Domesday Book and the Transformation of English Landed Society 1066–1086

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Introduction

What effect did the Norman Conquest have on English landed society?[1] Beyond the basic fact that it resulted in the most comprehensive elite takeover in England's recorded history, no-one really knows. This may seem surprising, for with relatively few exceptions, Domesday Book records the names of everyone who held property in England south of the Tees in 1066 and 1086, so it in theory contains all the evidence one needs to reconstruct English landed society in something close to its entirety before and after the conquest. However, before that potential can be realized, it is essential to identify every landholder named in Domesday for both of its terminal dates and, although a great deal of prosopographical work has been lavished on Domesday,[2] and notwithstanding the fact that the digitization of Domesday has progressed rapidly in recent years,[3] this work has never been brought together in a comprehensive and systematic way.[4] Consequently, there are no reliable estimates of how many landholders Domesday records, how much each of them held or, therefore, how landed wealth was distributed throughout society as whole. Research has therefore tended to focus on other questions. In an influential passage on the 'Norman Settlement', Sir Frank Stenton

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[1] This paper is offered in affectionate memory of Duncan Probert, a gregarious and scholarly friend and colleague, who died in December 2016. <Other acknowledgements>.

[2] The literature is too voluminous to summarise here, but important surveys of the pre-Conquest elite include P. A. Clarke, *The English Nobility under Edward the Confessor* (Oxford, 1994), and A. Williams, *The World before Domesday: The English Aristocracy, 900–1066* (London, 2008); for the post-Conquest elite, see K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People. A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066–1166. I. Domesday Book* (Woodbridge, 1999); and Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*.

[3] Three digital resources have been published on CD-ROM: J. Palmer, *Domesday Explorer* (2000); K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *The Continental Origins of English Landholders, 1066–1166 Database and the COEL Database System on CD-ROM* (2002); and *The Digital Domesday Book* (2002). For a discussion of the merits (and shortcomings) of these resources, see R. Fleming and A. Lowerre, 'MacDomesday Book', *Past and Present* 84 (2004), 209–31. There are further electronic resources exist in various stages of development:
(i) Between 1983 and 1986, a team led by Robin Fleming and funded by the United States National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of California Santa Barbara created a database of statistical information contained in Great Domesday Book using a mainframe computer. Although this material was never published, the data informed R. Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), and has since been developed for use in a GIS environment by Andrew Lowerre: see most recently A. Lowerre, 'Geospatial Technologies and the Geography of Domesday England in the Twenty-First Century', in *Domesday Now: New Approaches to the Inquest and the Book*, ed. D. Roffe (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 219–46.
(ii) J. Palmer, *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book: Translation, Databases and Scholarly Commentary, 1086* (2nd Edition, 2010), UK Data Service. SN: 5694, http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5694-1.
(iii) A. Powell-Smith, *Open Domesday* (2011), http://opendomesday.org, which integrates John Palmer's data with online search and mapping facilities.
(iv) K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, R. Wood, and D. Thornton, *COEL Database: Continental Origins of English Landholders, 1066–1166* (2007), UK Data Service. SN: 5687, http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5687-1.
(v) *PASE Domesday*, ed. S. Baxter, with contributions by C. P. Lewis, D. Probert, A. Dymond and K. Blayney (2nd revised edition, 2016), published online at http://domesday.pase.ac.uk. See further below, pp. <000>.
(vi) *Exon: The Conqueror's Commissioners Unlocking the Domesday Survey of SW England* (forthcoming, 2017), http://www.exondomesday.ac.uk.

[4] J. Palmer, 'Notes on the Identifications in the Translation and Indexes', in his *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book* is, however, a major contribution.

observed: 'It is remarkable proof of the Conqueror's statesmanship that this tenurial revolution never descended into a scramble for land. In every part of England the great redistribution as controlled by the king, and carried out by his ministers on lines which he himself laid down.'[5] This forms the root of long controversy which has branched out in several directions. Among the questions that have been at issue are these. Was there indeed a 'tenurial revolution' between 1066 and 1086, and if so what form did this take? Was Stenton right in thinking that the Norman 'settlement' of England was for the most part orderly and controlled by royal authority,[6] or is the process better conceived as 'the establishment of a kleptocracy, which supplemented royal grants through self-interested and aggressive private enterprise, based on theft, intimidation and the extension of protection'?[7] To what extent did pre-Conquest patterns of landholding and lordship inform the process of colonization? Specifically, did new lords simply step into old lordships,[8] or were old lordships torn apart as new ones formed?[9] More generally, what were the prevailing norms of royal patronage, land tenure and lordship in late Anglo-Saxon England,[10] and to what extent were those norms transformed in the aftermath of conquest?[11] How many English landholders survived the conquest and what factors account for their survival?[12] From where did the new elite originate,[13] and how did the political fusion of England and Normandy affect the strategies of major landholders whose possessions lay on either side of the Channel?[14] We seek to build on

[5] F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1971), p. 626.

[6] Stenton's case has been accepted and developed by others, including, for example, R. A. Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 172, 178–86 (especially p. 183); D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (London, 1966), pp. 270–2; and J. A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 48–99 (especially pp. 48–53).

[7] R. Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 183–214 (quotation at p. 210).

[8] See, for example, P. H. Sawyer, '1066–1086: A Tenurial Revolution?', in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (London, 1985), pp. 71–85; *idem*, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1998), pp. 207–12, 222–25; D. Roffe, 'From Thegnage to Barony: Sake and Soke, Title and Tenants-in-Chief', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1990), 157–76; A. Williams, 'Hunting the Shark and Finding the Boojum: the Tenurial Revolution Revisited', in *Domesday Now: New Approaches to the Inquest and the Book*, ed. D, Roffe and K. S. B. Keats-Rohen (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 155–68.

[9] Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 107–44; G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 24–33.

[10] S. Baxter and J. Blair, 'Land Tenure and Royal Patronage in the Early English Kingdom: a Model and a Case Study', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 28 (2006), 19–46; *idem*, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 125–51, 204–69; *idem*, 'Lordship and Justice in the Early English Kingdom: the Judicial Functions of Soke and Commendation Revisited', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. S. Baxter, C. Karkov, J. Nelson and D. Pelteret, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, general editor N. Brooks (Ashgate, 2009), pp. 383–419; J. G. H. Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England: Volume 2, 871–1216* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 93–148.

[11] F. M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism 1066–1166* (Oxford, 1932); S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 332–52; Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 1–135; Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, pp. 333–75.

[12] A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 71–154; H. M. Thomas, 'The Significance and Fate of the English landholders of 1066', *English Historical Review* 18 (2003), 303–33; *idem*, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066–c.1220* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 95–237; D. Roffe, 'Hidden Lives: English Lords in post-Conquest Lincolnshire and Beyond', in *The English and Their Legacy, 900–1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. D. Roffe (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 205–28.

[13] L. C. Loyd, *The Origins of some Anglo-Norman Families*, ed. C. T. Clay and D. C. Douglas (Leeds, 1951); K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Portrait of a People: Norman Barons Revisited', in *Domesday Book*, ed. D. Bates and E. Hallam (Stroud, 2001), pp. 121–40; *eadem*, *Domesday People*, pp. 3–75.

[14] J. Le Patourel, *Norman Barons*, Historical Association pamphlet (1966); *idem*, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 28–48, 179–221; D. Bates, *The Normans and Empire* (Oxford, 2013); S. Baxter and C. P. Lewis, 'Comment

this considerable body of work and to engage with all of these problems, but we are also seeking to reframe the debate by confronting the question with which we began, which has scarcely been posed let alone adequately unanswered in the literature as it stands.

There are two basic reasons for this. One is the sheer scale of the material: Domesday records about 29,000 pieces of property and assigns them to people bearing roughly 1,800 different personal names. The other is that Domesday's relentless homonymy means that it is often difficult to differentiate people from a mass of similar names. These are considerable, but not insuperable barriers. The key to overcoming them is to accept that, although certainty is often unobtainable, the balance of probability generally is. Domesday landholders can be identified with varying degrees of confidence, depending on a range of considerations including those listed below.[15]

(i) The relative popularity of names: people bearing unusual names can be identified with greater confidence than those bearing common names.
(ii) The presence of bynames and descriptions: where given, these naturally help to differentiate people with the same first name.
(iii) Orthography: the way names are spelled in Domesday can help to differentiate their bearers.
(iv) The size of individual manors or estates: the owners of very large estates are more likely to have possessed other holdings than the owners of modest estates.
(v) Geographical proximity: small landowners are unlikely to have owned land scattered over great distances.
(vi) Succession patterns: the identity of 1086 landowners can strengthen the identification of pre-Conquest owners, and vice versa.
(vii) Lordship: where Domesday records the identity of landholders' lords, this can help to identify the landholders themselves.
(viii) Joint holders: where Domesday attributes the same parcel of property to more than one person, this often constitutes suggestive evidence of a connection between them.
(ix) Other information in Domesday: the text often supplies further incidental but illuminating information, frequently relating to property which was disputed in 1086.
(x) Other information beyond Domesday: many Domesday landowners are named in charters, chronicles and other records, and their identification can sometimes be strengthened by evidence relating to the descent of their property after 1086.

Our long-term objective is to assign all the property recorded in Domesday to particular landholders with specified degrees of confidence based on these criteria, and to explain the basis of each judgment. We have recently completed a pilot project to develop resources for this purpose.[16] The three main outputs from this were as follows. First, we constructed a

identifier les propriétaires fonciers du *Domesday Book* en Angleterre et en Normandie? The cas d'Osbern fitzOsbern', *911–2011: Penser les mondes normands médiévaux*, Actes du colloque international de Caen et Cerisy (29 septembre – 2 octobre 2011), ed. D. Bates and P. Bauduin (Caen, 2016), pp. 207–44.

[15] This approach was pioneered by C. P. Lewis, 'Joining the Dots: a Methodology for Identifying the English in Domesday Book', in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 69–87. It has been developed in subsequent publications: see, for example, S. Baxter, 'The Death of Burgheard son of Ælfgar and its Context', in *Frankland: The Franks and the World of Early Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Dame Jinty Nelson*, ed. P. Fouracre and D. Ganz (Manchester, 2008), pp. 266–84; Duncan Probert, '*Wulfnoð*,*Olaf* and the Domesday scribes', *Nomina*, 35 (2012), 1–19; C. P. Lewis, 'Danish landowners in Wessex in 1066', in *Danes in Wessex: The Scandinavian Impact on Southern England, c. 800–c. 1100*, ed. R. Lavelle and S. Roffey (Oxford, 2016), pp. 172–211; Baxter and Lewis, 'Comment identifier les propriétaires fonciers du *Domesday Book*'.

[16] The title of the project was *Profile of a Doomed Elite: English Landed Society in 1066*. It was funded by the Leverhulme Trust (grant number F/07 040/AU) between 2010 and 2012. The project was directed by Stephen

database which lists every piece of property recorded in Domesday Book, and contains fields that enable us to attribute each one to landholders with specified levels of confidence using a scale which descends from A (representing certainty) to E (for an identification judged to be just about more likely than not), and beyond that to F (which represents no more than an informed guess). Second, we have written profiles which further explain and justify each identification, and summarize all that is known about each landholder using information drawn from other historical records as well as Domesday itself, where this exists. Third, we have designed a web resource, which forms part of the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (*PASE*) website, on which each profile is published together with tables and maps. To date, we have written profiles for about 1,100 pre-Conquest landholders who bore about 500 different personal names. In addition, after the completion of the pilot project, we made a provisional attempt to identify all the other landholders in Domesday Book using the same criteria; however, in these cases the confidence with which each identification is made is not yet recorded in the database or explained in written profiles. The aggregate of these judgments is a model of landed society, not a definitive analysis of it. However, the element of uncertainty within the model is visible and quantifiable. It is unlikely that this element will represent a statistically significant proportion of the whole, for we have now worked through enough of the material to know that a clear majority of landholders can be identified with a high degree of confidence: the richest landholders tend to be relatively easy to identify, and they account for a disproportionate share of the total; and although identifications tend to become more problematic further down the social scale, the great majority of them can be identified with a reasonable confidence. The model should, therefore, provide a credible estimate the structure of landed society when it is complete.

PASE Domesday is therefore a working tool, made freely available in the hope that it may prove useful to others as the research proceeds. This paper is offered in a similar spirit. It aims to illustrate some of the findings emerging from the research, pending a fuller treatment. The first half proceeds from the bottom-up, accumulating examples of landholders which illustrate different elements within landed society. The second half proceeds top-down, offering provisional reflections on the social and spatial distribution of landed wealth in England before and after the conquest.

From the bottom up: profiling landed society

Much is known about the lands and lives of queens and royal abbesses in the late Anglo-Saxon period,[17] but there were other elite women whose profiles also offer a perspective on the gendering of power. The examples developed here are Earl Harold's sisters Gunnhild and Eadgifu. Gunnhild's name appears in connection with four manors in 1066, one in Sussex and three in Somerset, only one of which was specifically assigned (and only in Exon Domesday) to 'the daughter of Earl Godwine'.[18] They formed a dispersed estate worth £30 a year.[19]

Baxter; the historical research was undertaken by Stephen Baxter, Chris Lewis, and Duncan Probert, with contributions by Alex Dymond and Katherine Blayney; the digital research was undertaken by John Bradley, Elliot Hall, Neil Jakeman, and David Little, under the direction of Paul Vetch, José Miguel Monteiro Vieira, James Smithies, and Pamela Mellen. For further details about of the project and its subsequent development, see the 'About' tab of the *PASE Domesday* website, http://domesday.pase.ac.uk/pde/about.jsp.

[17] P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997); S. Foot, *Veiled Women*, 2 vols (Aldershot, 2000).

[18] *PASE Domesday*, Gunnhild 4.

[19] Exon 104b2, 107a3, 141a1 (GDB fos. 86v, 87, 88 (Somerset 1,18; 1,24; 5,17)); GDB fo. 28v (Sussex 13,29).

Gunnhild was a younger daughter born probably in the early or mid 1040s, and a professed religious whose life before and after 1066 was recorded on a plaque placed in her grave at the monastery of St Donatian in Bruges, where she died in 1087.[20] Gunnhild's sister Eadgifu is however absent from all modern discussions of the family of Earl Godwine.[21] Outside Domesday Book, she is known only from her commemoration in the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster at Winchester, where Eadgifu 'daughter of Earl Godwine' was entered just before a group comprising King Edward, Queen Edith (her sister), and Edgar atheling.[22] In Domesday Book the forename is very common,[23] but an Eadgifu who was almost certainly Godwine's daughter appears at the single valuable manor of Crewkerne in Somerset, in a group of estates which otherwise passed to King William from the earl's wife and children.[24] The core of the manor did not pay geld and was not hidated – invariably a sign that it had been an ancient royal manor – and it was the head of a hundred with a minster church. That it was indeed an ancient royal manor is established by the fact that it was among the estates that King Alfred bequeathed to his youngest son.[25] Crewkerne was being dismembered by 1086,[26] but its pre-Conquest value of £62 10s. was exceptionally high. The property assigned to Gunnhild and Eadgifu hints at the ways in which the fathers in elite families assured the lifestyles of their unmarried daughters by assigning them property.

The king's chaplains are a second well-defined group which has received much attention in the literature,[27] but there remains a good deal to say about their landed estates. An outstanding example is the Norman Osbern fitzOsbern, a cousin of both King Edward and Duke William. He came to England as a chaplain in Edward's household before the early 1060s, and later served both Harold and William, who made him bishop of Exeter in 1072. William of Malmesbury believed him to be English in his sympathies, though other evidence suggests that he retained an emotional investment in his Norman heritage too. He was exceptionally well rewarded before 1066, with a large part of the ancient minster estate of Bosham in Sussex, a half share of a hundredal manor in Cornwall, part of a royal manor in Surrey, and the minster churches of two royal manors in Somerset and Wiltshire. The total

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[20] <E. van Houts, 'Invasion and Migration', in *A Social History of England, 900–1200*, ed. J. Crick and E. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), pp. <000> (at p. 228); N. Rogers, 'The Waltham Abbey Relic-list', in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1992), pp. 157–81 at pp. 166–7; E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its Causes and its Results*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1875–9), iv, 756–7 (2nd edn, pp. 754–5); R. Sharpe, 'King Harold's Daughter', *Haskins Society Journal*, 19 (2007), 1–27 at p. 25; E. Mason, *The House of Godwine: The History of a Dynasty* (London, 2004), p. 35.

[21] F. Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (London, 2002); Mason, *The House of Godwine*.

[22] *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. S. Keynes, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 26 (1996), fol. 29r.

[23] O. von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book*, Nomina Germanica 3 (Uppsala, 1937), pp. 229–31.

[24] Exon 105b1 (GDB fo. 86v (Somerset 1,20)).

[25] P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks 8 (London, 1968), revised by S. Kelly, R. Rushforth *et al.*, *The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters*, currently at http://www.esawyer.org.uk/about/index.html (conventionally cited as 'S'), no. 1036 (printed *Select Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. and trans. F. E. Harmer (Cambridge, 1914), pp. pp. 15–19, 49–53).

[26] Exon 79b1, 154a2–3, 197a3, 272a1, 513a5, 514b3 (GDB fos. 87v, 91, 92 (Somerset 3,1; 12,1; 19,33)).

[27] F. Barlow, *The English Church 1000–1066: A History of the Later Anglo-Saxon Church*, 2nd edn (London, 1979), pp. 115–37, 156–8; J. Barrow, *Who Served the Altar at Brixworth? Clergy in English Minsters c. 800-c. 1100*, 28th Brixworth Lecture, 2010 (Brixworth, 2013), pp. <000>; J. Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, their Families and Careers in North–Western Europe, c. 800–c. 1200* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. <000>.

annual value of almost £150 made him the richest royal priest by some distance, on a par with the bishops of Selsey and Elmham and outranked by only six abbeys.[28]

Osbern's fellow chaplain Swithgar was less wealthy.[29] Three charters of the 1060s have as a witness Swithgar the secretary (*notarius*), in association with Regenbald the chancellor. Although the charters in themselves are outright forgeries, Simon Keynes has shown that they drew on authentic witness lists,[30] so we can be sure that there was such a person as Swithgar in the last years of the Confessor's reign. He can be identified as holding two prebends at the important royal collegiate church of St Martin at Dover, as well as the large scattered manor of Newington on the north Kent coast. Newington included tenements in Rochester and Canterbury, woodland pastures on the North Downs, and quitrents from Minster in Sheppey, but more than half its annual value of £40 derived from cash rents and payments in kind from the king's adjoining manor of Milton. The Newington estate centred on a collegiate prebendal church, and there is more ambiguous evidence for a nunnery. Swithgar was presumably *de facto* dean of the minster, and held the estate from Queen Edith, who perhaps held the manor as protector of the nunnery. In the Domesday texts Swithgar's name was assimilated to an Old English form, but its first element, *Swith–* had in fact disappeared from use in England over a century earlier,[31] and it is likely that he originally bore the Old High German name Swindger. His name is one pointer to how he might have come to England and entered royal service in association with the king's chancellor Regenbald, often supposed a Lotharingian. Profiling Swithgar as a Domesday landowner thus brings to light an important personage in royal administration at the end of the Confessor's reign, and underlines the cultural plurality of his court.

The importance of sheriffs, reeves and other minor royal officials in late Anglo-Saxon England is a staple of our understanding of the reach of English government,[32] so any further flesh that can be put on the personnel of administration is valuable. Three examples from the eastern counties are offered here. The first is Leofcild, sheriff of Essex, who between 1035 and 1052 or 1053 was named in three wills, a royal diploma, and a writ, all undoubtedly authentic. Together the non-Domesday sources identify him as the owner of land in Essex in the time of Harold I (1035–40), and a thegn of Edward the Confessor who served as sheriff of Essex early in the reign and made a grant of land to Westminster abbey confirmed by the king in 1052 or 1053 in terms which suggest that Leofcild was recently dead. One five-hide manor in Essex was still attributed to him in Domesday Book, for reasons which are discussed in his profile.[33] It was evidently not his entire estate while alive.

The second example is the official named as reeve of Ipswich in 1066. Ipswich was the seventh largest town in Domesday England,[34] and its revenues were divided two thirds to Queen Edith and one third to her brother Gyrth, the local earl.[35] The borough reeveship was a responsible position that required deep financial resources, good social connections, and administrative ability. Brun, reeve of Ipswich, and commended to Queen Edith, is named as

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[28] Baxter and Lewis, 'Comment identifier les propriétaires fonciers du *Domesday Book*', pp. 215–36.
[29] *PASE Domesday*, Swithgar 1.
[30] S. Keynes, 'Regenbald the chancellor (*sic*)', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 10 (1987), 185–222 at pp. 197–203, 209–10.
[31] *PASE Domesday*, Swithgar (discussion of name).
[32] J. Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 201–218; repr. in his *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 201–27.
[33] *PASE Domesday*, Leofcild 3.
[34] B. Brodt, 'East Anglia', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 639–56 at p. 643.
[35] LDB fos. 290, 294 (Suffolk 1,22a–g; 3,55).

the owner of Baylham, in the Gipping valley above Ipswich, and can be identified as the owner of meagre landed property worth just 25s. a year and as the commended lord of a handful of small freemen in the same area. He can be distinguished from other small landowners of the same name with property in east Suffolk but commended to different lords. Brun the reeve's modest landed estate passed mostly to Roger Bigod, who in 1086 had custody of the now royal borough of Ipswich. An obscure passage in Little Domesday Book seems to mention Brun in the present tense as holding under Bigod's tenant Warengar, but it is not clear that it should be taken at face value. For certain, we can conclude that the queen's reeve in Ipswich was essentially an urban figure with only limited interests in rural property.[36]

The third example was one of three Norfolk landowners bearing the Danish name Haghni. One of these was a king's thegn commended to Archbishop Stigand with manors worth £20 a year and as many as 70 commended sokemen and freemen.[37] The second was a smaller manorial lord on the edge of the fens in west Norfolk who ran an unusually large herd of cattle on the marshes and specialized in breeding horses.[38] A third Haghni was evidently a local official. He had the single small manor of Weybourne on the north Norfolk coast, worth £4 a year.[39] After the Conquest Weybourne passed to Earl Hugh of Chester, from whom it was held by Ranulph de Mesnilwarin; Domesday Book often fails to name the tenants of subtenants, and it is conceivable that Haghni remained in possession of part of the manor, where in later times one knight's fee was divided in two parts, two thirds held by the Mesnilwarins and one third by a local family, perhaps Haghni's descendants.[40] Haghni certainly survived in 1086, when he had a small fief held directly from the king as a king's reeve, and when Ralph son of Haghni, listed next in Little Domesday Book, had two manors, one adjoining Weybourne, the other mixed up with Haghni's property.[41] Haghni the reeve's fief had an unusual configuration: it consisted of small parcels of land, none larger than 100 acres, dispersed across nine vills in Eynesford hundred. Haghni had no demesne, but was taking rent from the thirty-three peasants occupying the land. It seems likely that he was the hundred reeve, and perhaps had custody of the large royal manor of Foulsham, the soke centre for the hundred, offices which would have allowed him to acquire peasant rents formerly paid to the king and perhaps helped him steer a small manor into his son's hands. He may well already have held office before 1066. Haghni's choice of the name Ralph for his son is suggestive, since it honoured the wealthy East Anglian landowner and royal official Ralph the staller, suggesting that Haghni was moving in administrative circles before the Conquest.

Another way of grouping the profiles of pre-Conquest landowners is by economic class derived from the size of their landed estates. An income from land of £100 a year put a proprietor in a small group of the very rich. There seem to have been more of them than previous accounts have suggested, and in every case examined so far they were somewhat wealthier than the standard published account of them allows.[42] A case in point is Aki the Dane, hitherto identified only with the Aki whose lands in Middlesex, Northamptonshire,

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36 *PASE Domesday*, Brun 20–21.
37 *PASE Domesday*, Haghni 2.
38 *PASE Domesday*, Haghni 4.
39 *PASE Domesday*, Haghni 3.
40 F. Blomefield, *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, continued by C. Parkin, 2nd edn, 11 vols (London, 1805–10), ix, 446–50.
41 LDB fo. 279 (Norfolk 57,1–3).
42 Clarke, *English Nobility*, pp. 31–60. Palmer, 'Notes on the Identifications', also finds that Clarke underestimated the holdings of the wealthiest secular landholders below the rank of earl.

Suffolk, and Wiltshire passed to Robert Blund and were worth £35 a year.[43] Blund's manors were very dispersed, Aki was a rare name in England, and there are grounds for thinking that the same man, a housecarl in turn of King Edward and King Harold, had a much larger landed estate worth £120 a year, extending into almost every shire between Wiltshire and Suffolk.[44] More likely than not, he was the same person as the Aki son of Toki whose father left property to the church of Worcester for which the monks had to buy off Aki's claim in the earlier 1050s. This looks like a new family established in the time of Cnut or his sons, and there are further hints of the means by which they had grown so wealthy. St Albans tradition, for instance, implied that Aki was the heir of one of three men to whom the abbey gave the large manor of Flamstead in return for their defending the abbey in time of war. Another telling point about Aki's landed estate is its inclusion of important property in at least two towns, Hertford and Dunwich.

Landowners with incomes in the bracket £30–£100 tended to have estates spread across a region but with a centre of gravity in a single shire. Two instances which have come to light are Esbern Bigga, long identified as a landowner in Kent and belonging to a family established there by the end of Cnut's reign, but now seen also to have owned land in at least four other southern shires which altogether brought in £84 a year;[45] and the Mercian landowner Æthelmund, who had 56 hides worth £34 mainly in Shropshire but extending into Staffordshire and Warwickshire, and whose name appears in the witness list of a royal diploma issued in 1062 alongside the two most prominent Shropshire thegns Eadric (the wild) and Siward (the fat). Æthelmund was still living in 1086, when his son Æthelweard was much the most important English survivor in Shropshire.[46]

The greater thegns whose lands brought in between £10 and £30 a year were commonly landowners in just one shire; the geographical spread of their interests makes them the eleventh-century equivalents of the county gentry. Where they had unusual names we can be absolutely certain about the extent of their interests. In Yorkshire, Fech owned 20 carucates of land, mainly at Giggleswick and its berewicks in upper Ribblesdale, and must surely be the person behind the place-name of the nearby hamlet of Feizor ('Fech's sheiling').[47] In Wiltshire, Cuthwulf had four manors worth some £15 and survived to 1086 as a king's thegn holding one of them.[48] In Surrey, a man with the hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian name Godtovi had three manors of 30 hides worth £17 10s. strung out along the North Downs.[49] His central manor was evidently Titsey, the only one with a church and which in 1086 had a large home farm operated by a sizeable workforce of slaves.

Lesser thegns with incomes in the range £2–£10 were the equivalents of the parish gentry of later centuries, typically holding a single manor or a small cluster of property. Every shire had large numbers of such landowners, and only a handful of the many identified to date can be indicated here. The Chancton coin hoard of some 3,000 pennies, one of the largest Anglo-Saxon hoards ever found, was packed into an ordinary earthenware pot and buried in

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[43] R. R. Darlington, 'Introduction to the Wiltshire Domesday', in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Wiltshire*, II, ed. R. B. Pugh and E. Crittall (London, 1955), pp. 42–112 at p. 66; T. G. Pinder, 'An introduction to the Middlesex Domesday', *The Middlesex and London Domesday*, ed. Ann Williams and G. H. Martin (London, 1991), pp. 1–21 at p. 20.

[44] *PASE Domesday*, Aki 4.

[45] *PASE Domesday*, Esbern 3.

[46] *PASE Domesday*, Æthelmund 33. The diploma is S 1036 (for which see below, p. <000>).

[47] *PASE Domesday*, Fech 3.

[48] *PASE Domesday*, Cuthwulf 14.

[49] *PASE Domesday*, Godtovi 2.

1066 or early 1067 on the only manor belonging to a thegn whom Domesday Book calls *Essocher*. The name evidently represents Æschere, a name uncommon in current use but one which may well have resonated with every member of elite Anglo-Saxon society in the eleventh century, since a fictional Æschere was an important figure in *Beowulf*, King Hrothgar's best-loved follower and a paradigm of thegnliness. Chancton was worth £4 a year in 1066, and the hoard represents about three times the manor's annual value to the Domesday Æschere. The hoard may or may not have been his store of cash, and we are left with unanswerable questions about the wealth of eleventh-century thegns and Æschere's fate in 1066.[50]

The Old English female name Godhild, formed from two elements widely used in eleventh-century naming, is not otherwise documented and has not hitherto been recognized in Domesday Book.[51] One of the two women of that name who owned land in 1066 had a cluster of three manors worth £6 12s. a year in the middle Roding valley of Essex.[52] Her largest manor was Greensted, where Godhild dominated a vill otherwise occupied only by three freemen with little more than a virgate apiece. She had a large arable farm there, with three ploughs operated by slaves, and a few farm horses, dairy cattle, and pigs. There were extensive woods and some meadow. Her manor must have included that extraordinary survival, the timber-built church of St Andrew. Her second manor was up the valley at Norton Mandeville, the larger of two parts into which the Domesday vill was divided; it, too, had a home farm, a small livestock operation with dairy cattle and pigs, woods and meadow. The other part of Norton, identifiable as the later manor of Norton Foliots,[53] belonged to a woman called Godgyth, who after the Conquest gave it to St Paul's cathedral by some means which the canons found hard to explain to the Domesday commissioners in 1086.[54] The two women shared a first name-element and may conceivably have been kin. Godhild's smallest manor lay down the valley at Navestock, one of the two smallest shares of a large vill divided among six proprietors; there was no home farm in 1066, just a couple of bordars. Godhild's compact estate was characterized by intensive demesne farming and large resources in woodland.

Cadian was a Welsh name known to have been current in the later eleventh century.[55] It appears once in Domesday Book, as the holder of Kilpeck in the culturally and linguistically Welsh district of Archenfield in south-west Herefordshire, which had come definitively under English control only a few years earlier.[56] Judging from the manor's resources in 1086, when 57 men had 19 ploughteams besides the home farm of 3 ploughs, Kilpeck was an extensive territory probably covering all the western side of Archenfield along the river Monnow, and Cadian a significant personage locally.

A single example of a landowner who can best be characterized as a rich peasant must suffice here. There was only one person of the name Cæfla in Domesday Book, holding half a virgate at Bagley, high on Exmoor, almost 1,200 feet above sea level on the slopes of Dunkery Beacon.[57] The area was agriculturally marginal, but Bagley was occupied continuously from the Iron Age until the farm was abandoned in the nineteenth century.[58] Cæfla survived

[50] *PASE Domesday*, Æschere 2.
[51] von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, pp. 164–5, 263; E. Okasha, *Women's Names in Old English* (Farnham, 2011); *PASE Domesday*, Godhild (discussion of name).
[52] *PASE Domesday*, Godhild 2.
[53] *VCH Essex*, iv, 179.
[54] LDB fo. 56 (Essex 28,16).
[55] *PASE Domesday*, Cadian (discussion of name).
[56] *PASE Domesday*, Cadian 2.
[57] *PASE Domesday*, Cafla 2.
[58] H. Riley and R. Wilson-North, *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor* (Swindon, 2001), pp. 73–4.

to 1086 as a tenant of Roger de Courseulles, with half a ploughteam, 50 acres of pasture, 12 acres of woodland, and 2 bordars with half a plough team of their own as his tenants. The increase in value from 12d. when Roger acquired the manor to 40d. in 1086 suggests that Cæfla was being squeezed hard by his new lord.

Below Cæfla's social level, Domesday has extensive information about the holdings of individual peasants only in limited areas of England, notably east Suffolk. The adjoining vills of Kembroke and Levington on the Colneis peninsula between the estuaries of the Orwell and the Deben comprised a total of 1½ carucates. The landscape long included extensive heaths between the arable fields of the two vills.[59] Domesday gives a full tally of the peasants owning land there, who bore 27 different personal names. Sigeweald is one of three names which appear in both vills: at Kembroke he was listed first among five men with 30 acres worth 3s., and at Levington first among nine men with 32 acres worth 10s. Both groups were commended to Northmann, sometime sheriff of Suffolk, who had a large manor near by at Walton and dozens of commended men on the peninsula. It is impossible to be sure how much arable land was farmed by each individual, left alone what livestock they ran on the heath, but Sigeweald perhaps had around 10 acres.[60]

Turning finally to urban elites, it seems likely that fuller profiling of rural landowners with demonstrable urban interests will significantly fill out the picture of links between towns and countryside put together by Robin Fleming.[61] A clear example can be seen at Lincoln in the person of Agemund son of Walraven. Agemund had a name of Scandinavian origin,[62] but his father's name was Continental Germanic and may have been Flemish.[63] In 1066, Walraven was one of the twelve lawmen of Lincoln and part of the urban patriciate, and his son Agemund had succeeded him in that role by 1086.[64] Both were also moneyers, Walraven's name appearing on Lincoln coins assigned to the period 1029–44 and Agemund on those for 1059–70.[65] Both were also landowners in the hinterland of Lincoln in 1066, and the Domesday entries for two of their manors appear to give the names of Agemund's brothers Sigketil, Brunhyse, and Skule, also landowners. A focal point of the family's property was Canwick, immediately south of Lincoln and closely connected with the city. Walraven, Agemund, and Skule had five or six manors in Canwick, accounting for almost 9 carucates of its assessment, with most of rest in the hands of another Lincoln lawman, Ulf. Unlike his father and brothers, who had only a handful of manors between them, Agemund possessed a large rural estate of some 20 carucates in 1066, with land in as many as fifteen vills and soke in another seven. Only one of the manors was of any size; the rest were, distinctively, rather small pieces of property. The whole estate looks rather like what could be accumulated over a period of time by investing urban wealth in rural property. After the Conquest it passed almost intact to a Frenchmen, Lambert, who by 1086 had been succeeded by his son Jocelin fitzLambert. The completeness of the transfer hints at acquisition by marriage into Agemund's family.

Profiles of individual landowners are the building blocks for a profile of society. One point worth stressing is that the Domesday evidence is not confined to two static pictures of landownership in 1066 and 1086. There is much to be discovered about the progress of

[59] J. Hodskinson, *The County of Suffolk Surveyed* (London, 1783), ed. D. P. Dymond, Suffolk Records Society 15 (1972).
[60] *PASE Domesday*, Sigeweald 14.
[61] R. Fleming, 'Rural Elites and Urban Communities in Late-Saxon England', *Past and Present* 141 (1993), 3–37.
[62] *PASE Domesday*, Agemund (discussion of name).
[63] *PASE Domesday*, Walraven (discussion of name).
[64] GDB fo. 336 (Lincolnshire C,2–3).
[65] *PASE Domesday*, Walraven 6 and Agemund 7.

Norman settlement between the Conquest and Domesday, and plenty can be teased out of the *TRE* data about change earlier in the eleventh century. As further profiles are added, it will be possible to see, shire by shire and region by region, how landed society as a whole was structured, how the estates of earls and thegns, barons and knights, sat alongside the landed interests of the king and the churches.

Examples of two landowners from 1086 may be used to underline the point that our methods are valuable for the date of the Domesday survey as for King Edward's time. William the usher and Ralph de La Pommeraye were involved in collecting the great geld of 6 shillings on the hide set in 1085 and delivered at Easter 1086 while the survey was in full swing.[66] They are named in the geld account for Wonford hundred, Devon, which mentions a sum of 20 shillings which had gone missing: 'the tax collectors say they received the money and delivered it to William the usher and Ralph de La Pommeraye, who had to carry the geld to the king's treasury at Winchester'.[67] Plainly it would be useful to know as much as possible about them. We learn from a note in Exon Domesday for Somerset that the men responsible for carrying the geld to the treasury dealt with the receipts for an entire county, had an allowance of 40 shillings, and claimed out-of-pocket expenses to cover the cost of hiring packhorses and a scribe and buying forels (leather bags for storing and carrying coins) and sealing wax.[68]

Ralph de La Pommeraye was one of the leading barons of Devon in 1086, who held as many as 61 Devon manors and a couple in Somerset from the king, but none elsewhere.[69] They were worth £102 a year, of which his own demesne manors brought in almost £80. His chief manor was Berry Pomeroy in south Devon, near the borough of Totnes, and he had at least eight knightly tenants. There are indications from the interlocking of their estates that Ralph had recently shared a landed inheritance with his brother William, a man known by the Latin nickname *Capra* ('Nanny-Goat').[70] Possibly their father was the first owner of the estate after 1066. Ralph had slightly the larger share and was thus evidently the older brother, taking his byname not from any caprine qualities of appearance or character but from the family's Norman place of origin at La Pommeraye (Calvados, arr. Caen, cant. Thury-Harcourt),[71] a day's ride up the Orne valley from the western ducal capital of Caen. As well as his tenancy-in-chief, Ralph (unlike his brother) had acquired subtenancies in Devon on an unusually large scale, holding six manors from Baldwin the sheriff,[72] seven from Judhael of Totnes,[73] and one each from his own brother[74] and Robert count of Mortain.[75] They were worth another £16 a year, bringing his annual revenue from land to £95. Ralph had links in Normandy with the count of Mortain which may be the most important clue to the family's affiliations. A Theodric whom one must suppose another member of the family gave land at La Pommeraye to Count

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66 The geld and its documentation is discussed in full by C. P. Lewis in *Domesday: The Making and Purposes of the Conqueror's Survey*, ed. S. Baxter (forthcoming).

67 Exon 70b1: 'fegadri dicunt se recepisse .xx. solidos et deliberasse Willelmo hostio et Radulfo de Pomario qui debebant geldum portare ad thesaurum regis Wintoniae'.

68 Exon 526b5.

69 Exon 335a1–344a3; GDB fo. 96v (Somerset 30,1–2), and fos. 113v–114v (Devon 34,1–58).

70 Exon 399a1–406a1; GDB fo. 110–111 (Devon 19,1–46).

71 Loyd, *Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families*, pp. 78–9; an alternative place of the same name (Calvados, cant. Lisieux, comm. Saint-Désir) suggested without references by François Neveux in a review in *Le Moyen Âge* 106 (2000), 197–9 at 199, seems too far distant to match the geographical evidence cited by Loyd.

72 Exon 288b2, 295b4, 296a1, 297b3, 305a2, 306a1; GDB fos. 105v, 106v, 107v (Devon 16,7; 16,51–2; 16,63; 16,114; 16,120).

73 Exon 319b1, 320a2, 320b1–4, 323a3; GDB fo. 109 (Devon 17,20; 17,23; 17,25–8; 17,44).

74 Exon 218a1; GDB fo. 105v (Devon 15,66).

75 Exon 403b3; GDB fo. 110v (Devon 19,33).

Robert's new collegiate church of Saint-Évroul at Mortain in 1082,[76] while Ralph's great-grandson Henry (II) de La Pommeraye was a tenant by knight service of the honor of Mortain in 1172.[77] Given Ralph's role as a geld-bearer in 1086 it is intriguing to find that his grandson, another Henry, served Henry I of England as a baron of the Norman exchequer.[78]

William the usher, who appears in Domesday Book among the king's serjeants in Devon, was much less wealthy in land. The eleven small manors that he held from the king were worth £16, of which his demesne manors accounted for £12. In one of the vills he was also a tenant of Tavistock abbey, and he had four knights as tenants on the more distant holdings.[79] Unlike the Pommeraye fief, there was no obvious central residence, presumably not needed because an usher's duties kept him at court. Ushers kept the doors of rooms at court and performed duties associated with the functions of those rooms. Twelfth-century evidence can be used cautiously to eliminate the departments where William was not the usher in 1086: not the great hall,[80] not the king's bedchamber,[81] not the service departments mentioned in the *Constitutio Domus Regis*,[82] since the kitchens, larder, buttery, and table-linen store could probably not spare their ushers (not all of whom were of knightly status anyway) for other duties. Possibly William was an usher of the treasury itself, the duties of whose successors a century later, known from the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, included delivering the summonses across England for sittings of the exchequer.[83] If William were a treasury official in 1086 it would explain why he was named before his wealthier baronial colleague in the Wonford geld account. At any rate, the methodology of profiling landowners shows that the bearers of the Devon geld in 1086 were two Devon landowners, one a leading figure in the county, the other much less wealthy but certainly a king's serjeant and perhaps a treasury official.

It is hoped that these few examples suffice to bring out the rich variety of landholders in Domesday landed society. This was a much more complex society than the usual social categories – earls, thegns, barons, knights and peasants – tend to convey: Domesday takes us to a world that was also occupied by stallers, housecarls, castellans, free men, sokemen, commended men and vavassores; by men performing the functions of sheriffs, port-reeves, hundred reeves, estate farmers, village reeves, chamberlains, treasurers, ushers, porters, bursars, hunters, foresters, hawkers, radknights, beadles, stewards, scribes, interpreters, goldsmiths, archers, crossbowmen, carpenters, engineers, steersmen, stonemasons, vinedressers, butlers, cooks, kitcheners, and many other kinds of *seruientes*; by townsmen who were lawmen, urban patricians, moneyers, burgesses, traders, dealers, bakers, brewers; by men in religious orders of various kinds including the pope, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, royal priests, minster priests, monks, clerks, canons, deans, and village priests; and by women

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[76] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), no. 215 at pp. 677, 682.

[77] Loyd, *Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families*, p. 78.

[78] C. H. Haskins, 'The Administration of Normandy under Henry I', *English Historical Review*, 24 (1909), 209–31 at pp. 209–10, citing a charter printed and discussed by J. H. Round, 'Bernard, the king's scribe', *English Historical Review* 14 (1899), 417–30 at pp. 425–7.

[79] Exon 179b1, 475a1–476b1, 495b5, 500a3; GDB fos. 103v, 117v (Devon 5,9; 51,2–12).

[80] J. H. Round, *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State, with their Coronation Services* (London, 1911), pp. 14, 110–12; GDB fos. 74v, 85 (Wiltshire 68,18–19; Dorset 57,10); Exon 156b3, 168b1, 174b4, 477a2–4, 478a2–3, 479a3 (GDB fos. 89, 90v, 98v (Somerset 6,7; 8,26; 2,8; 46,7–11)).

[81] Round, *King's Serjeants*, pp. 108–10, cf. p. 83.

[82] *Constitutio Domus Regis* in Richard fitzNigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. E. Amt and *Constitutio Domus Regis: Disposition of the King's Household*, ed. and trans. S. D. Church (Oxford, 2007), pp. 200–5, 210–11.

[83] *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. and trans. S. D. Church, pp. 12–13, 18–19, 32–3, 66–9.

who were queens, earls' wives, countesses, abbesses, nuns, widows, heiresses, wives, daughters, sisters, and nieces, almswomen, and in one case, by a little old lady (*quaedam uetula*).[84] Part of the fascination of identifying Domesday landholders is that it is rare to encounter any one of them, however modest, whose profile does not add some distinctive colour, depth or texture to the emerging picture of landed society, like the brushstrokes of a pointillist canvass.

From the top down: analysing landed society

The social distribution of landed wealth

Although premature, it is nevertheless irresistibly tempting to ask: what will our canvas of Domesday landed society like look like when it is complete? Let us begin with some early impressions of the social distribution of landed wealth in 1066 and 1086: that is, the way landed wealth was distributed among landholders with different income levels. Beyond the basic problem of identification, three further methodological issues are pressing here. The first is the question of what Domesday means when it attributes a value (*valet*) to each parcel of property. This is best interpreted as an estimate of the total income, expressed in money, that each manor was expected to generate for its lord in a given year: it was therefore intended to comprise all the income generated by each part of the manor, including the profits of demesne farming, peasant rent, other manorial assets such as mills and fisheries, together with any render due from jurisdiction which Domesday often describes as soke.[85] The Domesday *valet* did not represent the entire economic output from each manor, but only the share of it due to the lord; indeed, the share of economic output retained by the manorial peasantry is usually concealed from view in Domesday. In what follows, we will refer to the sum of all Domesday values as Domesday England's 'landed wealth'. This was not the kingdom's entire economic output or gross domestic product, but only that share of it extracted by landholders in the part of the kingdom that the survey covered.[86]

The second problem is the way lordship is represented in Domesday, and how this affects interpretations of the Domesday *valet*. What does Domesday mean when is says that X held a manor from Y, and what were the financial implications of this relationship? Which of them enjoyed the *valet*: X, the man, or Y, the lord? These questions are problematic partly because the representation of pre-Conquest lordship in Domesday is patchy and variable. Only two of Domesday's seven circuits consistently record the lords of pre-Conquest landholders. In addition, where Domesday does supply information about pre-Conquest lordship, it does so in a variety of different ways, principally because the commissioners in each circuit used

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[84] GDB fo. 274v (Derbyshire 6,28).

[85] This is the standard interpretation of the Domesday *valet*. The best recent treatment of the problem is S. P. J. Harvey, *Domesday: Book of Judgment* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 161–209, with references to earlier literature. For different, but ultimately unconvincing interpretations, see A. R. Bridbury, 'The Domesday Valuation of the Manor', in *The English Economy from Bede to the Reformation* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 111–32 (who contends that the Domesday *valet* tended to record only cash rents); and D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 240–50 (who contends that the Domesday values consisted of soke dues rendered in coin).

[86] For estimates of GDP in Domesday England, see <N. Mayhew, 'Modelling the Medieval Monetisation', in *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086 to 1350*, ed. R. H. Britnell and B. M. S. Campbell (Manchester, 1995), pp. 55–77>; <C. Dyer, 'Appendix 3: A Note on Calculation of GDP for 1086 and *c.* 1300', in *A Commercialising Economy: England 1086 to 1350*, ed. R. H. Britnel and B. M. S. Campbell (Manchester, 1995), pp. 196–98>; <J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford, 2001)>; <J. T. Walker, 'National Income in Domesday England', in *Money, Prices and Wages: Essays in Honour of Professor Nicholas Mayhew*, ed. M. Allen and D. Coffman (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. <000>>.

different formulations to cope with the problem of recording its complex combination of personal, tenurial and jurisdictional elements.[87] For example, the commissioners for circuit III (which covers Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Middlesex) used formulas that distinguished between landholders who held their property in dependent tenure – in which case Domesday records that the holder was not free to 'give' or 'sell' or alienate his land – and landholders who were simply commended to their lords.[88] Roughly two thirds of all entries in circuit III use formulas of this type, and of these about 15% record dependent tenures. By contrast, lordship in 1086 is recorded everywhere as a matter of course, such that about half of all the entries in Domesday record subtenancies; however, the formulae which describe these tenancies tend to be terse and uninformative, revealing little about the reciprocal bonds between lords and their men. In short, we have a much fuller record of lordship in 1086 than in 1066, and this complicates the task of comparing landed society at these two dates.

The third problem is that Domesday reveals remarkably little about the financial dealings between lords and their men. In a very few instances, Domesday entries can be compared with near-contemporary charters which reveal that the subtenants of certain religious houses were expected to make annual payments in respect of their holdings.[89] In more general terms, it is a safe presumption that those who held land in dependent tenure before and after the conquest were expected to perform service, including but not limited to military service, which could be burdensome and expensive. However, for the sake of simplicity, we have assumed that

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[87] S. Baxter, 'The Representation of Lordship and Land Tenure in Domesday Book', in *Domesday Book*, ed. E. Hallam and D. Bates (Stroud, 2001), pp. 73–102, 203–208.

[88] S. Baxter, 'The Making of Domesday Book and the Languages of Lordship in Conquered England', in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in Medieval England c.800–c.1250*, ed. E. M. Tyler (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 271–308 (at pp. 292–308).

[89] For example:

(i) A vernacular chirograph in the cartulary of Bath Abbey records that William Hose leased an estate at Charlcombe in Somerset from the abbey, and was expected to pay £2 per annum to the abbey, in addition to performing (unspecified) service to the king, and paying geld in respect of the estate: see *Two Chartularies of the Priory of St Peter at Bath*, ed. W. Hunt, Somerset Record Society, Volume 7 (Frome and London, 1893), pp. 37–8. The corresponding Domesday entry records that the same William held Charlcombe from Bath Abbey, and that the estate was worth 50 shillings *TRE* and £6 in 1086: Exon 186a1; GDB fo. 89v (Somerset 7,8).

(ii) A Latin charter preserved in the archives of St Augustine's, Canterbury records that Abbot Scotland granted Hugh fitzFulbert Hugo 2 sulungs at Sibertswold in Kent on condition that he paid the abbot 20 shillings each year and gave the tithes of all his proceeds from the demesne: printed C. Flight, *The Survey of Kent: Documents Relating to the Survey of the County Conducted in 1086* (Oxford, 2010), p. 219 (no. 5). The corresponding Domesday entry records that Abbot Scotland held 2 sulungs at Sibertwold in demesne in 1086 (i.e. there was not subtenant enfeoffed at that date), and has a complex valuation clause which records that the estate was worth £8 *TRE*, 40 shillings when acquired, £6 in 1086, 'tamen reddit' £8: GDB fo. 12v (Kent 7,21).

(iii) Another St Augustine's charter records that Abbot Scotland granted Wadard (he of Bayeux Tapestry fame) 5 sulungs around Northbourne in Kent, on condition that he paid the abbot 30 shillings each year and gave the tithes of all his proceeds from the demesne: Flight, *Survey of Kent*, pp. 219–20 (no. 6). The corresponding Domesday entry records that Wadard held 3 sulungs less 60 acres, that the value was £9, and that Wardard rendered no service to the abbot except for 30 shillings which he paid each year: GDB fo. 12v (Kent 7,19).

(iv) A Latin chirograph which remains extant in its original form, and is dated 1085, records that Roger de Lacy held an estate at Onibury from Robert, bishop of Hereford, for which he gave the bishop 20 shillings per annum: V. H. Galbraith, 'An Episcopal Land Grant of 1085', *English Historical Review* 46 (1929), 353–72 at p. 353 (facsimile) and 371–72 (text). The corresponding Domesday entry records that the same Roger held Onibury from the bishop and that it was worth 40 shillings *TRE* and 20 shillings in 1086: GDB fo. 252 (Shropshire 2,2).

when X held a manor from Y, the value of that manor's should be attributed in the first instance to X – to the man, not his lord.

Table 1. The social distribution of landed wealth in Domesday England

		Table 1a: Landholders in 1066					Table 1b: Tenants-in-chief in 1086					Table 1c: net value of landholders in 1086				
Class	**Class boundaries**	**No. of people**	**Value (£)**	**% of value**	**Cumulative % of value**	**Cumulative no. of people**	**No. of people**	**Value (£)**	**% of value**	**Cumulative % of value**	**Cumulative no. of people**	**No. of people**	**Value (£)**	**% of value**	**Cumulative % of value**	**Cumulative no. of people**
A King	Royal demesne	1	8,230	12%	12%	1	1	17,787	23%	23%	1	1	16,273	21%	21%	1
Class A	£750+ per year	7	10,213	14%	26%	8	14	19,733	26%	49%	15	6	5,682	7%	29%	7
Class B	£400-750 per year	13	6,681	9%	35%	21	22	11,605	15%	64%	37	16	8,579	11%	40%	23
Class C	£200-400 per year	26	7,218	10%	45%	47	37	10,960	14%	78%	74	34	9,356	12%	52%	57
Class D	£100-200 per year	40	5,858	8%	54%	87	49	6,844	9%	87%	123	61	8,516	11%	63%	118
Class E	£40-£100 per year	111	7,066	10%	64%	198	83	5,484	7%	94%	206	140	8,692	11%	74%	258
Class F	£20-40 per year	145	3,978	6%	69%	343	63	1,796	2%	97%	269	210	5,752	7%	82%	468
Class G	£10-£20 per year	314	4,276	6%	75%	657	83	1,103	1%	98%	352	371	5,095	7%	88%	839
Class H	£5-£10 per year	624	4,131	6%	81%	1,281	105	727	1%	99%	457	563	3,827	5%	93%	1,402
Class I	£1-£5 per year	2,966	6,053	9%	90%	4,247	276	642	1%	100%	733	1,716	3,836	5%	98%	3,118
Class J	less than £1 per year	4,735	1,233	2%	91%	8,982	376	109	0%	100%	1,109	1,757	464	1%	99%	4,875
Class K	Anonymi	29,309	6,188	9%	100%	38,291	48	28	0%	100%	1,157	2,460	745	1%	100%	7,335
Total		**38,291**	**71,125**	**100%**	**100%**	**38,291**	**1,157**	**76,817**	**100%**	**100%**	**1,157**	**7,335**	**76,817**	**100%**	**100%**	**7,335**

Before 1066

Table 1a is a provisional analysis of the social distribution of landed wealth in England in 1066. The first two columns divide landed society into a series of classes based on landholders' income levels. This adopts a similar approach to that used by William Corbett who, in a pioneering study, assigned the wealthiest landholders of 1086 to one of five classes labelled A to E, depending on the value of their lands.[90] It should be noted that Corbett did not explain his rationale for choosing the boundaries between classes, and that a case could be made for using alternatives.[91] However, we have used the first five of his class boundaries here to facilitate comparison with Corbett himself and subsequent scholarship.[92] Beyond these, we have extended the number of classes to capture landholders at every level, not just the wealthiest few, and we have applied these to the landholders of 1066 as well as those of 1086. The landholders grouped in classes A to J are all named in Domesday Book, and class K groups landholders whom Domesday records anonymously: the latter were predominantly free men, sokemen and burgesses who typically possessed relatively small holdings usually worth less, often considerably less, than £1. The third column gives the number of landholders in each class; the fourth gives the total value of their landholdings; the fifth presents this as a percentage of the whole; the sixth presents these percentages cumulatively; and the seventh shows the number of landholders cumulatively. So, for example, there were 87 landholders in class D and above in 1066, and they between them shared 54% of the kingdom's landed wealth.

The first point to make about this table is that, where the data can be compared with calculations which have been arrived at independently and published elsewhere, the disparities are often insubstantial. For example, the figure given here for the value of King Edward's estates (£8,230) can be compared with an earlier study by John Grassi, which arrived at a figure of £8,164, a difference of less than 1%;[93] the figure of £1,563 for Queen Edith is also within a percentage point of the Pauline's Stafford estimate of £1,574;[94] the total for other members of the house of Godwine, £5,800, compares with an earlier estimate of £5,599, a variance of 3%; and the total for the family of Leofric, earl of Mercia, £2,723, compares with an earlier estimate of £2,857, a variance of 5%.[95] These comparisons suggest that our own estimates are of the right order of magnitude, which is all that matters for present purposes. They also confirm that there is no basis to the often-repeated but erroneous proposition that the house of Godwine held more land than the king.[96] Ealdormen and earls in late Anglo-Saxon England were often mighty and sometimes over-mighty subjects, but none of them were richer than the king.

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[90] W. J. Corbett, 'The Development of the Duchy of Normandy and the Norman Conquest of England', *The Cambridge Medieval History, Volume V*: *The Contest of Empire and Papacy*, ed. J. R. Tanner, C. W. Previte-Orton and Z. N. Brooke (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 481–520, 885–94 (at pp. <000>).

[91] C. P. Lewis, 'Danish landowners in Wessex in 1066', in *Danes in Wessex: The Scandinavian Impact on Southern England, c. 800–c. 1100*, ed. R. Lavelle and S. Roffey (Oxfords, 2016), pp. 172–211 experiments with some different divisions (which is why the £30 is preferred to the £40 boundary above, p. <000>).

[92] Corbett's class boundaries have been used, for example, by <J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Wealth of the Secular Aristocracy in 1086', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 22 (2000), 279–91>; Green, *Aristocracy*; and C. W. Hollister, 'The Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief', in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 219–248.

[93] J. Grassi, 'The Lands and Revenues of Edward the Confessor', *English Historical Review* 117 (2002), 251–83.

[94] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 280.

[95] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 129, 315. Stephen Baxter was not responsible for the identification of the Leofwinesons in *PASE Domesday Domesday*, so they are to that extent independent estimates.

[96] Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 68 for King Edward; 65 n. 51 for Queen Edith; 59, 66, and 71 for the Godwinesons; cf. Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 129–39, 316–9.

The next point to emerge is that this was a deeply hierarchical society in which there were profound inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Classes A to C comprise the landholdings of just 47 people who between them held 45% of Domesday's landed wealth (the top 63 landholders account for 50%). It is worth pausing over some of the logistical and political implications of this. For example, it would have been possible to accommodate the lords of half of England comfortably in a relatively modest space. That affords some insight into the physical realities of late Anglo-Saxon royal assemblies, for it suggests that the people named in the witness lists of royal diplomas may often have represented a substantial proportion of the kingdom's wealth. For instance, in 1062, King Edward issued a diploma confirming the Earl Harold's foundation, dedication and endowment of Waltham Holy Cross.[97] The authenticity of this document has been defended persuasively.[98] Its witness list includes the names of 57 people: the king, queen, both archbishops, 11 bishops, 11 abbots, 5 earls, 22 thegns and 3 royal priests. Of these, 50 can be identified in Domesday, and their holdings amount to about £30,000, a little more than 40% of the kingdom's landed– wealth.

[97] S 1036.

[98] S. Keynes, 'Earl Harold and the Foundation of Waltham Holy Cross (1062)', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 40 (2017), 81–111. We are grateful to Professor Keynes for sight of this article prior to publication.

Table 2. The Domesday landholdings of the witnesses of S 1306 <*recte* 1036>

Witness	Identified as	£	Witness	Identified as	£
Eadwardus Anglorum basileus	King Edward	8,230	Esgarus regiae procurator aulae	Esgar the staller	418
Eadgy∂a dei munere Christi regina	Queen Edith	1,562	Rodbertus regis consanguineus	Robert fitzWimarc	257
Stigandus Dorobornensis archipraesul	Archbishop Stigand[99]	2,051	Radulphus regis aulicus	Ralph the staller	233
Ealdredus Eboracensis archiepiscopus	Ealdred, archbishop of York	650	Bundinus regis palatinus	Bondi the staller	219
Ælfwoldus episcopus	Ælfwold, bishop of Sherborne	-	Hesbernus regis consanguineus	Osbern fitzOsbern	103
Heremannus episcopus	Herman, bishop of Ramsbury[100]	377	Regenbaldus regis cancellarius	Regenbald the chancellor	32
Leofricus episcopus	Leofric, bishop of Exeter	198	Petrus regis capellanus	(Later bishop of Lichfield)[101]	-
Willielmus episcopus	William, bishop of London	260	Baldewinus regis capellanus	(Later abbot of Bury St Edmunds)[102]	35
Ailmarus episcopus	Æthelmær, bishop of Elmham	159	Brihtricus princeps	Beorhtric son of Ælfgar	637
Leofwinus episcopus	Leofwine, bishop of Lichfield	81	Ælfstanus princeps	Ælfstan of Boscombe	288
Wlfwinus episcopus	Wulfwig, bishop of Dorchester	395	Wigodus regis pincerna	Wigot of Wallingford	116
Ælwinus episcopus	Æthelwine, bishop of Durham[103]	23	Herdingus reginae pincerna	Hearding son of Eadnoth	91
Æfricus episcopus	Æthelric, bishop of Selsey	173	Adzurus regis dapifer	Azur son of Thorth	534
Walterus episcopus	Walter, bishop of Hereford	234	Yfingus regis dapifer	Ifing 'of Norton'	11
Gyso episcopus	Giso, bishop of Wells	252	Godwinus reginae dapifer	Godwine son of Ælfhere	82
Ægelno∂us abbas	Æthelnoth, abbot of Glastonbury	468	Doddo princeps	Unidentified	-
Ælfwinus abbas	Ælfwine, abbot of Ramsey	377	Ælfgarus princeps	Ælfgar 'of North Perrott'	57
Wlffricus abbas	Wulfric, abbot of Ely	761	Brixinus princeps	Beorhtsige Cild	192
Leoffricus abbas	Leofric, abbot of Peterborough etc[104]	314	Ægelno∂us princeps	Æthelnoth Cild	341
Leofstanus abbas	Unidentified	-	Esbernus princeps	Esbern Bigga	80
Ælwig abbas	Æthelwig, abbot of Evesham	142	Eadwig princeps	Eadwig Cild	21

[99] Stigand's Domesday landholdings combined the archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishop of Winchester and his (considerable) personal holding.
[100] The bishoprics of Ramsey and Sherborne were combined by 1066.
[101] Peter's TRE holdings are unidentified.
[102] Baldwin presumably held part of the manor of Deerhurst in 1062.
[103] Most of the endowment of the bishopric of Durham lay to the north of the area covered by Domesday.
[104] Leofric held Peterborough in plurality with Burton, Coventry, Crowland and Thorney: see Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 190–5.

Witness	Identified as	£	Witness	Identified as	£
Hordricus abbas	Ordric, abbot of Abingdon	347	Eadricus princeps	Eadric of Laxfield	194
Ægelsinus abbas	Æthelsige, abbot of St Augustine's, Cant.	440	Ægelmundus princeps	Æthelmund 'of Shropshire'*[105]	34
Leofstanus abbas	Unidentified	-	Siwardus princeps	Siward Barn	211
Eadmundus abbas	Edmund, abbot of Pershore	101	Alwoldus princeps	Æthelweald 'of Stevington'*	54
Sichtricus abbas	Sihtric, abbot of Tavistock	72	Ælphig princeps	Alwig son of Banna*	69
Haroldus comes	Harold, earl	3,306			
Ælfgarus comes	Ælfgar, earl	720	-	Godwine, earl[106]	793
Tostinus comes	Tosti, earl	515	-	Edwin, earl	721
Leofwinus comes	Leofwine, earl	294	-	Morcar, earl	994
Gyrð comes	Gyrth, earl	260			
Total					**29,577**

[105] The identifications marked with an * are particularly tentative.

[106] Earl Godwine died in 1053 and earls Edwin and Morcar were appointed in 1063 and 1065 respectively. The value of their Domesday holdings is shown here because they were presumably held by King Edward and earls Harold, Tostig and Ælfgar in 1062.

The remainder of landed society was very different in scale and character. We have provisionally identified about 1,000 landholders in classes E to H with incomes between £5 and £100, about 3,000 lesser aristocrats or prosperous farmers in class I with incomes of between £1 and £5, and about 34,000 free peasant farmers in classes K and J. It is therefore clear that, although landed wealth was sharply concentrated at the top, it was also broadly based at the bottom.

In 1086: Survival rates

How was this society affected by conquest? It was of course decimated. Stenton famously observed that only two Englishmen possessed secular honours of baronial dimensions in 1086;[107] Ann Williams has listed only 14 English landholders were accorded the dignity of being named individually in the lists of tenants-in-chief in Great Domesday Book;[108] and Hugh Thomas has estimated that there were between 800 and 1,300 named English landholders in 1086, who between them ~~they~~ held about 4% of the England's landed wealth.[109] It is possible to refine these figures a little, without ~~in~~ changing the bleak story they tell. The conqueror's legislation distinguished between *Angli*, defined as anyone who resided in England during King Edward's reign regardless of their origins and ethnicity, and *Franci* defined as those who followed William to England after 1066. If this broader definition is adopted, it is possible to identify 44 'English' landholders who are individually named in the lists of tenants-in-chief in Domesday Book, who between them held land in-chief worth £1,914 (£1,515 net) in 1086. To these may be added 15 'English' religious tenants-in-chief – 3 bishops, 7 abbots, 1 abbess, 1 nun, and 3 priests – who between them held land in-chief worth £2,876 (£2,335 net) in 1086.

[107] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. <000>.
[108] Williams, *English and the Norman Conquest*, p.<000>.
[109] H. M. Thomas, 'The Significance and Fate of the English landholders of 1066', *English Historical Review* 118 (2003), 303–33.

Table 3. 'English' tenants-in-chief in 1086.

No.	Name	In chief (£)	Net (£)	No.	Name	In chief (£)	Net (£)
1	Edward of Salisbury	496	482	32	Swein son of Azur	3	4
2	Swein of Essex	477	221	33	Grim the reeve	3	3
3	Alfred of Marlborough*	233	142	34	Almær 'of Burgh St Margaret'	2	2
4	Osbern fitzRichard*	140	97	35	Thorkil the reeve	2	5
5	Thorkil of Warwick	127	19	36	Hagebern	1	1
6	Colswein 'of Lincoln'	86	65	37	Stanheard son of Alwig	1	1
7	Harold son of Earl Ralph	65	65	38	Starculf 'of Barnham Broom'	1	1
8	Christina	55	55	39	Sibold 'of Lowick'	1	1
9	Oda of Winchester	55	50	40	Stanheard 'of Wethersfield'	0	0
10	Godric the steward	47	38	41	Wulfmær 'of Lafham'	0	0
11	Theodric the goldsmith*	28	31	42	Eadric the falconer	0	0
12	Alsige of Faringdon	23	34	43	Godwine the deacon	0	0
13	Alric the cook	16	16	44	Northmann the sheriff	0	20
14	Tovi 'of Holkham'	14	14		**Subtotal**	**1,915**	**1,515**
15	Oda the goldsmith	12	12	1	Baldwin, abbot of Bury St Edmunds*	681	525
16	Eadgifu 'of Chaddesley'	12	12	2	Osbern fitzOsbern, bishop of Exeter*	490	379
17	Croc the huntsman	11	19	3	Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester	440	286
18	Edgar Ætheling	10	0	4	Ælfsige, abbot of Ramsey	333	314
19	Gospatric son of Arnketil	9	19	5	Giso, bishop of Wells*	333	222
20	Godwine Haldein	8	8	6	Ælfgifu, abbess of Barking	164	162
21	Modwin 'of Donyland'	8	8	7	Leofwine, bishop of Lichfield	112	107
22	Edmund son of Algot	8	9	8	Ælfweald, abbot of St Benet of Hulme	98	100
23	Wulfgifu wife of Finn	7	7	9	Ælfsige, abbot of Bath	82	64
24	Alfred nephew of Wigot	6	22	10	Regenbald the chancellor*	76	102
25	Ulfkil 'of Framingham'	5	10	11	Ingulf, abbot of Crowland	55	52
26	Ealdred 'of Iping'	4	4	12	Sihtric, abbot of Tavistock	8	8
27	Ealdgyth 'of Wells next the Sea'	4	4	13	Leofgifu the nun	6	6
28	Northmann the fat	4	4	14	Earnwine the priest	4	10
29	Alfred 'of Attleborough'	4	4	15	Colbern the priest	0	0
30	Haghni 'of Weybourne'	4	4		**Subtotal**	**2,876**	**2,335**
31	Eadgifu, wife of Edward son of Swein	4	4		**Total**	**4,790**	**3,851**

However, these were not the only 'English' landholders holding directly from the king in 1086, for most of the shires in Domesday conclude with a miscellaneous list of the king's servants, and these record the names of a further 376 secular 'tenants-in-chief' who bore native names and whose lands were worth £886 at that date. In addition, Domesday names about 1,177 secular landholders who bore native names, held no land in chief, but who possessed subtenancies worth £1,498 in 1086.[110] All told, this adds up to about 1,612 landholders with a total net income of £6,234, which represents about 8% of the total. In statistical terms, therefore, the English had in fact been more than decimated by 1086, for they between them controlled less than one pound in every ten of Domesday's landed wealth at that date.

In 1086: Tenants-in-Chief

The question remains whether this astonishingly comprehensive takeover also transformed the structure of landed society: that is, how wealth was socially, as distinct from ethnically, distributed within it. Here it is important to grasp how Domesday Book represents landholding in 1086. In the first instance, all land fell into of one two categories: it was either *terra regis*, the land of the king, or held directly from the king by lords who are conventionally known as 'tenants-in-chief' in the literature.[111] The contemporary terms used to describe the group of estates held by a tenants-in-chief include *breve* and *feudum*, and they are conventionally referred to 'honours' or 'fiefs' in the literature. Within each fief, all land again fell into one of two categories: every estate was either held by the tenant-in-chief directly, or from them by a subtenant (and occasionally from them by sub-subtenants). This structure lends itself to analysis on two different levels. First, we can calculate the total value of land attributed to each tenant-in-chief: this is relatively straightforward, being the sum of the value of every manor in an honour regardless of whether it was held in demesne or by subtenants. Second, we can estimate the 'net value' of holdings: this is more complicated, for it involves making certain assumptions about the financial dealings between tenants-in-chief and subtenants.

Let us begin with the value of land held in chief (Table 1b). Here it is essential to register that Tables 1a and 1b are not directly comparable, for reasons which are themselves instructive. The contrast between them is partly illusory, being a function of the way Domesday was made, for as we have seen, the Domesday record of *TRW* lordship is far more complete than its record of *TRE* lordship. However, the contrast is also partly real, reflecting the reality that lordship over land more extensive in 1086 than it had been in 1066, for the structure of Domesday implies that all land was held either immediately mediately from the king. Indeed, one of main purposes of Domesday was to maximise the political and financial gains which flowed from the Conqueror's uniquely comprehensive rights of lordship in

[110] For the possibility that Domesday understates the number of tenants of subtenants, many of whom were English, see C. P. Lewis, 'The Domesday Jurors', *Haskins Society Journal* 5 (1993), 17–44.

[111] The terms is strictly-speaking anachronistic, for although Domesday uses the word *tenentes* in the heading of some of its 'contents lists' of landholders (e.g. GDB fos. 30 (Surrey), 64v (Wiltshire), 75 (Dorset), 126v (Middlesex), 154 (Oxfordshire)), this word is not coupled with *in capite* in any of the documentation of the Conqueror's reign; indeed, the earliest occurrence of *in capite* in England (significantly, the term has no Continental currency) is datable to the 1120s. However, there is not the slightest doubt that the concept of a landholder who lacked any intermediary lord between themselves and the king was current in 1086: in addition to the Domesday contents lists, it is clearly articulated in the geld accounts of Exon Domesday, which use the expression *baro regis* to articulate it (e.g. Exon 1a1). See R. Sharpe, '*Tenere in Capite* and Tenant in Chief', *The Charters of William II and Henry I*, currently accessible at https://actswilliam2henry1.wordpress.com/2017/05/23/tenere-in-capite/; and for *barones*, see *idem*, 'Official and Unofficial Latin Words in 11th- and 12th-Century England', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 206 (2017), 247–271.

England. Later evidence demonstrates that, when a tenant-in-chief died, his honour escheated or reverted into royal control until the right to succeed to it had been negotiated and agreed; and that this enabled the king to profit by enjoying the income from escheated honours until successors were installed, and by charging successors themselves the right to succeed. Indeed, the pipe roll of Henry I reveals that about a third of his fabled wealth derived from 'feudal incidents' such as the vacancies in religious houses, escheats, wardships, marriages, and reliefs. Domesday Book itself was structured as it was – by shire and then by tenant-in-chief – so that sheriffs and treasury officials could administer these income streams more efficiently.[112] King Edward the Confessor enjoyed very considerable powers of lordship and patronage, and doubtless made handsome profits from doing so, but not on this scale; only the uniquely comprehensive conquest enabled the Conqueror to represent himself as the ultimate source of all tenure (or of all property rights), and to profit systematically from doing so.[113]

For these reasons, Table 1b is best considered to be *sui generis*. It reveals that the landed wealth of tenants-in-chief was heavily concentrated. In 1086, the royal demesne was worth £17,800, about 23% of the total,[114] and there were 15 'class A' landholders between them held 26% of the total; this means that just 16 individuals controlled almost half of the kingdom's landed wealth. Classes B and C, comprising 59 tenants-in-chief, account for the next quarter or so of the kingdom's landed wealth; 132 tenants-in-chief in classes D and E accounted for most of the rest; and 950 minor tenants-in-chief, mostly royal *seruientes*, between them shared the last 5%. Although the table does not show this specifically, the point at which the cumulative share of the nation's wealth reaches 90% in the database is the 143rd tenant-in-chief in the list ranked in descending order by value of fiefs. In other words, King William assigned nine-tenths of the landed wealth of England to about 150 people. Insight drawn from experimental psychology helps to bring out the significance of this. In 1993, Professor Dunbar published a now famous paper, in which he observed that the optimal group size of various species covaries with size of the neocortical part of the brain which governs its social functions. By analogy and extension, Dunbar suggested that the human brain is wired to cope with group sizes of roughly 150 or less; and that social groups which exceed this number significantly tend to disfunction, and therefore break up to form other groups. Dunbar went on to show that, in a range of circumstances, human beings do indeed organize themselves into groups of about 150 or less. He drew on a series of ethnographical and anthropological studies of hunter-gatherer populations in Africa, Australisia, South America and the Arctic circle, and among these the average village consisted of 148 people (the hunting party tended to be smaller, and the tribe much bigger, but the fundamental social unit, the village, was about 150). He also studied the size of smallest fighting unit (the company) drawing on examples from around the world from *c.* 1600 onwards, and showed that the range is almost invariably between 100 and 200 with a mean average of about 150 – a particularly telling example, because army companies are well known to have strong social functions, and because their

[112] S. Baxter, 'How and Why was Domesday Made?' (forthcoming).

[113] The best exposition of this case is Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. <000>. The best exposition of the case to the contrary is <S. Reynolds, 'Was All Land Held from the King?', in her *The Middle Ages without Feudalism: Essays in Criticism and Comparison on the Medieval West* (Farnham, 2012)>; see also her 'Tenure and Property in Medieval England', *Historical Research* 88 (2015), 563–76.

[114] The analysis of the Conqueror's estates in *PASE Domesday* has been undertaken by Alex Dymond, and will be developed in his Oxford University doctoral thesis, 'The Estates of William the Conqueror: Royal Property in England and Ducal Property in Normandy in the Eleventh Century' (forthcoming).

cohesiveness is critical.[115] Since 1993, this so-called 'social-brain hypothesis' has been tested and in large measure validated in a wide variety of contexts, which include the analysis of some very large social media datasets.[116] The hypothesis has also been refined, for instance by demonstrating the intuitively plausible point that we construct hierarchies of social circles both within and beyond the threshold of 150:

> Both personal social networks and small-scale societies are structured … as a series of relationship layers. These layers are hierarchically inclusive, with a distinct structure. Each layer is three times bigger than the one inside it, with the successive layers consisting of roughly 5, 15, 50, and 150 individuals. We know that these circles continue for at least two more layers (at 500 and 1,500 individuals, reflecting acquaintances and people whose faces we can put names to, respectively). Successive layers correspond to decreasing levels of emotional closeness and frequency of contact, with the boundaries between adjacent layers being associated with a precipitate drop in these indices … We distribute our available social time roughly in proportion to the perceived intimacy of our relationships. We devote around 40% of our available social time to our 5 most intimate friends and relations (the subset of individuals on whom we rely most) and the remaining 60% in progressively decreasing amounts to the other 145. Kinship is an important additional structuring principle for personal social networks. About half of the slots in our networks are taken up by the members of our extended family.[117]

All this accords with common sense: we intuitively know that there are limits to the number of people we can include in our social lives, and that most people have 'inner circles'. But it happens that there is a striking correlation between Dunbar's number (as it is often called) and the distribution of landed wealth among tenants-in-chief in 1086. King William assigned 90% of the wealth of conquered England to about 150 people, and within this group there existed a clear hierarchy: the king and the five wealthiest tenants-in-chief (including two of the king's half-brothers) between them controlled 38% of the kingdom's landed wealth; a further 52% was shared in progressively decreasing amounts among about 140 other lords; and the remaining 10% was distributed among roughly 1,000 lesser landholders. In short, the Conqueror appears to have distributed the landed wealth of England a manner that closely resembles the way in which people instinctively allocate their social capital and resources. Indeed, this constitutes good evidence that is the principal rationale for the way William redistributed England's landed wealth: the closer barons were to the Conqueror's inner circle, the more property they received. Here it is relevant that there is a broad correlation between the people who witness the Conqueror's charters most regularly and the wealthiest Domesday landholders.[118] This in turn strengthens the case that William retained a firm personal control over the process of colonization. It also adds further insight into the physical logistics of royal assemblies in early conquered England, including the assembly at which the Domesday survey reached its climax. The annal for 1086 famously says that, once the survey was complete, 'ealle þa landsittende men þe ahtes wæron ofer eall Engleland' ('all the landholders of any account in England') performed homage and swore oaths of loyalty to William at Salisbury.[119] We now

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[115] R. I. M. Dunbar, 'Coevolution of Neocortical Size, Group Size and Language in Humans', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16 (1993), 681–735.

[116] For a recent review of the literature, see R. I. M. Dunbar, 'The Social Brain: Psychological Underpinnings and Implications for the Structure of Organizations', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 23(2) (2014), 109–114.

[117] Dunbar, 'Social Brain', pp. 110–1.

[118] C. W. Hollister, 'Magnates and *Curiales* in Early Norman England', *Viator* 8 (1977), 63–81.

[119] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A Collaborative Edition, Volume 7: MS. E, A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Indices and Notes*, ed. S. Irvine (Cambridge, 2004), <p. 94>; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas and S. I. Tucker (London, 1961), <p. 162>. For the case that the assembly at Salisbury constituted the climax of the Domesday survey, see J. C. Holt, '1086', *Domesday Studies: Papers Read at the Novocentenary Conference*

know that all the landholders of any account could be brought together in a relatively small space – perhaps the hall inside the castle, or the nave of ~~the~~ Salisbury's first cathedral.[120]

Relatively little is known about the way in which the honours of tenants-in-chief were constituted. The diplomatic record is disappointing in this respect, for other than a late and imaginative forgery, none of the Conqueror's charters of enfeoffment survive.[121] Domesday uses the word *antecessor* to refer to the pre-Conquest holders of the lands which passed to tenants-in-chief, and implies that in some cases William assigned all the lands and lordships of a single *antecessor* to a single tenant-in-chief; this form of transfer is therefore known as an 'antecessorial grant' in the literature.[122] Indeed, some scholars have made a case for continuity in this respect, arguing that antecessorial grants of land and their associated lordships constituted the principal mechanism by which land was transferred between 1066 and 1086: most new lords simply acquired old lordships.[123] Robin Fleming has made a very different case, contending that antecessorial grants accounted for a relatively small proportion – roughly ten per cent – of all honours in 1086, and that the bulk of which were constituted by other means, including territorial grants made by the king, and acquisitions through by 'private enterprise', i.e. unauthorized, extra-legal land-grabbing by tenants-in-chief.[124]

Unfortunately, the fact that pre-conquest lordship is ambiguously and inconsistently recorded in Domesday means that this debate cannot be definitively resolved, since it precludes comprehensive analysis. However, once aggregated, the Domesday data remains suggestive. Table 4 lists the most prominent beneficiaries of antecessorial grants, identifies their principal *antecessores*, shows the proportion of the wealth the tenants-in-chief derived from them, and lists the total number of pre-conquest landholders named in each their honours.

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of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute for British Geographers, Winchester, 1986, ed. J. C. Holt (Woodbridge 1987), pp. 41–64; reprinted in his *Colonial England, 1066–1215* (London, 1997), pp. 81–101.

120 <*The History of the King's Works*, ed. H. Colvin (London, 1963), ii, 824–8>; <R. Gem, 'The First Romanesque Cathedral at Old Salisbury', in *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context*, ed. E Fernie and P Crossley (Hambledon, 1990), 9–18>; <T. Webber, Scribes and Scholars at Salisbury Cathedral c 1075–c 1125 (Oxford, 1992)>; <E. Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford, 2000).>.

121 <*Early Yorkshire Charters*, ed. W. Farrer and C. T. Clay, 12 vols (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record series, extra series, 1914-1965), iv, 94–5 and frontispiece>.

122 Exon Domesday occasionally refers to the *honores* of pre-Conquest lords: for example, Count Robert of Mortain acquired manors *cum honore Edmeratorii* (211a2, 211b1 etc), and *cum honore Ordulfi* (215b4); William Chevre *cum honore Alwardi* (404a1); and Humphrey the chamberlain *cum honore Bristricii* (479b1). <It is probable that the Latin *honor* translated the Old English *wurðscipe*: see, for example, the use of that word in relation to Edgar Ætheling in the annal for 1086 (as n. <000> above). It should be stressed that it is implicit throughout Domesday that every *TRE* landholder was the *antecessor* of the *TRW* tenant-in-chief, whether or not that term was specifically used: see Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. <000>.

123 See above, n. <000>.

124 Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 183–214.

Table 4. Secular tenants-in-chief who acquired more than half of their honours from a single *antecessor*

No.	Tenant-in-chief	Total value of fief	Principal antecessor	Value of ante-cessor's lands	% of fief	Total no. of antecess-ores
1	Robert de Vescy	80	Æthelric son of Mærgeat	80	100%	19
2	William Leofric (fitzRichard)	44	Osgot of Hailes	42	96%	13
3	Geoffrey Alselin	147	Toki son of Auti	141	96%	63
4	Ralph Paynel	133	Mærleswein the sheriff	127	96%	54
5	Walter de Saint-Valery	116	Ælfgar, earl	111	96%	7
6	Aubrey de Vere	278	Wulfwine	237	85%	72
7	Nigel the physician	66	Spirites the priest	55	83%	20
8	Roger de Beaumont	77	Archbishop Stigand	55	71%	8
9	Swein of Essex	477	Robert fitzWimarc	330	69%	113
10	Gilbert of Ghent	424	Ulf Fenisc	292	69%	163
11	William d'Eu	397	Ælfstan of Boscombe	262	66%	95
12	Harold son of Earl Ralph	65	Ralph, earl	43	66%	5
13	Walter the Fleming	103	Leofnoth son of Osmund	67	65%	42
14	Odo fitzGamelin	60	Beorhtric son of Ælfgar	38	64%	32
15	Robert Blund	50	Aki the Dane	31	61%	38
16	Ralph fitzHubert	57	Leofnoth son of Osmund	34	60%	61
17	Alfred of Marlborough	233	Carl 'of Norton Bavant'	135	58%	54
18	Christina	55	Ælfgar, earl	31	56%	4
19	Hamon the sheriff	70	Northmann of Mereworth	39	55%	7
20	Geoffrey de Mandeville	820	Esgar the staller	452	55%	218
21	Alfred d'Épaignes, the Breton	115	Alwig son of Banna	61	53%	66
22	Ranulph Peverel	363	Siward of Maldon	188	52%	98
23	Guy de Craon	94	Æthelstan son of Godram	48	51%	64
24	Hermer de Ferrers	88	Thorkil 'of Stow Bardolph'	45	51%	91
25	Aubrey, earl	164	Azur son of Thorth	83	51%	48
26	Godric the steward	47	Edwin 'of Melton'	24	50%	83

The table shows that only 26 tenants-in-chief acquired half or more of their land by value from a single *antecessor*. Some of these (e.g. Walter de Saint-Valery, Odo fitzGamelin, Christina) received only a fraction of the holdings of their principal *antecessores*, so that it strains the point to describe them as the beneficiaries of antecessorial grants. The table also shows that most of the fiefs in question consisted of the lands of dozens and sometimes more than a hundred *antecessores*. Of course, that is not in itself conclusive, for the problem remains that we do not know what proportion of these honours derived from the principal *antecessor*'s lordship: for example, because Ralph Paynel's honour lay in those parts of domesdy England where pre-Conquest lordship is patchily recorded, we do not know whether or not his 53 antecessores other than Mærleswein the sheriff were Mærleswein's men. However, examples drawn from the parts of Domesday England where lordship is well recorded are suggestive. For instance, Little Domesday reveals that Robert Malet obtained 40% of his fief from Eadric of Laxfield, but he also obtained a further 17% from Eadric's commended men. On the other hand, Little

Domesday also records that Robert succeeded to the entire holding of Godwine son of Ælfhere, and to several score free landholders associated with other lords; and that Eadric of Laxfield's estates and lordships passed to 5 and 25 different tenants-in-chief respectively. In this case, there is no doubt that Robert considered Eadric to be his *antecessor*, for Little Domesday repeatedly makes this plain; but it is also clear that Robert did not succeed to Eadric's lordship intact, and that Eadric was not Robert's only *antecessor*.[125] There remains abundant scope for more work here, but it is probable that such cases were typical. It therefore looks probable that only a small minority of fiefs were constituted through antecessorial grants, and that the remainder of England's tenurial fabric was indeed 'shredded' and reconstituted between 1066 and 1086.[126]

In 1086: net value

Another way of approaching the social distribution of landed wealth in 1086 is to estimate the value of each landholder's property net of the effects of lordship. This is more complicated, for as we have seen, it involves making assumptions about financial relationships between tenants-in-chief and subtenants, about which remarkably little is known.[127] For simplicity, the present analysis proceeds from the assumption that subtenants enjoyed all the value from the estates they held. It also takes account of the fact that many tenants-in-chief themselves held some manors as subtenants or other barons, and that some subtenants themselves enfeoffed sub-subtenants. On this basis, 'net value' of a landholder in 1086 may be calculated as follows:

$$\text{net value of landholder X} = A - B + C - D + E$$

where A is the aggregate value of property held by X 'in chief', B is the value of the subtenancies held from X, C is the value of the property held by X as a subtenant, D is the value of sub-subtenancies held from X as a subtenant, and E is the value of land held by X as a sub-subtenant.[128]

Table 1c represents the distribution of 'net value' in 1086 thus defined. Domesday records roughly 5,500 subtenants and 500 sub-subtenants. The proportion of subtenanted land varies considerably from fief to fief, but the total value of subtenancies in 1086 was about £26,000: tenants-in-chief therefore collectively retained about two thirds of their land in demesne and enfeoffed one third to subtenants. The net value of royal demesne increased significantly between 1066 and 1086: the £ 16,273 attributed to King William is almost exactly double the £8,230 attributed to King Edward. The net value of the lands of Class A landholders was smaller in 1086: £5,699 compared with £10,213, a reduction of 44%. The gap

[125] <For Robert Malet, see K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and D. Roffe, Domesday Book and the Malets: Patrimony and the Private Histories of Public Lives, with an Appendix on Welbourn Castle, Lincolnshire', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 41 (1997) 13–56>.

[126] The phrase is borrowed from Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 26–32.

[127] Above, n. <000>.

[128] There is one further complication to take into account here: namely, the possibility that a Domesday manor could 'render' a value in excess of its *valet*. This was because certain manors were 'farmed' by estate managers who assumed responsibility for paying the *valet* to the manor's lord and, depending on the amount of income actually generated or rendered by the manor in a given year, could make profits or losses from this enterprise. The best discussion of this practice remains R. Lennard, *Rural England 1086–1135: A Study of Social and Agrarian Conditions* (Oxford, 1959), pp. <000>. See also <Harvey; Bridbury>. Our calculations attribute the *valet* of manors which are said to be at farm to the tenant-in-chief; the farmers or estate managers of these manors are not, therefore, treated as subtenants.

between the king and the richest landholders therefore grew dramatically between 1066 and 1086 – a point which lends support to Fleming's proposition that the Conqueror addressed the problem of overmighty subjects which had destabilised King Edward's regime.[129] However, in classes C to G, representing all those who had net value of between £750 and £10, the number of landholders and the total value of holdings in each class was appreciably higher in 1086. At that point, the pattern reverses, for there are fewer landholders with less holdings in each of the classes from H to K. The most spectacular reduction occurs in classes J and K, which is made up of modest but free peasants farmers with an income of £1 or less: their numbers fell from 34,044 to 3,209 (a reduction of 91%), and the value of their land fell from £7,421 to £1,265 (a reduction of 83%). Here it is important to stress that most free peasants were not physically annihilated but reclassified between Domesday's terminal dates; nevertheless, they were presumably reclassified because their socio-economic status and condition had been reduced. Domesday draws a basic distinction between the landholders who enjoyed the surpluses of agrarian farming, and those who contributed to it; and whereas most free men and sokemen are represented above that line in 1066, the majority fall below it in 1086. This is one of several indications that the economic condition of the peasantry deteriorated in early conquered England. The kingdom's total landed wealth increased by 5% between 1066 and 1086, notwithstanding the fact that large swathes of England remained economically depressed by harrying of the north (the value of Yorkshire fell by two thirds between 1066 and 1086). The principal drivers of this were presumably economic growth, inflation, and greater seigneurial pressure on the peasant sector resulting in higher rents; and although we lack sufficient data to estimate the relative importance of these factors, Domesday contains abundant evidence of the latter, including not least a rapid expansion in both the number of manors and the number of peasant farmers drawn into their nexus.[130] In short, the Norman conquest resulted not only in an unusually complete elite replacement, but also widespread peasant displacement. At almost every level except the lowest, the ranks of the aristocracy swelled and extracted a greater share of the kingdom's landed wealth, and it did so by intensifying pressure on those least able to resist: put simply, the rich became suddenly richer, the poor appreciably poorer.

The spatial distribution of secular landholdings

The spatial distribution of landed wealth in conquest England is another new field of enquiry, for the simple reason that very few reliable maps of Domesday landholders have been published, and those that exist have never been brought together for comparative purposes. It is also an important line of enquiry, for the distribution of landed wealth could have a considerable, perhaps determinative impact on the way polities functioned in this period. There is a basic contrast between rulers who enjoyed sufficient control over landed resources to exercise patronage on a significant scale and those who did not, for whereas the former could reasonably expect to attract the most powerful aristocrats to their courts, and could therefore govern credibly though assembly politics, the latter could not. There is also a basic contrast between polities where lords tended to monopolise landed wealth in geographically concentrated lordships, and those where landed wealth tended to be geographically dispersed

[129] Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. <000>.
[130] S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Labour', in *A Social History of England 900–1200*, ed. J. Crick and E. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 98–114.

and heterogeneous in most localities, for it was more difficult for rulers to exercise meaningful authority in the former than the latter.

This is the essence of Chris Wickham's persuasive explanation for the contrasting political trajectories of England and West Francia in the long tenth century (from *c.* 875 to 1025).[131] He argues that in West Francia (or France, as Wickham prefers to call it), the royal demesne contracted to a core between the Paris-Orléans strip, the authority of late Carolingian and early Capetian kings disintegrated, and rather than attending their assembles, nobles intensified their 'commitment to local power' and focused their energies on geographically concentrated lordships. In England, the conquest of Danish controlled territory by King Alfred and his descendants in the long tenth century resulted in a rapid expansion of the regime's royal estates and its scope for exercising patronage, and this explains why assembly politics flourished and aristocratic commitment to local power was less pronounced within the early English kingdom. On this reading, the making of the English state was in the first instance a political and tenurial, not an administrative or institutional exercise. With these considerations in mind, we turn to the spatial distribution of landed wealth in eleventh-century England with quickened interest. The discussion that follows will focus on secular landholdings worth £100 or more. It is illustrated with a selection of printed maps (the figures contain maps of the landholders marked with an asterisk (*) in the discussion that follows); however, the reader may find it useful to know that distribution maps of every landholder named in Domesday can be now consulted using the *PASE Domesday* website.

Before 1066

<Insert Figure 1 here>

There was only one national, or kingdom-wide estate in 1066, and that was the royal demesne. King Edward* was the only landholder who possessed property in every shire, and he was the wealthiest landholder in 18 of those shires. The royal demesne was not evenly distributed, for its greatest concentrations lay south of a line between Gloucester, Oxford, Westminster and Canterbury, but it also consisted of significant possessions in the Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria.

Below the king, a very small group of landholders had significant possessions in several regions within the kingdom. Earl Harold* was only other landholder whose estates were distributed in every region, though not quite every shire: he held land in 29 shires and was the wealthiest lord in 2 of them. After him, the next most widely dispersed holding was that of his sister, Queen Ealdgyth* (aka Queen Edith), who held land in 21 shires in a portfolio that included significant possessions in the midlands and the eastern shires as well as the south. Archbishop Stigand* was in absolute terms the third wealthiest landholder in England. Domesday appears to differentiate his personal possessions from those he held as the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of Winchester; this enormous portfolio was scattered across 17 shires in a great triangle between Norfolk, Somerset and Kent, but Stigand lacked a tenurial presence in the northern Midlands, Northumbria and Cornwall and Devon in the far southwest. Earl Ælfgar and his sons earls Edwin* and Morcar* between them held land in 19 shires in Mercia and Northumbria, but there are chronological complications here, for Ælfgar died in *c.* 1063 and Morcar did not obtain earldom until after the crisis of 1065 which resulted in Earl Tostig's expulsion from Northumbria. Indeed, it is likely that Harold, Eadwine and Morcar obtained most of their estates in in Yorkshire and the east Midlands when Tostig's

[131] C. Wickham, *Problems in Doing Comparative History*, The Reuter Lecture 2004 (Southampton, 2005); reprinted in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter*, ed. P. Skinner (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 5–28.

earldom was carved up between in the last few weeks of Edward's reign. This is one of several reasons for thinking that many, probably the majority, of estates attributed to earls were loaned to them on a temporary, *ex officio* basis.[132] If so, their estates were in large measure the product of royal patronage (even if this sometimes amounted to little more than royal acquiescence), and they were structured in ways that aligned the interests of earls with extensive regions within the kingdom.

The estates of aristocrats below these exalted ranks also tended to be much more dispersed than concentrated. There were a few pre-Conquest landholders whose estates were concentrated in one or two shires.

<Insert Figure 2 near here>

The most prominent examples are as follows (the numbers in parentheses gives the national ranking of each landholder in descending order by value, and asterisks indicate persons whose holdings are mapped in figure 4: Wihtgar son of Ælfric* in Essex and Suffolk (48), Eadric of Laxfield* in Suffolk and Norfolk (51), Wulfwine *antecessor* of Aubrey de Vere in Cambridegshire, Essex and Suffolk (56), Siward of Maldon in Essex (65), Cypping 'of Worthy'* in Hampshire (68), Eadric the Wild* in Shropshire (76), Beorhtmær 'of Rillaton'* in Devon and Cornwall (79), and Eskil of Ware* in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (83). However, as the parenthetical numbers in this list show, none of these magnates were in the uppermost tier of the English nobility; indeed, all of them fall into in our class D, with estates worth between £100–£200 per annum. In addition, none of them were the leading landholders in any shire, though Wihtgar son of Ælfric and Eadric of Laxfield were the wealthiest lords in Suffolk after Baldric abbot of Bury St Edmunds and Wulfric abbot of Ely. Interestingly, with the possible exception Eadric, none of their names occurs in the witness lists of King Edward's extant diplomas.[133]

The more common pattern was for holdings to be scattered across several shires, very often with an orientation towards that part of England where royal assemblies were most frequently convened. Figure 3 reproduces Simon Keynes's map of the places where royal assemblies are known to have been held in the period between 900 and 1066.[134]

<Insert figure 3 here>

There are several outliers, but the great royal assemblies were convened within egg-shape zone which encompassed London and Westminster in the east, Winchester in the south, and Gloucester in the west, arcing between these points to include royal estates in Somerset, Dorset, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The frequency with which the estates of wealthy aristocrats formed stepping stones to or lay within this zone is altogether remarkable.

<Insert Figure 4 here>

This pattern is not only visible in the holdings of the king, queen, Archbishop Stigand, and the earls, but is also commonplace among aristocrats representing each wealth bracket greater than £40 a year. Good examples include, in class B: Gytha, wife of earl Godwine (10),

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[132] See n. <000> above.

[133] S. Keynes, *An Atlas of Attestations of Anglo-Saxon Charters, c. 670–1066* (Cambridge, 2002), Table LXXV 'Attestations of thegns during the reign of King Edward the Confessor', currently accessible online through *Kemble: The Anglo-Saxon Charters Website*, at http://dk.usertest.mws3.csx.cam.ac.uk/node/115. A thegn named Eadric attested S 1028 (dated 1059) and S 1036 (dated 1062): this could be Eadric the Wild or (more probably, because wealthier, Eadric of Laxfield).

[134] S. Keynes, 'Meeting-places of the King and his Councillors, 900–1066', published on *Kemble: The Anglo-Saxon Charters Website*, currently at http://dk.usertest.mws3.csx.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/MeetingPlaces.jpg; see also S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready' 978–1016*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd series 13 (Cambridge, 1980), <p. 36>.

Beorhtric son of Ælfgar (11), Ulf Fenisc* (19), Esgar the Staller* (21), Azur son of Thorth (12); in class C, Æthelnoth Cild* (27), Ælfstan of Boscombe (32), Mærleswein the Sheriff* (45), Wulfweard the White (42), Siward Barn* (47); in class D: Beorhtsige Cild (52), Toki son of Auti (62), Eadmær Ator (64), Wulfwynn of Creslow (66), Aki the Dane (74); and for class E, Tonni 'of Culverthorpe'* (100), Ulf son of Manni Swart (112), Swein Swart (133), and Spirites the priest (140). These examples are too numerous to be explained away coincidence: they have cumulative force, and reveal that the possession of property *en route* to and within the zone of assembly politics was much prized by members of England's ruling elite. That in turn suggests that physical proximity to power mattered as much as real estate itself in the strategies of England's elites. Like the witness lists of royal diplomas, this constitutes clear evidence that royal assemblies exercised a strong gravitation pull on England's landed elite in the late Anglo-Saxon period.[135]

That this was so suggests that late Anglo-Saxon kings exercised extensive control over the scale and distribution of aristocratic wealth. This control was nothing like absolute, but it was sufficient to draw the greatest magnates towards the king and one another on regular basis, and sufficient to ensure that the kingdom's landed elite which was not so much committed to local power as to the kingdom's political centre of gravity: aristocratic interests were collectively aligned with the kingdom as a whole. Indeed, there are now strong grounds for thinking that the early English kingdom was held together as much by patterns of land tenure and lordship as by the institutional structures, which have received much more attention in the literature.

After 1066

How did the conquest affect the geographic distribution of landed wealth? The literature as it stands is necessarily impressionistic. In a prescient passage, Stenton drew attention to the tenurial heterogeneity of Domesday England, observing that the largest holdings were often geographically dispersed such that the tenurial fabric of many localities consisted of a patchwork of different lordships; but he also stressed the prevalence of concentrated blocs of property, often associated with castles, sometimes described as castleries (*castellaria*) in Domesday.[136] Important here too are Robin Fleming's observations that many Domesday hundreds and wapentakes were dominated by a single lord, presumably because the Conqueror frequently apportioned land to his followers by making territorial, as distinct from antecessorial grants, guided by existing administrative boundaries; and that many of the compact elements of the honours of tenants-in-chief lay on the coast and borders of England, as if intended to guard them.[137] It is now possible to explore these questions further.

King William held land in every shire except Cheshire, and was the wealthiest landholder in 23 shires, and the second wealthiest landholder in 8 more. No tenant-in-chief enjoyed anything like this breadth of coverage. The most dispersed honour in 1086 was that of Bishop

[135] The attestations of late Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas are fully tabulated in Keynes, *Atlas*, Tables. For an important discussion of the circumstances in which the witness lists of royal diplomas were compiled during the course of royal assemblies, see S. Keynes, 'Church Councils, Royal Assemblies, and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas', in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. G. R. Owen-Crocker and B. W. Schneider (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 17–182.

[136] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 627–9. Subsequent scholarship has developed and refined these remarks: see, for example, Lennard, *Rural England*, pp. 28–34; and Allen Brown, *Normans and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 184–6.

[137] Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 145–82.

Odo of Bayeux, which comprised land in 19 shires (though ~~to~~ should be noted that this honour was then under royal control, for Odo had been imprisoned since 1082). Prior to that date, Odo and the king's other half-brother, Count Robert of Mortain possessed enormous honours that partly mirrored partly meshed with one another. They between them held land in 26 shires: each of them was the wealthiest landholder in a single shire, Robert in Cornwall, Odo in Kent; both of them acquired major concentrations of property in other southern shires, Robert in Devon, Somerset and Dorset, and Odo in Sussex; and both also acquired substantial but more disperse holdings in the east Midlands, East Anglia and Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Interestingly, an analogous situation obtained in Normandy, for the great fiefs of Mortain and Bayeux covered distinct swathes of territory in southern and western Normandy, but interlocked at certain points (see Figure 8).

Beyond the king's immediate family, the honours of tenants-in-chief in fall into three main groups defined by their geographical reach and shape. The first are honours which are principally the product of antecessorial grants: these naturally mirror their pre-Conquest counterparts and therefore tend to have an orientation towards the old zone of royal assemblies. The clearest examples of these are as follows (with *antecessores* named in parentheses): Geoffrey de Mandeville (Esgar the staller), Gilbert of Ghent (Ulf Fenisc), William d'Eu (Ælfstan of Boscombe), Swein of Essex (his father, Ralph the staller), Ranulph Peverel (Siward of Maldon), Ralph Paynel (Mærleswein the sheriff), Aubrey de Vere (Wulfwine, his antecessor), Alfred of Malborough (Carl 'of Norton Bavant'), Walter de Saint-Valery (Earl Ælfgar), Walter the Fleming (Leofnoth son of Osmund), Countess Judith (her husband, Earl Waltheof), and Edward of Salisbury (his mother, Wulfwynn of Creslow).

The second group consists of honours that consisted of a combination of dispersed and concentrated holdings.

<Insert figures 5 and 6 here>

All of the Class A barons' honours were of this type: Earl Hugh* dominated Cheshire, but also possessed estates scattered through another 20 other shires; Earl Roger de Montgomery* dominated Shropshire and the Rape of Arundel in Sussex, plus a scattering of estates in 11 shires between the two; William de Warenne's honour comprised the Rape of Lewis and the third largest holding in Norfolk, plus a more dispersed holing in the eastern shires and outliers elsewhere; Count Alan's* honour consisted of dense concentrations in south Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire and the North Riding of Yorkshire – indeed, he is the only tenant-in-chief who was assigned a whole wapentake renamed in his honour – but he also had more dispersed holdings in Suffolk, Norfolk and the east Midlands; the core of Eustace of Boulogne honour lay in Essex, plus holdings scattered across 11 other shires forming a great triangle between Kent, Norfolk and Somerset; the honour of Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances* consisted of compact blocs in north Somerset and a compact corridor in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, plus land in 8 other shires; and Richard fitzGilbert's* estates were focused on his two principal seats at Tonbridge in Surrey and Clare in Suffolk, but lay in 9 shires in all. The honours of several class B and class C barons also consisted of concentrated and dispersed elements, albeit on a slightly smaller scale: they include Robert Malet*, Henry de Ferrers*, Walter Giffard, Ralph Baynard*, Roger the Poitevin, Ralph de Mortimer, Robert of Stafford*, Hugh fitzBaldric*, Ralph de Limésy, William fitzAnsculf* and Robert the Bursar. Honours of this type this gave leading barons both a firm commitment to specific parts of the kingdom, and a tenurial stake across the kingdom as whole. It is likely that most of them were the product of a series of acquisitions made over time – a reminder that the Norman colonization

of England was a protracted process, still incomplete when the Domesday survey was made, especially in the north.[138]

The third group consists of holdings which consisted primarily of concentrated holdings in specific regions, shires, or parts of shires.

<Insert figure 7 here>

Some of these compact territorial holdings crossed the borders of two or three shires: such were the honours of Robert d'Oilly and Miles Crispin along the Upper Thames Valley, Roger Bigod* in East Anglia, Rannulph Peverel in Essex and Suffolk, Hugh de Grandmesnil* in the central Midlands, Roger de Lacy in the western marches, Roger de Bully* in south Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and Count Robert of Meulan in Warwickshire and Leicestershire. Some consisted of dense concentrations in particular shires: Swein of Essex, Baldwin the sheriff in Devon, Hugh de Port the sheriff in Hampshire, Humphrey de L'isle* in Wiltshire, Ivo Taillebois* in Lincolnshire, Hugh de Beauchamp* in Bedfordshire, Roger de Courseulles in Devon, Picot the sheriff in Cambridgeshire, Thorkell of Warwick in Warwickshire, Nigel d'Aubigny in Hertfordshire, Aiulf the sheriff in Dorset. Others were more narrowly focused on parts of shires: for instance Robert Malet in east Suffolk, Robert count of Eu in East Sussex, Ilbert de Lacy in the west Riding of Yorkshire, and Judhael of Totnes in west Devon.

These patterns must reflect the Conqueror's strategies for delegating power and authority into localities. In most shires, King William made himself the wealthiest landholder, and enriched two or three tenants-in-chief with concentrated holdings, such that the king and these 'leading barons', if we may call them that for convenience, usually controlled more than half of the landed wealth in these shires between them. However, it was rare for such leading barons to monopolize localities, for their holdings were usually counterbalanced by a pattern of tenurial heterogeneity. In most shires, roughly half of the landed wealth was shared between a few dozen tenants-in-chief: that much is clear from Domesday's lists of tenants-in-chief, which are often forty or more deep. Indeed, a visitor to Anglo-Norman England remarked that there seemed to be as many lords as there were neighbours there.[139] Many of the leading barons with concentrated holdings in specific shires exercised shrieval functions. This reflects a significant shift in the structure and distribution local ~~of~~ delegated authority in early conquered England: the decline the earl, and the rise of the sheriff.[140] King Edward's earls usually exercised authority in earldoms consisting of several shires at a time, and although the composition of earldoms were not fixed, it was usual for most shires to be assigned to an earldom at any moment in time.[141] King William's earldoms were different, probably because he faced rebellions led by earls in the late 1060s and in 1075, and learned to distrust them. William therefore made fewer appointments to the rank of earl and limited their authority, assigning them to more geographically restricted commands. That created a vacuum of delegated authority which sheriffs quickly filled, with the result that, whereas Edward the

[138] For the Norman colonization of the north, see W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: the Region and its Transformation 1000–1135* (London, 1979); W. M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: The Church of Durham, 1071–1153* (Woodbridge, 1998); R. Sharpe, *Norman Rule in Cumbria, 1092–1136*, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (Kendal, 2006).

[139] <J. Laporte, 'Epistulae Fiscannanses: lettres d'amitie, de gouvernement et d'affaires', *Revue Mabillon* 43 (1953), 5–31 at p. 30> (cited by Hudson, *Laws of England*, p. 373).

[140] R. Sharpe, 'Earls and the Shires in Anglo-Norman England' (forthcoming); *idem*, 'The Earliest Norman Sheriffs', *History* 101 (2016), 485–94.

[141] Baxter, *Earls of Mercia*, pp. 62–71, 302–14; *idem*, 'Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question', in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and The Legend*, ed. R. Mortimer (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 77–118 (Maps 1–12).

Confessor's sheriffs tended to be relatively modest landholders, William's sheriffs were mostly major barons.[142]

One further significant change in the geographical distribution of landed wealth within English landed society is invisible in Domesday Book: namely the fact that many, indeed probably most of the wealthiest lords in England also had substantial holdings in Normandy. The Anglo-Norman polity had a very different political centre of gravity to that of late Anglo-Saxon England, not least because the king's itinerary spanned both sides of the Channel; indeed, the Conqueror's charters demonstrates that he spent about three quarters of his time in Normandy between 1072 and 1087.[143] The Norman charter evidence, which is richer than the English, also demonstrates that many of the leading Norman families had substantial possessions land on either side of the Channel. This gave them a powerful interest in the integrity and unity of the Anglo-Norman polity; indeed, in the absence of meaningful institutional integration, that is what held that polity together.[144] Even so, not much is known about the physical realities of cross-Channel lordships, because the prosopographical evidence for them is hard won and relatively little of it has been published.[145] A single example must suffice here to suggest the value of further work in this area. During the two decades prior to the invasion of England, William fitzOsbern became one of Duke William's closest companions. That helps to explain the fact that he acquired the bulk of two great lordships by inheritance: that of his father, Osbern the steward, and that of his mother, Emma, the sister of Bishop of Hugh Bayeux and niece of Count Ralph. The fusion of these two great inheritances placed William fitzOsbern in command of a great swathe of property with concentrations straddling the Seine Valley, like muscles strengthening Normandy's spine. Between 1066 and 1070, William acquired another great swathe of property within the dismembered earldom of Wessex: this consisted of concentrated blocs in Herefordshire and the Isle of Wight, plus a scattering of manors in the shires between two. The resulting complex has a remarkably simple logic: a line of best fit drawn through a map of Earl William's cross-channel lordship leads directly from Breteuil, Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight and Hereford, his principal seats of power in England and Normandy (see figure 8). Wherever William was within this great corridor of lordship, he would always be within a day's ride of one his own manors.[146]

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[142] For estimates of the value of the holdings of sheriffs in 1066 and 1086, see (respectively): P. Wormald, *Papers Preparatory to the Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Volume II: From God's Law to Common Law*, ed. S. Baxter and J. Hudson (University of London: Early English Laws, 2014), http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/reference/wormald/, p. 200; J. Green, 'The Sheriffs of William the Conqueror', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5 (1983), 129–45 (at p. <000>).

[143] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), pp. 75–84.

[144] J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), pp. <000>; D. Bates, *The Normans and Empire* (Oxford, 2013), pp. <000>.

[145] Indeed, the most important work in this field consists of unpublished theses: K. Thomson, 'The Cross-channel Estates of the Montgommery-Bellême Family, *c.* 1050–1112' (Unpublished MA thesis, University College, Cardiff, 1983); V. Traill, 'The Social and Political Networks of the Anglo-Norman Aristocracy: the Clare, Giffard and Tosny Kin-groups, *c.* 940 to *c.* 1200' (University of Glasgow, PhD thesis, 2013); J. Moore 'The Norman Aristocracy in the Long Eleventh Century: Three Case Studies', (Oxford University DPhil thesis, 2017); A. Dymond, 'The Estates of William the Conqueror' (forthcoming).

[146] Baxter and Lewis, 'Comment identifier les propriétaires fonciers du *Domesday Book*', pp. 215–43. Baxter is currently preparing a monograph on William fitzOsbern and the Norman nobility in the long eleventh-century.

The transformation of landed society

This paper has proposed ways to reframe the debate on the nature and extent of change in English landed society between 1066 and 1086. It is difficult to sustain the argument that these changes were revolutionary. The period witnessed the violent replacement of one landholding elite by another, but this was a conquest, not a social revolution. That is not to say that the effects of conquest were anything but dramatic. It more than decimated the indigenous landholding elite, such that by 1086 there were only about 1,600 English landholders above the ranks of the dependant peasantry who between them shared about 8% of the kingdom's landed wealth. It resulted in a sharp concentration of landed wealth, for the property of about 37,000 landholders was acquired by 1,150 tenants-in-chief, who between them enfeoffed about 6,000 subtenants. In a small minority of cases, pre-Conquest lordships informed the process of colonization, but the majority those lordships were shredded and reconstituted. The social distribution of landed wealth in 1086 was very different from 20 years earlier: the royal demesne doubled in size; the gap between the king and the richest nobles widened; the ranks of the rest of the upper nobility swelled and captured a greater share of the kingdom's landed wealth, at the expense of the lesser nobles and free peasants whose numbers fell dramatically. Lordship intensified at every level. King Edward's royal demesne was extensive and widely distributed such that he enjoyed considerable powers of patronage, including the power to assign great swathes of property on an *ex officio* basis; but King William's powers of patronage were exponentially greater, for he treated the whole kingdom as his lordship, and every landholder as his tenant or tenants of his tenants. By 1086, there were fewer, wealthier lords in each income bracket. Although the effects of conquest on lordship cannot be established with any precision, it is probable that there was a marked increase in the amount land held in dependant tenure from the wealthiest landholders. The spatial distribution of landed wealth was also uprooted and replanted in a very different configuration. Whereas the majority of pre-Conquest magnates organised their holdings towards a zone of assembly politics in southwest England, a critical mass of the Anglo-Norman elite possessed substantial holdings on both sides of the Channel, and thereby aligned their interests with the shape of the new polity. The majority of pre-Conquest holdings were geographically dispersed, often with outliers that formed stepping stones to the zone of assembly politics. By 1086, there were more concentrated holdings in England ~~in 1086~~, such that the king and a handful of major barons controlled the majority of landed wealth in each shire; this was partly because earldoms shrank in scale and importance and sheriffs filled the resulting vacuum in authority. However, the portfolios of most major landholders still consisted of dispersed as well as concentrated holdings, and the social power of barons in most localities was counterbalanced by a pattern heterogeneity. These lordships in England communicated with holdings in Normandy, such that a critical mass of the Norman elite possessed cross-channel lordships, which aligned their interests with the shape of the new polity. These changes were not revolutionary in nature, but their cumulative effect was considerable: they amount to a transformation in English landed society.

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