

THE POPULATION OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE IN 1086

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This is one of a series of papers which has examined evidence contained in the Buckinghamshire folios of Domesday Book for aspects of society and economy in the late-eleventh century. Previous papers have been concerned with the manor, slavery, watermills, small estates of two hides or less, and the ability of the last Anglo-Saxon landowners to dispose of their land freely. Throughout, the size and composition of the population have featured in passing, and it is now appropriate to discuss in more detail those who formed the vast bulk of the inhabitants of the county in 1086. These were the peasants who drove the ploughs, sowed and reaped, herded the animals and performed a multitude of services from carting to hay-making, which supported the landowners and the emerging towns and markets. The composition of the peasantry and its distribution in relation to agricultural resources will be the main focus. Insofar as slaves formed part of that population, they feature here, but for a more detailed discussion of the phenomenon, readers are referred to the author's earlier paper.

I

For most of England, Domesday Book provides the first detailed evidence for the size and composition of the population, although as we shall see, it is an area of the survey even more than usually fraught with difficulties. These problems arise mainly from the fact that we do not know what proportion of the population is mentioned in Domesday Book, nor the extent to which the enumerated individuals represent family members, etc. For example, the survey does not cover large regions of the north of England, which, while they may have been lightly populated, still contributed to the total. There are also problems with urban centres, not least because both London and Winchester are omitted. In Buckinghamshire, for instance, while the shire town has a section of its own at the beginning, the size of its population is unclear. Aylesbury is given much the same treatment as any large agriculturally-centred estate, although it had a mint at various times over the previous century, an ancient minster church, and almost certainly some kind of market. Newport Pagnell was undoubtedly an urban centre, but here too the information is patchy, and there is a reference to an unspecified number of 'men'.¹

Nationally, as well as locally, the crucial issue is how to move from the numbers of various types of inhabitants listed in the Domesday folios to the total population by way of a multiplier. Since this involves trying to ascertain what the statistics rep-

resent in themselves, there will inevitably be a degree of circularity. There is also the difficulty that the totals tend to vary every time they are tallied up, although in aggregate the differences are not too significant. The problem inherent in taking the terminology employed in Old English terms for various types of peasant and others and translating it into Latin, with an overlay of Norman French, should not be underestimated, especially in view of the difficulty in understanding the nuances of pre-Conquest documents such as laws and those relating to estate management.

Let us begin with estimates of the total population of England in 1086, and with the multipliers applied to factoring up the Domesday data. The total enumerated population is 268,279. From this are omitted the four northernmost counties, most of Lancashire, London, Winchester, and a greater or lesser proportion of the population of other towns. The position of tenants-in-chief and sub-tenants is also confused, since many held land in more than one county, and there are many identical personal names which may or may not overlap. Darby estimated the total at around 327,000 after making good these omissions (305,000 if slaves are counted as individuals).²

The choice of multiplier to take us from this base figure to the total for Domesday England ranges from 3.5 to 5.0, although that of course produces very large variations. Maitland, an early and per-

ceptive student of Domesday Book and its vagaries opted for five, in the absence of anything better.³ J.C. Russell considered this too high and argued for a multiplier of 3.5. These would give outside estimates of between 1.07 and 1.52 million. Research which has subsequently been undertaken into later medieval demographic data, virtually none collected for census purposes, but inferred from taxation and other records, suggests that Maitland's guess was nearer the truth, with a range of household size from 4.5 to 5.0. This would make the population of England in 1086 somewhere between 1.37 and 1.52 million. While this seems tiny to the modern reader, the low level of agricultural technology, poor and very variable yields, and the virtual absence of urban and industrial bases must be borne in mind. And of course, 1086 was followed by two centuries of dramatic population growth and arable expansion, with at least a doubling to 3-4 million by the end of the thirteenth century. This pressed too hard on the limits of farming practice and was sharply reduced after 1300 by famine and especially by the Black Death and other pandemic outbreaks of plague after 1348.

Turning to Buckinghamshire, the rural population has been calculated in recent years as 5,103 or 5,095.⁴ Of these, 845 are slaves and the convention of treating them as individuals will be followed here. Using a multiplier of 4.0 on the remainder, the total for the county is about 17,900, while using 5.0 as a factor gives about 22,100. These figures seem small to modern eyes, when the county population is about 800,000 (including the area lost to Berkshire in 1974). Evidence for the urban population is very sketchy. At Buckingham, 26 burgesses are mentioned, to whom may probably be added a further 27 recorded as owing dues, and who represent links with rural estates in the north of the county.⁵ There is in addition a substantial rural population, totalling 29, with fourteen bordars who are likely to have been either town dwellers or closely associated with the life of the town.⁶ The status of Newport Pagnell is questionable, although its name (from OE meaning 'new market/trading place') and a reference to an unknown number of burgesses suggest that it was at least quasi-urban in 1086.⁷ There are also rural estates with no recorded population, even though there are agricultural assets, and one or two where the scribe has omitted to insert a figure for villeins (Leckhampstead 3 and Shenley Brook End 2, for example). While the

missing individuals could have been entered under other parts of the same vill, they might have been completely overlooked. There is also the question of the tenants-in-chief and sub-tenants who held no land outside Buckinghamshire and their families, and also possible unrecorded retainers. Darby's assumption of a 5% allowance for all of these contingencies would add another 1,000 or so to the county population, although 2.5% might be nearer the mark. These additions would give a total for the county in 1086 of 22,700 to 23,200 using a household multiplier of 5.0. It seems unlikely to have been much more. (In the rest of the paper, data for individual settlements/estates are presented as absolute values from the Domesday folios, *except where stated to the contrary*. A family/household multiplier of 5.0 is used.)

That Buckinghamshire is not out of line with its neighbours is shown below:

TABLE I
Domesday Population and Area: Selected Counties

<i>County</i>	DB Popn.	Area 000 ac.	Ac./ Person	Arable* Ac./ Person	Ac./ Person
Buckingham	23200	476	20.5	206	8.9
Bedford	16835	298	17.7	140	8.3
Hertford	21435	407	19.0	136	6.7
Berkshire	28900	462	16.0	189	6.5
Middlesex [#]	10960	180	16.5	55	5.0
Oxford	31030	485	15.6	261	8.4
TOTAL	132360	2308	17.4	987	7.5

Notes: *000 ac., based on 100 ac./ploughteam; # excludes London

Overall, there were about one million acres under the plough in these six shires, an average of 7.5 acres/person. This may be compared with estimates of a minimum of five acres required for subsistence, suggesting a surplus of around 50% for the consumption of overlords and for sale/exchange in a 'normal' year. On this basis, Buckinghamshire comes out well, with a surplus of 75%, although, given the variability of weather, yields and other factors in the equation, we should not take too rosy a view of the life chances of the peasantry. Buckinghamshire was the least densely-populated of these counties, but had more ploughs than might be expected.

II

Turning from the shire to the Hundred, the population data for 1086 are summarised below (absolute figures, followed by percentages).

Allowing for a major distorting factor like the borough of Buckingham in Rowley Hundred, there is a wide variation around the county average for the three major classes of peasant. Even when the twenty-six burgesses are excluded, the profile for

Rowley is distinctly different from most other Hundreds, notably in the large number of bordars. This itself, however, may reflect the presence of Buckingham, as many boroughs across the country have hinterlands with a high proportion of bordars.⁸ Comparing individual Hundreds with the county average using the standard deviation technique, these following results are obtained ('others' excluded, totals rebased):

TABLE 2
Buckinghamshire Population in 1086 by Hundred

<i>A. Numbers</i>						<i>B. Percentages</i>				
<i>Hundred</i>	<i>Villeins</i>	<i>Bordars</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Hundred</i>	<i>Villeins</i>	<i>Bordars</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	<i>Other</i>
Stone	183	121	80	0	384	Stone	47.7	31.5	20.8	0
Aylesbury	156	80	30	3	269	Aylesbury	58.0	29.7	11.2	1.1
Risborough	101	27	17	0	145	Risborough	69.7	18.6	11.7	0
S/T	440	228	127	3	798	S/T	55.1	28.6	15.9	0.4
Stoke	163	53	31	0	247	Stoke	66.0	21.4	12.6	0
Burnham	155	62	37	0	254	Burnham	61.0	24.4	14.6	0
Desborough	287	106	58	4	455	Desborough	63.1	23.3	12.7	0.9
S/T	605	221	126	4	956	S/T	63.3	23.1	13.2	0.4
Ixhill	184	77	62	0	323	Ixhill	57.0	23.8	19.2	0
Ashendon	162	65	40	0	267	Ashendon	60.7	24.3	15.0	0
Waddesdon	126	46	29	0	201	Waddesdon	62.7	22.9	14.4	0
S/T	472	188	131	0	791	S/T	59.7	23.8	16.5	0
Cottesloe	228	86	50	3	367	Cottesloe	62.1	23.4	13.6	0.8
Yardley	139	25	47	0	211	Yardley	65.9	11.8	22.3	0
Mursley	122+	77	45	0	244+	Mursley	50.0	31.6	18.4	0
S/T	489+	188	142	3	822+	S/T	59.5	22.9	17.3	0.3
Stotfold	98+	72	39	0	209+	Stotfold	46.9	34.4	18.7	0
Rowley	80	82	46	36	244	Rowley	32.8	33.6	18.8	14.8
[excl. burgess]	80	82	46	10	218	<i>Excl. burgess</i>	36.7	37.6	21.1	4.6
Lamua	163	60	51	0	274	Lamua	59.5	21.9	18.6	0
S/T	341+	214	136	36	727+	S/T	46.9	29.4	18.7	5.0
Seckloe	225	72	92	?	389+	Seckloe	57.8	18.5	23.7	?
Bunsty	160	99	52	8	319	Bunsty	50.2	31.0	16.3	2.5
Moulsoe	187	127	50	0	364	Moulsoe	51.4	34.9	13.7	0
S/T	572	298	194	8	1072+	S/T	53.4	27.8	18.1	0.7
TOTAL	2919+	1337	856	56+	5168+	TOTAL	56.5	25.9	16.5	1.1

Some Hundreds are anomalous in more than one class, and it is probable that the variations have a long history prior to 1086. Thus, Risborough Hundred, with almost 70% of its inhabitants classed as villeins, has only 19% of bordars and 12% of slaves, both about one-third less than the county average. Yardley too, with 66% villeins, and an excess of slaves (22% cf. Buckinghamshire 16.5%), has only 12% in the bordar class. Even

after discounting the burgesses, Rowley Hundred is anomalous in all classes. It has only about two-thirds of the expected proportion of villeins, a higher number of slaves than average, but almost twice as many bordars. Stone has a shortfall of villeins, but a surplus of slaves, while in Stotfold, there is a surplus of bordars balanced by a dearth of villeins. Seckloe Hundred has almost 50% more slaves than the average, but two-thirds the number

of bordars. These variations are much less noticeable when the Hundreds are grouped into their traditional threes, so the anomalies arise at the local level, often between adjacent villis.

TABLE 3

Domesday Buckinghamshire: Population Anomalies by Hundred

Class	>+1 σ	<-1 σ
Villeins	Risborough	Stone
	Stoke	Stotfold
	Yardley	Rowley
Bordars	Stotfold	Risborough
	Rowley	Yardley
	Moulsoe	Seckloe
Slaves	Stone	Aylesbury
	Yardley	Risborough
	Rowley	Stoke
	Seckloc	

Unfortunately, the Buckinghamshire Domesday does not provide details of the size of peasant holdings, but it is possible to form an idea of the hierarchy which existed from neighbouring Middlesex. There, in most, but not all, holdings, information is provided on the land held by the various types of peasant. This is usually expressed in phrases such as "X villeins hold one virgate each", or "Y bordars hold one hide". The way in which the sums work suggests that the hides in this case are tenurial, rather than the fiscal ones used to express the geld liability of an estate. The equation appears to be one hide=four virgates=120 acres. There are many cases, however, where no acreage is attributed to the population listed, although these relate mainly to bordars and cottars, whose lands were very small. There is also a considerable range in the size of villein holding. A fortunate few held one hide or even more, sufficient to produce a surplus for the market, and also to employ the services of virtually landless bordars and cottars. Many more held only half a virgate, about fifteen acres, only twice as much as the average bordar. In order to subsist, these villeins must have worked on the demesne to a greater extent, or for their wealthier peers. Bordars averaged a quarter-virgate, placing them well below the villeins, and representing little more than a family smallholding. Cottars, with just two acres each, were even more obliged to hire their labour to

others, although as a class they had amazing powers of survival, occurring in every age down to the nineteenth century. The eighteen priests with land had an average of 54 acres, almost two virgates, which places them firmly inside the ranks of the peasantry in economic terms. Men-at-arms and knights had an average of 170 acres (1.5 hides). The overall position for the Middlesex peasantry was:

Class	No.	Av. ac.
Villeins	1059	27.82
Bordars	308	7.67
Cottars	167	1.99
Total	1534	21.14

Cottars are virtually unknown in Domesday Buckinghamshire. There was a much higher proportion of slaves in the local population (16% cf. 5% in Middlesex). Of the free and semi-free peasants, however, villeins form a virtually identical proportion in the two counties: 69% in Middlesex and 68% in Buckinghamshire. If we assume a similar profile of land holdings in the latter, the total area occupied by these groups would have been 91,500 acres, although this is difficult to reconcile with other aspects of the survey. The number of tenant ploughteams at work in Buckinghamshire in 1086 was 1,478, giving a theoretical arable area of 147,800 acres at 100 acres/plough/year, more than half as much again. Either peasant holdings in this county were considerably larger than those in Middlesex, or the productivity of the ploughs was less than commonly assumed. This apparent paradox results, no doubt, from the very variable size of the virgate. There is evidence for a range of sizes from fifteen up to forty or more acres, and this clearly affected the arable total.

An alternative approach, however, is to consider the proportion of holdings in various size categories in Middlesex. This gives a much better fit with the evidence for tenants' ploughteams. The relevant data are:

Size	% Holders	Total acres >
>1 Hide	2.79	6780
0.5-1 H	7.68	7375
0.12-0.5 H	68.78	22840
5-15 ac.	13.97	1350
0-5 ac.	6.70	265
Total		38610

This compares with an estimated 41,500 acres of arable in the hands of tenants of all classes, about 93% of the total, a reasonable fit by the standards of Domesday Book. The overwhelming number of small and very small landholdings is clear, with 90% holding around sixty acres or less. The regularity underlying allocation of land is also apparent in Middlesex. 35% of all holdings are of one virgate, and further 31% are half-virgate units. This may indicate that the arable was being divided up on a systematic basis, possibly associated with the creation of communal open field systems and the rearrangement of settlement into larger nucleations, replacing earlier dispersed farms and hamlets with fields farmed in severalty.⁹

Using the total population of Buckinghamshire as a basis for a similar calculation, with the same proportions in each size category, the following result is obtained:

Size	Holdings	Total Ac.
> 1 H	143	24240
0.5-1 H	395	26465
0.12-0.5 H	3537	82060
5-15 ac.	718	4810
0-5 ac.	345	965
Total	5138	138540

The total reconciles more closely with the arable acreage assumed from the number of ploughs at 100ac. per team per year, and is probably as close as we can reasonably expect at this remove.

The best that can be said on the available evidence is that the 'typical' villein holding was around one virgate, as was the case for many centuries, for example at the time of the Hundred Rolls in 1279, with bordars holding one quarter of that and cottars a handful of acres. If we take the number of Buckinghamshire villeins in 1086, their total holdings would be of the order of 80,000 to 100,000 acres. The rapid upsurge in population over the ensuing two centuries led to an increase in the total amount of arable, but also to a reduction in per capita holdings, with many half- and quarter-virgate holdings among the free tenantry in the late-thirteenth century.

We now proceed to consider in more detail the distribution of the principal groups in late-eleventh-century Buckinghamshire: villeins, bordars and slaves. The latter have already formed the

subject of a separate study, and will not be treated in depth here.

III

Villeins formed almost three-fifths of the population of Buckinghamshire in 1086, but are likely to have been a heterogeneous group in terms of the size of their landholdings and economic and social status. At the top end of the spectrum were men with holdings of one hide or more (at least one hundred acres). Some represent pre-Conquest landowners who had paid the penalty of being on the losing side. There was a class of so-called 'thegns' in 1066, which also occurs in neighbouring Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and whose members held far less than the theoretical norm of five hides.¹⁰ They seem to have been what elsewhere were described as sokemen or freemen, having the right to dispose freely of their land, and only loosely tied into the feudal order. All that changed in 1066 and they found themselves at the top end of the semi-free peasantry, although quite comfortably off in many cases. The Russian term *kulak* might be applied to this group at the top of the peasant hierarchy. At the bottom end of the villein class were those holding half a virgate or even less (up to 15-20 acres), who would have struggled to retain any vestige of independence, owing onerous labour services on the lord's demesne, and facing the ever-present threat of moving down into the ranks of the bordars.

Readers of previous papers will be aware that it is rare for Domesday data to be evenly distributed across the county and its Hundreds, and this is also true of the population supported by arable and other resources. The most straightforward measure of variation about the county average is the standard deviation, and Table 4 sets out those villis which either exceeded or fell below the mean by more than one standard deviation (σ). In this case, all instances of an identical place-name are counted together, *unless* they are known to have been clearly separated in 1086 (e.g. the Kimbles and the Risboroughs).

Fifty-four places fall into these two categories (26% of all villis), indicating that the distribution is rather more peaked than a normal one, in which one-third of items fall outside the range $\pm 1\sigma$.¹¹ Twenty-four places have more than 75% of their population in the villein class, thirteen of them in the south of the county and the Chilterns, the rest in the Vale and the north. There is a significant cluster

TABLE 4

Villeins 1086: Variation from the Mean - Aggregated Data

1. Villeins $>+1\sigma$	%	2. Villeins $<-1\sigma$	%
Little Kimble	77	Hartwell	33
Denham	83	Stone	18
Boveney	100	Broch	33
East Burnham	83	Addingrove	20
Dilehurst	88	Ashendon	31
Bradenham	100	Wotton Underwood	36
Turville	93	Waddesdon H anon	17
Ditton	80	Aston Abbots	35
Iver	76	Cublington	38
Burnham	76	Helsthorpe	29
Upper Winchendon	90	Littlecote	33
Middle Claydon	76	Ivinghoe Aston	33
Drayton Beauchamp	79	Horton [Yardley]	3
Whaddon [Yardley]	100	Pitstone	35
Shenley Brook End	80	Yardley H anon	33
Grove	100	Biddlesden	31
Boycott	100	Lampport	27
Evershaw	100	Maids Moreton	30
Steeple Claydon	83	Buckingham	5
Mentmore	86	Lenborough	8
Woolstones	81	Tingewick	20
Gayhurst	83	Caldecote	17
Little Linford	100	Newport Pagnell	36
Moulsoe H anon 2	100	Woughton	37
		Lavendon	36
		Stoke Goldington	33
		Tyringham	35
		Weston Underwood	33
		Clifton Reynes	36
		Wavendon	29

on the Thames floodplain from Iver to Dilehurst (Cippenham) and a lesser one at Mentmore, Grove and Whaddon (in Slapton parish). Thirty villas have 38% or less villeins, with clusters in Cottesloe and Yardley Hundreds (eight) and in and around Buckingham (four), the latter probably caused by the presence of the borough. The three Newport Hundreds have nine villas with a dearth of villeins, notably in Bunsty to the north of the Ouse.

In general, places which show significant variations from the mean are smaller than the average for the county as a whole. All Buckinghamshire villas have an average geld assessment of 9.74 hides, while those in which the percentage of villeins falls outside the $\pm 1\sigma$ range average 7.97 hides. This over-

all average conceals the fact that the three-quarters of these villas with assessments in excess of five hides (40 out of 54) have assessments very close to the norm (10.12 hides cf. 9.74). It is the remaining, very small places, which have disproportionate numbers of villeins, with an average hidage of only 1.83 (2.19 hides for those in excess of $+1\sigma$, and only 1.35 hides for those below -1σ). These villas include, on the positive side, Bradenham, Grove, Boycott and Little Linford, and on the negative, Addingrove, Horton in Slapton and Buckingham. Bradenham, assessed at two hides, has only two villeins recorded, and by analogy with the Middlesex data discussed above, it seems likely that here we have two separate one-hide farms, cultivated in severalty. The same is likely to be true at Boycott - entered in the Oxfordshire Domesday and remaining a detached part of that county until the 1890s - where one villein equates to one hide. 'Boia's cottage' later developed into a more grandiose manor house.

There is a significant difference between the positive and negative anomalies for villeins in terms of the presence of subdivisions under the overall umbrella of the villa name. Only five of the twenty-four villas with a high proportion of villeins are divided, whereas twenty-one of the thirty places with a dearth of villeins fall into this category. Why this should be so is unclear, and we shall see when discussing the disaggregated data that it is often the case *within* a divided villa that some of the components have high numbers of villeins, some very few. In the absence of knowledge of the field systems in operation in eleventh-century Buckinghamshire, it is impossible to say whether there is a correlation between open fields and excess villeins, or between farming in severalty, dispersed settlement and few villeins, although some of the evidence might be pointing in that direction. Some support for this view comes from the manorial status of the villas, and from the presence and type of demesne. Thus, of the nineteen undivided villas in the $>+1\sigma$ group, nine are 'full' manors, in the sense of having the *M(anerium)* rubric in DB, and five are described as 'defending' themselves for x hides, whereas only three, all very small, were never considered to have been manors.¹² Seven had demesnes with separate geld assessments, eight had demesnes without, and four had no demesne recorded. The impression is that places such as Denham, Iver, and Middle and Steeple Claydon had already assumed the character of 'typical'

medieval villages by 1086, with a central settlement surrounded by open fields, farmed communally, probably with their own churches. It is impossible to verify this or to guess when such a pattern arose, although detailed analysis of field-names will throw up some clues in due course.

Given that places with the same name in Domesday Book often represent separate settlements of some kind, in the case of villeins twenty-five out of 54 (46%), it is worth looking at the disaggregated data, to see what the overall figures may conceal.

TABLE 5

Villeins in 1086: Variations from the Mean - Disaggregated Data

1. Villeins $>+1\sigma$	%	2. Villeins $<-1\sigma$	%
Ellesborough 2	100	Hartwell 1	4
Denham	83	Hartwell 2	13
Boveney 1	100	Hartwell 5	20
East Burnham	83	Hartwell 6	33
Dilehurst	88	Stone 1	4
Bradenham	100	Stone 2	32
Turville	93	Upton 2	20
Aston Sandford 2	100	Chesham 1	33
Ludgershall 2	100	Chesham 2	29
Shipton Lee 1	100	Broch	33
Upper Winchendon	90	Addingrove	20
East Claydon 1	100	Aston Sandford 3	23
Burston 2	100	Ickford 1	23
Burston 4	100	Chearsley 2	25
Crafton 2	100	Waddesdon H anon	17
Grove	100	Aston Abbots	35
Hollington 1	100	Hollington 3	25
Hollington 2	100	Littlecote 1	29
Littlecote 3	100	Ivinghoe Aston 2	20
Mentmore	86	Cheddington 7	33
Soulbury 2	100	Horton 2	33
Wingrave 3	100	Yardley H anon	33
Wingrave 4	100	Mursley 2	22
Ivinghoe Aston 1	100	Akeley	25
Cheddington 2	100	Biddlesden 1	31
Drayton B'champ 3	87	Foxcote	25
Edlesborough [Bd.]	100	Lampport 1	33
Whaddon 1	100	Lampport 2	20
Whaddon 2	100	Leckhampstead 1	25
Stewkley 2	82	Maids Moreton 1	33
Swanbourne 2	100	Maids Moreton 2	25
Boycott	100	Maids Moreton 3	30
Beachampton 2	100	Beachampton 1	33

Steeple Claydon	83	Buckingham	5
Caldecote 2	100	Lenborough 1	10
Great Linford 3	100	Tingewick	20
Loughton 1	100	Bradwell 2	25
Shenley C End 2	100	Caldecote 1	11
Great Woolstone	89	Little Woolstone 2	33
Little Woolstone 1	100	Woughton 1	27
Gayhurst	83	Lavendon 4	33
Lathbury 1	100	Lavendon 5	30
Little Linford	100	Lavendon 9	25
Hardmead 4	100	Tyringham 1	23
Moulsoe H anon 2	100	Weston U'wood 1	22
		Clifton Reynes 2	20
		Clifton Reynes 5	28
		Milton Keynes 2	14
		Wavendon 1	33
		Wavendon 2	29
		Wavendon 6	33

Of the 322 separate entries with villeins, 98 fall outside the $\pm 1\sigma$ range (30.4%), making this much more like a normal distribution, although one that is negatively skewed as there are 52 holdings with relatively few villeins, compared to 46 with excessive numbers. This discrepancy arises largely because the north-western and north-eastern extremes of the county are short of villeins, notably the area around the borough of Buckingham, Bunsty and Moulsoe Hundreds. Hartwell, Stone and Upton, all within the hinterland of Aylesbury also stand out in this respect. Excess numbers of villeins are a feature of Cottesloe and Yardley Hundreds, and of Seckloe in the north-east. Some places have surpluses under some entries and deficits under others, which may reflect misallocation in data collection or analysis. Examples include Cheddington 2 (+) and 7 (-), Littlecote 3 (+) and 1 (-), and Great & Little Woolstone 1 (+) and Little Woolstone 2 (-). Equally, there may have been different farms or hamlets represented by the entries, with different tenurial histories and population structures. Late-eleventh-century England was a complex society, and there had been a massive upheaval in the two decades since 1066, with many Anglo-Saxon landholders experiencing drastic reductions in status, if not total dispossession. Slavery was declining,¹³ and the unfree were doubtless moving up into the ranks of the semi-free (bordars/cottars), while, in many cases, the minor 'thegns', sokemen and freemen were moving down into the villein class.

At this level of analysis, the holdings are much

smaller in terms of hidage. For all those in the $\pm 1\sigma$ villein group, the average is 3.36 hides, and only a quarter exceed five hides. For the three-quarters which are less than five hides, the average is only 1.80 hides, which takes us into the realms of the individual villein farm in the case of holdings with excessive numbers in that class, or into that of the very small 'manor' where there is a significant shortfall compared with other classes in the population.

Domesday entries with $>+1\sigma$ villeins include thirteen assessed at five hides or more (average 9.06 hides), eight of them in undivided villis. The other thirty-two have an average geld liability of only 1.48 hides, only five in undivided villis. In the case of the $<-1\sigma$ holdings, only eleven out of 51 have five hides or more (average 6.86), the rest average 2.06 hides.

Holdings with excessive numbers of villeins are uncommon in the south of the county, only seven occurring in the Chiltern region. They are more common in the Vale (24 examples, of which fifteen are in the two Hundreds of Cottesloe and Yardley). There is another cluster in the north-east, with eleven holdings in the three Newport Hundreds. Given the small size of these holdings, it is not surprising that only just over half had ever been manors (21 out of 45), of which five had lost that status between 1066 and 1086. The rest are divided as follows: *M(anerium)* 7; *se defendit pro x hidis* 4; *pro uno manerio* 8. All but one of the *M* holdings are assessed at five hides or more, and all have demesnes. They are also undivided villis, with the exception of East Claydon 1 (3.25 hides). All of the *se defendit* estates have demesnes, two hidated and two others. Only the portion of Edlesborough contained in the Bedfordshire Domesday is in a divided vill. In contrast, all the *pro uno manerio* holdings with a high proportion of villeins are in divided villis, and only five of the eight have demesnes, all of them unhidated. At an average size of about 3.5 hides, they seem to represent the typical subsidiary manors found in many Buckinghamshire parishes throughout the medieval period, although not necessarily identical with those of 1086 (see the parish accounts in the VCH *passim*).

Large numbers of the estates with no recorded population apart from villeins had only one or two individuals, suggesting that these were single farms held in severalty, rather than part of whatever com-

munal agrarian arrangements might have operated in other parts of the same settlement, or in its neighbours if it was a unitary vill in 1086. Such holdings would have been in the range 25-100 acres in many cases, farmed by what would be described later as a yeoman and his family, without apparent assistance, but still in many ways dependent on the tenant-in-chief, for example paying rent and probably owing some services such as carrying. It seems likely that these villeins, who form a distinct class in Middlesex, represent victims of the Norman takeover, although they may well have been more dependent in 1066 than the fondly-imagined free Anglo-Saxon ceorls of Victorian historians.

IV

In 1086, bordars were less than half as numerous as villeins in this county (26% cf. 56%). We have seen from the data on peasant holdings from Middlesex that they also had a range of tenancies, but generally well under the virgate level so typical of the villeins. Holdings of around five-fifteen acres were too small to sustain a household and the deficit would have been made up by the hire of labour to more prosperous neighbours, and by enforced labour services on the demesne, in return for prescribed 'payments' of grain, drink and so on. The same calculation of variation from the mean has been made for bordars (and the handful of cottars) as for villeins. The aggregate results are as follows:

TABLE 6
Bordars 1086: Variation from the Mean - Aggregated Data

1. Bordars $>+1\sigma$	%	2. Bordars $<-1\sigma$	%
Halton	60	Little Kimble	8
Stone	58	Aston Clinton	9
Stone H anon	100	Bledlow	7
Bedgrove	50	Dilehurst	6
Bierton	100	Fawley	6
Wanden	100	Turville	7
Broch	67	Ilmer	8
Wooburn	50	Grendon Underwood	11
Ashendon	54	Pollicott	6
Beachendon	60	Upper Winchendon	5
Aston Abbots	60	Middle Claydon	10
Dunton	60	Creslow	8
Great Horwood	50	Whitchurch	8

Akeley	50	Edlesborough [Bu.]	8	Wendover 2	100	Bledlow	7
Dadford	88	Ivinghoe	10	Wanden	100	Horsenden 3	10
Foxcote	50	Steeple Claydon	5	Horsenden 1	100	Dilehurst	6
Stowe	100	Water Eaton	11	Horsenden 4	100	Fawley	6
Beachampton	50	Woolstones	6	Amersham 1	100	Hambleden	13
Bourton	50			Amersham 6	100	Hughenden	13
Gawcott	67			West Wycombe 2	100	Turville	7
Haseley	50			West Wycombe 3	100	High Wycombe	13
Lenborough	67			Addingrove	70	Ilmer	8
Caldecote	58			Ickford 1	77	Grendon U [^] wood	11
Lavendon	52			Ashendon 2	100	Pollicott	6
Stoke Goldington	53			East Claydon 3	100	Upper Winchendon	5
Wavendon	58			North Marston 4	100	Middle Claydon	10
				North Marston 5	100	Waddesdon	13
				Hardwick 2	100	Creslow	8
				Hollington 3	75	Hardwick 3	11
				Littlecote 2	100	Whitchurch	8
				Soulbury 6	100	Edlesborough [Bu.]	10
				Cheddington 1	100	Ivinghoe	10
				Cheddington 5	100	Shalstone 1	12
				Pitstone 1	100	Chetwode	13
				Pitstone 2	100	Tingewick	13
				Dadford 1	80	Marsh Gibbon 1	11
				Dadford 2	100	Steeple Claydon	5
				Maids Moreton 2	75	Water Eaton	11
				Stowe	100	Great Linford 2	9
				Hillesden 1	100	Simpson 1	9
				Lenborough 2	100	Great Woolstone	11
				Caldecote 3	100		
				Lavendon 8	100		
				Lavendon 9	75		
				Lavendon 10	100		
				Stoke Goldington 1	100		
				Weston U [^] wood 2	100		
				Clifton Reynes 4	100		
				Milton Keynes 2	72		
				Wavendon 3	100		
				Wavendon 5	100		

Excess bordars are concentrated in the centre and north, with no examples south of the Chiltern escarpment other than Wanden and Wooburn. There is a cluster around Buckingham, from Akeley round to Lenborough, which probably reflects the influence of the borough on the local population profile.¹⁴ Caldecote and Wavendon may occupy a similar position in relation to Newport Pagnell. Villages with especially few bordars are also uncommon in the south, with only Dilehurst south of the Chilterns, and few on the chalk itself. There are equally few in the north of the county, but a line of places in this category stretches across the Vale from Ilmer and the Claydons to Ivinghoe. Although not given urban status in Domesday Book, it is probable that Aylesbury had a market and other quasi-urban functions. It had minted coins sporadically between 991 and 1060, and possessed a church with control over a wide area.¹⁵ Its Iron Age fortifications may have been refurbished during the uncertain times of the tenth and early-eleventh centuries, although it did not acquire burghal status.¹⁶ Stone, Bedgrove and Bierton in the immediate vicinity had excess numbers of bordars which echoes the situation at other Buckinghamshire towns.

At the disaggregated level of holdings in 1086, the pattern of bordars is slightly different.

TABLE 7

Bordars in 1086: Variations from the Mean - Disaggregated Data

1. Bordars >+1σ	%	2. Bordars <-1σ	%
Hartwell 2	83	Hartwell 4	13
Little Missenden 1	100	Little Kimble	8
Little Missenden 2	100	Great Missenden	8
Stone H anon	100	Aston Clinton	9

In some cases, holdings with an excess of bordars may be paired with those of the same name which have a deficit: Hartwell 2 and 4; Little and Great Missenden; Horsenden 1, 3 and 4; West and High Wycombe; East and Middle Claydon, and Hardwick 2 and 3. The surplus at Ashendon 2 may be balanced by the shortfall at neighbouring Pollicott. More striking, however, is the incidence of undivided villages (those with only one recorded estate in 1086). In the thirty-two cases where there is a significant shortfall in numbers of bordars, twenty-four (75%) are undivided, some of them

substantial estates with up to thirty hides (Bledlow, Waddesdon, Whitchurch), in which there may have been more than one settlement in 1086, but which were subsumed under the name of the central place because they had no separate geld obligation. Westcott and Weedon are obvious examples. Most of these estates were assessed at ten hides or less, however, and the dearth of bordars in some cases reflects an excess of slaves (e.g. Creslow; Chetwode; Tingewick). Since the institution of slavery was in decline in 1086, with freed slaves progressing into the lower ranks of the semi-free peasantry, probably these anomalies arise from the snapshot nature of the Domesday survey. Some estate owners were evidently more progressive than others, not necessarily from humanitarian or pious motives, but because they appreciated the relative economic benefits of manumission.

Bordar-rich holdings were generally lacking in manorial status: eight were so described (only four with any kind of demesne) and four had lost that distinction since 1066. Their average size was only 1.6 hides. As thirty-nine of the forty-two are components of divided villis, it is possible they represent some kind of separate farming enterprise, although not necessarily a demesne *per se*, and either part of the communal farming system or a discrete block of fields. Only six of them had demesnes in 1086, two of them with their own hidage assessments (Ickford 1 and Caldecote 3) and four without (Addingrove; Hollingdon 3; Maids Moreton 2 and Stowe). These may have deployed bordars rather than slaves to work the lords' own land, although none has a statistically significant shortfall in the proportion of slaves.

The suggestion that holdings with a high proportion of bordars may represent some kind of separate farm is supported by the fact that a majority have *all* of the recorded population in this category: 34 out of 42. Twenty-two of these (65%) have only one or two individuals [and their families], sufficient labour for perhaps fifty acres or so. Alternatively, they may represent the labour force of the demesne in one of the other holdings with the same name, although the fact that the pre- and post-Conquest landowners were usually different makes this less likely. The remaining twelve estates with no recorded population other than bordars seem to represent a genuinely different type of agrarian entity, although precisely what the data offer no more than a hint. These places (Amersham

6, with five bordars; Little Missenden 1, Lavendon 8 and Stoke Goldington 1, with four each; and Bierton, Amersham 1, Ashendon 2, East Claydon 3, Dadford 2, Stowe, Hillesden 1 and Wavendon 5, with three apiece) occur in loose clusters in the Amersham area, in the north-west and north-east of the county. Bierton is probably here because of its links with the urban centre at Aylesbury. Stowe, Dadford and Hillesden fall within the sphere of influence of the borough of Buckingham. The rest, however, are in typically rural areas. Elvey identified Jocelyn the Breton's estate (Amersham 6) with the hamlet of Catestrop.¹⁷ (OE *þorp*, 'secondary settlement, dependent farm' being just the type of naming element which one might expect in the case of an estate with an excess of bordars.¹⁸) Things are never straightforward in Domesday Book, however, for we discover that there was only one plough at work in Amersham 6, equivalent perhaps to one hundred acres of arable, far too little to support the families of five bordars, *unless* by chance they were recently manumitted slaves as yet without dependents. More probably, some of their labour was devoted to the other Amersham estates where the ratio between manpower and ploughteams was less top-heavy. The same pattern appears in East Claydon, Stoke Goldington and Little Missenden, where estates whose populations were exclusively bordars seem to represent pools of labour for use elsewhere, rather than being self-contained. The position at Lavendon is similar. The two holdings which fall in this category (Lavendon 8 and 10) have been identified with Cold Brayfield, otherwise omitted from the survey.¹⁹ Perhaps bordars (who may until recently have been slaves) were being used to recolonise this marginal territory after the upheavals of the previous century.²⁰ The six bordars on these holdings had only one plough between them, although there was said to be land sufficient for four. This may well be a snapshot of the frontier of arable expansion. At Wavendon 3 and 5, the four bordars had no ploughs, suggesting that a similar situation obtained on the margins of the clayland and the marginally fertile Woburn sands. It should be noted, however, that Wavendon generally has about twice the usual number of men per plough, suggesting some other factor at work, although what is unclear.

The picture is quite different in the case of estates with a notable dearth of bordars, 75% of which (24 out of 32) are undivided villis. All but

three were manors of some kind in 1086, and the remainder had lost that status since the Conquest. All had demesne land, fourteen of them hidated. These were therefore much more typical of the 'classical' medieval manor and settlement. They were also larger, with an average assessment of 11.4 hides, almost ten times that of holdings with excess bordars. Five of these estates had higher-than-average numbers of villeins and four had excess slaves, all on non-hidated demesnes. There was also a much higher incidence of these estates being retained by their tenant-in-chief (50%, cf. only 17% of estates with excess bordars).

V

As the subject of Buckinghamshire slavery has been investigated in a recent paper,²¹ this section will be concerned only with significant anomalies revealed by the calculation of standard deviations.

TABLE 8

Slaves 1086: Variations from the Mean - Aggregated Data

1. Slaves $>+1\sigma$	%	2. Slaves $<-1\sigma$	%
Weston Turville	50	Aylesbury	5
Radnage	36	Stoke Mandeville	7
Ibstone	36	Princes Risborough	6
Aston Sandford	38	Upton	8
Chearsley	50	Burnham	5
Waddesdon H anon	66	Dilehurst	6
Creslow	42	Taplow	8
Helsthorpe	42	Marlow	5
Ivinghoe Aston	67	Wooburn	4
Cheddington	35	Brill	6
Horton [Yardley]	67	Lower Winchendon	3
Dunton	40	Upper Winchendon	5
Shalstone	37	Granborough	8
Chetwode	40	Fleet Marston	8
Haseley	50	Aston Abbots	5
Tingewick	67	Burston	8
Newport Pagnell	64	Wingrave	6
Tickford	40	Lillingstones	4
		Buckingham	4
		Chicheley	6
		Hardmead	8
		Westbury	8
		Caldecote	8
		Emberton	4
		Moulsoe	6

Some places had significant elements of the unfree in their population, although the figure for Newport Pagnell is overstated owing to the omission of the number of 'other men who work outside the five hides'.²² Since slavery was in terminal decline at the end of the eleventh century, and it is likely that the slaves on any given estate were manumitted *en bloc*, too much should not be read into these data. Three-fifths places with significant surpluses and deficits of slaves are undivided villis.

TABLE 9

Slaves 1086: Variations from the Mean Disaggregated Data

1. Slaves $>+1\sigma$	%	2. Slaves $<-1\sigma$	%
Hartwell 5	80	Aylesbury	5
Upton 2	40	Ellesborough 1	9
Weston Turville	50	Stoke Mandeville	7
Aston Sandford 3	46	Monks Risborough	9
Chearsley 2	50	Princes Risborough	6
Waddesdon H anon	66	Upton	8
Creslow	43	Burnham	5
Helsthorpe 2	42	Dilehurst	6
Ivinghoe Aston 2	80	Taplow	8
Cheddington 4	40	Marlow 1	9
Cheddington 7	67	Marlow 2	9
Drayton B'champ 2	50	Marlow 3	7
Horton 2	67	Marlow 4	2
Pitstone 6	67	Wooburn	4
Maids Moreton 3	50	Wooburn	4
Shalstone 1	38	Brill	6
Barton Hartshorn	57	Lower Winchendon	3
Chetwode	40	Upper Winchendon	5
Haseley	50	Granborough	8
Tingewick	67	Fleet Marston	8
Thornborough 2	40	Aston Abbots	5
Bradwell 1	50	Wingrave 5	8
Newport Pagnell	64	Leckhampstead 2	8
Shenley C E 1	55	Westbury 1	8
Little Woolst. 2	67	Westbury 2	9
Tickford	40	Buckingham	4
		Edcott	9
		Little Brickhill	9
		Clifton Reynes 1	9
		Emberton 3	7
		Moulsoe	6

Undivided villis account for only one-third of slave-rich holdings, but two-thirds of slave-poor holdings. It seems likely that many of the high con-

centrations of slaves represent groups of dwellings allocated to those working on the demesne, or estates where demesne arable and activities were predominant. Fifteen of the key holdings for slaves were, or had been, manors of some kind, and sixteen had demesnes, only one hidated. As usual, it is likely that some of the slaves were employed on other components of the villis concerned, especially where the slave-rich holding had no manorial attributes or demesne. Examples include Hartwell 5, Upton 2 and the cluster in Yardley Hundred (Cheddington, Drayton, Horton and Pitstone). Eleven of these estates had statistically significant shortfalls of villeins and four of bordars (Tingewick had both), supporting the view that there was something deliberate about the high concentrations of slaves.

In contrast, only two of the thirty-one holdings with a marked dearth of slaves had never been manors, and half of them belonged to the type denoted by an M rubric (for *Manerium*), which often represents the 'classic' medieval manor-village-parish type. Thirteen of these estates had demesnes with separate hidage assessments and sixteen did not. Many were assessed at five hides or multiples thereof. Three of this group had significant shortfalls of villeins and two of bordars, while two had excess numbers of villeins. Generally, however, they seem to represent places where the removal of the slave element in the population had led to a 'normal' distribution of the various classes.

VI

The Buckinghamshire Domesday contains very few examples of other classes in society. There were between fifteen and twenty sokemen (depending on how they are counted and by whom), a group identified by having commended themselves to the jurisdiction of another (soke), not necessarily the lord of the place where they resided.²³ This was very much a pre-Conquest relationship, and found especially in the eastern counties. But it accorded ill with the ideas of feudalism practised by the new Norman and other foreign tenants-in-chief. It seems that many sokemen had lost that status after 1066 and, along with many men formerly accounted 'free', had moved down to the upper echelons of the villein class, albeit often with holdings of more than one hundred acres.

Apart from individuals in Aylesbury (with one virgate), Princes Risborough (three virgates) and

Stone (paying 15/-), all the sokemen are in the north of the county, although the entry for Stoke Mandeville records the dues owed by sokemen to the church of Aylesbury in the eight surrounding Hundreds, which may indicate others who are actually recorded in the relevant estate entries as villeins. Tickford had five rendering 27/- in 1086. They may be the five thegns recorded as holding three and a half virgates in 1066. (There were two distinct types of thegn in Anglo-Saxon Buckinghamshire, and also in Bedfordshire. The 'traditional' type with holdings of at least five hides, and a second, whose holdings could be as small as ten or a dozen acres, and who seem to have been identical with freemen or sokemen. It is unclear whether the use of the term 'thegn' denotes some specific attribute, or was merely an interchangeable local usage.²⁴) The largest cluster of sokemen was the seven on the Bishop of Coutances' holding at Weston Underwood, along with one Frenchman. In 1066 this had been one of the typical, highly fragmented estates of north-east Buckinghamshire, with ten 'thegns' of Burgred (see above) and a man of Alric who had three virgates. Although Domesday Book makes no connection, it may be that the Frenchman replaced the latter and that seven of the thegns were now more properly recorded as sokemen. Allowing for one hide in demesne, the average holding in 1066 would have been about two virgates, making these 'thegns' little more than prosperous peasants.

At Caldecote there were two *vavasores*, a type of under-tenant, who together paid 32/6, and may represent two of the four thegns who held these four hides in 1066. Also at Caldecote was a knight with two virgates, who may have replaced another thegn in the upheavals of 1066. Loughton had two knights, although they were the direct subtenants of Mainou the Breton. Two Englishmen mentioned at Soulbury 5 may have been owners, rather than part of the general population, while nothing further is known of the two mail-clad men used on guard duty at Windsor who had been dispossessed at Drayton Parslow. The ten cottars at Buckingham are the only examples of this class of smallholder in the county, and probably reflect the presence of the borough. They may have been townsmen with house-and-garden plots. (Cf. two cottars at Holborn and 42 at Westminster.) Newport Pagnell had an unspecified number of men outside its five hides, who may or may not have been the same as those

who lived in the wood and paid 4/-. A smith is mentioned on the Buckinghamshire portion of Ibstone, although why he should be singled out for mention is another Domesday quirk.

The only other element in the rural population were four *huri* (boors) at High Wycombe. Unlike their equivalents in other Germanic languages, these were at the bottom of the peasant hierarchy, and may have been recently manumitted slaves, still working on the demesne as semi-free individuals. They are certainly bracketed with the eight slaves in the text. It seems odd, however, that there is no trace of them elsewhere in the county. (There were only 65 in the whole survey, with clusters of 19 in Herefordshire; 18 in Berkshire, all at Letcombe Regis, a royal estate centre, and 17 in Oxfordshire, all at Bampton. Like Wycombe, these places were centres of major Anglo-Saxon estates.)

The church is very sketchily treated in the Buckinghamshire Domesday. There is no systematic recording of churches, and the parallel evidence of priests is also largely absent. We read of churches only where there is some unusual attribute, such as a render or a separate holding, as at Buckingham, Aylesbury and Haddenham. By inference, these were minsters served by a group of priests responsible for the spiritual welfare of large tracts of country. A throwaway remark in one of the entries for Hardmead testifies to the existence of St. Firmin's minster at North Crawley. The name Whitchurch indicates a church by 1086, as does the fabric at Wing, but neither is mentioned. Thurstan the priest held half a hide at Wingrave, although he may not have been the parish priest. Godwin the priest with one virgate at Wavendon, however, may have served one of the growing number of local, later parish churches being built in the late-eleventh century by landowners to overcome the inconvenience of remote minsters.²⁵ Gilbert the priest held the church of Haddenham with three hides, and may have been the senior clergyman there, representing the Norman influence under either Edward or William. Reinbald held an estate at Boveney, tributary to the minster at Cookham in Berkshire. He was definitely not a local priest, but one of the Confessor's royal clerks.

VII

In 1086, the population of Buckinghamshire was overwhelmingly rural. The numbers associated with the boroughs of Buckingham and Newport

and the probable urban settlement at Aylesbury were tiny in comparison, perhaps only 2-3% of the total. Among the mass of peasant cultivators, villeins formed almost three-fifths of the total, bordars about one quarter and slaves one-sixth. The balance was made up of tiny groups of men who for some reason were deemed to warrant separate mention, but who were probably little different from the major classes. The massive tenurial revolution after the Conquest severely affected many who had been practically free from the demands of overlords (freemen/sokemen/'small' thegns), and there is some circumstantial evidence that they had been driven down into the ranks of the semi-free, owing services and dues to the new masters.

Evidence from Middlesex shows that the catch-all class of villeins was far from homogeneous, ranging from individuals who held one hide or more (120 acres plus) down to those with small-holdings of ten-fifteen acres. We cannot know what the proportions were in Buckinghamshire, but in the many very small estates across the county we see evidence of a range of villein tenements. Neither is there any evidence of the extent to which feudal dues impinged on the villeins, although the Hundred Rolls of 1279 suggest that many may have escaped quite lightly, being effectively free tenants.

Bordars, on the basis of the Middlesex evidence, held between about five and twenty acres, in many cases too little to sustain an individual and his family, especially as the demands of manorial lords fell more heavily on them. Much of their labour would have gone to the demesne or to prosperous neighbours of the villein class. There is some evidence that bordars clustered around urban settlements, which of course depended on the locality for food and other raw materials.

Slaves were an important, but declining, element in the local population. Although many estates had none, or very few, they remained critical in sustaining demesne farming in many places. Although only a snapshot, Domesday Book suggests that the process of manumission was under way, with former slaves moving into the ranks of the semi-free peasantry, where they formed a pool of labour for which the lord had less costly responsibility. This was a form of upward mobility which only partly counterbalanced the depressed status of many Anglo-Saxon freemen after 1066.

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