

MANORIAL DEMESNES IN DOMESDAY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: A REAPPRAISAL

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This paper re-examines the evidence in the Buckinghamshire Domesday for manors whose demesnes had their own hidage assessments. An earlier paper considered the suggestions that this was either indicative of a demesne farmed separately from the lands of the tenantry, or that it denoted those demesnes which were not subject to geld (tax) obligations, a form of tax exemption principally benefiting the major tenants-in-chief. It was concluded that the evidence was inconclusive either way. A third hypothesis is examined here, namely that the existence of demesne hides denotes an estate held in-hand by the tenant-in-chief, that is one not subinfeudated to a lesser tenant, and that it also represents a geld reduction. The investigation is broadened to include evidence from the other counties which belonged to the same Domesday "Circuit" as Buckinghamshire.

INTRODUCTION

A series of papers published in this journal in the 1990s explored the evidence presented by Domesday Book for late eleventh-century society and economy in Buckinghamshire. One of them discussed manorial demesnes, that is land reserved for direct exploitation by the lord.¹ In particular, the occurrence of demesnes with their own hidage assessments alongside those without had given rise to different interpretations by previous historians, two of which were examined. Gerald Elvey considered that the hidated demesnes represented discrete blocks of land, separated from the holdings of the tenantry and farmed in severalty by manorial lords.² In contrast, the great Victorian scholar J.H. Round thought that demesne hidages represented land not subject to geld obligations, in other words, was exempt from the principal contemporary form of taxation on land.³

My paper considered these two hypotheses in relation to the various ways in which land holdings in Buckinghamshire were categorised in 1086 and concluded that both had their merits, but that it was impossible with the data available to say if either, or both, applied in practice. Examples of both intermixed and several demesnes are to be found in later medieval documents, even on manors within a single parish, although it is impossible to be sure that this situation had applied in the eleventh century.

A third hypothesis about hidated demesnes was proposed by F.H. Baring, and endorsed by Sally Harvey, namely that they denote estates held directly by Domesday tenants-in-chief and also a reduction in geld liability.⁴ A discussion of this suggestion forms the core of the present paper, which begins with a brief recapitulation of the Domesday data and categorisation of manors. Readers are referred to the 1997 paper for full details.

DOMESDAY DEMESNES IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

A total of 383 landholdings is listed in the Buckinghamshire Domesday, of which 221 were considered to be manors in 1086, along with forty-four which had been manors in 1066 and 119 which were not considered as manors at either date. The vast majority of manors in 1086 had demesnes: 204 out of 221 (92%), and of these 91 were hidated (45%). Three descriptors are used in the Buckinghamshire Domesday to indicate manorial status. (1) A capital **M** (for *Manerium*) used as a marginal rubric; (2) The formula 'X holds *pro uno manerio*', 'as one manor'; (3) The formula 'X holds Y. It answers for Z hides' (*se defendit*). The *se defendit* formula is sometimes used in conjunction with the **M** rubric.

Seventeen estates were apparently manors but had no demesne. This may have arisen from misat-

tribution, either by local juries, or at some stage during the transmission of data to the final Exchequer Domesday. Amersham 6 and Hardmead 1 had marginal Ms, the former possibly a scribal error, while Broughton by Aylesbury was a *se defendit* estate. The rest were held *pro uno manerio*. All were in divided vill, mostly in the north-east of the county. Thirty holdings which had apparently ceased to be manors since 1066 still had demesnes, many in divided vill. More difficult to explain are the fifteen holdings which were not manors in 1066 or 1086, but which nevertheless had demesnes at the latter date. All are in divided vill, so the demesne may have been wrongly assigned and belonged in reality to a manor in the same vill.

Domesday demesnes in Buckinghamshire were therefore a heterogeneous group, as befits many years of development of the so-called manorial system, whose roots were often centuries old. The progressive fragmentation of land holding also began long before the Norman Conquest. The massive and rapid transfer of land ownership after 1066, together with the speed with which the Domesday data were amassed, collated and written up, makes it unsurprising that our evidence is at times contradictory and difficult to understand.

HIDATED DEMESNES AS EVIDENCE FOR MANORS HELD "IN-HAND"

Scholars conventionally group Domesday Book counties into "Circuits", differentiated by certain formulae and information, although such differences do not occur universally or consistently within a group. Circuit III contains Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Middlesex. Amongst its distinguishing characteristics is the identification of hides in demesne on estates held directly by tenant-in-chief. This is not always the case, however, and neither is the assertion that estates held by sub-tenants have no demesne hidages.⁵

Baring concluded that hides in demesne were recorded separately because of an exemption from geld of land held by a tenant-in-chief himself, rather than by a sub-tenant, although, as we shall see, this generalisation does not hold good for all such estates in Buckinghamshire, nor elsewhere in the same Domesday "Circuit".⁶ Sally Harvey's paper is concerned with taxation in Domesday, and

examines the way in which hidage assessments were reduced, often dramatically, in several shires between 1066 and 1086. Surrey is a good example, where geld liability often changed from penal in Edward the Confessor's reign to 'absurdly lenient' in Domesday.⁷ Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire saw substantial reductions in a more consistent way.⁸ Some manors, especially small ones, were leased out entirely by magnates, providing a guaranteed income from holdings often remote from their principal estates. In this way sub-tenants could benefit from year-round residence, including previous English owners who continued to work their own land, for which there is some evidence in the case of Buckinghamshire.⁹

Bledlow, a substantial estate held by the Count of Mortain, is a typical example of a hidated demesne. Its total assessment was thirty hides, of which sixteen (53%) were in demesne, which had only four ploughlands (22%).¹⁰ Winemar the Fleming's large and complex estate at Hanslope, with several settlement foci and field systems, had a very beneficial assessment of ten hides, five of them in demesne.¹¹ In addition, however, there were five carucates or ploughlands in demesne (Latin *caruca*, 'plough'). Demesne carucates appear elsewhere in the county (see below). Confusingly, Hanslope had only two demesne ploughs at work, with capacity for four more.

Newport Pagnell provides a good example of the problems faced by the compilers of Domesday Book in trying to assimilate data on a place undergoing significant change.¹² Newport (Old English *niwe+port*, 'new market/trading place') was held in 1066 by Ulf, a King's thegn, and in 1086 by William FitzAnsculf, a substantial tenant-in-chief with thirty-one Buckinghamshire holdings. Newport was assessed at five hides, the conventional minimum for a thegn's estate, with land for nine ploughs. The demesne is assessed at four carucates, and had four ploughs at work, an unambiguous correlation. Five villeins had five ploughs, suggesting that they were significant farmers rather than average peasants. (One-hide villein holdings occur in the more detailed Middlesex Domesday.) Furthermore, Newport was a nascent urban centre in 1086,¹³ and its burgesses had '6½ ploughs of the other men who work outside the five hides'. In other words, the town was assessed separately from the original rural holding and had its own arable land. FitzAnsculf also succeeded Ulf at neigh-

bouring Tickford.¹⁴ Also a five-hide estate, it had eight ploughlands and a demesne assessed at two carucates with two ploughs, worked by the four slaves; six villeins had six ploughs. In 1066 five thegns had held 3½ virgates (almost one hide). These are not “proper” thegns like Ulf, but a class of small freeholders occurring widely across north-east Buckinghamshire and neighbouring Bedfordshire in 1066.¹⁵ They had probably become the five freemen who rendered 27/- for their land in 1086. It is impossible to say why these two estates should have had their demesnes assessed in carucates rather than hides, although there are several examples in Bedfordshire.¹⁶ Hanslope, Newport and Tickford all have the *Manerium* rubric.

At Turweston, the manor of William of Feugeres, successor to Wynsig, King Edward’s chamberlain ‘answered for five hides’.¹⁷ There was land for eight ploughs ‘besides these five hides’ (*praeter has v hidae*), of which three carucates were in demesne, although only one plough was at work, with two more possible. Six villeins and four bordars had five ploughs. Even more obscure is the comment that the 5¾ hides held by Robert fitzWalter from Robert d’Oilly at Oakley ‘are eight hides’. This unique formula suggests a reduction in geld liability of 28%, not out of line with the proportion of many hidated demesnes, but may have reflected the complexity of the pre-Conquest tenure.¹⁸

Overall, 130 Buckinghamshire estates were held in-hand by Domesday tenants-in-chief, including the assorted individuals with very small entities held by ‘from the King’ grouped together in the final section of the county folios. Eighty-three had hidated demesnes (64%; the hidage of Haversham’s demesne is omitted), excluding the carucated examples discussed above. This proportion is well short of the assertion that all lands held in-hand by

tenants-in-chief had hidated demesnes. Even if the miscellaneous holdings are excluded, the proportion only increases to 70%. However, 93% of manors with marginal M and 82% for those that ceased to be manors after 1066 had hidated demesnes, compared with 67% ‘answering for x hides’, 50% ‘held as one manor’ and only 10% of those which had never been manors. There are forty-five such holdings where Domesday states that ‘X himself holds Y’ (Latin *ipse tenet*), of which 89% have hidated demesnes.

It seems, therefore, that Baring’s and Harvey’s explanation of the hidated demesne as evidence for an estate held in-hand by a tenant-in-chief falls well short of universal applicability in this county, unless a restrictive definition of in-hand estate is used. There is a small group of subinfeudated estates which nevertheless had hidated demesnes.

Robert Count of Mortain was the Conqueror’s half-brother. At Ickford and Marsh Gibbon, he had granted the estates to the monks of Grestain, a family abbey in Normandy.¹⁹ Apparently, both estates had ceased to be manors since 1066, presumably being accounted with another of the count’s many estates. Given the close link between mesne lord and sub-tenant in these cases, they should probably be regarded as marginal exceptions to the in-hand “rule”. At Lavendon, a highly divided vill, Humphrey held 2½ hides from Mortain *pro uno manerio*, with 60% assigned to the demesne. The bishop of Bayeux, also the King’s half-brother, had subinfeudated two estates in Desborough Hundred to Theodwald (a Continental Germanic name). Five hides at Marlow had been held in 1066 by Queen Edith. At Radnage, Theodwald’s possession is recorded in the past tense and the estate was said to be in the King’s revenue in 1086 (*nunc est ad firmam regis*). Examples of subinfeudated estates in other counties share these

TABLE 1 Tenanted Estates with Hidated Demesnes, 1086

<i>Chief Tenant</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Hides Total</i>	<i>Dem</i>
Mortain	Ickford	Grestain	[m]	6	3
Mortain	Marsh Gibbon	Grestain	[m]	11	4
Mortain	Lavendon	Humphrey	P	2.5	1.5
Bayeux	Marlow	Theodwald	[m]	5	1.5
Bayeux	Radnage	Theodwald	[m]	3	0.5

Note: [m] manor 1066, not 1086; P ‘held as one manor’

TABLE 2 Domesday Demesnes in Circuit III Counties

<i>County</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>In-Hand</i>	<i>Hid.Dem.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Ipse Ten</i>	<i>Hid.Dem.</i>	<i>%</i>
Bucks.	M	12	10	83	1	1	100
	M+D	58	54	95	37	35	95
	M dem	1	0	0	0	0	0
	P	12	6	50	1	0	0
	D	8	8	100	2	1	50
	(m)	8	6	75	3	3	100
	Never	31	3	10	1	1	100
	Total	130	86	66	45	41	91
Middx.	M	17	11	65	na	na	na
	M+D	20	19	95	na	na	na
	D	1	0	0	na	na	na
	P	1	0	0	na	na	na
	(m)	9	6	67	na	na	na
	Never	14	1	7	na	na	na
		Total	62	37	60	na	na
Herts.	M	1	1	100	1	1	100
	M+D	1	1	100	1	1	100
	D	7	2	29	2	2	100
	D(m)	69	69	100	40	40	100
	P	4	4	100	0	0	0
	(m)	20	18	90	6	6	100
	Never	21	4	14	3	0	0
	Total	123	99	80	53	50	94
Beds.	M	12	9	75	2	2	100
	M+D	37	29	78	21	18	86
	M+P	8	6	75	0	0	0
	M/dowry	1	1	100	0	0	0
	D	1	1	100	0	0	0
	D(m)	5	4	80	0	0	0
	P	2	2	100	0	0	0
	(m)	20	18	90	6	6	100
	Never	21	4	14	3	0	0
	Total	110	63	57	26	20	77
Cambs.	M	34	32	94	6	6	100
	M+D	23	18	78	5	5	100
	M dem	4	1	25	0	0	0
	D(m)	5	4	80	2	2	100
	(m)	9	8	89	1	1	100
	Never	109	50	46	6	4	67
		Total	184	113	61	20	18
All Counties	M	76	63	83	10	10	100
	M+D	139	121	87	64	59	92
	M+P	8	6	75	0	0	0
	M other	6	2	33	0	0	0
	D	8	3	37	2	2	100
	D(m)	89	85	96	44	41	93
	P	19	12	63	1	0	0
	(m)	50	41	82	10	10	100
	Never	215	66	31	13	5	38
	Total	610	399	65	144	130	90

Key: M marginal rubric; M+D marginal M and *se defendit*; M dem Demesne manor; M/Do marginal rubric+dowry; P pro uno manerio; D *se defendit x hides*; D(m) *se defendit x hides*, manor 1066; (m) manor 1066, not 1086; Never, not a manor in 1066/1086

anomalous features, for example Lisson and Laleham in Middlesex, held “in alms” by a lady called Edeva, and by Estrild, a nun, respectively

THE EVIDENCE FROM OTHER CIRCUIT III COUNTIES

The “in-hand estate=hidated demesne” hypothesis clearly falls well short of universal application in Buckinghamshire, so it is appropriate to look briefly at the situation in the other four counties which belong to the same Domesday “Circuit”. Unfortunately, none of the five counties use identical manorial terminology, mostly notably Hertfordshire, where marginal **M** occurs only once. The results are summarised in Table 2.

Apart from Hertfordshire, where 80% of in-hand estates have hidated demesnes, the proportion is similar, ranging from 57-66% (65% overall). Excluding the five “demesne manors”, the proportion of manors denoted by marginal **M** is considerably higher in all counties apart from Hertfordshire, where this rubric is virtually absent. In all, 190 out of 223 such manors have hidated demesnes (85%). There are too few *se defendit* and *pro uno manerio* estates to provide a meaningful sample apart from Hertfordshire, where 71 out of 76 *se defendit* holdings have hidated demesnes (93%), the vast majority having been manors in 1066. In-hand estates which were not described as manors in 1066 or 1086 generally have 15% or less with hidated demesnes. In Cambridgeshire, where a large number of holdings are described as having been *terra* ‘land’ rather than *manerium* ‘manor’ in 1066, this proportion rises to 46%.

Estates where the phrase *ipse tenet* appears in Circuit III account for a quarter of the total, and 90% have hidated demesnes (130 out of 144; the term is absent from Middlesex, although this has little overall effect). This offers a high level of support for the Baring-Harvey hypothesis, although it should be noted that there is no systematic use of *ipse tenet* across all the holdings of individual tenants-in-chief with groups of manors. In Buckinghamshire, three Canterbury estates have hidated demesnes, but only two have *ipse tenet*. Geoffrey de Mandeville has four hidated demesnes, two using the phrase while two do not. This pattern is repeated in the other three counties in Circuit III where *ipse tenet* occurs.

HIDATED DEMESNES: A MEDIEVAL “TAX BREAK”?

It remains to discuss the extent to which the suggestion made by Round and Baring, followed by Sally Harvey, that hides in demesne denotes a concession by the Crown to tenants-in-chief, either as a reduction of their geld liability, or a transfer of the right to collect the money for their own benefit.

The proportion of hides assigned to the demesne covers a very wide range in all counties: Buckinghamshire 12-83%, Bedfordshire 16-80% Cambridgeshire 12-85% Hertfordshire 20-89% and Middlesex 9-90%. The mean, modal value and standard deviation for each county are set out below.²⁰

On average 40-50% of hides are assigned to hidated demesnes, with a standard deviation around the mean of 15%. About two-thirds of estates fall the range ± 1 standard deviation, approximating to a “normal” distribution.²¹ Apart from Bedfordshire, the most frequent proportion of hides on the demesne is 50% – 75 estates in total, one-fifth of the total. The absence of evidence from other regions makes it impossible to say whether such figures have a wider application.

Almost half of demesne hidages fall between 40-59% of total assessments, ranging from two-fifths in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire to three-fifths in Cambridgeshire and Middlesex. Unfortunately, we do not know when the idea of demesne hides was developed. It could have been before 1066, in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest, or later, closer to the Domesday inquest itself. It might have been a one-off concession, a permanent change, or one capable of renegotiation between Crown and tenants-in-chief. There was a dynamic in geld assessment, as is evidenced by the reductions which took place in Cambridgeshire and

TABLE 3: Hidage Assigned to Demesnes: Domesday Circuit III

County	Mean %	SD%	% ± 1 SD	Mode
Bucks.	38.43	14.73	73.17	50
Beds.	43.50	15.44	62.07	40
Cambs.	49.93	12.78	74.31	50
Herts.	50.75	16.45	62.00	50
Middx.	50.68	17.28	65.79	50
All	46.81	15.87	68.22	50

TABLE 4: Proportion of Hides in Demesne by County

<i>% Dem.Hid.</i>	<i>Bucks.</i>	<i>Beds.</i>	<i>Cambs.</i>	<i>Herts.</i>	<i>Middx.</i>	<i>Total</i>
0-19	9.8	3.4	2.8	0	2.6	3.6
20-29	17.1	17.2	3.7	6.0	7.9	9.6
30-39	23.2	13.8	9.2	20.0	7.9	15.5
40-49	17.1	25.9	19.3	18.0	29.0	20.4
50-59	22.0	22.4	43.1	21.0	34.2	28.9
60-69	9.8	13.8	17.4	21.0	5.3	15.0
≥70	1.2	3.4	4.6	14.0	12.1	7.0

other counties. If demesne hides existed in Cambridgeshire before 1066, they must have been adjusted as part of the general reassessment of the shire.

POSSIBLE GELD REDUCTION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

If geld reduction for the benefit of tenants-in-chief underlies demesne hidage, it is possible to assess its impact on individuals in Buckinghamshire. For this analysis, tenants-in-chief have been divided into broad groups: 1. King/Queen; 2. Church; 3. Major Laymen (50 hides or more); 4. Medium Laymen (20-50 hides); 5. Minor Laymen ([A] 10-20 hides; [B] 0-10 hides).

A fundamental problem with the idea of demesne hides representing a geld reduction arises with its application to royal lands. The reality however is more complicated. Some estates had always been in royal hands. Aylesbury was described a demesne manor of the King and Brill was a manor of Edward the Confessor, although Wendover has no such qualification. None has a

hidated demesne. Princes Risborough, Swanbourne and Upton near Slough, were all villis of Earl Harold in 1066, and all had hidated demesnes. Although Harold was King between January and October 1066, he is always denied that title in Domesday Book. It would appear that these estates had been granted to the Godwin family during their rapid rise after the 1020s. None has a surviving charter to reveal when they left the royal patrimony. William clearly retained them as Crown lands after 1066. William's estate at Biddlesden was held in 1066 by Azor son of Thored, a king's thegn, from whom it passed to Earl Aubrey and thence to the Crown. Queen Matilda's estates at Marlow and Hambleton were both held in 1066 by Earl Ælfgar of Mercia and East Anglia. All three had hidated demesnes. No "proper" royal estate in Buckinghamshire had demesne hides, therefore, a situation matched in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

Church estates in Domesday Buckinghamshire account for one-tenth of hides, most of them held in-hand. Only the local diocese, recently relocated from Dorchester to Lincoln, had the bulk of its holdings let to sub-tenants. Nine-tenths of church

TABLE 5 Buckinghamshire 1086:Proportion of Hides in Demense by Landowner

	<i>Royal</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Minor</i>		<i>Total</i>
					<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	
Individuals	2	7	9	11	11	30	70
1 Hides	151.75	207.5	1198.49	315.62	145.07	88.97	2107.4
2 In Hand Hid Dem	87.5	186	318	221	87.08	27.37	926.95
3 In Hand No HD	60	1	52.25	5	7.49	35.75	161.49
4 In Hand Total	147.5	187	370.25	226	94.57	63.12	1088.44
5 Dem Hides	36.25	70	108.5+;6c	73.25	35	13.25	336.25+
6 5%2	41	38	34+	33	40	48	36+
7 Not In Hand HD	4.25	0	27.5	0	0	0	31.75
8 Not In Hand DH	2	0	10.5	0	0	0	12.5

TABLE 6: Proportion of Hides in Demesne in Circuit III Counties

<i>County</i>	<i>1</i> <i>Total H</i>	<i>2</i> <i>In-Hand HD</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Dem H</i>	<i>4</i> <i>2%1</i>	<i>5</i> <i>3%1</i>	<i>6</i> <i>3%2</i>
Middx.	880.58	699.5	266.12	79.43	30.22	38.04
Cambs.	1223.3	606.59	306.37	49.58	25.04	46.38
Beds.	1199.47	422.5	163.19	35.22	13.61	38.62
Herts.	1118.97	761.75	359.69	68.08	32.14	47.22
Bucks.	2107.4	926.95	336.25	43.99	15.96	36.27
TOTAL	6529.72	3417.29	1431.62	52.33	21.92	41.89

Note: col.1 Total number of hides in DB; col.2 Total number of hides on estates held by tenants-in-chief with hidated demesnes; col.3 Total hides in demesne

manors had demesne hides, accounting for 38% of the total. Tenants-in-chief with more than fifty hides were more important in this county than the rest of Circuit III, with 1200 hides (57%), of which 30% were held in-hand. The great majority of these estates had hidated demesnes, which account for at least 34% of hides (some data are missing). Tenants-in-chief with 20-50 hides held 315 hides (15%), with 72% in-hand. Most of these latter had hidated demesnes, accounting for 33% of hides. Holders of 10-20 hides account for only 7% of total hides. Two-thirds of their estates were in-hand, with demesne hides forming 40% of the total. Holders of less than ten hides, the bulk of whom held two hides or less, were in many cases tenants-in-chief by default. They held only 4% of the county's hides. Of those with recorded demesnes, most were not hidated. Of those which were, demesne hides comprise 48% of the total.

In Buckinghamshire as a whole, 927 hides were on holdings with hidated demesnes held directly by tenants-in-chief (47% of the county total). About 340 hides were assigned to demesnes, representing

36% of these holdings, and 16% of the county total. If this phenomenon really represents a reduction in geld liability to tenants-in-chief, the Exchequer was evidently forgoing a substantial amount of revenue. Given the known rapacity of William I in matters of taxation, not least part of the motivation in commissioning the Domesday survey, this seems intrinsically unlikely.²² One might have imagined that the granting of massive amounts of confiscated land to his supporters was sufficient reward without allowing them a substantial fiscal benefit whenever geld was collected.

All of the other counties in Circuit III show evidence of an equally substantial impact of assigning hides to demesnes, however, as the figures in Table 6 show.

In these five counties, demesne hides accounted for more than one-fifth of the total, ranging from 14% to 32%, which suggests that no simple or uniform formula was being applied. Uniformity is however more apparent in the proportion of hides assigned to demesnes. The overall average is 42%, but the range is much smaller, from 36% in Buck-

TABLE 7 Selected Tenants-in-Chief: Hides in Demesne (% Total)

<i>Tenant-in-Chief</i>	<i>Beds</i>	<i>Bucks</i>	<i>Cambs</i>	<i>Herts</i>	<i>Middx</i>
Barking Abbey	20	17	na	na	40
Count Alan	na	na	53	53	na
Edward Salisbury	na	48	52	na	50
Eudo s Hubert	48	na	52	66	na
Mandeville	na	38	60	48	48
Mortain	na	49	na	45	55
Ramsey Abbey	42	na	42	33	na
Warenne	na	20	57	na	na
Westminster Abbey	na	28	na	48	56

inghamshire to 47% in Hertfordshire, which is directly comparable to that for the various classes of tenant-in-chief within Buckinghamshire (33–48%, see Table 5).

That there was no systematic approach to the question of the proportion of an estate's hides assigned to the demesne is borne out by the fact that the same tenant-in-chief experienced widely differing geld reductions (if that is what they were), not only between counties but also within them. The small sample in Table 7 shows a wide range of experience. Count Alan and Edward of Salisbury appear to have achieved a highly beneficial outcome on widely-separated estates, whereas other major laymen and religious houses failed to do so.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion, it appears that the hypothesis advanced by Baring and Harvey concerning the correlation between estates held in-hand by tenants-in-chief and hidated demesnes is at best a broad generalisation of variable accuracy. As such, it is of limited value in explaining the phenomenon, especially as Domesday Book only provides evidence from a limited geographical area. In the absence of data on hidated demesnes from other Domesday counties and Circuits, it is impossible to say whether the phenomenon is really restricted to this region, although that seems improbable, given that the grouping is a purely administrative convenience for the purposes of a single survey. Round's idea that demesne hides represent a reduction in the geld liability of tenants-in-chief seems to gain more support from an analysis of the data for these counties.

As such, the "in-hand estate" explanation of the hidated demesne in Domesday Book is, like those of discussed in the author's earlier paper, helpful but 'not proven'. The Conqueror's great survey of 1086 was not designed to provide historians nine centuries later with unambiguous statistical data. Rather, it offers tantalising glimpses of the society and economy of medieval England in the aftermath of its greatest ever tenurial upheaval.

We cannot know when and why the phenomenon of the demesne with its own hidage assessment arose, nor its real significance. The alternative views offered by earlier scholars offer useful perspectives for debate. They are not necessarily

either/or explanations, and it is quite possible that more than one of them applied at any given location across these five counties. The existence of demesne hides on estates not held directly by tenants-in-chief, and their absence on many estates which were so held is clearly a warning that a one-size-fits-all explanation is likely to remain elusive. The terminology employed in Domesday Book is frequently inconsistent, and is in many cases capable of differing, but equally plausible interpretations.

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10. Domesday Book (DB), vol i 146a.
11. DB i 152a.
12. DB i 148d.
13. A.H.J. Baines, 'The Origin of the Borough of Newport Pagnell', *Recs. Bucks.* **28** (1986), 128–137.
14. DB i 149a.
15. K.A. Bailey, 'The Smallest Estates in Domesday Buckinghamshire', *Recs. Bucks.* **41** (2001), 125–141, esp. 139.
16. Carcuated demesnes occur in Beds. at

- Bolnhurst (DB i 211a), Clapham (212a), Toddington (212a–b), Easton (216a) and Chalgrave (216d), at the first, second and fourth of these, the demesne carucates are said to be in addition to the hides. At all apart from Chalgrave there is a direct correlation between the carucates and the number of actual/potential demesne ploughs.
17. DB i 151b.
 18. DB i 149b.
 19. DB i 146b, 146c.
 20. Mean=average of values, Standard Deviation=variation of values about the mean, Mode=most frequent value in sample. See D. Ebdon *Statistics in Geography* (2nd. ed. Oxford, 1985), 27.
 21. Ebdon, *op. cit.*, 7–8. 28.
 22. See the account of the commissioning of the Domesday Survey in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1085.