DOMESDAY SHIRES AND HUNDREDS OF ENGLAND
METADATA

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When the Normans arrived in England in AD 1066 they found a kingdom divided into a distinctive and complicated administrative geography. In compiling Domesday Book, the great survey of holdings and liabilities over much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086, the assessors grouped information firstly into 'shires'—districts that are in many cases the precursors of modern counties—and then into smaller divisions such as hundreds, wapentakes, and vills (estates), with additional groupings such as multiple hundreds and regional ealdormanries also discernible in the source. These administrative entities clearly had a territorial composition. Using the boundaries of estates, parishes, and hundreds mapped at later dates, numerous scholars have sought to reconstruct the administrative geography described in Domesday Book.

This archive contains digitised shapefiles of the administrative boundaries as they are believed to have existed in 1086. In total, 812 hundreds (or wapentakes in some parts of what became known as the Danelaw) can be rubricated from the evidence of Domesday Book. At least south of the Humber, these hundreds formed a dense pattern of administrative districts subdividing the territories known to us as 'shires' or counties. Ranging in size from 4.6 km^2 (Worth, Kent) to 982 km^2 (Salford, Lancashire), these administrative districts grouped local land units into named supra-local territories, in which, according to the early tenth-century law code of King Edward the Elder,[1] assemblies were to be held every four weeks, an interval which could be charted according to the lunar cycle.

Digital mapping of the Domesday hundreds was carried out as part of a three-year interdisciplinary research project *Landscapes of Governance*, which ran until November 2012 funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and which brought together researchers from the UCL Institute of Archaeology, the Institute for Name-Studies at the University of Nottingham, and the Department of History, University of Winchester.[2]

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[1] II Edw 8: see F.L. Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 120–21. See P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 378–9, for a discussion of the complexities of this text, possibly an unofficial document, which probably dates to the reign of Edgar (957–75).

[2] The Principal Investigator was Professor Andrew Reynolds, who was supported and guided by Dr Jayne Carroll (Nottingham) and Professor Barbara Yorke (Winchester) as Co-Investigators overseeing the historical and toponymic aspects of the work respectively. Dr Stuart Brookes and Dr John Baker were full-time research fellows for the duration of the project. From the outset, the project team were conscious of the necessity for, and challenges presented by, an interdisciplinary approach and we were fortunate to be able to consult with an advisory board with wide-ranging expertise. The *Landscapes of Governance* advisory board comprised Professor Wendy Davies, Professor John Hudson, Dr Sarah Semple, all of whom provided judicious guidance throughout the project.

Administrative territories can be approximated by plotting named eleventh-century vills comprising a Domesday hundred, supplemented by the boundaries of estates, parishes, and hundreds mapped at later dates.[3] Except for revisions made to the boundaries of the hundreds, and the extension of mapping into areas covered by the Little Domesday, the boundaries of territories in this digital resource follow those described in 29 county maps published by the Alecto Historical Editions, Domesday Book (1986–1992).[4] The latter are scaled at 3 miles to the inch and alongside the derived outlines of the administrative districts carry the Latin and English names of every vill or manor named in Domesday Book. For areas covered by Little Domesday, reference was made to the maps of the Phillimore editions of Domesday Book (1973–86). Alecto nomenclature also forms the baseline for the names of districts adopted by this digitisation programme, and the associated Electronic Anderson.

Digitisation of boundaries aimed as far as possible to harmonise with pre-existing digital datasets, notably those of early modern parish boundaries, and nineteenth-century hundreds. With regards the latter our digitisation was considerably aided by colleagues in the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge who provided GIS-enabled data of the nineteenth-century hundredal geography, as aggregated from parish boundaries recorded on 1851 one-inch Ordnance Survey maps.[5] Where Domesday hundreds deviated from their nineteenth-century successors digitization re-aggregated territories from the same parish boundary data.[6]

A retrogressive approach in combination with the Alecto Domesday mapping of individual counties has allowed us to reconstruct digitally the mid-eleventh-century hundredal pattern. The spatial data is supplemented by lexical listings of hundred names which form a separate resource 'Electronic Anderson'.[7] Separately and together, these resources provide a powerful new tool for analyzing and re-assessing the nature of English territorial arrangements and their linguistic contents.

FILES

The data-package consists of three ESRI shapefiles, describing three tiers of administrative district that can be reconstructed from Domesday Book, ranging from small (DBhundreds.shp) to large (DBshires.shp) in scale, with some areas also having intermediate (DBinter.shp) administrative divisions. Whilst this tripartite division holds true in the most general of senses, it is one that also

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[3] Cf. various entries by F.R. Thorn in the *Alecto Domesday*, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', (London, 1986–92).

[4] http://alecto-historical-editions.co.uk/Domesday/Index.htm, accessed Feb 2017

[5] We are very grateful to Drs Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Max Satchell for providing this mapping in electronic form. The results of the Cambridge project can be found at:
http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/hundredmapping/hundreds.html

[6] UK Data Archive, SN 4348 R.J.P. Kain and R.R. Oliver, *Historic Parishes of England and Wales: An Electronic Map of Boundaries before 1850 with a Gazetteer and Metadata*; SN 4828 N. Burton, J. Westwood and P. Carter 'GIS of the Ancient Parishes of England and Wales, 1500-1850': (https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue?sn=4828).

[7] Electronic Anderson is a Microsoft Access database of the complete list of territory names, and archaeological and toponymical information about the assembly places from which territories are named. Lists derived from the Electronic Anderson will appear as separate resources on the Early Medieval Atlas in due course.

obscures a very much more complex reality of administrative and territorial organization; one that exhibits considerable variations in scale, structure, and terminology from region to region.

At the largest territorial scale, the Domesday survey lists entries under the header of "shire", the great majority of which are familiar in modern usage as administrative divisions (i.e. shires, counties). Whilst the origins of these districts varied, by Domesday they served as the major units for the organisation of local government and the main mechanism by which information was collected by the Inquiry.[8] DBshires.shp contains polygons for each of the Domesday shires, aggregated from hundred districts.

Each shire was subdivided into smaller administrative districts. At the smallest territorial scale Domesday Book lists together vills under the head of "hundred" – units which were both territorial arrangements and legal entities. In areas of the Danelaw (north-eastern England) a different term—"wapentake"— was used to describe administrative districts. However, while hundreds and wapentakes are often treated as equivalent units, in Durham, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Cumberland (where Domesday coverage is anyway thinner), neither hundreds nor wapentakes are normal, and the landscape is instead divided territorially into wards. Even the word "equivalent" must be used with caution, for it may turn out that the equivalence suggested by the Domesday treatment of wapentakes and hundreds extends no further than the fact that they were territorial groupings of vills that shared some functional similarities in the eleventh century. Their historical origins and precise administrative status may sometimes have differed. With this caveat, DBhundreds.shp brings together the evidence for small administrative districts.[9]

In certain parts of the country Domesday Book and other early sources make mention of administrative divisions that existed between those of shire and hundred. Lindsey and Yorkshire in the northern Danelaw are divided into three parts, known as Ridings. These divisions existed already in the eleventh century and have a Scandinavian terminology, deriving from OScand *þriðjungr* "third part".

In Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and perhaps Derbyshire, each wapentake was itself divided into twelve-carucate hundreds by the early twelfth century, an administrative structure that Round traced back to 1086 or earlier.[10] Superficially this arrangement mirrors (in structure though not in status or perhaps function) the "lathes" of Kent and "rapes" of Sussex, which were also divided into districts called hundreds. Acknowledging that lathes, rapes, and the

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[8] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 1086; D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas and S. I. Tucker, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Revised Translation* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 161–3.

[9] Further subdivisions of the hundred/wapentake are also visible in early sources. In parts of the Danelaw, townships were often known by the Scandinavian term *býjar-lǫg* "law of the village", which survives in place-names such as Brampton Bierlow (Smith 1961:106, 222). Parsons and Styles (2000:112) describe this as "an area in which minor disputes could be settled by locally-agreed laws". In these parts of the Danelaw, it seems that a Scandinavian system was established whereby a shire unit based on a central settlement – York or Lincoln – was divided into three parts, each of which was sub-divided into wapentakes, below which a further stratum of local governance existed at township level (Cameron 1991:7, 2001:1, 6; Smith 1928:xiv–xv, xxii, 1, 1937, 1962:64–5, 117–8).

[10] Stenton 1910:89; Round 1895:196–204; Hadley 2000:101–104

Lincolnshire hundreds, were in fact very different from each other – they are compiled together in DBinter.shp as aggregates of hundreds/wapentakes.

Key to Attribute Tables

ATTRIBUTE TABLES

ESRI .shp File: DBshires

FID	Unique identifier
Shape	Feature type [polygon]
County_1	Name of the Domesday county

ESRI .shp File: DBhundreds

FID	Unique identifier
Shape	Feature type [polygon]
Layer	The Domesday hundred (or wapentake) name, following conventions adopted by the Alecto Editions Domesday Book
County_1	Name of the Domesday county
TerrID	Unique identifier for each hundred based on country acronym + number. TerrID links to the Electronic Anderson database (see above, Baker and Brookes, forthcoming).

ESRI .shp File: DBinter

FID	Unique identifier
Shape	Feature type [polygon]
Layer	Common name of unit
County_1	Name of the Domesday county
TerrID	Unique identifier for each hundred based on country acronym + number. TerrID links to the Electronic Anderson database, cf. 'General Guide' document.