The Domesday Geography of Somerset

BY F. W. MORGAN

THE value of the Domesday Survey to the legal and social historian of the eleventh century has long been recognised. In the last few years it has become apparent that it is of equal value as a source of information about economic activity and the distribution of agricultural production. Maitland's prophecy is coming true : ' the substance of Domesday Book will have been rearranged. Those villages and hundreds which the Norman clerks tore into shreds will have been reconstituted and pictured in maps, for many men from over all England will have come within King William's spell.'[1] This essay is an attempt to apply to the county of Somerset the methods used by Maitland for an interpretation of the Domesday statistics for the whole of England.[2]

It is fortunate that the Domesday record is more detailed for this county than for most of the country. As is well known, besides appearing in the Exchequer volume, Somerset, like Devon and Cornwall, is described in the Exon Domesday in considerably more detail, in that with the entry for each manor is given the number of animals of each sort possessed by the holder in addition to the plough oxen.[3] It is thought that these more detailed accounts in the Exon Domesday represent the original returns made by King William's commissioners, from which was prepared the summarised version which we now have as the Exchequer Book.[4]

Domesday was not, of course, compiled as a census or a geographical treatise, and its material, as we shall see, was not always so clear or so complete as we should like. It was compiled on a tenurial rather than a topographical basis, in that in the record the descriptions of places are grouped according to the names of the holders of land and not according to any

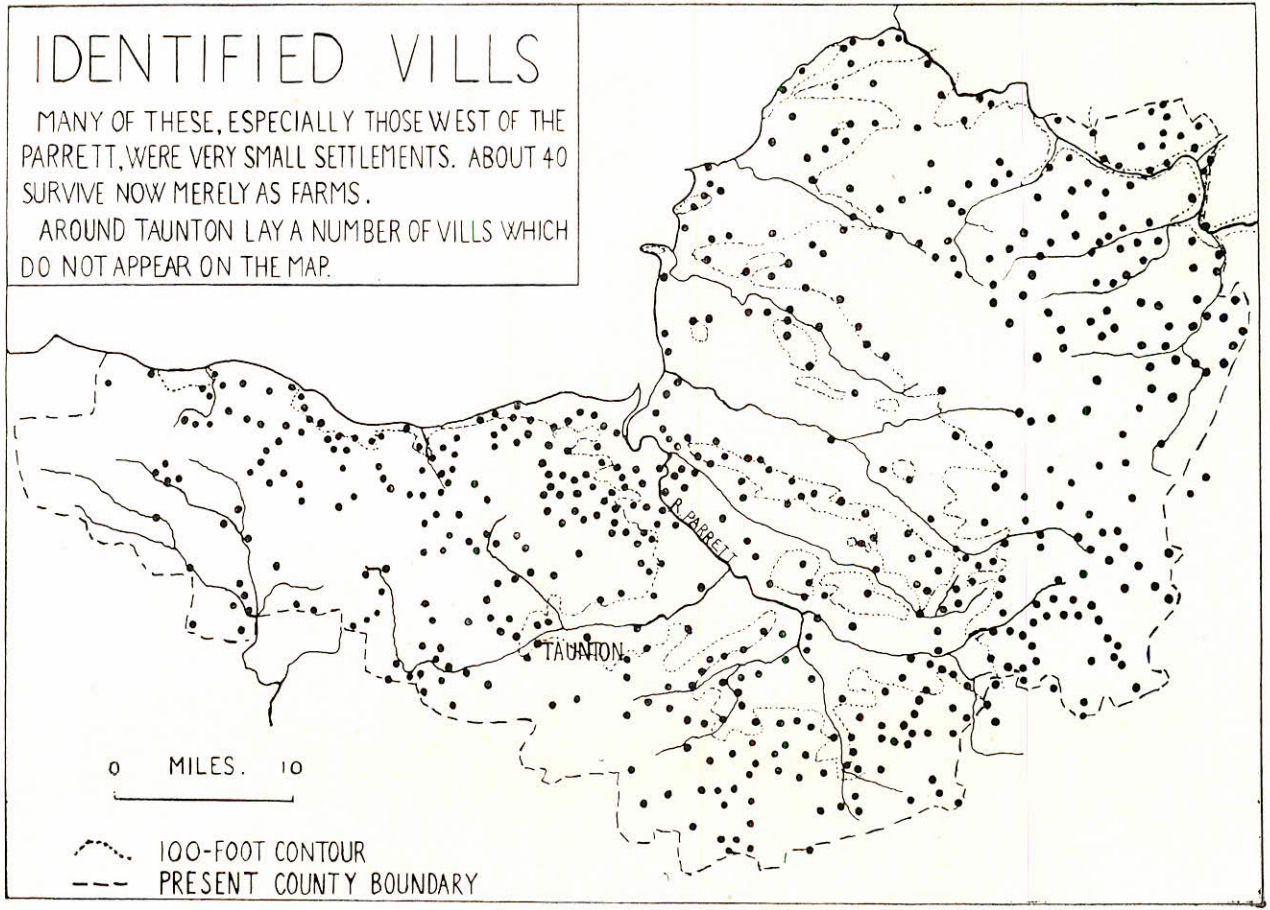
purely territorial arrangement. Further, the Survey names and describes manors and not villages (or ' vills ' as they were called). Where a manor included more than one vill the subsidiary vills were not mentioned, their profits being added in with the total. An extreme example of this is the Bishop of Winchester's manor of Taunton, which appears as one of the largest in England, the classical example of colossal manors.[5] It probably included the following settlements, however: Kingston, Combe-Flory, Nynehead-Flory, Withiel-Flory, Corfe, Orchard Portman, Ruishton, Staplegrove, Trull, Cothelstone, Bishop's Hull, Otterford and Bishop's Wood.[6] There is sometimes evidence that a settlement which existed before the Conquest was included under another entry in Domesday, *e.g.* Mark was a part of the manor of Wedmore.[7] On the other hand, a manor sometimes consisted of only a part of a vill, so that the name occurs more than once, and for a complete account of that vill information must be assembled from several entries: Nether Stowey, for example, occurs under three entries and consisted of three manors of varying size and value.[8] Detailed research into village history, however, has shown that several entries under the same name frequently refer to parts of the same vill, but may also refer to hamlets geographically distinct if not far away. This concealment of hamlets under the name of a principal village would occur more frequently in a county like Devonshire where settlement is much more scattered. Altogether, a map of the identified vills would not give a complete picture of the settlement of a county, but such complications are infrequent enough for the map to be useful as a general distribution. (*See* Map, Plate XIV).[9]

Domesday study must be based upon exact topographical identification as far as possible; the identifications for Somerset were begun by Collinson (1791),[10] carried further by Eyton (1880),[11] and completed by Whale (1902) and Bates (1906).[12] An example of a revision is that of the entry ' Hasecombe ', formerly regarded as Ashcombe in Weston-super-Mare, but identified by Bates as Hescombe in Odcombe near Montacute.[13] The obscurities which remain are all entries of very small holdings; it is difficult to say whether they arise from the

IDENTIFIED VILLS

MANY OF THESE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WEST OF THE PARRETT, WERE VERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS. ABOUT 40 SURVIVE NOW MERELY AS FARMS.

AROUND TAUNTON LAY A NUMBER OF VILLS WHICH DO NOT APPEAR ON THE MAP.



disappearance of the actual settlement or merely from the obsolescence of the name. In Collinson's time 'Middlecote' was depopulated,[14] while Eyton found 'Woodwick' in Freshford destroyed and Goose or Goviz Bradon uninhabited.[15] Bates found a dozen names obsolete and has half a dozen conjectural identifications. There is one clear case of a change of name, in that Huish Episcopi appeared under the name of Litelande.[16] Some existing settlements appear not to have been in existence at the time of the Survey : such were Charterhouse and Priddy.

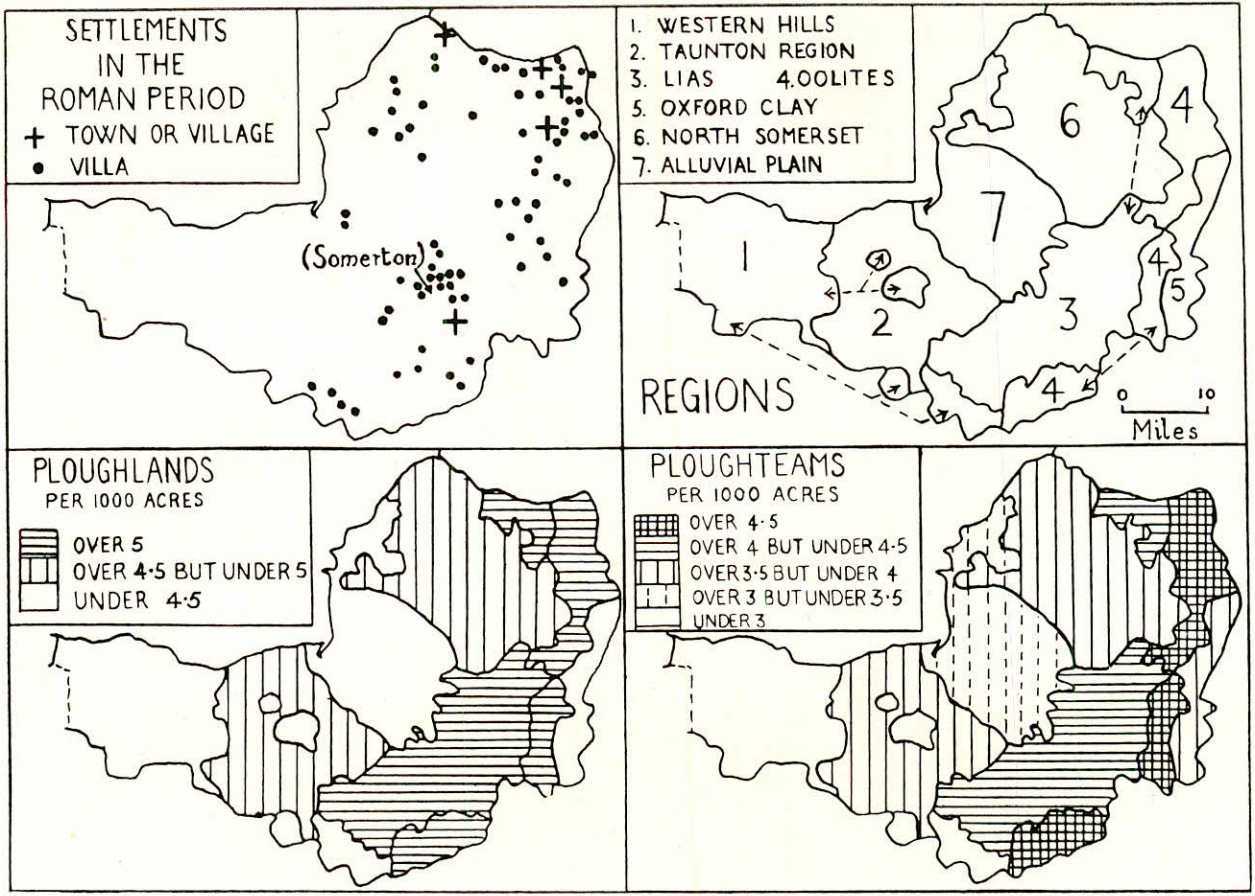
The map of identified vills shows how completely the Saxon settlement laid the foundation of the rural geography of Somerset. Altogether, the number of separate settlements which have been identified by name is 600, many of these being very small indeed. Settlement was more scattered to the west of the Parrett than to the east : the region had nearly half of the total of separate settlements though its area is only one-third of the area of the county ; the average population of the vills was 18 west of the Parrett and 24 to the east. Thus this western area resembled Devonshire, where the average population of the identified vills was 14. That this difference in the settlement arrangement is due not only to geographical factors is suggested by the fact that much of the area, such as the Vale of Taunton Deane, is lowland, which in England is generally associated with the nucleated or closely grouped village (though many of the small vills may have originated as settlements in early woodland). It is difficult to separate the geographical background and the historical development of this region in the study of its human geography. The region differed again from the rest of Somerset in the hidation or assessment in Domesday ; in that eastwards of the Parrett there is the frequent occurrence of the five hide unit of assessment for a manor, as in so much of England, while westwards, as in Devon, this unit was not employed apparently : the figures are more irregular, and frequently holdings were assessed in virgates or fertines, the fractions of the hide.

* * * * *

It has been found that a convenient way of analysing the distribution of the chief components of wealth is to treat them in relation to area and to find their density per 1,000 acres.[17]

The picture of eleventh-century economic activity thus derived gains considerably in interest when related to the geographical background of soil, topography and climate.[18] For this purpose Somerset has been divided into seven areas which can fairly be distinguished from each other in their geographical characteristics. The boundaries of these regions are civil parish boundaries, which represent approximately the bounds of the Domesday manors. It is not possible, of course, to distinguish regions which are completely homogeneous, and their boundaries do not follow the geological outcrops exactly, and further, two detached parts are unavoidable. The characteristics of these regions may be summarised as follows (*see* Map, Plate XV): region I, the Western Hills, comprising mainly the Old Red Sandstone of Exmoor and the Quantocks, but also the small area of chalk and greensand around the southern extremity of the county, is characterised by higher elevation and heavier rainfall as well as by geological differences; region II is the Vale of Taunton Deane and lower slopes of the surrounding hills, mostly newer marls and sandstones; region III is the great stretch of Lias clays and marlstones extending from Ilminster almost to Shepton Mallet, with a detached portion around Keynsham in the north; region IV is the narrow strip of the Oolites from Crewkerne to Bath, an undulating upland surface; region V is the belt, principally of Oxford Clay, which stretches from Templecombe to Frome along the eastern border; region VI, North Somerset, is more heterogeneous, consisting principally of marls and sandstones like those around Taunton but enclosing the three carboniferous limestone areas of the Mendips, Barrow Down and Failand; region VII is the alluvial plain, with a small extension behind Weston-super-Mare. These regions are the simplest which can be devised and do give a substantially accurate idea of the different natural regions of Somerset. As will appear, they represented very real divisions of agricultural prosperity at the time of the Survey.

The question here arises as to how far it is worth while calculating averages of population or agricultural activity for the area of the alluvial plain, much of which may have been useless fen or 'moor' at the time of the Survey. 'No doubt


SETTLEMENTS IN THE ROMAN PERIOD
+ TOWN OR VILLAGE
• VILLA
(Somerton)
1. WESTERN HILLS
2. TAUNTON REGION
3. LIAS
4. OOLITES
5. OXFORD CLAY
6. NORTH SOMERSET
7. ALLUVIAL PLAIN
REGIONS
0 10
Miles
PLOUGHLANDS
PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 5
OVER 4·5 BUT UNDER 5
UNDER 4·5
PLOUGHTEAMS
PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 4·5
OVER 4 BUT UNDER 4·5
OVER 3·5 BUT UNDER 4
OVER 3 BUT UNDER 3·5
UNDER 3

in Saxon times the whole of our drainage area was one vast marsh, affording here and there a certain amount of pasturage in dry summers, but impassable in winter.'[19] It is difficult to say how far all the moors were useless. Dunstan had done something towards reclamation and in medieval times 'up to the dissolution of the monasteries the waterways and drainage were probably very well looked after'.[20] In a number of entries small parcels of moor were mentioned as being of value, probably for summer pasturage, rushes or osiers, *e.g.* 3 leagues of moor were appurtenant to Bishop Giso's manor of Wells.[21] But at Wedmore were moors rendering no profit: 'Praeter hoc sunt ibi morae quae nihil reddunt.'[22] From this and similar entries Eyton, using his questionable calculations, reckoned that very large areas of moor were ignored by the commissioners.[23] To put it differently, we should say that the Plain manors were rated in hides at a very low figure. Some of the parish boundaries, however, suggest that the moor was not entirely useless, in that they show considerable variety of shape in order to include parts of it. Thus five parishes on the Polden Hills—Cossington, Chilton, Edington, Catcott and Shapwick, although they include part of the moor to the north, have also detached portions lying in the moor to the south, an arrangement implying that when the boundaries were drawn the land in the detached portions was of some value. From the averages which follow we may obtain a fair picture of the economic importance of the Plain without getting involved in a discussion as to how much of it was used and how much useless.[24]

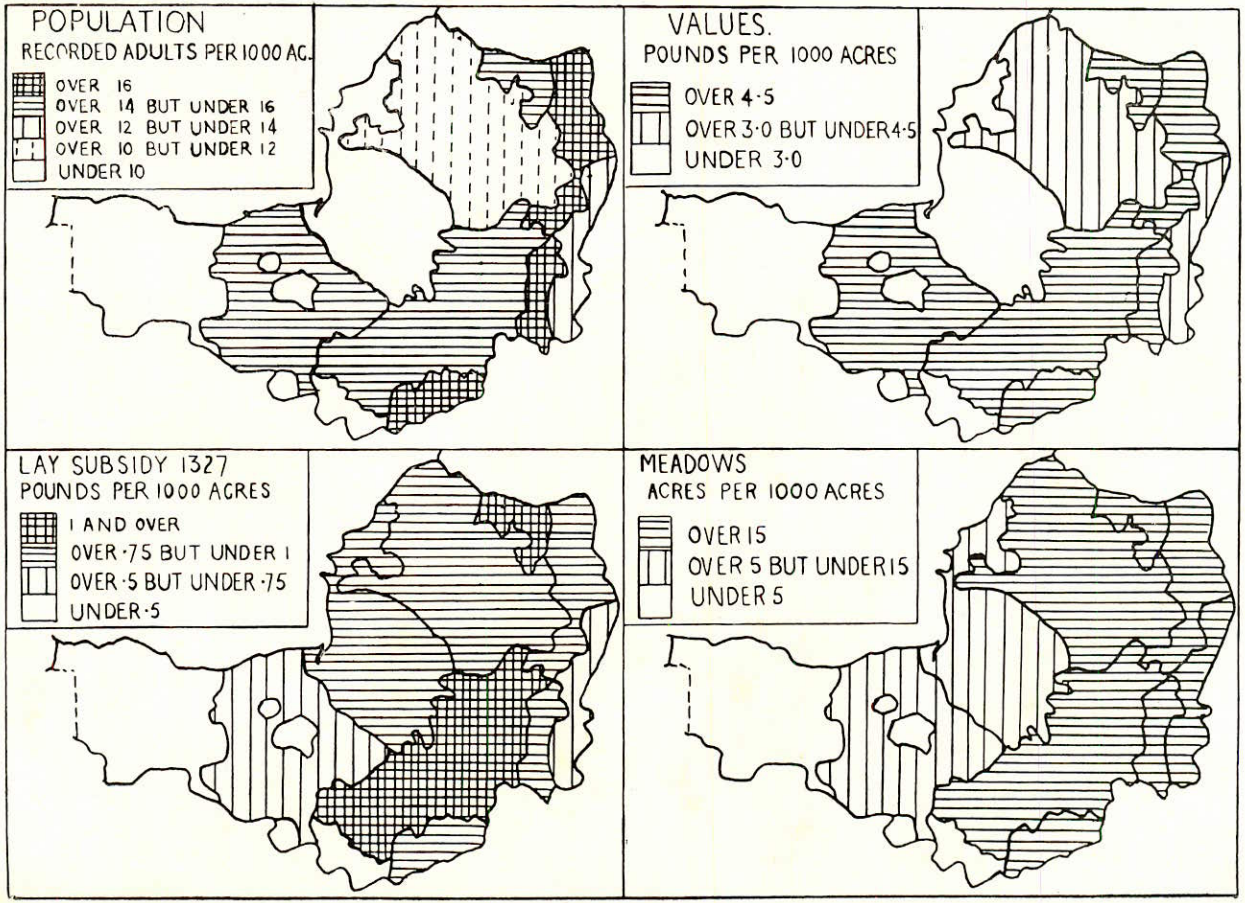
A further point arises over the Forests, areas preserved for hunting purposes and outside the ordinary laws. None were mentioned in the Survey, though it is likely that five were in existence—Exmoor, Mendip, Neroche, North Petherton, and Selwood, of which the first two probably contained very little woodland. As their bounds at the time of the Survey are not known it is impossible to say how far they affected the distribution of wealth. Exmoor Forest would appear from its later history and characteristics to have been an almost valueless region, and the area of the present parish has therefore been omitted from the calculations.

The first item in each entry was a statement of the number of hides at which the manor was assessed, but any consideration of hidages must be deferred. Then followed the number of ploughlands, ' carucatae ', which appears to have been an estimate of the amount of potential land available for cultivation by the ploughs of each manor. The table shows the relative importance of each region in this respect, but since the precise significance of the ploughlands entry is not agreed upon it would be well not to base too much upon this list.

Ploughlands per 1000 *acres.*		*Ploughteams per* 1000 *acres.*	
Oolites	5·8	Oolites	4·8
Lias	5·2	Lias	4·2
Taunton region	4·8	N. Somerset	3·95
N. Somerset	4·5	Taunton region	3·93
Western Hills	4·4	Oxford Clay	3·8
Oxford Clay	4·3	Plain	3·3
Plain	4·0	Western Hills	2·7

(*See* Maps, Plate XV)

The next item shows the numbers of ploughteams upon the demesne itself and among the dependent cultivators, the total of the two giving the number upon the manor. Generally speaking this number is smaller than the number of ploughlands, sometimes to a surprising degree. The royal manor of Winsford had land for 60 ploughs but only 15 there (2 on the demesne and 13 among the villeins) ; the Glastonbury manor of Mells had land for 20 ploughs but 5 ploughs there ;[25] as a rule, however, the difference is much less. This discrepancy has given rise to much discussion. The figure of ploughlands may have indicated the number of teams present in 1066, that is an earlier and higher level of prosperity, but it may have indicated, on the other hand, ' the frequent prospect of further cultivation ; and the commissioners, with the King's geld in mind, were not uninterested in this '.[26] Maitland suggested that in south-west England the marked preponderance of teamlands over teams implied a poor soil and a backward tillage.[27] Apart from the distribution of ploughlands, however, it is likely that the distribution of teams bore some relation to agricultural prosperity. The distribution as it appears in the table is in part what we should expect : the


POPULATION
RECORDED ADULTS PER 1000 AC.
OVER 16
OVER 14 BUT UNDER 16
OVER 12 BUT UNDER 14
OVER 10 BUT UNDER 12
UNDER 10
VALUES.
POUNDS PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 4·5
OVER 3·0 BUT UNDER 4·5
UNDER 3·0
LAY SUBSIDY 1327
POUNDS PER 1000 ACRES
1 AND OVER
OVER ·75 BUT UNDER 1
OVER ·5 BUT UNDER ·75
UNDER ·5
MEADOWS
ACRES PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 15
OVER 5 BUT UNDER 15
UNDER 5

rough western hill country with little agriculture ; the Plain, however far it may have been reclaimed, with a fairly low figure ; the Taunton region, with its fertile Vale, moderately high, and exceeded slightly by N. Somerset,[28] which has similar soils over much of its area. But the high place taken by the Lias region and the preponderance of the Oolitic belt over the Taunton region are less to be expected. Perhaps as much should be ascribed to Saxon activity as to any fertility of the soil. The Oolitic would have soils both comparatively warm and well-drained, but the clays of the Lias lowland were initially less attractive : the region is comparable to the vales of North Berkshire and North Wiltshire, which consist principally of heavy clays, but which by the time of the Survey had become more active agriculturally than the remaining areas of those counties with their lighter soils.[29]

A further index of prosperity may be seen in the numbers of the rural population, the serfs on the lord's demesne and the villeins, cottars, bordars and other dependent cultivators : *e.g.* on the Wells manor at Combe St. Nicholas were 12 serfs and 15 villeins and 13 bordars.[30] This population was distributed in a way which shows a general but not a detailed correspondence with the densities of ploughteams. The extremes are the same in each list, but the chief difference is that the Taunton region, while its teams were only slightly more numerous than those of N. Somerset, had a considerably greater density of population. Such differences show that arable farming was not the sole determinant, if an important one.

Agricultural population per 1000 acres.		*Values, in £ per 1000 acres.*	
Oolites	16·6	Oolites	5·68
Taunton region	15·	Lias	5·2
Lias	14·1	Taunton region	4·47
Oxford Clay	13·2	Oxford Clay	3·8
N. Somerset	11·1	N. Somerset	3·53
Plain	9·6	Plain	2·78
Western Hills	9·3	Western Hills	2·2

(*See* Maps, Plate XVI)

The next fundamental component was the value of each manor, shown in the concluding statement of each entry,

' valet x pounds '. This annual value, Maitland suggests, was roughly equivalent to a pure net rent.[31] It was derived from any revenue-producing source, such as the fines from the manorial court or the profit from a market, as well as from the usual agricultural activities, but the latter were undoubtedly much the more important. The distribution of values, therefore, is likely to be a fair indication of the distribution of productivity. The list showing the values of each region, it will be seen, is in general agreement with the previous orders and is in more detailed agreement with the population densities. (In the Somerset survey the value in 1066 is entered only occasionally, so that comparisons over the 20 years are impossible.)

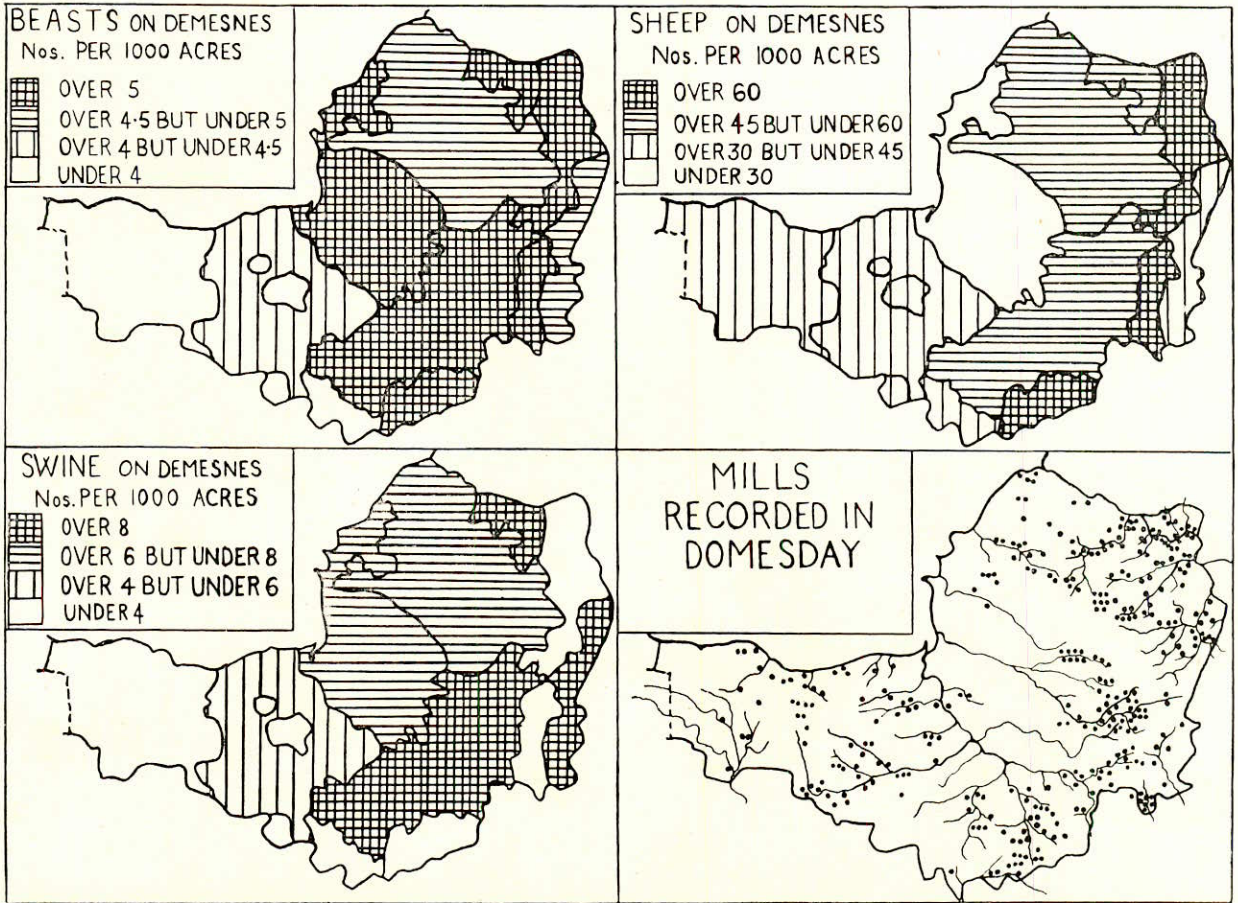
Here, therefore, in these four tables, is some indication of the distribution of agricultural wealth in Somerset. An interesting comparison may be made between the last, that of the Domesday values, and the distribution of wealth at a later period, *viz.* 1327, when the Lay Subsidy of Edward III was imposed.[32] On the assumption that the incidence of the tax bore considerable relation to the value of the land, the totals have been calculated for the regions of the county in the same way as the Domesday totals.

Proceeds of Lay Subsidy, 1327 ; *pounds per* 1000 *acres.*

Lias	1·00
Oolites	·95
Plain	·94
N. Somerset . . .	·88
Oxford Clay . . .	·65
Taunton region . . .	·54
Western Hills . . .	·37

(*See* Map, Plate XVI)

As we should expect, the Western Hills are low in yield, but the Taunton region appears as only moderately productive ; the Lias and Oolitic areas are the most valuable, with North Somerset not far behind, but the most striking change is seen in the rise to importance of the Plain region. Although the values and subsidy are not directly comparable, they inevitably reflected the prosperity of the land. The comparison shows that though the relative importance of the different


BEASTS ON DEMESNES
Nos. PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 5
OVER 4·5 BUT UNDER 5
OVER 4 BUT UNDER 4·5
UNDER 4
SHEEP ON DEMESNES
Nos. PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 60
OVER 45 BUT UNDER 60
OVER 30 BUT UNDER 45
UNDER 30
SWINE ON DEMESNES
Nos. PER 1000 ACRES
OVER 8
OVER 6 BUT UNDER 8
OVER 4 BUT UNDER 6
UNDER 4
MILLS
RECORDED IN
DOMESDAY

regions remained generally similar, in one of them a considerable improvement had taken place in land utilisation.

We may now consider the valuable additional information which is found in the Exon account, the statement of the number of animals kept on the demesnes. These figures do not indicate the whole animal population on each manor, and we do not know how the demesne totals compared with those of the villeins' stock, but it is likely that the distribution of the demesne animals was similar to that of the total animal population. J. H. Round said 'Swine we should expect in the woodlands; sheep are associated with marshlands; and cows we look for in the meadows down in the river valleys',[33] but the distributions do not work out in this way, and reveal interesting differences between the stock-rearing capacities of the various regions.

Numbers of stock on demesnes, per 1000 *acres of each region.*

Cows.		*Sheep.*		*Swine.*	
Plain	5·5	Oolites	97·9	Oxford Clay	8·9
Lias	5·2	Lias	54·	Lias	8·8
Oolites	5·	N. Somerset	50·3	N. Somerset	6·8
Oxford Clay	4·5	Oxford Clay	40·9	Plain	6·7
N. Somerset	4·5	Taunton region	35·1	Taunton region	4·9
Taunton region	4·	Western Hills	32·	Oolites	3·3
Western Hills	2·2	Plain	22·9	Western Hills	2·3

(*See* Maps, Plate XVII)

The distribution of the cattle has no surprising features: it did not vary greatly over the county, the greatest density was in the Plain with its damper soil, the next highest was in the Lias lowland, while the Western Hills had far and away the lowest density. With the sheep distribution there is much more variation between the extremes and no simple relation to the geography. As it was highest in cattle, the Plain is lowest in sheep, but the Western Hills had a surprisingly low density. On the other hand, the Oolite, which had the greatest density of sheep, was far ahead of the next, the Lias, its figure being nearly double. Although there were very large flocks on the Oolitic downs to the south of Bath, sheep were by no means confined to the hills, for the Lias lowland, where we should not expect to find so many, had a greater density than

North Somerset with its three extensive limestone uplands. Again, there are peculiarities about the swine distribution, for such different regions as North Somerset and the Plain had almost equal densities—and it must be remembered that the Plain had very little woodland for pannage. The high density on the Oxford Clay might be explained on the ground that much woodland remained there and that the woods of Selwood Forest were near, but the Lias lowland, from which much of the woodland had been cleared, had nearly as many.[34] It will be observed that in the tables of animal populations the Western Hills appear as the poorest region and that the Taunton region occupies a modest place in all three. These animal densities bear no simple relation to the geography, and no connection can be found with the distribution of any of the landholders, such as episcopal or monastic lords.

From all the densities examined so far certain facts emerge. First, the economic primacy of the Oolitic belt, followed by the Lias. Second, the Taunton area, regarded to-day ' as possessing some of the richest soil in the whole of England ',[35] was not so outstanding then, though its fertility is apparent in the fact that it maintained more in population and in values than its ploughteams would suggest. At the other extreme, the poverty of the Western Hills is equally clear. With the animal population, as we have seen, there are a number of puzzling features for which explanations are not apparent. The obvious geographical factors such as topography or woodland do not provide an explanation for many of the densities, and the implication is that farming technique accounted for them. The Saxons had succeeded in developing the fertility of the originally unfavourable clays of the Lias, so that this area assumed an importance which became even more clear in the fourteenth century, and of which in the eighteenth century an investigator said ' the country is exceedingly fertile both in corn and pasture . . . . . and . . . . . as well cultivated and as productive as most parts of the Kingdom '[36] It was a transformation begun in Roman times, when an important group of villas was established west of Somerton, some of which represented settlement on land hitherto avoided.[37] (*See* Map, Plate XV).

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So far we have been considering those entries in the great Survey which refer to the more common and widespread resources. There was, however, a variety of other resources in the medieval economy, though they were more sporadic in their occurrence. The three most important were the meadow, the pasture and the woodland, and the amount of all these was carefully noted by the King's commissioners. The meadow was land near a stream which was flooded in winter and as a result produced the only hay crop. This hay was essential as the main winter feed of the plough oxen, so that the possession of meadow land was extremely fortunate for a manor. In later times meadow was often the most valuable of all land.[38] The vast majority of Somerset manors possessed some meadow : the largest amount lay at Wells, 300 acres, the smallest at Poyntington, half an acre.[39] The greatest amounts lay not, as would be expected, in the Plain, but in the middle courses of the rivers, and in this the distribution was similar to that in Wiltshire and in the Thames Basin.[40] The densities of meadowland in the regions of Somerset corresponded roughly with their order in ' values '.

Acres of meadow per 1000 *acres.*

Lias	19·7
Oxford Clay . . .	18·5
Oolites	18·4
N. Somerset . . .	18·3
Plain	14·4
Taunton region . . .	11·2
Western Hills . . .	3·6

(*See* Map, Plate XVI)

The moderate wealth in meadow of the Plain suggests that much of it was not merely damp or occasionally under water but always water-logged.

The pasture was the rougher grazing which was not suitable for hay. In the medieval village there were, however, two other sources of feed which were useful, the stubble which was grazed after harvest and the meadow which was grazed after haymaking. The entries for Chelwood illustrate this : there was no pasturage, yet the two manors supported 30 she-goats and 180 sheep ; Bishopston (Montacute) had no meadow or

pasture but supported 180 sheep. Occasionally pasture was held in common, as at Hemington and Hardington.[41] The greater number of Somerset manors possessed pasture, some of it being very large in extent, such as, at Winsford 4 leagues x 2 leagues (*i.e.* 6 miles x 4 miles) or Litton, 1,000 acres,[42] but an appreciable number had none. Those manors without pasture lay chiefly in the middle parts of the county : all those in the Western Hills were well supplied.

Woodland was of considerable value to the medieval village, providing fuel, timber for building and fencing, but most of all, pannage for swine in beech and oak woods. In Somerset the smaller woods were measured in acres and the larger ones by their length and breadth. The difficulty about the dimensions is that with the largest woods they form, if interpreted as sides of right angles, areas considerably larger than the areas of the manors, *e.g.* Ashill and Ilminster, hence we must assume that the dimensions represented the extreme length and breadth. Thus a map would show only distribution and not actual amounts. Such a map has several features of interest. In the extreme east the manors near Selwood Forest, on the Oxford Clay, were well wooded ; the long belt of the Oolites, while bearing some fairly large woods west of Bruton, was otherwise empty. On the large area of the Lias, which carried extensive woodland originally, changes had taken place : around Bruton a fair amount of woodland was left and around Ilminster, especially to the north-west, was the most considerable expanse of woodland in the county ; but over three large areas, around Ilchester, to the west of Bath, and along the Polden Hills, there was hardly any recorded woodland. Quite large woods lay along the western slopes of the Mendips and on the northern slopes of the Quantocks and Brendon Hills. It would appear that centuries of clearing had made considerable inroads upon the natural cover of woodland.

In the Survey one more miscellaneous item specified with any regularity was the mill, an important part of the village economy and source of profit to the lord of the manor. In practice, though not by any statute, the villeins were bound to have their corn ground at the manorial mill, on payment.

The lord had come to prefer to let out the mill to a miller for a fixed rent, and this rent is the figure which is given in Domesday. It is, unfortunately, by no means clear that the survey recorded all the mills—368 are entered for Somerset but only 94½ for Devonshire, which had a considerably larger number of ploughteams than Somerset—5,542 against 3,804. In Somerset the mills varied in size from one at Bathwick worth 35 shillings annually to others worth only a few pence ; on some manors, such as Donyatt and Raddington, ' ibi Molendinus qui molit annonam suam ',[43] *i.e.* a mill which ground only the corn crop of the lord, a variant of the entry for such mills in Hampshire being ' Molinus serviens aulae ', a mill sufficing for the needs of the manor house. A number of manors had no mill, *e.g.* Brent, Dulverton, Wedmore, Glastonbury,[44] and this, together with the fact that individual mills were frequently of value out of proportion to the size of the manor and number of teams or population, suggests that a good deal of corn had to be transported for grinding. The mill at Watchet seems to have been doing business other than its own : there was only one plough there with one serf and one villein, yet there was a fairly valuable mill worth 10 shillings.[45] The value of a mill depended largely upon the size of the area over which its rights of monopoly extended, but that it was partly dependent upon natural facilities, in the shape of water at different levels, is suggested by the fact that the Plain division had the smallest number of mills, 8½, of any region, both absolutely and in relation to its area, but they were the most productive of all with an average annual value of 10·2 shillings, compared with 8·34 shillings, the next highest. Over the whole county the distribution of mill value was in accord with the distribution of teams :

Mill value per 1000 *acres.*

Oolites . .	6·2	shillings.
Lias . . .	3·3	,,
N. Somerset .	2·3	,,
Taunton region .	2·	,,
Oxford Clay .	1·6	,,
Western Hills .	·7	,,
Plain . .	·7	,,

The actual distribution of mills is not notable—it is a reflection

partly of natural features and partly, like the mill values, of the corn-growing areas. About one third of the total number lay below the 200 foot contour line. It is hardly to be expected that any precise relationship to topography should appear—this is more to be worked out on individual sites. (*See* Map, Plate XVII).

A few items of curious information appear in other entries. At Exford there was land for half a plough, but it had been laid down to grass. Several small estates had been unproductive or waste, 'quando recepit erat penitus vastata'—Exford and the neighbouring hamlets of Almsworthy and Downscombe, while Stone in Exford had remained waste, 'semper fuit vasta postquam Rogerus recepit'.[46] In other entries indications are given of a variety of resources of no great amount but of interest as showing that nothing was neglected by the commissioners if it had any value at all. The woodland is reflected again in the mention of a number of swineherds and the dues they paid yearly : 20 at North Petherton paid £5, 1 at Bruton paid 5 swine, 1 at E. Coker 10 swine, 7 at Whitelackington 40 swine, 8 at Castle Cary 50 swine, 6 at Cutcombe 31, 1 at N. Cadbury 12, while there were also 4 at North Curry.[47] Vineyards existed at North Curry, at Glastonbury, and at Muchelney and Midelney.[48] Fisheries were of value : 2 at Somerton were worth 10 shillings, 3 at Cheddar 10 shillings, 1 at Martock 5 shillings, 2 at Wedmore 10 shillings, 2 on the islands paid a rent in the form of 6000 eels, and an orchard in Langport paid its rent to the manor of Staple Fitzpaine in the form of 50 eels.[49] Unlike Devonshire, Somerset had no saltpans along its coast, and altogether there is little mention of any mineral resource. A 'bloom' of iron appears as a payment several times : 1 was due to South Petherton from Cricket St. Thomas, Whitestaunton produced 4, at Alford 8 were due from the villeins, at Bickenhall each free man owed 1 to the King's manor of Curry Rivel (though it had not been paid), while at Laxworthy in Enmore four mills paid 6 blooms. At Glastonbury there were 8 smiths, though there is no reference to any source of metal supply.[50]

We may conclude by a reference to the boroughs. Domesday information about town life in the county is not very

abundant and is not always easy to interpret, with the result that authorities differ in their views as to the number of boroughs in Somerset. Maitland suggests that no borough was of outstanding importance, from the fact that none is given a description at the beginning of the county survey like that given to Malmesbury, Shaftesbury and Exeter in the neighbouring counties.[51] Ballard finds six 'composite' boroughs (those in which lived certain burgesses belonging to manors at a distance and performing for the lord the duty of maintaining the walls)—these were Bath, Ilchester, Milborne Port, Bruton, Langport, and Axbridge, in order of size.[52] There was one 'simple' borough, in which all the burgesses paid their dues to the lord of the manor in which it stood—Taunton. The reference to Taunton, for example, as with so many other boroughs, inadequately describes its real nature, for the burgesses are merely mentioned along with the total of agricultural workers associated either with Taunton itself or with the subsidiary vills of the manor.

An important centre was formed when a market was established, usually at a convenient meeting-place for neighbouring districts. One market was in a borough, that of Taunton, producing 50 shillings; markets in places which were not boroughs were those of Ilminster (20 shillings), Milverton (10 shillings), Crewkerne (4 pounds) and Frome (46 shillings and 8 pence).[53] The market was the most valuable of all the franchises that could be annexed to a manor; for it was only at a market that the villagers could sell their produce and procure the salt and iron and other necessaries that they could not produce themselves.[54]

A mint was another institution contributing to the importance of a place: there was one at Taunton worth 50 shillings and one at Bath worth 5 pounds.[55] (In pre-Conquest days there had been mints at Bath, Bruton, Ilchester, and Langport, when a mint could be established only in a 'burh' or 'port'.)

In Somerset, as in other counties, the boroughs received comparatively little attention, for the commissioners were concerned chiefly with the ways in which they contributed to the exchequer. We must not expect to find, therefore, very much information about their mercantile activities which were becoming more and more characteristic of urban centres.

REFERENCES

1. F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (1897), 520.

2. One of the earlier commentators of the Somerset Domesday, R. W. Eyton, occasionally made reference to economic distributions, *e.g.* he saw that Keynsham Hundred was one of unusual fertility and wealth—*Domesday Studies, Somerset*, i (1880), 121.

3. In this it resembles the East Anglican counties in the Little Domesday

4. The references which follow are given to the volume and folio in the Record Office edition of Domesday, vol. i, ii (ed. A. Farley), 1783 ; vol. iii, iv (ed. H. Ellis), 1816, vol. iii being the Exon Domesday.

5. *See* J. Billingsley, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Somerset* (1798), 268, for an account of the survival of tenurial arrangements at that date deriving from the original church possession.

6. Eyton, *op. cit.*, ii, 34.

7. *Ibid.*, i, 108–9.

8. D.B., iii, 344, 373, 491.

9. This map, and the others which follow, were prepared in the Department of Geography, University College, Exeter.

10. J. Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset* (1791), i.

11. *Op. cit.*

12. T. W. Whale, ' Principles of the Somerset Domesday ', *Proc. Bath Field Club*, 1902.

E. H. Bates, *Victoria History of the County of Somerset* (1906), i ; reference may be made here to the interesting study of the Five Hide Unit by E. H. Bates, *Proc. Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xlv, ii, 51.

13. Bates, *op. cit.*, 446.

14. Collinson, *op. cit.*, ii, 450.

15. Eyton, *op. cit.*, i, 97.

16. Bates, *op. cit.*, 456.

17. *See* H. C. Darby, ' The Domesday Geography of Norfolk and Suffolk ', *Geographical Journal*, lxxxv (1935), 432.

18. In the absence of detailed soil maps, the map of solid geology must be taken as a basis.

19. R. N. Grenville, *Proc. Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Soc.*, lxxii (1926), ii, 2.

20. *Ibid.*, 11.

21. D.B., iii, 157b.

22. D.B., iii, 160.

23. Eyton, *op. cit.*, i, 180.

24. Eyton attempted some ratios of ploughs and population in a comparison of the fruitful Hundred of Cruche and the poor hundred of Cutcomb and Minehead, *op. cit.*, i, 135.

25. D.B., iii, 104b ; 168, 168b.