TERRITORY FORMATION IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND: NAMES, PLACES AND DISTRICTS*

Stuart Brookes (Institute of Archaeology. University College of London)

INTRODUCTION

Domesday Book -the Great Survey of England and parts of Wales completed under William the Conqueror in AD 1086- lists a number of different types of territories that made up the Late Anglo-Saxon state. While ostensibly describing a hierarchy of administrative structures that existed by this time, from large-scale jurisdictions covering entire regions down to very small legal groupings (in some cases comprising only two or three parishes), this paper will argue that Domesday Book can also be read as evidence for the processes by which these territories came about. Some of these processes appear to have taken a long time, others may have occurred only shortly before Domesday Book was compiled, and there is great regional variability in their manifestations. Unpicking this palimpsest is, accordingly, very difficult, and no single model can be universally applied to explain every situation. So, I will restrict myself in this paper to describing only two of the processes that can be gleaned from the evidence. One is known as the "river and wold" model, espoused, amongst others, by Alan Everitt and Tom Williamson, and is in essence a cultural ecological approach to territory formation[1]. The other comes from James Scott's ideas about the legibility of the state: that the metrication, measurement and rationalisation of space are one of the ways by which states come to dominate subjects[2]. This phenomenon is, I will suggest, particularly common as an outcome of "peer-polity competition" -which itself has been widely used to describe the processes of kingdom formation in England taking place in the fifth to seventh centuries[3]. Both of these ideas can be usefully transposed to examine the Domesday evidence, and can arguably find some expression too in the context of northern Iberia. While this paper does not therefore advance any particularly novel approach to the study of territory formation, it is nevertheless hoped that this description of processes visible in early medieval England finds some resonances amongst the readers of this volume.

TERRITORIES IN DOMESDAY BOOK

Several different kinds of territory can be rubricated from the evidence of Domesday Book. The largest territories were known as "shires", from the Old English (OE) *scīr* "a

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[1] Everitt, Alan, "River and Wold: Reflections on the Historical Origin of Regions and Pays", *Journal of Historical Geography* 3 (1977), pp. 1–19; Everitt, Alan, *Continuity and Colonization: the evolution of Kentish Settlement*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1986; Williamson, Tom, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2013.

[2] Scott, James C., *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale, Yale University Press, 1999.

[3] Bassett, Steven, "In Search of the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms", in Steven Bassett, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1989, pp. 3–27; Scull, Christopher, "Social Archaeology and Anglo-Saxon Kingdom Origins", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 10 (1999), pp. 17–24; Renfrew, Colin, "Introduction: Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change", in Colin Renfrew and John F. Cherry, eds., *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-Political Change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 1–18.

jurisdiction, an administrative district, a county"[4]; a term that that implies that they were in most cases conceived as parts of a larger whole -a "kingdom". Each shire in turn was subdivided into smaller administrative districts, known as "hundreds", each consisting of groups of townships or "vills"[5]. In areas of the Danelaw (north-eastern England) a different term -"wapentake"- was used, which was broadly equivalent to the "hundred". These "hundreds/wapentakes" were apparently both territorial arrangements and legal entities. They were the system by which assets were assessed, and were usually named after the meeting-place of the hundred-court where (presumably) taxes were collected by officials, where oaths were extracted from all the free adults of these districts, disputes were settled, maybe even where military obligations were reinforced[6].

Reconstruction of the hundreds/wapentakes and shires of Domesday England, suggests that at least south of the Humber, these districts formed a dense pattern of administrative organisation (Fig. 1). Before this pattern is discussed, it must be stressed that Figure 1 be used with caution. The evidence in Domesday Book can be plotted, but technically speaking we cannot map the territories as precisely as they are depicted here[7]. In a small number of cases early medieval charters describe in their boundary clauses the precise course of a boundary of an estate that forms part of an administrative district mentioned in Domesday Book, but more commonly the Domesday territories are drawn by aggregating together later medieval parishes that are co-areal with the named vills. This method can be justified to some extent. In the 1920s and 30s G.B Grundy published a series of "solutions" to boundary clauses mentioned in charters of the seventh to eleventh centuries, showing that in a majority of cases these landmarks were fossilised on later parish and civil boundaries[8]. In keeping, Desmond Bonney, Ann Goodier, and -latterly- Andrew Reynolds[9], have demonstrated the coincidence of significant numbers of early "pagan" and later execution burials on, what became formalised as parish and hundredal boundaries. Whilst the resulting hundred boundaries are therefore largely supposition based on later evidence, there are grounds for believing these accurately describe (at least some, or parts of) the territories as they existed in late Anglo-Saxon England. However, by the same token it must be acknowledged that ragged edges surely existed between many groups of vills, particularly in areas of waste, wood, moor and bog, and these will not be accurately reflected in the hundred map.

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[4] Keynes, Simon, "Shire", in Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, London, Blackwell, 1999, pp. 420–422.

[5] Miller, Sean, "Hundreds", in Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg 1999, pp. 243–244.

[6] Miller, 1999; Loyn, Henry R., *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 500–1087*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1984, pp. 140–142. Baker, John and Brookes, Stuart, "Identifying outdoor assembly sites in early medieval England", *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 40:1 (2015), pp. 3–21.

[7] Thorn, Frank R., "Hundreds and wapentakes", in Ann Williams, ed., *The Huntingdonshire Domesday*, London, Alecto, 1989, pp. 24–30, at 24.

[8] e.g. Grundy, George B., "The Saxon Land Charters of Hampshire with Notes on Place and Field Names", *Archaeological Journal 2nd series*, 28 (1921), pp. 55–173; Grundy, George B., "Berkshire Charters", *Berkshire and Oxfordshire Archaeological Journal*, 27 (1922), pp. 37–247; Grundy, George B., "Dorset Charters", *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society,* 55 (1933), pp. 239–268.

[9] Bonney, Desmond, "Pagan Saxon burials and boundaries in Wiltshire", *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 61 (1966), 25–30; Bonney, Desmond, "Early boundaries and estates in southern England", in Peter Sawyer, ed., *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change*, London, Edward Arnold, 1976, pp. 72–82; Goodier, Ann, "The formation of boundaries in Anglo-Saxon England: a statistical study", *Medieval Archaeology*, 28 (1984), pp. 1–20; Reynolds, Andrew, "Burials, boundaries and charters in Anglo-Saxon England: a reassessment", in Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds, eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, Leeds, Society of Medieval Archaeology, 2002, pp. 171–194.

Insertar Figure 1: Map of England showing the arrangement of Domesday shire, hundreds and wapentakes, as recorded in 1086. This and figures were produced from digital data assembled by the "Landscapes of Governance" project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

While these territories are not recorded until the eleventh century (in some cases slightly earlier in the tenth), it is likely many originated earlier[10]. The Laws of King Ine (688–726) of Wessex make mention of "shires"[11], and from sources of the seventh and eighth centuries we hear of kingdoms subdivided into districts referred to as *regiones* or *provinciae* that might be in some ways be equivalent[12]. When we compare Domesday shires with what we know of the political geography of eighth-century England from the source known as the Tribal Hidage it's clear that some shires are indeed divisions of early kingdoms (e.g. East Anglia, Wessex), others were once formerly autonomous kingdoms (e.g. Kent, South Saxons), but in yet other cases they bear no resemblance to the administrative geography as it existed at this time (e.g. across the Midlands) (Fig. 2).

Insertar Figure 2: Tribal Hidage territories, after Hart (1971).

Similar variability is suggested by the pattern of hundreds. They vary greatly in size from 4.6 km^2 (Worth, Kent) to 982 km^2 (Salford, Lancashire), and this alone might militate against a common origin. In some cases, the subdivision of shires into hundreds was very regular: a probable eleventh-century source, known as the County Hidage, shows that a number of shires were divided into multiples of twelve, twenty-four and thirty-two, suggesting some form of top-down imposition of administrative order[13]. In other cases there is no such regularity.

Naming practices similarly hint at a variety of origins. Most hundreds appear to be named from the specific locations of their meeting-places, so place-name elements designating mounds, trees, and stones are common[14]. But in some cases hundred names contain Old English (OE) community names, such as those ending in OE *-ingas* "people of", or *-sǣta*/*sǣtan* "dwellers". Conceivably these hundred names identify a kind of supra-local grouping existing below the level of kingdoms[15]. Of 812 Domesday hundreds, some thirty-seven are named in this way, perhaps indicating that these groups continued to be understood as political constituencies into the eleventh century[16]. In other cases, hundred boundaries clearly cut across such community territories. Bassett's influential reconstruction of the folk territory of the *Hroþingas* in Essex, is such an example[17]. The extent of this putative folk grouping -the land of "Hroða"s people"- is argued to be represented by an adjoining cluster of eight parishes all

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[10] Keynes 1999.

[11] Ine 8; Attenborough, Frederick L., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 39 and 49; Whitelock, Dorothy (ed.), *English Historical Documents I: c.500–1042*, London, Oxford University Press, 1955, p 368. It should be noted that Ine's laws are preserved only as an appendix to the lawcode of King Alfred dating to the late ninth century, and may, therefore, contain somewhat later material.

[12] Bede *Historia Ecclesiastica* in Colgrave, Bertram and Roger A. B. Mynors, eds., *Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969, ii.14, iii.20, iv.13, iv.19, v.19; Yorke, Barbara, *Wessex in the early Middle Ages*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1995, pp. 39-43; Campbell, James, *Bede's* Reges *and* Principes, Durham, Durham University Jarrow Lecture, 1979; Bassett 1989, pp. 17-21.

[13] Keynes 1999.

[14] Baker and Brookes 2015.

[15] Smith, Albert Hugh, *English Place-Name Elements*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956, pp. 298-303; Baker, John, "Old English *-sǣta* and *-sǣtan* names", *Journal of the English Place-Names Society,* 46 (2015), pp. 45-81; Baker, John, "Old English *sǣte* and the historical significance of "folk" names", *Early Medieval Europe*, 25:4 (2017), pp. 417-442.

[16] Baker, John and Brookes, Stuart, *Landscapes of Governance*, forthcoming.

[17] Bassett 1989, pp. 21-23, fig. 1.11; Bassett, Steven, "Continuity and Fission in the Anglo-Saxon landscape: the origins of the Rodings (Essex)", *Landscape History*, 19 (1997), pp. 25–42.

of which are named Roding lying either side of the River Roding and extending to the watershed of the river basin. But by Domesday the Roding parishes lay in two different hundreds (Dunmow and Ongar), neither of which preserves the name of the *Hroþingas* (Fig. 3)[18].

Insertar Figure 3: The *regio* of the *Hroþingas* in relation to the Essex hundreds of Dunmow and Ongar.

RIVER AND WOLD

The great variability in form and character of territories recorded in Domesday Book evades easy characterisation, and it is likely that various competing forces -from resource distribution, allocation, and ownership, to the maintenance of order and the enforcement of authority, to social organization- are all likely to have played their part[19]. One observation which has gained particular traction through a number of well-worked case-studies, is that the natural environment often had an important structuring effect on the formation of territories. Tom Williamson, for example, has remarked on the tendency of some territories to conform to the basins of river systems, with boundaries collinear with those of the watershed[20]. These "drainage provinces" naturally comprised variations in drainage, soils, relief and landcover that lent themselves to particular forms of agricultural activity and settlement. Where underlying soils are free-draining, such as on gravel terraces, the sides of river valleys are commonly the most suitable for arable agriculture, while intervening uplands -the "wold"- often comprises less fertile, thinner, and exposed lands, better suited to woodland management and animal husbandry[21]. Given this tendency, it is not surprising therefore, to see the similar social territories reconstituted again and again in different periods[22].

Cultural ecologists have generalized about this tendency even more broadly. According to the "Habitat Selection Model" populations will distribute themselves in proportion to the quality of the habitat, as defined by food supply, availability of shelter, but also the density of other individuals[23]. So people choose to live in those habitats which provide best fitness in evolutionary time, only moving into poorer-quality habitats when population growth or other depletions in the quality of the primary habitat make these an attractive alternative. According to the habitat selection model, population density is an important variable. When population growth in this first habitat reduces the availability of resources for everyone, individuals are more likely to occupy poor-quality territories, so that over time populations tend to distribute themselves with respect to this function. In historical terms, this process might explain the recurring patterns of "core" and more "marginal" settlement in areas of woodland, upland and marsh, which is also implied in the "river and wold" model.

While habitat selection is part of the explanation for this tendency, it does not completely explicate it, for forms of tenure, technology (ploughing, water management, etc.), water availability and land-use are also important variables in determining the "quality" of habitats. Harrington and Welch's analysis of early medieval settlement in Surrey showed that

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[18] Reaney, Percy Hide, *Place-Names of Essex*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1935, map of hundreds and parishes.
[19] Cf. Soja, Edward W., *The political organization of space*, Washington, Association of American Geographers, 1971, p. 7.
[20] Williamson 2013, pp. 82-106.
[21] Williamson 2013, p. 55.
[22] Everitt 1977; Phythian-Adams, Charles, "Introduction: an agenda for English Local History", in Charles Phythian-Adams, ed., *Societies, Cultures and Kinship 1580–1850*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1993, pp. 1-24; Brookes, Stuart, "Population ecology and multiple-estate formation: the evidence from eastern Kent", in Nicholas Higham and Martin Ryan, eds., *The Landscape Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England,* Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge, 2010, pp. 66-82; Williamson 2013, p. 105.
[23] Krebs, Charles J., *Ecology*, New York, HarperCollins, 1994, pp. 61–74.

settlement was densest, not, as one might expect, on the most fertile soils, but the most free-draining ones[24]. Across the large areas of midland England that are dominated by heavy and impermeable clays, early medieval settlements cluster on spring-lines and valley floors[25]. In Kent, the coastal region of moderate easily-worked soils was settled earlier and more intensively in the fifth and sixth centuries than the more fertile Holmesdale -a continuous vale of Gault Clay stretching east-west across the county- which was only "colonised" in the later sixth and seventh centuries[26].

The habitat selection model predicts that for each habitat there is an optimal group size, which means if population rises, conflicts can arise between members. In rich habitats with abundant resources groups tend to split into small territories, such that each retains its former per-capita intake. This tendency is clearest in river valleys, where divisions tend to occur laterally so that each territory retains access to the varied resource-base that such a topographical setting provides. This pattern is typified by landscapes such as the Chilterns, South Downs, and southern Wiltshire where parallel "strip" parishes with a narrow, elongated shape run from river to watershed (Fig. 4)[27].

Insertar Figure 4: Domesday hundreds and parishes recorded in 1851 in southern Wiltshire. Note the way that "strip" parishes subdivide the Domesday hundreds at right angles to the river valleys so that each community has equal access to valley meadows, escarpment and plateau.

Such splitting is not always possible. When resources are spread more heterogeneously, other strategies need to be employed. Cultural ecologists describe two options: either implement a member's rule and exclude newcomers, or allow the group to grow beyond optimum size, thereby decreasing the benefits of the existing members. In this scenario a strategy which groups can adopt in order to increase their returns is to share extra-resources, thereby raising the net returns for the group. This is known as the "Resource Dispersion Hypothesis", which argues that the economics of exploiting different resource patches enables a larger population to share resources over a common area. Groups have to forage further afield, or develop other cooperative production systems in order to have more resources to pool. Cooperative behaviour, in other words, is in the direct self-interest of individuals.

The archaeological evidence in many cases appears to fit this model. In south-east England, for example, it is clear that the "wold" -in this case a large region of sandstone, clays, and dense woodland, known as the Weald- were initially exploited for grazing, pannage, wood and timber by settlements which were often occupied on a temporary or seasonal basis. Manorial lists from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (and attested already in occasional charters from the eighth century onwards) show that settlements on the northern and eastern flanks of Kent, or the southern coast of Sussex, exerted rights over these temporary settlements in the Weald, 40–70 km away[28]. One of the main uses of these appurtenances appears to have

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[24] Harrington, Sue and Welch, Martin, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Southern Britain AD 450–650: Beneath the Tribal Hidage*, Oxford, Oxbow, 2014, pp. 95-103.
[25] Williamson 2013, pp. 188-193.
[26] Everitt 1986; Brookes, Stuart, *Economics and Social Change in Anglo-Saxon Kent AD 400–900: Landscapes, Communities and Exchange*, Oxford, Archaeopress, 2007; Brookes 2010.
[27] Rackham, Oliver, *History of the Countryside*, London, Dent, 1986, p. 20.
[28] Reaney, Percy Hide, "Place-Names and Early Settlement in Kent", *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 76 (1961), pp. 58-74; Witney, Ken P., *The Jutish Forest: a study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1380 AD*, London, Athlone Press, 1976; Everitt 1986; Gardiner, Mark F., "Economy and landscape change in post-Roman and early medieval Sussex, 450–1175", in David Rudling, ed., *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD 2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage, 2003, pp. 151-160; Brookes 2007a; Brookes, Stuart, "Walking with Anglo-Saxons: Landscapes of the Living and Landscapes of the Dead in Early Anglo-Saxon Kent", in Sarah Semple and Howard Williams, eds., *Anglo-Saxon*

been for pig pasture; Domesday Book suggests that in summer-time there were as many as 60,000 hogs on the move between the Weald and "primary" settlements on the coast. With population increases over the course of the early medieval period the woodland pastures were gradually opened up for cultivation, and settlements within them became permanent, and proliferated. However, such places continued to be dependent upon or tenurially subservient to the primary settlements in the original heartlands. Generally, they remained smaller in size and were physically linked to parent settlements by transhumance and resource routes[29].

The existence of such extra-territorial rights suggest that notions of territoriality can often be imprecise, seasonal and strategic, as well as being nested in expanding spheres of relations[30]. In certain parts of the country Domesday Book and other early sources could be making this explicit by mentioning administrative divisions that existed between those of shire and hundred. Lindsey and Yorkshire in the northern Danelaw were divided into three parts, known as "Ridings". These divisions existed already in the eleventh century and have a Scandinavian terminology, deriving from the Old Scandinavian *þriðjungr* "third part". In Domesday Book's entries for Kent, meanwhile, vills are grouped together under the headings both of "hundred", as is common elsewhere, and a larger territory known as a "lathe" (OE *lǣð*), a term that appears to have been synonymous with "jurisdiction", "court" and "authority over landed possessions"[31]. Perhaps significantly in light of the rights claimed over Wealden districts, theses "lathes", along with similar putative territories in neighbouring Sussex and Surrey, form a series of large parallel units -reminiscent of "strip" parishes- stretching from the coast into the Wealden interior[32]. What this seems to imply is that communities in Kent were grouped together into hundreds for legal and administrative reasons, but simultaneously understood themselves to exist as part of larger territories (lathes) determined in part by the distribution of distant resources. In a very general sense in other words, the lathe formalised notions of central-place sharing, while the hundred was concerned with the workings of the state.

People could also see themselves as part of yet larger territories. In Kent, a further scaling up of territorial identity existed at the level of the kingdom. The dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury were established shortly after the conversion in AD 597 and split Kent into western and eastern parts to either sides of the River Medway. Barbara Yorke has effectively argued that these provinces were not coincidental, but crystallised a pre-existing cultural and political division of the kingdom that is visible also in material culture, and which continues through later historical sources and folklore to the present day[33]. Conceivably, following the kingdom of Kent's annexation, first by the Mercians in the eighth century, and then the West Saxons in the ninth, people understood yet larger notions of territorial identity: Greater Mercia,

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Studies in Archaeology and History 14: early medieval mortuary practices, Oxford, Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2007, pp. 143-153.

[29] Everitt 1986; Witney 1976; Brookes 2007b.

[30] Sack, Robert David, *Human Territoriality. Its Theory and History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 8.

[31] Jolliffe, John Edward Austin, *Pre-Feudal England: The Jutes*, London, Oxford University Press, 1933, pp. 39-41; Brooks, Nicholas, "The creation and early structure of the kingdom of Kent", in Bassett 1989, pp. 55-74, at p. 69; Brookes, Stuart, "The lathes of Kent: a review of the evidence", in Stuart Brookes, Sue Harrington and Andrew Reynolds, eds., *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: Papers in Honour of Martin G. Welch*, Oxford, Archaeopress, 2011, pp. 156-170.

[32] Brookes 2011; Blair, John, *Early Medieval Surrey: landholding, church and settlement before 1300*, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1991; Gardiner 2003.

[33] Yorke, Barbara, "Joint kingship in Kent *c.* 560 to 785", *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 99 (1983), pp. 1-19; Yorke, Barbara, *Kings and Kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England*, London, Seaby, 1990, p. 27; Chadwick-Hawkes, Sonia E., "Anglo-Saxon Kent c.425-725", in Peter E. Leach, ed., *Archaeology in Kent to AD 1500*, London, CBA Research Report 48, 1982, pp. 64-78, at pp. 70-74; Franklin, B. *c.* 1780, poem "Men of Kent or Kentish Men?".

Greater Wessex, and ultimately English, respectively, but this moves us a little beyond the physical evidence.

Of these different scales of territoriality, it was arguably identities relating to middle-sized units that emerged first. Because "wolds" were areas of grazing and woodland, and at best only sparsely settled, they tended to constitute cut-off points in patterns of human interaction –"indeterminate zones"- existing between cultural provinces[34]. Communities were focused within particular valleys, or valley systems, developing identities distinct from those dwelling the other side of a watershed.[35] Because they were a kind of no-man's land, transition points between these drainage basins were in some cases deemed important places where different people came together, either for peaceful or sometimes more violent exchanges. Such is implied, for example, by the locations of hundred meeting-places containing the OE element *geat* ("gate") and the names of other kinds of meeting place, seldom recorded in hundred names, but attested by other means, containing OE *here*, *fyrd* ("army")[36].

The middle-sized territorial arrangements are likely, in the first instance, to have only been sustained through relatively informal networks, but over time they became increasingly fixed in landscape[37]. The influential "peer-polity" model, suggests that already by the later sixth century, through competition and conflict with their peers, some local rulers were able to impose wider and more stringent forms of territorial lordship and regional hegemony[38]. These earliest English kingdoms are likely to have been involved in surplus extraction through impermanent tributary arrangements, that linked different communities to transient high-status centres[39]. Arguably, by the eighth century -and perhaps in some kingdoms by the seventh- the development of a monetised economy, commercial bulk trade and incipient taxation, intensification of agricultural production and economic specialisation, and the beginnings of a shift from extensive lordship to smaller proto-manorial estates, saw greater efforts invested in clearly defining authority territorially[40]. It is from this period that we have a number of archaeological indicators for boundary behaviour, including the construction of linear earthworks, the ostentatious placement of both high-status "sentinel" burials and social outcasts, and -in some cases- written descriptions of boundaries themselves[41].

LEGIBILITY OF THE STATE

[34] Cf. Phythian-Adams, Charles, "Frontier valleys", in Joan Thirsk, ed., *The English Rural Landscape*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 236-262.
[35] Williamson 2013, pp. 58-59.
[36] Baker, John and Brookes, Stuart, "Gateways, Gates, and *Gatu*: liminal spaces at the centre of things", in Sarah Semple, Celia Orsini and Sian Mui, eds., *Life on the Edge: Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe*, Hanover, Hanover Museum, 2017, pp. 253-262; Baker, John and Brookes, Stuart, "Explaining Anglo-Saxon military efficiency: the landscape of mobilisation", *Anglo-Saxon England*, 44 (2015), pp. 221-258.
[37] Cf. Drewett, Peter, Rudling, David and Gardiner, Mark, *The South-East to AD 1000*, London, Longman, 1988, pp. 291-292.
[38] Bassett 1989; Scull 1999.
[39] Blair, John, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005; Brookes 2010; Hamerow, Helen, *Rural settlements and society in Anglo-Saxon England,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.
[40] Hansen, Inge and Wickham, Chris, eds., *The long eighth century. Production, distribution and demand,* Leiden, Brill, 2000; Hodges, Richard, *Dark Age Economics: a new audit*, Bristol, Bristol Classical Press, 2012.
[41] Semple, Sarah, "Burials and political boundaries in the Avebury region, North Wiltshire", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 12 (2003), pp. 72-91; Reynolds, Andrew and Langlands, Alex, "Social Identities on the Macro Scale: A Maximum View of Wansdyke", in Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall and Andrew Reynolds, eds., *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2006, pp. 13-44; Reynolds, Andrew, *The Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Judicial Practice: the Message of the Gallows*, Aberdeen, The Agnes Jane Robertson Memorial Lecture, 2009; Brookes, Stuart and Reynolds, Andrew, "Territoriality and Social Stratification: the Relationship between Neighbourhood and Polity in Anglo-Saxon England", in Julio Escalona, Orri Vésteinsson and Stuart Brookes, eds., *Polity and Neighbourhood in Early Medieval Europe*, Turnhout, Brepols, forthcoming.

While the environment influenced the formation of some territories, others seem to have come about more as a result of processes of top-down rationalisation and regularisation. Certainly, the concept of the hundredal system by the time of Domesday Book was highly regular and tightly regulated. Legislation decreeing that hundred meetings should be held every four weeks and that all freemen should attend, is first documented in the early tenth-century law code of King Edward the Elder[42]. Even the name of the administrative units, which notionally consisted of 100 hides each (whether or not they did in practice), suggests regularity and, perhaps, top-down imposition, at least in parts of England[43]. A connection might be made between this and other very regular elements of the late Anglo-Saxon military administrative system -the five-hide unit of military and fiscal assessment, the three-hundred hide ship-soke, and so on. Similar regularisation is reflected in the divisions of shires in the County Hidage into multiples of twelve, twenty-four and thirty-two -as already mentioned.

Some historians have viewed this terminological and procedural introduction as a function of "Carolingianising" influence upon the nature of West Saxon rule and its state-like characteristics in the later tenth- to eleventh centuries[44]. Be that as it may, the issue of whether there was an attempt, perhaps beginning in Wessex in the ninth century[45] and wider afield in the tenth century, to systematise, reorder and fix certain internal boundaries and to regularise internal government in local courts especially by the supervision of local officials, must also be considered.

Indeed, it is in Wessex where we can see that, as part of the process of large-scale territorial definition, there was some attempt made to rationalise the heartlands of the kingdom –the primary habitats as it were. Here, from the eighth or ninth centuries, we see the first indications for intermediary territories, larger in scale to later hundreds, but smaller than shires, which predated the Domesday hundredal pattern[46]. Bruce Eagles' important work on the administrative organisation of Hampshire, suggests that such districts (presumably used for the organisation of local government, the military, and legislation), were established in some cases around the main proto-manorial estates, in others, from groups of self-identifying peoples, or "folk" (Fig. 5)[47]. Whatever their diverse origins, when clumped together these territories comprised "small shires" -groups of administrative districts concentrated on the core areas of royal dominance, typically within the "drainage provinces".[48] The important observation is that these early organised heartlands were surrounded by a larger belt of undivided lands – "indeterminate zones", which were only subdivided into administrative territories at a later date. Often the hundredal pattern resulting from this later subdivision of indeterminate zones

[42] II Edw 8: Attenborough 1922, pp. 120-121. See Wormald, Patrick, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 378-379, for a discussion of the complexities of this text, possibly an unofficial document, which probably dates to the reign of Edgar (957–75).

[43] Cam, Helen Maud, *Local Government in Francia and England*, London, University of London Press, 1912, pp. 27 and 59-61; Wormald, Patrick. 2014. "Papers Preparatory to The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, II: From God's Law to Common Law" [http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/media/cms_page_media/49/Papers%20Preparatory%20to%20MEL2.pdf, last accesed: 15th November 2017]; Loyn 1984, pp. 140-142. The "hide" was a unit of land assessment roughly equivalent to the land farmed by, and supporting, a family: Faith, Rosamond, "Hide", in Lapidge, Blair, Keynes and Scragg 1999, pp. 288-289.

[44] See, for example, Wormald 1999, p. 379. Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxon Hundred can be equated with the *centena* of the Carolingian area.

[45] Wormald 1999, pp.122-125.

[46] E.g. Bassett, Steven, "Boundaries of knowledge: mapping the land units of late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England", in Davies, Hassall, and Reynolds 2006, pp. 115-142; Faith, Rosamond, "Forms of dominance and the early medieval landscape", *Medieval Settlement Research*, 23 (2008), pp. 9-13.

[47] Eagles, Bruce, "Small shires' and *regiones* in Hampshire and the formation of the shires of eastern Wessex", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 19 (2015), pp. 122-152.

[48] Eagles 2015.

appears very regular, suggesting it was done as a block shortly before the compilation of the Domesday survey.

Insertar Figure 5. Small shires of Hampshire, after Eagles (2015), and their relationship to Domesday hundreds.

Beyond Wessex the impact of state legibility is even more visible. In parts of England that were conquered by West Saxon forces over the course of the early tenth century, Domesday Book records territories that were arranged in a geographically very regular way around a central stronghold –a *burh*[49]. Thus we have Bedford-shire, Buckingham-shire, Hertford-shire clearly centred on tenth-century strongholds of those names. The archetype of such an arrangement is Huntingdonshire, which displays a strikingly regular form, comprising a subdivision into four equal parts with meeting-places of similar type, all arranged in pie slices around the *burh* of Huntingdon (Fig. 6).[50] The regular laying out of the shire extended to estimating the value of the land. In Domesday Book the vills comprising each hundred added up to a value of around 200 hides, perhaps indicating their origins as "double hundreds"[51]. Indeed, an authentic Peterborough charter of 963–84[52], talks about *þam twam hundredum þe secæð into Normannes cros*; that is to say "the two hundreds that go to [i.e. administratively belong to] Normancross". When originally constituted, perhaps in the late ninth or early tenth centuries, the total value of Huntingdonshire is therefore likely to have been *c*.800–850 hides[53].

Insertar Figure 6. The Domesday shire of Huntingdonshire.

Despite this superficial regularity, the hundreds of Huntingdonshire, do however, vary somewhat in detail, and it is here that we can perhaps discern some of the processes by which the extension of political hegemony and the consolidation of proper states, was operationalised. Two of the Domesday hundreds, Leightonstone (*Lectunestane*) and Hurstingstone (*Hyrstingestan*), take their names from existing English settlements: "Stone of Leighton" (OE *lēac-tūn* "herb garden"), and "Stone of the people of **Hyrst*" (OE *hyrst* "wooded slope") respectively[54]. Significantly, Hurstingstone is a community name in *-ingas*[55], suggesting that this was a pre-existing territory that was formalised in the new territorial arrangement. In some cases, there may therefore be a considerable blurring between hundreds originating as semi-autonomous "folk" territories and administrative districts imposed from above and identified

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[49] E.g. Round, John H., *Feudal England*, London, Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., 1895, pp. 44–69; Hart, Cyril, *The Hidation of Cambridgeshire*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1974, pp. 12-14; Hollister, C. Warren, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 38-58 and 108-112; Stenton, Frank M., *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971 (Third edition), pp. 336-337; Bassett, Steven, "The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century", in Nicholas Brooks and Catherine Cubbitt, eds., *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence.* Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1996, pp. 147-173.

[50] Baker, John and Brookes, Stuart, "Governance at the Anglo-Scandinavian interface: hundredal organisation in the southern Danelaw", *Journal of the North Atlantic*, Special Issue 5 (2013), pp. 76–95. For a reconstruction of the shire, see Thorn 1989.

[51] Cf. Thorn 1989. Hurstingstone hundred, which included the 50 hides of Huntingdon itself, totalled 187¼ hides; Leightonstone 206 ½ hides; Normancross 188 hides; and Toseland 228 hides. All Domesday hidages are taken from Thorn, Frank R., Thorn, Caroline and Hodgson, Natasha, *Electronic Edition of Domesday Book: Translation, Databases and Scholarly Commentary, 1086*. Available online at http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=5694 (2010). Accessed 25 June 2012.

[52] *c*.1200; Sawyer, Peter, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an annotated list and bibliography*, London, Royal Historical Society, 1968 catalogue number S 1448.

[53] Thorn 1989, p. 25.

[54] Anderson, Olof S., *The English Hundred-Names*, Lund, Lunds Universitet, 1934, pp. 109-112.

[55] Anderson 1934, p. 109; Mawer, Allen and Stenton, Frank M., *Place-names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*, London, English Place-Name Society, 1926, pp. 203–4.

by their community-name in *–ingas*, *–sǣta*, and the like[56]. The other two Huntingdonshire hundred names provide further variants of this pattern. Both Normancross (*Normanescros*) and Toseland (*Toleslvnd*) suggest these were districts conflating community identity with administrative functions. Normancross appears to be a description of Northmen or Vikings, and possibly coined in Old Norse (ON). Toseland is "*Toli"s/Toglos"* grove", incorporating the ON personal name *Tóli* and the ON *lundr* "grove", probably with heathen religious associations attached to it. In the case of the former, there is an explicit reference made to a Scandinavian community; while "Toseland" makes reference to someone with an Old Norse personal name, perhaps suggesting the presence of a Scandinavian community. In both instances these groups appear in contradistinction to the English "people of **Hyrst*", and therefore must surely post-date the settlement of Scandinavians in this region from the 870s.

Taking the Huntingdonshire example, we might thus imagine at least four different approaches to pre-existing territories that the new West Saxon administrators adopted in the creation of the regular system of hundreds, visible particularly in the conquered Danelaw. They could establish territories *de novo*, formalise pre-existing territories, retain all or part of pre-existing territories, or re-define them to new forms of measurement. However it was achieved, this rationalisation also involved systematisation, as the similar valuation of the hundreds shows, with each hundred community given parity in fiscal and military terms. Numerically, Toli's followers were afforded the same status as the "people of **Hyrst*", irrespective of their origins in historical terms.

This observation brings us to the squarely back to Scott's ideas of the legibility of the state. By establishing uniform measures West Saxon rulers aimed to impose dominance over both previously independent local groups and newly constituted ones. Rather than relying on ad hoc procedures, bi-lateral agreements, and extended kin relations, the uniform application of territorial and fiscal measures were designed to knit together the mosaic of communities existing north of the Thames. Whether or not this was achieved on the ground, the intention was to arrange populations into territories that "simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion…[to understand] their wealth, their landholdings and yields, their location, their very identity"[57]. Indeed, the effectiveness of these measures is reflected in the levels of detail the Domesday assessors were able to compile just a century or so later.

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing I have examined two of the visible processes underlying the early medieval territories recorded in Domesday Book. One sees territories formed in a close relationship with the natural environment; the other in almost total disregard of it. One has boundaries that closely follow major natural features, and embrace a range of environmental resource patches, the other does so only if these coincide with the maximization of taxes and the organisation of military assets.

However appealing the model, this characterisation necessarily oversimplifies the evidence. The processes by which "drainage provinces" were fragmented over the course of the seventh to eleventh centuries were hugely variable, and could result in a wide range of smaller territories – some of which are explicable by cultural ecological models, but some not. Nor were these territories to start with defined purely by the environment. Stephen Rippon's detailed analysis of "folk" territories in south-western England, shows that earlier -Roman and prehistoric- territorial arrangements also influenced the shape of regional identities[58]. Others have similarly suggested that early medieval groupings perpetuated underlying Roman systems

[56] Baker 2015.
[57] Scott 1999, p. 2.
[58] Rippon, Stephen, *Making Sense of an Historic Landscape*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012.

of administration and economic organization[59]. In these cases, there are good parallels with those *alfoces* of southern Castile and elsewhere that saw considerable continuity in the networks of communities that existed within territories[60].

It might also be pointed out that the physical size of environmental zones has a huge bearing on the nature of territorial relationships. In southern England, the interfluves between drainage basins are characterised by relatively low relief, and distances between valley units are measurable in tens of kilometres. In northern England -as in northern Iberia-"indeterminate zones" can be much larger and more distinctive ecosystems in their own rights. Here, larger, more extensive communities controlling areas of common land, and with their own networks of settlements, could emerge as independent systems[61]. Consolidation of, and developments within, such territories thus took place without explicit recourse to economic and demographic changes in primary habitats.

Despite these caveats, in both of the cases described here, we can recognise territories forming as the result of scale change. These could take a long time. The "river and wold" model predicts that territories emerged and solidified over a relatively long timescale. In some cases, the interfluves between drainage basins took several centuries to become more intensively exploited. A case in point is provided by the Weald, where even at the time of the compilation of Domesday Book in the late eleventh century, parts had yet to be formally constituted into hundreds[62]. In other cases, such as in the burghal system of the Midlands, territories are likely to have been laid out and consolidated very rapidly, even if -as we have seen- this apparently regular pattern may also have relied in part on pre-existing notions of territoriality.

In both cases of scale change there is an issue of centrality and marginality by which more environmentally or politically marginal areas were brought into an administrative framework over time. This process can leave a physical trace in the pattern of settlement and territories that emerged. In the case of the river and wold, more often than not, it was settlements in the primary habitats that developed into market centres, thereby perpetuating important roles as social and economic foci for smaller communities in the wold. In the case of burghal territories, this role of central places was made explicit from the outset. But unlike the former situation, where social and economic territories grew together as a result of long-lived relationships, the artificiality of the latter could also render them more susceptible to political or economic upheavals. Written sources suggest that in the tenth century there were shires centred on the *burhs* of Winchcombe and Stamford that may once have closely resembled that of Huntingdonshire. By the time of the Domesday survey these had already disappeared[63]. Reconstructing such "failed" territories requires a whole range of different questions and methodologies.

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[59] Yorke, Barbara,"Anglo-Saxon *gentes* and *regna*", in Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut and Walter Pohl, eds., *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, Leiden, Brill, 2003, pp. 381-408; Millet, Martin, "Roman Kent", in John Williams, ed., *The Archaeology of Kent to AD 800*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2007, pp. 135-186, at pp. 137–41, 150–1; Brookes 2011; Bassett, Steven, "How the west was won: the Anglo-Saxon takeover of the west Midlands", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 11 (2000), pp. 107-118.

[60] Cf. e.g. Escalona, Julio, Mapping scale change: hierarchization and fission in Castilian rural communities during the tenth and eleventh centuries", in Davies, Halsall and Reynolds 2006, pp. 143-166; Martín Viso, Iñaki, "Central places and the territorial organization of communities: the occupation of hilltop sites in early medieval northern Castile", in Davies, Halsall and Reynolds 2006, pp. 167-185.

[61] Cf. e.g. Escalona 2006.

[62] Lawson, Terence, "Lathes and Hundreds", in Terence Lawson and David Killingray, eds., *An Historical Atlas of Kent*, Andover, Phillimore, 2004, p. 30.

[63] Whybra, Julian, *A Lost English County. Winchcombshire in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1990; Baker and Brookes 2013.