bisceopes*).<sup>3</sup>

To resolve the different recordings of Viking leaders and English negotiators in 991, we need to look at a different source altogether; that is the peace treaty known as II Æthelred:

Ðis synd ða friðmal 7 ða forword, ðe Æthelred cyng 7 ealle his witan wið ðone here gedon habbað, ðe Anlaf 7 Justin 7 Guðmund Stegitan sunu mid wæron:

Ðæt ærost, þæt woroldfrið stande betweox Æthelrede cyng 7 eallum his leodscipe 7 eallum ðam here, ðe cyng þæt feoh sealde, æfter ðam formalan, ðe Sigeric arcebiscop 7 Æðelwerd ealdormann 7 Ælfric ealdorman worhton, ða hu abædon æt ðam cyng 7 þæt hy mostan ðam læppan frið gebicgean, ðe hy under cyng hand ofer hæfdon.

These are the peace terms and conditions which King Æthelred and all his councillors have made with the army which Olaf and Jósteinn and Guthmund, Steita's son were with:

In the first place, that a general peace be established between King Æthelred, and all his people, and all the army to which the king gave the tribute, in accordance with the terms which Archbishop Sigeric and Ealdorman Æthelweard and Ealdorman Ælfric made, when they obtained permission from the king to purchase peace for the districts which they had rule over, under the king.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS C (D, E), s.a. 991; trans. Whitelock, 82.

<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, s.a. 991, eds. Darlington and McGurk, II, 439.

<sup>3</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition, Volume 3, MS. A: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, ed. J. M. Bately (Cambridge, 1986), 79; trans. Whitelock, 82 n. 5.

<sup>4</sup> 'II Æthelred', printed and translated in Keynes, 'Historical Context', 104-7.

This treaty used to be attributed to 991, but Gordon and Keynes have persuasively argued that it should be attributed to 994, after the Viking campaign of that year, which King Olaf (presumably Olaf Tryggvason of Norway), and Swein (presumably King Swein of Denmark) had conducted according to the 'C', 'D' and 'E' texts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.<sup>1</sup> The names of Jósteinn and Guthmund found in John of Worcester for 991 probably stem from the author's reading of this treaty mistakenly dating it to that year, the year that the 'A' text says that Olaf led the expedition, and the 'C', 'D' and 'E' texts say that it was a force of unspecified Danes. Therefore, the best harmonisation of the sources is to accept that Olaf led a band of Scandinavian invaders that included Danes to Maldon in 991, and received the resulting tribute, while in 994 peace was made with Olaf, Justin and Guthmund. What happened to Swein in that year remains a mystery; he is not mentioned in the treaty. The other half of the problem – that of who advised the king to pay the 991 tribute in the first place – also resolves itself if it is accepted that II Æthelred was mis-dated by John of Worcester; the ealdormen Æthelweard and Ælfric did not advise the tribute in 991, rather it was Sigeric alone. This does seem the most likely, as Æthelweard and Ælfric were ealdormen over the Western provinces and Hampshire respectively, neither of which were affected by the raids of 991. Hampshire certainly was attacked in 994, and possibly the West country as well when the Vikings, having ravaged Hampshire, 'seized horses and rode as widely as they wished, and continued to do indescribable damage'.<sup>2</sup> All three men were involved in the 994 treaty negotiations.

The 994 entry of the 'C', 'D' and 'E' versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* differ with II Æthelred in the amount of tribute alleged to have been paid. It says that:

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<sup>1</sup> Keynes, 'Historical Context' 103-4; E. V. Gordon, 'The Date of Æthelred's Treaty with the Vikings: Olaf Tryggvason and the Battle of Maldon', *Modern Language Review* 32 (1937), 24-32.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS. C (D, E), s.a. 994, trans. Whitelock, 83.

þa gerædde se cyning 7 his witan þæt him man tosende 7 him behet gafol 7 metsunge wið þon ðe hi þære heregunge geswicon, 7 hi ða þæt underfengon; 7 com þ eall se here to Hamtune 7 ðær wintersetl namon. 7 hi mon þær fedde geond eall Westseaxena rice, 7 him mon geald feos .xvi. ðusend punda.<sup>1</sup>

the king and his councillors determined to send to [Olaf and his army] and promise them tribute and provisions, on condition that they should cease [their] harrying. And they accepted that, and the whole army came then to Southampton and took winter quarters there, and they were provisioned throughout all the West Saxon kingdom, and they were paid £16,000 in money.

The law code II Æthelred says that 'Twenty-two thousand pounds in gold and silver were paid from England to the army for this truce' (*Twa and twentig ðuse[n]d punda goldes 7 seolfres man gesealde ðam here of Ænglalande wið friðe*).<sup>2</sup> Liebermann thought that this £22,000 figure may have been an interpolation, as according to him, despite it being an archetypal phrase in this kind of document, it does not belong to the treaty, for it is the only part written in the perfect tense, and seems to come almost as an afterthought at the end of the document.<sup>3</sup> Yet, an interpolation added soon after 994 may well be more reliable than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* figure, the author of which was probably writing c.1016 to 1023.<sup>4</sup> Whichever was the true figure, the tribute seems to have helped persuade Olaf to be confirmed in the faith before promising never to come back to England in hostility, a promise he appears to have kept.<sup>5</sup>

King Swein of Denmark, meanwhile, does not appear in the latter part of the entry for 994; his whereabouts are unknown at this point. At the beginning of the annal for 997 the *Chronicle* says 'the [Danish] army went round Devon into the mouth of the Severn and ravaged there' (*se here abutan Defenanscire into Sæfern muðan, 7 þær heregodon*), rather as if Swein's Danish army had never left.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, John of Worcester explicitly speaks of 'the Danish army who had remained in England'

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. 994, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 87; trans. Whitelock, 83,

<sup>2</sup> 'II Æthelred', trans. Keynes, 'Historical Context', 105-107.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann (Halle, 1898-1916), vol. 3, 154.

<sup>4</sup> Keynes, 'Declining Reputation', 232.

<sup>5</sup> ASC MS C (D, E), s.a. 994, trans. Whitelock, 83; ASC MS C, s.a. 994, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 87.

<sup>6</sup> ASC MS C (D, E), s.a. 997, trans. Whitelock, 84; ASC MS. C, s.a. 997, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 88.

(*Danorum exercitus, qui remanserat in Anglia*).<sup>1</sup> This could therefore have been a resident Danish army turned mercenaries or protection racketeers, turning on its English paymasters after three years of desired or undesired service; if so some kind of payment either in cash, bullion or in kind would surely have been paid in the years between 994 and 997. However, it is also possible that John was wrong, and that this was simply a new army, come to terrorise England afresh, so we cannot safely draw any inferences.

We do know, however, that by 1001 at the latest Scandinavian warriors were in the service of King Æthelred. The 'A' text for that year says that Swein's brother-in-law, Pallig, came to the assistance of a Danish fleet in Devon with a group of ships, having 'deserted King Æthelred in spite of all the pledges which he had given him' (*asceacen wæs fram Æðelrede cynce ofer ealle ða getrywða ðe he him geseald hæfde*).<sup>2</sup> The *Chronicle* then describes how 'the king had also made great gifts to him, in estates and gold and silver' (*se cyng him wel gegifod hæfde on hamon 7 on golde 7 seolfre*).<sup>3</sup> One possible interpretation of this is that Pallig had entered into Æthelred's service in return for gold and silver bullion and for land. In that case the purpose of these 'gifts' would seem similar to the stipendiary payments of later *heregeld*: the maintenance of a resident Viking army. The method of raising capital was very different, however, as it would seem that royal property is referred to here, not money raised by taxation.

The third record of a specific tribute figure is in 1002, after the Danish army had ravaged England for five years, with a one-year break in Normandy. Neither the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* nor John of Worcester name the leader of this army. The *Chronicle* begins its annal thus:

Her on ðissum geare se cyning gerædde 7 his witan þæt man sceolde gafol gyldan þam flotan, 7 frið  
wið hi niman wið þon þe hi heora yfeles geswican sceoldan. Þa sende se cyning to þam flotan Leofsig

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<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 997, eds. Darlington and McGurk, II, 446-7.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS A, *s.a.* 1001, trans. Whitelock, 85; ASC, MS A, *s.a.* 1001, ed. Bately, 80.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS A, *s.a.* 1001, trans. Whitelock, 85; ASC, MS A, *s.a.* 1001, ed. Bately, 80.

ealdorman, 7 he ða þæs cyninges worde 7 his witena gryð wið hi gesette, 7 þæt hi to metsunge fengon 7 to gafole 7 hi ða þæt underfengon, 7 him mon ða gegeald xxiiii þusend punda.

In this year the king and his councillors determined that tribute should be paid to the fleet, and peace made with them on condition that they cease their evil doing. Then the king sent ealdorman Leofsig [of Essex] to the fleet, who, by the command of the king and his councillors, arranged a truce with them and that they should receive provisions and tribute. And they then accepted that, and 24,000 pounds were paid to them.<sup>1</sup>

Once again there is this somewhat ambiguous recording of provisions (*metsunge*) being given as well as tribute, thus it is difficult to say with certainty how long the English were initially prepared to accommodate the Danish army, whether they were expected to sail home in the near future or whether an agreed system of continued provision and payment was set up.

If there were such an agreement for ongoing provisions and tribute, it did not last long, for November of the same year brought the St Brice's Day massacre, when:

se cyng het ofslean ealle þa deniscan men þe on Angelcynne wæron...forðam þam cyninge wæs gecyð þæt hi woldan hine besyrwan æt his life 7 siððan ealle his witan 7 habban sibban þis rice.

the king ordered to be slain all the Danish men who were in England... because the king had been informed that they would treacherously deprive him, and then all his councillors, of life, and possess the kingdom afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

While this has been traditionally perceived as having been a full-blown genocide of a twentieth-century nature, Keynes has pointed out that the decree can hardly have covered the descendants of Danes in Danelaw, as they were much too integrated with the rest of the population.<sup>3</sup> Keynes believes it therefore to have been aimed at Danes such as Pallig, who had been mercenaries

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1002, trans. Whitelock, 86. ASC MS C, s.a. 1002, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 89.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. 1002, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 89; ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1002, trans. Whitelock, 86.

<sup>3</sup> Keynes, 'Historical Context', 93.

‘protecting’ England over the last few years, and who had either betrayed their English clients over the period 997-1002, or at least neglected to defend them. Yet, John of Worcester pointedly says that it was ‘all Danish settlers, greater and less, and of either sex’ (*omnes Danos Angliam incolentes, maiores et minores utriusque sexus*) who were the target,<sup>1</sup> and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says that it was ‘all (*ealle*) the Danish men who were in England’. A charter of King Æthelred himself describes the event as a ‘most just extermination’ (*iustissima examinacione necarentur*) of ‘all the Danes who had sprung up on this island, sprouting like cockle among the wheat’ (*ut cuncti Dani qui in hac insula uelut lolium inter triticum pullulando emergerant*).<sup>2</sup> Though the full extent of the massacre may be contested, it certainly seems as if it was something more than a witch hunt of former and current Danish mercenaries. A royal diploma in favour of the monastery of St Frideswide in Oxford shows the enthusiastic popular support that the massacre seems to have enjoyed: it describes the burning of St Frideswide’s church by the people of Oxford because Danes were hiding inside. Such an atrocity, however, was never likely to go unpunished: Swein returned in 1003 at the head of a devastating army that would remain in England for four years, bar a one-year break in 1005 only due to a famine in England.<sup>3</sup>

The next tribute recorded is of an unspecified amount given to Swein in 1004 by Ulfcetel, a senior East Anglian nobleman, who in response to Swein’s destruction of Norwich:

wið ða witan on Eastenglum þæt hit betere wære þæt mon wið þone here friðes ceapode, ær hi to mycelne hearne on ðam eared gedrydon, for ðæm hi unwæres comon, 7 he first næfde þæt he his fyrde gegaderede.

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<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1002, eds. Darlington and McGurk, 452-3.

<sup>2</sup> S 909, *The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters* (2007), <http://www.esawyer.org.uk> printed in *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St. Frideswide at Oxford*, ed. S. R. Wigram, (Oxford, 1895), I, 1-9; trans D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents, vol. 1, c. 500-1043* (London, 1979), 590-3. Henceforth all Anglo-Saxon Charters from this catalogue are referred to in the first place by their ‘S’ (Sawyer) number.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1003-1005, trans. Whitelock, 86-7.

with the councillors in East Anglia determined that it would be better to buy peace from the army before they did too much damage in the country, for they had come unexpectedly and he had not time to collect his army.<sup>1</sup>

In the end this local payment did not amount to enough to stop Swein from plundering; later in the same year he broke the peace by attacking Thetford. This was the first of two recorded explicitly regional payments, suggesting that regional administrations may have been capable of levying sums from a locality autonomously. King Eadred's will may provide a precedent: datable from 951 to 955, his will granted £1,600 to his people, apportioned among the various shires and regions, 'to the end that they may redeem themselves from famine or from a heathen army if they need' (*to þan ðæt hi mege hungor and hæþenne here him fram aceapian gif hie beþurfen*).<sup>2</sup> There was some precedent, therefore, of regional administrations paying off invaders, though how freely they were able to act apart from the king before the 1000s is not quite certain.

Having left England during the great famine of 1005, Swein returned to wreak further destruction in 1006, ravaging Kent, Hampshire and then Berkshire. The *Chronicle* tells us of the difficult decision the king and his witan then faced, based for the winter up in Shropshire far away from the Viking army, but amid a national mood of terror:

Ða waerð hit swa micel ege fram þam here þæt man ne mihte geþencan 7 ne asmeagan hu man hi of eared adrifan sceolde oþþe ðisne eard wið hi gehealdan, forðan þe hi hæfdon ælce scire on Wesseaxum stiðe gemearcod mid btyne 7 mid heregunge. Agan se cyning þa georne to smeagenne wið his witan hwæt him ealum rædlicust þuhte þæt mon ðissim eared gebeorhgan mihte ær he mid ealle fordon wurde. Þa gerædde se cyng 7 his witan eallum þeodscype to þearfe, þeah hit him eallum lað wære, þæt man nyde moste þam here gafol gildan. Þa sende se cyning to þam here 7 him cyðan

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. 1002, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 90; ASC MS C (D, E), s.a. 1004, trans. Whitelock, 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. F. E. Harmer (Cambridge, 1914), no. XXI, 34-5; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, no. 107, 555-6.

het þæt he wolde þæt him grið betweenon beon sceolde, 7 hi ða ealle þæt underfengon, 7 hi man  
metsode þa geond Angelcyn.

Then so great a terror of the Danish army arose that no-one could think or conceive how to drive them from the country, or to defend this country from them, for they had cruelly left their mark on every shire of Wessex with their burning and their harrying. The king then with his councillors began eagerly to consider what might seem to them all most advisable, that this country could be saved before it was completely destroyed. Then the king and his councillors, for the benefit of the whole nation, determined – hateful though it was to all of them – that tribute must needs be paid to the army. Then the king sent to the army to inform them that he desired that there should be a truce between them, and that tribute should be paid them and provisions given, and they all accepted that, and they were supplied with food throughout England.<sup>1</sup>

The annal conveys the sheer sense of desperation that must have pervaded in the king's *witan* and throughout the country at the time. The English had tried lavying an army and fighting in the autumn, but to no avail; indeed the *Chronicle* says that 'the English levy caused the people of this country every sort of harm, so that they profited neither from the native army nor the foreign army' (*seo fyrding dyde þære landleode ælcne hearm, þæt him naðer ne dohte ne inghere ne uhtere*).<sup>2</sup> This suggests the leaders had lost control of their men, but perhaps also alludes to the financial cost of sustaining these soldiers.

We are told by the Berkshire Domesday that in the reign of the Confessor each soldier cost four shillings per hide for two months of military service.

Si rex mittebat alicubi exercitum de v hidis tantum unus miles ibat 7 ad ejus uictum uel stipendium de unauaque hida dabantur ei iiii solidi ad ii menses.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. 1006, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 91-2; ASC MS C (D, E) s.a. 1006; trans. Whitelock, 88. John of Worcester placed this decision-making process under the year 1008, just before the tribute was actually paid. John of Worcester, eds. Darlington and McGurk, II, 460-1.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. 1006, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 91; ASC MS C (D, E) s.a. 1006, trans. Whitelock, 88.

If the king sent an army anywhere, only one soldier went from five hides, and 4s were given him from each hide as subsistence and wages for two months.<sup>1</sup>

During the crisis of 1006, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells us that Æthelred called out ‘the whole nation from Wessex and Mercia’ (*ealne þeodscype of Wesseaxum 7 of Myrcnum*), probably representing the entire hidated portion of England, plus Kent, which was measured for tax purposes in sulungs. Overall that would have amounted to 44,018 hides and 1,157 sulungs, according to Palmer’s electronic version of Domesday Book.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 893, King Alfred divided his force in two during the Viking invasions:

Se cing his fyrd on tuw tonumen swa þæt hi wæron symble healfe æt ham healfe ute buton þam mannum ðe þa burga heoldon.

The king had divided his army into two, so that always half its men were at home, half on service, apart from the men who guarded the boroughs.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot know whether this arrangement was operational under Æthelred, but it seems reasonable that something similar would have applied in his army too, and that maybe around half of the total *fyrd* were paid for and on duty at any one time. If the Berkshire rate of Domesday Book was representative of all assessed England as far back as Æthelred’s reign, then the army from Wessex and Mercia may have cost around £4,518 for two months of service for half of the army, (45,175 hides and sulungs multiplied by 4 shillings divided by 2); that is just over £27,100 annually. The tribute finally paid in 1007 was £36,000<sup>4</sup> – expensive indeed, but perhaps not much more expensive than sustaining an undisciplined and ineffective army for a whole year, in addition to the

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 56v; (Berkshire B, 10).

<sup>2</sup> Data drawn from the statistical notes for each county in J. Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book: Translation, Databases and Scholarly Commentary*, 1086, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2011), UK Data Service, SN: 5694, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5694-1>, accessed 14/08/2017.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS. C, s.a. ‘894’, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 66; ASC MS C, D, s.a. 893, trans. Whitelock, 54.

<sup>4</sup> ASC MS C (D, E), s.a. 1007, trans. Whitelock, 87; ASC MS. C, s.a. 1007, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 92. The payment was £30,000 according to E and F: ASC MS. E, s.a 1007, ed. Irvine, 66; ASC MS. F s.a. 1007, ed. Baker, 101.

theft and damage of property that the Viking army would have wrought. It may even have been the case that the earlier, lesser tributes were cheaper than the cost of fighting.

Whether or not this or a similarly stark equation was running through the minds of the king and his *witan* during the crisis of 1006, the final decision to pay tribute appears to have had the desired effect of the Danish fleet returning home. Æthelred seems to have tried to make the most of this breathing space that he had bought, for in 1008 we are told:

Her bebead se cyng þæt man sceolde ofer eall Angelcyn scyfu fæstlice wyrcean, þæt is ðonne of þrim hund hidum 7 of tynum ænne scegð, 7 of viii hidum helm 7 byrnan.

The king ordered that ships should be built unremittingly over all England, namely a warship from 310 hides, and a helmet and corselet from eight hides.<sup>1</sup>

It seems unlikely that this massive programme of shipbuilding and arms manufacture (called *scyppfyrd* by the *Chronicle* in 1009)<sup>2</sup> was undertaken without monetary payments on a large scale, and that it was not an option or a necessity for the various '310 hides' situated inland to pay in cash or bullion rather than necessarily in materials, labour or crew. Indeed, the idea that money could be paid instead is supported by an earlier entry in 999, in which the 'C' text complains about the raising of an army and navy by order of the king and councillors in order to combat the Danes. There are few details about the 999 attempt to raise a defence, other than its failure, and how:

Ne beheold hit nan þing seo scyppfyrding ne seo landfyrding buton folces geswinc 7 feos spylling 7 heora feonda forðbylding.

it effected nothing – the naval expedition or the land expedition – except the oppression of the people and the waste of money and the encouragement of their enemies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1008, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 92; ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1008, trans. Whitelock, 88.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1009, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 93.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 999, trans. Whitelock, 84-5; ASC MS. C, s.a. 999, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 88.

The 1008 ship levy, ready in 1009, was similarly unsuccessful due to many of the ships being destroyed when the thegn Brihtric took 80 ships to capture 20 ships that the renegade thegn Wulfnoth Cild had stolen. The attempt was unsuccessful, and ‘the toil of all the nation thus lightly [came] to naught’ (*ealles þeodscypes geswinc ðus leohtlice forwurðan*).<sup>1</sup>

These events left the door open for Thorkell the Tall and his fleet to invade later in 1009, and according to John of Worcester, another ‘immense fleet of the Danes’ (*classis Danorum innumerabilis*) under earls Heming and Eilaf came to join him on the Kent coast.<sup>2</sup> Their forces then proceeded toward Canterbury. Before they got there, however, the citizens of Canterbury sued for peace, and they with ‘all the people of East Kent’ (*ealle Eastcentingas*) paid the army tribute of £3,000, which had the effect of the Danes leaving the area and heading off to ravage Hampshire, Sussex and Berkshire instead, and seems to have secured Kent peace until 1011.<sup>3</sup> This is the second case of a tribute paid autonomously by a particular region; it differs slightly to the East Anglian payment of 1004 in that no noble is explicitly said to have been involved in the decision to sue for peace and the subsequent payment of tribute, but rather it was the citizens of Canterbury and the people of East Kent themselves who decided upon it.

For two years, Thorkell and the Danes ravaged various parts of Wessex and East Anglia until in 1011 King Æthelred and his council once again agreed to pay tribute (*gafol*) and provisions to the Danish army. After listing the shires that had been ravaged – amounting to most of England – the *Chronicle* complains that ‘all those disasters befell us through bad policy, in that they were never offered tribute in time’ (*ealle þas ungesælðe us gelumpon þuruh unrædas þæt man nolde him a timan gafol beodon*) – only the ‘C’ text adds ‘nor were they fought against’ (*oppe wið gefeohtan*).<sup>4</sup> Never in the entire period of *gafol* payments does the chronicler explicitly criticise the policy of tribute paying;

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1009, trans. Whitelock, 89; ASC MS. C, *s.a.* 1009, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 93-4.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1009, trans. Whitelock, 89; John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1009, eds. Darlington and McGurk, II, 463.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1009, trans. Whitelock, 89. ASC MS. C, *s.a.* 1009, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 93.

<sup>4</sup> ASC, MS C, *s.a.* 1011, trans. Whitelock, 91; ASC MS. C, *s.a.* 1011, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 95.

here in fact he comes closest to advocating it. How far this reflected public or scholarly opinion at the time, or whether the chronicler said this only with hindsight is difficult to say. However, if the people of East Kent had paid off the army by their own initiative two years earlier, perhaps tribute payment rather than defence had become accepted policy, and was not necessarily unpopular.

While it was the king and his councillors who forged the peace and promised the money in 1011, in 1012 the *Chronicle* records that:

Eadric [Streona] ealdorman 7 ealle þa yldestan witan, gehadode 7 læwede, Angelcynnes to Lundenbyrig toforan þam Eastron; þa wæs Easter dæg on þam datarum Idus Aprilis. 7 hi ðær þa swa lange wærob oþ þæt gafol eal gelæst wæs ofer ða Eastron; þæt wæs ehta 7 feowertig þusend punda [‘E’: viii. þusend punda].

Ealdorman Eadric [Streona] and all the chief councillors of England, ecclesiastical and lay, came to London before Easter – Easter Sunday was on 13 April – and they stayed there until the tribute, namely £48,000 [‘E’: £8,000], was all paid after Easter.<sup>1</sup>

The primacy of the ealdorman and the absence of the king may suggest that the main protagonist in the decision to pay such a large tribute was Eadric, whose by-name ‘Streona’ meant ‘acquisitor’, and who went on to betray both Æthelred and Edmund Ironside in the years to come. Three years earlier, in late 1009, the king, his army and ‘the whole people’ (*eal folc*) are said to have been ready to attack Thorkell’s army, ‘but it was hindered by Ealdorman Eadric then, as it always was’ (*ac hit wæs þa ðuruh Eadric ealdorman gelet swa hit gyt æfre wæs*).<sup>2</sup> Below I explore how taxation may have been a mechanism for transferring wealth from poorer landholders to richer ones; Eadric has aroused suspicion from Lawson in this regard, although whether Eadric was selfishly motivated to

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS C (D), s.a. 1012, trans. Whitelock, 91; ASC MS. C ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 96; ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1012, ed. Irvine, 69.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1009, trans. Whitelock, 89. ASC MS. C, s.a. 1009, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 94.

propose, collect and deliver money to the Vikings as early as this point is uncertain, even if his instincts not to fight them had already been betrayed.<sup>1</sup>

While the payment of 1012 was termed *gafol*, there are grounds for thinking that at least part of it constituted the first stipendiary *heregeld*. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* annal continues:

Ða þæt gafol gelæst wæs, 7 friðapas asworene wæron, þa toferde se here wide swa he ær gegaderod wæs. Ða bugon to þam cyng of ðam here fif 7 feowertig scypa 7 him beheton þæt hi woldon þysne eard healdan, 7 he hi fedan sceolde 7 scrydon.

When that tribute was paid and the oaths of peace were sworn, the Danish army then dispersed as widely as it had been collected. Then 45 ships from that army came over to the king, and they promised him to defend this country, and he was to feed and clothe them.<sup>2</sup>

It is possible that this £48,000 included the price for Thorkell's services, food and clothing over the next year or two. The next recorded payment in 1014 was certainly stipendiary: 'the king ordered £21,000 to be paid to [Thorkell's] army which lay at Greenwich' (*se cyng het gyldan þam here ðe on Grenawic læig .xxi. þusend punda'*), Thorkel having fought for Æthelred against Swein Forkbeard during this time.<sup>3</sup> Whether part or all of the 1012 payment was similarly stipendiary or not, it was the taking on of Thorkell the Tall and his fleet to defend the country in 1012 that seems to have marked the beginning of the *heregeld* era, a supposition that the 'D' text shares in its 1051 entry recording the abolition of the tax 'in the thirty-ninth year after it had been instituted' (*on þam nigon 7 þrittigoðan geara þæs þe he hit ongunnon hæfde*).<sup>4</sup>

Yet the institution of stipendiary *heregeld* in 1012 did not quite mark the the end of tributary *gafol* payments. In 1016, Æthelred's son Edmund Ironside was defeated by Swein's son Cnut at the Battle

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 54-5954; Lawson, 'Collection of Danegeld', 732-4.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1012, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 97; ASC, MS C (D, E) s.a. 1012, trans. Whitelock, 92.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1013, trans. Whitelock, 93; ASC, MS. C, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 99.

<sup>4</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition*, Volume 6, MS. D: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices s.a. 1052 [sic], ed. G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996), 69; trans. Whitelock, 116.

of Ashingdon in Essex, after a year of desperate fighting. On Ealdorman Eadric's advice, 'the kings met at Alney and established their friendship there both with pledge and with oath and fixed the payment for the Danish army' (*þa cynegas comon togædere æt Olanege 7 hira freondscypre þær gefæstnodon ge mid wedde ge mid aþe 7 þæt gyld setton wið þone here*).<sup>1</sup> We are then told that Edmund succeeded to Wessex, and Cnut to Mercia, although the latter must have by now controlled East Anglia and the Danelaw also. After this 'the Londoners came to terms with the [Cnut's] army and bought peace for themselves' (*Lundenwaru griðode wið þone here 7 him frið gebohten*); and that the Danish army brought its ships into London and took up winter quarters there.

According to the 1018 entry, the price of the new 'friendship' between Edmund and the conquering Danish king was astronomical for the English people:

Ðæt gafol gelæst ofer eal Angelcyn – þæt wæs ealles twa 7 hundseofontig þusend punda – buton ðam þe seo burhwaru on Lunden geald – þæt wæs endlyfte healf þusend punda.

The tribute was paid all over England, namely £72,000 in all, apart from what the citizens of London paid, namely £10,500.<sup>2</sup>

After Edmund Ironside died in November 1016, shortly after his treaty with Cnut, the Danish king succeeded to Wessex as well as those territories – East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria and London – which he held already. If the total £82,500 tribute was distributed reasonably equitably around all the regions, then London's payment of £10,500 suggests it was deemed either to account for an eighth of England's total wealth, or else for its disposable silver wealth, the latter being more plausible considering its role as a trading centre.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. C (D, E), s.a. 1016, trans. Whitelock, 96; ASC MS C, s.a. 1016, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 103.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1018, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 104; ASC, MS C (D, E), s.a. 1018, trans. Whitelock, 97.

## ‘Heregeld’: Payments to Scandinavian mercenaries, 1012-1051

The 1014 payment of £21,000 to Thorkell’s army at Greenwich has traditionally been interpreted as the first payment of stipendiary *heregeld*, and it is indeed the first time we can confidently say that a payment was of this type, although it is possible that the payment of 1012 was the first. While it was not described by the *Chronicle* as *heregeld*, it was ‘£21,000 to be paid (*gyldan*) to the army (*here*)’, so the vocabulary at least approached the word the *Chronicle* uses in 1040.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps more significantly, the 1014 entry does *not* say that it was *gafol*, the term mentioned in all other entries of payments to Scandinavians before this point, except for local payments of East Anglia in 1004, and of East Kent in 1009.<sup>2</sup> It seems probable, therefore, that this payment was seen as being distinct from previous tributes.

We then hear nothing of *heregeld* until 1040. It may have been temporarily discontinued after Thorkell left England later in 1014, however, there is evidence that it was an ongoing payment throughout King Cnut’s reign, and indeed right up until 1051. I argue here, in agreement with Hooper, that the nature of the tax’s purpose did not fundamentally change: it was to pay naval mercenaries, who were known in England by the 1030s at the latest as *lithsmenn* (literally, ‘fleet-men’).<sup>3</sup> This first appears as a term in English sources in 1035, when the ‘E’ text says that ‘Earl Leofric and almost all the thegns north of the Thames and the fleet-men in London chose Harold to the regency of all England’ (*Leofric eorl 7 mæst ealle þa þegenas be norðan Temese 7 þa liðsmen on Lunden gecuron Harold to healdes ealles Englelandes*).<sup>4</sup> We know that a fleet was in the service of Cnut at various points during his reign, possibly continuously. After the great *gafol* payment of 1018,

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1014, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 99; ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1014, trans. Whitelock, 93. John of Worcester puts the figure at £30,000: John of Worcester, s.a. 1014, eds. Darlington and McGurk, 478.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1004, 1009, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 90, 93.

<sup>3</sup> N. Hooper, ‘Military Developments in the Reign of Cnut’, in A. R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London, 1994), 97-100.

<sup>4</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1035, trans. Whitelock, 102-3; ASC MS E, s.a. ‘1036’, ed. Irvine, 76.

we are told that 40 ships remained with the king.<sup>1</sup> When Cnut went home to Denmark in 1019, the ‘D’ text says he went with nine ships, possibly meaning that 31 ships remained in England.<sup>2</sup> Cnut is then described as being ‘with his ships’ (*mid his scypon*) in 1022 on the Isle of Wight.<sup>3</sup> In 1026, the ‘E’ text tells us that ‘King Cnut went with ships to Denmark’ (*Cnut cyng to Denmearcon mid scipon*), and there fought a Swedish force at the Battle of the Helgeå.<sup>4</sup> During the battle ‘very many men on King Cnut’s side were destroyed, both Danish and English men’ (*wæs swiðe feala manna forfaren on Cnutes cynges healfe, ægðer ge deniscra manna ge engliscra*). It is unclear here whether the English were intermingled with Danish mercenaries, or whether they constituted a different type of army, raised by different means. Two years after this defeat, in 1028 Cnut then conquered Norway ‘with 50 ships’ (*mid fiftig scipum*) – an attack that was launched from England.<sup>5</sup>

Then in 1040, we are told of what was apparently the normal state of affairs under Cnut and his successor King Harold I:

On [Harolds] dagum man geald .xvi. scipan æt ælcere hamulan .viii. marc, eall swa man ær dyde on Cnutes cynges dagum.

In [Harold’s] time 16 ships were paid for at 8 marks to the rowlock, just as had been done in King Cnut’s time.<sup>6</sup>

It is probable that those who manned the rowlocks can be identified as the *lithsmenn* mentioned in the 1035 entry, quite probably those who manned Cnut’s ships from 1018 and onwards through successive campaigns.<sup>7</sup> The ‘E’ text for 1040 then continues with criticism of the new king Harthacnut’s military policy; it describes how soon after the king’s arrival in Sandwich:

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1018, trans. Whitelock, 96.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E), *s.a.* 1019, trans. Whitelock, 97; ASC, MS. D, *s.a.* 1019, ed. Cubbin, 63.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E) *s.a.* 1022, trans. Whitelock, 98; ASC, MS. C, *s.a.* 1022, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, 104.

<sup>4</sup> ASC, MS E, *s.a.* 1026, trans. Whitelock, 100; ASC MS E, *s.a.* ‘1025’, ed. Irvine, 75.

<sup>5</sup> ASC, MS C (D, E, F), *s.a.* 1028, trans. Whitelock, 100-1; ASC MS E, *s.a.* 1028, ed. Irvine, 75-6.

<sup>6</sup> ASC MS. E, *s.a.* (1039), ed. Irvine, 77; ASC, MS E (F), *s.a.* 1040, trans. Whitelock, 105.

<sup>7</sup> ASC MS E, *s.a.* 1040, trans. Whitelock, 105; ASC MS E, *s.a.* ‘1039’, ed. Irvine, 77.

[Harðacnuts] rædes men hit syððon strange forguldon, ða hi gerædden þet man geald .lxii. scipon æt ælcere hamelan viii marc.

[Harthacnut's] advisers afterwards requited it very sternly when they decreed that 62 ships should be paid for at eight marks to the rowlock.<sup>1</sup>

Then, in 1041:

Ðet here geold [wæs] gelæst, þet wæron .xxi. þusend punda and .xcviii. punda, mann geald syððan .xxxii. scipon .xi. þusend punda 7 .xlviii. punda.

The *heregeld* was paid, namely £21,099, and later £11,048 were paid for 32 ships.<sup>2</sup>

In these two annals, an association is made between the *heregeld* and the mercenaries who manned the fleet. The implicit link made by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* between *lithsmenn* and *heregeld* continues during the reign of Edward the Confessor. In 1049, according to the C text, King Edward:

scylode ix scypps of male, 7 hi foron mid scypon mid eallon anweg 7 belifon v scypa bæftan, 7 se cing heom behet xii monað gyld.

paid off nine ships, and they went away, ships and all, and five ships were left behind and the king promised them twelve months' pay.<sup>3</sup>

The E-text, placing this event one year later in 1050, says that

Her on þisum geare wæs mycel gemot on Lundene to midfestene, 7 man sette ut ix Litsmanna scipa, 7 fif belifan wiðæftan.

In this year there was a big council at London in the middle of Lent, and nine ships of the *lithsmenn* were dismissed and five remained.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS. E, s.a. (1039), ed. Irvine, 77; ASC, MS E (F), s.a. 1040, trans. Whitelock, 105.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS. E, s.a. (1040), ed. Irvine, 77; ASC, MS E (F), s.a. 1041, trans. Whitelock, 106.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS C, s.a. 1049, trans Whitelock, 114.; ASC MS C, s.a. 1049, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 111.

<sup>4</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1050, trans Whitelock, 115, with 'lithsmenn' replacing Whitelock's 'sailors'; ASC MS E, s.a. '1047', ed. Irvine, 80.

These annals suggest that King Edward had been keeping a force of 14 ships, which may in turn suggest that his *heregeld* levies were similar in size or perhaps even less than those of Cnut and Harold Harefoot, who we are told employed 16 ships. Given that Harthacnut's second *heregeld* levy of £11,048 was around half his first levy, and that it paid for a fleet roughly half the size of the first (32 versus 62), we may expect Cnut, Harold and the Confessor's *heregeld* to have been roughly half of £11,048 – perhaps £5,500 for Cnut and Harold to pay for 16 ships, or £4,800 for Edward to pay for 14, if it cost roughly the same to pay for each ship. The 'C' text then says under the year 1050, one year after it says nine ships were paid off, leaving just five left, that King Edward 'laid off all the lithsmenn' (*sette ealle þa litsmen of male*).<sup>1</sup> These final five ships might then only then have cost around £1,700. In 1051, the D-text then tells us that the *heregeld* was abolished in the thirty-ninth year after it was instituted, that is from the year 1012, when Thorkell and his mercenary Scandinavian fleet were first employed.<sup>2</sup> As Hooper says, after 1051, the lithsmenn 'disappear, lock, stock and barrel' from the sources.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the link between the *heregeld* and the *lithsmenn* is made for the whole period from 1012-1051, even if it is never made absolutely explicit. In all probability, it was when the *lithsmenn* were finally dismissed that it was decided that the *heregeld* should be discontinued, for the purpose of the latter was to pay for the former.

The reasons behind Edward's abolition of *heregeld* are not obvious. Below, I explore how it could have come about partly as a result of a lack of silver in the economy; the 'Small Flan' coinage of 1048-1050 may not have been large enough to cover two or three payments of around £4,800 each.<sup>4</sup> But political opposition to the *heregeld* may have emerged in many different forms and from all parts of society; it may have been perceived by many as symbolic of an oppressive Danish regime, as well as a real material burden. Karl Leyser interpreted the event as Edward taking a rare opportunity

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS C, s.a. 1050, trans Whitelock, 116, with 'lithsmenn' replacing Whitelock's 'sailors'; ASC MS C, s.a. 1050, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 112.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS D, s.a. 1051, trans. Whitelock, 116; ASC MS D, s.a. '1052', ed. Cubbin, 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Hooper, 'Military Developments', 99.

<sup>4</sup> See below, 81.

to seize more power in a nation dominated by mercenaries: 'it was to get rid of these janissaries that Edward the Confessor, in his brief moment of independence, abolished the *heregeld*, the key to the housecarls' stranglehold on the royal palace.'<sup>1</sup> While his equating of *lithsmenn* and housecarls is flawed (as is explained below), the idea that Edward was throwing off the mercenaries from around his neck is at least a plausible explanation for his abolition of *heregeld*.

An alternative perspective might see the threat of English rebellion and anti-Scandinavian violence as being a factor in Edward's mind when he abolished *heregeld*. We may recall the nativist nature of the St Brice's Day massacre of 1002, in which frenzied English mobs targeted Danish warriors who had been extracting what was essentially protection money from the local population.<sup>2</sup> It seems unlikely that these resentments towards Scandinavian mercenaries would have much abated among many parts of society fifty years later. Indeed, in 1041, the year of Harthacnut's greatly increased *heregeld*, a bloody rebellion broke out over the tax in Worcester, which like in 1002 may have been motivated by ethnic tension as well as financial frustration. According to John of Worcester, who gave a more complete account of the 'C' and 'D' versions of this event:

Rex Anglorum Heardecanutus suos huscarlas misit per omnes regni sui prouincias ad exigendum quod indixerat tributum, ex quibus duos, Feader scilicet et Turstan, Wigornenses prouinciales cum ciuibus, seditione exorta, in cuiusdam turre Wigornensis monasterii solario quo celandi causa confugerant iiii nonas Maii, feria ii, peremerunt.<sup>3</sup>

Harthacnut, king of the English, sent his housecarls through all of the provinces of his kingdom to extort the tribute he imposed. Two of them, Feader and Thurstan, were slain on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May by the country people of Worcestershire and the townspeople, in an upper room in one of the towers of Worcester monastery to which they had fled to hide when a disturbance had broken out.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed., T. Reuter (London, 1994), 109.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 26-27.

<sup>3</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1041, 532-3; ASC MS C (D), *s.a.* 1041, trans. Whitelock, 106.

This murder of the housecarls, the king's Scandinavian household warriors, was taken so seriously by Harthacnut and the Anglo-Scandinavian nobility that no fewer than five earls, English and Scandinavian, 'and all of the other English ealdormen and almost all [the king's] housecarls' (*et ceteros totius Anglie comites, omnesque ferme suos huscarlas*) went with an army to suppress the rebellion and avenge the murder, under orders 'to slay all the men if they could, to plunder and burn the city, and to lay waste the whole province' (*omnes uiros si possent occiderent, ciuitatem depredatam incenderent, totamque prouinciam deuastarent*).<sup>1</sup> Although most of the townspeople escaped, Worcester and the surrounding countryside was largely destroyed. This was an extraordinary show of force on the part of the government, in what was the first recorded rebellion over taxation in England. We may wonder whether the grievances that caused this rebellion may have loomed so large in the mind of Harthacnut's successor King Edward that he never raised taxes to such high levels again, and in 1051 abolished *heregeld* altogether.

## The beginnings of national land taxation

How was all the money for *gafol* and *heregeld* raised? This section argues that, although the very earliest *gafol* payments may have been paid for only by certain regions, from 1002 onwards all parts of the kingdom were expected to contribute. It also argues that all parts of society had to pay, including the king, the church, the nobility and the peasantry; and that the primary means for raising the money was most likely to have been direct land taxation based on the hide. This section will also deal with those land sales and confiscations associated with Cnut's *heregeld* as well as the possibilities of the abuse of the system by the rich and powerful.

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<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1041, 522-3

In 994, King Æthelred issued a charter to Æscwig, Bishop of Dorchester, confirming the latter's ownership of 30 hides in Buckinghamshire, given to him in exchange for the money he had lent to Archbishop Sigeric in order to pay the Danes £90 in silver and 200 mancuses of gold (equivalent to £115 overall, one mancus being worth 30d), which Sigeric had promised to pay them in return for the sparing of Canterbury, as they were in the process of devastating Kent.<sup>1</sup> Although the charter is datable to 994, Sigeric's original payment to the Danes may have been in 991. The fact that the charter says that Sigeric 'had not so much as a single penny' (*nec unum tantummodo nummum haberet*) suggests that his reserves may have already been depleted by the 991 tribute he himself proposed; it must have been unusual for the see of Dorchester to have more cash available than the far wealthier see of Canterbury.<sup>2</sup> When we consider how active Sigeric was in the decision to pay tribute in 991, and his apparent lack of money soon afterwards, it does seem possible that a large amount of that first tribute of £10,000 was shouldered by the archbishop himself. It is just possible that in 991 only those areas which had been badly affected by the fighting were expected to pay; the south-east of England, where the archbishop was the largest landholder.

The peace treaty known as II Æthelred, made with the Viking army in 994, may also allude to peace being paid for regionally, although this time by both secular and religious leaders. It states:

Ðæt ærost, þæt woroldfrið stande betweox Æthelrede cyng 7 eallum his leodscipe 7 eallum ðam here, ðe se cyng þæt feoh sealde, æfter ðam formalan, ðe Sigeric arcebiscop 7 Æðelwerd ealdormann 7 Ælfric ealdorman worhton, ða hu abædon æt ðam cyng, þæt hy mostan ðam læppan frið gebicgean, ðe hy under cyng hand ofer hæfdon.

Firstly, that a general peace be established between King Æthelred with all his people and all the army to which the king gave the tribute, according to the terms which Archbishop Sigeric, Ealdorman

<sup>1</sup> S 882, printed in *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, ed. J. M. Kemble (London, 1839-48), no. 689.

<sup>2</sup> M. F. Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2007), 201-4. According to Giandrea's calculations, Canterbury's lands were valued at £1,333 in 1066, Dorchester's at £214.

Æthelweard and Ealdorman Ælfric made, when they obtained permission from the king to purchase peace for the areas which they had rule over, under the king.<sup>1</sup>

This is a difficult text to interpret, but it seems to imply that the archbishop and the two ealdormen had already negotiated at least a temporary peace for their own areas and had perhaps handed over some tribute already. Æthelweard was ealdorman of the Western Provinces (*Occidentalium Prouinciarum dux*) and Ælfric was ealdorman of 'the provinces of Hampshire' (*Wentaniensium Prouinciarum dux*).<sup>2</sup> We are told that the Vikings had wrought destruction on 'Essex, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire, and finally they seized horses and rode as widely as they wished (*7 ridon him swawide swa hi woldan*), and continued to do indescribable damage', implying that Æthelweard's lands as well as thelred's and Sigeric's were either already affected or under serious threat.<sup>3</sup> After peace was made and tribute promised, the Viking army took up winter quarters in Southampton, 'and they were provisioned throughout all the West Saxon kingdom' (*7 hi mon þær fedde geond eall Westseaxena rice*). Certainly, the south of the country was the most affected, and it seems likely that it therefore shouldered most of the burden. Some of II Æthelred's clauses indeed suggest that the treaty did not apply to all of England, but only to those regions where the truce was agreed (the numbering is conventional in modern editions):

2. And every trading ship which enters an estuary is to have peace, even if it is a ship to which the truce does not apply (*unfriðscyp*), provided it is not driven ashore.

2.1 And even if it is driven ashore, and takes refuge in any borough included in the truce (*fryðbyrig*), and the men escape into the borough, the men and what they bring with them are to have peace.

3. And each of the men to whom this truce applies is to have peace both on land and on water, both within the estuary and outside.

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<sup>1</sup> *Die Gesetze*, ed. Liebermann, I, 220; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, 437-8.

<sup>2</sup> Their titles are used in S 891, a charter in favour of Old Minster, Winchester in 997, printed in *Codex*, ed. Kemble, no. 698.

<sup>3</sup> *ASC*, MS C (D, E), s.a. 994, trans. Whitelock, 83; *ASC*, MS C, s.a. 994, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 87.

3.1 If a subject of King Æthelred to whom this truce applies (*friðman*) comes into a district where it does not apply (*unfriðland*), and the army comes there, his ship and all his goods are to have peace.

3.2 If he has drawn his ship ashore or built a shed or pitched a tent, he and all his goods are to enjoy peace there.

3.3 If he brings his goods into a house among the goods of men outside the truce (*unfriðmanna*), he is to forfeit his goods, but himself to have peace and life, if he announces himself.

3.4. If the man to whom the truce applies (*friðmann*) flees or fights, and will not announce himself, he is to lie uncompensated for, if he is killed.<sup>1</sup>

The distinction being drawn between men to whom the truce applied (*friðmanna*) and those to whom it did not apply (*unfriðmanna*), and similarly to geographical regions where it did and did not apply (*fryðbyrig* and *unfryðland*, and presumably *unfryðbyrig* and *fryðland*), is not made explicit. It may be that the truce applied to all Englishmen and Danes in England, the term *friðmanna* describing all of them - but then to whom does *unfriðmanna* refer? Similarly, what was *unfriðland*, and where was a *fryðbyrig* located, as opposed to an *unfryðbyrig*? It could be that these districts and boroughs were in reference to foreign lands, yet it could also be that there were parts of England in which the truce did not apply, despite the theoretically universal peace (*woroldfrið*) established in clause one 'between King Æthelred with all his people and all the army to which the king paid tribute' (*betweox Æthelrede cynges 7 eallum his leodscipes 7 eallum ðam here ðe se cyng þæt feoh sealde*).

It is quite possible, therefore, that national taxation on landholding, assessed on the hide, was not involved for the earliest *gafol* payments of 991 or of 994; these might have only been regional tributes, approved by the king, but paid for largely by the local magnates and prelates. The prominent roles of Sigeric and Ealdormen Æthelweard and Ælfric in negotiating peace, as well as the

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<sup>1</sup> *Die Gesetze*, ed. Liebermann, 200; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, 437-8.

apparent bankruptcy of Sigeric by 994, suggest that perhaps one or all of these men shouldered a disproportionate burden – particularly when we remember that it was their lands and property which were most at risk. Quite possibly such an arrangement would still have involved the squeezing of the lesser nobility and peasantry in affected regions at some stage, but perhaps not on a national, uniform or regulated basis.

It does, however, seem very likely that ordinary taxpayers, landowners both great and small, were involved systematically in providing the bulk of the money to pay the later *gafol*, and that the payment was assessed on the hide. Here I disagree with Simon Keynes, who places great emphasis on the distinction between *gafol* and *heregeld*, believing *gafol* to have only been raised partly, if at all, by land taxation, and *heregeld* as the only true precursor to the ‘Danegeld’ as that tax became known by the late eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> Keynes’s belief is rooted not just in the difference of terminology, but crucially in the belief that he shares with Gillingham that ‘£20,000 was about as much as could be raised by regular taxation’.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Gillingham, Keynes sees the *gafol* figures as credible payments, but he argues that ‘while some part of each payment may have been paid for by a special tax levied for the purpose ... a greater part would have come from the accumulated treasure hoards and contingency funds of those whose high office made them responsible for finding the wherewithal to pay, supplemented by whatever could be raised from the selling of land and property, and by whatever could be gathered from other sources’.<sup>3</sup> Williams also makes much of the distinction between *gafol* and *heregeld*, and seems sympathetic to Keynes’s point of view on how it was raised, although she says that ‘it is possible, perhaps even probable, that *gafol* was raised, in part at least, by a fixed levy on the hide’. Her language suggests that she is marginally less sceptical than Keynes of the idea that all of the *gafol* might have been raised through tax.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keynes, ‘Historical Context’, 100-102.

<sup>2</sup> Keynes, ‘Historical Context’, 100.

<sup>3</sup> Keynes, ‘Historical Context’, 101-2.

<sup>4</sup> A. Williams, ‘A Note on ‘Danegeld’’, in A. Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: The Ill Counsellor King* (Hambledon, 2003), Appendix, 152-3.

There is important evidence pointing towards national land taxation during the *gafol* era. The will of Archbishop Ælfric, Sigeric's successor, datable 1002 x 1005, records that:

He forgeaf on Godes est Centingan þæne borh þe hy hym sceoldan, 7 Middelsexon 7 Suðrion þ feoh þ heom foresceat.

He forgave the people of Kent the debt which they owed him, and the people of Middlesex and Surrey the money which he advanced to them.<sup>1</sup>

This may well refer to debts incurred by the *gafol* paid in 1002. The reference to 'shires' and to 'the people' is striking: what else other than taxation could incur a significant debt at a shire level, with the burden apparently shared among the people? Could it be that such a public tax raised by a shire was so novel that the people of Kent, Middlesex and Surrey were caught out by it, so the archbishop saw fit to pay it in advance for them? It is possible that merely a demand for cash was made from each shire, and that a formal national taxation structure was not yet employed. However, 'the people of Middlesex and Surrey' must have been expected to raise the money somehow, and it is impossible to conceive of a way that they can have been expected to do so communally other than through taxation, even if methods of collection were possibly local, and differed from shire to shire.

A slightly later source, Archbishop Wulfstan's *The Sermon of the Wolf to the English*, dated 1014, complained of the 'monstrous taxes that have afflicted us greatly'.<sup>2</sup> The word translated as 'monstrous taxes' by Whitelock is *ungilda*. This may be more literally translated 'evil-tax', but it could also mean 'evil-tribute'. This then is not quite positive evidence of formal direct taxation, and could

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<sup>1</sup> S 1488, *Charters of Abingdon Abbey Part 2*, ed. S. E. Kelly (Anglo-Saxon Charters VIII, Oxford, 2001), no. 133, 517-19. Kelly uses the translation from *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church*, vol. 1, A.D. 871-1204, eds. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), 237-42.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. D. Whitelock (London, 1939), 30; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, 930. The dating of this sermon has been contested, but Simon Keynes has persuasively argued it belongs to 1014, S. Keynes, 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006-7 and 1009-12', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36 (2007), 203-13.

even be a reference to the 1014 *heregeld* rather than the 1012 *gafol*; however, it certainly suggests that the burden of payment was already affecting most areas of society already by 1014.

William of Malmesbury describes how Abbot Brihtwold of Malmesbury Abbey (984-1014) alienated church lands in order to pay the Danes during the reign of Æthelred:

Brihtwoldus, ut ex scriptis Anglicis animaduertimus, multa incommoda cenobio intulit, terras uel omnino distrahendo uel paruo pretio inuadando. Sed enim excusatur, quod magno illo geldo, qui tunc Danis dabatur, oppressus unicum inueniebat malorum remedium.

Brihtwold, as I observe in English records, caused much trouble to the house [of Malmesbury], by selling off land altogether or mortgaging it for too low a sum. His excuse is that he was a victim of the great geld that was paid to the Danes at that time, and had no other way of solving his problems.<sup>1</sup>

It is unclear which 'geld' these sources are referring to, or indeed if it refers to several or all of the *gafol* and *heregeld* from 991 up until 1012/1014. But the word *geldum* did imply land taxation when William of Malmesbury was writing in the first half of the twelfth century, so this may be more evidence for taxation rather than *ad hoc* levies.

Even if this evidence does not convince, it would seem legitimate to think that it would have been politically impossible to keep up paying tributes on an *ad hoc* basis for long; the burden must surely have been distributed among the various shires and all parts of society from an early point, if not from 991 itself, to avoid a great deal of resentment between regions and between factions in the *witan*. The administrative structures of shires, hundreds and hides were already in place, which would have made a *gafol* burden relatively easy to distribute along similar lines to military assessment, and we should note the cases of East Anglia and East Kent in 1004 and 1009 respectively, when local leaders were able to quickly raise money from the population, quite

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<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2007), 614-5.

probably using existing forms of assessment.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere in this thesis I argue that the largest recorded *gafol* payments were levied in coin drawn from the nation's high GDP, trade surplus and mint output, and that while church and aristocratic stocks of treasure did contribute to *gafol* payment, they could not, as Keynes has argued, have provided the bulk..

Keynes also suggested that land was sold by the great to raise money to pay for *ad hoc gafol* demands.<sup>2</sup> While sales of land clearly did occur, apparently in large numbers, this does not mean it was sold to pay for arbitrarily determined, or negotiated, contributions rather than assessed land tax demands. We know that the selling of land was used as a method to pay later *heregeld* under Cnut. A charter of Abbot Eadric of St Peter's Gloucester, datable c.1022, grants lands in Gloucestershire to a certain Stamarcotus in return for:

xv libris, quibus redemi omnia alia praedia monasterii ab illa magna heregeldi exactione, quae per totam Angliam fuit.

15 pounds with which I have redeemed all the other lands of the monastery from the exaction of a great heregeld, which was [paid] throughout all of England.<sup>3</sup>

If land was sold to pay for *heregeld*, which we know for certain was a land tax, then there is no reason to think that the sales of land to pay *gafol* were different; in all likelihood it was to pay for land taxation, because *gafol* was raised chiefly by land taxation.

### **Land alienation and confiscation during the *gafol* and *heregeld* era**

As we have already seen to an extent in the cases of the Canterbury archdiocese and Malmesbury Abbey, an important feature of this period is how great men and institutions, and indeed the king, were forced to sell or mortgage land in order to pay for *gafol* and *heregeld*. This has already been

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 27, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Keynes, 'Historical Context', 101-2.

<sup>3</sup> S 1424, printed in *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ed. W. H. Hart (Rolls Soc. No. 33, 1863), I, 8-9.

explored by Lawson; here I revisit the evidence, explore some of implications of the amounts involved, and re-affirm Lawson's view that the system of confiscation for non-payment probably benefited richer landholders at the expense of the poor.<sup>1</sup> Land prices in general seem to have worked inexplicably in the late Anglo-Saxon era: Naismith has shown that most of the 94 post- AD 900 charters detailing land sales fetched under 500d per hide (£2 1s 8d), although it is difficult to know how many of these cheap sales were mortgage redemptions, gifts or counter-gifts.<sup>2</sup> Some estates however were sold for a great deal more – there are eight examples of land being sold for more than 2,000d (£8 6s 8d) per hide. When ought to bear in mind in any such study that it is clear from Domesday Book that some hides were worth much more than others.<sup>3</sup> We also need only see how much land values could fluctuate between 1066 and 1086 to understand that the 1066 Domesday values would be very different to, say, 1016 values. Thus, we have no reliable guide as to how cheap or expensive any given land sale was, but we may at least compare such sales to each other, and in the case of pledges of land, work out whether the pledged estates were held for long enough by the creditor to recoup his money.

We have already seen Archbishop Sigeric pledging 30 hides at Risborough, Buckinghamshire, to the bishop of Dorchester in order to raise £115 to help pay Vikings, in or before 994. The estate was, however, returned to Sigeric's successor Ælfric, sometime before the latter's death in 1005.<sup>4</sup> Monks Risborough made profits of £16 per year in 1066 according to Domesday Book, so had the see of Dorchester kept Risborough for eight years, it would have made £128, that is the £115 paid plus a modest surplus.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lawson, 'Collection of Danegeld', 723-34.

<sup>2</sup> R. Naismith, 'Payments for Land Privilege in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, XLI (2012), 306.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 105-109.

<sup>4</sup> Monks Risborough is included in Ælfric's will: it was bequeathed to Christ Church Canterbury: S 1488, printed in *Charters of Abingdon Abbey Part 2*, ed. Kelly, no. 133, 517-522.

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 143v, (Buckinghamshire 2, 3).

We can also return to the charter of Abbot Eadric of Gloucester, datable to c.1022. It grants a lease for life of the lands Badgeworth and Hatherley, Gloucestershire to one Stamarcotus for £15.<sup>1</sup>

Badgeworth was rated at 8 hides and was valued at £15 annually by Domesday TRE, and was in the possession of a certain Ælfstan; Hatherley was held by a certain thegn, Eadmaer, and formed part of a 2 hide estate of unknown value.<sup>2</sup> It does not look as if the land relinquished in this charter was returned to St Peter's, and that therefore it was sold outright, in return for Stamarcotus's £15. If Badgeworth made £15 per year in 1022, as it did in 1066, then along with Hatherley, Stamarcotus's purchase might have more than paid for itself within one year. It seems reasonable to infer that this was probably quite a cheap sale, especially bearing in mind Risborough was mortgaged for much more.

The most plentiful charters of land sales from this period were those of the king. There are five charters of 1002 that record beneficiaries paying for land given to them by Æthelred. These are the first such charters, recording sales, of Æthelred's reign, which strongly suggests they were connected with the tributes of 1002.

- 1) S 900, AD 1002.<sup>3</sup> The king granted to his faithful minister Ælfhelm, 5 hides in Codicote, Hertfordshire, in return for 152 mancuses, or £19 (1 mancus being worth 30d). This manor was apparently given later by Ælfhelm to St Albans Abbey, and still belonged to St Albans Abbey in 1066, and along with 3 additional hides added to the manor at Oxwyce was valued at £12 according to Domesday Book.<sup>4</sup> Therefore Codicote itself was probably worth around £7 10s per annum in 1066. If that was also the case in 1002, then Ælfhelm would have started making profit on the land after just two and a half years.

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<sup>1</sup> S 1424, see above, 48.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 167 (Gloucestershire 31, 11); GDB, 162v (Gloucestershire 1, 3).

<sup>3</sup> S 900, printed in *Charters of St Albans*, ed. J. Crick (Anglo-Saxon Charters XII, Oxford, 2007), 174-8.

<sup>4</sup> S 900 has a passage recording Ælfhelm's grant of Codicote to St Albans' Abbey; however, this is believed to be an interpolation by S. Keynes 'A Lost Cartulary of St Albans Abbey' in *Anglo Saxon England*, vol. 22 (1993), 274. By 1066 however, the land was certainly part of St Albans' estate, GDB, 135v (Hertfordshire 10, 5).

- 2) S 901, AD 1002. In return for 50 talents, the king granted 24 hides at Dumbleton, Gloucestershire, to Archbishop Ælfric, as well as 2 hides at Aston Somerville, Gloucestershire and 5 hides of woodland at Fleferth.<sup>1</sup> Dumbleton was in two parts at Domesday, rated at 7.5 hides and 1 hide – those belonging to St Mary Abingdon church and to one Sæwine respectively. They were valued at £12 and £1 per annum in 1066.<sup>2</sup> Aston Somerville was rated at 6 hides in 1066, and one Earnsige held it – it was valued at £6 TRE.<sup>3</sup> The land at Fleferth is unidentifiable. ‘Talents’ denoted a sum of money of flexible and imprecise meaning, so it is impossible to know how expensively this land was sold. Moreover, the differences between the hidages recorded in the charter and the Domesday hidages are sufficiently large to make it questionable that the estates correspond.
- 3) S 902, AD 1002. The king granted 10 hides at Haseley, Oxfordshire, to Godwine his ‘faithful minister,’ in return for 30 mancuses.<sup>4</sup> In Domesday Book there is a manor at Haseley rated at 9 hides worth £7 per annum TRE, but the 1066 holder is unspecified.<sup>5</sup> This is probably the same manor as the Haseley described by the charter, probably modern-day Little Haseley. If so, and if it produced the same amount of surplus per annum in 1002, Godwine would have made a profit from the land after little more than six months.

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<sup>1</sup> S 901, printed in *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, Kelly, II, no. 132, 512-517.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 166 (Gloucestershire 13, 1); GDB, 167 (Gloucestershire 34, 13).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 169v, (Gloucestershire 66, 4).

<sup>4</sup> S 902, printed in *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, ed. Kelly II, no. 131, 509-512.

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 155v (Oxfordshire 7, 7).

- 4) S 903, AD 1002. King Æthelred granted to Westminster Abbey 2 hides at *Berewican*, near Tyburn, Middlesex, in return for 100 mancuses of gold (that is £12 10s).<sup>1</sup> *Berewican* is not precisely identifiable, and it is not found in Domesday Book.
- 5) S 905, AD 1002.<sup>2</sup> King Æthelred grants to a different Æthelred land in the city of Canterbury for £7. No hidage is given, but the charter says it was 15 rods in length and 8 in width; conventionally that is three quarters of an acre.<sup>3</sup> No doubt at least part of the reason it was so expensive was because this was urban land.

Slightly later charters make it explicit that such sales or mortgages of royal land were to generate money to pay tributes:

- 6) S 912, AD 1005.<sup>4</sup> This diploma, confirming the permanent transfer of land at Flamstead and St Albans says that Æthelred had exchanged 61 hides of land at Flamstead (1 hide), St Albans (5 hides) and also of 'Eadulfintun' (55 hides) to Abbot Leofric of St Albans in return for 'two hundred pounds of gold and silver' (*ducentas libras auri et argenti*) in order to help pay 'that heavy tribute to the Danes' (*illud graue uectigal Danis*). Leofric (abbot from 982-1007) returned to the king the 55 hides at 'Eadulfintun' in his will, probably by 1005, so the initial transfer looks like a mortgage to help pay the 991, 994 or 1002 tributes.<sup>5</sup> The abbey held a 10-hide manor at St Albans rendering £24 per year in 1066.<sup>6</sup> If the 5 hides sold by the king were 50 percent of that value, then the estate might have been making that abbey £12 per year. If this were reflective of the case in 1002, if that is when the transfer was made, then

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<sup>1</sup> S 903, printed in J. A. Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster: A Study of the Abbey under Norman Rule* (Cambridge, 1911), 167-8.

<sup>2</sup> S 905, printed in *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, ed. W. B. Sanders (3 vols., Southampton, 1878-1884), III, 36. Translated in *EHD*, ed. Whitelock, 585-6.

<sup>3</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 373.

<sup>4</sup> S 912, printed in *Charters of St Albans*, ed. Crick, no. 11, 178-82.

<sup>5</sup> S 1488, printed in *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, ed. Kelly, II, no. 133, 517-522.

<sup>6</sup> There is no Kingsbury in the Hertfordshire Domesday, but it was a manor on the outskirts of St Albans, so the best assumption is that these hides are labelled under St Albans, GDB, 135v (Hertfordshire 10, 5).

the land at St Albans alone would have recovered the £200 by the year 1019. We do not know the Domesday value of Eadulfinctun, but had Maitland's 'one pound, one hide' rule applied to its 55 hides, if the lease was made in 1002 it might have made the abbey as much as £165 before it was returned three years later.<sup>1</sup>

- 7) S 943, AD 1006 x 1011. This royal diploma confirms the sale of 6 hides of land in Oxfordshire by King Æthelred to a certain Dane called Toti, in return for £1 in order to help 'pay a tribute' (*ad reddendum tributum*).<sup>2</sup> Five hides were at Horton, which does not appear in Domesday Book, but one hide was at Beckley, which was rated at 6 hides in 1086, so it seems Horton was incorporated into Beckley by the time of the Conquest (the parishes are contiguous).<sup>3</sup> Roger d'Ivry held it in 1086; it was worth £5 *TRE*, but there is no record of who held it in 1066. It is difficult to tell then whether the transfer was an outright sale or a mortgage, although that it no longer belonged to royal demesne in 1086 suggests the former. One pound seems to have been a very cheap price for these six hides; indeed, it almost seems if it were a gift, even though the charter explicitly says it was to pay a tribute. Possibly this was just a token fee to be recorded by the charter, and Toti was expected to contribute much more than just £1 toward the *gafol* fund in return, but that is merely speculative.

No more surviving charters name prices for land sold to raise tribute money. However, there is plenty of evidence of land alienation elsewhere. William of Malmesbury wrote that certain unspecified lands held by Glastonbury Abbey in Wiltshire were 'in the time of the Danes, who burdened the kingdom with unpayable tribute demands, handed over as a pledge to the royal treasury or elsewhere' (*tempore Danorum, cum inportabiles pensiones regnum grauarent, fisco regio*

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<sup>1</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 465; see below, 107.

<sup>2</sup> S 943, printed in *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. C. R. Hart (Leicester, 1966), 190-3.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 158v (Oxfordshire 29, 2).

*uel alias pignori addictas*).<sup>1</sup> The abbey did not buy the lands back; rather Beorhtwold, Bishop of Wilton (used sometimes for Ramsbury,) redeemed them and returned them to the monks. He was bishop between 1005 and 1045, so it is not immediately obvious whether the *tempore Danorum* was the time of Danish rule and *heregeld*, of earlier raiding and *gafol*, or both. Whenever it was, this shows that even the greatest abbey in the kingdom suffered seemingly major land losses as a result of the raising of money at a national level.

Hugh Candidus, writing in the mid-twelfth century, wrote:

Tunc qui habuerunt ad tantum tributum soluendum dabant, qui non habuerunt terras et possessiones et alias res inrecuperabiliter perdiderunt. Unde factum est ut ecclesia [de Burch] et multe alie multa perdiderunt.

Those who had money enough to pay such mighty tribute paid it, but those who had it not lost beyond recovery their lands and possessions, and all things they had. Thus, this church [of Peterborough], like diverse others, did suffer great loss.<sup>2</sup>

This is apparently in reference to Cnut's great *gafol* paid in 1018. Hugh mentions Howden in Yorkshire among other unspecified villas as estates having been lost as a result of the great *gafol* being collected when Abbot Ælfsige was abroad with Queen Emma; she was exiled in 1016-1017.<sup>3</sup> Howden was a large manor held by King Edward in 1066, it comprised 51 carucates and six bovates, and worth £40 per year.<sup>4</sup> Here we may have another example of land being sold, or perhaps even surrendered, to King Cnut in order to pay *gafol*.

The Worcester monk Hemming tells us more generally that if tax could not be paid, and was paid for by another person, then the land would be transferred by the sheriff to that third party:

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<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury, *The Early History of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's 'De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie'*, ed. J. Scott (Woodbridge, 1981), 140.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus, a Monk of Peterborough* ed. W. T. Mellows (London, 1949), 65; Hugh Candidus, *The Peterborough Chronicle*, trans. W. T. Mellows (Peterborough, 1941), 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. Mellows, 64; Hugh Candidus, *Chronicle*, trans. Mellows, 32.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 304v, (Yorkshire 3 Y, 4).

Tempore quo Cnut, Rex Danorum, hac patria devicta, vectigal importabile toti Anglorum regno imposuerat, ablatae sunt hae villulae in Uuareuicscire a monasterii possessione, vi et fraude malignorum Danorum, quorum potentia eo tempore terrori erat indigenis hujus patrie. Nomina autem terrarum haec sunt: Ludingtun, & Draeitun, et iii. hide ad Lockeslea, et Lappaþunðin, et dimidia Mylecote. Constituerunt enim, ut, siquid vectigalis ad iii-am constituti diei deesset, quisquis prius pecuniam pro ea solveret, eius possessioni subjaceret. Hac calliditate inventa, quisquis aliquam terram de monasterio concupierat, pecunia data vicecomiti, vectigali refutato etiam satis tempestivo, quod male concupierat, pro libitu injuste rapiebat.<sup>1</sup>

When Cnut, king of the Danes, subdued this country, he imposed insupportable taxes on the whole of the kingdom of the English; these villas in Warwickshire were taken away from the possession of the monastery, by the violence and deceit of the wicked Danes, whose power at that time was a terror to the indigenous people of this country. These are the names of the estates: Luddington and Drayton, three hides at Loxley, Lapworth and half of Milcote. For they determined that if any tax had not been paid on the third day after it was due, whoever then first paid the tax would possess the land. It transpired that by this cunning method, whoever desired any land from the monastery gave money to the sheriff – even when tax had been paid on time – so that which was evilly coveted, was stolen by arbitrary injustice.

Hemming then lists lands taken from the monastery in this way:

Eo quoque tempore Eduuinus, frater Leofrici comitis, isto modo inuasit has villas, que his nominibus appellantur: Bikemerc in Uuareuicscire et Wicbald in hoc vicecomitatu, et alias de quibus iam diximus in Scropscire.<sup>2</sup>

At that time Edwin, brother of Earl Leofric, seized these villages in this manner, which are called these names: Bickmarsh in Warwickshire and Wychbold in this shire [Worcestershire], and others of which we have already spoken in Shropshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Hemming, *Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis*, ed. T.Hearn (Oxford, 1723), I, 277-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hemming, *Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, I, 278.

Hemming seems to be referring to the Shropshire estates of Tetstill, Hopton Wafers and Cleobury North.<sup>1</sup> This is evidence that some English nobles were profiting from the levying of *heregeld*. The priory lost lands in Herefordshire, specifically the estates of Upleadon, Ocle Pychard, Colgre, Rochford, and Pencosan (either Pencoyd or Pencombe) to Earl 'Ronig', that is Earl Hrani, and his men, in part on account of 'the frequently excessive and unbearable taxes of the king' (*regis vectigalia saepe supervenientia et importabilia*).<sup>2</sup> Whether these too had been confiscated for non-payment of tax is not explicit; it may be these had simply been sold cheaply under pressure to this Danish earl to fulfil tax demands.

This system of land confiscation for non-payment of tax is implied by one manuscript of the legislation labelled II Cnut, which says that:

Se ðe land gewerod hæbbe on scire gewitnysse (7 se nolde oððe ne mihte, þe hit ær ahte,) hæbbe unbesacen on dæge 7 æfter dæge to sylenne 7 to gyfenne þam þe him leofost si.

He who has performed the obligations on an estate with the witness of the shire – and he who owned it before would not or could not – is to have it uncontested for his lifetime and to give it to whom he pleases after his lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

To defend one's land meant to provide military service and to pay geld, or at least it certainly meant the latter by the time of Domesday Book. This interpretation of the law would fit with Hemming's assertion that paying the tax due on land that the landholder could not entitled the payer to the land.

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<sup>1</sup> Hemming, *Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, I, 277; estates identified by A. Williams, 'The Spoliation of Worcester', *Anglos Norman Studies*, XIX, (1997), 401 n.3.

<sup>2</sup> Hemming, *Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, I, 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Gsetze*, ed. Liebermann, I, 366; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, 466-7. Of the four Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of II Cnut, only British Library, Cotton Nero A, I, contains the clause '7 se nolde oððe ne mihte, þe hit ær ahte'. ('and he who owned it before would not or could not'). Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 383 adds 'on scyppyrde 7 on landfyrde' ('on expeditions by sea or land') as a descriptor of the services of landowners.

Lawson has suggested that it was through such predatory means that Eadric *Streona* (the Acquisitor) acquired his by-name.<sup>1</sup> Aside from the name, Lawson's suggestion relies on the charter S 933, in which Wulfgar, famulus of Sherborne, is described as having bought at 'a great price of gold and silver' (*multo auri argentique pretio*) land in Corscombe, Dorset, which Eadric had acquired from Sherborne 'because of the attacks and plunderings of the evil Danes' (*ob malorum infestationes direptionesque Danorum*).<sup>2</sup> As Lawson admits, there is no way of knowing exactly how Eadric came into possession of the land. Whether it is true in this case or not, it is inherently probable that the alleged system of land confiscation for non-payment of land tax, and its subsequent resale to anybody who could pay it, would have led to the massive enrichment of the already wealthy, and the dispossession of many poorer landholders in financial trouble.

However, despite Hemming's evidence in the West Midlands, it seems doubtful that such a stark system of confiscation and redistribution really existed throughout the country during all of Cnut's reign. Why, for instance, were monasteries' lands mortgaged or pledged to the treasury or to others, such as in the cases of Malmesbury Abbey, Glastonbury Abbey and St Peter's Gloucester discussed above, when it would have been far more profitable for a creditor to merely pay the tax due on the lands and to take them over completely? Also, such a system would have been chaotic; men might have flocked to sheriffs all over the country in the hope of acquiring confiscated land extremely cheaply, possibly for as little as a tenth of the lands' annual value. 'One pound, one hide' has long been recognised as the general trend for ratio between assessment units and the annual surplus of land in Domesday Book.<sup>3</sup> If Cnut and Harold levied *heregeld* regularly yielding c.£5,500, then the 69,000 hides and hide equivalents in Domesday Book suggest that the rate per hide that they

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<sup>1</sup> M. K. Lawson, 'The Collection of the Danegeld and Heregeld in the Reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut', *English Historical Review* 94 (1984), 732-4.

<sup>2</sup> S 933, printed in *Charters of Sherborne*, ed. M. A. O'Donovan (Anglo-Saxon Charters III, Oxford, 1988), no. 15, 51-3.

<sup>3</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 465.

charged might have been 2s, allowing for some exemptions and non-payment.<sup>1</sup> But had land really been sold off to the first individual who could pay just 2s for every hide, then surely the treasury would have been missing out on an opportunity to raise far more money by simply auctioning confiscated estates to the highest bidder, as William the Conqueror did with his newly acquired lands, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.<sup>2</sup> Even if the 1018 tax rate was as high as one pound per hide, auctioning would still have made more economic sense than the method described by Hemming and *II Cnut*.

Nevertheless, *Cnut's* letter of 1027 certainly highlights abuses by royal officials in collecting money for the king, and the profiteering of the powerful:

Precipio etiam omnibus uicecomitibus et prepositis uniuersi regni mei, sicut meam amicitiam aut suam salutem habere uolunt, ut nulli homini nec diuiti nec pauperi uim iniustam inferant, sed omnibus tam nobiles quam ignobiles et diuitibus et pauperibus sit fas iusta lege potiundi, a qua nec propter fauorem regum aut alicuius potentis personam nec propter mihi congregandam pecuniam ullo modo deuietur; quia nulla mihi necessitas est, ut iniqua exactione mihi pecunia congregetur.

I command also all the sheriffs and reeves over my whole kingdom, as they wish to retain my friendship and their own safety, that they employ no unjust force toward any man, neither rich nor poor, but that all men, of noble or humble birth, rich or poor, shall have the right to enjoy just law, from which there is to be no deviation in any way, neither on account of the royal favour nor out of respect for any powerful man, nor in order to amass money for me; for I have no need that money should be amassed for me by unjust exaction.<sup>3</sup>

This letter corroborates Hemming's allegation of corruption; the 'unjust force against any man' might be a reference to the confiscation of estates of the less powerful and their transfer to the

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<sup>1</sup> See Table 16, below, 226.

<sup>2</sup> *ASC*, MS. E, s.a. 1087, ed. Whitelock, 163.

<sup>3</sup> '*Cnut 1027*', printed in *Die Gesetze*, ed. Liebermann, I, 277; trans. Whitelock, *EHD*, 478.

more powerful as a result of non-payment of *heregeld*. Whether this took place through confiscation and resale for the tax amount due, or by auction to the highest bidder, it certainly seems that in the early eleventh century, taxation was very much a redistributive force within English lay society: not by wealth from the rich going down to the poor, rather by wealth from the poor going up to the rich. This is besides, of course, the international redistribution of wealth across the North Sea.

## The English economy and the source of silver

The figures provided by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in relation to the size of payments made to the Viking invaders of the late tenth and early eleventh century largely went without question, until John Gillingham in 1989 attacked historians' blind faith in the figures.<sup>1</sup> His basic contention was that England was simply not wealthy enough to afford such large tributes, at least not without catastrophic consequences.<sup>2</sup> He took particular exception to the £24,000 tribute of 1002, the £36,000 tribute of 1007, the £48,000 tribute of 1012 and the £72,000 tribute (excluding London) in 1018, and claims that they are fabricated figures that the chroniclers inserted by applying a duodecimal sequence, used rhetorically to add weight to the impression that 'ever things got worse and worse' in England at the time.<sup>3</sup> The figures Gillingham is most inclined to believe are the £21,099 *heregeld* of 1041 and the subsequent payment of £11,048. These precise sounding figures match very well with the estimated size of the Viking fleet and the number of soldiers to pay.<sup>4</sup> He points out that these numbers were considered exceptional by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and that the levying of the tax sparked insurrection in Worcestershire.<sup>5</sup> Gillingham reasoned that the higher figures provided by the *Chronicle* for *gafol* are improbable, as they apparently evoked no such

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<sup>1</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 373-84.

<sup>2</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel' 374-8.

<sup>3</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 380.

<sup>4</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 380-1.

<sup>5</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 382.

opposition. However, Lawson responded to Gillingham by observing that the English were in no position to argue against the terms of the various peace treaties, and that the price of peace increased continually only because the strength and violence of the invaders became ever more terrible, and that the pressure of Viking leaders to reward their followers became ever greater.<sup>1</sup>

More central to Gillingham's scepticism, however, is his argument that England in the late Anglo-Saxon period cannot have been as wealthy as England in the early thirteenth century, the first time after the Norman Conquest when tax receipts reached such high levels again. The English population increased significantly during that time, leading to a greater overall GDP, and inflation meant that the £40,000 raised in 1225 was worth considerably less than £40,000 raised in the early eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is estimated that Henry III minted around double as many coins per year as Æthelred and Cnut, casting doubt on the affordability of the *gafol* in terms of silver coin.<sup>3</sup>

The debates about the size of the economy and the volume of the coinage are closely linked, and their relationship can perhaps be best analysed by addressing these questions: was there enough silver in England to feasibly pay the tributes, and if so where did all the silver come from? Taking on the latter question first, Peter Sawyer argues that the English economy was large enough to sustain tribute through an ongoing balance of trade surplus with the continent; in contrast, Richard Hodges and Simon Keynes contend that the accumulated wealth of England, most notably church treasures, was the primary source of silver.<sup>4</sup>

Sawyer draws on Domesday evidence to suggest that the English peasantry produced surpluses for lords of considerably more than £72,000 per annum.<sup>5</sup> Including subsistence farming, peasant

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<sup>1</sup> Lawson, "Those Stories Look True", 392-8.

<sup>2</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 374-6.

<sup>3</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 376.

<sup>4</sup> P. Sawyer, *The Wealth of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2012), 10-31, 100-114 builds on his famous article P. Sawyer, 'The Wealth of England in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, 15 (1965), 145-64; Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 179-83; S. Keynes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon' 100-102. See also S. R. H. Jones, 'Devaluation and the balance of payments in eleventh-century England: an exercise in Dark Age economics', *Economic History Review*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 44 (1991), 594-607.

<sup>5</sup> Sawyer, *Wealth*, 12.

surpluses, the urban economy, plus the parts of Northern England that were not included in the Domesday survey, actual GDP would have been considerably greater than this amount. English GDP in 1086 has been subject to three recent estimates, all which were summarised by Fairbairn.<sup>1</sup> All estimates have sought to find out the value of English production from what is hidden in the Domesday evidence, and what can be gleaned from comparisons with later periods.

The lowest estimate was Snooks's, a total GDP of £136,621. This was based on £71,573 calculated as the net seigneurial income (the figure arrived at when adding up all the value totals in Domesday Book), plus £51,306 of subsistence farming by unfree peasants, plus £3,034 for the far north of England, plus £10,708 for the towns.<sup>2</sup> For reasons he does not adequately explain, Snooks assumes free peasant income is included in the Domesday's seigniorial annual values, not as part of the hidden economy that Domesday conceals, which he believes to have been entirely of a subsistence nature and occupied exclusively by 'unfree' peasants.<sup>3</sup> Snooks' estimate of the size of the hidden part of the economy is brought even lower because of his belief that after manorial extractions, unfree peasants were merely left with the bare minimum needed to achieve 'physiological subsistence' (i.e. survival and reasonable enough health to work and reproduce).<sup>4</sup>

Mayhew criticised Snooks for believing that the peasantry got by on only just enough. Some peasants, even unfree ones, held much larger plots than others, therefore they could keep back more. Moreover, villeins' land was generally more productive than demesne land. Mayhew also finds no reason to believe that free peasant incomes were included in the seigneurial values of Domesday. He argues that the Domesday values for seigneurial and burghal incomes are not an adequate reflection of the entire picture, and that much went unrecorded, even in the surveyed parts of

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<sup>1</sup> H. Fairbairn, 'The Nature and Limits of the Money Economy in Late Anglo-Saxon and Early Norman England' (unpublished thesis, King's College London, 2013), 187-92.

<sup>2</sup> G. D. Snooks, 'The Dynamic Role of the Market in the Anglo-Norman Economy and Beyond, 1086-1300', in R. H. Britnell and B. M. S. Campbell (eds.), *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086-1300* (Manchester, 1995), 33.

<sup>3</sup> Snooks, 'Dynamic Role', 28.

<sup>4</sup> Snooks, 'Dynamic Role', 28, 32.

Domesday England. Mayhew's own estimate was £100,000 for total seigneurial and burghal incomes, including estimates for the northern shires and for London and Winchester. He estimated £200,000 to £300,000 per annum for the rest of the economy, based on the ratio of seigneurial extractions to the rest of the economy in the thirteenth century as likely to have been around one to two, and the fact that there was probably a comparative labour shortage in post-Conquest England, perhaps bringing this to one to three in 1086. Mayhew's GDP total was, therefore, £300,000 to £400,000.<sup>1</sup>

Using a more complex model, more data from other periods, and a more modern database of Domesday statistics, Walker has recently tried to estimate the various different parts of the seigniorial and non-seigniorial sectors, as opposed to simply their overall worth.<sup>2</sup> He estimates the total of the seigniorial sector of Domesday Book to be worth £94,591 and the non-seigniorial sector at £288,284.<sup>3</sup> The urban economy is estimated at £31,320. Concealed ploughs are rated at £18,177, the northern shires at £15,167, and a further £51,826 is assumed to have been lost in the mid-1080s due to poor weather, as testified by the tree ring evidence for those years.<sup>4</sup> Walker's overall estimate of English GDP in 1086 is £500,365. Both Mayhew's and Walker's estimates seem more plausible than Snooks', and as both of their methodologies have credit, perhaps it is safest to proceed with the idea of an English GDP of between £300,000 and £500,000 per annum in mind.

How much of this GDP would actually have been disposable, that is, not needed for subsistence?

Assuming for argument's sake that landlords enforced the *heregeld* payments entirely from the peasantry aside from their usual rents, then together Walker's seigneurial incomes of £94,591, plus Snooks's theoretical 'bare minimum' for the peasantry to subsist of £51,305, would have totalled

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<sup>1</sup> N. J. Mayhew, 'Coinage and Money in England, 1086–c. 1500', in D. Wood (ed.), *Medieval Money Matters* (Oxford, 2004), 75-6.

<sup>2</sup> J. Walker, 'National Income in Domesday England', in M. Allen and D. Coffman (eds.), *Money, Prices and Wages: Essays in Honour of Professor Nicholas Mayhew* (Basingstoke, 2015), 24-50.

<sup>3</sup> Walker, 'National Income', 30.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, 'National Income', 46-7.

£145,896.<sup>1</sup> This might have left the rest of the country with approximately £155,000 to £355,000 of product that it could, in theory, have dispensed with. This amount would decrease slightly further when taking into account the non-disposable wealth of the northern shires and the towns; unfortunately, we cannot speculate how much income was disposable in those areas, and indeed, it is possible these areas never have contributed to *heregeld* payments at all. Yet even an approximate overall range of £100,000 to £300,000 of disposable wealth generated per year would have been enough to pay all the known *gafol* and *heregeld*. The £82,500 great *gafol* of 1018 apparently took two years to collect – it was agreed in 1016 – so the burden on the nation might have been considerably reduced in that instance.

The GDP estimates themselves therefore do not discourage the view that even the higher recorded tributes were feasible for England to pay, even when considering that much of the disposable wealth would have been ransacked by the Vikings or used to feed and clothe them. However, *gafol* and *heregeld* were not paid in kind but in precious metal, so the ultimate test of the feasibility of continued tribute payments lies in how much silver the nation could draw upon. England was cash rich, Sawyer believes, as a result of a large trading surplus with Europe, and wool the country's major export.<sup>2</sup> With domestic silver mines providing only a minimal output, the ultimate source of most of the silver was the Harz Mountains in Germany, with the Holy Roman Empire and the Low Countries being the chief importers of England's produce. This accounts for the ability to produce so many coins, and ultimately the ability of England to pay such large tributes.<sup>3</sup>

Hodges has argued against Sawyer's view. He thinks that port infrastructure in the early eleventh century was not advanced enough to cope with the demand of trade on a large scale.<sup>4</sup> Judging by archaeological finds there appears to have been a lack of imports during the period, and indeed the

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<sup>1</sup> Mayhew believes Snooks' figure to be something of an underestimate, although probably not a gross one, N. J. Mayhew, 'Coinage', 75.

<sup>2</sup> Sawyer, *Wealth*, 100-114.

<sup>3</sup> Sawyer, 'Wealth', 160-3.

<sup>4</sup> Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 180-2.

increased use of cheaper materials such as pewter points toward an age of austerity at the turn of the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> While not doubting the figures of *gafol*, Hodges believes they were paid out by the 'vast reserves' of church silver in England, as well as by domestic silver mining, not primarily from the proceeds of trade.<sup>2</sup> Keynes agrees; while seeing the tribute figures as believable, he 'suspects that a greater part would have come from the accumulated treasure hoards and contingency funds of those whose high office made them responsible for finding the wherewithal to pay, supplemented by whatever could be raised from the selling of land and property, and by whatever could be gathered from other sources'.<sup>3</sup> By placing emphasis on assets, Keynes diminishes the role of exports in sustaining tribute.

Hodges's argument about the strength of the English economy seems undermined by the fact that we could never expect wool exports to leave archaeological traces – nor other perishable exports for that matter, such as slaves. Yet while domestic silver mining was seemingly minimal in the eleventh century – only in Derbyshire did lead-ore mining produce silver in 1086 according to Domesday Book, and only £40 worth per year – Hodges' faith in the church being able to pay from its reserves is interesting, and is not necessarily without some justification. The wealth of the late Anglo-Saxon church should not be underestimated. There are abundant references to great treasures, either held by or given to various churches in the eleventh century. For instance, three inventories in the *Liber Eliensis* detail the monastery's treasures, much of which was probably in its possession before 1066. Sawyer provides a summary list:

[There were] 26 or 27 chalices, large and small, most of them of silver or silver gilt and the largest weighing almost 15 pounds (one gold one was lighter but worth more), 27 crosses, mostly silver gilt, and some with gold and figures in ivory or gold with gems, 2 silver candelabra, 3 censers, altars, hangings, and 13 reliquaries as well as elaborate shrines of Æthelthryth and her companions. There

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<sup>1</sup> Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 179-81.

<sup>2</sup> Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, 182.

<sup>3</sup> Keynes, 'Historical Context', 101-102.

were also 283 books including at least 12 gospels with elaborate covers and many vestments; the earliest list has 38 copes, 40 chasubles and 19 stoles - 165 items in all.<sup>1</sup>

The Ely chronicler claims that these were still in the monastery's possession, even after 1,000 marks worth (£667) of precious metal had been melted down to buy the king's peace from William the Conqueror.<sup>2</sup> Accounts of large donations of similar riches given to churches are plentiful, including those given by pre-Conquest earls.<sup>3</sup> When William Rufus stripped Waltham, the church of which Earl Harold was patron, of its treasures, the *Waltham Chronicle* says that over £6,666, a round figure of 10,000 marks, was removed to churches in Caen.<sup>4</sup>

If we believe their chroniclers, we can perhaps assume that both Ely and Waltham held treasures worth several thousand pounds at the time of the Norman Conquest. Neither Ely nor Waltham necessarily held as much in the *gafol* and *heregeld* era earlier in the century; indeed, Waltham almost certainly did not, as Harold had not yet patronised it. Indeed, Waltham may have been a unique case; Earl Harold was easily the wealthiest noble in the kingdom during the Confessor's reign.<sup>5</sup> Yet taken with all the other evidence of churches' treasures that comes out of the chronicles without value figures, that many of the richest monasteries, cathedrals and churches in England held at least many hundreds of pounds, perhaps several thousands of pounds of treasures each in the early eleventh century seems rather likely. Hugh Candidus describes the purchase by Abbot Ælfsige (abbot of Peterborough c.1006-1042) of the figure and shrine of St Florentin for £500 from the abbey of Bonneval, Eure-et-Loir; that is at least one documented figure from the period in question, which indeed alludes to the monastery not only hoarding treasures, but also being able to purchase

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<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, *Wealth*, 30-1. Sawyer drew his information from a forthcoming work by Simon Keynes and Alan Kennedy, examining the treasures described in *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake (Camden Third Series, vol. 92, 1962), 196-7, 223-4, 288-94.

<sup>2</sup> Sawyer, *Wealth*, 30; *Liber Eliensis*, ed. Blake, 194-5.

<sup>3</sup> C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective*, (Manchester, 1982), 197-8. For an overview of precious items described by chroniclers in Anglo-Saxon England, see 188-215. See also R. Fleming, 'The *New Wealth*, the *New Rich*, and the *New Political Style* in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *ANS*, XXIII, (2001), 12-15.

<sup>4</sup> *The Waltham Chronicle: An Account of the Discovery of our Holy Cross at Montacute and its Conveyance to Waltham*, eds. L. Watkiss and M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1994), 58.

<sup>5</sup> S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), 315-17.

them with large sums of cash.<sup>1</sup> We do not know by how many factors we should multiply £500 to account for Peterborough's overall hoarded wealth at the time, but a total figure running into the lower thousands does not seem at all implausible. Later, Abbot Leofric (1057-1066) was able to acquire so many precious items for Peterborough that the town was 'no longer simply called "Burgh", but "Gildenburgh"', the Golden Borough, according to Hugh Candidus.<sup>2</sup>

Nor should we jump too quickly to the conclusion that all these figures are necessarily exaggerated by the chroniclers, in the vein that Gillingham alleged the higher *gafol* figures to have been. It has been estimated that around £70,000 worth of gold and silver was seized from the monastic houses during the English Reformation.<sup>3</sup> By this point the equivalence between 240 pence and one tower pound in weight, that was operative during the late Anglo-Saxon era, had been broken; for most of the time during the dissolution of the monasteries the ratio was 540 pence to the tower pound. This means that that the confiscated £70,000 equates to 31,111 Anglo-Saxon equivalent tower pounds (10,889 kgs).<sup>4</sup> Under Edward VI, another £45,000 was seized from chapels and churches – that is 20,000 tower pounds (7,000 kgs).<sup>5</sup> Overall then, in excess of 50,000 tower pounds (17,500 kgs) of silver were officially seized by the Crown during the Reformation. Much more than this might have been held back, plundered illegally, or spared. It is true that there were many more monasteries in England in the early sixteenth century than in the early eleventh, but many were also relatively poor. We cannot know for certain the relative stocks of silver held in English churches but considering world silver production only took off at an explosive rate from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, perhaps these figures are not entirely unlike what the church held in the early eleventh century. The total figure of *gafol* and *heregeld* allegedly paid up until 1018 was £240,500; perhaps church

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<sup>1</sup> *Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. Mellows, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. Mellows, 66.

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage*, (Manchester, 1978), 160-1.

<sup>4</sup> Conversion data from online spreadsheet by J. Munro, 'Alterations of the English Silver Coinage', [www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/Engcoin5.xls](http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/Engcoin5.xls), (accessed 22/08/14).

<sup>5</sup> Challis, *Tudor Coinage*, 162-5.

treasures could have covered a considerably higher proportion of the coins paid in this total than we may have assumed.

Furthermore, there is clear evidence that churches did pay their share in this way. Hemming, who loudly complained of the confiscation of land to pay taxes, also complained of the treasure that was lost:

Sicuti factum est temporibus Apelredi, regis Anglorum, vastante et depopulante hanc patriam pagano rege Danorum, Swein nomine, cum maximum et fere importabile tributum tota Anglia reddere cogeretur. Ob hujus itaque tam gravis tributi exactionem, omnia fere ornamenta hujus ecclesiae distracta sunt, tabulae altaris, argento et auro paratae, spoliatae sunt, textus exornati, calices confracti, cruces conflatae, ad ultimum etiam terre et villulae pecuniis distractae sunt.

As happened in the times of Æthelred, king of the English, this country was wasted and depopulated by the pagan king of the Danes, called Swein, who caused a very great and heavy tribute to be collected and rendered by the whole of England. On account of this very severe exaction of tribute, almost all the ornaments of this church were melted down, altar tables for their silver and gold were plundered, embellished cloth and chalices were broken up, crosses were melted down, until the land and estates had been utterly ruined for its wealth.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, lay magnates also possessed treasure, as did the king. In the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the Old English word *rice* changed, from meaning powerful to meaning powerful *and* wealthy.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the aforementioned example of Earl Harold adorning the church at Waltham with so much, there are records of other great magnates giving huge gifts of gold and silver to churches, such as the man-sized gold crosses given by Earl Tosti, Tovi the Proud, Earl Leofric and

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<sup>1</sup> Hemming, *Chartularium*, 248-9; trans. Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 284.

<sup>2</sup> Fleming, 'New Wealth', 3.

ealdorman Æthelmaer to various patronages.<sup>1</sup> King Cnut and Queen Emma presented New Minster Winchester with a large gold cross.<sup>2</sup> As Dodwell states, 'if kings like Athelstan and Cnut gave silver candlesticks (sometimes decorated with gold) to churches, we might suppose that they had something similar in their own palaces. If the Countess Goda's private chapel at Lambeth, in the eleventh century, could boast silver-gilt stools and gilded candelabra, it seems probable that the appointments of her main manor house had a comparable splendour. If a Waltham account can speak of its 'stools fashioned from a large amount of gold', we might conceive that its wealthy patron, Earl Harold, also had opulent furnishings'.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly then, there was a very great amount of precious metal extant in England that could have been melted down to convert into coins to pay tribute. However, only a small minority of taxpayers would have possessed such objects, albeit some of them in abundance. Yet, we know that even the great Glastonbury Abbey had to resort to giving over land to fulfil its tax obligations, and that Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury was reported to not have a single penny left by 994; after repeated tributes of such great size, even church reserves had to run out of money and bullion at some point.<sup>4</sup> Much would surely have been plundered by Viking armies before any monetary settlements were made anyway. Therefore, this bullion would have needed replenishing one way or another; neither domestic consumption nor sales of land could bring more silver into England. Sooner or later, the king, the church, the magnates and the rest of the laity would have needed to pay in silver gleaned from other sources, ultimately from trade. Sawyer's image of a wealthy and economically booming England with a high GDP and a strong balance of payments surplus seems to be the best explanation for the ability of the country to continually pay large amounts of tribute in silver.

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<sup>1</sup> Fleming, 'New Wealth', 13-14; Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 197.

<sup>2</sup> *The Liber vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester: British Library Stowe 944: together with leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Cotton Titus D. XXVII*, ed. S. Keynes (Copenhagen, 1996), 35-7.

<sup>3</sup> Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 193.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 42, 53.

## Coins and taxation

Anglo-Saxon coins from the period of tribute and *heregeld* (991-1051) have been found in large numbers across Scandinavia; more so even than in England. The most recent survey of the material, published in 1981, drew on a sample of 57,000 Anglo-Saxon coins deposited between 975 and 1140 found in Scandinavia.<sup>1</sup> Since then, numismatists and historians have debated the significance of these finds in regard to raiding, tribute, taxation, the wealth of England in general, and its trade links with Scandinavia and the continent.<sup>2</sup> Two key questions have been at issue. Firstly, was mint output large enough to be able to cover the enormous tribute payments of the early eleventh century, as set out by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*? The second question is related: were the coins unearthed in Scandinavia brought to those lands primarily as a result of tribute or of trade?

### Mint output

The easiest way to extract wealth from the lesser aristocracy and peasantry was to raise tax in the form of coins, as these were likely to have been the only items of precious metal that most people owned. Such demands could sometimes have been as low as 2s per hide, as was probably the case in most years of Cnut's reign, maybe sometimes even less. Coins would have been the most convenient way to pay for those holding only a few hides, or only small portions of hides. Extracting wealth from the church and magnates may also have been easiest through the medium of coin: although no doubt larger payments were measured by weight, coins could be better tested for silver content

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<sup>1</sup> M. Blackburn and K. Jonsson, 'The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element of North European Coin Finds', in M. A. S. Blackburn and D. M. Metcalf (eds.), *Viking Age Coinage in the Northern Lands*, Part I (BAR International Series 122, Oxford, 1981), 149.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalf, 'Can we believe the very large figure', 165-76; Jonsson, 'The Routes', 205-230; D. M. Metcalf, 'The Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands: a Pirenne-Like Hypothesis', in B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke (eds.), *Developments around the Baltic and the North Sea in the Viking Age: the Twelfth Viking Congress*, (Stockholm, 1994), 207-12; J. C. Moesgaard, 'The Import of English Coins to the Northern Lands: Some Remarks on Coin Circulation in the Viking Age Based on New Evidence from Denmark', in Cook and Williams (eds.), *Developments*, 389-419; D. M. Metcalf, 'Inflows of Anglo-Saxon and German Coins into the Northern Lands, c. 997-1024: Discerning the Patterns' in B. Cook and G. Williams (eds.), *Coinage and History in the North Sea World c. 500-1250: Essays in Honour of Marion Archibald* (Leiden, 2006), 349-385.

than larger objects. This would explain the melting down of precious objects that Hemming describes, as well as the distinct lack of identifiably English precious objects other than coins in Scandinavian hoards of the period.<sup>1</sup>

Was there ever actually enough minted coin to pay these tributes? Numismatists have used die-linkage in surviving coins to estimate the total number of dies used to produce the various coin types between Edgar's reform and the Norman Conquest. These estimates of the total number of dies have then been multiplied by a factor of anywhere between 10,000 and 25,000, to generate estimates of what the total national output of pennies for each type might have been. These are necessarily crude estimates of how many coins a single die might have struck; however, it is widely agreed that 10,000 is probably a conservative estimate. It is based on both experiment and the documentary evidence of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which suggest 15,000 was the average.<sup>2</sup> Allen's estimates use revised assumptions to utilise Metcalf's method of estimating total coin production, which has a three-step process. He first estimates the number of dies at the Lincoln mint for each type, using data generally held to be reliable for the period provided by Mossop.<sup>3</sup> He then extrapolates from the ratio of numbers of Lincoln struck coins to non-Lincoln struck coins in the Copenhagen and Stockholm Anglo-Saxon coin collections (which house most Anglo-Saxon coins discovered to date, and are considered representative) to estimate the number of non-Lincoln dies used to strike each coin type. He then takes the lower estimate of the total number of dies (Lincoln and non-Lincoln combined) and multiplies by it 10,000 to produce a conservative estimate of total

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<sup>1</sup> M. Blackburn, 'Æthelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute', in Scragg (ed.), *Battle of Maldon*, 165.

<sup>2</sup> M. Allen, 'The Volume of the English Currency c. 973-1158', in Cook and Williams (eds.), *Coinage and History*, 489-90; Buttrey, however, criticises this method in T. V. Buttrey, 'Calculating Ancient Coin Production: Facts and Fantasies', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 153 (1993), 335-51. However, even within this article (on page 344), Buttrey presents data showing that the great majority of average die outputs per year between 1279-1327 was between 20,000 and 50,000 coins per year, far above the conservative assumption of 10,000 on which the estimates I employ below are based.

<sup>3</sup> H. R. Mossop, *The Lincoln Mint, c. 890-1279* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970), appendix, Table 4; D. M. Metcalf, 'Continuity and Change in English Monetary History c. 973-1086 Part 2', *British Numismatic Journal*, 51 (1981), 53-5.

coin production, and then takes the higher estimate and multiplies it by 20,000 to produce a liberal estimate.<sup>1</sup>

The dating of coinages is also contentious. We can be fairly certain of the order of the coin types due to data from mules (coins with the obverse of a new type, and the reverse of an old type), from hoard composition (if coins of one type that dominate the composition of a hoard are found with a few coins of another type, then the majority type was probably the minority type's immediate successor, if this is a trend among several hoards), as well as from the continuity and cessation of names of moneyers on coins from certain mints over various coin types. However, aside from the sequence of coin types within a particular king's reign, we have no knowledge of the precise dating of the types in current issue, bar the start date of a king's first coin type and the end date of his last.

Numismatists, while acutely aware of the problem, usually nevertheless follow the datings of the most important theorist on the *renovatio monetae*, Michael Dolley, whose dating estimates form the basis of the dates in the table below.<sup>2</sup> His theory was that the coin changes were more or less regular, and happened every six years during the reigns of Æthelred and Cnut, and every two or three years during the reigns of Harold Harefoot, Harthacnut, and Edward the Confessor. There is one piece of circumstantial evidence that may provide substance to at least one of Dolley's datings for a coin type in the middle of a reign. *Helmet* type coins were not minted in Wilton, which had previously minted Long Cross coins and other types, rather they were minted in Salisbury, where coins had not been minted previously. Dolley attributed this to the sack of Wilton by the Danish army in 1003, and the likely immediate moving of moneyers to Salisbury.<sup>3</sup> He therefore drew the conclusion that the beginning of the *Helmet* coin type was in that year, as his hypothesis of a change

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, 'Volume of the English Currency', 490-2.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, 'The Reform of the English Coinage under Eadgar', in R. H. M. Dolley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Studies Presented to F. M. Stenton on the Occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday 17 May 1960* (London, 1961), 152-4.

<sup>3</sup> R. H. M. Dolley, 'An Introduction to the Coinage of Ethelred II' in Hill, *Ethelred*, 124-5.

every six years during this period would suggest. Allen's estimates of mint output for each type, together with the estimated dates of minting, are presented in the table below.

**Table 2. The Estimated Volume of Mint Output (Allen, 2006)<sup>1</sup>**

Type	Dates <sup>2</sup>	Lower limit	Upper Limit
Reform/First small cross	973-979	£40,000	£140,000
First Hand	979-985	£80,000	£370,000
Second Hand	985-91	£50,000 <sup>3</sup>	
CRVX	991-7	£170,000	£550,000
Long Cross	997-1003	£80,000	£250,000
Helmet	1003-9	£50,000	£120,000
Last Small Cross	1009-1016	£120,000	£330,000
Quatrefoil	1016-1023	£200,000	£450,000
Pointed Helmet	1023-1029	£90,000	£220,000
Short Cross	1029-1036	£60,000	£130,000
Jewel Cross	1036-1038	£40,000	£80,000
Fleur-de-lis	1038-1040	£50,000	£140,000
Arm-and-Sceptre	1040-1042	£30,000	£70,000
PACX	1042-1044	£20,000	£60,000
Radiate/Small Cross	1044-1046	£20,000	£50,000
Trefoil-Quadrilateral	1046-1048	£30,000	£70,000
Small Flan	1048-1050	£10,000	£30,000
Expanding Cross (light)		£10,000	£20,000
Expanding Cross (heavy)		£20,000	£50,000
Expanding cross (combined)	1050-1053	£30,000	£70,000
Pointed Helmet	1053-1056	£40,000	£130,000
Sovereign/Eagles	1056-1059	£60,000	£200,000
Hammer Cross	1059-1062	£70,000	£160,000
Facing Bust	1062-1065	£40,000	£90,000
Pyramids	1065-1066	£10,000	£30,000
PAX	1066	£10,000	£30,000

<sup>1</sup> Allen, 'Volume of the English Currency', 493-4.

<sup>2</sup> M. Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2012), 295-301; Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 405-6.

<sup>3</sup> Allen declined to estimate figures for Second Hand coinage, due to lack of data on dies. £50,000 is Metcalf's estimate, using a conservative 10,000 multiplier; D. M. Metcalf, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Coin Finds c.973-1086* (London, 1998), 175-6.

Although, as Allen admits and as already discussed, all of these volumes of mint output estimates and the dating of the various coinages are subject to significant caveats, the most salient point we can derive from them is that all bar one of the most conservative estimates of total mint output are theoretically enough to have covered every known tribute if paid with only one type of coin.<sup>1</sup> The exception is Harthacnut's Arm-and-Sceptre, which was almost certainly the current issue when £21,099 was levied, and probably the later £11,048 as well. However, it is argued below that, independent of numismatic support, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* figures for 1041 seem reliable, and indeed help persuade us to veer toward a more liberal estimate of Arm-and-Sceptre mint volume estimates.<sup>2</sup> From these estimates, the tribute figures in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were theoretically possible to pay entirely in silver coin of the current type, and indeed, if we believe more liberal estimates of coinage volumes, it is even possible that mint output could have covered such tributes with ease. At the very least, these figures lend some credibility to the idea that such high payments could have been made entirely, or almost entirely, in coin of whatever kind.

The question must still be asked as to what proportion of silver could feasibly have been lost from the English economy in the form of *gafol* or *heregeld* payments. While it may have been theoretically possible to pay tributes by the total mint output of a coin type, there must have been a point where it would have been practically impossible, or economically untenable, to extract such high proportions of the total coin minted in England for the purpose of foreign tribute payments. This is clearly a vital consideration, but it may well be that the amount of coin needed in circulation domestically to keep the economy going was a much smaller proportion of total mint output than we imagine. Allen has estimated that the volume of the currency – that is the amount of money actually in domestic circulation at any one time – ranged between £15,000 and £30,000 between

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<sup>1</sup> Allen in his later book says 'it might perhaps be safe to suggest that the lowest die estimates of a few hundred dies in a type imply outputs of at least £10,000, and that the highest estimates of more than 6,000 dies could indicate a massive output of hundreds of thousands of pounds'. Allen, *Mints*, 300.

<sup>2</sup> See below, 80.

973 and 1042.<sup>1</sup> This is very much an estimate, based on the number of single coin finds per estimated year of issue, which from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries have been found to correlate with the volume of the currency in circulation.<sup>2</sup> By determining the ratio of the 973-1042 coin finds per year with similar data from the mid twelfth century, where we have more reliable data for the currency volume, an estimated currency volume for the 973-1042 can be extrapolated.<sup>3</sup> If we see £15,000 to £30,000 as the necessary amount of coin to remain in the domestic economy at any given point, then we should not be unprepared to accept the sometimes very high proportions of estimated mint output as reportedly being paid out of the economy as *gafol* or *heregeld*. Indeed, under severe strain perhaps we can expect the nation to survive with a currency volume of considerably less than £15,000. Some of the currency in circulation would, of course, have been taxed to pay the tributes; however, this would also have had to be quickly replaced by other minted coin entering circulation. Indeed, with many landholders being forced to sell land and property in order to find money to pay their taxes, as well as others melting down their precious metal, we can expect there to have been spikes in the volume of the coinage at the times *gafol* and *heregeld* were raised. Indeed, some of the coin paid is unlikely to have left circulation for long; not all Scandinavians immediately went home once paid, and many settled in England or stayed in protracted service for long periods from the time of Thorkell the Tall's army in 1012 onwards. These men may have spent much of their money in England. The early eleventh-century grave slab decorated in the Ringerike style found at St Paul's cathedral was likely commissioned by a Norse family to commemorate a warrior of King Cnut. Such a piece must have cost a considerable amount of money and was

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, 'Volume of the English Currency', 501.

<sup>2</sup> S. E. Rigold, 'Small Change in the Light of Medieval Site-Finds', in N. Mayhew (ed.), *Edwardian Monetary Affairs, 1279-1344* (Oxford, 1977), 59-80.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, 'Volume of the English Currency', 498-501; P. Latimer, 'The Quantity of Money in England 1180-1247: a model', *Journal of European Economic History* 32 (2003), 640-44. See also Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 215-221.

probably produced in England.<sup>1</sup> It is especially likely that much *heregeld* money never left the English economy, as this paid for a permanent mercenary force, whereas *gafol* payments are likely to have been shipped to Scandinavia in far greater quantities.

I shall now look at the feasibility of certain coin types paying each of the alleged *gafol* and *heregeld* one by one. CRUX was probably the second largest coin issue from Edgar's reform of 973 until the Norman Conquest. It was probably the current coin type for the 991 tribute of £10,000, and indeed is believed by Petersson and Stewart to have been in place since 989, in disagreement with Dolley whose dating estimates are included in Table 2.<sup>2</sup> It was very probably the coin type for the 994 payment of £16,000 (or £22,000, according to the treaty II Æthelred). The conservative estimate of £170,000 easily covers these two tributes. Not all the currency would have been minted at the same time, so if Dolley's dating is correct maybe only a small proportion of the CRUX type would have entered circulation by the payment date of 991. But it is vital to remember that there is no obvious reason why Vikings should not have been paid in coin other than the current type – much may have been paid in Second Hand coin (as it were), or with even earlier coin types. Indeed, a far higher number of Edgar's Reform coins were found in Scandinavia with a *terminus post quem* (*t.p.q.*, the earliest possible date of a hoard) later than 991, rather than before, and even more later than 997. The highest proportion of these later coins did not come from the Danelaw, Scandinavia's traditional trading partner in England.<sup>3</sup> This could suggest an obsolete coin being suddenly called upon from all over the country to pay *gafol* in 991 and 994, because although a delay in the burial of English coin is not unusual, the great decrease in proportion of Danelaw struck Reform coins in 990s burials

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<sup>1</sup> D. Griffiths, 'The Ending of Anglo-Saxon England: Identity, Allegiance and Nationality', in D. A. Hinton, S. Crawford, and H. Hamerow (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (Oxford, 2011), 74; 'Grave Slab', *Museum of London Collections Online*, <http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/35563.html> (accessed 14/08/2017).

<sup>2</sup> I. Stewart, 'Coinage and recoinage after Edgar's Reform', *Studies in Late Anglo Saxon Coinage in Memory of Bror Emil Hildebrand*, (Stockholm, 1990), 460.

<sup>3</sup> D. M. Metcalf, 'The Fall and Rise of the Danelaw Connection, the export of Obsolete English Coin to the Northern Lands, and the tributes of 991 and 994', in K. Jonsson and B. Malmer (eds.), *Sigtuna Papers: Proceedings of the Sigtuna Symposium on Viking-Age Coinage 1–4 June 1989* (Stockholm, 1990), 214-16.

suggests a reason for coin exports other than normal trade. First Hand and Second Hand coinages also show a similar trend: Scandinavian finds with a *t.p.q.* after 991 are from proportionally far more widely distributed mints than those with an earlier *t.p.q.*<sup>1</sup> This fall of the 'Danelaw Connection' continues until the mid eleventh century, and may partly be a result of the more deliberate drawing of coins from all over the kingdom to meet the demands of taxation.<sup>2</sup>

The 1002 tribute of £24,000, a payment probably coming late in period of the Long Cross coin type, could have been comfortably paid for by coins of that issue. Yet, it is interesting that estimated Long Cross mint output was less than half that of Crux, when the *gafol* burden was only maximally £8,000 higher for CRUX. Indeed, CRUX output seems to have been exceptionally high, far more than the *gafol* in 991 and 994 necessarily warranted. This reminds us of an important point when considering all of these mint output estimates: *gafol* payments were not necessarily the primary driver of coin minting, other factors will have been at play. All mint output estimates can do is help show us whether the *gafol* and *heregeld* figures were *possible* to pay; not that they will necessarily fit a neat pattern that spikes and dips along with the alleged amounts paid.

The Helmet mint output estimates, however, do present a potential problem. The conservative £50,000 mint output estimate sits uncomfortably close to the £36,000 alleged payment, especially when considering that perhaps up to £15,000 was needed in circulation to keep the nation going economically. But there is no need for it to necessarily be a problem. Firstly, even following Allen's conservative estimate of mint output, the payment could in theory have been made exclusively by coins of the Helmet type, albeit a very high proportion of them, and there may still have been just enough coin left in circulation to meet the economy's needs in desperate times. Secondly, older coin types may well still have been in existence and in regular use: it seems unlikely that the large difference between CRUX and the Long Cross and Helmet mint outputs can be explained by the

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, 'Fall and Rise' 216.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalf, 'Fall and Rise', 213.

export or loss of CRUX coins alone, which had a comparably light *gafol* burden to pay; perhaps many CRUX coins were still either temporarily hoarded in England or even still in circulation. Thirdly, the upper estimate of Helmet's mint output, up to £120,000, much better accommodates the alleged *gafol* payment of £36,000. However, as explained below, there are indeed serious problems with the 1007 *gafol* figure, but the lower mint output estimate of Helmet does not in itself put the chronicler's figure in jeopardy.<sup>1</sup>

The £48,000 *gafol* of 1012 and the £21,000 *heregeld* of 1014 were probably in Long Cross type coins, as was possibly the £3,000 payment by East Kent in 1009. Long Cross seems to have been the largest issue since CRUX, and indeed had considerably more tribute to cover than any type before it. However, a conservative estimate of mint output of £120,000 for Long Cross does not in itself give us much reason to doubt the affordability of £72,000 in tribute.

Meanwhile, the £82,500 paid in 1018 would have been paid during Cnut's Quatrefoil type, the largest coin issue of all in this period. It is possible that Cnut's demand was so high because he knew there was much more available silver in the country than had actually been collected before. Looked at from this perspective, it is perhaps surprising that the earlier Viking demands were not significantly higher. The Quatrefoil issue may have been a particularly large one, partly because Cnut may have demanded his crews be paid off with coins bearing his own name, and not with old Æthelred coins, although it is interesting that heavier Quatrefoil coins (thought to be earlier in the issue in c.1018) are not as well represented in Scandinavian hoards as later lighter coins.<sup>2</sup> Metcalf argues that this is a historical anomaly for Quatrefoil, and believes that most of the Quatrefoil issue, including much lighter coins, were struck before the end of 1018.<sup>3</sup> For Metcalf, the sudden very large rise in mint output of Quatrefoil from western and midland mints points to a great new demand for

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 86.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalf, 'Can we believe the very large figure', 170-1.

<sup>3</sup> Metcalf, 'Can we believe the very large figure', 171.

coin to be struck from all over the country, which is only really explainable by the massive *gafol* of 1018.<sup>1</sup>

The vast payment of 1018 has received particular attention from historians and numismatists, as it is here that scholars have been unwilling either to believe the truthfulness of the figure at all (Gillingham), or else to believe that such a sum could have been raised through taxation. As the new king of his newly conquered kingdom, the argument goes, Cnut could have raised the money from wherever there was wealth; he did not have to use the hidage system, which at an approximate rate of one pound per hide would very likely have led to insurrection.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that taxation in the usual sense was not or only partially involved in paying this tribute, but this leaves us with the awkward question of where the Vikings did get all the money. By this point church and lay stocks of silver bullion must have been severely depleted, if not exhausted, so the only credible options for the wealthy to raise so much money would have been to sell land to the invaders, or to extract the money from their peasants. If one assumes that the latter course was chosen before the former in more instances than not, then this would have merely been indirect taxation; Cnut's demands probably being publicly known, this would surely have led to just as much cause for the insurrection that never happened as would a direct land tax of one pound per hide. It should also be pointed out that it seems the 1018 *gafol* took two years to collect; the comparatively long time must reflect the time it took to raise the money. If it took two years, then the burden on the population would have been lightened considerably to £36,000 per year; possibly 10s per hide per year.

It is hard to see where London could have raised £10,500 by itself, were it not for the heavy taxation of merchants and burgesses. The city does not feature in Domesday Book; however, in its section on the customs of the city of Exeter, we are told 'TRE this city [Exeter] did not pay geld except when

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, 'Can we believe the very large figure', 168-75.

<sup>2</sup> D. M. Metcalf, 'Large Danegelds in Relation to War and Kingship, their Implications for Monetary History, and some Numismatic Evidence', in S. C. Hawkes (ed.), *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, monograph 21, 1989), 184-5.

London, York and Winchester paid geld; that was half a mark of silver for the use of the soldiers' (*haec ciuitas T.R.E. non geldabat nisi quando Londonia 7 Eboracum 7 Wintonia geldabant 7 hoc erat dimidia marka Argenti ad opus militum.*)<sup>1</sup> While this extremely low tax rate for Exeter was not necessarily replicated in London, this is at least direct evidence that tax was occasionally expected of London before 1066.

The Pipe Roll of 1129-30 does not show London paying Danegeld at all, rather it paid an 'aid of the city' (*auxilio ciuitatis*) of £120 - a somewhat round, arbitrary looking figure, as well as rather a low one, albeit more substantial than Exeter's pre-1066 half a mark.<sup>2</sup> However, £120 probably under-represents how much could be extracted from London by various means; the same Pipe Roll records £2,810 of non-Jewish Londoners' debts to the Crown in 1130, £1,734 of which was collected or pardoned. This was roughly comparable with the amounts collected or pardoned from some of the larger shires: Hampshire (£1,429), Yorkshire (£2,054) and Lincolnshire (£2,364) but was still less than 6% of the total from the whole nation (£28,116).<sup>3</sup>

If the 1018 figures are accurate, then nearly 13% of the entire nation's burden was demanded of London and apparently paid in full. Of all the *Chronicle's* figures, the £10,500 allegedly paid by London is admittedly the hardest to accept, but it may have held richer treasure stocks and other forms of portable wealth than other areas of the country, and could have increased customs duties on its merchants. The city might have been deemed to be very rich by Cnut's army that used the city as a base.

If after 1018 Cnut did raise a regular, perhaps annual *heregeld*, maybe at a rate of £5,500, as the 1040 'E' text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* suggests, then all of the taxes could have been paid for by Quatrefoil, Pointed Helmet and Short Cross coins. An interesting problem presents itself for the

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 100 (Devonshire C, 4).

<sup>2</sup> PR Henry I, 118-9.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 224.

*heregelds* of Harthacnut, however. The coin type for when he was finally king in both name and reality was the Arm-and-Sceptre type. It seems likely that he would have wanted to pay his *lithsmenn* in coins issued in his own name, and not in his fierce rival Harold's. Yet the total *heregeld* levied by Harthacnut of approximately £32,000 exceeds the conservative estimates of mint output of Arm-and-Sceptre. The Jewel Cross type was struck predominately in the name of Harthacnut's rival Harold, but there a significant number were also struck in the name of Harthacnut, so there might well have been some Jewel Cross coins struck in his name still around, or even some of his father Cnut's coins.<sup>1</sup> Of course, Harthacnut's *heregelds* could also have been paid for quite easily by Arm-and-Sceptre coins alone, if we assume the higher estimates of mint output, reaching perhaps £70,000.

Indeed, if we assume Arm-and-Sceptre was the only type in which these *heregelds* were paid, then an interesting hypothesis surrounding late Anglo-Saxon coin estimates in general presents itself. The £21,099 payment and the £11,048 payment seem like reliable figures; they are two of the more moderate numbers that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reports as having been levied in the first half of the eleventh century, and as Campbell puts it: 'it may not be beyond human ingenuity to find explanation for [the precision of the] figures... other than that they derive from accounts, written accounts. But common sense does seem to suggest that, more likely than not, they do so derive'.<sup>2</sup> Even Gillingham sees them as probably being accurate.<sup>3</sup> Of all the *gafol* and *heregeld*, these two were the ones most likely to have been paid in coins in one type, that is Arm-and-Sceptre, for propaganda reasons, to ensure Harthacnut's soldiers were paid with coins of his own name, and certainly not of his enemy Harold. The mint output of this type was relatively small, and most conservative estimates cannot quite cover the *heregeld* figures. Therefore, mint output may have

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<sup>1</sup> R. H. M. Dolley, 'The Jewel-Cross Coinage of Ælfifu, Emma, Harthacnut and Harold I, *BNJ*, 27 (1952), 274.

<sup>2</sup> J. Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in J. Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), 203.

<sup>3</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel,' 380-1.

been toward the liberal end of estimates. If so, then it seems reasonable to think that mint output might have been toward the higher end of estimates for all the preceding coin types as well. If that is the case, then there is even less reason to disbelieve any of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* tribute figures on the grounds of ability to pay in minted silver.

We have little documentary evidence of Edward the Confessor's *heregeld*, only his abolition of it in 1051, and the recording that nine ships' crews were paid off in 1049, while five remained in service, but only until 1050 when we are told that all of the *lithsmenn* were laid off.<sup>1</sup> Extrapolating from the sums of money we are told Harthacnut taxed to pay for for 62 ships and then for 32 ships, we may think that Edward was paying around £4,800 per year until 1049 for 14 ships, and perhaps around £1,700 in 1050 for five ships.<sup>2</sup> The early coin types minted under Edward could have covered such payments even using the most conservative estimates; however, the Small Flan coinage of 1048-1050 may have struggled to meet *heregeld* demands of £4,800 per annum, while leaving enough money in circulation for the economy to function. Fairbairn points out that the Small Flan type was struck at a very light weight of below 0.9 grams, as if the government may have ordered mints to strike as many as possible from the limited amount of silver available.<sup>3</sup> Even though coin production and the weight of coins partially recovered in following types, Fairbairn may be right to suspect it is no coincidence that it was at this time when the fleet was first reduced and then disbanded altogether: there may not have been enough silver to produce coins to pay for it all.<sup>4</sup> In sum, it is possible that a bullion crisis was a major factor in bringing about the abolition of *heregeld* in 1051.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS D s.a. 1051, trans. Whitelock, 116, and above, 38.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 37-39.

<sup>3</sup> Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 220.

<sup>4</sup> Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 221-2.

## Coin finds in Scandinavia

The sheer amount of coin that might have been struck helps to defuse an argument between Kenneth Jonsson on the one hand, and Michael Metcalf and Jens Christian Moesgaard on the other, on the reason why English coins are so thoroughly mixed up with German coins in Scandinavian hoards. Jonsson's argument is that the coins dug up in Scandinavia were there primarily as a result of trade, and that coins first arrived from England into Germany, where they were mixed up with German coins, before being circulated and deposited in Scandinavia.<sup>1</sup> He believes that the *gafol* would have been paid predominantly in kind.<sup>2</sup> Metcalf and Moesgaard reply that there is very little evidence of English coins ever having been in circulation in northern Germany, and that the mixing process took place once coins had arrived in Scandinavia directly from England through tribute.<sup>3</sup> The absence of evidence of English coins in Germany suggests that Metcalf and Moesgaard have the better case. Moreover, Jonsson's belief that payments were made in kind is profoundly mistaken, given all the evidence of melted down silver and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* repeated assertions that the English were to provide the Danes with provisions (*metsunge*) as well as make payments. However, this 'trading versus raiding' debate (a misleading title, but one regularly used), may well be a false dichotomy if we assume large mint outputs. Possibly much Anglo-Saxon coin did end up in Scandinavia through trading, but coin circulation within Scandinavia was rapid enough to mix the traded coins with the tribute coins.

Histograms detailing the number of coins of each type dug up in various regions of Scandinavia were published by Blackburn and Jonsson in 1981.<sup>4</sup> It is here that we are most likely to see relative patterns between the alleged amounts of coin extracted through tribute, and the number of

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<sup>1</sup> Jonsson, 'Routes', 205-230.

<sup>2</sup> Jonsson, 'Routes', 212.

<sup>3</sup> Metcalf, 'Inflows', 349-385; Metcalf, 'Beginnings of Coinage in the North Sea Coastlands, 207-12; Moesgaard, 'The Import of English Coins', 389-419.

<sup>4</sup> Blackburn and Jonsson, 'Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element', 152.

corresponding current coin types actually dug up in Scandinavia. I have reproduced the histograms here:

**Table 3. Histogram of coins in the Stockholm Systematic Collection<sup>1</sup>**



**Table 4. Histogram of coins from Helsinki and other Finnish Collections<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> B. F. Hildebrand, *Anglosachsiska Mynt i Svenska Kongl. Myntkabinettet funna i Sveriges jord* (Stockholm, 1846).

<sup>2</sup> T. T. Talvio, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 25: Helsinki and Other Public Collections in Finland* (London, 1978).

**Table 5. Histogram of Anglo-Saxon coins in West Slavic hoards<sup>1</sup>**



For both Denmark and Gotland, Blackburn and Metcalf have produced some indicative tables, listing numbers of each type found in five typical hoards:

**Table 6. The Anglo-Saxon element of five Danish hoards deposited between 1024 and 1030.<sup>2</sup>**

Hoard	PR	R	FH	SH	C	LC	H	LSC	Q	PH	SC
D 69 Villie	1	2	3	1	64	105	6	0	0	0	0
D 59 Ö. Herrestad	0	0	0	0	4	14	4	33	40	1	0
D 66 Grönby	0	1	2	1	14	130	22	100	358	1	0
D 58 Kelstrup	0	0	0	0	13	52	16	66	288	242	0
D 70 Enner	0	1	0	1	9	51	52	73	196	258	1

<sup>1</sup> Blackburn and Jonsson, 'Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element', 235-249. The histogram excludes the unrepresentative Lübeck hoard.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Blackburn and Jonsson, 'Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element', 171.

**Table 7. Anglo-Saxon elements of five Gotland hoards deposited between 1005 and 1048<sup>1</sup>**

Hoard	PR	R	FH	SH	C	LC	H	LSC	Q	PH	SC
G 69 St. Embjånne	0	2	5	8	67	142	27	0	0	0	0
G 78 Ekeskogs	0	1	2	1	39	164	32	18	7	0	0
G 82 Österryftes	0	8	18	13	147	294	39	44	15	0	0
G 120 Nygårds	1	7	11	9	122	321	26	61	28	44	8
G 136 L. Valla	0	0	3	2	45	126	34	101	36	15	11

These histograms and tables show us that there was a small increase in the number of coins coming to Scandinavia out of the First and Second Hand issues, followed by a comparatively massive number out of the CRUX issue. Long Cross was even better represented than CRUX in Gotland, Denmark and Finland. There is then a great reduction of finds in all areas of coins of the Helmet type. For the Last Small Cross, the numbers remarkably rise again. The Quatrefoil finds slightly exceed those of the Last Small Cross, except in the Danish hoards, where they greatly exceed them, and in the Gotland hoards, where they are significantly lower in number. Although somewhat fewer in number than Quatrefoil, the number of Pointed Helmet coin finds is still high; the much more significant reduction is in finds of Cnut's Short Cross. After an even further reduction in number of imported Jewel Cross coin finds, coin imports apparently never recovered, bar perhaps a small spike in Radiate and Trefoil coins in Sweden. Indeed, during the middle and late parts of Edward's reign, coin imports appear to have gradually tailed off altogether.

The CRUX, Long Cross, Last Small Cross and Quatrefoil spikes fit a pattern we might expect: these are the coinages current at the time of major *gafol* payments and were from issues of very high mint output (see Table 2.) We may think that the numbers of Pointed Helmet seem surprisingly high, especially in comparison with Short Cross, but this could perhaps reflect a comparatively high regular rate of *heregeld* imposed during the first twelve years or so of Cnut's reign that was significantly

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Blackburn and Jonsson, 'Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element', 165.

lowered during his later years. But Æthelred's Helmet type once again proves to be an anomaly: rather like the low number of Helmet coins minted, this appears to stand in potential contradiction to the levying of a £36,000 *gafol* in 1007. One would assume that there should be more finds of Helmet coin than CRUX in Scandinavia. Assuming that Jonsson's theory that the great majority of Anglo-Saxon coins were not imported directly into Scandinavia by way of tribute is false, then we are left with two possible conclusions: either obsolete coin was in large part used to pay the 1007 *gafol*, or the £36,000 figure itself is false.

If the latter is the case, then Gillingham's contention that the *Chronicle* has invented the figures deserves re-examination. His argument was that the figures rise in a neat duodecimal progression from £24,000 in 1002, to £36,000 in 1007, to £48,000 in 1012, then to £72,000 plus £10,500 from London in 1018, and that they are simply too neat to be true.<sup>1</sup> The argument stems partly from Simon Keynes's analysis of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* style for Æthelred's reign. Keynes shows that a single chronicler from London wrote the account of the whole of Æthelred's reign (979-1016) that was integrated into the 'C', 'D' and 'E' texts, some time between 1016 and 1023.<sup>2</sup> This chronicler therefore had a retrospective view of Æthelred's reign, and he chooses to present it 'as a remorseless progression towards ultimate disaster'.<sup>3</sup> Keynes says this chronicler 'describ[ed] the succession of raids with a monotony conditioned by defeatism' with the example from 1001: 'and ever their raid was worse than the one before it'.<sup>4</sup> Gillingham believes that whoever wrote the 1018 entry, possibly a later chronicler, looked at the duodecimal sequence until 1012, and added £24,000 again.<sup>5</sup> It is a credible hypothesis that the chronicler did use such a sequence to make a rhetorical point for the years 1002 to 1012. Yet the same cannot be said for the rest of the reign: 991 (£10,000), 994 (£16,000), 1014 (£21,000, admittedly a *heregeld*, but the chronicler was not making

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<sup>1</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 379-80.

<sup>2</sup> Keynes, 'Declining Reputation', 232.

<sup>3</sup> Keynes, 'Declining Reputation', 235.

<sup>4</sup> Keynes, 'Declining Reputation', 235.

<sup>5</sup> Gillingham, 'Most Precious Jewel', 383-4.

explicit distinctions between *gafol* and *heregeld*) plus indeed the 1018 chronicler's own record of £10,500 from London. None of these figures fit a duodecimal sequence.

If we assume for the sake of argument, however, that the chronicler was making a rhetorical point just for the years 1002 to 1012, which is possible, then the convenient looking £36,000 figure that comes in the middle is likely to be inaccurate. However, as Lawson points out, the chronicler, writing retrospectively, was surely more likely to know accurate figures from recent years; conversely therefore, the 1012 payment seems the most likely to be accurate, and the 1002 payment to be the least so. From this perspective, it is the higher figure of £48,000 that is most believable, and the lower figure of £24,000 that is most likely to be inaccurate.<sup>1</sup> In summary then, nothing about the Helmet evidence brings into question any of the high payments of which Gillingham was so sceptical, apart perhaps from the £36,000 figure of 1007 itself, and, somewhat ironically, the comparably low £24,000 figure of 1002.

What can we make, however, of the low numbers of Arm-and-Sceptre coins found, which were current for the £32,147 total *heregeld* paid for Harthacnut's fleet in 1041? Before we enter this discussion, we should remember that even Gillingham agrees with these *heregeld* figures, because of the insurrection they caused in Worcester and because of their precision, and the way they match up with estimated numbers of oarsmen and steersmen. The chronicler's *heregeld* figure for this year is thus not in question, rather the question is why so few Arm-and-Sceptre coins survive in Scandinavia? Maybe the answer is that by the end of Cnut's reign, the Danish army would no longer have so much resembled a foreign force, but rather a domestic one, which spent wages domestically. Indeed, it is likely that many English had joined its ranks; we know English warriors fought for Cnut at the Battle of the Helgeå in 1026.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lawson, 'Those Stories', 390-1.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 37.

Certainly, the near total decline of coin types of Edward the Confessor found in Scandinavia can be explained by reduced rates of *heregeld*, its abolition in 1051 (estimated to be at the time of the Expanding Cross), and the increased tendency of wages to be spent domestically in England. Blackburn and Jonsson have also credibly suggested that the development of significant national coinages in Denmark and Norway in the mid eleventh century caused a proportion of new imported coins to be converted into domestic types, thereby reducing the prevalence in hoards of later Anglo-Saxon coin types.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Blackburn and Jonsson, 'Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Element', 157.

# Taxation on the eve of the Norman Conquest

## Taxation after the abolition of heregeld

The 'D' text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells us that the *heregeld* was abolished by Edward the Confessor in 1051:

Alede Eadward cyng þæt heregyld þæt Æþelred cyng ær astealde – þæt wæs on þam nigon 7 þrittigoðan geare þæs þe he hit ongunnon hæfde. Þæt gyld gedrehte ealle Engla þeode on swa langum fyrste swa hit bufan her awriten is; þæt wæs æfre ætforan oðrum gyldum þe man myslice geald, 7 men mid menigfealdlice drehte.

King Edward abolished the heregeld which King Æthelred had imposed, that is in the thirty-ninth year after it was instituted. That geld oppressed all the English people for as long a space of time as we have written above. That [geld] always came before other gelds that were variously paid, and it oppressed people in many ways.<sup>1</sup>

The text clearly implies that *heregeld* was not the only geld that English kings levied between 1012 and 1051. Moreover, Domesday Book refers to 'geld' in a pre-1066 context in thousands of entries, with no suggestion that it had long ceased to be collected. Three major questions follow. What were the 'other gelds' that the 'D' text alludes to? How many gelds remained in existence until 1066? Was the 'geld' that Domesday Book so frequently refers to a re-instituted *heregeld* or a different kind of impost?

There has been some debate on these points, although perhaps not as much as one might expect. Vinogradoff's view, with which Barlow concurs, is that the suspension of *heregeld* was only

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. D, s.a. '1052', ed. Cubbin, 69-70; ASC, MS D, s.a. 1051, trans. Whitelock, 116.

temporary; others, such as Williams, contend that other gelds continued to be levied after the suspension of *heregeld*.<sup>1</sup> Pratt has more recently asserted that:

the *Chronicle*'s testimony that heregeld had been abolished in 1051 deserves to be taken seriously, and neither general references in Domesday to the collection of geld in Edward's time, nor a Bury St Edmunds writ narrowly postdating the Confessor's act, seem sufficient grounds for doubt.<sup>2</sup>

Pratt says of the *Chronicle*'s reference to 'other gelds' that 'the usage of *gyld* reads most naturally as a generic reference to dues and exactions of all kinds'.<sup>3</sup> However, he does not explain this viewpoint, and so his reading of the text is not persuasive. He also takes the view that the 'common geld' mentioned in the Berkshire Domesday recorded as being levied in the reign of Edward at 7d per hide was actually the *heregeld* that had not been taken since 1051, and not a tax levied in the later years of the reign.<sup>4</sup> While I agree that the *heregeld* had indeed been abolished in 1051 and did not return during the Confessor's reign, there is sufficient evidence in Domesday Book that other taxes, or other 'gelds', levied for other purposes than paying *lithsmenn*, were taken right up until 1066.

#### **A housecarl tax**

For each of the the Dorset boroughs of Dorchester, Bridport, Shaftesbury and Wareham, Domesday Book provides a hidage assessment and a statement as to how much money that amounted to in tax. The purpose of the tax is said to be for the use of the king's housecarls.<sup>5</sup> For example, in Bridport:

Tempore Regis Edwardi erant cxx domus et ad omnem seruitium regis defendebat se et geldabat pro v hidis. Scilicet ad opus Huscarlium regis dimidiam markam argenti.

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<sup>1</sup> Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 141; Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, 106 n.5; A. Williams, *Kingship and Government in Pre-Conquest England, C.500-1066* (Basingstoke, 1999), 144.

<sup>2</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 8.

<sup>3</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 8.

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 8.

<sup>5</sup> GDB 75, (Dorset B, 1-4).

TRE there were 120 houses and they were assessed for every service of the king and paid geld for 5 hides, that is half a silver mark for the use of the king's housecarls.<sup>1</sup>

The 143 houses of Wareham, meanwhile:

ad omnem seruitium regis se defendebat 7 geldabat pro .x. hidis scilicet .i. markam argenti Huscarlis regis.

were assessed for every service of the king and paid geld for 10 hides, that is, 1 silver mark for the king's housecarls.<sup>2</sup>

There has been some debate as to who, precisely, these housecarls were.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, as the Dorset borough entries in Domesday testify, they were paid, but were they full-time mercenaries of the sort that were paid for by the *heregeld*, that is the *lithsmenn* who manned the warships? Or were they simply retainers in royal and aristocratic households? We certainly know that the housecarls were not simply the *lithsmenn's* replacement as a full-time mercenary force, because they appear in English sources both before and after the dismissal of the *lithsmenn* in 1050.<sup>4</sup> Hooper argues that housecarls were not like the *lithsmenn* at all, in that they did not form part of a full-time, standing army. Rather, the housecarls were the king's retinue at court, or his 'household', men of military age who could fulfil military or non-military duties, much like more traditionally Anglo-Saxon thegns.<sup>5</sup> Hooper points out that according to Asser, King Alfred paid one sixth of his revenues each year to his 'fighting men and likewise to his noble thegns who lived at the royal court in turns, serving him in various capacities', so the fact that these men were paid does not necessarily make them a

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<sup>1</sup> GDB 75, (Dorset B, 2).

<sup>2</sup> GDB 75, (Dorset B, 3).

<sup>3</sup> L. M. Larson, *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, 1904); C. Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1962), 9-19; N. Hooper, 'The Housecarls in England in the Eleventh Century', *ANS*, 7 (1985), 161-76; N. Hooper, 'Military Developments in the reign of Cnut', in A. R. Rumble (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London, 1994), 89-100; F. Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England: 1042-1216* (London, 1961), 50.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. ASC MS C, (D), s.a. 1041, trans. Whitelock, 106.

<sup>5</sup> Hooper, 'Housecarls' 161-76, esp. 171-2; developed in Hooper, 'Military Developments', 89-100.

permanent standing army of mercenaries.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Hooper argues that 'the status and function of the houscarls and thegns were identical', citing examples from Domesday Book and narrative sources where the two terms apparently overlap to support his case.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, not all housecarls were royal housecarls; for example the 'C' text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* refers to Earl Tostig's housecarls who were slain by the thegns of Yorkshire in 1065. But specifically royal housecarls continued to be referred to by various sources right up until 1066: Domesday Book refers to one 'Thori the housecarl of King Edward' (*Thori huscarle regis*) and a writ of the early 1060s is addressed to 'Richard, King Edward's housecarl'.<sup>3</sup> Barlow disagrees with Hooper as to their identity and function: he sees the king's housecarls as being a royal bodyguard with a 'special military code of honour... the *corps d'élite* of any army put into the field', distinct from thegns. However, he agrees that they were paid men distinct from the *lithsmenn* sent home in 1050.<sup>4</sup>

The upshot of this is that we have in the Dorset borough entries direct evidence of a tax levied on the hide during King Edward's reign that was not *heregeld*. The *heregeld* was paid for *lithsmenn* until their departure in 1050; the Dorset entries refer to a tax paid for housecarls, probably for during the times they served at court, for which there may have been a rotational system. This housecarl tax may well have co-existed with the *heregeld* before 1051 – for housecarls are identifiable in England from at least 1033 - and continued after the abolition of the *heregeld*, probably right up until 1066.

### **The 'common geld' in Domesday**

Five other pre-1066 'gelds' that Domesday Book records may have been referring to this royal housecarl tax, but again, maybe to different taxes. In Exeter we are told:

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<sup>1</sup> Hooper, 'Housecarls', 170-1; 'Asser's Life', trans. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (eds.), *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources* (London, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Hooper, 'Housecarls', 175.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 147 (Buckinghamshire 14, 35); Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, nos. 116-17.

<sup>4</sup> Barlow, *Feudal Kingdom*, 50.

haec ciuitas T.R.E. non geldabat nisi quando Londonia 7 Eboracum 7 Wintonia geldabant 7 hoc erat dimidia marka Argenti ad opus militum.<sup>1</sup>

In the time of King Edward this city [Exeter] did not pay geld except when London, York and Winchester paid geld; that was half a mark of silver for the use of the soldiers.

The word *militum* neither necessarily indicates housecarls, nor any other particular kind of soldier, though Williams opts to translate it as 'thegns'. This particular 'geld' may well have been distinct from the housecarl taxes in the Dorset boroughs; the implication is that it was paid on certain occasions, perhaps less frequently than elsewhere. However, though a larger city, Exeter was assessed at the same rate of hides as Bridport; we are told 'whenever an expedition went out by land or sea, this city [Exeter] gave as much service as 5 hides of land did' (*quando expeditio ibat per terram aut per mare seruiebat haec ciuitas quantum v hidae terrae*).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the same rate of taxation was due from Exeter as in the Dorset boroughs, for these also paid half a silver mark for every five hides.

Meanwhile in Lincolnshire Domesday tells us that:

Stamford Burgus Regis dedit geldum T.R.E. pro .xii. hundredibus 7 dimidio. In exercitu 7 nauigio 7 in Danegeld.

The king's borough of Stamford paid geld in the time of King Edward for 12 ½ hundreds. That is by military service by and sea and in Danegeld.<sup>3</sup>

This is the only use of the term 'Danegeld' in Domesday Book. It surely refers to a direct monetary tax: in the Danelaw land taxation was assessed in carucates and 'hundreds', which here were units of assessment comprised of twelve carucates each, not administrative entities.<sup>4</sup> There are only two other documents that use the word 'Danegeld' that demonstrably date from the Conqueror's reign,

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 100 (Devonshire C, 4).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 100 (Devonshire C, 5).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 336v; (Lincolnshire S, 1).

<sup>4</sup> See below, 106.

and both imply direct monetary taxation. The first, a grant of land in favour of Westminster Abbey dated between 1076 to 1086, commands the land given to be 'free of murdrum, geld and Danegeld' (*quietas de murdro et geldo vel danegeldo*).<sup>1</sup> The second, a grant of land in favour of St Paul's cathedral dating between 1080 and 1087, commands the land to be 'free and quit of Danegelds, all other gelds, military service and all works' (*solutas et quietas de denegeldis et omnibus aliis geldis, et ab omni expeditione, et ab omni opere*).<sup>2</sup> The three uses of the term that have survived from the Conqueror's reign mean that we can surmise that land tax was sometimes known by that name before 1087. As for the Stamford entry in relation to the 1066 context, it could either be that it refers to a specific pre-1066 local or universal land tax as 'Danegeld', whether it was really referred to as 'Danegeld' in 1066 or not, or to that same tax as was paid in Dorset to housecarls. In the latter instance, the housecarls, probably still a largely Scandinavian body, the term 'Danegeld' might have made some literal sense, in a way it never really did after the Norman Conquest when we start finding it in writing.

Another pre-1066 reference to a land tax in Domesday Book is in Berkshire:

Quando geldum dabatur T.R.E. communiter per totam Berchesciram dabat hida iii denarios 7 obolum ante natale domini 7 tantundem ad Pentecosten.<sup>3</sup>

When geld was commonly paid in the time of King Edward, throughout the whole of Berkshire, a hide gave 3 ½ d before Christmas and as much at Pentecost.

There is no hint as to the purpose of this land tax. The abbreviation 'TRE', literally meaning 'in the time of King Edward', is used in Domesday Book to refer to the situation in 1066, or more specifically 'on the day King Edward was alive and dead' (*die qua rex Eduardus uiuus et mortuus fuit*), a formula that is standard in Exon Domesday, and which Great Domesday occasionally uses in connection with

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<sup>1</sup> Bates no. 314 in D. Bates (ed.), *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum. The acts of William I (1066–1087)* (Oxford, 1998), all charters within this volume henceforth rendered as 'Bates no. xxx'

<sup>2</sup> Bates, no. 188.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 56v, (Berkshire B, 10).

disputes.<sup>1</sup> However, in some cases, 'TRE' may refer to an imprecise point in the period of Edward's reign, not necessarily the day he died; for example, for some estates Domesday Book refers to earls who died before 1066 as having held the land 'TRE'.<sup>2</sup> The reference to a 'commonly paid geld' in the time of King Edward in Berkshire thus does not necessarily mean it was collected right up until the end of Edward's reign. Having said that, there is nothing explicit or implicit to the contrary; Pratt's interpretation that this refers to the *heregeld* abolished in 1051 has no clear justification.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the fact that the dates of payment are specified points toward knowledge of the detailed working of the tax, which in turn hints toward a comparatively recent date of collection. In this Berkshire entry we may either be seeing the housecarl tax of the Dorset boroughs and perhaps of Stamford once again, or else a different levy altogether. The case for a different tax altogether is that it was clearly levied at a different rate; 7d per hide rather than 16d per hide as in Dorset. However, it is possible that in both Dorset and Berkshire the rates are only mentioned because they were exceptional; they could have been the same housecarl tax, merely at different rates.

In the Domesday entry for Guildford we are told that Archbishop Stigand in 1066 had full rights over his tenements 'except when the common geld is laid on the town, which no-one escapes' (*nisi commune geldum in uilla uenerit unde nullus euadat*).<sup>4</sup> Although this pertains to an urban context, the language used is similar to that of the entry referring to all Berkshire; it is probably alluding to the same tax. The 'common geld' or the 'commonly paid' geld suggests a universal land tax, just as the *heregeld* was before 1051 and the Danegeld was to be from 1066 onwards. In Hertford, meanwhile, there was a holding belonging to Esgar the staller which included 7 houses 'which rendered no customary dues except the king's geld when it was collected' (*quae nullam*

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. GDB, 211, (Bedfordshire 10, 1).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. the king's manors of Bosham and Rotherfield, Sussex, are said to have been held by Earl Godwin, who died in 1053. GDB, 16 (Sussex, 1, 1-2).

<sup>3</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 8.

<sup>4</sup> GDB 30, (Surrey 1, 1b).

*consuetudinem reddiderunt nisi geldum regis quando colligebatur*).<sup>1</sup> Again, that the 'king's geld' was collected from time to time before 1066 is assumed by the record, and no indication is given that the tax had been discontinued for fifteen years before 1066. Williams points out that the wording of these two entries suggests that the tax or taxes they were referring to were not necessarily annual imposts, as in both cases money was only owed 'when the tax is laid on the town' or 'when [the tax] was collected'. This tax - or these taxes, perhaps - while different in nature to the *heregeld* in that they were collected at a different rate and frequency, nevertheless were assessed taxes that continued to be collected until 1066.<sup>2</sup>

### Ship tax

One irregular land tax still levied after 1051 might have been a ship tax. A writ of William the Conqueror ordering the settlement of a dispute over manorial rights between the diocese of Worcester and the Abbey of Evesham suggests that geld was collected under the Confessor specifically for the making of ships.

Facite ita esse socam et sacam inter episcopum Wlstanum et Walterum abbatem de Euesham sicut erant die qua novissime tempore regis Eduuardi geldum acceptum fuit ad navigium faciendum.

See to it that soke and sake between Bishop Wulfstan and Walter, Abbot of Evesham, are as they were on the day when King Edward last collected geld for the construction of a ship.<sup>3</sup>

The *heregeld* abolished in 1051 was the tax to pay for *lithsmenn*, those soldiers who manned ships.<sup>4</sup> While it is not impossible that it was used to pay for the construction of ships as well, that was not its primary purpose. Here we may therefore be looking at a reference to a different kind of tax, a ship tax, needed to be levied by the Confessor in order to build a fleet after the mercenary *liðsmenn* were

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 132 (Hertfordshire B, 8).

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Kingship*, 144.

<sup>3</sup> Bates no. 347.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 36-3936.

disbanded. An inland and western shire such as Worcestershire would not have contained many seafaring men, nor shipbuilders. Cash payments could therefore have made a convenient substitute to any naval service. The origins of this Edwardian ship-geld may have pre-dated the institution of heregeld itself in 1012, for the *Chronicle's* entry for 1008 says that:

Her bebead se cyng þæt man sceolde ofer eall Angelcyn scyfu fæstlice wyrcan, þæt is ðonne of þrim hund hidum 7 of tynum ænne scegð, 7 of viii hidum helm 7 byrnan.

The king ordered that ships should be built unremittingly over all England, namely a warship from 310 hides, and a helmet and corselet from eight hides.<sup>1</sup>

That this naval construction service could be converted to cash in inland shires seems highly likely, although timber could perhaps also have been provided.

## Conclusion

In all probability, the national *heregeld*, that is the tax to pay Scandinavian mercenary *lithsmenn*, did not return after its abolition in 1051. However, this did not result in the abolition of all land taxation based on the hide; the *heregeld* was only ever one of numerous taxes, as the 'D' text says. In Worcestershire, a ship tax is referred to as having existed under the Confessor, which was needed in order to replace the disbanded fleet. A tax to pay for royal housecarls assessed on hides was extracted from Dorset boroughs. Other, less defined land taxes seem to have existed as well; a 'Danegeld' is referred to at Stamford, Lincolnshire, and a 'common geld' in Berkshire and in Guildford, Surrey, and perhaps in Hertford as well. It is conceivable that these were local land taxes, but the more natural reading of the Domesday evidence is that the 'common geld' was a single, national impost probably collected annually. Since the money it raised was not used to pay for mercenary forces, this was not a reconstituted *heregeld*. However, the notion that land taxation based on the hide entirely ceased between 1051 and 1066 cannot be sustained. Certainly, if no land

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. C s.a. 1008, ed. O'Brien O'Keefe, 92; ASC, MS C (D, E) s.a. 1008, trans. Whitelock, 88.

taxes at all had been levied after 1051, one would expect the Berkshire entry, the Stamford entry or the Dorset entries to say so. At the very least one might expect one of the thousands of entries in which Domesday texts have cause to mention land tax assessments in Edwardian contexts to state that land taxes had been discontinued for fifteen years. But there is no indication in Domesday Book or in any of its satellites that this was the case. That silence is deafening. The geld remained functional throughout Edward's reign. It was one of the prizes at stake in 1066.

## Assessment systems

The structure of the various late eleventh-century tax accounts suggests that the primary centre of assessment for the land tax by 1086 was not in the first instance the shire, but rather the hundred or wapentake. In the Northamptonshire Geld Account and in the Exon Geld Accounts, each hundred is accounted for separately, and hides from which the king has not had his geld are noted at the end of each hundred's section.<sup>1</sup> Only very briefly at the end of Dorset and Somerset's Geld Accounts do the scribes enter the total the king had from the shire; otherwise even how much was left owing was omitted.<sup>2</sup> There is a stark absence of any kind of summary in the Cornwall, Devon and Wiltshire accounts, and in the Northamptonshire Geld Account. It seems therefore that in the eyes of the administration, the hidation of hundreds was not determined by the hidation of the shire, rather the hidation of the shire was determined by the hidations of its hundreds.

It may not always have been like this; indeed, lists such as the Tribal Hidage, estimated to be of the mid seventh to the late ninth century, the Burghal Hidage of the late ninth or early tenth century, and the County Hidage of the early eleventh century, suggest otherwise: that round numbers of

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<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. A. J. Robertson (Cambridge, 1956), 230-7. For a discussion and full references of the southwestern Geld Accounts, see below, 151-168. For the Northamptonshire Geld Account, see below, 119-121.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 24, ed. and trans. A. Williams, 'Text and Translation of Dorset Geld Rolls', *VCH Dorset* (Oxford, 1968), III, 148; Exon Domesday, fol. 526, trans. E. H. Bates, 'Geld Inquest', *VCH Somerset* (London, 1906), I, 537.

hides were allotted to regions or shires, to be divided among localities.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that this situation continued right up until the mid eleventh century. However, by the time of William the Conqueror, and almost certainly by the end of the reign of Edward the Confessor, so many changes had taken place involving beneficial hidation, demesne exemption, individual exemptions, as well as changes of tenure and of estate boundaries, that there could be no expectation that shires would answer for a fixed, round number of hides divided more or less equally among its hundreds. Instead, the treasury had to take account of varied assessments of individual hundreds to work out what the shire now ought to give, even if officials from the shire were ultimately responsible for rendering shire tax money to the treasury.

There were, however, various systems of assessment in operation in England, and each shire used just one system. In Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire, the equivalent of the hundred was the wapentake. These were not assessed in hides, but in 'carucates'. Kent was divided in the first instance among 'lathes', but these were in turn divided among hundreds, which seem to have been the fundamental administrative unit, just as elsewhere in southern England. Kent's unit of assessment was not the hide, however, but the 'sulung', which could be divided into four 'yokes'.<sup>2</sup> All the other English shires were subdivided by hundreds. However, Norfolk and Suffolk's estates were assessed by carucates, yet apparently only for assessed services other than land taxation, for the land tax in East Anglia was assessed in a very different way from the rest of the country, with each estate being responsible for a certain number of pence of

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<sup>1</sup> D. Dumville, 'The Tribal Hidage: an introduction to its texts and their history', in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, (London, 1989), 225-30; for the Tribal Hidage's document's dating and context see J. Blair, 'The Tribal Hidage' in Lapidge et al. (eds.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, 455-6 and the notes; A. R. Rumble, 'An edition and translation of the Burghal hidage, together with Recension C of the Tribal Hidage' in D. Hill and A. R. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Oxford, 1999), 24-35; for dating of the Burghal Hidage see Hill and Rumble, *Defence of Wessex*, 1-2; for the County Hidage, see below, 114-118.

<sup>2</sup> See below, 112-113.

every pound that the hundred owed in geld.<sup>1</sup> I shall now briefly explore all of these systems in a little more detail, although space does not permit a comprehensive survey.

### Hides and carucates

The origins of the hide are obscure. Hides (*hid* or *hiwisc* in Anglo-Saxon), in most instances in Latin charters are called ‘cassati’<sup>2</sup>, ‘manentes’, ‘mansae’ or ‘tributarii’ from the mid to late seventh century onwards, and by Bede ‘familiae’ in the early eighth century.<sup>3</sup> Bede simply describes ‘familiae’ as ‘the English way of reckoning’ (*aestimationem Anglorum*) areas of land, large or small. Kentish sulungs meanwhile were called ‘aratra’, that is ‘ploughlands’ in even earlier Latin charters.<sup>4</sup> The term ‘familiae’ points toward one hide being for the sustenance of a family, while the term ‘tributarii’ is directly suggestive of tribute being central to their character. Meanwhile, the term ‘mansae’ recalls the basic unit of tenanted land in Francia, the ‘mansi’, but whether there was any equivalence at one point between the two units is impossible to say. Ultimately, we do not know how deeply into the past we should look for the hide’s ultimate origin, whether it be early Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, Roman, or even pre-Roman.<sup>5</sup>

Early Anglo-Saxon evidence suggests that hides were used to assess food-rents to the king at a local level, and probably for tribute taking by conquering kings at a wider level. The key documents are Ine’s law code and the list known as the Tribal Hidage. Clause 70.1 of Ine’s code, dating limits 688-694, sets out demands of goods to be supplied by localities in groups of ten hides:

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> Early examples from probably genuine diplomas according to *The Electronic Sawyer* include: S 51 (AD 676) for ‘manentes’; S 71 (AD 681) for ‘cassati’; S 53 (AD 693) for ‘tributarii’; S 244 (AD 702) for ‘mansae’; S 259 (AD 749) for ‘familiae’, a term also found in Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 162, 222, 292, 336, 372, 374, 382, 396, 520.

<sup>3</sup> R. J. Faith, ‘Hide’, in Lapidge et al., *Blackwell Encyclopedia*, 239.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly the earliest example from a trustworthy charter is the grant of 3 sulungs (*aratra*) in Stodmarsh to St Augustine’s Canterbury by King Hlothhere of Kent in AD 675, S 7, printed in *The Charters of St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, and Minster-in-Thanel*, ed. S. E. Kelly (Oxford, 1995), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 513-20; T. M. Edwards, ‘The Origins of the Hide’, *Past and Present*, 56 (1972), 3-33; Faith, *English Peasantry*, 109-52.

Æt x hidum to foster: x fata hunies, ccc hlafa, xii ambra wilisc ealað, xxx hluttres, tu eald hriðeru oððe  
x weðeras, x gees, xx henna, x cesas, amber fulne buteran, v leaxas, xx pundwæga fodres 7  
hundteonig æla.

As a food-rent from 10 hides: 10 vats of honey, 300 loaves, 12 'ambers' of Welsh ale, 30 'ambers' of  
clear ale, 2 full-grown cows or 10 wethers, 10 geese, 20 hens, 10 cheeses, an 'amber' full of butter, 5  
salmon, 20 pounds of fodder, 100 eels.<sup>1</sup>

The extent of this obligation is not clear, nor is it even explicit that it was to be paid to the king.  
However, in a recent and suggestive article, Lavelle suggests the Ine's law not only refers to the  
food-rents due from royal estates, but rather from the estates of landholders throughout the  
kingdom of Wessex.<sup>2</sup> He thus posits the existence of a kingdom-wide system of taxation, based on  
the hide, with payments made in goods rather than coin, operating in Wessex in the late seventh  
century. A minimum reading of the same clause could interpret it more modestly as a demand made  
from royal estates; although it would still be significant that such estates were being demanded of  
goods according to their hides, showing that such assessments were already possible, and could  
potentially be expanded.

The Tribal Hidage, meanwhile, is a list of names of kingdoms and tribes with assessments in hides  
accorded to each one.<sup>3</sup> The earliest surviving copy is from an eleventh-century manuscript, and  
there is no meaning or explanation given to the list, but it is almost certainly a Mercian document  
dating from the mid-seventh to the late ninth century. The traditional view of the document is that it  
is a tribute-taker's list, an aid to Mercian kings to exact tribute on conquered territories.<sup>4</sup> Keynes  
doubts this view, suggesting that it could simply be a list drawn up by a scholar for his own purposes

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<sup>1</sup> *Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), 58–9; trans.  
Whitelock, *EHD*, I, 406.

<sup>2</sup> R. Lavelle, 'Ine 70.1 and Royal Provision in Anglo-Saxon Wessex', in G. R. Owen-Crocker and B. W. Schneider  
(eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), 259–272.

<sup>3</sup> Dumville, 'Tribal Hidage', 225–30.

<sup>4</sup> H. R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (London, 1962), 297; W. Davies and H. Vierck,  
'The Contexts of the Tribal hidage: Social Aggregates and Settlement Patterns', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 8,  
(1974), 225.

rather than an administrative document at all.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case, the idea that overlords might impose tributes on conquered territories based on hides is scarcely controversial, not least because charters frequently refer to hides as 'tributarii'.

By the early tenth century, we find evidence that the usage of hides had evolved from assessing food renders and tributes to the assessment of labour work and fortress defence. The Burghal Hidage is an early tenth-century administrative list, conventionally dated to the reign of Edward the Elder, of fortresses (*burhs*), in southern England, detailing how many hides owed service for the protection of each *burh's* walls.<sup>2</sup> An appendix to the document known as the 'Calculation' states:

To anes æceres bræde in ealstilinge 7 to þære þære gebirgeað xvi hida. Gif ælc hid byþ be anum men gemannod þonne mæg man gesettan ælce gyrde mid feoþer mannum.

For the establishment of a wall of one acre's breadth [that is, 22 yards], and for its defence, 16 hides are required. If each hide is represented by one man, then each pole [that is, five and a half yards of wall] can be furnished with four men.<sup>3</sup>

The text proceeds to give further examples of how larger walls would require more hides, always at the same one man from one hide, and four men to each pole of wall ratio; as is said at the end of the calculation 'there is always required 160 men for one furlong [that is, 10 acres' breadth]; then each pole is furnished with four men' (*ealning to anum furlange gebyreð sixtig manna 7 .c. þonne bið ælc gyrde mid feoþer mannum geset*).<sup>4</sup> It tends to be assumed that the men demanded would come from the shire where the burh was situated, and that in most cases, the total hidage of the shire would

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<sup>1</sup> S. Keynes, 'England, 700-900', *New Cambridge Medieval History*, II, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 21-5.

<sup>2</sup> Hill and Rumble (eds.), *Defence of Wessex*, 2, 14-35.

<sup>3</sup> 'Edition and translation of the Burghal Hidage', ed. and trans. Rumble, 30, 34.

<sup>4</sup> 'Edition and translation of the Burghal Hidage', ed. and trans. Rumble, 30, 34.

have been approximately equal to the number of hides attached to the *burhs* for which it was responsible.<sup>1</sup>

By the time of Aethelred II's reign, before the introduction of *heregeld*, we see hidages used to assess and demand the supply of military equipment and ships.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps most critically of all, the Berkshire and Lincolnshire Domesday Book prove that by Edward the Confessor's reign at the latest, hides and carucates were used to assess military service for the regular Anglo-Saxon non-mercenary army, or 'select *fyrð*' as Hollister named it.<sup>3</sup> The vital evidence for this is the famous entry in the Berkshire Domesday:

Si rex mittebat alicubi exercitum de v hidis tantum unus miles ibat 7 ad ejus uictum uel stipendium de unaquaque hida dabantur ei iiii solidi ad ii menses.

If the king sent an army anywhere, only one soldier went from five hides, and 4s were given him from each hide as subsistence and wages for two months.<sup>4</sup>

Although there have been critics of Hollister's idea of a universality of a five-hide to one warrior system across southern and western England, the idea that at least similar types of arrangements as in Berkshire existed for the levying of soldiers, probably all over the country, no longer seems controversial.<sup>5</sup> How far back the hide was used to assess for the army is unknown, but that this may have been customary already for centuries before 1066 should not be ruled out, and it certainly seems probable that it had been a feature for at least several decades.

The 'carucate' (*carucata*), meanwhile, was the unit of assessment in the Danelaw shires of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, the equivalent of the hide. The

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<sup>1</sup> N. P. Brookes, 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in Hill and Rumble (eds.), *Defence*, 128-150; P. H. Sawyer, *From Roman to Norman England* (London, 1978), 227-8.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS. C, s.a. 1008, ed. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 92; ASC, MS C (D, E) s.a. 1008, trans. Whitelock, 88; see above, 31.

<sup>3</sup> For the Lincolnshire entry, see above, 93.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 56v; (Berkshire B, 10).

<sup>5</sup> R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1988), 97-115.

carucate was also a unit of assessment in Norfolk and Suffolk, but in these two shires they were not units of taxation.<sup>1</sup> The nomenclature of carucates suggests they were once notionally the amount of land that one eight-oxen plough could plough in one year.<sup>2</sup> They are not, however, to be confused with the Domesday 'ploughland' (*caruca*), which was probably meant to be a measure of real agriculture in 1086.<sup>3</sup> From what we can tell, by the mid eleventh century the administrative functions of the hide and the carucate were identical.

*Carucatae terrae* also occasionally appear in Domesday Book on unhidated estates in southern England. Mostly these are explicitly labelled as estates that never paid tax; it seems reasonable to assume that these were of a fundamentally different character to Danelaw carucates, and were possibly just a rough measure of land unassessed for whatever reason. In certain areas special types of hides and carucates co-existed: in the six hundreds described between the Mersey and the Ribble, southern Lancashire, we are told that 'in each hide there are 6 carucates of land' (*in unaquaque hida sunt vi carucatae terrae*), meaning that overall in the area 'there are 79 hides paying geld.'<sup>4</sup> Farrer has argued that this meant that South Lancashire only paid geld at a rate of 79 hides, despite having 474 carucates. He then went on to argue that such a system of 6 carucates forming 1 'geldable hide' was replicated in Yorkshire, and that it had been that way since 921 AD. His argument centred around the low taxation of Yorkshire in the Pipe Rolls of 1129-30 and 1155-6, when it appears the shire paid at a rate of just 4d per Domesday carucate, that is one sixth of other hides and carucates, which paid 2s.<sup>5</sup> He argues, not unpersuasively, that South Lancashire was treated as part of Yorkshire by the Pipe Rolls in the twelfth century. However, the lack of direct statements in Yorkshire Domesday or in any other document on the matter should give us pause before accepting

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Stenton, 'Introduction', in *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, eds. C. W. Foster and T. Longley, (Lincoln Record Society 19, 1924), x-xii

<sup>3</sup> See below, 175-190.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 269v, (Cheshire R1, 44); GDB, 270, (Cheshire R7, 1).

<sup>5</sup> W. Farrer, 'Introduction to the Yorkshire Domesday', *VCH Yorkshire*, II (1912), 138-142.

Farrer's conclusion that Yorkshire was really assessed at just one sixth of its carucates for tax purposes from as far back as the tenth century. It seems just as likely that Yorkshire was granted a special rate – perhaps after the harrying of the North, but perhaps sometime much later – than any other more ancient explanation for the mysteriously low rate in the twelfth-century Pipe Rolls. Even in South Lancashire, it seems more plausible that its 6 hundreds traditionally paid geld for 474 carucates rather than for 79 hides.

### 'Five-hide units'

One feature of the pattern of assessments around England has attracted special attention from scholars for many decades. Round, using the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis*, noticed the prevalence of what he termed 'the five-hide unit', that is, vills assessed at multiples of five hides.<sup>1</sup> Presenting numerous, although selective, examples from elsewhere in the kingdom, he argued that this arrangement was so common that it cannot possibly have been accidental. His case was strong for Cambridgeshire; Baring demonstrated that the rule held true to at least a large extent also in Bedfordshire; and Hart showed it to have been prevalent in pre-1066 Northamptonshire.<sup>2</sup> Later statistical analysis by Leaver shows that roughly five hide units (any vills within 0.5 hides below 5 hides, 10 hides, 15 hides etc.) were commonplace in Buckinghamshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Wiltshire, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Huntingdonshire; indeed they made up between 40% and 72% of total vills in these shires.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Round, *Feudal England: historical studies on the XIth and XIIth centuries* (London, 1895), 44-69; 'Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis', ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton, in *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis: nunc primum e manuscripto unico in Bibliotheca Cottoniana asservato typis mandata. Subjicitur Inquisitio eliensis*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London, 1876), henceforth, 'ICC, ed. Hamilton'.

<sup>2</sup> F. H. Baring, *Domesday Tables*, (London, 1909), 175-6; C. R. Hart, *The Hidation of Northamptonshire* (Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., no. 3, 1970), 48-78.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Leaver, 'Five Hides in Ten Shires: A Contribution to the Domesday Regression Debate', *Economic History Review*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 41 (1988), 525-542.

Round also detected a tendency for Danelaw vills to be assessed by multiples or divisions of six carucates; he therefore postulated the 'six-carucate' unit along with the 'five-hide unit'.<sup>1</sup> Later historians have painstakingly confirmed Round's observation that the Danelaw wapentakes in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Rutland comprised varying numbers of twelve-carucate 'hundreds', different to southern hundreds in that they appear not to have had administrative functions, which in the Danelaw belonged to wapentakes, rather they probably only served assessment purposes.<sup>2</sup> It is probable, though not demonstrable, that such units also existed in Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup> Leicestershire did have hundreds below the wapentake level, but these varied in size, and were somewhat larger in terms of carucates than the twelve-carucate counterparts of its northern neighbours.<sup>4</sup> Once again the suggestion is that assessments had originally been cast territorially – that is, on geographically compact areas – rather than on landholders.

Even though Leaver found five-hide trends in the old West Saxon kingdom, fully intact five-hide units are less prevalent in Domesday Book in these shires, where the original hidation had probably occurred centuries before 1086.<sup>5</sup> However, as we have seen they were more prevalent in the conquered territories of the early tenth century, that is the Southeast Midlands, and, in the form of twelve-carucate hundreds, in the Danelaw. It is also instructive to note that hundreds were more uniform in the Midlands than in Wessex. Since hundreds – and five hide units - were more likely to disintegrate as they grew older through negotiations over hidages and land boundaries, the

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<sup>1</sup> Round, *Feudal England*, 69-82.

<sup>2</sup> D. R. Roffe 'An Introduction to the Derbyshire Domesday', in *The Derbyshire Domesday*, eds. A Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1990), 6; F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in *Derbyshire Domesday*, eds. Williams and Erskine, 30-31; D. R. Roffe, 'An Introduction to the Nottinghamshire Domesday', in *The Nottinghamshire Domesday*, eds. A Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1990), 9; Stenton, 'Introduction', in *Lincolnshire Domesday*, eds. Foster and Longley, xii-xiv; D. R. Roffe, 'An Introduction to the Lincolnshire Domesday', in *The Lincolnshire Domesday*, eds. A Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1992), 4-5; D. R. Roffe, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes' in *The Lincolnshire Domesday*, eds. A Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1992), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Round, *Feudal England*, 72-89; F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in *The Yorkshire Domesday*, eds. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1992), 46-7.

<sup>4</sup> *The Leicestershire Survey c. A.D. 1130: A New Edition*, ed. C. F. Slade (Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, No. 7, 1956), 68-82.

<sup>5</sup> Leaver, 'Five Hides', 534-5.

suggestion that hundreds were ‘an ancient West Saxon measure [that] was applied much more rigidly over the rest of the country in the first half of the tenth century’ carries much weight, and would tie in with a new regularised hidation of those more recently conquered areas.<sup>1</sup> The hundreds of the Danelaw, and perhaps even carucates, may also have been a late Anglo-Saxon imposition forced into the existing wapentakes.<sup>2</sup>

The main point that Round himself sought to make was that hides were fiscal and administrative entities imposed from above, not physical entities determined by the extent of arable land, the land value or anything else from below: in his own capitalised words, ‘ASSESSMENT BORE NO RATIO TO AREA OR TO VALUE in a vill, and still less a manor’.<sup>3</sup> These words have been pounced on since, possibly unfairly, by those arguing that there was a general correlation between land value and tax assessment. This correlation has been statistically demonstrated in a number of shires by McDonald and Snooks, as well as by others such as Abels, and the studies involved all essentially confirm Maitland’s observation that one pound tended to correspond to one hide.<sup>4</sup> This is important, for ‘one pound one hide’ remains a useful benchmark by which to measure ‘over-rated’ or ‘under-rated’ shires, hundreds or estates throughout the long eleventh century.<sup>5</sup>

However, one of McDonald and Snooks’s chief conclusions, that ‘assessments were not artificial’ does not follow from their findings. All that they proved was that there was a general correlation between hidages and land values. That does not necessarily mean that hidages were not artificially distributed, it only means that land values were one factor in deciding how.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it probably

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<sup>1</sup> S. Miller, ‘Hundreds’ in Lapidge et al. (eds.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, 243.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Stenton, ‘Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw’, in P. Vinogradoff (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, II, (Oxford, 1910), 88-90.

<sup>3</sup> Round, *Feudal England*, 45.

<sup>4</sup> J. McDonald and G. D. Snooks, ‘Were the Tax Assessments of Domesday England Artificial? The Case of Essex’, *Economic History Review* 38, 1985), 352-372; J. McDonald and G. D. Snooks, *Domesday Economy: A new approach to Anglo-Norman History* (Oxford, 1986), 51-76; Abels, *Lordship*, 104-6, 187-204.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 465.

<sup>6</sup> Hamshere also points out McDonald and Snooks’ fallacy in J. D. Hamshere, ‘Regressing Domesday Book: Tax Assessments of Domesday England’, in *The Economic History Review*, 40 (1987), 247-51.

misrepresents Round to suggest that he ever thought that assessments were not at least very loosely in line with land values – to do so implies that he thought that an estate worth £10 was as likely to be rated at 1 hide as at 10 or even 100 hides. That would be absurd. Rather, Round’s central point still really seems to hold: assessments *do* appear to have been artificial – at least in much of the Midlands and the Danelaw – in that there was no discernible set, one-size-fits-all way of determining them. There are simply far too many exceptions to the one pound one hide model, and large ones at that, to have made land values the only determining factor. The same can be said for assessments compared to other units such as ploughlands.

As well as helping determine the lack of relationship between assessments and material realities, the five-hide unit also shows us the method of apportioning assessment. Maitland called this ‘the method of subpartitioned provincial quotas... a sum [of hides] cast upon a hundred has been divided among that hundred’s vills; a sum cast upon a vill has been divided among the lands the vill contains’.<sup>1</sup> In other words, hidages were apportioned territorially, who owned or occupied the land was at the point of the casting of hidages, in theory at least, irrelevant. Most of the coercive power needed to create and apportion assessments would have been exercised at the time of hidation or carucation, whenever that was for any particular shire or hundred. Presumably this power was exercised by the incumbent king, his *witan*, and senior shire officials. Subsequent to a shire’s original hidation or carucation, the decay of the system over time would have been the gradual result of negotiation between landholders within a five-hide unit or similar, possibly facilitated by the hundred or shire court, with the effect that in many instances, five hide units were no longer visible by 1066. It should be noted that it would only take a significant change in the hidage of one vill, or several minor changes in multiple vills, for an original five-hide unit to become all but invisible to modern historians. In an age when wholesale changes in hidages could be imposed across entire shires at a single point in time, we should not be surprised to find that the prevalence of the five-

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<sup>1</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 450.

hide unit had been severely diminished in many shires by 1066.<sup>1</sup> However, the original method of apportioning assessments from the top down territorially among shires, hundreds and vills, and only then to individuals' holdings, gave the Anglo-Saxon fiscal system a more corporate, public, territorial character as opposed to the individual, private, feudal character that came to define most payments extracted from the Anglo-Norman nobility to their lords, the kings of England, after 1066.

### **Hundreds and wapentakes**

By the time of the Northamptonshire Geld Account, and quite possibly since the inception of the land tax under Æthelred II, hundreds (and in Danelaw, wapentakes), had become the fiscal subdivisions of shires. The Exon Geld Accounts show that by 1086 at the latest, hundreds and wapentakes were the primary agents of local tax collection. The origins of these entities are not certain, but have been widely discussed. We know that by the late tenth century, hundreds were geographical subdivisions of shires, and that each possessed a hundred court where local justice and government was administered. They first appear in documents of the tenth century; the first explicit mention of judicial and administrative bodies called 'hundreds' is in the laws of King Edmund (939-946).<sup>2</sup> Geographical districts called 'hundreds', meanwhile, are first encountered in the 'Hundreds Ordinance', which can be dated at some point from King Edmund's through to King Edgar's reigns (939-975). Loyn and Miller see evidence for hundreds in Edward the Elder's (899-924) and Athelstan's (924-939) law codes; although hundreds are not named specifically, local administrations with some responsibilities similar to hundreds can be identified within them.<sup>3</sup> Molyneaux, however, is sceptical that the provisions of these earlier law codes are indicative of kingdom-wide geographical and administrative hundreds under these earlier kings, and suggests the possibility that

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 114-118.

<sup>2</sup> G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), 144.

<sup>3</sup> H. R. Loyn, 'The Hundred in England in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries', in H. Hearder and H. R. Loyn (eds.), *British Government and Administration: Studies Presented to S. B. Chrimes* (Cardiff, 1974), 3-6; S. Miller, 'Hundreds', 243-4.

Edmund and Edgar applied more widely administrative practices used only in particular regions under Edward and Athelstan.<sup>1</sup>

Hundreds, like shires and hides, were not of a standard area; however, in the Midlands there was a strong propensity for hundreds to each comprise around 100 hides as late as 1086.<sup>2</sup> That they were much more regular in terms of hidage in the Midlands than they were in Wessex suggests that they were imposed here after the reconquests of Edward the Elder.<sup>3</sup> The comparative irregularity of Wessex's hundreds may be reflective of ancient administrative units that were renamed and reformed as 'hundreds' around the same time that the Midlands' hundreds were imposed in a more uniform manner.<sup>4</sup>

Wapentakes, meanwhile, were the direct equivalent of hundreds in the Danelaw shires of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, although apparently not in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where, curiously enough, the administrative shire subdivisions in Domesday Book are called 'hundreds'. These are not to be confused with the hundreds in the rest of the Danelaw that were merely a measure of assessment; in fact in the East Riding, the assessment hundreds and the administrative hundreds might have co-existed, a bureaucratic headache *par excellence* for the sheriff and his men.<sup>5</sup> The origin of wapentakes as districts are ultimately as mysterious and possibly as ancient as those of Wessex; the districts probably existed before the mid tenth century and were named or renamed by Scandinavian settlers or their descendants. Meanwhile, some of the administrative and judicial powers of the wapentake may have pre-dated those of the hundred in the rest of England, but to what extent and how far

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<sup>1</sup> Molyneux, *Formation*, 149-50.

<sup>2</sup> Round, *Feudal England*, 44-69. Leaver, 'Five Hides', 525-542.

<sup>3</sup> Molyneux, *Formation*, 146-7; Loyn, 'The Hundred in England', 1-2; F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn., Oxford, 1971), 298-9; Miller, 'Hundreds', 243;

<sup>4</sup> Molyneux, *Formation*, 146-7; Loyn, 'The Hundred in England', 1-2; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 298-9; Miller, 'Hundreds', 243.

<sup>5</sup> See above, 106; Farrer, 'Domesday Survey', 134-5.

back in the past is impossible to say.<sup>1</sup> While some of the functions of the wapentakes possibly differed slightly from their southern counterparts, overall their administrative functions appear to have been very similar to southern hundreds by the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup>

### **East Anglian assessment**

Norfolk and Suffolk differed from the rest of the country in several respects. While the two shires were divided into hundreds, the primary assessment unit was not the hide, rather it was the carucate. However, the origins of these carucates in the region are mysterious. The fact that Little Domesday Book contains the earliest use of the term 'carucate' in East Anglia has been suggested by Campbell to indicate it was a term adopted by the Normans, probably for a pre-existing unit.<sup>3</sup> We find in pre-1066 East Anglian charters 'cassatos'<sup>4</sup> and 'mansas'<sup>5</sup> (Latin terms for hides), and in an eleventh-century manuscript containing various notes and memoranda relating to Bury St Edmunds, the abbey is said to hold '16 hides of arable land' (*xvi hida eorðes landes*), in a section of the manuscript that derives from the abbacy of Leofstan (1044-1065).<sup>6</sup>

The most important difference, however, was that the East Anglian carucate was not a measure of geld payment, because geld in Norfolk and Suffolk was reckoned on an entirely different basis to the rest of the country. Specific vills would pay a specified number of pence when the whole hundred paid 20 shillings of geld. The Latin could be rendered in numerous ways, but a typical expression is that used for the abbot of Bury St Edmund's estate at South Runcton, Norfolk:

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<sup>1</sup> Molyneaux, *Formation*, 151.

<sup>2</sup> S. Miller, 'Wapentakes', in Lapidge et al., *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, 467.

<sup>3</sup> J. Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets: a survey with suggestions', in C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), 162-3.

<sup>4</sup> S 781 (AD 970), printed in *Liber Eliensis*, ed. Blake, 112-13; S 1213 (AD 962), printed in H. Pierquin, *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes: Les saxons en Angleterre, 604-1061* (Paris, 1912), pt. 2, no. 122.

<sup>5</sup> S 948 (AD 1015 x 1016), printed in *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, ed. C. Hart (Leicester, 1966), 198-9; S 703 (AD 962), printed in C. Hart, and A. Syme, 'The Earliest Suffolk Charter', *Proceedings of the Suffolk of Archaeology and History* 36 (1987), 165-81.

<sup>6</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, 194; for more references to East Anglian hides see C. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London, 1992), 81-2.

Runghetuna reddit viii d quando totum hundredum reddit xx solidos de gelto.<sup>1</sup>

[South] Runcton pays 8d when the whole hundred pays geld of 20s.

This payment was facilitated by a system of 'leets', *letis* or *leitis* in Domesday Book, derived from Anglo-Saxon *læth* (district) or perhaps from *hlete* (share or portion).<sup>2</sup> Leets were subdivisions of hundreds which grouped small numbers of villas together for taxation purposes, and each leet was responsible for the same number of pence, or approximately the same number of pence, as all other leets in the hundred.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the carucates, or the hides as they may have been called before 1066, remains unclear. Campbell suggests that feudal obligations besides monetary taxation, such as carrying, guard and labour services, as well as the rents of free peasants to their landlords, were still assessed using the traditional units, while the pence in the pound land tax payment system was a later innovation introduced either by the late Anglo-Saxon or the Conqueror's regime, possibly in response to economic growth and the enrichment of East Anglia's unusually large free peasantry, distorting the older assessments.<sup>4</sup>

### **Kentish sulungs**

Kent was different to the rest of southern England in that it was assessed in 'sulungs', not hides. Like hides, sulungs were divided into four; however not four virgates but four 'yokes'. Maitland suggested that the sulung was fiscally identical to the hide, which comprised 120 notional fiscal acres, although he admitted that he could not prove this.<sup>5</sup> More recent work suggests that the

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<sup>1</sup> *LDB*, 209 (Norfolk 14:1).

<sup>2</sup> Bailey, 'Introduction to Suffolk', 16.

<sup>3</sup> R. H. C. Davis (ed.), *The Kalendar of Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds and Related Documents* (Camden Third Series, vol. 84, 1954), xv-xxx; C. Johnson, 'Introduction to Norfolk Domesday', *VCH Norfolk*, II (1901), 5-9; C. Johnson, 'The Danegeld in Norfolk', *VCH Norfolk*, II, 204-212; B. A. Lees, 'Introduction to Suffolk Domesday', *VCH Suffolk*, II, (1911), 360-5, 412-16.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, 'Hundreds and Leets', 161-4.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 484-5.

sulung was equal to between 160 and 200 fiscal acres, and that it could vary in different areas.<sup>1</sup>

There are two pieces of evidence to corroborate this. The first is the entry for the common land of St Martin's: 'on the common land of St Martin are 400 and a half acres which make two and a half sulungs' (*In communi terra S. Martini sunt cccc acrae et dimidia quae fiunt ii solinos et dimidium*).<sup>2</sup> If we take it that the scribe has rounded down the 400 ½ acres, we may conclude that the sulung was therefore 160 fiscal acres. Another interpretation has been that the 'half' was meant as fifty; in that case the sulung would have been equivalent to 180 fiscal acres. Meanwhile, the Domesday entry for one Gilbert's subtenancy of St Augustine's Abbey in its manor of Northbourne assesses the estate at 2 sulungs minus half a yoke,<sup>3</sup> and the section of St Augustine's 'White Book' describing the lands and rights of the abbey says that 'Gilbert has 2 sulungs minus 25 acres' (*Gilbertus habet ii solinos xxv agros minus*).<sup>4</sup> These two statements suggest that a sulung was 200 acres, while a yoke was 50.

Although we can therefore probably dismiss Maitland's speculation that the sulung was equivalent to 120 acres, the essence of his point may well yet be correct: that the exchequer saw no difference between a sulung and a hide for assessment purposes. While there is no Domesday entry specifying the rate of taxation for Kent, Henry I's Pipe Roll of 1129-30 suggests that Kent's sulungs paid at the same 2s. rate as the other shires' hides and carucates. The difference of acreage per sulung may go some way toward explaining why Kent apparently had such a low assessment; its approximately 1150 sulungs has long been recognised as a gross underassessment for one of the richest shires in England.<sup>5</sup> However, we need to be careful here, for as we have seen already, hide and fiscal acres

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<sup>1</sup> R. Eales, 'An Introduction to the Kent Domesday', in A. Williams and G. H. Martin (eds.), *The Kent Domesday* (London, 1992), 19.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 2 (Kent P, 16).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 12v (Kent 7, 19).

<sup>4</sup> *An Eleventh-Century Inquisition of St Augustine's, Canterbury*, ed. A. Ballard, British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, 4 (London, 1920), 21.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the apparent over-assessment and under-assessment of various shires, see Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 461-2.

were far from being standardised units anywhere in the country, so it is not wholly safe to compare sulungs with hides, or Kentish fiscal acres with other fiscal acres.

## Reduction of assessment before 1066: The County Hidage

A list of thirteen shires and their hidages surviving in four manuscripts has become known as the 'County Hidage'. The manuscripts are all datable either to the reigns of Henry III or Edward I.<sup>1</sup> The most common dating estimate of the original document is some time in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> This has become increasingly uncontroversial; David Austin once believed it to be twelfth-century, but he is now more inclined to see it as mid-eleventh.<sup>3</sup> Cyril Hart thought the document reflected an unchanged assessment reality since the 920s or 930s.<sup>4</sup> However, it is very unlikely that the document itself dates from before 1007, when Eadric Streona became ealdorman of Mercia.<sup>5</sup> Eadric's career is significant in this regard because the Worcester monk Hemming attributed the amalgamation of Winchcombeshire into Gloucestershire to him, and this amalgamation is apparent in the County Hidage.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, a date of composition any time after 1066 is only possible if it is assumed the document is a fabrication, or at the very least a rough and inaccurate estimate of the actual hidages at some point after 1066. The most likely way to make such an estimate is by adding

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<sup>1</sup> J. M. Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the period of the Norman Conquest* (London, 1876), I, 493-4.

<sup>2</sup> F. Liebermann, *Über die Leges Anglorum saeculo XIII ineunte Londoniis collectae* (Halle, 1894), 7; followed by Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 456; and by F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', *The Worcestershire Domesday*, eds. A. Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1988), 32, a view he repeats in other Alecto Domesday volumes. Another proponent of the early eleventh century is C. S. Taylor, 'The Origin of the Mercian Shires', in H. P. R. Finberg (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicestershire, 1957), 26-7. Sawyer also sees it as being pre-1066, P. H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1998), 228-9.

<sup>3</sup> Austin's original view is reported in D. Hill, 'The Calculation and Purpose of the Burghal Hidage', in Hill and Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex*, 95. Professor Austin informed me of his new view by personal correspondence.

<sup>4</sup> Hart, *Hidation of Northamptonshire*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> S. Keynes, 'Eadric Streona (d. 1017)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2007), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8511>, accessed 26/09/2016].

<sup>6</sup> *Hemingi Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, I, 280; Taylor, 'Origin', 26-7.

up the number of known hundreds and multiplying them by 100. The table below shows that this explanation is implausible.

**Table 8. County Hidage assessments vs Domesday Book hidages and hundreds**

Shire	Hides according to County Hidage				Domesday Book Hides		Domesday hundreds <sup>1</sup>
	MS 1 <sup>2</sup>	MS 2 <sup>3</sup>	MS 3 <sup>4</sup>	MS 4 <sup>5</sup>	Darby <sup>6</sup>	Palmer <sup>7</sup>	
Wiltshire	4800	4800	4800	4800	4032	4114	40
Bedfordshire	1200	1000	1200	1200	1186	1205	12
Cambridgeshire	2500	2500	2005	2500	1297	1239	(17) <sup>8</sup>
Huntingdonshire	850	850	800.5	850	808	814	8
Northamptonshire	3200	4200	3200	3200	1280	1368	32 <sup>9</sup>
Gloucestershire	2400	2000	2400	3400	2468	2503	39
Worcestershire	1200	1500	1200	1200	1432	1188	12
Herefordshire	1500	1500	1005	1200	1199	1242	19
Warwickshire	1200	1200	1200	1200	1297	1313	(10) <sup>10</sup>
Oxfordshire	2400	2400	2400	2400	2568	2435	22 <sup>11</sup>
Shropshire	2300	2400	2400	2400	1430	1449	(15) <sup>12</sup>
Cheshire	1300	1200	1200	1200	545	552	12
Staffordshire	500	500	N/A	500	507	510	5

<sup>1</sup> Hart, *Hidation of Northamptonshire*, 15, unless otherwise indicated in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> London, British Library, MS Cotton, Claudius, B. vii. f. 204b. All figures from Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 400-1.

<sup>3</sup> London, British Library, Cotton, Vespasian, A. xviii, f. 112b

<sup>4</sup> A Crowland manuscript (now lost).

<sup>5</sup> Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, fos. 267v-268.

<sup>6</sup> Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), 336.

<sup>7</sup> Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book*, accessed 14/08/2017.

<sup>8</sup> Hart did not include the urban hundred of Cambridge, and so counted 16.

<sup>9</sup> These are the hundreds of the Northamptonshire Geld Account, taking into account the recorded four 'hundreds and a half', and the two 'double hundreds.'

<sup>10</sup> This number is from F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in *The Warwickshire Domesday*, eds. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1991), 24. Hart recorded 12, although there are only 10 named hundreds. He probably reckoned Coleshill (193 hides) and 'Ferncumbe' (182 hides) as double hundreds, but then this inexplicably leaves Marton (177 hides) as only being a single hundred.

<sup>11</sup> Hundredal rubrication is lacking in Oxfordshire Domesday. This figure is derived from the royal manors listed that are said to have the 'soke' of x number of hundreds, which amounted to 18 hundreds and 2 half hundreds. GDB, 154v (Oxfordshire 1, 1-7), plus Dorchester hundred, controlled by the bishop of Lincoln, GDB, 155 (Oxfordshire 6, 1-17), which is counted as three hundreds on the grounds that by the 13th century, the bishop controlled Dorchester, Thame and Banbury hundreds, but held the same estates as recorded in the Domesday Book. See F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in *The Oxfordshire Domesday*, eds. A. Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1990), 22.

<sup>12</sup> F. R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in *The Shropshire Domesday* eds. A. Williams and R. W. H. Erskine (London, 1990), 30. Hart reckoned 13, however it is unclear how he arrived at this figure.

The relationship between the hidages of the County Hidage for each shire and the number of hundreds thought to be in each shire does not leave grounds for suspicion that the former was estimated from the latter. True, there were some shires where the two match, namely in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Worcestershire, Cheshire and Staffordshire. However, in all of the other shires there is a discrepancy between the County Hidage figures and the number of hundreds in a shire. Only in Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and possibly Oxfordshire do the County Hidage figures and the total Domesday hidages even loosely match, so the somewhat unlikely possibility that the compiler counted hides in Domesday Book looks even less plausible. There are, therefore, strong grounds for thinking that the County Hidage is a record of the hidages of these twelve shires sometime between 1007 and 1066, albeit certainly heavily rounded and possibly crudely estimated.

The County Hidage is useful, therefore, in showing how the assessment of shires evolved during the early to mid eleventh century. However, the discrepancies between the manuscripts make it hard to know which shires were reduced by how much. Large-scale reductions seem to have been imposed in Wiltshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire and Cheshire before 1086. Wiltshire appears to have been cut by 700 or 800 hides, Cambridgeshire's hidage was roughly halved, around 900 or 1,000 hides were reduced in Shropshire, and 600-800 taken off Cheshire. The Northamptonshire Geld Account records 2,664 hides in that shire in the 1070s or early 1080s, which suggests that it received a reduction of between five and six hundred hides between the date of that document and the County Hidage. We might speculate that Shropshire and Cheshire were cut as a favour to their Norman earls, Roger de Montgomery and William fitz Osbern, the dominant landholders in those shires.

While such speculation about when and why some shires were substantially reduced, while others were not, is interesting, the more important and secure point is that there was the capacity for such large-scale reductions at all. It is possible that most of these reductions took place before 1066, or

that they were imposed at the behest of the Conqueror; systematic reductions of some, but not all, hundreds' hidages in Cambridgeshire are visible from the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* as having taken place between 1066 and 1086.<sup>1</sup> Northamptonshire underwent a spectacular systematic reduction between the time of its Geld Account and 1086, with nearly all its hundreds being re-assessed to a hidage close to 40, its hundred and a halves to near 60, and one double hundred to 81.<sup>2</sup> All of these large-scale reductions, both before and after 1066, are testament to the flexibility of the Anglo-Saxon system, and shows how the royal power could be exercised to the fiscal favour or detriment of whole territorial areas. It is a powerful example of the eleventh-century English state exercising central control over its localities, and shows how the systems of assessment could be re-organised from the top down.

## Tax liability of demesne before and after 1066

There has been a general consensus since the work of Hoyt that demesne portions of estates held directly by tenants-in-chief – i.e. those manors that were not subtenanted to knights or other nobles – were exempted from tax by the later years of William the Conqueror. Both subtenanted estates and the non-demesne portions of tenants-in-chief's estates were liable to be taxed.<sup>3</sup>

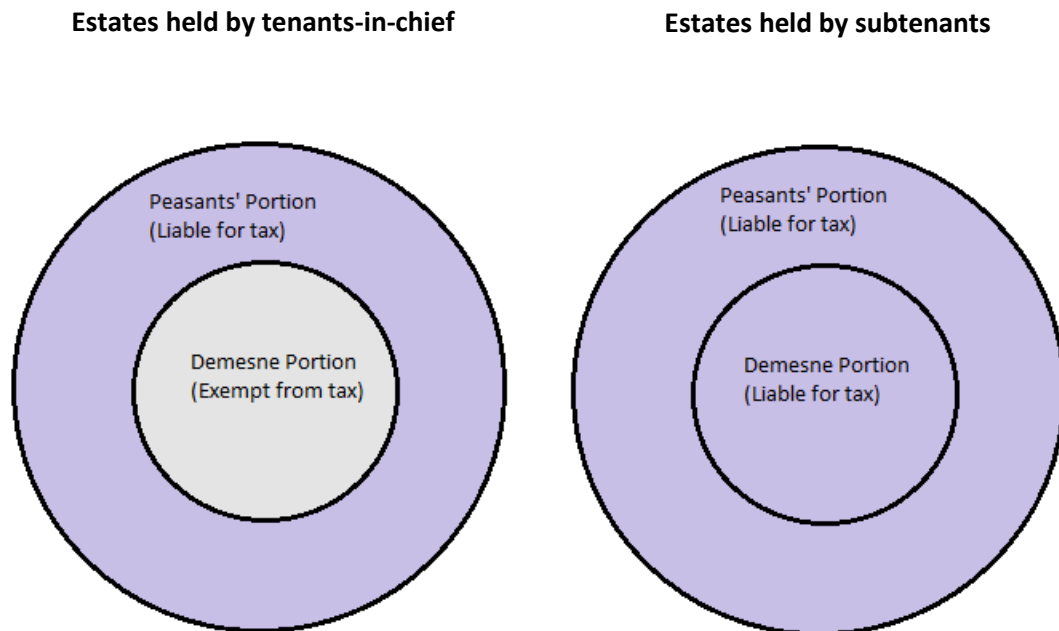
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<sup>1</sup> See below, 124.

<sup>2</sup> Hart, *Hidation of Northamptonshire*, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 25-36, 52-58; D. Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 1-34; C. Flight, *The Survey of the Whole of England* (British Archaeological Reports, vol. 405, 2006), 62; A. Williams, 'Introduction to the Dorset Geld Roll', *VCH Dorset*, III, 114-15, S. Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement* (Oxford, 2014), 218-223.

**Figure 1. Tax liability of estates, 1086**



The most explicit evidence of the principle of demesne exemption for tenants-in-chief occurs in the Exon Geld Accounts, where in every hundred, hides held 'in demesne' are considered exempted.<sup>1</sup> These were almost invariably listed under the title 'the king's barons hold in demesne', and only a very few subtenanted lands appear to have enjoyed demesne exemption.<sup>2</sup> This appears to indicate that the exemption of demesne was confined only to directly held lands of the tenants-in-chief, and generally did not apply to subtenants.

Another near explicit, and slightly earlier, source on the matter of demesne exemption under William the Conqueror is the Northamptonshire Geld Account. This is a hundredally arranged tax

<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fos. 1-6 + 529, 7-12, 13-16, 17-24, 65-71, 72-3, 75-82, 526-7; see below, 151-153.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, 'Introduction to the Dorset Geld Roll, 115.

account, datable 1068x1083, though most likely within the bounds 1070x1078.<sup>1</sup> It details the number of hides in every hundred of Northamptonshire, followed by the number of hides that had paid geld, the numbers of hides that were apparently exempted from geld for certain stated reasons, and finally the number of hides that had not paid but ought to have done, if any, and who was liable.<sup>2</sup> For example:

Dis is into Klegele hundred þ[at] is an hundred hide swa it wes on Eduardes dege kynges 7 þerof is gewered xviii hide 7 fourti hide inland 7 ii 7 xl hide weste.<sup>3</sup>

To the Cleyley hundred belong 100 hides, as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 18 hides have paid geld and 40 hides are inland and 42 hides are waste.

Or:

Pis is into þas twa hundred to Uptunegrene fif syðe twenty hida 7 nigeða healf hida þus it was on Eadw[ardes] dege kynges 7 þer is gewered fifti hida 7 vii 7 xx hida inland 7 viiii 7 xx hida weste 7 i healf hida 7 of v siðe xx hidæ is þridde healf hide unwered 7 þet heah Ricard engaigne.

To the double hundred of Upton Green belong 108 ½ hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 50 hides have paid geld, and 27 hides are inland and 29 ½ hides are waste, and of the 100 [sic] hides 2 ½ hides have not paid geld, and that estate is owned by Richard Engayne.<sup>4</sup>

The 'waste' hides are evidently not expected to have paid geld, and neither, therefore, were the inlands. Historians have tended to see the 'inland' of the Northamptonshire Geld Account as identical in type to the exempted demesne of the Exon Geld Accounts; although whether 'inland' in pre-1066 sources and in parts of Domesday Book may have meant a different kind of fiscally

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<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. Robertson, 230-7; trans. Douglas and Greenway, *EHD*, II, 517-19. The document very likely dates between 1068 and 1083, the year in which Queen Matilda was crowned and the year of her death, respectively; she is recorded by the document as holding land in the shire. If 'Osmund þes kynges writere', also mentioned by the document as holding land in the shire, is correctly identified as Osbern the Chancellor, then the earliest date would be 1070 when he took office, and the latest date 1078 when he became bishop of Salisbury.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, 481.

<sup>3</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, 232; *EHD*, ed. Douglas and Greenway, 518.

privileged demesne is still open to question, and will be explored further below.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the Exon Geld Accounts' and the Northamptonshire Geld Account's evidence of demesne exemption for the directly held manors is supplemented further by the tendency to record demesne hides as a separate statistic on non-subtenanted manors in Circuit III of Domesday Book (Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex).<sup>2</sup> Slightly later evidence comes in the Henry I coronation charter, in which all knights are promised the exemption of their demesne 'ploughs' (*terras dominicarum carrucarum*), suggesting that tenants-in-chief had already enjoyed such a privilege.<sup>3</sup>

Both Salzman and Finn have proposed a useful distinction between 'fiscal demesne' and 'manorial demesne', though Salzman preferred the term 'inland demesne'.<sup>4</sup> Fiscal demesne was a fixed figure attached to a manor to determine its level of tax exemption; manorial demesne was the actual amount of land exploited directly by the landholder. In most instances, the two figures are likely to originally have been the same at whatever point manorial demesne was made fiscally exempt, and in many, possibly in most, cases were the same even by 1086.<sup>5</sup> While there are no explicit statements affirming the hypothesis, the significant number of small discrepancies between identifiable portions of exempted demesne in the Exon Geld Accounts (fiscal demesnes) compared with the corresponding demesnes in Domesday Book (manorial demesnes) may be evidence of an

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. its translators Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, 231-7; Douglas and Greenaway, *EHD*, II, 517 n. 2; and Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 3-14; c.f. R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London, 1997), 15-55, esp. 48-55.

<sup>2</sup> S. P. J. Harvey, 'Taxation and the Economy', in J. C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies: Papers read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, Winchester, 1986* (Woodbridge, 1987), 260-1.

<sup>3</sup> 'Henry I's Coronation Charter', ed. and trans. R. Sharpe, *Early English Laws* (2016), <http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/hn-cor/view/> (accessed 31/05/2016). For a fuller discussion of this clause in Henry I's coronation charter, see below, 205-207.

<sup>4</sup> R., Weldon Finn, *The Domesday Inquest and the Making of Domesday Book* (London, 1961), 151-9; R. Weldon Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Liber Exoniensis* (London, 1964), 111-16; L. F. Salzman, 'The Domesday Survey for Cornwall: Introduction', in W. Page (ed.), *A History of the County of Cornwall*, pt. viii (Victoria County Histories, 1924), 48-9.

<sup>5</sup> Finn, *Liber Exoniensis*, 111-12.

understood distinction.<sup>1</sup> The Burton survey of the early twelfth century also seems to support such a distinction, at least by this later time. For example, at Burton Abbey's estate at Appleby, Warwickshire, the survey records:

In Appelby nichil Inlandae est, id est quae sit sine gildo Regis. Terra in dominio est xxxiiii virgatae ubi possunt esse aratra iii. <sup>2</sup>

In Appelby there is no inland, i.e. that which is exempt from the king's geld. In demesne there are 34 virgates where there could be 3 ploughs.

Or, in 'Wilintona':

In Wilintona nichil Inlandae est. Terra se defendit pro iii carucatis. In hac terra sunt xxxii bovatae, ex hiis sunt vii in dominio et satis ad ii aratra.<sup>3</sup>

In 'Wilintona' there is not inland. The land defends itself for 3 carucates. There are 32 bovates, seven of these are in demesne and are sufficient for 2 ploughs.

Here the distinction between tax exempt 'inland' and land on which demesne ploughs were operating is clearly made. The distinction would certainly make practical sense: a fixed fiscal demesne would prevent a tenant-in-chief from declaring all of his land to be 'in demesne' overnight in order to gain total exemption from geld.

The question of whether a similar system of demesne exemption was in operation before 1066 is more difficult. Pratt has recently argued that there was no such demesne exemption.<sup>4</sup> The core of Pratt's argument is that the reductions recorded between 1066 and 1086 in the south-eastern shires of Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and Berkshire, as well as the reductions observable in six hundreds in Cambridgeshire, can only be adequately explained if they are recording the exemption

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<sup>1</sup> Finn, *Liber*, 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Burton Chartulary', ed. G. Wrottesley, in The William Salt Archaeological Society (eds.), *Collections for a History of Staffordshire, pt 1*, vol. 5 (The William Salt Archaeological Society, 1884), 18-30, at 30.

<sup>3</sup> 'Burton Chartulary', ed. 23

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 1-20.

of demesne hides. Therefore, for Pratt, these demesne hides cannot have been exempted before 1066, showing that before this date there was no system of exemption similar in nature to that which existed in 1086. I now turn to examining this argument in detail.

To take the south-eastern shires first: Harvey has shown that hidage reductions here were not granted out proportionally among hundreds, nor were they obviously related to land value or changes in land value.<sup>1</sup> Also, larger landholders, smaller landholders, ecclesiastical, lay, French and English landholders, men and women, all received reductions, making it seem less likely that they were the product of individual grants, made at the king's discretion. For Pratt, it therefore follows that exemption of the demesne parts of directly held manors is the best explanation of these hidage reductions in the south-east. The Domesday formula for assessment in this circuit also helps this argument: the formula is *tunc se defendit pro X hidis et modo pro Y hidis* ('then it defended itself for X hides and now for Y hides').<sup>2</sup> This wording does not necessarily imply that total hidage of an estate had changed, it could merely mean that the number of hides that it was actually expected to pay military service or tax for after 1066 was now less than the total nominal number of hides. The argument is also helped by the fact that by the time of the Pipe Roll of 1129-30, when demesne exemption had been rescinded, probably already for a number of years, these shires apparently paid geld at a rate nearer their earlier, 1066 ratings, suggesting that the nominal hidages had technically stayed in place during the time of demesne exemption.<sup>3</sup>

However, Pratt's contention that the reductions recorded in Domesday Book in the south-eastern shires were a consequence of demesne exemption runs up against one major difficulty. That is, many subtenants, as well as tenants-in-chief, appear to have enjoyed reductions on their estates in the south-eastern shires - a point also missed by Harvey. In Surrey, the great majority of subtenanted estates benefited from reduction, and subtenants receiving reduction are the majority

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<sup>1</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 10-13; S. Harvey, 'Taxation and the Economy', 257-261.

<sup>2</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 31.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 225-229.

in almost every hundred.<sup>1</sup> In Berkshire, meanwhile, according to Baring's tables, a large minority - 27 of 110 (25%) - of subtenanted estates where it is possible to tell whether reductions were received did receive reductions, and these examples are spread across 12 of the 21 hundreds.<sup>2</sup>

We should therefore leave open the possibility that the reductions in the south-eastern shires were not a consequence of the exemption of the demesne parts of the directly held manors, and that rather they were reductions granted on some other basis, or bases, now untraceable. Pratt's other principal argument that demesnes were exempted only after 1066 suffers from similar problems. Pratt observed that the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis*, a hundredally organised 'original return' of the Domesday Survey, records the reductions of nearly all villis within six hundreds: Staploe, Cheveley, Armingford, Longstow, Papworth and Northstow.<sup>3</sup> He worked out that where comparisons are possible, most of the reductions of villis that took place between 1066 and 1086 were within one hide of the number of demesne hides that Domesday Book records in the entries for the corresponding villis.<sup>4</sup> In some places the possible equivalence between hides in demesne and how much it was reduced by is clear enough: at Countess Judith's manor of Kirtling, in the Cheveley hundred, the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* says that there were 10 hides in 1066 and 6 hides in 1086.<sup>5</sup> Domesday Book confirms that that was the case, and then says that 'in demesne are 4 hides'.<sup>6</sup> However, in the other examples Pratt gives, the correspondence between the reduction and the demesne hides is rarely that neat, and in fact, even a one hide difference between the figures can be proportionally large.<sup>7</sup> For example, at Wicken, held by Count Alan, in the Staploe hundred, both the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* and Domesday Book tell us that it was reduced from

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<sup>1</sup> Baring, *Domesday Tables*, 20-37.

<sup>2</sup> Baring, *Domesday Tables*, 52-77.

<sup>3</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 11 n. 68; *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 1-96; see also C. Hart, *The Hidation of Cambridgeshire* (Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ser., no. 6, 1974), 20-30, 46-67.

<sup>5</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 11;

<sup>6</sup> *GDB*, 202, (Cambridgeshire 41, 1).

<sup>7</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption'; 11 n. 68.

seven hides to five.<sup>1</sup> But Domesday Book also tells us that Count Alan had three hides in demesne, not the two we would expect if exemption was based on demesne.<sup>2</sup> Clopton, in the Armingford Hundred, has a similar problem: the vill was reduced from five hides to four, but the demesne held by the bishop of Winchester amounted to one hide and three virgates, not just the one hide we might expect.<sup>3</sup>

Pratt admits that the comparisons are often more messy than they are neat, and notes that the villis of Shingay, Lidlington, Bassingbourn and Willingham have a difference of between one and two hides between the number of hides reduced and the recorded demesne hides; he then goes further and concedes that Bourn, Little Gransden and Madingley are even further out than two hides.<sup>4</sup>

Neither Bourn nor Little Gransden were reduced at all according to the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis*, but we are told by Domesday Book that Picot the sheriff held 5 hides in demesne of his 13 hides at Bourn<sup>5</sup> and the Abbot of Ely held 2 ½ hides in demesne of the 5 hides at Little Gransden.<sup>6</sup> Pratt calls these last examples ‘potentially explicable peculiarities’<sup>7</sup>, and argues that the general untidiness of the correlation between the reduction of hidage and hides held in demesne is down to another principle in place on top of demesne exemption, one that added to or subtracted from demesne exemption in order to make the assessment reductions ‘tidy’.<sup>8</sup> However, from the evidence Pratt presents, it may actually be easier to argue that the reductions of hides in villis found in the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* had no obvious relationship with the number of hides held in demesne in those villis.

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<sup>1</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 9; *GDB*, 195v (Cambridgeshire 14, 74).

<sup>2</sup> *GDB*, 195v, (Cambridgeshire 14, 74).

<sup>3</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 55; *GDB*, 190, (Cambridgeshire 2, 2).

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, ‘Demesne Exemption’, 11 n. 68.

<sup>5</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 88-9; *GDB*, 200v, (Cambridgeshire 32, 23).

<sup>6</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 88; *GDB*, 191v (Cambridgeshire 5, 38).

<sup>7</sup> Pratt, ‘Demesne Exemption’, 11 n. 68

<sup>8</sup> Pratt, ‘Demesne Exemption’, 11.

Thus, we find no firm evidence that in the time of the Conqueror, reductions of hidage in either south-east England or in Cambridgeshire were determined by the number of hides held in demesne; it is quite possible that these reductions had some other basis that is now obscure to us. To an extent, this undermines Pratt's argument that Anglo-Saxon demesnes were not exempted, because as we can no longer so easily see the reductions of the period from 1066 to 1086 as corresponding to demesne, we cannot therefore infer that these same demesne lands had been paying geld before 1066 as a matter of course.

However, the opposite view to Pratt's - that demesnes were normally exempted in late Anglo-Saxon England - has even less supporting evidence. Cornwall may have been an exception, which is worth exploring first as it may help to prove the rule that all other shires' demesnes did normally pay. In the Cornwall Domesday, we are told for nearly every manor that *TRE geldabat pro X hidis. Ibi tamen sunt Y hidae* ('TRE it paid geld for X hides, but there are Y hides there'), the 'Y' number 'there' always being larger than the 'X' number that 'paid geld'.<sup>1</sup> Salzman has shown that the differences between the hides 'there' and the hides that paid geld TRE are very close to the hides held 'in demesne' by Cornish landholders in the Cornish Geld Account of 1086.<sup>2</sup> I reproduce his table below, slightly amended.

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<sup>1</sup> From Pratt's very useful appendix of Domesday formulae in different shires, 'Demesne Exemption', 31.

<sup>2</sup> Salzman, 'Domesday Survey', 48-9.

**Table 9. A comparison of non-gelding hides TRE and demesne hides in 1086 in Cornwall (Salzmann, 1924)**

Landholder	Total Hides 'there' (GDB, 1086)	Hides that 'TRE paid geld' (GDB, 1066)	Assumed Non-taxed Hides (GDB, 1066 + 1086)	Demesne hides (Geld Accounts, 1086)
The King <sup>1</sup>	66	32	34	28
Tavistock Abbey <sup>2</sup>	3.3	[2.8]	[0.6]	3.3
Bishop of Exeter	102	23.5	78.5	80
St Petroc's Church	32.3	-	32.3	35
Other churches <sup>3</sup>	17.5	-	17.5	11.8
The Count of Mortain	48.8	18.8	30	29
The men of the Count of Mortain	145	51.8	93.3	89.6
Judichael and Goscelm	0.3	0.3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>415.3</b>	<b>126.8</b>	<b>288.3</b>	<b>276.6</b>

The non-taxable hides of 1066 are close in number to the demesne hides of the 1086 Geld Account.

The apparent anomalies of the king, Tavistock Abbey and the 'other churches' may be misleading;

there is reason to think their non-taxed hides may be under-represented in the case of Tavistock

Abbey and over-represented in the case of the king and the 'other churches'; all three might actually

have had very close correspondences between their non-taxed hides in Domesday Book and the

<sup>1</sup> The king also lost six estates amounting to five hides to the Count of Mortain between 1086 and 1086 at St Kew, Blisland and Pendrim, but it is not clear in which of these cases the hidages of the alienated estates are in addition to or included in their old head manors' hidages. It is possible therefore that the total number of hides 'there' is five hides too high. GDB, 120, (Cornwall 1, 4, 6-7); Salzmann, 'Domesday Survey', 49 n. 17.

<sup>2</sup> As Salzmann noted, in four of Tavistock's six estates (Shevioc, Antony, Tregenna and Tolcarne), the standard Domesday formula for Cornwall is broken, and it is merely recorded that at each estate 'geldabat pro x hidas' (gelded for x hides), with the total hides 'there' (*ibi sunt x hidae*) not mentioned. This is so unusual in Cornwall that it may be a mistake, and that these were the total hides, on which no geld was actually paid, in which case the figures in square brackets should be reversed, Salzmann, 'Domesday Survey', 49 n. 18; GDB, 121-121v, (Cornwall 3: 1, 2, 4, 6).

<sup>3</sup> As Salzmann has said, 'it is difficult to make out the full extent of the Count's deprivations on the estates of the Cornish churches, but he seems to have got possession of about 7 hides belonging to them.' If this is the case, the hides less gelding hides TRE would be even closer to the 1086 figures, Salzmann, 'Domesday Survey', 49, n. 20; GDB 120v-121, (Cornwall 4, 1-29).

Geld Account demesnes.<sup>1</sup> It might yet be argued that this evidence suffers from one of the same problems as Pratt's evidence regarding exemption of demesne in Cambridgeshire, in that the number of demesne hides in the Geld Account never quite exactly matches the total hidage less the gelding hides in Domesday Book. While this would be true, the differences in Cornwall are proportionately less divergent than in Cambridgeshire. We may not wish to say it quite as trenchantly as Salzman, but his conclusion that in Cornwall 'it can hardly be doubted that the exempted land "in demesne" was identical with that portion of the assessed land which did not pay geld [TRE]' seems more or less justified from this evidence.<sup>2</sup> However, the other shires of England appear not to have shared Cornwall's privileges; demesne parts of manors were not normally exempted TRE.

Faith argues that a certain type of Anglo-Saxon demesne, namely 'inland', which she describes as a type of demesne that could be tenanted by certain types of peasant, may have enjoyed tax privileges in the Anglo-Saxon period, though perhaps not all of them.<sup>3</sup> In fact, because of her tentativeness on the totality of inland exemption to geld before 1066, it is perhaps slightly misleading of Pratt to say that 'Faith's position effectively revives the view of Vinogradoff, who regarded 'inland' as an area exempted from taxation and military service', although Faith certainly thought inland was exempted from the latter.<sup>4</sup> However, it is still worth re-iterating the reasons for doubting the general exemption of inland in a pre-1066 context. There are sporadic references to 'inlands' in the southern and midland shires of Domesday Book, and in most of these cases, it appears that the inland in question was exempted in 1086.<sup>5</sup> But inland is only referred to in three examples by Domesday Book in a pre-1066 context. In Oxfordshire, it is said that 'Robert [d'Oilly] holds Water Eaton. There are 5 hides. Land for 5 ploughs. Besides these hides he has 3.5 hides of

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<sup>1</sup> See preceding three footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> Salzman, 'Domesday Survey', 49.

<sup>3</sup> Faith, *English Peasantry*, 48-55.

<sup>4</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 1; P. Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 186-207.

<sup>5</sup> These are listed in Faith, *English Peasantry*, 268.

inland that have never paid geld' (*Rotbertus [de Oilgi] tenet Etone. Ibi sunt v hidae. Terra v carucis. Praeter has hidas habet de inland iii et dimidiam quae nunquam geldauerunt*).<sup>1</sup> In the same shire 'Gilbert holds 7.5 hides in Garsington from the Abbot [of Abingdon] ... 1 hide of inland there that has never paid geld. It lies dispersed among the king's land' (*Gislebertus tenet de abbate ... ibi i hida de inland quae nunquam geldauit. Jacens inter terram regis particulatim*).<sup>2</sup> That the author points out the qualifier that neither estate ever paid geld may suggest that exemption was not necessarily the norm for inland. Moreover, in the third reference to inland in a pre-1066 context, at Offord in Huntingdonshire, Domesday Book implies the inland *did* pay geld:

In Upeforde habet abbas de Ramesy iv hidas ad geldum. De his fuit i hida inland et super hoc ii carucae in dominio.

The Abbot of Ramsey had in Offord 4 hides to the geld. Of these, 1 hide was inland and in addition thereto there were 2 ploughs in demesne.<sup>3</sup>

Finn has posited that the most likely explanation of Domesday Book's usage of the term inland was the same as the Northamptonshire Geld Account's: that 'inland', at least in its 1086 sense, was fiscal demesne.<sup>4</sup> As Pratt says, this would seem to be the most economical reading of the word 'inland' in most of the shires.<sup>5</sup>

In the Danelaw shires of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, meanwhile, 'inland' seems to have had a subtly different meaning. Here 'inlands' were demesne parts of outlying manors located away from their head manors, otherwise called 'berewicks' by Domesday Book.<sup>6</sup> Stenton identified these berewick inlands as demesne lands geographically detached from head manors, but that could be tenanted by

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 158, (Oxfordshire 28, 5).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 156v, (Oxfordshire 9, 7).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 204v, (Huntingdonshire 6, 19).

<sup>4</sup> Finn, *Domesday Inquest*, 151-9; Finn, *Liber Exoniensis*, 111-16.

<sup>5</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 14.

<sup>6</sup> Faith, *English Peasantry*, 43-44, 53, 55; Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 186-94.

peasants.<sup>1</sup> But these inlands are usually found to have been expected to pay geld:<sup>2</sup> further evidence perhaps inland was not systematically free from taxation before 1066.

Another possible piece of evidence, suggesting that inland may in fact normally have been expected to pay, is a writ of the Confessor to Bury St Edmunds of c. 1051, ordering that its inland be free from geld.

Eadward cyninc gret Ægelmer b[iiscop] 7 Ælfgar eorl 7 ealle mine ðegenas 7 scirgerefan on Suthfolce 7 Norðfolce 7 swa hwer swa Sancte Eadmund ænig land hafep freondlice. 7 ic cyða eou þat hic gehate be fullan hæse þat Sancte Eadmundes inland sy scotfreo fram heregelde 7 fram eghwilc oðer gaful.

King Edward sends friendly greetings to Bishop Æthelmær and Earl Ælfgar and all my thegns and sheriffs in Suffolk and Norfolk and wheresoever St Edmund has any land. And I inform you that I expressly command that the inland of St Edmund be exempted from payment of heregeld and every other render.<sup>3</sup>

This leaves little room for doubting that inland could be made exempt; but the fact that it was necessary to issue a writ to make this happen strongly suggests that inland was not normally or systematically exempt from geld.

It remains possible that exempted inland was more widespread before 1066 than the Domesday Book reveals. Certainly there were some unhidated parts of manors, especially ecclesiastical manors in Somerset and Dorset that were measured in carucates or ploughlands.<sup>4</sup> Faith reads these lands as 'inlands' of the type occasionally found in the rest of the southern shires of Domesday Book.<sup>5</sup> The idea that they were indeed inlands is plausible, but as Faith herself recognised, just because these

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<sup>1</sup> Stenton, *Types of Manorial Structure*, 5–15, esp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Burton, GDB 352v, (Lincolnshire 18:5); Attercliffe and Sheffield, GDB, 320, (Yorkshire 10W:42).

<sup>3</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, ed. and trans. Harmer, No. 15, 158-9.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Netherbury, held by Sherborne Abbey, GDB, 77, (Dorset 2:6) and Pilton, held by Glastonbury Abbey GDB, 77, (Dorset 3:1). For more examples, see Faith, *English Peasantry*, 268-9.

<sup>5</sup> Faith, *English Peasantry*, 51-2.

were traditionally exempted does not mean that other inlands necessarily were.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps more likely that these 'inlands', if that is what they were, were granted special exemptions.

In sum, we can only be tentative on the question of demesne or inland exemption before 1066; as Pratt has observed, there is no conclusive evidence to decide the matter. Moreover, using post-Conquest documents to answer questions on the pre-Conquest past is always riddled with problems, especially when using Domesday Book, which often employs opaque terminology that can change in meaning even between shires.<sup>2</sup> However, the balance of evidence tips in favour of the proposition that the exemption of the demesne parts of estates was not systematically applied throughout the kingdom until after 1066. A generic exemption of demesne land, or inland, is not observable before 1066, except possibly in Cornwall, earmarking it as possibly having been an exception that proves the rule that in the rest of the country, demesnes were *not* exempted. Meanwhile in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, there is direct evidence that at least one kind of demesne land – outlying 'inlands' – were in fact liable before 1066.

Either way, after 1066 the situation changed. At some point William the Conqueror granted demesne exemption, but only on lands directly held by his tenants-in-chief. If, as we suspect, there was no widespread demesne exemption before 1066, then this represented a very large extension of tax privileges, possibly a political bargain made with Norman nobles who had never paid such taxes before in their homeland, and were not happy to start doing so now in their conquered territory.

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<sup>1</sup> Faith, *English Peasantry*, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 6-8.

## The fiscal status of Edwardian royal demesne

During the period of *gafol* payments before 1012, we find in charters King Æthelred II selling or mortgaging land to pay for tributes, demonstrating the necessity for the king to contribute towards the nationwide levies.<sup>1</sup> The question that we are now presented with is whether the kings of England paid *heregeld* from 1012 onwards, and the other *gelds* that continued after *heregeld's* abolition in 1051. It may seem counter-intuitive that the king might pay tax; it may be thought, as indeed Flight has articulated, that it would have been like taking with one hand and giving with the other.<sup>2</sup>

However, we ought to remember that the original purpose of the *heregeld* was to pay for something quite different than the king's ordinary financial demands. It was rather to pay the wages of foreign mercenaries. The *heregeld* wasn't a royal exaction demanded for the material benefit of the king; rather, it was a national tax, assented to by the great men of the realm, in order to fund the defence of the nation. Even though by 1066 land taxation no longer had the specific purpose of paying for mercenaries, we know from the Dorset boroughs' entries in Domesday Book that *geld* was still raised in part at least to pay for the upkeep of royal housecarls, rather than on kingly luxury or other non-military pursuits.<sup>3</sup> We should therefore not necessarily expect to find king's estates being exempted from taxation in 1066.

Vinogradoff, however, thought that normally, royal manors were exempt from *geld* before 1066; he argues that 'royal manors were in principle held to be exempted from the payment of *geld* because they were subjected to the king's farm.'<sup>4</sup> Maitland was much less confident than Vinogradoff about the generally *geld* free status of royal demesne, observing that 'the degree in which the various manors of the crown stood outside the national system of finance, justice and police we cannot

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 50-53.

<sup>2</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 63.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 90-92.

<sup>4</sup> P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century: Essays in English Medieval History* (Oxford, 1908), 182-3.

accurately ascertain. Some, but by no means all, pay no geld.<sup>1</sup> Hoyt, agreeing with Maitland, considered it unusual that royal manors were exempt. Neither was it unusual, however, that royal manors, even those which Edward held, were subject to geld and Domesday says so specifically<sup>2</sup>.

One of the major obstacles in determining royal liability to geld is Domesday Book's use of formulaic language regarding assessment. We might be tempted to draw conclusions, for example, from the large numbers of Danelaw estates where King Edward is said to have held a certain number of carucates *ad geldum* (to the geld). There are also those lands in Circuit 2, the southwestern shires, which King William held in 1086 and that had 'paid geld TRE' (*dedit geldum*), but where nobody is listed as the TRE holder: it is very likely that at least some of these estates were King Edward's before the Conquest. However, in both the Danelaw and southwestern examples the phrases *ad geldum* and *dedit geldum* were formulaic phrases that seem to have meant assessment to public burdens in general such as labour service and, most especially, military service, which in any given instance might have, but did not necessarily, include actual geld payment itself.<sup>3</sup>

We face a similar problem with Exon Domesday's language when referring to the geld liability of royal estates. Hoyt cited fifteen entries in Exon Domesday which record estates that came under the title *Terra Regis ad Regnum pertinens* (the royal land pertaining to the king), that seem to have been held by King Edward himself in 1066, and which paid geld (*reddidit geldum*) in the past tense.<sup>4</sup> For example, there was the manor at Colyton, Devon 'which was held by King Edward on the day he was alive and dead and rendered geld for one hide' (*quam tenuit Rex Eduuardi ea die quam ipse fuit uiuus et mortuus et reddit gildum pro unam hidam*).<sup>5</sup> However, the phrase *reddidit geldum* as used by the Exon scribe was again formulaic to express assessment to all public liabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 167.

<sup>2</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 19.

<sup>3</sup> For a useful table of Domesday assessment formulae, see Pratt, 'Demesne Exemption', 31-2.

<sup>4</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 54; Exon Domesday fols. 83-7.

<sup>5</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 85.

More suggestive, however, of some royal demesne land being in principle liable for geld payment are the many cases in Exchequer Domesday where an Edwardian royal estate was hidated but 'did not pay geld' or 'never paid geld', perhaps setting such instances apart from the perceived norm. Hoyt cited the *terra regis* in Hampshire and Berkshire as particularly good examples of where this kind of apparent distinction was used.<sup>1</sup> Some royal manors, such as Thatcham and Cookham in Berkshire are hidated but specifically are said to have 'never paid geld' (*nunquam geldavit*).<sup>2</sup> The implication may be that those lands which were hidated but are not specifically said to have been exempt from geld, probably *did* pay geld in the reign of Edward. Hoyt found eleven examples of such manors specifically said to have been held in 1066 by Edward in Berkshire, and one in Hampshire.<sup>3</sup>

While we cannot be certain, therefore, whether royal demesne did pay geld before 1066, Domesday Book gives us reason to believe that some of it probably did. As for the king's 'farm of one night' manors, it is not certain that all of these were exempt from geld before 1066. While the majority of such manors were unhidated, a few are, such as the 46 hides of Eastbourne, so it is not clear that there was a general rule that even these manors were exempt.<sup>4</sup> The real distinguishing feature of such estates was that they paid a 'night's farm' in kind instead of a yearly money render (the value in pounds and shillings given for nearly all other estates in Domesday Book), not that they paid it instead of paying geld.

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<sup>1</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 56v (Berkshire 1: 2-3).

<sup>3</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 19 n.32. I have found 12 manors in Berkshire, rather than 11: Windsor (Berkshire 1:1), Blewbury (Berkshire 1:5), Compton (Berkshire 1:25), Kintbury (Berkshire 1:26), Shalbourne (Berkshire 1:27), Lambourn (Berkshire 1:29), South Fawley (Berkshire 1:30), Letcombe Regis (Berkshire 1:31), Kingston Lisle (Berkshire 1:32), Shrivenham (Berkshire 1:33), Hendred (Berkshire 1:38) and Reading (Berkshire 1:41); all from GDB, 56v-58. For Hampshire I have found 5 manors rather than just 1: Meonstoke (Hampshire 1:15), Christchurch (Hampshire 1:28), Lower Burgate (Hampshire 1:38), Sandford with Week (Hampshire 1W:3) and Arreton (Hampshire 1W:4); all from GDB, 38-39v. Christchurch, however, was beneficially hidated to the point of *de facto* exemption: it was assessed at 1 virgate but rendered £19 TRE.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 20, (Sussex 10, 2).

## Taxation in conquered England: the reign of William the Conqueror

### Land taxation, 1066-1087

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* remains a major source of evidence about taxation throughout the reigns of William the Conqueror, William II and Henry I. Its references to taxes levied are almost wholly negative in their appraisal, and the greed of the Anglo-Norman kings is one of the *Chronicle's* leitmotifs during the post-Conquest period. Unfortunately, the references are often vague, and at times even seem suspiciously routine, thrown in with remarks about poor weather, bad harvests and plagues, making a given year sound especially awful. However, before turning to other evidence, it is worth subjecting these entries to close reading, for as we shall see, the annals in question should not be dismissed as mere rhetoric. Indeed, they are crucial in our understanding of how the new regime integrated the exploitation of old territorial-based taxation systems with new feudal revenue raising methods.

The 'D' text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for those years after the Conquest (1066-1079) has a debated provenance. The question as to whether it was assembled in Worcester, near Worcester, York, or somewhere else in 'the North' has never been settled; and, as Wormald said of all such debates surrounding the *Chronicle*, 'W's deduction is X's hunch, and Y's rigour is Z's abuse of Occam's razor'.<sup>1</sup> There is disagreement as to whether parts of the *Chronicle* were written contemporaneously or in the late 1090s or early twelfth century; but with the possible exception of some interpolations concerning Queen Margaret of Scotland, these annals are best read as a near-

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<sup>1</sup> P. Wormald, 'How do we know so much about Anglo-Saxon Deerhurst?', in P. Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. S. D. Baxter (Oxford, 2004), 235.

contemporary witness, written by those close to Archbishop Ealdred before, and probably after, his death in 1069.<sup>1</sup>

At the very end of the annal for 1066, the 'D' text says this about the coronation of King William: he

sealde on hand mid Christes bec 7 eac swor, ær þan þe he wolde þa corona him on heafode settan, þæt he wolde þisne þeodscype swa wel haldan swa ænig kyngc ætforan him betst dyde, gif hi him holde beon woldon. Swapeah leide gyld on mannum swiðe stið, 7 for þa on þam lengtene ofer sæ to Normandige.

promised on Christ's book, and swore moreover (before Ealdred would place the crown on his head) that he would rule all this people as well as the best of the kings before him, if they would be loyal to him. All the same he laid taxes on people very severely, and then went in Spring overseas to Normandy.<sup>2</sup>

The E text of the *Chronicle* – which for the period 1064-1080 is of unknown provenance, but presumed to be near-contemporary, and probably sharing a source in common with the D text<sup>3</sup> – also mentions this 1066 tax in its extremely brief account of the Conquest. However, it also includes a statement of considerable moment regarding land tenure:

Willelm þis land geeode 7 com to Westmynstre, 7 Ealdred arcebiscop hine to cyngge gehalgode, 7 menn guldon him gyld 7 gislas sealdon 7 syððan heora land bohtan.

William conquered this country, and came to Westminster, and Archbishop Ealdred consecrated him king, and people paid taxes to him and gave him hostages, and afterwards they bought their lands.<sup>4</sup>

The levies mentioned in both accounts are likely to have been land tax. It is not always entirely clear, however, whether the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in any given instance uses the word 'gyld' to denote

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<sup>1</sup> Whitelock, *EHD*, II, 107-8; Whitelock, *ASC*, xvi; Cubbin, *ASC*, 'D', lxxiii-lxxix; Wormald, 'How do we know so much about Anglo-Saxon Deerhurst?', 236-9.

<sup>2</sup> *ASC*, MS D, s.a. 1066, ed. Cubbin, 81; trans. Whitelock, 145.

<sup>3</sup> *ASC*, MS E, ed. Irvine, lxxxii-lxxxiv.

<sup>4</sup> *ASC*, MS E, s.a. 1066, trans. Whitelock, 141-2; *ASC*, MS E, s.a. 1066, ed. Irvine, 87.

the land tax that became known as Danegeld in the Anglo-Norman era, or whether in some annals it refers to some sort of other tax. As we shall see, it uses phrases such as ‘all sorts of taxes’ (*mænigfealde gylða*) on several occasions, strongly suggesting the existence of more than just one type of tax.<sup>1</sup> In 1116, ‘gylð’ describes a tax taken ‘both in the boroughs and outside of them’ (*ægðer ge binnan Burgan 7 butan*).<sup>2</sup> Although this could refer to a Danegeld levy – as Domesday Book testifies that some if not all boroughs were assessed to the geld – it is an unusual distinction for any chronicle to make when referring to a land tax. It seems more likely that the word ‘gylð’ in this entry referred to taxes in a wide sense.

The English word ‘gylð’, therefore, does not necessarily correspond to the Latin ‘geldum’, and even less so ‘Danegeld’, although the two Latin words are clearly derived from the Old English. The principal Latin chronicle source for the period, John of Worcester, which largely follows the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* during this period, uses the word ‘tributum’ (or in one case, ‘exactiones’) when the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* speaks of ‘gylð’ or ‘geold’, suggesting he may have found the term problematic, although he calls Danegeld the *Danicum tributum* in 1130.<sup>3</sup> Anglo-Norman charters often list ‘geldum’ and ‘Danegeldum’ together when listing exemptions for privileged estates, sometimes using the formula ‘denegeldis et omnibus aliis geldis’ (Danegelds and all other gelds) suggesting that the authors used the term in a similar way to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: it was primarily used to describe the specific annual land tax that was also known as Danegeld, but it could also describe taxes in a wider sense.<sup>4</sup> In this way the charters can be as ambiguous as the chronicles.

The ambivalence of the Old English term ‘gylð’, combined with John of Worcester’s use of the ill-defined Latin ‘tributum’, means that we cannot be certain of the nature of the taxes that these

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. ASC MS E, s.a. 1096, 1098, 1104, 1105.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1116, trans. Whitelock, 185; ASC MS E, s.a. 1116, ed. Irvine, 118.

<sup>3</sup> John of Worcester, s.a. 1067, 1100, 1104 (*exactiones*), 1130 (*Danicum tributum*), ed. McGurk, 4, 94, 106, 202.

<sup>4</sup> Bates, no. 188, cited also above 94. Other examples include *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, eds., H. W. C. Davis, R. J. Whitwell, C. Johnson, H. A. Cronne (4 vols. Oxford, 1913-1969), I, nos. 415, 666, henceforth rendered ‘RRAN, I, no. xx’.

chronicles describe during this period unless we are given more information. However, it seems safer to assume that they were land taxes than that they were not, unless we are given information to the contrary, such as the case of borough aid in 1116. It is very likely that the Conqueror's 1066 'gyld' was a land tax: a parallel, known to William or not, of Cnut's punitive taxation on newly conquered England in 1016-18.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1067, William returned from Normandy to face rebellion in the west of England and a hostile Welsh force. The 'D' text says that in response, 'the king imposed a heavy tax on the wretched people' (*se kyng sette micel gyld on earm folc*) in the lead-up to the siege of Exeter.<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, following the 'D' text here, says that 'William returned to England from Normandy and imposed an unbearable tax (*importabile tributum*) upon the English'.<sup>3</sup> Once again it is not conclusive whether this was a nationwide tax based on hides or some other tax, but as both this 'gyld' and the 1066 gyld were demanded in December, the month in which we know William's later geld of 1084-5 was demanded (i.e. December 1083), this somewhat increases the likelihood it was indeed a land tax.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1067 and 1083, the chronicles are silent on taxes. This is surprising given the record at the beginning of William's reign, what we know of taxes at the end of his reign, and his well-known thirst for money. All the same, it remains probable that William did in fact take geld in years in which the chronicles do not mention such levies. The unremitting detail with which Domesday Book records geld liabilities strongly implies that it was a regular, not an exceptional impost, and contains no evidence to contradict that hypothesis. The Northamptonshire Geld Account testifies to a land tax collected some time between 1068 and 1083, and probably between 1070 and 1078, showing that at least one land tax was collected during these years.<sup>5</sup> Most crucial of all however is the Staffordshire

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 34.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS D, s.a. 1067, ed. Cubbin, 81; ASC, MS D, s.a. 1067, trans. Whitelock, 146.

<sup>3</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. III, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> See below, 141.

<sup>5</sup> See above, 119-121.

Domesday, which contains an explicit statement to the effect that geld was collected annually. It begins with a list of tenants-in-chief who held property in the borough of Stafford, before observing:

Hi omnes habent sacham et socham. Rex habet de omnibus geldum per annum.

All of these have sake and soke. The king has geld from them all each year.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have firm evidence that by 1086, William the Conqueror was levying geld annually. If so, why is it not mentioned more often by the chronicles?

In a sense the question answers itself. At some point geld became a regular impost, and so became less worthy of note by the chroniclers. That date could be as early as 1068; if a land tax was ordered to be levied in that year, it would have been the third year in a row, and so may not have stirred the author of the 'D' text to mention it, especially if it was at a lower rate than the 'unbearable' tax demanded in late 1067. In the reign of Henry I, the 'E' text only mentions taxation in years of apparently severe levies, but Pipe Roll evidence establishes that it was collected in 1123 and in 1129-30 at the rate of 2s, years in which taxation was not mentioned by the *Chronicle*.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know what the usual rate of land tax would have been under William the Conqueror, but we can make an informed guess. Ever since Webb professed the opinion in his *Short History*, he has been followed by most in thinking that 2s was the usual rate of taxation.<sup>3</sup> Webb used Henry of Huntingdon as his guide, who wrote (no later than 1141):

[Stephanus] uouit quod danegeldum, id est duos solidos ad hidam, quod antecessores sui accipere solebant singulis annis, in eternum condonaret.

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<sup>1</sup> GDB 246a (Staffordshire, B, 10).

<sup>2</sup> See below, 215, 225-242.

<sup>3</sup> Webb, *Short Account of Danegeld*, 18.

[Stephen] vowed that Danegeld – that is the 2s per hide which his predecessors used to collect every year – he would remit for all time.<sup>1</sup>

The 1123 Pipe Roll fragment and the 1129-30 Pipe Roll both record 2s per hide Danegelds.<sup>2</sup> None of this, it may be said, is very reliable evidence for the situation under the Conqueror. However, we may notice that in the three years in which the chronicles of the Anglo-Norman period include specific rates in their periodic laments about years of heavy taxation, figures given are 6s in 1084, 4s in 1096, and 3s in 1110.<sup>3</sup> A rate of 2s or less is never highlighted by a chronicle as being exceptional, suggesting that such rates were the norm. On the balance of probability, bearing in mind the testimony of the Pipe Rolls and of Henry of Huntingdon, it seems safest to follow Webb in thinking that 2s was the usual rate of land taxation under William I and William II, as well as Henry I.

One area of continuity with the Anglo-Danish past seems to have been the law regarding non-payment. The law code II Cnut, corroborated by the monk Hemming, tells us that if a landholder could not pay his obligations, then anybody who could pay would come into possession of his land.<sup>4</sup> Domesday Book tells us that sheriff Peter de Valognes of Hertfordshire confiscated into the king's hand the half virgate and 10 acres of a king's sokeman at Libury into the king's hand for the non-payment of geld, and then took the land into his own fief, presumably by paying the geld due himself. Although Peter's action was found by the Domesday inquest to be illegal, as the land was said by the men of the hundred to have been 'always quit of geld' (*semper quieta fuit de gildo*) as long as the sokeman held it, it points toward the old custom of land confiscation for non-payment of geld continuing under the Conqueror.<sup>5</sup> How often this punitive measure was used in practice is difficult to say; there are plenty of examples of non-payment in the Exon geld accounts of 1085-6,

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. D. E. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), 704-5.

<sup>2</sup> See below, 215, 225-242.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 141, 195, 214.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 54-59.

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 141 (Hertfordshire 36, 9).

and of collections of arrears from previous collections.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps confiscation was only a measure used to punish serial tax evaders, or only a measure used by the most rapacious of sheriffs.

In December 1083, William ordered a 6s geld, which was probably collected between Easter 1084 and Easter 1085. This was unquestionably a land tax. The 'E' text of the *Chronicle* states that:

æfter midewintre se cyng let beodan mycel gyld 7 hefelic ofer eall Englalund, þet wæs æt ælcere hyde  
twa 7 hundseofenti peanega.

after Christmas, the king had a great and heavy tax ordered all over England – it was 72d for every  
hide.<sup>2</sup>

By this point demesne exemptions for tenants-in-chief were in place and were eating into tax yields.<sup>3</sup> Round suggested the six shilling rate may have been levied to try to recover losses in this regard; in fact he called it 'a compromise – we might almost say a conspiracy' between the king and his barons so he could raise as much money, or perhaps more money, than he had done before demesne exemption was granted.<sup>4</sup> Whether a conspiracy or not, the 1084-5 tax must have hurt subtenants and peasants considerably.

It is not obvious from the context of December 1083 why this geld was levied. It may be that anxiety was building over the ambitions of King Cnut IV of Denmark. In 1085 it was being 'said and declared as a fact [that Cnut] was setting out in this direction and meant to conquer this country with the help of Robert, Count of Flanders' (*cwydodon 7 to soðan sæden ... fundade hiderward 7 wolde gewinnan þis land mid Rodbeardes eorles fultume of Flandran*).<sup>5</sup> However, it may have been some other threat imminent in 1083 but unmentioned by the *Chronicle*, or possibly to fund a campaign in Normandy, for that is where William was when he heard about the invasion that never took place.<sup>6</sup> It is as good

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 167.

<sup>2</sup> ASC, MS E, s.a. 1083, ed. Irvine, 93; trans. Whitelock, 161.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 118-122.

<sup>4</sup> Round, *Danegeld*, 97-8.

<sup>5</sup> ASC, MS E, s.a. 1085, trans. Whitelock, 161; ASC, MS E, s.a. 1085a, ed Irvine, 93.

<sup>6</sup> ASC, MS E, s.a. 1085, trans. Whitelock, 161.

as certain that the Conqueror taxed England in order to finance his wars in Normandy and Maine; his successors certainly did.

The final land tax of the Conqueror's reign is 6s geld recorded by the Exon Geld Accounts. Although the date of these documents remains uncertain and disputed, the consensus emerging from recent work is that they refer to a tax collected from 1085 to 1086.<sup>1</sup> If this is correct, then a six-shilling geld levied in 1085-6 went unnoticed by the chroniclers. However, we are told by Robert Losinga, Bishop of Hereford, in his description of the Domesday Survey of 1086, that 'the land was vexed with much violence arising from the collection of the king's money' (*vexata est terra multis cladibus ex congratione regalis pecuniae procedentibus*).<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, it is possible that this referred to the collection of arrears from 1084-85 that were identified as a result of the 1086 survey, but it seems more likely that this was a reference to a separate land tax in 1085-6.

## 1086 and the Conqueror's obituary

In the autumn of 1086, before going to Normandy for the last time, we are told by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that William 'first acted according to his custom, that is to say he obtained a very great amount of money from his men where he had any pretext for it either just or otherwise' (*he dyde ærest æfter his gewunan: begeat swiðe mycelne sceatt of his mannan þær he mihte ænige teale to habban, oððe mid rihte oððe elles*).<sup>3</sup> Round as usual rejected 'Mr Freeman's eventual conviction that the 'scot' which was levied subsequently to Domesday was in any sense a geld at all'.<sup>4</sup> Round's attack on Freeman was perhaps even less justified than usual, since 'sceatt' can mean 'tax' as well as 'tribute, 'gift' or simply, 'money'. However, Round may in the end have had it right; we should bear in mind the *Chronicle's* comment of the 'just or otherwise pretext', suggesting perhaps taxation

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of these, see below, 151-168.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Stevenson, 'A Contemporary Description of the Domesday Survey', *English Historical Review*, 22 (1907), 74.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1086 (1085), trans. Whitelock, 162; ASC MS E, s.a. '1085b', ed. Irvine, 94.

<sup>4</sup> Round, 'Danegeld', 87.

outside the usual methods. We might also note that if 'sceatt' here did refer to a land tax, it would be a unique use of the term in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for this period. This suggests that this might have been a payment of very a different nature. That it came from the king's 'men' suggests a levy through feudal means in which specific demands, with good reason or without, were made upon specific persons in William's baronage.

The annal and obituary of William the Conqueror in 1087 is a vital contribution to our understanding of William's approach to revenue raising. After describing the pestilence of that year, the *Chronicle* tells us:

Se cyng 7 þa heafodmen lufedon swiðe 7 oferswiðe gitsunge on golde 7 on seolfre 7 ne rohtan hu synlice hit wære begytan buton hit come to heom. Se cyng sealde his land swa deore to male swa heo de\o/rost mihte. Ðonne com sum oðer 7 bead mare þonne þe oðer ær sealde, 7 se cyng hit let þam men þe him mare bead. Ðonne com se þridde 7 bead geat mare, 7 se cyng hit let þam men to handa þe him eallra meast bead 7 ne rohte na hu swiðe synlice þa gerefan hit begeatan of earme mannon ne hu manige unlage hi dydon.

The king and the chief men loved gain much and over-much – gold and silver – and did not care how sinfully it was obtained provided it came to them. The king sold his land on very hard terms – as hard as he could. Then came somebody else, and offered more than the other had given, and the king let it go to the man who offered him more. Then came the third, and offered still more, and the king gave it into the hands of the man who offered him most of all, and did not care how sinfully the reeves had got it from the poor men, nor how many unlawful things they did.<sup>1</sup>

Here we see echoes again of the law of land confiscation and redistribution for the non-fulfilment of public burdens, including geld payment. Confiscated land was no longer being sold to whoever could pay tax, but sold to the highest bidder. The 'poor men' the *Chronicle* refers to here were likely

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1087, trans. Whitelock, 163.

Englishmen, and those purchasing the land Normans. In an echo of Cnut's letter of 1027, sinful pretexts by local officials seem to have been employed, suggesting they themselves were under pressure or had strong positive incentive to confiscate land, incentives possibly offered by a land-hungry Norman aristocracy. We might recall here Peter de Valognes, sheriff of Hertfordshire, wrongly confiscating a sokeman's land at Libury on the pretext that the sokeman had not paid the geld due, which, as it turned out from the testimony of the hundredmen to the Domesday jurors, had always been free of geld.<sup>1</sup>

Further on in its long entry for 1087, the E-text sums up in a poem the Conqueror's avarice:

Castelas he let wyrcean 7 earme men swiðe swencean.  
Se cyng wæs swa swiðe stearc 7 benam of his underþeodan man  
manig marc goldes 7 ma hundred punda seolfres.  
Ðet he nam be wihte 7 mid mycelan unrihte  
Of his landleode for littelre neode.  
He wæs on gitsunge befeallan, 7 grædinæsse he ludode mid ealle.

He had castles built and poor men hard oppressed.  
The king was so very stark and deprived his underlings  
of many a mark of gold and more hundreds of pounds of silver,  
that he took by weight and with great injustice  
from his people with little need for such a deed.  
Into avarice did he fall and loved greediness above all.<sup>2</sup>

The passage captures various types of exaction, and examples of continuity and change. The Anglo-Saxon assessment system was used for labour services to build castles, and geld lay behind a good deal of the oppression of the peasantry. Through the introduction of feudal exploitation into England, the king also extracted huge sums from his baronage, which in turn hurt peasants even

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 141, (Hertfordshire 36,9); see above, 140.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. '1086', ed. Irvine, 97; trans. Whitelock, 164-5.

further.<sup>1</sup> That there was ‘little need for such a deed’ may be so – although we should remember the context of wars in Normandy, English rebellions and threatened Scandinavian invasions – but without doubt this new and potent mixture of revenue raising methods helped make William one of the most formidably powerful rulers the country had ever known, a power which after his death passed to two of his sons, first to William Rufus, and then to Henry I.

## The fiscal purposes of Domesday

The purpose of the Domesday Survey and Book have been debated for centuries, and there is really still no close consensus today. However, very broadly speaking, the dominant view is that Domesday Book was intended to serve multiple purposes as a practical, political and ideological tool for both the king and his barons, at a time of perceived great danger for the new elite. The most thorough proponent of this view was Holt in 1986; more recently he has been followed to varying degrees by Garnett, Baxter and Harvey.<sup>2</sup> Holt ably narrowed down the practical and political functions of Domesday Book to both the king and his barons. For the king:

- 1) [Domesday Book] provides a record of the customs of the shire and boroughs and of the location, value, potential and assessment of the *terra regis*. It puts the treasury in a firm and informed position in imposing requirements on the sheriff and others who farmed and accounted for these resources.
- 2) It gives a record, shire by shire, sometimes hundred by hundred, always manor by manor, of the holdings of the king’s tenants. It provides a reference work for the settlement of conflicting claims. It enables the king’s men to instruct the sheriff of each shire to dispossess a tenant or give permission to an heir or claimant.

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 252.

<sup>2</sup> Holt, ‘1086’, 41-64; G. Garnett, *The Norman Conquest: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2009), 86-7; S. Baxter, *Domesday*, (BBC 2, 2010); Harvey, *Book of Judgement*, 1-3, 325-6; S. Baxter, J. Crick, C. Lewis and F. Thorn, *Making Domesday: The Conqueror’s Survey in Context*, Studies in Exon Domesday II, general editor J. Crick (Oxford, forthcoming).

- 3) It records, shire by shire, the location, extent, value and potential of particular tenements, for which the sheriff or some other nominated royal agent will be accountable if the lands come into the hands of the Crown.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile for the Norman tenants-in-chief:

1. [Domesday Book] provided a single coherent record of tenancies accumulated piecemeal over a period of up to twenty years.
2. It provided a written record which warranted possession [of estates] which in many cases had not advanced beyond the stage and status of acquisition.
3. It recorded purchases and exchanges, many of which had presumably been made without royal confirmation.
4. It warranted a large number of tenancies originally established by Norman lords who had withdrawn or been dispossessed.
5. It recorded the tenancies held of the two remaining comital earldoms of Chester and Shrewsbury.<sup>2</sup>

In the first three cases, the legal certainty which Domesday Book provided was perhaps just as useful to the king as to his barons. The repeated emphasis of all lands being held *de rege* underlined the king's new position as being landlord of all of England, driving a crucial legal and ideological point home.

The geld is conspicuous by its absence in Holt's analysis, which may be surprising given that Domesday Book contains a tax assessment in nearly every entry. Until the mid twentieth century however, it was indeed widely believed that matters to do with land tax were at the heart of Domesday Book's purposes. Most famously, Maitland thought that Domesday Book was a 'geld-book'.<sup>3</sup> While Round seemed hesitant to accept Maitland's position, it was Galbraith in 1942 who sought to refute the notion of Domesday Book as primarily concerned with the administration of the

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<sup>1</sup> Holt, '1086', 54.

<sup>2</sup> Holt, '1086', 62.

<sup>3</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 3.

geld.<sup>1</sup> He demonstrated that it would have been useless for the treasury to help it raise land taxes, for, unlike the Geld Accounts, it was not arranged hundredally, but feudally, that is by fief.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, only occasionally does Domesday Book record the number of hides held in demesne on a given estate; crucial information for any tax-collector in the late eleventh century, as such hides were exempted on the lands of tenants-in-chief. Besides, the central administration almost certainly knew already how many hides were in each hundred – the earlier Northamptonshire Geld Account is testament to this, as surely are the Geld Accounts of 1086, which are unlikely to have been the first of their kind, and certainly cannot have been drawn up without prior hidage information coming from some source; indeed the Geld Accounts themselves refer to the local collectors' 'lists' (*indicia eorum*), suggesting some form of pre-existing tax record.<sup>3</sup>

Round, unlike Maitland, implied that Domesday Book itself was not primarily concerned with the land tax, but he did think that the tax information in the 'original returns' - that is the hundredally arranged preliminary documents such as the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* - was the primary object of the survey, the ultimate aim being a re-assessment of the geld.<sup>4</sup> Galbraith characterised Round as 'tacitly assuming' that Domesday Book was a later afterthought of the survey, drawing on the materials that had originally really mattered.<sup>5</sup> Galbraith then sought to shatter that idea, arguing that the aim of the Domesday Survey was the final product, Domesday Book itself, not hundredal tax records as represented by *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis*.<sup>6</sup> This view became the new orthodoxy for a generation, but has been more recently contested.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. H. Galbraith, 'The Making of Domesday Book', *English Historical Review*, 57 (1942), 161-77, esp. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, see also V. H. Galbraith, *Making of Domesday Book* (Oxford, 1961), 12-44.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement*, 222; Exon Domesday, fol. 18, *VCH Dorset*, III, 127.

<sup>4</sup> Round, *Feudal England*, 3-146; J. H. Round, 'Domesday Survey', *VCH Somerset*, I, 386; Round, 'Danegeld', 77-9. Vinogradoff also thought the survey was 'mainly directed towards ascertaining the data and imposition and repartition of geld' in Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 141.

<sup>5</sup> Galbraith, 'Making of Domesday Book', 163; Galbraith, *Making of Domesday Book*, 19, with perhaps some justification from Round, *Feudal England*, 139-42.

<sup>6</sup> Galbraith, *Making of Domesday Book*, 12-44.

<sup>7</sup> For example, David Roffe disagrees, thinking the Inquest and Book to have been totally different enterprises, the latter being 'a purely administrative aid to the Exchequer' drawn up any time from the revolt against Rufus

However, some have argued that, although geld may not have been the Domesday survey's primary concern, that does not mean that it was not interested in it at all. Flight, and even Galbraith, argue that the surviving Geld Accounts are updated from information drawn from the survey.<sup>1</sup> In particular they think that information in the Geld Accounts concerning concealed hides can only have come to light from the survey inquisitions. Thorn and Thorn and Baxter and Lewis however think it far more likely that information from the Geld Accounts was used to update the Exon Domesday and the Great Domesday Book, rather than vice-versa.<sup>2</sup> This is a still ongoing argument, and may be resolved when a forthcoming monograph on Exon Domesday is published.<sup>3</sup> Either way, however, the passages concerned are few in number – indeed there is only one explicit case in the Geld Accounts of a 'concealed' half-hide being discovered.<sup>4</sup>

Flight also thinks that hides recorded by the Geld Accounts as not having paid tax were only identified because information from the Domesday Survey showed that they were not demesne parts of demesne manors, despite their owners falsely declaring them as being so.<sup>5</sup> This seems equally unlikely. Rather, the more likely source of information about defaulters was primarily the local collectors, who had intimate knowledge of the tenurial makeup of their area, or else shire officials who probably held up to date records.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, if we are correct in viewing the artificial 'fiscal demesne' of the Geld Accounts as distinct from the real 'agricultural demesne' of the other survey documents, then such information could not be transferred from one to the other.<sup>7</sup>

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in 1088 to the early years of Henry I; D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), 224-51; D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), 62-108; D. Roffe, 'Domesday Now: A View from the Stage' in D. Roffe and K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Now* (Woodbridge, 2016), 8.

<sup>1</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 65-6; Galbraith, *Making of Domesday Book*, 223-30.

<sup>2</sup> F. Thorn and C. Thorn, unpublished letter to Sally Harvey, (2010); S. Baxter and C. P. Lewis, (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> *The Conqueror's Commissioners: Unlocking the Domesday Survey of SW England* (2013-), <http://www.exondomesday.ac.uk/> grant no. AH/L013975/1.

<sup>4</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 66v.

<sup>5</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 55-6.

<sup>6</sup> See below, 159-165.

<sup>7</sup> For this distinction, see above, 121-122.

Harvey, however, notes that in the Exon Domesday, in which the Geld Accounts were kept, the administration – national or local – had a means of comparing fiscal demesne with agricultural demesne in any given manor.<sup>1</sup> This is because, as she sees it (and I agree), following Finn, the hidage of the fiscal demesne was expressed in the Geld Accounts and the hidage of the agricultural demesne was expressed in the text of Exon. The agricultural demesne hidage was also expressed in the *ICC*, and presumably all the other original returns, meaning that probably at some point the treasury had access to similar hundredally arranged information across the whole country, except East Anglia, where geld was administered differently.<sup>2</sup> The Domesday Survey therefore provided a way – at least potentially – of reconfiguring fiscal demesne to make it more in line with actual agricultural demesne. (It should be pointed out that this was a separate task to the hypothesised wholesale re-assessment in ploughlands, which Harvey thinks was planned and mapped out through the survey, and about which I have expressed doubts below.)<sup>3</sup> Whether large-scale modifications of existing assessments were ever actually enforced on the back of this information is doubtful, but the possibility at least now existed for a brief moment, before agricultural demesne could be changed again by landholders. If Harvey is correct in seeing Ranulf Flambard as the mastermind of the survey, then her conclusion on this point is strengthened, for Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury testify to his interest in fiscal assessments, at least later on in his career under Rufus.<sup>4</sup>

The question remains, however, as to why all geld assessments were included in the final product of Domesday Book itself. I have two suggestions on how to approach this. Firstly, it is almost certain that the hidage of a particular estate, alongside who owned it, would have been one of the most basic known facts about it, as tax was paid every year. Hidages were usually known facts, whereas the Domesday's annual values, and in certain parts of the country ploughlands too, had to be

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement*, 221-2.

<sup>2</sup> *ICC*, ed. Hamilton, 1-96; Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement*, 222.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 175-230.

<sup>4</sup> *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford, 1990), IV, 172-3; *Gesta Pontificum*, ed. Winterbottom, I, 416-7.

estimated. Even the number and class of peasants on an estate would have been more difficult to ascertain than an estate's total hidage. Because hidages were so well known, any survey worth writing would surely include them almost by default. Secondly, we should consider that land values, peasant, plough, ploughland and livestock data were just as immediately useless to the treasury and to the king as was were assessment data. Ultimately, we need to ask a more fundamental question: why was so much material information surveyed and recorded at all in Domesday Book and its preliminary documents, if the Norman barons merely wanted their ill-gotten gains confirmed and the king his position as ultimate landlord of England legally enshrined?

One answer to this – and I am essentially augmenting Holt's answer to this question here<sup>1</sup> – may be to view Domesday Book through that very prism of a simultaneously legal, ideological and tenurial document. The king now claimed by right to be the lord of all England, and that his tenants-in-chief were just that, *tenentes*. This was not just an ideological innovation, it was of dramatic material consequence too. There were now all sorts of ways of land coming into the king's possession, be it through ecclesiastical vacancies, forfeitures, escheats and wardships. Domesday Book provided description of all estates in England, structured by tenant-in-chief. Knowing how much to expect per year from estates taken into the king's hand was vital information for the central administration; it could help stop royal officials pocketing undeclared surpluses. Additionally, knowing how fully lands were being exploited would have also been useful; if the working ploughs were less than the 'ploughlands', then the estate may not be fully exploited, which could perhaps be rectified by a king's official. Similarly, knowing the breakdown between demesne ploughs and peasants and non-demesne ploughs and peasants could also be useful information for any prospective estate manager, and the proportions could perhaps be altered whatever way was in the royal favour. Moreover, knowing how much geld was due would also be useful, even if this information could be gleaned elsewhere from other sources. In a sense, Domesday Book provided the central administration with

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<sup>1</sup> Holt, '1086', 54-5.

a master document, from which it could formulate and dictate expectations to royal officials taking charge of newly acquired lands, boosting the central government's power, control and revenue. Under the new system of tenure, the king could also now demand fees for inheriting land (reliefs), and for marriages in which large amounts of land were involved. Once again, knowing the resources and fiscal obligations of estates that he was granting was useful to the king and his administration, if only to help determine how much they could charge an incumbent tenant-in-chief.

In conclusion, neither Domesday Book, nor perhaps even the Domesday Survey, were primarily interested in land taxation. Rather, Domesday Book's primary practical significance lay in its usefulness in measuring the wealth – actual and potential – of each manor and fief in England, so that under the new Norman tenurial system of the king being landlord of all land in England, the king knew how much he could charge, either from an incumbent taking over the estate, or from a royal official farming the estate.

## The Geld Accounts of Exon Domesday

Our main evidence for the collection and the accounting of the English land tax comes from the Geld Accounts that are bound up in the *Liber Exoniensis*, or the Exon Domesday, a regional draft of Domesday Book for the southwestern shires.<sup>1</sup> There is one version each of the Geld Accounts surviving for four shires: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset.<sup>2</sup> For Wiltshire, there are three different versions of the same basic account.<sup>3</sup> Each account is arranged hundredally, and loosely in

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fos. 1-493. A new critical edition is being published soon, the text prepared by Frank Thorn, which I have had access to, and which is the Latin quoted here. The associated project is *The Conqueror's Commissioners: Unlocking the Domesday Survey of SW England*, online at <http://www.exondomesday.ac.uk/> (accessed 19/09/2017), grant no. AH/L013975/1.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, fos. 17-24, ed. and trans. Williams, 'Dorset Geld Rolls', 124-149; Exon Domesday, fos. 65-71, trans. The Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and the Arts, *The Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest: Extensions, Translations and Indices* (Plymouth, 1884-1892), xi-xlix; Exon Domesday fos. 72-3, trans. W. Page, *VCH Cornwall*, I (1924), 61-3; Exon Domesday fos. 75-82, 526-7, trans. E. H. Bates, 'Geld Inquest', *VCH Somerset*, I (1906), 527-537.

<sup>3</sup> Exon Domesday, fos. 1-6 + 529 (A), 7-12 (B), 13-16 (C), trans. R. R. Darlington, *VCH Wiltshire*, II (1955), 178-217.

the following order, although sometimes it differs: for each hundred the account states the number of hides, followed by how much money in total the king has received in geld from the hundred and how many hides that represents. This is followed by a list of individuals and how many hides they held in demesne (indicating that they were exempted on these hides), and by a list of individuals from whom the king had not had received geld from a certain number of hides. A typical example from the Dorset Geld Accounts is as follows:

In Stanae hundred sunt lx et iii hide et dimidia. Inde habent barones regis in dominio x et viii hidas virgam et dimidiam minus. De isto dominicatu habet abbas Wintoniensis xvi hidas dimidiam virgam minus et abbas Cerneliensis ii hidas i virgam minus. Et pro xliiii hidis et virga et dimidia habuit rex xliii libras et xx denarius. Et de ii hidis et dimidia quas tenet Bristuinus de abbate Cerneliensi non habuit rex geldum et de i virga quam tenent villani abbatis Wintoniensis non habuit rex geldum.

In the 'Stane' hundred there are 63 ½ hides. Thence the king's barons have in demesne 18 hides less 1 ½ virgate. Of this demesne, the Abbot of Winchester has 16 hides less ½ virgate and the Abbot of Cerne 2 hides less 1 virgate. And from 43 hides and 1 ½ virgates the king had £13 1s 8d. And from 2 ½ hides which Bricuin holds of the Abbot of Cerne the king did not have geld and from 1 virgate which the villeins of the Abbot of Winchester hold the king did not have geld.<sup>1</sup>

The account starts with a declaration of the total number of hides in the hundred. The next statement is how much was held in demesne by the *barones regis*; in this case the 'barons' in question were actually the abbots of Winchester and Cerne, which serves to highlight that *barones regis* really means 'tenants-in-chief' in these accounts. We are then told how the 17.625 hides that the abbots held in demesne overall were shared between them. The rest of the account implicitly shows that these demesne hides were exempted. The next statement tells us how much the king received and from how many hides: £13 1s 8d (3,123 pence) from 43.375 hides. That equates to exactly 6s (72 pence) per hide. The final statement records that the king received no money for 2.5

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dorset Geld Rolls', ed. and trans. Williams, 131.

hides held by one Bricuin of the Abbot of Cerne, nor from one virgate held by the villeins of the Abbot of Winchester. Domesday Book confirms that Bricuin was a subtenant of the Abbot of Cerne in Dorset, although whether the reference pertains to land in this particular hundred is not certain. The virgate held by the villeins of the Abbot of Winchester was presumably part of or all of the non-demense part of one of the abbot's directly held manors in the shire. The implication is that the total of 2.75 hides from which the king had not had his geld *ought* to have been paid, but for whatever reason was not.

The account for the 'Stane' hundred almost balances: 63.75 hides were either exempted as being demesnes of tenants-in-chief, or had had tax paid for, or had not had tax paid for; that is 1 virgate more than the 63.5 hides declared as being in the hundred at the start of the account. Such minor errors or discrepancies are very commonplace in the Geld Accounts: while this doubtlessly is partly the result of the complexities of adding up fractions of virgates using Roman numerals, as well as the difficulty of making amendments to documents in this period, it could also suggest that the authors were not as precise in their work or quite as numerate as we might expect. We commonly see similar arithmetic mistakes throughout the treasury's Pipe Roll of Henry I. It seems reasonable to assume that fewer such mistakes were made in the actual collection process than in the recording; landholders were surely unlikely to have ever paid more than they knew they owed.

There has been a lengthy debate about the dating of the land tax that the accounts describe. Before Galbraith's article of 1950, it was simply assumed that they described the 6s geld mentioned by the *Chronicle* as being called in late 1083, which Baxter and Lewis have correctly recognised would have been collected in Michaelmas 1084 and Easter 1085.<sup>1</sup> However, Galbraith argued for a date of 1086, in the belief that the accounts drew upon materials that could only be gleaned from the Domesday Survey.<sup>2</sup> Such a tax would have been collected from 1085-6. Flight, Roffe and Welldon Finn are

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> V. H. Galbraith, 'The Date of the Geld Rolls in Exon Domesday', *English Historical Review*, 65 (1950), 1-15.

convinced by Galbraith's argument, and this has become the consensus position.<sup>1</sup> Darlington, however, disagreed, and Williams followed him in attributing all the Geld Accounts to the 1084-1085 geld, arguing that there are many inconsistencies between the Geld Accounts and Domesday Survey material which show that they were not contemporary.<sup>2</sup>

There are, however, some good arguments for the Geld Accounts all being 1086 documents accounting for geld collected from 1085-6. The Wiltshire accounts, for example, describe geld-collecting activities of certain officials, notably several times by one 'Walter and his colleagues' (*Waltus et socii*)<sup>3</sup> and a 'Bishop William and his colleagues' (*Episcopus Willelmus et socii*), the latter reappearing as simply 'the bishop and his colleagues' in another hundred.<sup>4</sup> In each case they are either said to have collected some of the unpaid geld from individuals since the deadline of payment (Easter or Lady Day), or to have retrieved it from collectors who had for whatever reason not paid all the money they had collected to the treasury. The sums involved were relatively small; Walter retrieved 5s 3d from the collectors in Chedglow, 10s 4d from the collectors in Heytesbury as well as 5d from one Gundwin, 1s 6d from both Odo Wolf's Arse and one Godwine in Melksham hundred, and 6s from unspecified persons in the Dunworth hundred.<sup>5</sup> The bishop collected 10s and 9d geld that had been retained by collectors in the Chippenham hundred, and 'found' 8s 9d in the Chedglow hundred.<sup>6</sup> Now it seems unlikely that a staffed Bishop William of Durham (or perhaps Thetford, the other Bishop William of the time) was found in these Geld Accounts as recouping relatively small amounts of withheld geld in Wiltshire, unless he had some other very good reasons for being there, but a role as a Domesday commissioner can satisfactorily explain his presence. Darlington's idea that he might indeed have been employed in a geld retrieving role in 1084-5 strains credulity.<sup>7</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 60; Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, 78; Welldon Finn, *Domesday Studies: The Liber Exoniensis*, 98.

<sup>2</sup> Darlington, 'Wiltshire Geld Rolls', 173-6; Williams 'Dorset Geld Rolls', 117-123.

<sup>3</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 1b, 2a, 2b, 8a.

<sup>4</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 1b; 2a.

<sup>5</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 2a, 1b, 8a, 2b.

<sup>6</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 1b; 2a.

<sup>7</sup> Darlington, 'Wiltshire Geld Rolls', 173.

possible that in 1086 the bishop was recouping unpaid geld from the 1084-5 geld, but in that case questions arise as to why the accounts were still being drawn up or revised more than a year after the collection.

There are other clues pointing toward 1086 for the other shires as well. In his brief description of the Domesday Survey, Bishop Robert of Hereford mentioned the upheaval surrounding the collection of the 'king's money' while the Domesday investigators were conducting the survey: 'the land was vexed with much violence arising from the collection of the king's money' (*vexata est terra multis cladibus ex congregatione regalis pecuniae procedentibus*).<sup>1</sup> Although it is not explicit, this could well have been in reference to a geld collected during that year, and may perhaps be alluding to the Domesday commissioners being more assertive in collecting withheld geld than previous officials had been. Lewis and Baxter point out that Lady Day and Easter were only nine days apart in 1086, whereas they were 26 days apart in 1085, so that the Geld Accounts seem to use them both as synonyms for the deadline for payment is much less awkward if the geld in question was levied from 1085-6, rather than 1084-5.<sup>2</sup> Finally, it is significant that some of the scribes who wrote the geld accounts of Exon Domesday also contributed to the production of Exon fief.<sup>3</sup>

It is nevertheless probably fair to say that none of these points actually clinch the argument. Indeed, regarding the dating of the Geld Accounts, Harvey recently judiciously said that 'arguments can be made for 1084 and for 1086, but neither is watertight', adding that 'the important point is that the surviving Geld Accounts appear largely independent from Domesday'.<sup>4</sup> By this she meant that the content of the Geld Accounts was not fundamentally dependent on the content of the Domesday documents, nor vice-versa. However, this relationship, or lack of one, between the Geld Accounts

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<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, 'Contemporary Description', 74.

<sup>2</sup> Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 38-62; Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming); T. Webber, 'Salisbury and the Exon Domesday: some observations concerning the origin of Exeter Cathedral MS 3500', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 1 (1989), 1-18.

<sup>4</sup> Harvey, *Domesday*, 213.

and the Domesday Survey is a further point of contention among scholars. Galbraith and Flight see information gleaned from the Domesday Survey as informing the Geld Accounts, particularly in regard to the 'discovery' of hides that ought to have paid but had not been doing so, perhaps for a long time.<sup>1</sup> Flight thinks the Domesday Survey uncovered very many such undeclared hides, and that these are represented in the lists of defaults at the end of each hundred in the Geld Accounts, and that it was due to the retrieval of these sums that the violence described by Robert of Hereford broke out.<sup>2</sup> However, Baxter and Lewis and Thorn and Thorn have pointed out that cross-over of data between the geld accounts and the Domesday survey texts is minimal, and that it is just as likely – in fact rather more likely – that information from geld lists that lie behind the accounts was used to inform the Domesday Survey texts, rather than vice-versa.<sup>3</sup> The treasury clerks had access to a wealth of other information, probably including accounts drawn up in the localities as a standard part of the collection process, as well as perhaps older Geld Accounts.<sup>4</sup> Flight's contention that the accounts' details on non-paying hides was a result of the Domesday Survey revealing hides that had previously not been declared for tax is not persuasive<sup>5</sup>; I shall argue below that the local and regional collection officers would have known precisely how many hides each landholder held in a hundred, and therefore how much they owed, and therefore how many hides they had not paid for.

The crucial point, in my opinion, is that the Geld Accounts were drawn up largely without input from materials of the Domesday Survey, even if in Wiltshire's case they were partially updated due to small amounts of geld being retrieved by Domesday commissioners as they undertook more important work. This means that there is no need to view the Geld Accounts as being fundamentally exceptional documents; very similar examples could well have existed from preceding or succeeding years, had they survived. The Northamptonshire Geld Account, probably datable to the 1070s but

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<sup>1</sup> Galbraith, 'Date of the Geld Rolls', 8-12; Flight, *Survey*, 65-6.

<sup>2</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming); F. Thorn and C. Thorn, unpublished letter to Sally Harvey, (2010).

<sup>4</sup> See below, 165.

<sup>5</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 65-66.

certainly from before 1083, also records precisely the hides that were in a hundred, the number of hides that paid and the number of hides that were exempted for whatever reason, and by implication the number of hides that had not paid.<sup>1</sup> It could well merely be a summary of a document similar to a Geld Account of the south-west shires. Whatever the case, it was clearly not dependent on a great survey for its information.

There is then the question of where the Geld Accounts were written. Were they drawn up by the treasury at Winchester, or by regional administrations? The debate hinges on the interpretation of certain phrases in the accounts, mainly those that describe money as being 'in the treasury at Winchester' (*in thesauro Wintonie*) or similar,<sup>2</sup> or that certain men had the duty 'to carry the geld to the king's treasury of Winchester' (*geldum portare ad thesaurum regis Wintonie*).<sup>3</sup> Flight interprets this to be evidence that the Geld Accounts were treasury documents.<sup>4</sup> Thorn and Thorn also think they are the work of treasury officials, although based on preliminary records drawn up in the shires.<sup>5</sup> Baxter and Lewis, meanwhile, think the original accounts were produced in the shires, and they were only updated at the treasury.<sup>6</sup> They consider the Exon Geld Accounts to be copies of these updated accounts, drawn up by the scribes who also contributed to the writing of the Exon fiefs.

Regardless, there is a common denominator among all these points of view: namely that the accounts, or the originals on which they are based, were either drawn up by or at the very least used and amended by the central treasury administration. When considering the intrusive nature of these accounts that record the exemptions and defaults of individual landholders in each hundred, this tells us that the Winchester treasury was not just concerned with accounting for overall sums due from shires, nor even from individual hundreds, but also had an acute interest in precisely which

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<sup>1</sup> *EHD*, ed. Douglas and Greenaway, II, 517-520.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, 70b, 78b, 526b.

<sup>3</sup> Exon Domesday, 70b.

<sup>4</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> F. Thorn and C. Thorn, unpublished letter to Sally Harvey (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming).

particular landholders had paid within each hundred, and which had not. The accounts therefore are not only ‘the oldest surviving records of any government department’,<sup>1</sup> but they are also testimony to such a government department exercising a surprising degree of bureaucracy and control, systematically intruding into and recording local government affairs and the lives of landholders great and small.

### **Geld collection**

The Geld Accounts constitute the only detailed evidence of how the geld was collected in England. Obviously, given the degree of regional variation we have already seen in terms of assessment systems, it is not certain that the system it reveals was representative of the kingdom as a whole. Indeed, we shall see that there were some differences, even among the shires of the south-west.

The accounts suggest that geld was due in two instalments per year. In Badbury hundred ‘the king had 64 s for 10 ½ hides and ½ virgate between two terms’ (*habuit rex lxxiii solidos pro x hidis et dimidia et dimidia uirga intra ii terminus*).<sup>2</sup> From three hundreds in Dorset it is clear that the deadline for one of these terms was Easter; in Canendone hundred and Puddletown hundred the king is said to have received his geld after Easter (*post Pascha*)<sup>3</sup>, and in Whiteway hundred Robert d’Oilly retained 15s of his geld, apparently belatedly, until after Easter.<sup>4</sup> In Cogdean hundred, however, the men of Roger de Beaumont are said to have rendered 105s of their master’s geld after Lady Day (*post festum sancta Marie*), March 25.<sup>5</sup> The two dates were only nine days apart in 1086; it may be that Lady Day was the actual deadline, and ‘Easter’ was used rather loosely as a way of

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<sup>1</sup> Flight, *Survey*, 61.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 18v, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 129.

<sup>3</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 18v-19, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 129-30.

<sup>4</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 19v, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 132.

<sup>5</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 20v, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 135.

referring to it.<sup>1</sup> We cannot tell from the accounts when the first term ended, but the Berkshire Domesday tells us:

Quando geldum dabatur T.R.E. communiter per totam Berchesciram dabat hida iii denarios 7 obolum ante natale domini 7 tantundem ad Pentecosten.<sup>2</sup>

When geld was commonly paid in the time of King Edward throughout the whole of Berkshire, a hide gave 3 ½ d before [the Feast of] the Nativity of our Lord and as much at Pentecost.

Clearly the latter date had been brought forward from Pentecost to Easter in the south-west by 1086, so it seems unlikely that Christmas was any longer the interim deadline. Probably it was Michaelmas (29<sup>th</sup> September); this was the beginning and end of the fiscal year by the time of the 1129-30 Pipe Roll, and almost exactly six months before Lady Day.

There is a surprising degree of variety in the terms used at the hundredal level for the local tax collectors, who were the points of contact between the taxpayer and the government. In Wiltshire these men were called *collectores* (collectors)<sup>3</sup>, on one occasion *congregatores* (gatherers).<sup>4</sup> In Dorset they are always called *congregatores*.<sup>5</sup> In Somerset, however, they are called *fegadri*, probably a latinised version of Old English *feohgadrere* (money-gatherer) or similar.<sup>6</sup> In Devonshire they are also usually called *fegadri*<sup>7</sup>, but sometimes also *hundremanni*. Both terms in Devonshire are clearly interchangeable; in Toritone, Framintone and Taintone hundreds *hundremanni* claimed one hide's geld as customary payment just as *fegadri* did in most other hundreds.<sup>8</sup> This term

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<sup>1</sup> As suggested by Baxter and Lewis, (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 56v, (Berkshire B, 10).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. in Dunworth Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 15v, ed. Darlington, *VCH Wiltshire*, 208.

<sup>4</sup> Kinwardstone Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 9v, ed. Darlington, *VCH Wiltshire*, 213, n.77.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. in Uggescombe Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 17v, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 126.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. in Portbury Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 76, ed. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 528. *Feohgadrere* is Flight's suggestion, Flight, *Survey*, 64 n.21.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. in Merton Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 65v, ed. Devonshire Soc, *Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Toritona Hundred, Exon Domesday, fol. 65, ed. Devonshire Soc, xiv-xv; Framintone Hundred, Exon Domesday, 65v, ed. Devonshire Soc, xv-xvi; Taintona Hundred, Exon Domesday fol. 69, ed. Devonshire Soc, *Devonshire Domesday*, xxxviii.

*hundremanni* strongly suggests that collectors in Devon were men specific to each hundred. The ‘testimonium hundremannorum’ (testimony of the hundredmen) is a phrase also used in the Conarditon hundred in Cornwall; in all the other Cornish hundreds the phrase ‘testimonium Anglorum’ (testimony of the English) is used.<sup>1</sup> As far as we can tell from the limited instances in which they are numbered, the collectors always operated in groups of four.<sup>2</sup> Quite possibly this could be flexible to an extent, in that perhaps some operated in slightly larger or smaller groups and perhaps some groups of collectors were responsible for more than one hundred, but we do not actually find any evidence of that flexibility.

Individual collectors are named on only three occasions: one in Wiltshire was named Celwi<sup>3</sup>, another in Somerset was called Ansger<sup>4</sup>, and yet another in Somerset was called Lambert of Wateleia.<sup>5</sup> Celwi, perhaps a variant of Ceolwig, was an English name, but nobody of that name appears in the Wiltshire Domesday Book. Ansger, meanwhile, is a continental name. In the Somerset Domesday, there was a minor 1086 tenant-in-chief named Ansgar Fower – maybe or maybe not identical with Ansger the cook in an entry immediately below, who held five hides at Lilstock.<sup>6</sup> There was another Ansger in Somerset called Ansger of Montacute, who was tenant-in-chief of two hides at Preston Plucknett.<sup>7</sup> None of these three Ansgers were major landholders. Lambert was also a French name. One or possibly two Lamberts held land at Blagdon and at Lovington from Serlo de Bucy.<sup>8</sup> ‘Wateleia’ can be identified as either Whatley near Winsham or Whatley near Frome; the latter is nearer Blagton and Lovington. In Lambert of Whatley near Frome then, as with Ansger, we possibly have an example of a fairly low-ranking Norman employed as a geld collector. From these three names that

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<sup>1</sup> Exon fol. 72; trans. *VCH Cornwall*, 61-3.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in Eggardon Hundred, Exon Domesday, fol. 18, ed. Williams, *VCH Dorset*, 127; in Mere Hundred, Exon Domesday, fol. 13, ed. Darlington, *VCH Wiltshire*, 180.

<sup>3</sup> In Calne Hundred Exon Domesday, fol. 1, ed. Darlington, 182.

<sup>4</sup> In the ‘Honour of the Bishopric [of Wells]’, Exon Domesday, fol. 78v, ed. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 531.

<sup>5</sup> In Bruton Hundred, Exon Domesday, fol. 82, ed. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 535.

<sup>6</sup> GDB, 98v, (Somerset 46, 16).

<sup>7</sup> GDB, 99, (Somerset 45, 18).

<sup>8</sup> GDB, 97v (Somerset 37, 1); GDB, 98 (Somerset 37, 8).

have been left to us, it is reasonable to conclude that geld collectors were a middling group comprising relatively high-standing Englishmen and low-standing Normans.

An important question is whether the collectors travelled around the hundred to each manor to collect geld, or whether it was collected at a central location, such as the hundred court; in other words, if geld was brought to them by tenants-in-chief or their agents. Palmer's proposition that the term 'manor' meant 'a house at which geld is collected', implies the itinerant method.<sup>1</sup> Actually there is no explicit evidence about this either way, but the lack of place names other than for hundreds in the Geld Accounts points away from the idea of itinerant manor to manor collection. Had collectors operated in this way, we might expect the Geld Accounts to include incidental information on which manors had how many hides in demesne, or which manors had defaulted. However, the information recorded in the Geld Accounts, and indeed in the Northamptonshire Geld Account, is only ever concerned with individuals, and never with manors. This better reflects a system whereby landholders or their estate managers brought money from their manors to a hundred court. If the deadlines for payment were on specific days such as Easter or Lady Day, then it would save much time if the collectors resided in a central location, receiving all payments on that single day. Collecting at a fixed location, with a militia guard, would also seem to be wise on security grounds. The sums raised even from one hundred often amounted to several thousands of silver pennies; it seems extremely unlikely that such sums could have been confidently held onto by four itinerant collectors, considering that successful robbery could perhaps provide a villain with financial security for life. The only really conceivable pragmatic outcome favouring collectors going around manor houses might be the immediate pressure bearing on manor holders or their estate managers to pay, derived from the tax collectors actually being there present at the door. In some circumstances this would no doubt encourage them to hand over money on the spot. But how much pressure could a knock on the door from four rather middling men of the hundred really exert on an

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<sup>1</sup> J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Domesday Manor', in Holt, *Domesday Studies*, 153.

estate manager of a powerful Norman baron? And what if nobody responsible was around when the collectors arrived? On balance, collection at a hundred court seems like the far more efficient and secure method of collection; after all they were places where people were used to going for all kinds of reasons, including the administration of justice.

The collectors had no apparent powers to actually enforce payment – the large number of defaults is as much testament to this as the lack of description of any such powers. Nor does the method of compensating the collectors give any obvious motivation for them to collect as much due tax as they could; they did not receive commission on the total of the money collected. The geld accounts prove that the *fegadri* and *hundremanni* of Devonshire were entitled to – or at the very least thought they were entitled to – the geld of one hide in each hundred. Thus we learn of Axemuda hundred that ‘for 1 hide which the fegadri claim that they ought to have by custom the king has not had his geld’ (*pro 1 hida quam clamant fegadri se debere habere pro consuetudinem non habuit rex gildum suum*).<sup>1</sup> For the (probably) standard 2s per hide tax, this would have amounted to sixpence per collector per hundred, but for the 6s geld the accounts describe, it would have been 1s and sixpence each; quite a high figure for what probably amounted to just a few days’ work. Perhaps this is why the authorities appear to have begun to see the legality of these retentions as dubious; as we see they record only that the collectors ‘claimed’ the custom, not that they were definitely entitled to it.

Certain entries in the Somerset accounts suggest that there might have been some similar controversy about this as there was in Devonshire. In a number of Somerset hundreds the *fegadri* withheld sums. We see this in the Portbury hundred, where the *fegadri* retained the geld of five hides, one virgate and one ferling, as well as in Bedminster (two virgates of geld retained), Winterstoke (two virgates and three ferlings), Brompton Ralph (two virgates), Milborne Port (two virgates) and Abdick (one and a half ferlings), as well as from the Honour of the bishopric of Wells

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 68v, ed. and trans. Devonshire Association, *Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest*, xxxv.

(one hide).<sup>1</sup> In none of these cases does the treasury condone the withholding of this money; rather it says that the king had not had his geld or that the collectors were unable to give account for it, certainly implying it was withheld wrongly. In the case of Bedminster, it is explicitly spelt out that the treasury ought to have received withheld money, for in an interlineation the *fegadri* had 'given security for its payment to the king's barons' (*vadiaverunt foris ante barones regis*).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in Bulstone and Frome hundreds on the detached, earlier draft of the Somerset Geld Account, the *fegadri* are described as having retained geld from half a hide and one and a half hides respectively by custom (*per consuetudinem*).<sup>3</sup> Perhaps then, when Somerset's money came with the shire treasury officials' accounts to the treasury (the process of which I describe below), the treasury clerk simply noted down the reason given by the collectors for the geld having been retained, that it was 'by custom'. Perhaps knowing that this was actually illegal, the scribe in the later, official version of the Geld Accounts declared these collectors as having wrongly withheld geld. Overall the evidence is suggestive of a long-held custom whereby the *fegadri* could keep a certain amount of money from particular hundreds, but that this was a custom that had been very recently been prohibited in Somerset.

The differences in amounts held back by collectors point to such customs as having been inequitable across hundreds, and were perhaps open to abuse. A new system of compensation may be identifiable in the case of Lambert of Whatley, who was apparently legitimately quit of one hide of land he held in return for his services as geld collector: 'Lambert of Whatley retained one hide held by the collectors' (*Lembertus de Uuatileia adquietavit i hidam teinorum fegadrorum*).<sup>4</sup> In Dorset and Wiltshire there are examples of the collectors wrongly withholding geld (see for example the cases of Uggescombe and Egardon hundreds below);<sup>5</sup> there are no similar hints that these had

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fols. 75v-81v, trans. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 528-35.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 76v, trans. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 529.

<sup>3</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 526v-527, trans. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 536-7.

<sup>4</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 82, trans. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 535.

<sup>5</sup> See below, 166.

been considered customary, although we cannot necessarily rule that out. It therefore looks probable that the method of payment of geld collectors differed at different times and in different shires and that the system for compensating geld collectors may have been under review.

The next observable stage of the process is the transportation of all the shire's geld money to the treasury at Winchester by certain *portatores*:

De Sumerseta habet rex de gildo suo .d. libras et .ix. libras in thesauro suo Uintoniae, et illi qui portauerunt has Uintoniam habuerunt .xl. solidos de conregio suo et inter saginarios conducendos et scriptorem et forellos emendos et ceram dederunt .ix. solidos et .viii. denarios et de .l. et .i. solidum et .iii. denariis quos receperunt portatores gildi non habuit rex denarium et non potuerunt compotum reddere. Hos uadiauerunt sese reddituros legatis regis.<sup>1</sup>

From Somerset the king has 500 pounds and 9 pounds of his geld in his treasury at Winchester and those who carried these to Winchester have had 40s consisting of their allowance, and for hiring carters and a scribe and buying boxes and wax they have given 9s and 8d; and from 51s and 3d which the geld-carriers have received the king has not had a penny and they have not been able to give a financial account. They have pledged that they will pay these to the king's legates.

We see here the porters held liable for money that was missing from the money collected in the shire. That the treasury was able to identify 51s and 3d that the porters had received, but not handed over, suggests that all the money had been put into one pool, de-segregated from particular hundredal batches – otherwise information about missing money would have been included under the particular hundred or hundreds. Therefore, some record must have informed the treasury about the overall sum being transported from each shire, so that the porters could be held to account for the total.

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 526v-527, trans. Bates, *VCH Somerset*, 537.

However, the Geld Accounts also show which particular tenants-in-chief had defaulted from particular hundreds, as well as which particular collectors had withheld geld. The only way these things can have been accurately recorded is an intermediate stage of accountancy between the hundred and the treasury. This was probably done at the shire level. Detailed accounts for each hundred must have been drawn up before all of the shire's money was sent to Winchester. Otherwise, there would have been no way for anyone to know who still owed money, because as soon as the money was in the porters' chests it was untraceable and nobody else but the porters could be held accountable for it. The collectors therefore probably settled accounts with some sort of shire official before the shire money was transported. These officials, most likely sheriffs and their assistants, would also have confirmed precisely how much the porters set out with and sent a record of that figure to the treasury: all handlers of geld needed to be held accountable every step of the way. The hundredal accounts drawn up by the shire intermediaries came with the porters and the money to Winchester, and indeed perhaps formed the basis of the final Geld Accounts.

At the end of the entry for the final hundred in the Devonshire Geld Accounts, Wonford Hundred, we see interaction between the tax collectors and two men, William the usher and Ralph de La Pommeraye took the geld money to the Treasury:

de iii hidis et i uirga et i fertino de quibus fegadri dicunt se recepisse xx solidos et deliberasse Willelmo hostio et Radulfo de Pomario qui debebant geldum portare ad thesaurum regis Wintoniae. non habuit rex gildum.

from the 3 hides and 1 virgate and 1 ferding from which the tax collectors say that they have received 20s, and assigned them to William the usher and Ralph de La Pommeraye who had to carry the geld to the king's treasury at Winchester, the king has not had the geld.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 70v, ed. and trans. Devonshire Association, *Devonshire Domesday and Geld Inquest*, xlvii-xlviii.

William 'Hostius' is elsewhere called both William the Porter (Willelmus Portitor)<sup>1</sup> and William the Usher (Willelmus hostiarius)<sup>2</sup> in the Devonshire Domesday. His lands in Devon amounted to 10 hides and half a virgate, and were valued at £21.<sup>3</sup> His estate at Bicton is of particular interest, for the *Book of Fees* of 1212 says that Henry I gifted the predecessors of John Janitor (*Johannes janitor* - meaning door-keeper, or usher) 'Bicton with its dependencies from the king, by a serjeanty of guarding the gate of Exeter Castle and the prisoners' jail' (*Bukint cum pertinenciis de domino rege per sergenteriam custodiendi januam castris Exonie et gaiolam prisonum*).<sup>4</sup> William the usher is highly likely to have been John's predecessor in this dual role. Gate-keeper and jailor may have been a good sort of security official for the treasury to employ as geld porter; perhaps Exeter Castle was the place to which all the hundreds' geld was brought before transportation. Ralph de la Pommeraye, meanwhile, was a very significant landholder in Devon, holding just over £102 worth of land.<sup>5</sup> He also had a connection with Exeter, for he held six houses there.<sup>6</sup>

When rendering account to the shire officials at locations such as Exeter Castle, the hundredal collectors will have needed to know precisely how much they had collected from their hundreds, as well as who had not paid their tax and how much had they had not paid. In two Dorset hundreds, the use of collectors' *indicis* (indices or lists) is recorded. Thus, in Uggescombe hundred:

et quod congregatores huius pecuniae receperunt xxiiii solidos denariorum quos recipere non deberent et quod iii solidi et vi denarii inuenti sunt indicis eorum super numerum dederunt uadimonium in misericordia regis.

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 117v (Devonshire 51, 1).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 117v (Devonshire 51:2).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 117v (Devonshire 51: 1-12).

<sup>4</sup> *Liber Feodorum, The Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill, Part 1 AD 1198-1242*, ed. H. C. Maxwell Lyte, (HMSO, London, 1920), 96.

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 113v-114v (Devonshire 34); 'Ralph 29', *PASE Domesday*, <http://domesday.pase.ac.uk> (accessed 29/04/15).

<sup>6</sup> GDB 114v, (Devonshire 34, 58).

And because the gatherers of this money have received 24s of pence which they ought not to have received, and because 3s and 6d were found in their list more than the number of hides, they have given a pledge as security, being in the king's mercy.<sup>1</sup>

In Eggardon hundred:

et quod .iiii. congregatores huius pecunie receperunt .xii. solidos pro terra alterius hundreti et quod indicis eorum inuenti sunt .vi. solidi supernumerum hidarum dederunt uadimonium in misericordia regis.

And because the 4 gatherers of this money have received 12s for land in another hundred, and because 6s were found in their list more than the number of hides, they have given pledges as security, being in the king's mercy.<sup>2</sup>

Presumably the 'number of hides' is the total number of hides recorded in the Geld Account for each hundred, either erroneous figures that may have been falsely declared by the collectors themselves, or else correct figures, but the collectors had collected too much, and possibly kept the cash themselves. The 'lists' appear to have been records used by the collectors themselves. This implies some basic literacy on the part of at least one collector from every team of four. The lists must at the very least have recorded how much money the collectors were required to collect from each landholder in the hundred, and probably more detailed information, such as the number of hides held by each landholder and how many were held in demesne.

How the treasury normally pursued unpaid geld from landholders is unclear. There are several instances of geld being paid in the term after the one in which it was due; one presumes this was extracted by the collectors in the normal way.<sup>3</sup> One also presumes there was some sort of ordinary mechanism for either the treasury, or more likely the sheriff, to collect unpaid geld, although

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<sup>1</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 17b1.

<sup>2</sup> Exon Domesday, fol. 18a1.

<sup>3</sup> See for example the case of Robert d'Oilly, above, 158.

Domesday Book suggests in one place that the Anglo-Danish practice of confiscating a non-payer's land may still have been in operation as a last resort.<sup>1</sup> However, the collection of 1086 was different, as the Wiltshire Geld Accounts testify. In this year the treasury had access to highly skilled human resources; the Domesday commissioners. Part of their brief was to extract payment from defaulters of the 1085-6 6s geld.<sup>2</sup>

## Royal tax liability in the reign of William the Conqueror

### Royal tax liability at the time of the Northamptonshire Geld Account

As explored above, Domesday Book indicates that in 1066, much but not necessarily all royal land was exempt from geld.<sup>3</sup> The Northamptonshire Geld Account, datable 1068x1083, though probably within the bounds of 1072x1078, is the most important source on the question of royal geld liability and exemption during the Conqueror's reign.<sup>4</sup> It is worth quoting some entries in full from the roll to illustrate how the king's land is treated:

To Sutton hundred belong 100 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 21 and two thirds hides have paid geld, and 40 hides are inland and 10 hides are the king's own food rent (*x hide pes kynges ahhen ferme land*) and 28½ hides are waste.

To 'Gravesende' hundred belong 100 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 18 ½ hides have paid geld and 35 hides are inland and 5 hides are the king's own food rent land (*v hidæ pes kynges agen ferme land*) and 41 ½ hides are waste.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 140.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 154.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 132-134.

<sup>4</sup> I follow Douglas and Greenaway's dating here; *EHD*, eds. Douglas and Greenaway, 517. Others agree it must be dated before 1083, and probably before 1078, e.g. *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. Robertson, 481; Hoyt agrees that it probably post-dates 1072, Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 40. Hart believes it to refer to a geld taken to within a decade of the Conquest, Hart, *Hidation of Northamptonshire*, 16.

To 'Eadboldesstowe' hundred belong 100 hides, as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 23 ½ hides have paid geld and 45 hides are inland and 5 hides are the king's (*v hide þes kynges*) and 26 ½ hides are waste.

To Foxley hundred belong 100 hides, as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 16 hides have paid geld and 30 hides are in demesne and 21 hides are the king's own land (*l 7 xx hide þes kynges ahhen land*) and 33 hides are waste.

To Towcester hundred belong 100 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 19 hides have paid geld and 40 hides are in demesne and 30 hides are the king's own land (*kynges ahhen land*) and 21 hides are waste.

To Willybrook hundred belong 62 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 7 hides have paid geld and 11 hides are in demesne and 13 hides are waste. All this belongs to half the hundred, and the king owns the half hundred (31 hides) which has paid no geld (*7 þ[at] healf e hundred eal unwered þ[at] heah se kyng*).

To Mawsley hundred belong 80 hides, and of these 12 hides have paid geld, and there are 30 hides in demesne and 30 hides waste and 8 hides which have not paid geld are owned by the king (*vii hide unwered þ[at] ah se kyng*).

To Corby hundred belong 47 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 7 ½ hides have paid geld and 11 ½ hides are in demesne and there are 12 hides and 1 yardland of the king's food-rent land which are waste and have not paid geld (*xii hide 7 i gerde þes kynges fermeland weste 7 unwered*) and 5 hides have not paid geld – of these the Scottish king owns 3 hides and the lady [Matilda] 1 ½ hides and Urs half a hide – and 11 hides less a yardland are waste.

To Rothwell hundred belong 60 hides as was the case in King Edward's time, and of these 10 hides have paid geld and 20 hides are in demesne and 15 hides have not paid geld – the king owns 7 ½ hides

(*seuen hide 7 i healf hide eah ðe kyng*) and the king's wife and Earl Robert's wife and William Engayne own 7 ½ hides.<sup>1</sup>

At first glance, the document seems to indicate that all of the king's land in Northamptonshire was exempt.<sup>2</sup> However, Hoyt successfully challenged this impression. He noted how there were far more royal hides in Northamptonshire Domesday than there are mentioned in the Geld Account, and that more Northamptonshire hundreds are said to have royal land in Domesday Book than in the Geld Account. I reproduce Hoyt's table below, slightly amended:

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<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. Robertson, 231-7.

<sup>2</sup> A view that Vinogradoff took, Vinogradoff, *English Society*, 189.

**Table 10. The Hidages of Royal land in Northamptonshire Hundreds in the Northamptonshire Geld Account and Domesday Book (Hoyt, 1950)**

<b>Hundred</b>	<b>Northamptonshire Geld Account hides</b>	<b>Domesday Book hides (1086)</b>
Sutton	10h	3h
Cleyley	nil	1h 2v
'Gravesende'	5h	2h 2.3v
'Eadboldestowe'	5h	2h
Foxley	21h	7h 1v
Towcester	20h	7h 2v
Huxloe	nil	9h 2v
Willybrook	31h	16h 2.5v
'Navereslund'	nil <sup>1</sup>	9h 2v
Nobottle-Grove	nil	2h 2v
Spelhoe	nil	7h 1.5v
Witchley	nil	35h 2.5v
'Stotfald'	nil	3h 2.833v
Stoke	nil	2h 3v
Higham	nil	10h 2v
Mawsley	8h	14h 1.5v
Corby	12h 1v	12h 2.5v
Rothwell	7h 2v	14h 0.5v
Hamfordshoe	nil	2h 2.5v
Orlingbury	nil	6h
Wymersley	nil	5h
'Geritone'	n/a	1h
<b>Total</b>	<b>119h 3v</b>	<b>177h 2v</b>

Domesday Book records 177 ½ royal hides inspread over 22 hundreds; the Northamptonshire Geld Account records 119 hides and three virgates, spread over just nine hundreds. Given that the hidage of Northamptonshire Hundreds were greatly reduced between the time of the geld account and Domesday Book, often by as much as 60%, this fact is surprising.<sup>2</sup> In fact, through a painstaking method, which admittedly rests on some crucial assumptions regarding the similarities between the Northamptonshire Geld Account and the Exon Geld Accounts, and the interpretation of those latter

<sup>1</sup> Queen Matilda owned 8 hides in this hundred, which Hoyt included as part of the royal demesne here, but not later in his work, see Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 42.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 118.

accounts in terms of its accounting of outlier estates, Hoyt reckoned that the 119 hides and 3 virgates actually only corresponded to 41 of Domesday's royal hides in Northamptonshire, meaning that overall, 136 half hides of royal land in Domesday Book are missing from the account.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not we accept such a high figure, or we only accept the conservative figure of 58 missing hides, there is still a large gap. Some lands may have come into the king's hand between the Northamptonshire account and Domesday Book – indeed this is what happened to 8 hides of Queen Matilda's land at Finedon in 'Naveresland' Hundred.<sup>2</sup> However, we might doubt that it did so in all of the other 12 hundreds with no royal land mentioned in the Northamptonshire Geld Account but which do contain royal land in Domesday Book.

Why then did such large amounts of the king's property go unidentified in the Northamptonshire Geld Account? It can only be either because it was paying geld as usual or because it was exempt inland. What this means is that in Northamptonshire there was no fiscal distinction between many of the king's estates and other properties. A few royal manors were exempt from the geld; most were liable to it.

Hoyt found also that a distinction might have existed between the king's land in Sutton, Gravesend, 'Eadboldestowe', Foxley, Towcester, all exempt from geld, and the king's land which had failed to pay geld (Mawsley, Rothwell and Willybrook).<sup>3</sup> The distinction is reflected both by language and of the structural layout of the account entries. In the first group of hundreds, the *kynges land* or the *kynges ahnen land* or simply the *hide þes kynges* is simply stated in hides, and they precede the wasted land, which would have been considered equivalent to exempt land in the sense that it was not liable to geld. There is every implication that these royal lands were considered exempt, otherwise they would not be mentioned. In Mawsley, Rothwell and Willybrook however, the *unwered* land that was owned by the king comes after the waste land, and indeed in Rothwell

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<sup>1</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 40-5, 59-63.

<sup>2</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 45-9.

hundred is lumped together with all the other land that had not paid, and which cannot have been specially privileged. The suggestion here is that these royal hides were in theory meant to have paid, but had not done so.

Hoyt concluded that the Northamptonshire Geld Account indicates, both internally and more especially when compared with Domesday Book, that very large amounts of royal land in Northamptonshire were not considered ordinarily exempt at the time of its writing, and there might well have been a difference - in Northamptonshire at any rate - between the king's exempt land and other royal land that was not exempt. We do not have a similar document systematically recording the treatment of royal land for geld in other shires, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there was much royal land in England that was liable for geld around the middle of the Conqueror's reign.

### **Royal tax liability in 1086**

The best documented geld is that to which the Exon Geld Accounts pertain, which is probably, although not certainly, the 6s geld of 1085-6. We have already seen that we should not lean too heavily on Exchequer Domesday Book's way of phrasing liability; its phrases concerning hidation and geld payment are usually formulaic and may be misleading in denoting liability to geld.<sup>1</sup> Still less is Domesday Book a precise record of who paid geld in the 6s levy of 1085-6. Most royal manors are hidated in a TRW context without any qualifying statement saying they were considered exempt from geld in 1086. However, it is not made explicit that they did pay geld.

The Exon Geld Accounts, however, appear to support Hoyt's conclusions drawn from the Northamptonshire Geld Account that much royal land, though not all, was liable to geld. The king's demesne hides of his directly held manors are listed in many hundreds of the Geld Accounts, along with all of his tenants-in-chiefs' demesne hides. However, the fact that the demesne portion of

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 133.

certain royal manors was exempt from the geld constitutes unambiguous evidence that the non-demesne portion of the same manors – the land of the villeins – *did* pay geld. In nearly every hundred where such demesne is mentioned, apart from in Devon, there is a corresponding entry in the lists of those who had not paid, saying that hides of the *terra villanorum* (land of the villeins) – that is the non-demesne hides of directly held manors – of the king’s land had not paid geld. In the Devon geld account royal land is only ever recorded in the lists of demesne hides.<sup>1</sup> In the Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset accounts, in both the sections listing demesne hides and unpaid hides, it is nearly always recorded, or can be identified as being the case, that the land was a great magnate or royal family member’s before 1066: very often it was held by Earl Harold ‘on the day King Edward was alive and dead’. However, no hides in any account are identified as having been King Edward’s before 1066; the reason for this being that as Domesday Book shows, none of his manors in the southwest were hidated, except for a few small manors in Devon, all assessed at under 3 hides amounting to no more than 14 hides overall.<sup>2</sup>

It appears then that hidated royal land was treated for tax purposes like any other land. At the same time, however, it has to be acknowledged that huge amounts of even hidated royal land *withheld* tax in the collection of 1086. In Wiltshire especially, it appears that no royal land paid any geld at all, as the royal hides recorded as demesne or as unpaid in the geld account actually slightly exceed the number of royal hides in Domesday Book.<sup>3</sup> It is not clear why so much royal land did not pay geld in 1086, when the format of the tax records expected it to. It seems highly unlikely that sheriffs or lesser king’s reeves did not pay geld without permission of the king. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that in 1085-6 King William ordered that his manors need not pay the 6s geld. The

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<sup>1</sup> There are a large number of examples, but see, for instance Damerham Hundred, (Wiltshire), Darlington, *VCH Wiltshire*, III, 202; Congresbury Hundred (Somerset), Bates, *VCH Somerset*, I, 531; Pimperne Hundred, (Dorset), Williams, *VCH Dorset*, III, 140.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 100-100v (Devon 1, 3 - 21).

<sup>3</sup> I calculate that the Wiltshire Geld Account ‘C’ records 194 ½ hides of royal demesne and 239 hides and 3 virgates of unpaid geld from the king’s *terra villanorum*, accounting for 434 hides and one virgate overall, and yet PASE Domesday records that there were 415 hides and 3 ½ virgates of royal land in Wiltshire that was not subtenanted. My thanks to Alex Dymond for providing the PASE information.

main point, however, is that the Conqueror's administration appears to have treated much of the king's land in the same way as other land in its tax records; if royal land was not expected to pay geld in 1086, then that year appears to have been the exception, not the rule.

## Taxation and the 'ploughland'

'The statement 'land for so many ploughs' (*terra est x carucis*) is at once the most simple of formulations and the most complex of Domesday problems.'<sup>1</sup> So said David Roffe about the 'ploughland', a unit expressed in a variety of ways throughout the majority of Great Domesday entries, though absent in Little Domesday Book, and rare in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, modern Lancashire and much of Shropshire. At first sight, the meaning of the statement could hardly be more obvious: surely it records the number of potential ploughs that can operate on an area of arable land in 1086? But this simple view, which has been defended by some, has been strongly contested by others, who offer very varying interpretations.

At one side of the spectrum, Moore and Higham take the most 'agricultural' face-value view. Moore concluded that, in his words:

1. The teamlands (that is, ploughlands) refer to 1086, not to 1066.
2. The teamlands measure the area of land actually cultivated, not the area of land which might be brought into cultivation.
3. The teamlands are units of variable size.<sup>2</sup>

Higham agrees: 'there are very good reasons to believe that ploughlands meant broadly and very simply what they say: that the ploughland was used as a unit by which to measure the area of arable

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<sup>1</sup> Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, 203.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Moore, 'The Domesday Teamland: A Reconsideration', *TRHS* 5<sup>th</sup> ser., XIV (1964), 128.

land in 1086.<sup>1</sup> Not so far from the ‘face-value’ view is Roffe’s interpretation. He thinks that ploughlands were a real measure of arable, but that they were only used in the Domesday context to measure *taxable* land, as opposed to inland, which he believes to be largely disguised by Domesday Book.<sup>2</sup> Finn also thought the ploughland was meant to represent a unit of actual arable, but that very often it was just an artificial estimate in which no measuring had actually taken place.<sup>3</sup> Maitland, however, suggested that the ploughland was a measure of cultivated land *in the time of King Edward* (my emphasis) recorded by William so that he could tax more appropriately; but Maitland then complicated his position by saying that later in the survey process, the ploughland enquiry may have been about ‘potential’ plough teams.<sup>4</sup> Maitland believed that confusion over this issue existed during the survey itself; hence some of the blank spaces we find in Domesday Book for ploughland data.<sup>5</sup>

A more radical interpretation was offered by Hart, who proposed that the Northamptonshire ploughland was an old tenth-century assessment unit, which may have once been based on actual agricultural ploughlands, and that it was an assessment specifically for bridge-work and fortress work in 1086.<sup>6</sup> He took a similar view of the ploughlands of Cambridgeshire, describing the ploughlands here as ‘some record – no doubt an incomplete and inaccurate record – of the carucation imposed by the Danes in 877’, which ‘continued to have substantial administrative significance’.<sup>7</sup> Hart thought the same was true in Huntingdonshire ‘and for many shires of the Danelaw’ where ‘the ploughland figures of Domesday Book preserve a record of the taxation imposed by Danish earls soon after the settlement of 877’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N. Higham, ‘Settlement, Land Use and Domesday Ploughlands’, *Landscape History* 12 (1990), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, 205-8.

<sup>3</sup> R. Welldon Finn, ‘The Teamland of the Domesday Inquest’, *English Historical Review* LXXXIII (1968), 95-101.

<sup>4</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 418-23.

<sup>5</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 423.

<sup>6</sup> Hart, ‘Hidation of Northamptonshire’, 24-8.

<sup>7</sup> Hart, ‘Hidation of Cambridgeshire’, 45.

<sup>8</sup> C. Hart, ‘The Hidation of Huntingdonshire’, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 61 (1968), 55.

Perhaps most radical of all, however, is Sally Harvey's theory, that the ploughland was a new tax assessment devised by the Conqueror's administration, which attempted to take into account more than just the extent of arable or arable capacity, but the full economic potential of each manor, including its labour force, the quality of land, and non-arable agricultural land such as meadow and pasture. The old hidage system needed overhauling as it no longer reflected economic reality. However, the re-assessment was never imposed anywhere in the country, presumably for practical or political reasons, or both.<sup>1</sup>

While some of these views may seem incompatible with each other, there could be some truth in most of them because of the simple fact that different regions in Domesday Book seem to have had very different ploughland characteristics, suggesting that the word could mean different things to different people in different localities. This is not to say that there was no single intended meaning on the part of those who master-minded Domesday; merely that it may have been interpreted differently by different people involved in the survey. Darby, who did not formally take any view on what the ploughland actually was, has provided the most useful survey of the term's use in different parts of England.<sup>2</sup> In my own survey below I shall draw gratefully on the data he assembled, before coming to my own conclusions on the definition and purpose of the Domesday ploughland.

Darby showed convincingly that in the southwestern shires of Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall (collectively forming 'Circuit Two' of the Domesday survey) Domesday Book's phraseology regarding ploughlands implies that they were considered agricultural units in this region.<sup>3</sup> He cites entries such as Cann Orchard, Cornwall, where there was 'land for two ploughs which are there' (*terra ii carucis quae ibi sunt*)<sup>4</sup> and at Kenn, Devon, where 'there is land for 25

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<sup>1</sup> S. P. J. Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland in Domesday Book' in P. Sawyer, *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* (London, 1985), 86-103; S. P. J. Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgement* (Oxford, 2014), 223-6.

<sup>2</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 95-120.

<sup>3</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 98-99.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 124 (Cornwall 5,11, 5).

ploughs and the same number are there' (*terra est xxv carucis et totidem ibi sunt*).<sup>1</sup> There was an apparent case of 'overstocking' at Frome Billet, Dorset: 'land for two ploughs but there are 3 ploughs there' (*terra est ii carucis, tamen sunt ibi iii carucae*).<sup>2</sup> In Exon Domesday, the agricultural connotations are even more explicit: the ploughland is usually rendered thus: 'x number of ploughs could till this land' (*hanc [terram] possunt arare n carucae*) or 'it can be tilled by x ploughs' (*potest arari cum n carucis*).<sup>3</sup> Darby pointed out that 'the figures for ploughlands [in the south west] often look suspiciously as if they were estimates rather than precise quantities', citing the round numbers of ploughlands on some estates where there were more precisely numbered plough teams, and other estates where the ploughlands amounted to exactly the same number as plough teams – even for figures as extravagant as 185 as at Crediton, Devon.<sup>4</sup>

In the southeast-midland shires of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Middlesex (comprising Circuit 3 of the survey), the phrase used to denote ploughlands was 'there is land for x number of ploughs' (*terra est n carucis*). Darby noted that it is strongly suggested by Domesday Book for this area that the number of ploughlands ought ideally to be equal to the number of plough teams, indicated by such phrases as 'there is land for two ploughs and they are there' (*terra est ii carucis et ibi sunt*),<sup>5</sup> and for one poor family of five brothers and their mother at Wymington, Bedfordshire, 'there is land for one plough but it is not there' (*terra est i carucae sed non est ibi*) – their land was now only worth 3s when it had been worth 20s in 1066.<sup>6</sup> If the number of plough teams in these shires was fewer than the number of ploughlands, then ordinarily the scribe would say the relevant number of ploughs 'could be there' (*possunt esse*). For example, at Sipton, Buckinghamshire, 'there is land for seven ploughs. In demesne there are two ploughs and

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 106v (Devonshire 16, 57).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 84v (Dorset 57, 1).

<sup>3</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 99; GDB, 101v (Devonshire 2, 2).

<sup>5</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 100; GDB, 211v (Bedfordshire 39, 1).

<sup>6</sup> GDB, 218v (Bedfordshire 57, 7).

another two could be there. Four villeins with one border have two ploughs and there could be a third' (*terra est vii carucis. In dominio ... sunt ii carucae et aliae ii possunt esse. Ibi iiii uillani cum I bordario habent ii carucas et tercia potest fieri*).<sup>1</sup> Only a very few estates had an apparent excess of teams in this area, but overall it does seem that the ploughland was meant to be some sort of real agrarian measure in these shires.

Information regarding ploughlands is sparser in the Circuit 5 shires (Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire). In Gloucestershire and Worcestershire the ploughland unit is almost completely missing from the text. In Herefordshire, there were only 24 estates on which ploughland information was included. Some of these entries suggest that the ploughland was a real agricultural unit, such as at Clifford, *ibi habet Radulfus terra ad ii carucas sed non est nisi i caruca* (Radulf has land for two ploughs but one plough is not there.) In both Herefordshire and Worcestershire there are a significant number of ploughs that are said could be added, potentially implying the existence of ploughlands – these occur in about 15% of entries in the two shires.<sup>2</sup> However, artificiality can be detected in the Welsh Marches and the 'Stradelie' valley: a formula of two ploughlands to every hide seems to have been used, but which might have been based on the other is hard to say in a part of the country where hidation had not yet uniformly been imposed.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, most of the way through Domesday's listing of the Church of Worcester's estates, we are told *in omnibus his maneriis non possunt esse plus carucae quam dictum est* (in all of these manors [above] there can be no more ploughs than is stated).<sup>4</sup> In Preston on Wye, Herefordshire, there is an explicitly acknowledged case of 'overstocking': *uillani plus habent carucas quam arabilem terram* (the villeins have more ploughs than land to till').<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile there was an 'idle team' (*alia*

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 151 (Buckinghamshire 27, 2).

<sup>2</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 101.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 186v-187.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 174 (Worcestershire 2, 80).

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 181v (Herefordshire 2, 5).

*ociosa*) at Mansell, Herefordshire, together with an operating team.<sup>1</sup> These entries are important because they show that agricultural overstocking really could happen. The idea that peasants could even for one winter keep more oxen than were strictly necessary has been rejected out of hand on the grounds that it contradicts all conventional thought on medieval economics. Harvey has said 'it is not possible to subscribe to any theory (and it is all variants of the arable capacity [meaning of the 'ploughland'] theory which suffer here) which assumes that many peasants were, even for one winter, supporting more ploughteams than they had land to use them on.'<sup>2</sup> Therefore it is considered that the apparent 'overstocking' in Domesday must be an illusion, one that is only apparent because we are interpreting the ploughland too literally.

But what evidence really is there to support this outright rejection of the possibility of excess ploughteams? None has been cited, except the apparent scarcity of meadow land, and its correspondingly high value.<sup>3</sup> But is it not possible that some farmers might have been able to and wanted to keep some oxen in reserve, or perhaps kept a few to breed or sell? Perhaps some soils exhausted oxen faster, and wealthier groups of peasants could afford to rotate teams? In densely populated estates, some peasants may have kept their own oxen as a security or as a status symbol. Perhaps some peasants gained leverage over others by keeping excess oxen on their own land, to lend to less fortunate farmers who had fewer? Perhaps oxen were routinely shared between estates, causing some inevitable inefficiencies. This last is a point stressed by Higham, who is also sceptical that cases of 'overstocking' are problematic at all. He cites the phenomenon of dispersed settlement patterns and irregular field systems as evidence that 'the gap between numbers of ploughlands and ploughs implies no more than the existence of widespread and substantial organisational barriers to efficient use of ploughs and teams.'<sup>4</sup> I do not think we should be as amazed by the overstocking

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 182v (Herefordshire 2, 46).

<sup>2</sup> Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 90.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 89.

<sup>4</sup> Higham, 'Settlement', 39.

phenomenon as many have been, and we should certainly not reject the possibility of the phenomenon outright; after all we have seen it explicitly spelt out in some entries that overstocking existed, such as at Preston on Wye and Mansell, Herefordshire.<sup>1</sup>

In Cheshire and Shropshire Domesday, ploughlands (*terra est x carucis*) are normally included in estate descriptions.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Shropshire's phraseology switches between a very agricultural rendering of how many ploughs could be there (*possunt esse, plus possunt esse* etc.) and the perhaps slightly more ambiguous rendering (*terra est x carucis*). The change happens half way through the description of Earl Roger's fief.<sup>3</sup> There are, however, three *possunt esse* style entries in the second half, suggesting an interchangeability of these two phrases.<sup>4</sup>

In Yorkshire, which although was in Circuit 6 was, as ever, a shire with very much its own characteristics, the emphases of the ploughland formulae are mixed, ranging from agricultural renderings such as *possunt esse n carucae* to the more formulaic *terra est n carucis*. However, there are duplications in the Yorkshire folios which apparently render the same information using these different formulae, implying they meant the same.<sup>5</sup> This certainly seems to lean in favour of an agricultural reading of the ploughland in Yorkshire. There are other entries which talked of tilled or untilled ploughlands, such as Loftus Hill and Winksley, which very directly draw agricultural links to the ploughland. At Loftus Hil, there was 'land for two ploughs. These [men] have it and cultivate it' (*terra ad ii carucas. Ipsi adhuc habent et colunt eam.*)<sup>6</sup> At Winksley, there was 'land for two ploughs. Gospatric has it now but he does not cultivate them' (*terra ad ii caruca. Ipse (Gospatric) habet nunc sed non colit.*)<sup>7</sup> There are, however, enough duodecimal ploughland figures to suggest there may be

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 179.

<sup>2</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 103-4.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 257 (Shropshire 4,11, 8-9).

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 257 (Shropshire 4,13, 1); GDB 257v (Shropshire 4,14, 18; Shropshire 4,19, 1).

<sup>5</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 110-11; e.g. duplicate entries for Chellow, Allerton, Thornton, Clayton and Wibsey, GDB, 318 (Yorkshire 9W, 131, 144).

<sup>6</sup> GDB, 330v (Yorkshire 29W, 40, 17).

<sup>7</sup> GDB, 330 (Yorkshire 28W, 39, 13).

some artificiality, or at least guesswork, going on, and there are a very many 2:1 or 1:1 carucate to ploughland ratios.<sup>1</sup> Some phrases suggest possible tax connotations, such as at Egton, where there were ‘three carucates to the geld and the same number of ploughs can be there’ (*ad geldum iii carucatae et totidem carucae possunt est*)<sup>2</sup> and at Hessay, where there were ‘two carucates and two bovates to the geld. There is land for the same number of ploughs’ (*ii carucatae terrae et ii bovatae ad geldum. Terra est ad totidem carucas*).<sup>3</sup> But these may well just be coincidences or estimations of agricultural ploughlands based on assessment ratings.

In Lincolnshire, another very large and exceptional shire in Circuit 6, the phrase *terra arabilis ad x carucas* (arable land for x ploughs) is sometimes used; an explicitly agricultural rendering of the ploughland.<sup>4</sup> There are, however, some entries in which the ploughland to carucate ratio looks artificial (36% of entries have the same ploughland figure as carucate figure), either lending credence to a view that the ploughland was an attempted unit of assessment, or else showing estimates of arable capacity based on previous or current tax ratings.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, for a great number of entries in Lincolnshire, there is no detectable artificiality.

Thus far, the regions in which the ploughland appears to be some measure of arable have been surveyed. However, in other areas, the ploughland has a distinct artificial flavour. In the midland shires of Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire (comprising Circuit 4) and in Huntingdonshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (all shires in Circuit 6), while there are a few entries which again could imply that the number of ploughs ought to match the number of ploughlands, these are neither as explicit nor as frequent as in the west of England or the

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<sup>1</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 111.

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 305 (Yorkshire 5 N, 3).

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 329 (Yorkshire 25W, 36, 17).

<sup>4</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 113.

<sup>5</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 114.

south-east midlands.<sup>1</sup> Normally the phrase used to denote ploughlands is simply *terra est n carucis*, which is more neutral in meaning than the *possunt esse* form.

Northamptonshire is the shire where the artificiality of the ploughland is the most pronounced. Round, Baring and Hart have all showed that ploughlands in the south of the shire bore consistent ratios to the hidage.<sup>2</sup> In eight hundreds comprising the south west part of the shire, the ratio between ploughlands and 1086 hides in villis was generally 5:2. In five hundreds surrounding Northampton in the southeastern part of the shire the ratio was 2:1. We should immediately remember that the hidages had been reduced since 1066, and in the southwestern hundreds they had all been reduced from 100 hides to within five hides of 40 hides (except Green's Norton, which was reduced to 33 hides,) and in the five hundreds around Northampton the assessments were close to or matching 100 or 150 hides, and all of these had been heavily reduced, often by more than half.<sup>3</sup> This strongly suggests that the ploughland had a relationship with the 1066 hidage. Was the ploughland the actual 1066 hidage, which the Northamptonshire Geld Account approximated? Was it a more recent unit of agrarian or fiscal character that was loosely based on the 1066 hidage? Or was it a new unit that bore a constant ratio to the new 1086 hidage? All are possibilities. Or, as Hart has suggested, was the ploughland a Domesday term for the assessment unit of the shire under Edward the Elder, in the case of the southwestern hundreds, and for the Danish carucation, in the case of the other hundreds in which the Danes had settled?<sup>4</sup> In the north of the shire, there was a duodecimal system of ploughland administration, suggesting a Danish origin. Hart saw the ploughland of Northamptonshire as representing the assessment for bridge and fortress work, while the hide was used to assess geld – William's regime could not reduce assessment on public works,

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<sup>1</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 105.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Round, 'The Hidation of Northamptonshire', *English Historical Review*, XV (1900), 78-86; F. H. Baring, 'The Hidation of Northamptonshire', *English Historical Review*, XVII (1902), 76-83; F. H. Baring, 'The pre-Domesday Hidation of Northamptonshire', *English Historical Review*, XVII (1902), 470-9; Hart, 'Hidation of Northamptonshire', 24-32.

<sup>3</sup> Hart, 'Hidation of Northamptonshire', 25-7, 48-64.

<sup>4</sup> Hart, 'Hidation of Northamptonshire', 24-8.

but they could for geld and so they used two assessments. Hart's suggestions certainly have merit, but perhaps the best resolution is that it was determined by the local authority, that, in response to the Domesday commissioners' requests for data on potential arable ploughlands, they would define the ploughland using some form of old assessment. This may well not have been what the commissioners were looking for; rather it was a local expedient for providing a figure that in reality was difficult to estimate.

There is also an artificial flavour of many of the ploughlands in Leicestershire. Stenton noted the preponderance of ratios of carucates to ploughlands being very often 2:1, 3:2 or 1:1.<sup>1</sup> There are four ways of expressing the ploughland in Leicestershire: 'there could be x ploughs' (*n carucis potest esse*), which is the rarest and most explicitly agricultural, the most common was 'land for x ploughs' (*terra est n carucis*), but also common were the formulae 'there were x ploughs in the time of King Edward' (*TRE fuerunt n carucae*) and simply 'there were x ploughs' (*ibi fuerunt n carucae*).<sup>2</sup> The TRE number of ploughs may simply be a way for a local authority to estimate how many ploughs there could be in 1086 by looking back at a past situation, or it may show that in Leicestershire the question posed was about the situation in 1066. Stenton suspected that the apparent artificiality here reflected the ploughland in Leicestershire as being a proposed reduction of assessment.<sup>3</sup> This need not necessarily be the case; as perhaps in Northamptonshire the local authority may have simply looked back to some previous measure or assessment and used that to loosely measure agricultural capacity in response to the Domesday commissioners' demands.

In Staffordshire, we twice find the phrase saying there 'could be' (*possunt esse*) more ploughs on certain estates, but otherwise there is no direct link made between ploughlands and agricultural reality.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, there is some evidence of speculation on six 'waste' holdings in Staffordshire, on

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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Stenton, 'Introduction to the Leicestershire Domesday', *VCH Leicestershire*, I (1907), 285-6

<sup>2</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 110.

<sup>3</sup> Stenton, 'Introduction to the Leicestershire Domesday', 286.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 266v (Cheshire 16, 1); GDB, 249 (Staffordshire 11, 48).

each either 'one or two' or 'two or three' ploughlands were 'there', though these may have been the result of the Domesday scribe copying ambiguous drafts.<sup>1</sup> In Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, while the overwhelming majority of entries use the term 'there is land for x ploughs' (*terra est n carucis*) or similar, though in four royal manors 'ploughlands' are not recorded at all, rather it is the TRE number of ploughteams at work that are recorded – it may be this information was quite distinct from the survey of ploughlands, however.<sup>2</sup>

In the Circuit 6 shires of Huntingdonshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, the formula used for the ploughland is *terra est n carucis* with not much variation.<sup>3</sup> Often the figures are duodecimal, suggesting estimation or artificiality, perhaps according to an old Danelaw assessment as Hart suggested in northern Northamptonshire. However, agrarian connotations of the ploughland are explicit in the *Inquisitio Eliensis* for Huntingdonshire. The entry for Spaldwick runs thus:

in comitatu Huntedonie Spalduic abbas de ely habet unum manerium de .xv. hidis ad geldum intra manerium 7 Bereuicas Estou, Estune, Bercheham & .xv. carucae possunt arare terram istam.

In Huntingdonshire, Spaldwick, the abbot of Ely has a manor of 15 hides, taxable within the manor, and the outliers Stow, Easton and Barham. 15 ploughs can plough this land.<sup>4</sup>

In the south-eastern shires comprising Circuit 1 (Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and Berkshire), the phrase translated ploughlands is normally *terra est n carucis*, similar to many other regions. But there a large number of instances in which the number is left blank. As Darby has said 'clearly, the clerks in these five shires either found difficulty in estimating the *terra carucis* or were in doubt about its meaning.'<sup>5</sup> The southeastern shires were especially prone to having more ploughs operating on the land than there were ploughlands; 'overstocking' as discussed above has been one

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<sup>1</sup> GDB, 246v (Staffordshire 1, 48, 51-53, 61, 63).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 154v (Oxfordshire 1, 1, 6, 7a).

<sup>3</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 112-13.

<sup>4</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 112; 'Inquisitio Eliensis' ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton in N. E. S. A. Hamilton (ed.) *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis subjucitur Inquisitio Eliensis* (London, 1876), 166.

<sup>5</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 96.

of the serious charges brought against an agricultural interpretation of the ploughland, even if the charge lacks substance.<sup>1</sup>

In Little Domesday Book the ploughland appears not to have been recorded at all. Johnson equated the East Anglian carucate with the ploughland; however, we do not find either carucates or ploughlands in hidated Essex, so it seems more likely the ploughland had simply been omitted from the whole book.<sup>2</sup> Also, if we were to accept an agricultural reading of ploughlands, and then try to interpret East Anglian carucates as ploughlands, we would be left with massive overstocking: in Norfolk there were more than twice the number of operating ploughs than carucates. It seems safer to assume that ploughlands were simply not included in the East Anglian survey, for reasons which are not clear.

Sally Harvey argued that 'all in all, the character of the ploughland, present or past, must be recognised as variable...This variation means that the problem [of the ploughland] does not lend itself to resolution by detailed local studies alone, and any solution must be adequate to embrace the variations.'<sup>3</sup> She therefore proposed a 'single, fiscal, explanation' that allows for the variations. Her view is that the ploughland was an assessment innovation devised by the Conqueror's regime in order to undo some of the damage done to geld income as a result of beneficial hidation and the exemption of demesne parts of estates held by the king's barons. She posits that the ploughland was a measure of total economic capacity of an estate, as opposed to merely the physical extent of potential arable land. Mills, fisheries, vineyards, orchards and, most crucially, livestock were all taken into account as well as arable capacity, and the quality of arable, when working out this 'ploughland' figure.<sup>4</sup> She accepts that not a little estimation went on, but thinks that the artificiality of the system in the Circuit 4 shires is more reflective of a *new* assessment based on working with the 1086 hidage,

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<sup>1</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 103, fig. 39. See above, 179.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, 'Introduction to the Norfolk Domesday', 1, 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 90.

<sup>4</sup> For Harvey's description of what might help inform the ploughland rating, see Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 92-103.

1066 hidage and sometimes land value, rather than of a re-hashed assessment narrowly based on the 1066 hidage or even older assessments.<sup>1</sup> Harvey fully recognised the regional variation in what factors were considered in determining the ploughland; for example it was clearly heavily linked to arable capacity in Circuit 3 (Middlesex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire). But to Harvey this was a phenomenon resulting from a decision made to measure 'ploughland' assessments in this narrow way in that area.

The central problem with Harvey's interpretation is that there is no explicit evidence to prove that 'ploughland' was any sort of tax assessment. They may simply be estimates of arable, or perhaps wider agricultural capacity, but without any purpose related to an intended re-assessment for tax purposes. The term ploughland (*terra est x carucis*) would have been an inadequate and confusing way to denote a tax assessment. It is very close to the existing fiscal 'carucate', which itself derives from 'caruca', or plough. We cannot know to what extent the older fiscal carucates were once strictly related to actual ploughlands, but whatever the case, a new, very similar term would not be a particularly logical or useful way of expressing total agricultural potential including food production other than ploughs. Moreover, the various more explicitly agrarian, alternative terms used such as *possunt esse x carucis*, do not lend themselves easily to being read as tax assessments.

A possible retort is that such oddities and apparent nonsenses of terminology come part and parcel with many major administrative enterprises; contemporary officials may have had as many doubts as the modern historian about the meaning or purpose of the phrase *terra est x carucis*. But besides phraseological considerations, why did the government not just seek to readjust the hidage, as actually happened in the south east before 1086, and then once again sometime before 1129?<sup>2</sup> Another question to ask of any such view of the ploughland as a unit of tax assessment is why there were such great differences between regions as to how the ploughland was be calculated? Who

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 96-9.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 123.

decided on this most important of considerations? If the ploughland were a tax assessment, then surely we cannot think that shires were individually allowed to decide how it was calculated.

We must also reckon with the question that if the ploughland was a new, somewhat revolutionary, assessment for tax, then why was it never implemented? Harvey has recently noted that there may actually have been an attempt during William Rufus' reign to administer such a re-assessment;

Orderic Vitalis tells us that Ranulf Flambard, Rufus' chief minister:

Annunte rege omnes carrucatas quas Anglice hidas uocant funiculo mensus est descripsit, postpositisque mensuris quas liberales Angli iussi Eduardi regis largiter distribuerant imminuit et regales fiscos accumulans colonis arua retruncauit.<sup>1</sup>

With the king's consent, he measured all the ploughlands, which in English are called hides, with a rope, and made a record of them; setting aside the measures which the open-handed English freely apportioned by command of King Edward, he reduced their size and cut back the fields of the peasants to increase the royal taxes.

Chibnall has questioned the Normandy based monk's knowledge of the English tax system, and indeed Orderic's statement here appears to betray several misunderstandings, not least the idea that King Edward instituted the current hidage.<sup>2</sup> The idea that Flambard measured or even had measured by others all the hides in England with a rope is clearly ridiculous. Presuming Orderic at this point is not writing complete fiction, and he does appear to be driving towards the idea that Flambard attempted to increase the number of tax units, necessarily making existing ones smaller; in short, some form of re-assessment. However, there is no indication that this was the Conqueror's government's policy in 1086, and nor is there any indication that the Domesday ploughland (not the same as the Domesday *carucata*, the word used by Orderic) was to replace the hide. As Roffe has remarked, there is no evidence that 'ploughland' was ever used in the twelfth century for taxation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. Chibnall, IV, 172-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Chibnall, IV, 172 n.4.

<sup>3</sup> Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, 206.

In any event, there is no evidence of a nationwide re-assessment, in hides, ploughlands or otherwise, by the time of the Pipe Roll of 1129-30.<sup>1</sup>

What then was the ploughland, and why was it demanded? Harvey's idea that it was a measure of total agriculture on an estate, taking into account the quality of arable land, extra-arable resources such as livestock, and the size of the local working population, is a good one, and would help make sense of many of the variances we find in the ploughland's character across the country.<sup>2</sup> Whether this is a correct interpretation of the ploughland's character, or whether it was, as in the view of Moore and Higham, an estimation merely of potential arable, Harvey's idea that the ploughland's purpose was that it was to be a new tax assessment does not persuade, most especially considering the lack of evidence of a re-assessment after Domesday.

Perhaps a more plausible explanation is tied in with the purpose of Domesday Book itself. If, as I argue above, a large part of Domesday Book's purpose was to inform royal officials how much they could either demand that sheriffs take annually from estates taken temporarily into the king's hand, or how much the king could charge barons for inheritance reliefs, marriages involving land transfers, or other rights of land tenure, then knowing the potential agrarian, or more roundly agricultural, capacity of any given estate or fief was potentially very useful. The ploughland may have been a response to the final, and perhaps most significant, question recorded in the terms of reference of the Domesday survey found in the preface of the *Inquisitio Eliensis*.<sup>3</sup> This asks 'if more can be had than is now had' (*si potest plus haberi quam habeatur*) from each manor.<sup>4</sup> Under the new system of land tenure, sheriffs could be appointed to farm vacant or confiscated manors, and ordered to increase production on under-exploited estates. Furthermore, heirs could be charged more for taking up their estates, according to the potential value of an estate rather than just its actual

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 225-230.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey, 'Taxation and the Ploughland', 92-6.

<sup>3</sup> This suggestion was originally posited by Vivian Galbraith, cited by C. Hart, *The Danelaw*, 320.

<sup>4</sup> 'Inquisitio Eliensis', ed. Hamilton, 97.

current value. The difference between working ploughs and ploughlands recorded in Domesday Book could aid the administration in negotiating the fee upwards. This way, the king could increase his revenue from the proceeds of lordship.

## Land Taxation, 1087-1162

### Land taxation reported in narrative sources of William Rufus, 1087-1100

This section examines the chronicles during the reign of William Rufus (1087-1100), exploring how he used the treasury to fund diplomacy and war in France. It focuses on two taxes that he raised, the first extracted from his soldiers, and the second largely from the church, causing numerous complaints from church chroniclers outside our more common sources of information about taxation, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and John of Worcester. The 'E' text from 1080 to 1121 was compiled in Peterborough; it drew mainly on an archetype version of the *Chronicle* that had been continued up until 1121 somewhere other than Peterborough, possibly at Christ Church Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester probably drew on a similar source.<sup>2</sup>

William Rufus evidently shared his father's preoccupation with moveable wealth. In fact, the chronicles of the period seem to portray Rufus as having been even more covetous than his father, although this is partly due to the fact that nearly all chronicles were written by churchmen, and we shall see it was from the church in particular that Rufus began to exploit new revenue streams.

Indeed, according to the E-text of the *Chronicle*, one of Rufus's first acts was to inspect the treasury:

Se cyng ferde to Wincaestre 7 sceawode þæt madmehus 7 þa gersuman þe his fæder ær gegaderod on golde 7 on seolfre 7 on faton 7 on pællan 7 on gimman 7 on manige odre deorwurðe þingon þe earfoðe sindon to ateallene.

The king went to Winchester and scrutinised the treasury and the treasure that his father had accumulated. It was impossible for anyone to describe how much was accumulated there in gold and

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<sup>1</sup> Irvine (ed.), *ASC*, MS E, lxxxiv-lxxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Irvine (ed.), *ASC*, MS E, lxxxvi-lxxxvi.

silver and vessels and costly robes and jewels, and many other precious things that are hard to recount.<sup>1</sup>

The treasury must indeed have been an impressive place. Almost £23,000 were paid into Henry I's treasury in 1130, according to the Pipe Roll for that year.<sup>2</sup> That amounts to around five and a half million silver pennies. The treasury in 1087 must have been busier still, for the Conqueror's royal demesne was considerably larger than Henry I's in 1129-30, and probably two successive 6s land taxes had recently been taken, triple the rate of Henry's taxes.<sup>3</sup>

In 1088, Rufus, in a desperate situation facing civil war with Bishop Odo and several other major prelates and magnates, as well as imminent invasion by his brother Robert, Duke of Normandy:

sende þa æfter englisce mannan 7 heom fore sæde his neode 7 gyrnde heora fultumes 7 behet heom þa betsta laga þæ æfre ær wæs on þisan lande, 7 ælc unriht geold he forbæd 7 geatte mannan heora wudas and slætinge; ac hit ne stod nane hwile. Ac englisce men swa þeah fengon to þam cynghe heora hlaforde.

sent for Englishmen and explained his need to them and asked for their help, and promised them the best law that there had ever been in this country, and forbade every unjust tax and granted people their woods and hunting rights – but it did not last any time. But nevertheless, Englishmen came to the help of their liege lord the king.<sup>4</sup>

The promises William made to forbid *ælc unriht geold* as well to abolish his father's unpopular forest laws, were enough of an incentive for an English force to fight for him and to defeat and capture Bishop Odo and his co-conspirator William de St Calais, Bishop of Durham, as well as to raise an English coast-guard to capture Duke Robert's preliminary invasion force.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, by promising

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1087, ed. Irvine, 98; trans. Whitelock, 166.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Government of England*, 225.

<sup>3</sup> J. Green, 'William Rufus, Henry I and the Royal Demesne', *History*, 64 (1979), 337-52.

<sup>4</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1088, trans. Whitelock, 167; ASC MS E, s.a. '1087', ed. Irvine, 100.

<sup>5</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1088, trans. Whitelock, 167-8.

the end of 'unjust taxes', which quite possibly were perceived to include national land taxes, William may well have saved his crown.

In 1090, Rufus campaigned in Normandy against his brother Robert and his ally King Philip I of France. Besieged by the 'immense' Franco-Norman force, King William:

sende to Philippe Francena cyng; 7 he for his lufan oððe for his mycele gersuma forlet swa his man þone eorl Rodbeard 7 his land 7 ferde ongean to France 7 let heom swa weorðan. 7 betwux þisum þingum þis land wæs swiðe fordon on unlagagelde 7 on oðre manige ungelimpe.

sent to Philip, king of the French, and he, either for love of him, or for his great treasure, left his vassal Count Robert and his country, and went back to France and so let them be: and in the course of these proceedings, this country [England] was severely injured by unjust taxes and many other misfortunes.<sup>1</sup>

The plain implication here is that William paid the king of France to leave Normandy. This is a clear example of how the wealth of England made Rufus more financially powerful than Robert Curthose as duke of Normandy; with English coin, King William caused Robert's key ally, the king of France, to desert him. It may have been partly for want of money that Robert had not been able to quickly assemble and send an adequate fleet across the channel to exploit the 1088 rebellion. Robert had sold, or perhaps mortgaged, the whole of the Cotentin to his youngest brother Henry Beauclerc (later Henry I of England) for £3,000 by weight, a loss of land which severely weakened the duke's position against his brothers in later years.<sup>2</sup> That kind of sum is what Henry I was able to raise from direct taxation at 2s to the hide in 1129-30; Rufus could probably raise a similar figure with little trouble on a regular basis, and we know their father raised at least two gelds of 6s per hide. William

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1090, trans. Whitelock, 168; ASC MS E, s.a. 1090, ed. Irvine, 101.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigny*, ed. E. M. C. van Houts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1992-5) ii, 204; *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Chibnall, V, 290.

Rufus and then Henry enjoyed tax-raising powers that gave them a distinct financial, political and military advantage over Robert, who was ultimately defeated by Henry at Tinchebrai in 1106.

In 1094, William exacted just about the most unjust tax of the entire Anglo-Norman era. According to the E-text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

Ða sende se cyng hider to lande fultume to Normandig; ac þa hi to sæ coman, þa het hi man cyrran 7 þet feoh syllan to þæs cynges behofe þe hi genumen hæfdon, þet wes ælc man healf punda, 7 hi swa dydon.

The king sent into the country and ordered twenty thousand Englishmen to be called out to his aid in Normandy; but when they reached the sea, they were ordered to turn back and give for the king's profit the money that they had received: that was half a pound for each man, and they did so.<sup>1</sup>

John of Worcester adds a few more details here:

Nuntiis in Angliam missis xx milia pedonum in Normanniam sibi iussit in auxilium mitti. Quibus ut mare transirent, Heastinge congregatis, pecuniam que data fuerat eis ad uictum, Rannulfus Passeflambardus precepto regis abstulit, scilicet, unicuique decem solidos, et eos domum repedare mandauit, pecuniam uero regi transmisit.

The king sent messengers to England, and ordered 20,000 foot soldiers be sent to his aid in Normandy. When they had assembled at Hastings before crossing the sea, Ranulf Flambard on the king's instructions took the money which had been given them for their keep, that is 10s for each man, and commanded them to return home, and sent the money to the king.<sup>2</sup>

This was an astonishing act of organised extortion, although perhaps some soldiers rather welcomed not having to face seasickness or battle. John of Worcester also tells us that, in this and the following year, England 'was oppressed with heavy and persistent taxation' (*gravi et assiduo tributo*). This may

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1094, trans. Whitelock, 171; ASC MS E, s.a. 1094, ed. Irvine, 104.

<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, s.a. 1094, ed. and trans. McGurk, 72-3.

refer to the levy confiscated from the soldiers, but it remains possible that further land taxes were levied.<sup>1</sup>

In 1096, English taxation was put to a rather different purpose: in that year, Duke Robert leased Normandy to King William, reportedly for 10,000 marks of silver, while Robert went on crusade.

According to John of Worcester:

Comes Nortmannorum Rotbertus, cum Ierusalem proficisci cum aliis animo proponeret, nuntiis in Angliam missis, germanum suum regem Wilelmum petiit, ut, inter se pace redintegrata, illi x milia marcas argenti prestaret, et ab eo Normanniam in uadimonium acciperet, qui mox petitioni eius satisfacere gestiens, indixit maioribus Anglie, ut quisque illorum pro posse sibi pecuniam festinanter accomodaret. Iccirco episcopi, abbates, abbatisse, aurea et argentea ecclesie ornamenta fregerunt, comites, barones, uicecomites, suos milites et uillanos spoliauerunt, et regi non modicam summam auri et argenti detulerunt. Ille autem mense Septembri mare transiit, pacem cum germano fecit, vi milia dclxvi libras illi prestitit, et ab eo Normannia in uadimonium accepit.

When Duke Robert of Normandy had decided to set out with others to Jerusalem, he sent envoys to England, to ask his brother King William that they should both re-establish peace and that he would lend him 10,000 silver marks in return for Normandy in pledge. William straightaway strove to meet his request and asked the greater men of England all to furnish him with money quickly and as far as their resources allowed. Thereupon bishops, abbots and abbesses broke up the ornaments of the church, while earls, barons and sheriffs despoiled their knights and villeins, and gave the king a large sum of gold and silver. In September, William crossed the channel, made peace with his brother, advanced him £6,666, and received Normandy from him in pledge.<sup>2</sup>

The Abingdon *Historia* says that the cash was raised in part by a levy of 4s on the hide, and describes how churches that could not pay were treated:

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<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1094, ed. and trans. McGurk, 72-3.

<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, *s.a.* 1096, ed. and trans. McGurk, 84-5.

Uectigal quatuor solidorum de hida, patriotis cunctis nimium ferre ponderosum, in augmentum mali, per Angliam illatum ... Quare infra monasterii limina, uasorum altaris diuersorum argenteorum pro his plurima elata atque confrica; forinsecus uero pecora abducta, pre oculis abbatis et monachorum, ministrorum ui regalium; et ab eis ad libitum cuncta distracta sunt. 000 Check

An especially heavy tax of 4s. per hide was imposed throughout England, to bear on all inhabitants... Therefore, within the confines of the monastery, very many of the silver altar vessels were taken away and broken up for this. Outside, indeed, royal officials took away livestock by force, before the abbot and monks' very eyes. And the officials disposed of all these things as they pleased.<sup>1</sup>

We see here royal officials acting like bailiffs, confiscating monastic property to raise cash, and we once again encounter echoes of Hemming's description of the impact of taxation on monasteries and their stocks of treasure earlier in the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> The 4s per hide levy is also reported by the so-called *Leges Edwardi Confessoris*, which take this opportunity to explain its own version of the origins of the system of taxation that underpinned it.

Denegeldi redditio propter piratas primitus fuit statuta. Patriam enim infestantes uastationi eius pro posse suo insistebant; sed ad eorum insolentiam statutum est denegeldum annuatim reddi, id est de unaquaque hida totius terre xii denarios, ad conducendum eos qui piratarum irruptioni resistendo obuiarent. De hoc quoque denegeldo quieti erit et libera omnis terra que de ecclesiis propriis et dominica erit, et de parrochiarum ecclesiis hiisdem pertinentibus, et nichil in eius redditione persoluebat, quia maiorem fiduciam habebant in orationibus sancte ecclesie quam in defensionibus armorum. Et hanc libertatem habuit sancta ecclesia usque ad tempus Willelmi iunioris, qui de baronibus totius patrie auxilium petiit ad Normanniam retinendam de fratre suo Rodberto eunte in Ierusalem. Ipsi autem concesserunt ei iiii<sup>or</sup> solidos de unaquaque hyda terre, sanctam

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<sup>1</sup> *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis*, ed. and trans. J. Hudson, II, 55.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 67.

ecclesiam non excipientes. Quorum dum fieret collectio, clamabat sancta ecclesia libertatem suam repossens, sed nichil ei profuit.<sup>1</sup>

The payment of Danegeld had first been ordered because of the pirates. For the attackers began to devastate this country as much as they could; but due to their insolence, the Danegeld was established, namely that 12d from every hide of the whole land was to be paid annually in order to hire those who might forcefully withstand the invasions of the pirates. Also, all land that was owned by and in the demesne of the churches, including parish churches belonging to these, was to be quit and free from this Danegeld and contributed nothing toward its payment, since they had greater faith in the prayers of the Holy Church than in military defences. And the Holy Church had this liberty until the time of William the Younger, who sought aid from the barons of the whole country to retain Normandy from his brother Robert, who was going to Jerusalem. They moreover conceded to him 4s from every hide of land, not excepting the Holy Church. When the collection of this was being made, the Holy Church cried out, demanding its liberty, but this profited them not at all.

The *Leges Edwardi* were 'a complex work of imposture' from an anonymous author, written in the mid twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> They tend to have more value as a source for twelfth-century law than for the period they purport to describe. It is therefore unsurprising that its account of the earlier history of Danegeld is demonstrably erroneous. The original *heregeld* of 1014 was certainly more than 1s on the hide, which might raise a maximum of about £3,450 if all c.69,000 hides, carucates and sulungs in Domesday Book were taxed. The statement that the demesnes of the church were exempted cannot be squared with Hemming's complaint that the gelds of the Anglo-Scandinavian period impoverished the church of Worcester, or with the Exon Domesday Geld Accounts, which demonstrate that many abbeys paid geld in the same way as others; their demesnes were exempted

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<sup>1</sup> 'Leges Edwardi Confessoris (ECf1)', ed. and trans. B. O'Brien, *Early English Laws*, <http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/ecf1/view/#translation-11/edition-11> (accessed 25/02/16).

<sup>2</sup> B. R. O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace: The Laws of Edward the Confessor* (Philadelphia, 1999), 6.

only because all demesne portions of the manors of tenants-in-chief were exempted, and had no special privileges in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

William of Malmesbury also records the lease of Normandy:

Rotbertus comes Normannorum Ierosolimam eundi, monitionibus Urbani papae, ut posterius dicitur, impetum cepisset, Normanniam fratri suo pro pecunia decem milium marcarum inuadatus est. Itaque importabilis pensionis edictum per totam Angliam cucurrit. Tunc episcopi et abbates frequentes curiam adeunt, super uiolentia querimoniam fatientes: non se posse ad tantum uectigal sufficere, nisi si miseros agricolas omnino effugent. Quibus curiales turbido, ut solebant, uultu 'Non habetis' inquirunt 'scrinia auro et argento composita, ossibus mortuorum plena?', nullo alio responso obsecrantes dignati. Ita illi, intelligentes quo responsio tenderet, capsas sanctorum nudauerunt, crucifixos despoliauerunt, calices conflarunt, non in usum pauperum sed in fiscum regium; quicquid enim pene sancta seruauit auorum parcitas, illorum grassatorum absumpsit auditas

Robert Duke of Normandy, having caught the urge to go to Jerusalem, from the exhortations of Pope Urban II as will be told hereafter, mortgaged Normandy to his brother [William] for 10,000 marks in cash. An edict therefore ran throughout all England, levying an intolerable tax. Bishops and abbots flocked to the court, complaining of his brutality; they could not possibly sustain such an impost, except by driving the wretched husbandmen from the land altogether. To this the courtiers retorted, with their usual scowls: 'Have you no shrines adorned with gold and silver and filled with dead men's bones?' And that was all they vouchsafed the petitioners by way of answer. The churchmen therefore, discerning the purport of this reply, stripped their saints' reliquaries, despoiled their crucifixes, and melted down their chalices, not to help the poor but to fill the king's coffers; almost all that the holy parsimony of their ancestors had saved was consumed by the depredations of those robbers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 54-58, 67, 118-122, and below, 234-236.

<sup>2</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum, The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), 562-3. One manuscript has 'unius hominis absumpsit auditas' ('was consumed by the depredations of one man') rather than 'illorum grassatorum' ('by those robbers').

Whether or not we accept all of this account as objective statement of fact, William's focus on the melting down of church treasures underlines how churches bore a heavy burden.

Having said this, a 4s tax does not seem enough on its own to warrant such a strong reaction from the church chroniclers; after all the monasteries appear to have been able to afford the 6s taxes under the Conqueror in 1084-5 and 1085-6. Eadmer, however, may give us a clue as to the true complaint of the bishops and abbots: that not only had a land tax been demanded of them, but also gifts of money or precious metal had been demanded on top:

Eo tempore Robertus comes Normanniae in expeditionem Ierosolimitanam proficisci disponens fratri suo Willelmo regi Angliae Normanniam spatio trium annorum pecuniae gratis in dominium tradidit. Quae pecunia per Angliam partim data, partim exacta, totum regnum in immensum devastavit. Nihil ecclesiarum ornamentis in hac parte indulsit dominandi cupiditas, nihil sacris altarium vasis, nihil reliquiarum capsis, nihil evangeliorum libris auro vel argento paratis.

At that time Robert, Duke of Normandy, intending to go upon a campaign to Jerusalem, made over the sovereignty of Normandy to his brother William, King of England, for a term of three years in consideration of a money payment. The raising of this money throughout England partly by gift and partly by exaction made a tremendous drain upon the whole kingdom. Such was the lust for dominion that in this cause nothing was spared, not the ornaments of the churches, nor the sacred vessels on the altars, nor the caskets of relics nor the books of the gospels overlaid with gold and silver.<sup>1</sup>

Eadmer goes on to say that the money raised was 10,000 marks, and that Anselm contributed 200 marks from Canterbury's resources, and gave over his estate at Petham to the monks for seven years as compensation.

As we have seen, Domesday Book records around 69,000 hides, carucates and sulungs. A tax of 4s to the hide, perfectly collected, would therefore raise about £13,800, much more than John of

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<sup>1</sup> *Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. M. Rule (Rolls Soc., 1884), 74-5; *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England*, trans. G Bosanquet, (London, 1964), 78.

Worcester's record of £6,667 (10,000 marks). However, the Exeter Geld Accounts and the Pipe Roll of 1129-30 record large-scale exemptions – albeit of different kinds, as we shall see. The Geld Accounts record around one third of hides in the southwestern shires exempted, the Pipe Roll more than two-fifths in the whole country.<sup>1</sup> Non-payment reduced still further the total collected in both 1085-6 and 1129-30 to just 54%, though in the case of 1086, much of the non-payment can be accounted for by royal manors, which might have been called upon to pay in 1096. Still, 54% of £13,800 is £7,452, so Rufus' levy of 4s ought to have been enough to cover the £6,667 lease on its own.

However, it is quite likely that at least part, or perhaps all, of the money was needed upfront, raised from methods other than the normal land taxation process. This is because Rufus needed the cash within three months at most, between the date Robert made his request some time after June 15, and before the end of September, when William crossed the Channel to pay the money and receive the duchy.<sup>2</sup> A full land tax usually took much longer to collect; that described by the Geld Accounts was levied in two instalments, the first probably being Michaelmas (September 29<sup>th</sup>) 1085, and the second more certainly at Easter 1086.<sup>3</sup> The taxes recorded in 1066, 1067 and 1083 were all demanded at royal assemblies held during December, suggesting that from the moment of 'edict' – to borrow William of Malmesbury's terminology – it took approximately 16 months to collect a geld. No doubt the period between the edict and the first instalment could have been considerably foreshortened, but it seems improbable that an entire geld, especially a higher than normal 4s geld, could have been collected in full within just three months. At most perhaps a half-year instalment could be expected to be collected at such short notice; a six-month instalment of a 4s geld would have amounted to £4,600, if a third of hides were exempted, as in the 1086 Geld Accounts. This would have left a shortfall of at least £2,067, and given the tax was likely imperfectly collected,

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 240-242.

<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, ed. McGurk, 84.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 158.

probably somewhat more than this. That would explain why extra money or bullion was needed as a 'gift' from those who were able to pay it.

Furthermore, it may be that the lease of Normandy was not the only demand on royal resources in 1096. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says that throughout that year:

Ða heafodmen þe þis land heoldan oftrædlice fyrde into Wealon sendon 7 mænig man mid þam swiðe gedrehtan, ac man þær ne gespædde butan man yrringe 7 feohspillinge.

The chief men who ruled this country frequently sent armies in Wales, and oppressed many a man very much thereby, but there was no success in it, only destruction of men and waste of money.<sup>1</sup>

These expeditions may have already used up much of the treasury's resources. In short, it is probable that by the summer of 1096 Rufus was low on cash, and needed it fast in order to lease Normandy. It is therefore not surprising that the lease caused enormous financial hardship throughout the kingdom. This would help to explain Eadmer's remark that the money for the lease was raised 'partly by gift and partly by exaction', and possibly also the general clamour caused by this tax, which receives far more attention than any other tax from the chroniclers of the Anglo-Norman period. The normal channels of taxation were too slow to raise the total, so money had to be seized from wherever the king could get hold of it, and in whatever form, whether in cash, bullion, or even victuals.

The annal for 1097 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* registers a further complaint about taxation and other burdens:

Ðis wæs on eallon þingan swiðe hefigtyme gear 7 ofergeswincfull on ungewederan þa man oððe eft tilða gegaderian 7 on ungyldan þa næfre ne ablunnon. Eac manege sciran þe mid weorce to Lundenne belumpon wurdon þærle gedrehte þurh þone weall þe hi worhton onbutan þone Tur 7 þurh þa brycge þe forneah eall Westmynstre worhte; 7 mænige man þærmid gedrehte.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1096, trans. Whitelock, 174; ASC MS E, s.a. 1096, ed. Irvine, 107.

This was in every respect a very severe year, and over oppressive with bad weather, when cultivation was due to be done or crops to be got in, and with excessive taxes that never ceased. Also, many shires whose labour was due at London were hard pressed because of the wall that they built around the Tower, and because of the bridge that was nearly all carried away by a flood, and because of the work on the king's hall, that was built at Westminster, and many a man was oppressed thereby.<sup>1</sup>

The excessive taxes referred to here perhaps represent the second instalment of the 1096 4s tax, although the first instalment of a separate land tax may have been paid as well, if we assume such imposts were annual. The annal also provides us with insight into the labour force of two of London's oldest and most famous monuments, the Tower of London and Westminster Hall, which was much the largest secular hall in Europe when completed.<sup>2</sup> Which shires owed labour in London is a nice question: they presumably included Middlesex and Surrey, but seem likely to have included other neighbouring shires as well. Here Rufus was almost certainly relying on labour services traditionally due from the old Anglo-Saxon regime, based on hides. This recalls the Domesday account of Chester, which gives a brief description of how labour was mobilised there for the king's works:

Ad murum ciuitatis et pontem reaedicandum de unaquaque hida comitatus unum hominem uenire praepositus edicebat. Cuius homo non ueniebat, dominus eius xl solidis emendabat regi et comiti.

For the repair of the city wall and bridge the reeve called up 1 man from each hide in the shire [Cheshire]. The lord of any man whose man did not come paid a fine of 40s to the king and earl.<sup>3</sup>

Such labour service was clearly a very valuable right of the king; the cost appears to have been borne by lords other than by the king himself. We cannot be certain that the labourers were actually paid

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1097, trans. Whitelock, 177; ASC MS E, s.a. 1097, ed. Irvine, 108.

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Colvin, 'The Norman Kings 1066-1154' in H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, (London, 1963), 45-7.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 262v, (Cheshire C, 21).

at all; there is no maintenance payment or rates of pay specified here or elsewhere for labour services, such as we know was specified for military service in Berkshire.<sup>1</sup>

The litany of complaints about taxation continues in the annal for 1098:

Dis wæs swiðe geswincfull gear þurh manigfeald ungyld 7 þurh mycele renas þe ealles geares ne ablunnon; forneah ælc tilð on mersclande forferde.

This was a very oppressive year because of all sorts of excessive taxes, and great rains that did not cease throughout the year; nearly all the cultivation perished on marshland.<sup>2</sup>

The recurrent, almost formulaic association of heavy gelds along with poor weather and agriculture is one of several hints that gelds were routinely levied – so routinely that the chronicles probably only complained about them when they reached a particular scale. The links also serve as a reminder about the effects of taxation upon the peasantry: land taxes could be as ruinous as a poor harvest. While the effects of a 2s geld on a well populated, fertile estate with large fiscal hides on a relatively small number of agricultural acres may have been bearable for the inhabitants, on a depopulated, struggling estate with particularly small hides compared to the amount of agricultural land, the effects could surely have been devastating on the inhabitants, even more for gelds at 4s or 6s. Much would of course depend on individual circumstances. One tenant-in-chief may have been renting out his lands to peasants on such hard terms anyway that he was forced to bear the burden of taxation himself, for no more could possibly be extracted from them. Another may have traditionally received a large proportion of his income from his own demesne, and so paid for some or much of the tax out of his own surpluses. But others still, who may have rented to peasants on lighter terms in the past, must have increased the squeeze on them rather than pay geld from their own surpluses. And no doubt there were some who had driven hard rent bargains, driving their peasants to the brink of poverty, and who when geld was demanded, drove them over that brink to save themselves from

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 103.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS E, *s.a.* 1098, trans. Whitelock, 175; ASC MS E, *s.a.* 1098, ed. Irvine, 109.

having to pay. Rational economics suggest that the tenants-in-chief would have sought to extract as much of the taxation burden as possible from the peasants, and although there is little reason to doubt that that was the norm, there are bound to have been exceptions. Even some tenants-in-chief, especially poorer ones, may themselves have suffered terribly from having to pay geld. Baxter contends that persistent heavy taxation was prominent among the factors that oppressed the peasantry throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The obituary for Rufus in the annal for 1100 reads as follows:

Ðurh yfelra manna rædas þe him æfre gecweme wæran 7 þurh his agene gitsunge, he æfre þas leode mid here 7 mid ungyldre tyrwigende wæs, forþan þe on his dagan ælc riht afeoll 7 aelc unriht for Gode 7 for worulde up aras.

Because of the counsels of wicked men, which were always agreeable to him, and because of his avarice, he was always harassing the nation with military service and excessive taxes, for in his days all justice was in abeyance, and all injustice arose both in ecclesiastical and secular matters.<sup>2</sup>

Rufus's reputation has always been a tarnished one, and the link here made between injustice and taxation shows that fiscal policy was at the heart of the chroniclers' resentment toward him.

Throughout Rufus reign, and especially during his final years, the chronicles record that the king heavily exploited every possible resource, from land taxes, military and labour services, as well as *ad hoc* levies from his own nobility and from the church at short notice. On at least one occasion, in 1094, he had extracted money from the pay of his own soldiers, contrary to all known previous custom. Here then we have striking examples of both continuity and change since the late Anglo-Saxon period. Old systems were not just used, but abused, and the nobility and church could not

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<sup>1</sup> S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', in J. Crick and E. van Houts (eds.), *A Social History of England 900-1200* (Cambridge, 2011), 98-114.

<sup>2</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1100, trans. Whitelock, 176; ASC MS E, s.a. 1100, ed. Irvine, 109-10.

escape arbitrary taxation as they may have done in the late Anglo-Saxon era, at least since the *gafol* era.

## Demesne exemption under Henry I

As we have seen, the Exon Geld Accounts demonstrate that the demesne portions of demesne manors were systematically exempted from geld in 1086, certainly in the south-western shires, and probably across the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The eleventh clause of Henry I's coronation edict of 1100 bears on this matter:

Militibus qui per loricas terras suas deseruiunt,<sup>2</sup> terras dominicarum carucarum suarum quietas ab omnibus geldis et ab omni opere proprio dono meo concedo, ut sicut tam magno grauamine alleuiati sunt, ita equis et armis se bene instruant, ut apti et parati sint ad seruitium meum et ad defensionem regni mei.

The knights, who in return for their estates perform military service equipped with a hauberk of mail, shall hold their demesne lands quit of all gelds and all work; I make this concession as my own free gift in order that, being thus relieved of so great a burden, they may furnish themselves so well with horses and arms that they may be properly equipped and prepared to discharge my service and to defend my kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Two ambiguities in this short but important passage make it difficult to elucidate. The first relates to what is meant by *dominica* (demesne) in the phrase 'terras dominicarum carucarum suarum'. The term could either be applied at the level of a collection of estates – a holding, or fee – in which case 'demesne' refers to land held directly, and not sublet to subtenants; or it could be applied at the

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 118-122.

<sup>2</sup> 'Defendunt' in two manuscripts.

<sup>3</sup> 'Henry I's coronation Charter', ed. and trans. R. Sharpe, *Early English Laws* (2016), <http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/hn-cor/view/> (accessed 31/05/2016).

level of an individual manor, in which case 'demesne' refers to the land farmed directly by and for the lord, rather than rented to peasant farmers. By translating as 'their demesne lands', Sharpe seems to endorse the first of these readings. However, the text literally refers to the demesne ploughs of the knights' lands, and this suggests that it was intended to convey the second. The distinction is important, for on this reading, the king was promising to exempt only parts of some knights' land, not all of it, from taxation.

The other ambiguity is what is meant by the *milites* who held lands by their military service. It is possible, as Green suggests, that the text only refers to tenants-in-chief, who held their lands directly of the king in return for providing quotas of knights.<sup>1</sup> If so, the clause would amount to a confirmation or reinstatement of the status quo in 1086, when tenants-in-chief alone enjoyed exemption on the demesne parts of those manors that they did not subinfeudate to their tenants. However, this reading seems unlikely; 'barones' is a more natural term than 'milites' for tenants-in-chief, and is that one the edict uses in several other clauses. Alternatively, as Harvey argues, *milites* could mean subtenant knights, those who held their lands from tenants-in-chief in return for helping fulfil the obligations of the latter to the king. If so, the clause would represent the extension – or the confirmation of the extension that could have taken place under William II – of the exemption of demesne portions of manors from the tenants-in-chief to their military subtenants as well.<sup>2</sup> Then again, as Hoyt suggests, *milites* could refer to knights wherever they were in the tenorial hierarchy, whether tenants-in-chief or subtenants; this too would have the effect of extending the scope of demesne exemption beyond the position that had obtained in 1086.<sup>3</sup> On either Harvey or Hoyt's interpretation, it would follow that, in 1100 at the latest, the king promised to extend to some subtenants demesne exemptions which were enjoyed only by tenants-in-chief in 1086. However, as we shall see, the evidence of the Pipe Roll suggests that by 1129, exemptions were no longer based

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<sup>1</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 246.

<sup>2</sup> S. Harvey, 'The Knight and the Knight's Fee in England', *Past and Present*, 49 (1970), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Hoyt, *Royal Demesne*, 52-3.

on demesne at all, for barons or for knights; for by then exemptions were individually bestowed on an *ad hoc*, although perhaps more liberal, basis.<sup>1</sup>

## Financing war and peace: Danegeld under Henry I

While Rufus's exactions had clearly infuriated the church and much of his nobility, we may safely presume that they left Henry with a healthy treasury. It is telling that Henry's first act upon hearing the news of his brother's death on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1100 was to rush to the treasury in Winchester.

According to Orderic, 'Henry galloped at top speed to Winchester castle where the royal treasure was, and imperiously demanded the keys from the keepers as the lawful heir' (*Henricus concito cursu ad arcem Guentoniae, ubi regalis thesaurus continebatur festinauit, et claves eius ut genuinus haeres imperiali iussu ab excubitoribus exegit*).<sup>2</sup> His aim was to not let the allies of his elder brother Robert get there first, demonstrating how physical possession and control of the treasury was perceived to be vital in order to wield royal power in England. Indeed, it mirrors one of the first acts of his brother Rufus, who went to examine the treasury upon his accession thirteen years earlier.<sup>3</sup>

In the early years of Henry's reign, we can see how the rich treasury of England not only helped secure his English throne, but also played a decisive role in the eventual defeat of his brother Duke Robert, and the ensuing annexation of the Duchy of Normandy to Henry's domain. In 1101, amid the threat of invasion by Duke Robert, Henry struck an agreement with Count Robert II of Flanders, whereby Henry would pay £500 per year in return for the service of 1,000 Flemish knights for any campaign in England or Normandy, or 500 in the county of Maine.<sup>4</sup> Although the defence of England was the first priority at the time of the deal, the agreement would seem to pre-empt the waging of

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<sup>1</sup> See below, 231-240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Chibnall, v, 290-1.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 191.

<sup>4</sup> *Diplomatic Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1964), I, 1-4.

the Normandy campaign that Henry would fight a few years later, and even its success, as Henry would only fight in Maine once he had already conquered Normandy.

Robert did invade England in 1101, but soon made a peace treaty with Henry at Winchester. As well as relinquishing the Cotentin peninsula, which he had held from Robert since 1088, Henry agreed to pay his brother 3,000 marks (£2,000) of silver from England each year (*eorl Rotbert ælce gear sceolde of Englalande preo þusend marc seolfres habban*).<sup>1</sup> While this would no doubt have been a major sum for the duke to receive each year, it is unlikely to have been crippling for the king of England, who in 1129-30 received more than £23,000 into his treasury.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1103 'was a very grievous year in this country through all sorts of taxes' (*wæs swiðe gedeo\rfsum gear her on lande þurh mænigfealde gyld*).<sup>3</sup> But the deal may have saved Henry's crown, and allowed him time to consolidate his position before allocating England's resources to the forthcoming invasion of his homeland.

In 1104 warfare began between Henry and Robert, and once again the *Chronicle* says that:

Nis eaðe to asegenne þises lands earmða þe hit to bysan timan dreogende wæs þurh mistlice 7 mænigfealdlice unriht 7 gyld þæ næfre ne geswican ne ne ateorodon.<sup>4</sup>

It is not easy to describe the miseries this country was suffering at this time, because of various and different injustices and taxes that never ceased or diminished.

This claim is repeated for 1105, the third successive year in the *Chronicle*. Henry went to Normandy and captured Caen and Bayeux, and the *Chronicle* claims that it was:

Swiðe gedyrfsom gear her on lande þurh wæstma forwordenessa 7 þurh þa mænigfealde gyld þe næfre ne geswican ær se cyng oferfore 7 þa hwile þr he þær wæs 7 eft syððan he ongean com.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1101, ed. Irvine, 111, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1101 trans. Whitelock, 177.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Government*, 225.

<sup>3</sup> ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1103, ed. Irvine, 112, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1103 trans. Whitelock, 178.

<sup>4</sup> ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1104, ed. Irvine, 113, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1104 trans. Whitelock, 179.

<sup>5</sup> ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1105, ed. Irvine, 113-14, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1105 trans. Whitelock, 179.

A very grievous year in this country [England] because of the ruin of crops and the various taxes that never ceased, before the king crossed over, and while he was there, and after he came back again.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September 1106, Henry finally defeated Robert at the Battle of Tinchebrai and took control of all of Normandy, almost to the day forty years after the Battle of Hastings.<sup>1</sup> It is surely no coincidence that the chronicles complained about the effects of heavy taxation in the three years leading up to this final conquest. English money had first been poured into pacifying the duke, and then into attacking him.

The period running up to 1106 will have seen much English silver transferred to Normandy and Flanders, regardless of whether it was spent to honour treaty payments or on and by soldiers. It may have been these years that William of Malmesbury had in mind when he described the appearance of a pair of conjoined twins in the border region of Brittany and Normandy at an unspecified time in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, and used them as a metaphor to represent England's relationship with Normandy. He describes how:

Postremo una defuncta superuixit altera; portauit pene triennio uiua mortuam, donec et mole ponderis et nidore cadaueris ipsa quoque defecit. Putatum est a quibusdam, et litteris etiam traditum, quod hae mulieres Angliam et Normanniam significauerunt, quae, licet spatiis terrarium sint diuisae, sunt tamen sub uno dominio unitae. Hae quicquid pecuniarum auidi faucibus insorbuerint, in unam lacunam defluit, quae sit uel principum auaritia uel circumpositarum gentium ferotia. Mortuam et pene exhaustam Normanniam uigens pecuniis sustentat Anglia, donec et ipsa fortassis succumbat exactorum uiolentia; felix si umquam in libertatem respirare poterit, cuius inanem iam dudum persequitur umbram. Nunc gemit calamitatibus afflicta, pensionibus addicta, et omni nobilitate antiquorum extincta.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1106, ed. Irvine, 114, ASC, MS. E, s.a. 1106 trans. Whitelock, 180.

In the end one died, and the other lived; the survivor carried round her dead partner for nearly three years, until the heavy weight and the smell of the corpse were too much for her also. Some people thought, and the idea was even published, that these women signified England and Normandy which, although geographically divided, are yet united under one rule. Whatever money these two engulf in their greedy jaws descends into a single maw, which may be either the greed of princes or the ferocity of neighbouring nations. Normandy, dead and nearly sucked dry, is supported by the financial strength of England, until maybe she herself is overwhelmed by the violence of her oppressors. O happy England, if the moment ever comes when she can breathe the air of that freedom whose empty shadow she has pursued so long! As it is, she bewails her lot, worn by calamity and wasted by taxation, with all the nobility of ancient days extinct.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that William had in mind here a later period when Henry was both king and duke, but his analogy might still have been appropriate for the earlier part of Henry's English reign, and perhaps also for much of Rufus's reign. Certainly, very large amounts of English money had been spent either on paying for peace with Duke Robert, subsidising his crusade, or trying to defeat him, and the chronicles of the period repeatedly testify that the taxation required had substantive negative economic effects on the English church and peasantry.

The draining of money from England during the Anglo-Norman period, and its likely bitter effects on commerce, may be reflected in the numismatic evidence, particularly single coin finds. Numismatists regard numbers of single-coin finds a good indicator of the relative size of the currency; that is the amount of coin actually changing hands and circulating within an economy.<sup>2</sup> Allen first created a model using single finds to estimate the volume of the currency during the late Anglo-Saxon and

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<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, ed. and trans Mynors et al., I, 384-7.

<sup>2</sup> See also above, 73-75.

Anglo-Norman periods, using data up to 2004; this was refined by Fairbairn with updated single find statistics in 2013. I reproduce both of their findings below.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, 'Volume of the English Currency', 499-501; Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 215-226.

**Table 11. The Estimated Volume of the Currency according to single coin finds (Allen, 2006)**

Period	Average number of single coin finds per year	Estimated volume of currency
c. 973 - 1016	8.4	£15,000 - £30,000
1016 - 1042	9.6	£15,000 - £30,000
1042 - 1066	13.4	£20,000 - £50,000
1066 - 1100	6.9	{£10,000 - £25,000}
1100 - 1135	7.1	
1135 - 1158	14.3	£20,000 - £50,000

**Table 12. The Estimated Volume of the Currency according to single coin finds (Fairbairn, 2013)**

Period	Average number of single coin finds per year	Estimated volume of currency
973-1016	10.9	£7,500 - £40,000
1016-1042	13.8	£10,000 - £50,000
1042-1066	18.5	£15,000 - £65,000
1066-1100	9.9	£7,500 - £35,000
1100-1135	11.3	£7,500 - £40,000
1135-1158	19.8	£15,000 - £70,000

There are various ways of extrapolating the estimated currency volumes from the average number of coin finds, but these are less important here than the principle that the larger the number of single coin finds, the larger the probable volume of the currency at any given period.<sup>1</sup> Relatively speaking, the 2012 single coin find data follow the pattern of the 2004 data: after a spike in single coin finds of years 1042-1066, the numbers dwindle to nearly half for the period 1066-1135, before rising sharply again to above pre-1066 numbers from 1135-1158. As Fairbairn points out however, the high figures for 1042-1066 may be a result of the fact that moneyers were striking comparatively light coins during the late 1040s, early 1050s and the early 1060s, in the ‘Small Flan’, ‘Expanding

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, ‘Nature and Limits’, 212-220.

Cross' and 'Facing Bust' coin types respectively, thereby being able to produce more of them.<sup>1</sup>

However, even if this factor is controlled for by bringing the average coin finds of these particular types down to the 1042-1066 average, then the average number of single coin finds in the 24 years leading up to 1066 is 14.0, meaning there is still a significant drop after 1066.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this evidence suggests that the volume of the currency was cut fairly significantly during the reigns of William I, William II and Henry I, before rising again considerably in the two decades following Henry I's death in 1135.

The reason for this drop in the volume of the currency could be that money was being taxed and then not re-entering circulation. One possible explanation of that phenomenon is that it was being spent abroad, in the most likely place at the time, the Duchy of Normandy. We may note that for the period of *gafol* and *heregeld* (991-1051), single finds are also fewer in number at a time when most taxation money similarly went abroad, only at this time to Scandinavia. In this case of course, we can actually see the enormous numbers of English coins that have been found in Scandinavia to corroborate the single find evidence.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, there have been very few such English coins found in Normandy, not because few exist, but rather because metal detecting is still very tightly controlled in France, and there is no systematic method for recording French finds. The single find evidence, however, may reflect materially what the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and William of Malmesbury tell us in words; that the taxation to finance Norman ventures cost the English population dearly, and brought about considerable hardship as purchasing power was reduced.

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<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 220-222.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbairn, 'Nature and Limits', 222.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 82-88.

There are no more references to taxation in chronicles between 1107 and 1110, when Henry took a special tax for the marriage of his daughter, Matilda, to Henry V, king of the Romans, and heir to the Holy Roman Empire. Orderic tells us that the total sent with Matilda was 10,000 marks (£6,667).<sup>1</sup> The agreement to marry was confirmed at court in Westminster at Whitsuntide 1109; one charter in favour of the abbot of Abingdon, granting him five hides exempted for this tax, tells us in passing that they levy came with the consent of the king's barons, a detail about consent that we do not find explicitly said about any taxes since the *gafol* of Æthelred.<sup>2</sup> Henry of Huntingdon mentions the rate of taxation: 'the king's daughter was given to the emperor, to speak briefly, in a fitting manner. The king accordingly took 3s from every hide' (*data est filia regis imperatori, ut breuiter dicam, sicut decuit. Rex itaque cepit ab unaquaque hida Anglie tres solidos*).<sup>3</sup> Three charters of the time grant religious houses confirmation that they were exempted from this 'aid' as they were traditionally exempted from geld.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that perhaps some exemptions from land taxation had been temporarily rescinded for this special tax. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says at the end of the annal for 1110, that 'this was a very severe year in this country because of taxes that the king took for the marriage of his daughter' (*bis wæs swiðe gedeorfsom gear her on lande þurh gyld þe se cyng nam for his dohter gyfte*).<sup>5</sup> It is likely that these taxes were levied, at least in part, after the marriage had actually taken place.

After 1110 the chronicles are again silent on taxation, until complaints about it arise in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for each of the three years between 1116 and 1118. In common with those of 1104-6, these taxes were linked with military campaigns in France. In 1116, fighting began between Henry and the French king, Louis VI, and in this year 'this country and the people ... were often severely

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<sup>1</sup> K. Leyser, *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours, 900-1250* (London, 1982), 194

<sup>2</sup> *RRAN*, II, nos. 959, 962, 964

<sup>3</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia*, ed. and trans. Greenway, 456-7.

<sup>4</sup> *RRAN*, II, nos. 946, 963, 968.

<sup>5</sup> *ASC MS E*, s.a. 1110, trans. Whitelock, 182; *ASC MS E*, s.a. 1110, ed. Irvine, 116.

oppressed by the taxes the king took both in boroughs and outside them' (*[þ]is land 7 þas leodan wurdon ... oftrædlice sare geswencte þurh þa gyld þe se cyng nam, æger ge binnan burgan 7 butan*).<sup>1</sup>

This highly unusual reference to the boroughs is interesting. Domesday Book indicates that boroughs paid the land tax in 1066 and 1086, but by the time of the 1129-30 Pipe Roll, this had been scrapped and a new tax, 'borough aid' (*auxilio burgorum*) or 'city aid' (*auxilio ciuitatis*), had replaced it.<sup>2</sup> While it is possible that the 1116 *Chronicle* reference to this tax of the boroughs was an ordinary geld, it may at this point be making the distinction between Danegeld and borough aid.

The years 1117 and 1118 were both characterised by war with France, during which 'England paid dear for all this [fighting] because of the various taxes that never ceased' (*Eall þis strange gebohte Engaland þurh þa mænigfealdlice gyld þe ... ne geswicon*).<sup>3</sup> The English chronicles then fall silent about taxation until 1131, although it hard to doubt that land taxes were still being levied annually or close to annually. The Pipe Roll of 1129-30 records a 2s land tax in that fiscal year, and the proceeds from a similar one most likely in the previous fiscal year.<sup>4</sup> In neither year do any chronicles record taxes levied in England. Mark Hagger has discovered a fragment of a Pipe Roll relating to the fiscal year 1123-4, and this records the exemption of William d'Aubigny Brito of 14s of Danegeld in Northamptonshire.<sup>5</sup> That is the same level of exemption that William received in Northamptonshire in 1129-30, suggesting that a 2s levy had also been imposed in 1123-4. Again, neither year was singled out by any chronicle as having been a year when England was subject to tax; it seems probable that chroniclers only mentioned taxes that were considered unusually severe.

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<sup>1</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1116, trans. Whitelock, 185; ASC MS E, s.a. 1116, ed. Irvine, 118.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. PR, Henry I, 9, 13, 18, 130.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1118, trans. Whitelock, 186; ASC MS E, s.a. 1118, ed. Irvine, 119. The entry for 1117 is discussed below, page 217.

<sup>4</sup> See below, 225.

<sup>5</sup> British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius, E. vi, pt 1, fo. 98v; M. Hagger, 'A Pipe Roll for 25 Henry I', *English Historical Review*, CXXII (2007), 133-140.

In 1131 John of Worcester records that King Henry was caught up in a storm in the Channel, and was so terrified that he promised God that he would remit the 'Danish tribute' (Danegeld) if he landed in England safely:

Veritus rex imminens funus, ut Rex regum in misericordiis euigilet sibi que suisque succurrat, in regno Anglie Danicum tributum vii annis non exigi decernit. ... Quo uoto, facta est tranquillitas magna. Angliam ueniens congaudentibus cunctis uota persoluit.<sup>1</sup>

Fearing an imminent disaster, the king decided that the Danish tax should not be collected in the English kingdom for seven years so that the King of kings would in His mercy be watchful and succour both him and his followers ... When he had so promised there was a great calm. On his return, to everyone's rejoicing he fulfilled his promise.

In the same annal, John describes how King Stephen later made a similar pledge, but promptly broke it:

Hoc etiam rex Stephanus qui nunc imperat in regali decreto suo promisit, Danicum scilicet tributum se nullatenus exacturum. Verum in Deo odibili periurio auribus hausit tributum per Angliam exigi.<sup>2</sup>

King Stephen, who now reigns, also promised in a royal decree that he would never collect the Danish tax. We hear that it is now again demanded throughout England by a perjury odious to God.

Henry of Huntingdon, probably not writing later than 1141, similarly says that Stephen:

[Stephanus] uouit quod danegeldum, id est duos solidos ad hidam, quos antecessores sui accipere solebant singulis annis, in eternum condonaret.<sup>3</sup>

[Stephen] vowed that Danegeld – that is the 2s per hide which his predecessors used to collect every year – he would remit for all time.

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<sup>1</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicle*, s.a. 1130 (recte 1131), ed. and trans. McGurk, 202-3.

<sup>2</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicle*, s.a. 1130, ed. and trans. McGurk, 202-3.

<sup>3</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia*, ed. and trans. Greenway, 704-5.

This particular passage has informed historiographical understanding of the regularity and rate of geld more than any other source. Webb particularly used it to ‘prove’ that ‘Danegeld was originally and in its institution a tax of 2s on every hide’.<sup>1</sup> While this was almost certainly not the case, given that the large sums raised in 1014 and 1041 suggest a rate of 6s on every hide, Henry of Huntingdon may have the rate correct for most gelds in the time of William II and Henry I, and possibly for their father William the Conqueror too. That these kings raised geld every year is also plausible, as indicated by the entry for Stafford in Domesday and the Pipe Roll fragment of 1123-4, which records a tax levied in a year that the chronicles do not mention one.<sup>2</sup> I examine the 1129-30 Pipe Roll in detail below; it must suffice here to say that it clearly indicates a 2s per hide land tax, as does the 1123-4 Pipe Roll fragment. Meanwhile, Henry of Huntingdon’s memory may well have accurately covered Henry I’s reign at the very least, and possibly some of Rufus’s as well (Henry is thought to have been born in 1088), and his position as archdeacon of Huntingdon in the diocese of Lincoln suggests he was likely well informed of such matters. It seems fair to take the archdeacon at his word, at the very least for Henry’s reign.

## Taxation in the Duchy of Normandy

In 1117, which as already mentioned was a year of war with the King Louis, but which actually saw no fighting:

Normandig waerð swiðe gedreht, ægðer ge þurh gyld ge þurh fyrde þe se cing Henri þærongean gaderode. Eac þeos þeode urh þis ylce þurh manigfealde gyld wearð strange geswenct.<sup>3</sup>

Normandy was very much distressed because of the taxes and because of the army King Henry had assembled. Also, this people [the English] was severely oppressed on the same account, because of the many various taxes.

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<sup>1</sup> Webb, *Short Account of Danegeld*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 138, 215.

<sup>3</sup> ASC MS E, s.a. 1117, trans. Whitelock, 185; ASC MS E, s.a. 1117, ed. Irvine, 119.

The English term 'gyld' can refer to taxation in a general sense; it does not necessarily refer to land taxation. However, the reference to Normandy being subject to taxation at all is surprising, as evidence of direct formal taxation taking place in the duchy during the eleventh century or the early twelfth century is scant, although not non-existent. One twelfth-century copy of a charter in favour of the abbey of Caen, with dating limits of 1081-1082, commands that

Homines de Ros et Ceus liberos, solidos et quietos ab omni exercitu et carruagio et gelt et collecta ut expedeti sint ad paranda et portanda cibaria et omnia alia necessaria.<sup>1</sup>

The men of Rots and Cheux are to be free and quit of military service, carriage, geld and tax in order to be available to prepare and transport the monks' food and other necessities.

While the term 'collecta' here could feasibly mean any sort of exaction, it does not necessarily indicate any kind of widespread systematic tax. The original charter is damaged and so is missing the word 'gelt', but the earliest copy, which is Norman and dates from the twelfth century, does include the word, so we may assume 'gelt' was indeed the word originally used. Again, we should bear in mind that Anglo-Norman charters of the post-1066 period, like the chronicles, were fairly loose in their use of the word 'geldum' and its variants; it sometimes seems to have been used as a catch-all term to describe all kinds of taxes, not just the primary land tax. We certainly cannot infer from this single Norman charter, not even when combined with the 1117 entry of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, that a land tax comparable to the English Danegeld was ever raised in Normandy in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, but there is a tantalising possibility nevertheless that some kind of direct taxation was attempted in Normandy during the Conqueror's reign, perhaps inspired by Norman experiences of the English system.

Besides the revenue of the ducal farms, most references to ducal exactions in Normandy in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries concern use of ducal property by others, such as payments for

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<sup>1</sup> Bates, no. 50.

use of pasture, woodland or mills.<sup>1</sup> Tolls for bringing goods to markets would have generated money for the duke from all the towns of Normandy, as would payments for the use of public highways. But there was nothing unusual or remarkable about this sort of low level indirect taxation; tolls were an integral feature of Anglo-Saxon commerce too, and had been in most of Europe since antiquity.

More direct taxes, paid by those independent of the ducal demesne, were *bernage* and *grauarium*. *Bernage* (*benagium*), payable in oats or coin, appears in several Norman *acta* from 1050 at the latest; normally when an exemption to it was granted.<sup>2</sup> The *acta* show that *bernage* could be levied on lands that were not part of the ducal demesne, but there is very little other information about it during the rule of the Conqueror and his sons. In 1180, the year of the first Norman Pipe Roll, the whole of the Cotentin paid just 26 livres, 18 sous and 4 deniers in *bernage*, and other *vicomtés* of Normandy considerably less, but we do not know whether that accurately reflects the extent of the tax earlier in the century at all.<sup>3</sup>

*Grauarium*, meanwhile, occurs even less frequently in Norman sources. As with *bernage*, its precise purpose, rate or frequency of collection is unknown. Again it appears in the *acta* from about 1050, and very often alongside *bernage*.<sup>4</sup> Collectors of the tax were identified as *grauaringos* by Orderic, and he says that it was the practices of these collectors that was a key reason Amaury de Montfort rebelled against Henry in 1123.<sup>5</sup> As Hagger points out, it therefore looks as if the work of the *grauaringos* was financially significant enough for it to cause political discontent.<sup>6</sup> The Empress Matilda gifted the monks of Falaise 46 sous and 6 deniers, 'which the vicomtes of Argentan are accustomed to return annually of *grauarium* of Montgaroult from their own land that they held

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Mark Hagger for sharing his draft chapter on ducal finance from his forthcoming book.

<sup>2</sup> *Recueil des Actes des Ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), nos. 121, 169, 196; Bates, nos. 50, 158.

<sup>3</sup> *Pipe Rolls of the Exchequer of Normandy for the Reign of Henry II 1180 and 1184*, ed. V. Moss (Pipe Roll Soc., 2004), 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Recueil*, ed. Fauroux, nos. 169, 196; Bates, no. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Chibnall, vi, 330.

<sup>6</sup> Hagger, (forthcoming).

there' (*quos annuatim reddere consueverant vicecomiti de Argentomo de gravaria de Monte Guarulfi de sua propria terra quam ibi habent*).<sup>1</sup> Hagger points out that this amounts to just under 12 English shillings; while we do not know how large the manor of Montgaroult was, such a payment was around the equivalent of what 6 hides would have paid in England in an ordinary fiscal year of Henry I.<sup>2</sup> We cannot be sure without further evidence, but it is at least possible that the *grauarium* may have produced considerable sums for the Norman dukes earlier in the twelfth century, especially if Matilda's charter is accurate in saying it was collected annually. Had the *grauarium* been a significant tax since 1050 or earlier, we cannot discount the possibility that significant taxation was less novel to England's Norman conquerors than we might otherwise assume.

## Royal income in 1129-30: Henry I's Pipe Roll

The Pipe Roll of 1130 – relating to the fiscal year Michaelmas 1129 to Michaelmas 1130 – is the earliest substantial account of English exchequer, although some parts are damaged, and the shires of Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Somerset are all missing. We know that other such documents existed prior to that year, at least since 1124, for a fragment of a Pipe Roll from that year has been discovered by Mark Hagger.<sup>3</sup>

The Pipe Roll divides each shire section in three: the first section pertained to royal demesne, or the shire farm; the second pertained to other items carried over from previous years; and the third, under the heading 'New Pleas and Agreements', pertained to those matters arising in 1129-30 other than the shire farm. Normally, for any given debt to the Crown, an amount demanded is stated, then the amount paid into the treasury, then any pardons, exemptions or expenses recorded – all

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<sup>1</sup> *Regesta*, iii, 748. Hagger noticed that the editors mistakenly considered 'Gravaria' to be La Graverie, Calvados, Hagger, (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> Hagger, (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius, E. vi, pt 1, fo. 98v; M. Hagger, 'A Pipe Roll for 25 Henry I', *English Historical Review*, CXXII (2007), 133-140.

deducted from the amount demanded – and then finally how much was still left owing for payment in future years. Judith Green produced an analysis of this material, which broke down the royal income that Henry I received in 1129-30 into various items of revenue and into three tables: one summarising the information relating to the current year (1129-1130), one relating to previous years, and one being the sum of these two, representing all years. These tables are well known, and the literature has been thoroughly reliant on them ever since their first publication.<sup>1</sup> I have reproduced them here:

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<sup>1</sup> Green, *Government*, 223-5.

**Table 13. Items of revenue from matters arising in 1129-30 (Green, 1982)**

Item of Revenue	Total demanded			Amount Paid			Amount Pardoned			Expenditure			Amount owing		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
County farms	9166	15	3	6343	1	0	87	9	9	804	15	10	1931	9	11
Estates in hand	2707	8	6	2232	12	6	1	3	0	193	18	6	280	4	6
Borough farms	360	11	2.5	242	5	1	0	0	0	83	8	3.5	34	17	10
Cornage, geld of animals	238	14	1.5	156	12	3	1	17	4	42	7	7.5	37	16	11
Danegeld	4355	12	7	2374	12	11	1810	17	1	0	0	0	170	2	7
Aids of boroughs, cities and shires	553	1	8	358	10	9	172	13	1	12	6	0	9	11	2
Aid of knights	58	6	8	45	16	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	10	0
<i>Dona regis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regalian rights (church vacancies)	798	3	10	587	0	4	35	0	0	63	2	6	113	1	0
Forest revenues, other than pleas	149	8	2	110	3	4	13	0	1	15	5	2	13	6	11
Pleas:															
Forest pleas	255	0	2	54	15	1	7	2	4	0	0	0	193	2	9
Murder fines	288	14	0	80	1	11	158	16	1	3	17	8	46	16	2
Other pleas	3583	7	8	1030	17	8	111	10	5	210	1	10	2164	1	3
Agreements:															
Help in judicial matters	793	6	8	107	13	4	1	10	0	0	0	0	684	3	4
Offices	289	0	0	84	3	4	129	6	4	12	0	0	63	10	4
Relief	416	3	4	128	13	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	281	10	0
Wardship	66	13	4	13	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	6	8
Marriage	220	13	4	35	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	185	6	8
Composite agreements	690	0	0	108	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	581	12	8
Miscellaneous agreements	711	0	8	127	6	8	0	0	0	6	0	0	578	14	0
Other Miscellaneous and composite entries	778	0	6	259	4	0	1	2	5	9	19	0	507	15	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,473</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14,480</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2,531</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7,924</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>

**Table 14. Items of revenue carried over from previous years (Green, 1982)**

Item of Revenue	Total demanded			Amount Paid			Amount Pardoned			Expenditure			Amount owing		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
County farms	5448	11	11	2636	19	6	0	0	0	86	7	7	2728	7	11
Estates in hand	467	15	10	207	4	2	91	6	8	0	0	0	169	5	0
Borough farms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cornage, geld of animals	221	12	3	149	17	2	2	10	8	16	2	0	54	2	5
Danegeld	793	5	11	114	13	0	552	18	6	0	0	0	125	14	5
Aids of boroughs, cities and shires	171	19	4	31	11	0	94	19	9	0	0	0	45	8	7
Aid of knights	124	18	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	101	18	0
<i>Dona regis</i>	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0
Regalian rights (church vacancies)	494	7	11	411	1	0	13	5	0	25	7	0	44	15	0
Forest revenues, other than pleas	14	15	3	14	15	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pleas:															
Forest pleas	1161	18	4	253	10	0	173	8	4	0	0	0	736	0	0
Murder fines	285	7	3	41	19	0	159	18	1	7	10	0	75	15	6
Other pleas	4695	5	8	934	14	6	862	15	4	26	4	11	2871	8	5
Agreements:															
Help in judicial matters	2689	19	6	271	13	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	2422	6	6
Offices	5593	7	4	277	6	0	80	0	0	0	0	0	5234	18	2
Relief	4176	6	8	827	6	9	13	6	8	0	0	0	3335	13	4
Wardship	389	6	8	17	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	372	0	0
Marriage	2285	7	8	232	2	4	1	6	8	44	6	8	2007	12	0
Composite agreements	1299	1	0	285	16	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1013	4	4
Miscellaneous agreements	6342	16	11	1084	19	0	571	10	0	10	0	0	4676	7	0
Other Miscellaneous and composite entries	5607	2	3.5	568	4	2	101	8	4	24	17	5	4912	11	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,287</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8,383</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2,719</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30,951</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 15. Items of Revenue, All Years (Green, 1982)**

Item of Revenue	Total demanded			Amount Paid			Amount Pardoned			Expenditure			Amount owing		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
County farms	14,615	7	2	8,980	0	6	87	9	9	891	3	5	4,659	17	10
Estates in hand	3,175	4	4	2,439	16	2	92	9	8	193	18	6	449	9	6
Borough farms	360	11	2.5	242	5	0	0	0	0	83	8	3.5	34	17	10
Cornage, geld of animals	460	6	4.5	306	9	2	4	8	0	58	9	7.5	91	19	4
Danegeld	5148	18	6	2,489	5	0	2,363	15	7	0	0	0	295	17	0
Aids of boroughs, cities and shires	725	1	0	390	1	0	267	12	10	12	6	0	54	19	9
Aid of knights	183	4	8	68	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	114	8	0
<i>Dona regis</i>	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	0
Regalian rights	1292	11	9	998	1	0	48	5	0	88	9	6	157	16	0
Forest revenues, other than pleas	164	3	5	124	18	3	13	0	1	15	5	2	13	6	11
Pleas:															
Forest pleas	1416	18	6	308	5	0	180	10	8	0	0	0	929	2	9
Murder fines	574	1	3	122	0	0	318	14	2	11	7	8	122	11	8
Other pleas	8278	13	4	1,965	12	6	974	5	9	236	6	9	5,035	9	8
Agreements:															
Help in judicial matters	3483	6	2	379	6	4	2	10	0	2	0	0	3,106	9	10
Offices	5882	7	4	361	9	0	209	6	4	12	0	0	5,298	8	6
Relief	4592	10	0	956	0	9	13	6	8	0	0	0	3,617	3	4
Wardship	456	0	0	30	13	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	425	6	8
Marriage	2506	1	0	267	9	4	1	6	8	44	6	8	2,192	18	8
Composite agreements	1989	1	0	394	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,594	17	0
Miscellaneous agreements	7053	17	7	1,212	5	0	571	10	0	16	0	0	5,255	1	0
Other Miscellaneous and composite entries	6385	2	9.5	827	8	2	102	10	9	34	16	5	5,420	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,767</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>22,864</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5,251</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38,894</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>

Green drew attention to some of the problems of categorising the Pipe Roll entries.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of composite agreements in which more than one payment was demanded, but grouped together as if they were one payment in such a way as to make it difficult to know what precisely was being paid off. There are also, in Green's words, a number of entries that 'are so laconic it is difficult to know exactly what was at stake'.<sup>2</sup> This manifests itself in the huge amount of money in her tables that can only be categorised as 'miscellaneous agreements' or as 'other miscellaneous and composite entries'. The difference between these two categories is not readily identifiable.

There is also a point to be borne in mind about the accuracy of any total figures, especially when considering that Somerset, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire, as well as some other sections, such as the Danegeld record of Devon, are missing from the Pipe Roll. Somerset had a total annual surplus value of £4,220 in 1086, and the other four shires £3,282 between them.<sup>3</sup> Together they comprised 7,418 hides, a little over 10% of all the hides and carucates in England. The king held no land in Cheshire or Shropshire, some in Worcestershire, but a good deal in Somerset and Herefordshire. It therefore seems fair to assume that the Pipe Roll omits very roughly 10% of the king's revenue.

### **Direct taxation in the Pipe Roll**

The Pipe Roll accounts for a 2s geld in the fiscal year 1129-30. Most of the sums demanded for Danegeld from each shire are close or very close to a division of ten of their respective shires' Domesday hidages, signifying a 2s payment per hide. Sums were also collected for previous years, suggesting that the impost was annual, or near annual; the fragment of the Pipe Roll for 1123-4 also indicates a 2s geld in that year.<sup>4</sup> Below I break down the amounts demanded by shire:

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<sup>1</sup> Green, *Government*, 220-2; Green, 'Earliest Surviving Pipe Roll', 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Government*, 221.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday* (accessed 08/09/2017).

<sup>4</sup> See above, 215.

**Table 16. The hidage of shires inferred from Domesday Book and the Pipe Roll of 1129-30**

Shire	Danegeld Demanded (£,1129-30) <sup>1</sup>	Implied Hidage (1129-30)	Darby Hidage (1066) <sup>2</sup>	Palmer Hidage (1066) <sup>3</sup>
Bedfordshire	110.60	1,102	1,186	1,205
Berkshire	200.06	2,001	2,495	2,496
Buckinghamshire	204.73	2,047	2,210	2,131
Cambridgeshire	114.45	1,145	1,297	1,239
Cheshire	n/a	n/a	545	552
Cornwall	22.79	228	424	428
Devon	78.68	787	1,142	1,139
Dorset	228.25	2,283	2,357	2,352
Essex	236.40	2,364	2,799	2,755
Gloucestershire	179.58	1,796	2,468	2,503
Hampshire	n/a	n/a	2,785	2,587
Herefordshire	n/a	n/a	1,168	1,242
Hertfordshire	110.07	1,101	1,119	1,119
Huntingdonshire	70.25	703	808	814
Kent	105.14	1,051	1,152	1,157
Lancashire (South) <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	474 <sup>5</sup>	474
Leicestershire	100.00	1,000	2,233	2,542
Lincolnshire	320.25	3,203	4,206	4,235
Middlesex	85.03	850	880	881
Norfolk	330.11	3,301	2,423	2,454
Northamptonshire	119.28	1,193	1,280	1,368
Northumberland	100.00	1,000	n/a	n/a
Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire	78.69	787	1,262	1,267
Oxfordshire	239.42	2,394	2,568	2,435
Rutland	11.60	116	40	38
Shropshire	n/a	n/a	1,430	1,449
Somerset	n/a	n/a	2,933	2,987
Staffordshire	44.05	441	507	510
Suffolk	235.03	2,350	2,411	2,392
Surrey	185.05	1,851	2,002	2,006
Sussex	209.93	2,099	3,204	3,205
Warwickshire	128.63	1,286	1,297	1,313
Wiltshire	388.65	3,887	4,032	4,114
Worcestershire	n/a	n/a	1,432	1,188
Yorkshire	165.98	1,660	10,609	10,508
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,372.65</b>	<b>43,727</b>	<b>69,178</b>	<b>69,085</b>

<sup>1</sup> PR 31 Henry I, ed. Green.

<sup>2</sup> Darby, *Domesday England*, 336.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday*, statistics notes.

<sup>4</sup> Farrer has convincingly argued that the the area between the Mersey and the Ribble paid its Danegeld with Yorkshire in the twelfth century.

<sup>5</sup> Darby calculated 153 carucates plus 54 hides. However, as explained above, the Lancashire carucates need to be multiplied by six as in this shire there were 6 'carucates' to the hide. Above, 104.

The implied hidage of 1129-30 fits well with the Domesday hide counts of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire and Wiltshire. The figures are close enough, so that at least in these shires, a 2s rate would seem impossible to deny. Some other shires are problematic. Berkshire, Devon, Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Sussex are all quite far out, while Cornwall, Leicestershire, Rutland and Yorkshire show very anomalous figures. Farrer explained the Yorkshire anomaly by pointing toward evidence of a 4d geld on the Yorkshire carucate; we need not necessarily accept here his idea that Yorkshire was assessed like south Lancashire on the basis of 6 carucates forming one 'geldable hide', but a 4d per carucate rate makes sense from the figures.<sup>1</sup> Rutland can be understood if the 76 hides of the Witchley hundred, included in the Domesday Northamptonshire, are added to the 38 carucates of Roteland that paid geld with Nottinghamshire.<sup>2</sup> This leaves 114 gelding units there. The Leicestershire figure of exactly £100 looks very much like an agreement made between king and shire, possibly lasting many decades, as its Danegeld fee was the same under Henry II.<sup>3</sup> Such an agreement was needed because Leicestershire was wildly over-assessed in 1066 and 1086; rated at around 2500 carucates, it only produced £869 of surplus per year.<sup>4</sup> A fragment of the Leicestershire Survey of the late 1120s survives, which shows, for the one wapentake it fully records and for the villis of the two wapentakes which it partially records, that overall the number of carucates had actually *increased* since 1086, rendering the shire even less able to pay according to its actual assessment.<sup>5</sup> Cornwall was once again an anomalous shire, appearing to be demanded only around half of what its Domesday assessment would suggest it should. The

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<sup>1</sup> W. Farrer, *VCH Yorkshire*, II, 138-141.

<sup>2</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 243 and her table reconstituting the structure of land tenure in Rutland, 'Last Century', 248-9.

<sup>3</sup> The total Danegeld demanded for Leicestershire was in £99 19s 11d in 1155-6, according to *The Great Rolls of the Pipe for the Second, Third and Fourth years of the Reign Henry II*, ed. J. Hunter (London, 1884), 45, henceforth cited as '2 Henry II' and £99 19s 4d in 1161-2, according to *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Eighth Year of the Reign of King Henry II, AD 1161-1162*, ed. Pipe Roll Society (London, 1885), 2, henceforth cited as '8 Henry II'.

<sup>4</sup> Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book*, statistics notes for Leicestershire.

<sup>5</sup> Stenton, 'Introduction to the Leicestershire Survey', 339-354; *The Leicestershire Survey*, ed. Slade 3-98.

total hides accounted for in the Cornish Geld Account of 1086 was 401 hides, which was not far away from the 428 recorded in Domesday Book, suggesting no special rate in 1086.<sup>1</sup> But by 1130, either the shire had been reassessed by around half, or it was only paying 1s or a little more per hide, halving the amount due on an already under-assessed shire (Cornwall generated £667 per annum at the time of Domesday Book, meaning it had a value to hidage ratio of well over £1 to one hide in 1086.)<sup>2</sup>

The more difficult problem is shires such as Berkshire, where 2,500 Domesday hides seem to have either become around 2,000 hides, or at least only paid Danegeld for that equivalent figure (£200). The shire was demanded of a similar amount in 1155-6 (£205 11s 4d), and somewhat less in 1161-2 (£177 12s 8d), so it seems Berkshire never again paid a rate close to matching its Domesday assessment.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Sussex paid 34% less in Danegeld than its Domesday hidage allowed, and was charged at a similarly low level under Henry II (£217 6d).<sup>4</sup> Gloucestershire paid 28% less Danegeld in 1129-30 than its Domesday hidage allowed; in Henry II's reign it only paid a little more (£194 1s 6d).<sup>5</sup> Lincolnshire was demanded of 23% less in 1129-30 than its Domesday hidage allowed, and under Henry II it was demanded of even less, just £266 for a shire of 4,235 carucates in 1161-2.<sup>6</sup> It seems that all these shires must either have been re-assessed, or had been granted a permanent, or at least semi-permanent, tax relief of some other kind.

In some shires, however, the reduction in Danegeld demands since 1086 appear only to have only been temporary. Devonshire was demanded of roughly 30% less in 1129-30 than its Domesday hidage allowed, but was demanded of close to £104 in 1155, which was much more in line with Domesday Book.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire paid 38% less in 1129-30 than what

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<sup>1</sup> Salzmann, 'Domesday Survey for Cornwall', 48.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday*, statistics notes for Cornwall.

<sup>3</sup> PR 2 Henry II, 34-5, 8 Henry II, 44.

<sup>4</sup> PR 2 Henry II, 61.

<sup>5</sup> PR 2 Henry II, 50.

<sup>6</sup> PR 8 Henry II, 18.

<sup>7</sup> PR 2 Henry II, 47.

their combined Domesday carucates allowed for, but by Henry II's reign they were paying £112 between them, much more in line with the Domesday hidages.<sup>1</sup> The reduction in the amount of Danegeld in these shires therefore appears only to have been temporary; perhaps these shires were only being charged at around two thirds of the normal rate for this particular tax year.

We should also note that Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire were paying for a hidage closer to that recorded in Domesday Book for 1066 than for 1086. It therefore looks as if that the reductions of these shires, granted by the Conqueror, had been undone, at least to an extent, by one of his sons.<sup>2</sup> This is important as it shows that the decline in shire hidages was not some kind of inevitable process after the Conqueror's reign had ended; they could be, and were sometimes raised by his children.

This having been said, it does appear that the total amount that was demanded in 1129-30 was a good deal less than would have been allowed for according to 1066 or 1086 hidages. As the table below shows, the rates demanded in the comparable shires were 15% lower than those shires' Domesday hidages allowed for. The missing shires of the Pipe Roll - Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Somerset and Hampshire - comprised of c.10,005 hides in 1086, which together would be demanded of almost exactly £1,000 for a 2s geld. If we proportionately discount these hides at the same ratio that the comparable hides of the rest of England had been discounted between 1086 and 1129 (15%), the total amount demanded of all the shires in 1129-30 might have been £4,373 plus £850, a total of £5,223.

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<sup>1</sup> PR 2 Henry II, 39.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 122-124.

**Table 17. Implied Hidages in 1129-30 Pipe Roll compared with Domesday Hidages<sup>1</sup>**

Shire	Danegeld Demanded (£,1129-30)	Implied Hidage (1129-30)	Hidage 1066 (Darby)	Hidage 1066 (Palmer)
Bedfordshire	110.6	1,102	1,186	1,205
Berkshire	200.06	2,001	2,495	2,496
Buckinghamshire	204.73	2,047	2,210	2,131
Cambridgeshire	114.45	1,145	1,297	1,239
Cornwall	22.79	228	424	428
Devon	78.68	787	1,142	1,139
Dorset	228.25	2,283	2,357	2,352
Essex	236.4	2,364	2,799	2,755
Gloucestershire	179.58	1,796	2,468	2,503
Hertfordshire	110.07	1,101	1,119	1,119
Huntingdonshire	70.25	703	808	814
Kent	105.14	1,051	1,152	1,157
Lincolnshire	320.25	3,203	4,206	4,235
Middlesex	85.03	850	880	881
Northamptonshire	119.28	1,193	1,280	1,368
Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire	78.69	787	1,262	1,267
Oxfordshire	239.42	2,394	2,568	2,435
Rutland	11.6	116	40	38
Staffordshire	44.05	441	507	510
Surrey	185.05	1,851	2,002	2,006
Sussex	209.93	2,099	3,204	3,205
Warwickshire	128.63	1,286	1,297	1,313
Wiltshire	388.65	3,887	4,032	4,114
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,471.58</b>	<b>34,715</b>	<b>40,735</b>	<b>40,710</b>

Cornage, meanwhile – that is the tax of animals in County Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland and Northumberland – was demanded at around £240 per year.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the amount pardoned of this tax was negligible, although some may be disguised in the amount granted as allowances to the ‘knights and serjeants of Carlisle’.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps that is testament to it not being politically controversial,

<sup>1</sup> Comparable shires only, Yorkshire and Leicestershire have been excluded on the grounds that unique beneficial arrangements applied to both shires in 1129-30, as described above, 227.

but that seems unlikely given that the amount of cornage paid was considerably higher than the Danegeld paid by the whole of Yorkshire.

### **Exemption in the 1129-30 Pipe Roll**

The Pipe Roll of 1129-30 provides suggestive evidence that the clause of Henry's coronation edict guaranteeing exemption of demesne to at least some of his knights amounted to a broken promise. Here I build a cumulative case that strongly points toward the conclusion that by the time of the Pipe Roll, demesne was no longer the basis of exemption, and that a new system, possibly based on *ad hoc* personal bargains between the king and individual barons, had replaced it.

In the Pipe Roll, we see hundreds of individual exemptions given for the 2s Danegeld of 1129-30, the rationales for which are not readily apparent. The form of the Danegeld entries is always a variant of what follows, from the section of the Pipe Roll for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire:

Et idem vicecomes reddit comptum de danegeldo. In thesauro lxxviii li. et xiii s. et ix d. Et In Perdonis per breve Regis, Archiepiscopo Eborac' lxx s. Comiti Cestr' lvi s. Roberto filio Toli ii m' argenti ...

And the same sheriff renders account of Danegeld. In the treasury £78 13s. 9d. And in pardons by the king's writ. To the Archbishop of York 70s. To the Earl of Chester 56s, To Robert son of Toli 2 silver marks ...<sup>1</sup>

The text goes on to list pardons to several other landholders, always giving the amount pardoned in monetary, not hidage terms.

How and on what basis were these exemptions made? Barlow seems to think that they were a mixture of demesne exemptions and exemptions granted on an individual basis. He says that 'there was probably between 1086 and 1130, besides Henry I's block concession, a steady erosion of

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<sup>1</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 9.

liability through particular exemptions, most of which were probably sold'.<sup>1</sup> By 'block concession', Barlow means Henry's adding of 'the manorial demesne of the knights to the existing exemptions', which he seems to think were still in place in 1129-30.<sup>2</sup> Green, on the other hand, says that 'by the time of the period covered by the 1129-30 Pipe Roll ... it is clear that the numerous exemptions from Danegeld did not include a customary exemption of manorial demesne or demesne manors for all tenants-in-chief, and that some appear to have paid in full'.<sup>3</sup> She noted that, in the section for Rutland in the Pipe Roll, the full amount that the Domesday hidage for the hundreds of Alstoe, Martinsley and Witchley could allow was demanded in the Pipe Roll, and therefore, 'those who are not mentioned in the pardons [by the king's writ] were presumably charged in full'.<sup>4</sup> One could add to this that there were other shires such as Hertfordshire, Kent and Warwickshire where the amount demanded in 1129-30 almost matched the Domesday hidages.<sup>5</sup> However, this only really demonstrates that demesne portions of demesne manors were being included in the overall amounts demanded as recorded by the Pipe Roll. It might yet have been that these very same demesne portions of demesne manors were ubiquitously represented in the lists of exemptions.

There are, however, several indications that the exemptions recorded in the Pipe Roll were indeed not the product of systematic exemptions of demesne. First, the formulae used in the Pipe Roll entries are themselves suggestive. As in the case above, they record exemptions effected *per breve regis* (by the king's writ). This suggests that each exemption was separately negotiated and confirmed by the king's writ. However, it is possible that wholesale exemptions were granted by a king's writ. Richard Fitz Nigel addresses the issue in his Dialogue of the Exchequer; he explains that there are circumstances when 'something is said to have been remitted 'by the king's writ' that is

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<sup>1</sup> Barlow, *William Rufus*, 243, n. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Barlow, *William Rufus*, 243.

<sup>3</sup> Green, *Last Century*, 246.

<sup>4</sup> Green, *Last Century*, 246, n. 7.

<sup>5</sup> See above, 225.

always remitted without a writ'.<sup>1</sup> The examples given are Henry I's exemption of the barons who sat at his exchequer, as well as Henry II's exemption of the Knights' Templars, Knights' Hospitallers and the Cistercian order. He explains that in these cases the Pipe Roll would still say the persons and institutions concerned were 'exempted by the king's writ', even though they did not have to produce one.<sup>2</sup> Richard did, however, seem to think this sort of exemption was the exception rather than the rule, and elsewhere describes how those who were pardoned of any money were expected to produce a writ of the king, detailing the precise amount.<sup>3</sup>

Second, a small number of exemptions state explicitly that a landholder's demesne land *was* exempted. For example, in Wiltshire, exemption was granted 'in the demesne of Richard Esturmit's land' (*in dominio terre Ricardi Esturmit*)<sup>4</sup> in Hertfordshire, 'the demesne of the land of Eudo the steward', the 'demesne of the land of Otuer fitz Count' and 'the demesne of the land of William Peverel of London' were exempted.<sup>5</sup> A reasonable inference is that these were exceptions, not the rule, and that demesnes were not normally exempt.

Third, there are cases of some large landholders in certain shires who were not named among those exempted in the Pipe Rolls who would have been if their manorial demesnes were systematically exempted. However, here we need to tread carefully, for it may have been that if a landholder was universally exempted from Danegeld, he was not included in the Danegeld exemption lists at all. For example, Glastonbury Abbey was granted a universal exemption from Danegeld by charter, which may well explain why it is not found in the lists.<sup>6</sup> It never owed Danegeld in the first place, so is not

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<sup>1</sup> *Dialogus de Scaccario, The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. E. Amt, and S. D. Church (Oxford, 2007), 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt and Church, 77-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt and Church, 136-7.

<sup>4</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 18.

<sup>5</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 47.

<sup>6</sup> RRAN, II, no. 895.

listed as having been exempted.<sup>1</sup> However, the Abbot of Peterborough, who is absent in both the Northamptonshire and Leicestershire lists of exemptions, is present in the Huntingdonshire ones.<sup>2</sup> Domesday Book records that Peterborough abbey held demesne properties in both Northamptonshire and Leicestershire in 1086.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in this case, it appears that the Pipe Roll did not include demesnes in its lists of exemptions granted to individuals.

Robert de Ferrers is an example of a layman for whom we would expect to find large exemptions in numerous shires, if exemption was determined by fiscal demesne portions of demesne manors. Domesday Book tells us that Robert's father, Henry de Ferrers, whose estates in England Robert inherited, held 347 hides of demesne land in 1086, spread across the country, with 111 hides in Derbyshire. However, Henry received just one exemption in 1129-30, of 12d in Staffordshire. This would equate to just half a hide of fiscal demesne. This strongly suggests that Robert's exemptions were not determined by fiscal demesne. It is possible that Robert had subinfeudated all of his inherited manors outside of Staffordshire, or else that none of his demesne estates had portions of fiscal demesne. In either of these scenarios this would mean that none of his manors outside Staffordshire would have been exempted from taxation if fiscal demesne were the determining factor of exemption, but both of these possibilities seem rather unlikely.

The fourth and final strand of evidence is the conclusions we can draw from a comparison of ecclesiastical Pipe Roll exemptions with the exemptions in the 1086 Geld Accounts of south-west England. Exemptions given to the estates of religious houses are the easiest to compare directly as they can be identified, and are less likely to have been broken up than lay estates. However, once again any religious houses that do not have any exemptions anywhere in the country must be ignored, on the grounds that they may have been enjoying unrecorded universal exemptions. This excludes from this analysis the Bishop of Exeter and the abbots of Glastonbury, Malmesbury,

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<sup>1</sup> Other examples of ecclesiasts not found at all in the Pipe Roll are the Bishop of Exeter, the Bishop of Wells, the Bishop of Worcester, the Bishop of Chichester, the Bishop of London, the Abbot of Chertsey.

<sup>2</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 37, 67-8, 70

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 221-222v, (Northamptonshire 6, 1-17); GDB, 231 (Leicestershire 5, 1-2).

Shaftesbury, Wilton, Cranborne, Horton, Athelney, Romsey, Tavistock, and Cerne, as well as the small Cornish institutions. Meanwhile, we know that Bishop Roger of Salisbury added very large amounts of land to his diocese, so it is not possible to compare his estates with the diocese's estates in 1086.<sup>1</sup> The monks of Bec were exempted of considerably more geld in the Pipe Roll than the lands of Bec could possibly have paid in Wiltshire 1086 (28s 6d in the Pipe Roll, compared to 10 hides in Domesday Book, which can have rendered a maximum of 20s in 1129-30), so we can only assume the abbey had been granted more land since 1086.<sup>2</sup> The Abbess of Winchester also had marginally more of an exemption in Wiltshire in 1129-30 than she could have enjoyed on the total of her 1086 estates (102s exempted in the Pipe Roll, whereas her predecessor held 48 hides, 1 ½ virgates, which if all were exempted would only amount to £96s 9d).<sup>3</sup> Of course these examples remind us of how comparisons between 1129-30 and 1086 can never be certain, as individuals and institutions inevitably acquired and alienated property over the best part of five decades.

There are, however, a few comparisons that can be made for a small number of ecclesiastical institutions. The Abbess of Amesbury was exempted for 18 ¾ demesne hides in Wiltshire in 1086; in 1129-30 she was exempted for 36s, almost exactly what we would expect if fiscal demesne determined exemption.<sup>4</sup> This is, however, the only case where the 1086 demesne exemption and the 1129-30 exemption nearly match. The Abbot of Milton was exempted of 38 ¾ hides in Dorset 1086, which would equate to 77s 6d for a 2s geld.<sup>5</sup> However, the abbot was only exempted of 60s in Dorset in the 1129-30 Pipe Roll, suggesting its basis of exemption was based on something less generous than fiscal demesne.<sup>6</sup> The Bishop of Lisieux was exempted of 3 hides and 2 ½ virgates in Wiltshire in 1086, but was not exempted of anything in Wiltshire in 1129-30, even though he was

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<sup>1</sup> B. R. Kemp, 'Salisbury, Roger of (d. 1139)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23956>, (accessed 10 Sept 2017).

<sup>2</sup> GDB, 68v (Wiltshire 17, 1); PR 31 Henry I, 17.

<sup>3</sup> GDB, 68 (Wiltshire 14, 1-2); PR 31 Henry I, 12.

<sup>4</sup> 'Geld Rolls', ed. Darlington, 179-80, 194, 199; PR 31 Henry I, 18.

<sup>5</sup> 'Geld Rolls', ed. Williams, 130, 132, 134-5, 136, 143, 145, 146-7.

<sup>6</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 12.

exempted in another shire, Essex.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that he was receiving no exemption on fiscal demesne in Wiltshire in 1129-30. Conversely, the Abbess of Winchester was exempted of 12 hides of demesne in Wiltshire in 1086, but was exempted of 102s (51 hides equivalent) in 1129-30.<sup>2</sup>

However, the clearest evidence that the exemptions of the Pipe Roll were not a function of fiscal demesne is that the Pipe Roll sometimes records geld exemptions for an entire fief. There are three good examples of this apparent occurrence. The abbot of St Stephen's, Caen, was exempted of 20 ¼ hides in Dorset in 1086, but was exempted of 71s in the Pipe Roll, which is equivalent to 35 ½ hides, the exact amount the abbot held in Dorset in total in 1086.<sup>3</sup> This suggests the abbot was granted an exemption in 1129-30 on all of his Dorset land; fiscal demesne was not the determining factor. The same is true of the abbess of Caen in Dorset. She was exempted of 20s in the 1129-30 Pipe Roll<sup>4</sup>; her abbey, Holy Trinity Caen, held 10 hides in 1086, suggesting that all of the abbey's hides were exempted in 1129-30.<sup>5</sup> This represented an extension of exemption from 4 hides of fiscal demesne in the Geld Account of 1086.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the church of Rouen was exempted of 56s in 1129-30 in Devon<sup>7</sup>; it held 28 hides in Devon in 1086, suggesting that in 1129-30 it was exempted on all of its Devon hides. Its fiscal demesne was just 6 hides according to the 1086 Geld Account.<sup>8</sup> The level of its exemption had been extended since 1086.

While none of these pieces of evidence on their own constitute conclusive evidence that the exemptions of the 1129-30 Pipe Roll were not generally determined by fiscal demesne, they together clearly point toward that conclusion. What then might have been the alternative systems

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<sup>1</sup> VCH Wiltshire, 180; PR 31 Henry I, 47.

<sup>2</sup> VCH Wiltshire, 196, 199; PR 31 Henry I, 18.

<sup>3</sup> VCH Dorset, III 146-8; PR 31 Henry I, 12; GDB, 78v (Dorset 17, 1-2).

<sup>4</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 12.

<sup>5</sup> GDB, 79, (Dorset 21, 1).

<sup>6</sup> VCH Dorset, III, 138,

<sup>7</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 124.

<sup>8</sup> GDB, 104, (Devon 10, 1-2); *The Devonshire Domesday*, ed. Devonshire Association, xxxii-xxxiii.

behind exemption in 1129-30, and under Henry I in general? They were probably the result of a bargain between the king and the landholders for a certain number of hides or amount of money to be exempted from Danegeld. Such exemptions could have been subject to annual or periodic review.

It seems that Henry's new system of individual exemptions was about as costly to Henry as the Conqueror's blanket demesne exemptions had been to him. The advantages of such a system was that it afforded the king scope to exercise patronage. Rather than giving away or selling portions of land or reducing quotas of knights, the king could give or sell an exemption on Danegeld, which in most cases he could most likely have taken away again. While it is impossible to prove that exemptions listed in the 1129-30 Pipe Roll were not considered permanent – for we do not have a later Pipe Roll of Henry I – there is suggestive evidence that indeed they were not. Perhaps the most obvious evidence was the apparent need to record the exemptions in the Pipe Roll at all. Most of the ecclesiastical institutions for which charters survive that grant total exemption do not appear in the Pipe Roll lists of exemptions – Dover Priory, Bury St Edmunds Abbey, Glastonbury Abbey, Worcester Priory, Beverley Minster and Westminster Abbey.<sup>1</sup> The exceptions are Colchester Abbey and possibly Reading Abbey; both of these received total exemptions by charter during Henry's reign, but both abbeys still appear in the Pipe Roll exemption lists.<sup>2</sup> However, the charter of 1127 granting freedom from geld to Reading Abbey is suspect, and it is interesting that both Colchester and Reading were renewed exemption by charters soon after 1129, suggesting that they had perhaps been wrongly demanded of geld in 1129-30.<sup>3</sup> Then there is the fact that there were generally fewer individual exemptions given in Henry II's Pipe Rolls than under Henry I, and Green notes that the abbeys of Cluny, Lewes and Fécamp are missing from the lists of exemptions under Henry II, whereas they are

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<sup>1</sup> *Regesta*, nos. 570, 658, 895, 940, 1112, 1240.

<sup>2</sup> *Regesta*, no. 568; *Reading Abbey Cartularies: British Library manuscripts: Egerton 3031, Harley 1708 and Cotton Vespasian E xxv. I, General documents and those relating to English counties other than Berkshire*, ed. B. R. Kemp (Camden 4<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 31, 1986), no. 2; PR 31 Henry I, 44, 47, 82, 99, 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Regesta* no. 1822 (dating limits c.1130-1133); *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, ed. Kemp, no. 7 (datable c.1129x1135).

present in 1129-30, suggesting their exemptions had at least not been permanent.<sup>1</sup> Green argues that each exemption granted on a temporary basis had to be re-claimed each year; this is the inference to be drawn from Stephen Count of Mortain in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, who was pardoned his debt of Danegeld of 102s 5d for the previous year (1128-9) but evidently had either not claimed or failed to secure the same exemption for the new year, as this precise figure was left owing by the sheriff, and the count had no exemption to his name.<sup>2</sup> The same was true in Hertfordshire, where £7 15s 1d was pardoned to the count for the previous year, but that same amount was left owing by the sheriff for the new year.<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey de Mandeville also appears to have failed to secure most of his exemptions in 1129-30; he was pardoned in five shires for the previous year, but this was not repeated for the next year.<sup>4</sup> In Warwickshire, Middlesex and Berkshire there can be no doubt that Geoffrey paid, for not only was no exemption granted to him, but the sheriffs cleared the new Danegeld account in Warwickshire and Middlesex, owing nothing more, while in Berkshire they had only 32s outstanding, when Geoffrey had been pardoned 110s for the preceding Danegeld in that shire.<sup>5</sup> Only in Oxfordshire did Geoffrey receive an exemption in 1129-30.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that his exemptions had either been officially cancelled for the new year, or else he had been late to claim them, just as he had been late to claim for the previous year, but this time the sheriff had collected from him or his estate managers without waiting. If exemptions did have to be re-claimed and re-confirmed each year, this would explain why such a high proportion of Danegeld left outstanding from the previous year was pardoned; in most cases the claim was genuine, but was simply put in late. Overall then, the evidence points strongly toward the conclusion that the exemptions recorded in the Pipe Roll were granted only on a temporary basis, and probably had to be claimed and re-confirmed each year; moreover they could be and sometimes were withdrawn.

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<sup>1</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 251; PR 31 Henry I, 106, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 250-1; PR 31 Henry I, 7, 9.

<sup>3</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 48, 49.

<sup>4</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 45, 81, 85, 98, 119.

<sup>5</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 86, 119-20, 99.

<sup>6</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 5.

The consequence of this is that in temporary exemptions Henry had a carrot and a stick with which to reward loyalty or punish bad behaviour, although it seems unlikely he could have withdrawn all such exemptions at the same time merely to raise money. Possessing a writ of exemption may well have been a kind of status symbol or a source of pride for its holder, far more than having demesne exempted just like one's peers. This may have instilled more loyalty to the Crown, as it was not something that could be taken for granted, even for the richer and greater nobles. Perhaps the king could even bestow or withdraw exemption just for one year as a reward or punishment.

The disadvantages of the system may well have been that Henry was not able to raise land taxes at such a high rate as his father, cutting his potential revenue. The loudest complaints about taxation in Henry's reign was for the 3s 'aid' for his daughter's marriage; in Rufus's reign the highest we know that was raised was a 4s geld, and in the Conqueror's reign probably at least two 6s gelds.<sup>1</sup> It may be that Henry did raise Danegeld from time to time at a rate of higher than 2s, as there were several years in which the *Chronicle* recorded gelds whereas it did not record them in others, and as we have seen, the chroniclers tended to record exceptionally high gelds, but was not necessarily moved to comment about more routine imposts. However, it seems highly unlikely that Henry could ever have levied a 6s geld, even if he had wanted to. Not even Rufus seems to have attempted this.

Without automatic exemption of demesne in place for his greatest men to cushion the blow, Henry would have even less political support needed to levy at the higher rate. If that is so, then by 1130, the king of England had probably lost a good deal of revenue generating capacity from Danegeld – possibly even by as much as half if the 3s levy of 1110 was the highest Henry ever raised. However, the power the new system of exemption gave Henry in terms of patronage may have helped compensate for this loss of revenue.

Furthermore, a total of £1,811, that is some 42%, of the total demanded was exempted in 1129-30. The 1086 Geld Accounts record 33% of the hidage in the southwestern shires as being exempted on

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 195-200, 141-142.

the strength of being demesne hides.<sup>1</sup> The scale of exemptions, therefore, appear to have increased between 1086 and 1129-30, though it is of course a limited comparison, as only five shires are recorded in the 1086 Geld Accounts.

### **Royal demesne**

The Pipe Roll suggests that at least some royal manors paid Danegeld. By listing some royal manors as exempt by the king's writ, it indicates that these manors were not automatically exempt simply by virtue of being the king's property.<sup>2</sup> Specifically exempted manors include some manors which were royal demesne in 1066, some that became royal demesne by 1086, and some which were not royal demense at the time Domesday. A clear example of a manor that had been at least been largely royal property since before 1066 was Woking, Surrey; 'the king's demesne of Woking' was specifically granted an exemption of 44s in the Pipe Roll.<sup>3</sup> Woking is the first royal manor listed in Surrey Domesday Book, and was 'of the farm of King Edward',<sup>4</sup> though some hides must have been added to it since, as it was only rated at 15 ½ hides in 1066, and 22 hides is the implied by the Pipe Roll's sum. In 1129-30, the strong suggestion is that without such an individual specific exemption by writ, the manor was expected to pay. As well as the few other examples of royal exemption in the Pipe Roll, we can suspect that there were many more royal lands not mentioned because they were paying Danegeld in 1129-30.

### **Conclusion – How much could Henry I raise from Danegeld?**

Henry I appears to have raised considerably less from the geld than his father. The highest recorded rate of tax under Henry was 3s, under his elder brother 4s, and under his father 6s. Many sheriffs were demanded to account for considerably less Danegeld in 1129-30 than was allowable by

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<sup>1</sup> S. Baxter and C. Lewis, (forthcoming, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 5, 9, 18, 27, 36, 40, 52, 53, 59, 63, 68, 75, 79, 81, 83, 95, 99, 106.

<sup>3</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 40.

<sup>4</sup> GDB, 30, (Surrey 1, 2).

Domesday Book in 1086; probably around £5,223 was demanded for a 2s geld in 1129-30 when Domesday Book suggests as much as £6,908 might have been demanded at such a rate.<sup>1</sup> The driving force behind this statistic was the apparent reduction of hidages between 1086 and 1129-30, including a special rates in Leicestershire and Yorkshire. Even controlling for these two anomalous shires, amounts demanded in 1129-30 suggest an overall reduction of 15% in shires directly comparable with Domesday.

Meanwhile, the new system of individual exemptions actually appears to have cost Henry more than the generic exemptions of the demesne portions of demesne manors had done under his father: 42% of the Danegeld was pardoned under Henry I, compared to 33% in the southwest under his father.<sup>2</sup> However, the number of hides that did not pay in the south-west in 1085-86 was just over 13% of the total, meaning that non-payment decreased sharply between 1086 and 1129-30, when only 4% was not paid.<sup>3</sup> This improvement balances the amount of geld lost through increased exemption: both William and Henry collected 54% of demanded geld. However, we should not be surprised that a 6s geld caused roughly three times the number of instances of non-payment as a 2s geld, as much higher taxes were, of course, much harder to pay; it is unlikely Henry could have maintained such a low non-payment rate had he tried levying Danegeld at 4s or 6s per hide.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a large proportion of the unpaid geld in 1086 is attributed to royal manors, which may well have not paid geld at all in that year, whereas we know many did in 1129-30.<sup>5</sup>

In sum, even had Henry I been able to demand a land tax of 6s per hide at a 4% non-payment rate - and it is very doubtful that he could have done - the amounts he was demanding from the shires and the rates of exemption suggest he might only have been able to collect three-quarters of what his father could by this method, that is £8,461 (54% of the projected total demanded in 1129-30

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 229.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 239, Baxter and Lewis (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Baxter and Lewis, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Baxter and Lewis, forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> See above, 173-174; 240.

multiplied by 3), assuming William could raise £11,191 (54% collection rate of 69,080 hides paying 6s). Had William taxed his royal manors, as Henry did at least in part, the difference might have been even greater. As it is Henry appears never to have levied a geld greater than 3s, collecting perhaps £4,230 from the land tax for his daughter's marriage in 1109-10, around 38% of what his father might have raised in 1086.

## Danegeld in the reign of King Stephen

Henry of Huntingdon informs us that in 1135 King Stephen 'vowed that Danegeld – that is the 2s per hide which his predecessors used to collect every year – he would remit for all time' (*uouit quod danegeldum, id est duos solidos ad hidam, quos antecessores sui accipere solebant singulis annis, in eternum condonaret*).<sup>1</sup> This, Henry claims, was one of Stephen's 'chief vows to God, and there were others, but he did not keep any of them' (*principaliter Deo uouit, et alia, sed nichil horum tenuit*).<sup>2</sup> This claim that gelds were levied in the time of King Stephen is corroborated by John of Worcester, who, writing no later than 1141, said in his annal for 1130 in reference to King Henry's promise to not levy the 'Danish tax' for seven years:

Hoc etiam rex Stephanus qui nunc imperat in regali decreto suo promisit, Danicum scilicet tributum se nullatenus exacturum. Verum in Deo odibili periurio, auribus hausit tributum per Angliam exigi.<sup>3</sup>

King Stephen, who now reigns, also promised in a royal decree that he would never collect the Danish tax. We hear that it is again demanded throughout England by a perjury odious to God.

It would not be especially surprising if Stephen did renege on such a promise during a time of civil war. It is, however, possible that Stephen never made the pledge in the first place. Two 'charters of liberties' that Stephen issued in December 1135 and April 1136 make no mention of this alleged

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<sup>1</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia*, ed. and trans. Greenway, 704-5.

<sup>2</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia*, ed. and trans. Greenway, 704-5.

<sup>3</sup> John of Worcester, III, ed. and trans. McGurk, 202-3.

promise to never collect Danegeld; these would seem a natural place to declare such a promise, not least since King Henry I had done so in his own coronation 'edict'.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, charter evidence suggesting that Stephen did collect geld during his reign. A writ dated by Crouch to between 1145 and 1154 commands William Martel to do justice between 'the abbot of Chertsey and the other tenants of the abbot of Westminster...who deprive him of his rights and have not acquitted their tenements of the Danegeld due to the king' (*qui ei deforciant rectitudines suas et de hoc quod non acquietaverunt tenuras suas versus me de danegeldo*).<sup>2</sup> Another writ of Stephen, at an unknown date in his reign, exempts Coxford Priory of 12d of Danegeld for land at Stanhoe, Norfolk.<sup>3</sup> According to a record of a lawsuit which took place in 1153, the shire court of Kent heard that Ralph Picot the sheriff, or onetime sheriff, had wrongly levied Danegeld from the demesne lands of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury:

Eylwardintune est terra monachorum ecclesie Christi Cantuariensis et de mensa eorum [...] De ista eadem terra quidam vicecomes, Radulphus Picot nomine, scottum et denegeldum et de murthru et cetera que de terris reddi solent exigebat injuste. Tandem autem, post multos sermones et placita inde habita, ventum est in comitatum quem idem Radulfus apud Castamers tenuit. Et ibi, per iudicium tocius comitatus, ostensum et diracionatum est a iusticiis vel ministris regis vel ab alio aliquo nichil omnino de predictis exigi vel accipi debere ... quia dominica terra eorum est.<sup>4</sup>

Elverton is land of the monks of Christ Church at Canterbury and belongs to their table [...] From this land a certain sheriff called Ralph Picot unjustly demanded scot, Danegeld, murdrum and other dues which lands usually yield. Finally, after many speeches and pleadings the case came before the shire court, which this same Ralph held at Keston, and there by the judgement of the whole shire it was shown and deraigned by justices and ministers of the king and other people that nothing of the aforesaid should be demanded or received [...] since it is their demesne land.

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<sup>1</sup> *Regesta*, eds. Cronne and Davis, nos., 270, 271.

<sup>2</sup> *RRAN*, III, no. 934; H. A. Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen 1135-54: Anarchy in England* (London, 1970), 230.

<sup>3</sup> *RRAN*, III, no. 248.

<sup>4</sup> *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I*, ed. R. C. van Caenegem (London, 1990), I, 296-7

Crouch has made the point that this record of the lawsuit, likely drawn up sometime after the event, might reflect the assumptions on the part of the author of what was demanded rather than what was actually demanded of the monks; Danegeld is lumped together with scot, murdrum 'et cetera' in a manner similar to many other charters describing the various royal exactions in the Anglo-Norman age.<sup>1</sup> Somewhat problematic for the reliability of the document is that it implies that demesne lands ought to be quit of Danegeld; this I have shown to be highly unlikely to have been the case, at least by the time of Henry I's Pipe Roll of 1129-30, when neither directly held estates, nor the demesne portions of directly held estates, were exempted as a rule.<sup>2</sup> It may be, however, that the monks of Christ Church were by law or custom exempt on their demesne: there are several examples of explicitly exempt demesnes in the Pipe Roll of 1129-30 – though they are exceptions rather than the rule. That the precise liability of this demesne of Christ Church had apparently been the subject of 'many speeches and pleadings', suggests that this was a particularly complex case in which an exceptional custom may have applied. In all, this lawsuit is evidence, if not quite compelling evidence, that Danegeld was levied at least in those shires under Stephen's close control. The cumulative effect of this evidence is strongly to suggest that King Stephen raising Danegeld at least on occasion in certain areas during his reign.

## Danegeld in the reign of Henry II

After the disruption of Stephen's reign, Danegeld was never again collected on an annual basis as it was in the time of Henry I before he refrained from collecting it from 1131 until his death. Danegelds are recorded by the Pipe Rolls as having been collected in 1155-6 and 1161-2; however there are Pipe Rolls for nearly every year of Henry's reign, and in no others does Danegeld feature.<sup>3</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (Harlow, 2000), 334.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 231-239.

<sup>3</sup> *The Great Rolls of the Pipe for the Second, Third, and Fourth years of the Reign of King Henry the Second, A. D. 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158*, ed. J. Hunter (London, 1844); *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Eighth Year of the Reign of King Henry II A.D. 1161–1162*, Pipe Roll Society Volume 5 (London, 1885).

represents an extraordinary decline in frequency, the reasons for which can only really be guessed at given the lack of other evidence on the matter.

Danegeld is mentioned just a handful of times in Richard Fitz Nigel's great fiscal manual, the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, and in only one place does the treasurer expound his understanding of the tax. He correctly places the origins of Danegeld to the time of Viking invasions, and the need to pay for mercenaries to defend the realm.<sup>1</sup> He says that the rate was two shillings from every hide, and that until the Norman Conquest, Danegeld was an annual impost.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these statements are strictly accurate, for as we have seen the *heregeld* was abolished in 1051, even if other land taxes may have continued to be levied at different rates. However, we cannot expect Fitz Nigel to have known the detailed history of the pre-Conquest geld. More interestingly, he says that William the Conqueror ended the practice of levying geld each year, and that it was 'it was paid rarely under him and his successors; that is, when war or rumours of war arose from foreign nations' (*raro igitur temporibus eius uel successorum ipsius solutus est; hoc est cum ab exteris gentibus bella uel opinionones bellorum insurgabant*).<sup>3</sup> This is a more surprising misunderstanding for a treasurer who professed to know much about exchequer practice under Henry I; as we have seen there are strong reasons to believe that William I, William II and Henry I raised geld annually, or at least very frequently.<sup>4</sup>

We may be justified in thinking therefore that Fitz Nigel was transposing the reality of Danegeld collection in his own time onto the past, and that it was in Henry II's reign an emergency tax, paid 'when wars with foreign peoples or rumours of wars arose.' His only other contribution to our knowledge on the matter concerns exemptions. The barons of the Exchequer were completely exempt from Danegeld, and sheriffs were exempt on their demesne estates 'because of the hard

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. E. Amt (Oxford, 2007) 84-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt, 84-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt, 84-7.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 217.

work they do collecting the tax' (*propter laboriosam eiusdem census collectam*).<sup>1</sup> Domesday, Fitz Nigel is at pains to say, means the sheriffs' directly held estates in their entirety, not just the demesne portions of these estates:

Noueris autem dominia cuiuslibet hec dici que propriis sumptibus uel laboribus excoluntur, et item que ab ascriptitiis suis suo nomine possidentur. Quia enim ascriptitii de regni iure non solum ab his que modo possident ad alia loca a dominis suis transferri possunt, uerum etiam ipsi quoque licite uenduntur uel quomodolibet distrahuntur, merito tam ipsi, quam terre quas excolunt ut dominis suis seruiant, dominia reputantur.<sup>2</sup>

You should know that a person's demesnes are the lands that are cultivated at his own cost or by his own labours, and also those that are held by his villeins in his name. For because the villeins, by the law of the realm, can not only be transferred from one place to another by their lords, but are also lawfully sold tor otherwise disposed of, they themselves are rightfully considered demesne, along with the lands they cultivate in serving their lords.

For sheriffs at least, this constituted a greater exemption than the system of exemption of the demesne parts of directly held manors that operated in the reign of William I and which Henry I appears to have abolished. Fitz Nigel records no other broad exemptions for the church or laity.

The proceeds of Danegeld are described in two Pipe Rolls: the roll of 1155-6 and the roll of 1161-2. While Henry I's 1129-30 Pipe Roll was missing Herefordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Somerset and Worcestershire, as well as the Danegeld entry for Hampshire, the 1155-6 Pipe Roll is missing the Danegeld liability from Norfolk, Suffolk and Cornwall, while the 1162 Pipe Roll is missing just the latter shire. However, in those shires common to all three Pipe Rolls; the Danegeld demanded from each in 1155-6 is remarkably similar to the that demanded twenty-six years earlier. Below I replicate Graeme White's comparison:

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<sup>1</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt, 86-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt, 86-7.

**Table 18. Danegeld Liability under Henry I and Henry II<sup>1</sup>**

Shire	Liability 1129-30			Liability 1155-6			Liability 1161-2		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Warwickshire	128	12	6	128	12	6	118	11	1
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire	108	8	6	112	1	11	92	3	0
Leicestershire	100	0	0	99	19	11	99	19	4
Oxfordshire	239	9	3	249	6	5	242	0	10
Berkshire	200	1	3	205	11	4	177	12	8
Buckinghamshire & Bedfordshire	315	6	7	315	6	8	315	6	0
Northamptonshire	119	5	7	119	10	9	109	10	7
Gloucestershire	179	11	8	194	1	6	177	19	0
Cambridgeshire	114	15	0	114	14	9	104	14	9
Worcestershire				101	6	0	101	6	0
Hertfordshire	110	1	4	110	1	3	100	1	1
Lincolnshire	256	12	0	265	19	8	266	0	0
Essex	236	8	0	236	8	0	216	8	0
Wiltshire	388	13	0	389	13	0	343	10	6
Herefordshire				93	15	6	93	1	6
Huntingdonshire	70	5	0	70	5	0	65	6	0
Somerset				277	10	4	277	10	0
Staffordshire	44	0	11	44	1	0	42	1	0
Surrey	175	1	0	184	16	0	163	10	0
Rutland	11	12	0	11	12	0	11	12	0
Middlesex	85	0	6	85	0	6	85	12	0
Devon	81	18	6	103	19	8	93	19	8
Dorset	228	5	0	228	5	0	248	5	0
Yorkshire	165	19	6	165	9	5	145	9	5
Shropshire				117	18	6	117	16	0
Sussex	209	18	6	217	0	6	210	15	0
Kent	105	2	10	105	16	10	105	16	10
Hampshire				175	5	0	184	15	4
Norfolk	330	2	2				330	0	0
Suffolk	235	0	8	14	3	8	235	0	0
Cornwall	22	15	10						
Northumberland	100	0	0						
Isle of Wight	13	1	0						

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from G. White, 'Were the Midlands "wasted" during Stephen's Reign?', *Midland History* 10 (1985).

The table shows that in 1155-6 and 1161-2 Danegelds were levied at 2s per hide, and were based on very similar, in most shires near-identical, patterns of assessment as in 1129-30. There are enough small differences in the amounts demanded to suggest that the treasury was not merely using previous Pipe Rolls to demand the exact same amount each time; rather they still appear to be based on the up to date numbers of hides or carucates within the hundreds and wapentakes of the shires, adjusted slightly probably by negotiations between landholders and royal officials, or perhaps through the resolution of disputes over hidages. But the numbers in each shire were not fundamentally altered in 33 years, including in 18 years of civil war.

While assessments had not significantly changed, there are some important differences in terms of what was actually collected. Chief among these in 1155-6 was an extra line that accounted for the amount written off 'in wasto' (waste). Waste accounted for £1,106 of uncollected Danegeld in that year.<sup>1</sup> This line is not present in the 1129-30 or 1161-2 account, apart from in the latter for just a handful of shires, accounting for a total of just £8 16s 11d of waived Danegeld.<sup>2</sup> Pardons to named individuals dramatically declined from the levels under Henry I; only around 20% (£928) of the amount demanded was exempted in this way, whereas 42% (£1,811) had been in 1130. However, in 1161-62, exemptions accounted for £1583 (32%), while waste had been virtually eliminated.<sup>3</sup> This shows that the level of exemption had recovered somewhat between 1156 and 1162, but was still some way off that of 1129-30.

There has been some discussion about how far the amount of waste in the 1155-6 Pipe Roll corresponded to the economic devastation of Stephen's reign.<sup>4</sup> White's contribution to this debate

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<sup>1</sup> E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government Restored, 1149-1159* (Woodbridge, 1993), 178.

<sup>2</sup> White, 'Were the Midlands wasted', 43.

<sup>3</sup> White, 'Were the Midlands wasted', 42-4.

<sup>4</sup> White, 'Were the Midlands "wasted"?', 26-46; G. White, *Restoration and Reform, 1153-1165: Recovery from Civil War in England* (Cambridge, 2000), 155-7; H. W. C. Davis, 'The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign', *English Historical Review*, XVIII (1903), 630-41; A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Oxford, 1955), 151-3; Green, 'Last Century', 251-2; E. J. King, 'The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> ser. XXXIV (1984), 143-6.

is the most substantial. He argues that the sums of 'waste' recorded in the Pipe Roll of 1155-6 'read as if a central authority, the exchequer, had accepted a plea of poverty and made an informed, but necessarily arbitrary, decision on the amount to be written off in pounds, shillings or marks.'<sup>1</sup> He expands: 'accordingly – in most shires' accounts if not all – the figure needed to bridge the gap between what had been collected or could otherwise be formally accounted for, and what the total liability was known to be, was inserted under this heading [waste].'<sup>2</sup> He speculates that 'disputed claims to exemption were dealt with by recourse to the items 'owing', pending subsequent decisions, but there must have been so many unresolved issues arising from this levy that 'waste' became the most convenient means to close the accounts.'<sup>3</sup> The lists of individual exemptions in the 1154-5 account are shorter than those of 1129-30, and considerably less was exempted in this way than under Henry I. If White is correct then 'waste' had a dual purpose; it stood in for many of the individual exemptions granted by Henry I, which were now disputed, and it recognised some of the economic devastation of Stephen's reign.

In absolute terms, a little less Danegeld was paid overall in directly comparable shires in 1154-5 than in 1129-30 (£1773 vs £1964), but a little more was paid in 1161-2 (£2025). The value of money is likely to have been similar in the 1150s and 1160s as it was in the 1130s; inflation only rose from the 1180s onwards.<sup>4</sup> However, in relative terms, the narrative is different. In 1129-30 Danegeld accounted for only 11% of the total paid into the treasury (£2,489 out of £22,865); in 1154-5 it accounted 26% using Amt's figures (£2,386 out of a total paid of £9,222).<sup>5</sup> In 1161-2 Danegeld accounted for 21% of the paid in total, using Ramsey's figures (£3,132 out of £14,940).<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in the years it was raised the Danegeld's relative size in proportion to other revenue had roughly

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<sup>1</sup> White, *Restoration*, 156.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Restoration*, 157.

<sup>3</sup> White, *Restoration*, 157.

<sup>4</sup> N. Barratt, 'The Revenue of King John', *English Historical Review* 111, 852-3.

<sup>5</sup> Amt, *Accession*, 192. Green reckoned it was only 19%, working from her own Danegeld figure, and Ramsey's overall 'paid in and accounted for figure', Green, 'Last Century', 254; J. H. Ramsey, *A History of the Revenues of the Kings of England 1066-1399* (Oxford, 1925), I, 68.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsey, *Revenues*, 78-80.

doubled since 1129-30, rendering it still an extremely valuable resource. However, these high relative proportions are driven by much lower overall revenues, not from higher Danegeld proceeds. Henry II was struggling to rebuild the Crown's financial strength; income from county farms especially had been severely curtailed by the Anarchy of Stephen's reign, and overall revenue was less than half his grandfather's.

After 1162, the Pipe Rolls do not include sections detailing the payment, non-payment and exemption of Danegeld. However, there are hints that Danegeld continued to be levied, or attempted to be levied, into the 1170s. In the Pipe Roll of 1173-4, forty marks are described as owing from Osbert de Bray, who had not paid Danegeld on his demesne.<sup>1</sup> This could potentially have been a very old debt. However, in the 1174-5 roll, a payment of 1 mark was made to the usher of the exchequer for issuing the writs of summons for a Danegeld throughout England.<sup>2</sup> If this Danegeld were collected, or at least started to have been collected, in that year, then it bears out Richard Fitz Nigel's belief that Danegeld was only a tax collected when the realm was in military danger, for Flemish and Scottish forces invaded England in 1173, and King Louis of France launched a campaign against Normandy that lasted until the summer of 1174.<sup>3</sup> While it is possible that during this period Danegelds were collected but accounted for separately from the Pipe Roll, this would seem unlikely given that Fitz Nigel, probably writing in 1176-7 does not mention such special methods of accounting for it, and in fact he rather seems to imply that it was normally recorded in the Pipe Rolls.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, as Green suggests, this was an aborted attempt at levying a Danegeld it might not have got much further than the usher issuing the summons.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PR 20 Henry II, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> PR 21 Henry II, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), 125-136.

<sup>4</sup> *Dialogus*, ed. Amt, 72, 156.

<sup>5</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 254.

## The demise of the land tax

There were several attempts at reinstating and reforming the land tax after Henry's death, under the name of 'carucage'. In order to pay for the remainder of his ransom in 1194, Richard I levied a land tax of 2s per hide or carucate.<sup>1</sup> Maitland found evidence in Wiltshire Hundredal Rolls from that year pointing towards the hidage of various hundreds being much the same as they had been more than a century earlier.<sup>2</sup> These same rolls testify that there were apparently no widespread exemptions to the land tax this year, either based on demesne, or individually granted, or otherwise. The only other discernable major difference between this tax and earlier Danegelds was that it was collected by itinerant justices working together with sheriffs rather than by hundredal collectors, who appear in the Pipe Roll of 1130 as well as, of course, the Geld Accounts of 1086.<sup>3</sup>

In 1198, Richard raised another land tax at 5s to the hide or carucate. This time, however, the government attempted to reform the assessment units so that they were comprised of 100 acres of actual tillable land.<sup>4</sup> An extraordinary effort appears to have been made to make the re-assessment successful. A survey with parallels to Domesday was carried out. A knight and a clerk of the treasury were sent out to each shire to hear on oath declarations of the number of tillable acres directly from estate managers and reeves together with 'four lawful men of the vill' and 'two knights of the hundred'.<sup>5</sup> They were given the power to punish any false declarations. Four drafts of each survey were made; one for the treasury clerk, one for the knight sent to the shire, one for the sheriff, and one for the estate managers.<sup>6</sup> This re-assessment does not appear to have been a success, for the land tax was not levied again on this basis. In 1200, King John levied yet another carucage, this time

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<sup>1</sup> M. Jurkowski, C. L. Smith and D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales 1188-1688* (Kew, 1998), 4; S. K. Mitchell, *Taxation in Medieval England* (New Haven, 1951), 127-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Three Rolls of the King's Court in the Reign of Richard I, A.D. 1194-1195*, ed. F. W. Maitland (Pipe Roll Soc, 1891), xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 5-6; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 128-131;

<sup>5</sup> *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series 51, 4 vols. (London, 1868-1871), IV, 46-7; *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden: Comprising the history of England and of other countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201*, trans. H. T. Riley, 2 vols. (London, 1853), II, 420-2.

based on the number of ploughteams working on an estate.<sup>1</sup> The rate was 3s per ploughteam. Once again it appears that this experiment was not considered a great enough success for it to be repeated. In 1217 Henry III's government levied a 3s land tax based on earlier hides and carucates, but there was no attempt by central government to measure these; they relied on the testimony of sheriffs and a group of appointed knights within each shire to validate the numbers of hides.<sup>2</sup> Mitchell pointed out that accuracy was unlikely to have been at the forefront of the government's mind, since it was then in desperate need of cash to fight the invading Prince Louis of France.<sup>3</sup> This was the final recorded attempt to levy land tax using the Anglo-Saxon system of hidage, but not quite the last land tax levied. In 1220 a carucage was levied, this time on a similar basis to the one levied by King John in 1200; it was assessed at 2s per ploughteam.<sup>4</sup> Finally, in 1224, another carucage based on ploughteams was levied on the clergy only, at a rate of half a mark per ploughteam on their demesnes and 2s for those of their sub-tenants.<sup>5</sup>

The decline of the land tax should be seen in the light of the rise of feudal income that the Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings greatly profited from, though to different extents at different times. As Galbraith said, 'it was on what historians call 'the incidents of feudal tenure' that the Norman king really lived – things like marriages, wardships, the sale of 'honours', lands and offices, and above all on 'fines' for every conceivable privilege or for regaining the King's favour after every little quarrel.'<sup>6</sup> The coronation charter of Henry I, and as Baxter argues, Domesday Book itself, show that from a very early stage after the Norman Conquest, this change of fiscal culture had already advanced significantly.<sup>7</sup> The Pipe Roll of 1129-30 includes copious numbers of feudal demands on behalf of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 6; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 131; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, IV, 107.

<sup>2</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 8-9; S. K. Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation under John and Henry III* (New Haven, 1914), 121-9.

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell, *Taxation*, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 9-10; Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation*, 129-36; D. A. Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (London, 1990), 206-7, 223-5.

<sup>5</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 11; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 137-8.

<sup>6</sup> V. H. Galbraith, *Studies in the Public Records* (London, 1948), 104-5.

<sup>7</sup> 'Henry I Coronation Charter', ed. and trans Sharpe; S. Baxter, 'Placing Domesday', in S. Baxter, J. Crick, C. Lewis and F. Thorn, *Making Domesday: The Conqueror's Survey in Context*, Studies in Exon Domesday II, general editor J. Crick (Oxford, forthcoming).

king; the total demanded and paid from feudal incidents in that year greatly exceeds that of Danegeld.<sup>1</sup> It seems highly likely that in 1131, when Henry I pledged to abandon the 'danish tax' after he was nearly killed at sea, he was expediently giving into existing pressure.<sup>2</sup> Green has pointed out that the very term 'Danegeld' was an anachronism, one which surprisingly only came into use from the late eleventh century onwards.<sup>3</sup> However, it was not just the nomenclature of the tax that had become anachronistic by 1131; the entire fiscal culture had transferred onto a feudal footing. Danegeld also began to face competition from other kinds of taxes, which were not quite feudal incidents but certainly appear to have been politically negotiated, unsystematic exactions. In Henry I's Pipe Roll we see glimpses of a tax called the *dona regis*, as well as *auxilia* from boroughs, cities and counties. The nature of the *dona regis* is not clear; it was owed by the burgesses of Grantham in one instance and by an individual, Walter son of Witso, in Pembrokeshire in the other.<sup>4</sup> The *auxilia*, meanwhile, were levies on boroughs, cities, or entire shires. The rates demanded appear to have been arbitrarily assessed or agreed round figures: Hertford, for example, owed £10 of an *auxilium burgi*, Guildford £5 and Southwark £5.<sup>5</sup> London owed £120 for an *auxilium ciuitatis*, for which Canterbury owed £30, and Winchester £15.<sup>6</sup> The *auxilium comitatus* was left owing from previous years, so we cannot tell what was owed originally, however we might also assume there were round numbers demanded.<sup>7</sup> In the 1150s, Henry II levied such *auxilia* on a regular basis, and these were assessed at round numbers for every shire. In 1155-6, and again in 1157-8 a tax on shires, this time called *donum*, was levied. Maitland reckoned that it might at least in part have been assessed on each shire in inverse proportion to those shires' over or under-assessment of Danegeld; hence Kent,

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 222-224.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 216.

<sup>3</sup> Green, 'Last Century', 258; see also above, 93-94.

<sup>4</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 90, 107

<sup>5</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 49, 40.

<sup>6</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 53, 118, 32.

<sup>7</sup> PR 31 Henry I, 16, 20, 97, 119

that 'egregiously undertaxed' shire, was liable to one of the largest bills for *donum*, while Wiltshire, which had the largest Danegeld bill, had only a modest *donum* bill for a shire of its great wealth.<sup>1</sup>

At a similar time there began proliferating another kind of tax: fixed charges, usually of one or two marks, on knight's fees. These were normally termed as scutage, a set payment made in lieu of military service, paid by tenants-in-chief for every absent knight, at rates of 10s, 20s, 1 mark or 2 marks in various years in the late twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> While scutages specifically helped pay the expenses of military campaigns in some instances, some similar taxes had no such direct military purpose. One such levy, confusingly called an *auxilium*, formed part of the payment for Henry's daughter Matilda's marriage in 1168.<sup>3</sup> In this case, scutage was not paid in lieu of military service, it was simply a tax on all knights' fees. The same appears to be true of a levy in 1158-9, also called *auxilium*, but similarly levied like a scutage, which brought in £5,359 to the treasury; a good deal more money than Danegeld ever raised in either of Henry II's levies, or probably any of his grandfather's.<sup>4</sup>

However, the most significant development of all was the beginning of taxes on revenues and on movables, which began in 1166 and became more frequent from the 1180s.<sup>5</sup> The whole value of anybody's movable property and revenue was calculated, and a fraction was taxed. This had clear advantages in terms of uniformity of assessment; an ox was an ox and a bushel of grain was a bushel of grain, and each could be given a standardised monetary value, whereas hides, carucates and sulungs were not at all uniform, nor either were knights' fees. In years of abundance the treasury could receive more than in years of drought, not a possibility under the land tax system. However, unquestionably the greatest virtue of such taxes were the sums raised for the treasury. The 'Saladin Tithe' of 1188, which was a tax of a tenth of revenues and movables, is said by Gervase of

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<sup>1</sup> Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 473-5.

<sup>2</sup> Jurkowski et al, *Lay Taxes*, xix-xx; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 180-90.

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell, *Taxation*, 113, 165-7.

<sup>4</sup> Amt, *Accession*, 175-6, 194; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 113.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell, *Taxation*, 113-123.

Canterbury to have raised more than £70,000 and another £60,000 from Jews.<sup>1</sup> This is almost certainly an exaggeration, the tax of a thirteenth on rents and movables levied by King John in 1207 raised £57,421 11s 5d according to a note in the fine roll for that year, which included associated fines paid by the religious for fiscal privileges, but was missing the tax of Sussex and Cumberland, whose sheriffs were yet to account.<sup>2</sup> But even accounting for significant inflation between the 1160s and the 1200s, this kind of revenue was an order of magnitude larger than yields from the Danegeld in the twelfth century, and the latter half of the eleventh.<sup>3</sup> It should perhaps therefore not surprise us that both John and the government of Henry III attempted to modernise the land tax so that it was based on oxen, and nor should it surprise us that having failed to do this, land taxation was more or less abandoned for good.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury vol. 1: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1879), 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in turri Londinensi asservati, Tempore Regis Johannis* ed. T. D. Hardy (London, 1835), 459; Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 1-2, 8; Mitchell, *Taxation*, 119-122;

<sup>3</sup> N. Barratt, 'The Revenue of King John', *English Historical Review* 111 (1996), 852.

## Conclusion

This thesis has explored land taxation in England between the reigns of King Æthelred II and King Henry II. For centuries before Æthelred's reign, the systems of administration in place were based on the hide to organise various forms of royal exactions: King Ine's law code suggests food rents may have been paid according to hides, units of land, as early as the seventh century, the Burghal Hidage testifies to fortress service being based on hides during the time of King Edward the Elder (899 - 924).<sup>1</sup> The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* suggests that shipbuilding and providing war gear was based on hides during King Æthelred's reign (978-1016). Domesday Book testifies to military expedition services and labour services also being based on hides, although for how long it is impossible to say; we might expect it to have been the case for centuries.<sup>2</sup>

While the very earliest tribute payments to Viking warriors in 991 and 994 may have been local payments, possibly largely raised from the moveable wealth of local prelates and magnates, from 1002 onwards the payments took on a more national character, and the bulk of the payments were probably raised from direct land taxation based on the hide.<sup>3</sup> While some of the higher figures of *gafol* recorded by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were eye-wateringly high, and may not have been wholly precise, both the wealth of England and the amount of coin minted in the kingdom were sufficient to pay tributes on the scale the *Chronicle* indicates without causing economic paralysis.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest tribute payment of all, that of 1018 which allegedly raised £82,500, was probably raised over two years, its burden spread over two economic cycles.<sup>5</sup> The stored wealth of the Anglo-Saxon church and aristocracy might have helped supplement land taxation in paying these burdens, but it is unlikely to have formed the chief component. There was probably not enough stored bullion

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 100-102.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 103.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 41-48

<sup>4</sup> See above, 59-88.

<sup>5</sup> See above, 34-35, 63.

to cover all the payments demanded over so many years, and the vast majority of the population would not have had access to any precious metal other than coins acquired by selling agricultural produce. Hoards discovered in Scandinavia suggest that the payments were made predominantly in coin, as does the fact that precious metal was melted down by churches, rather than simply handed over as bullion.<sup>1</sup> Sawyer's thesis that it was the export of wool that was the principal source of bullion remains the most persuasive explanation for England's ability to pay such high tributes in coin.

An annual, regular land tax to pay for Viking mercenary warriors, specifically the *lithsmenn* (fleet-men), was instituted in 1012 and continued until 1051; this tax was known as *heregeld*. The first *heregeld* raised £21,000, however most subsequent *heregeld* may have raised less. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells us that Harthacnut raised £21,099 to pay for 62 ships in 1040, and £11,048 on a later occasion to pay for 32 ships, but we are also told that Cnut and Harold Harefoot normally only levied money for 16 ships, suggesting a normal *heregeld* of perhaps around £5,500. While we do not know the rate of taxation per hide, it is unlikely that it was any more than 2s, as there are around 69,000 hides or hide equivalents recorded in Domesday Book, which if taxed with perfect efficiency at 2s could yield £6,900. No doubt there were some exemptions and some inefficiencies in collection, but at this point exemptions are likely to have been minimal in number and scale compared to after the Norman Conquest. Harthacnut's attempt to quadruple the usual tax burden caused a violent rebellion in Worcester, which suggests that Harthacnut on that occasion exceeded the politically acceptable level of peacetime taxation.<sup>2</sup>

Edward the Confessor abolished the *heregeld* in 1051, but there is evidence that land taxation continued for other purposes until 1066, possibly to help pay for housecarls or for the construction of ships.<sup>3</sup> Such taxes were however very probably levied at a substantially lower rate than Cnut's and

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 67, 82-88.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 40.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 89-98.

Harold's taxation, and might have been raised differently in each shire: Domesday Book mentions a rate in the Dorset boroughs of 16d per hide to pay for housecarls, and in rural Berkshire a rate of 7d per hide. Nowhere in the thousands of entries that make reference to 'geld' assessments in Domesday Book is it stated or implied that land taxation had been completely suspended for fifteen years before 1066.

One of William the Conqueror's first acts after his coronation on Christmas Day 1066 was to levy a tax on his new population; this was almost certainly a land tax levied on the hide.<sup>1</sup> This was repeated a year later, and indeed was probably repeated in every year of his reign.<sup>2</sup> At an unknown date before 1086, the demesne portions of the directly held manors of tenants-in-chief were exempted, which amounted to a considerable tax break for the landholding classes.<sup>3</sup> Losses to the treasury were offset by an increase of the rate during the final years of William the Conqueror; in 1084-5 and probably again in 1085-6, the non-demesne parts of manors and all subinfeudated manors remained liable, but were subject to levies of 6s per hides.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the less wealthy, that is subtenants and the tenanted peasantry, were forced to pay more, while the wealthy, the tenants-in-chief, paid less. This form of geld exemption was probably a political bargain struck between the king and his barons, none of whom had experienced any sort of systematic direct taxation in their Normandy homeland.

Land taxation, the chief manifestation of which was known as Danegeld from the late eleventh century, continued to be a significant source of royal revenue during the reign of the Conqueror's sons, William II and Henry I. However, at no point from the reign of Edward the Confessor onwards did it come close to the £21,000 that Æthelred raised in 1014 or Harthacnut raised in 1040-1 in terms of yield. William the Conqueror could raise 6s on the hide, but the Geld Accounts of the southwestern shires show that he was only collecting geld from 54% of the total hides in that region.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 136-138.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 138-140

<sup>3</sup> See above, 118-131.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 141-142, 153-155.

William Rufus's highest known Danegeld was a 4s levy, and this generated a good deal of disquiet within the Church, suggesting that such a levy could not expediently be collected on a regular basis.<sup>1</sup>

The downward trajectory continued into the reign of Henry I; his highest land tax was the 'aid' of 3s per hide, which probably needed to be supplemented from money elsewhere in order to raise 10,000 marks (£6,667) as a wedding gift to his daughter's husband.<sup>2</sup> An overall reduction of shire hidages of around 15%, as well as special rates in Yorkshire and Leicestershire, and increased numbers of tax exemptions to individuals, meant that Henry I could only raise an estimated c.£2,820 for the 2s per hide geld of 1129-30.<sup>3</sup> This accounted for only around 11% paid into the treasury that year. By the time of Henry's cessation of Danegeld collection in 1131, therefore, the land tax had already declined in importance, at least in purely financial terms.

While the amounts of Danegeld that King Stephen was able to raise is unknown - and it was almost certainly comparably little - Henry II was unable to raise significantly more than his grandfather had done (£3,132 in 1161-2), although in relative terms it was twice as lucrative given the extensive alienation and destruction of royal demesne during Stephen's reign. Yet Henry II only levied two Danegelds, the last being 1161-2. There followed some attempts to revive and reform the land tax under the name 'carucage' by Richard I, John and the government of Henry III, but the land tax was never successfully re-instated on a regular basis. After the carucage of 1224, land taxation disappears completely.

While the primary reason for Henry II discontinuing the land tax after 1162 is not clear, long term trends lend us some clues. We may look to the inherent inequity of the assessment system, whereby hides, carucates and sulungs varied in value and size enormously across and even within different shires, as being a severe handicap to the long-term viability of the land tax. Just as significant was the shift in fiscal culture towards feudal items of revenue that accompanied the Norman Conquest

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 195-201.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 214.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 240-242.

and continued throughout the twelfth century. Meanwhile, the most pertinent reason for the complete abandonment of land taxation after 1224 was the rise of taxation on moveables, a much more lucrative and equitably assessed option for raising revenue directly from the populace.

However, even when bearing in mind the decline in tax yields under Rufus and Henry I and the subsequent demise of the land tax, the fact that the Anglo-Norman kings even managed to continue exploiting the Anglo-Saxon land tax system at all is testament both to their personal political strength and to the strength of the institutions they inherited. Politically speaking, to be able to tax a baronage that had never paid tax systematically before in Normandy testifies to the great power and influence of the Conqueror and his sons. But the Anglo-Saxon system itself depended on co-operation between national, shire and hundredal government. In 1086, and possibly for many decades before then, low status hundredal tax collectors demanded and received money from high status barons. Perhaps more than anything else, this shows the intrusive strength of Anglo-Saxon government structures.<sup>1</sup> Although individuals often secured large tax exemptions under the Normans, there is little evidence of actual tax avoidance in the 1086 Geld Accounts, Domesday Book, the 1129-30 Pipe Roll or anywhere else. All of this serves to demonstrate the robustness and durability of the inherited Anglo-Saxon tax raising institutions.

Although William I was able to defeat Harold Godwinson in 1066 through skill, fortune, and sheer strength of character, he conquered a state considerably more powerful than his own. The Conqueror and his sons lost no time in exploiting England's wealthy treasury to finance wars and diplomacy in France. William I fought several wars to secure his duchy and his kingdom with English money; his son William II first fought his brother Robert Duke of Normandy, and then financed Robert's crusade in return for temporary control of the duchy. Finally, Henry I's conquest of Normandy in 1106 sealed his position as master of the Anglo-Norman world, and, more importantly, confirmed England's predominance over Normandy, in an ironic reversal of the events of 1066.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, 159-161.

Much of the reason for this reversal was that the English state and its capacity to exploit landed wealth was systemically stronger, farther reaching and more sophisticated than that of Normandy, both before and after the Norman Conquest.

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### **Unpublished thesis**

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