THE DOMESDAY GEOGRAPHY
OF LEICESTERSHIRE
BY D. HOLLY
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This paper attempts to reconstruct the geographical conditions of Leicestershire in the eleventh century, using the information contained in the Domesday survey. Domesday statistics, it is true, need most cautious interpretation, yet they do provide a store of material bearing upon the economic geography of the eleventh century.

Physical Geography

The prosperity of the inhabitants of Leicestershire in the eleventh century depended almost entirely upon agriculture, and, consequently, the physical features and soil distributions are most important in the interpretation of the Domesday statistics. The main physical features of the region are shown on Fig. 1, and on Fig. 2 an attempt has been made to show the general distribution of the main soil types. From the latter diagram the south-eastern portion of the county has been excluded owing to the lack of any adequate map showing the surface geology. The key to the map explains the general classification of the rest of the county. The Boulder-Clay and its associated sand and gravel are grouped with the light soils because of their relative lightness as compared with the heavy Keuper, Liassic, and Upper Coal Measure clays.

The Soar Valley, filled with rich alluvium and gravels, runs roughly from south to north, and divides the county into eastern and western portions. The western area is almost entirely over four hundred above sea level, rising to eight hundred feet in Charnwood Forest. It is an area of heavy Keuper and Coal Measure clays.

1 I wish to thank Dr. H. C. Darby for his advice in the preparation of this paper. I am also indebted to Dr. S. W. Wooldridge for his advice upon the treatment of soil questions and to Dr. W. G. Hoskins for many helpful suggestions.

2 It is really impossible to say that Boulder-Clay is light or heavy because it inevitably falls between the two extremes. Although, in detail, village sites in Leicestershire show a distinct preference for the patches of associated sands and gravels, the general effect of all the glacial deposits is one of lightness in comparison with the Mesozoic and Palæozoic clays.
LEICESTERSHIRE

DOMESDAY MILLS

+ 2 mills and less
Θ 3–4 mills
• over 4 mills
Contours at 200ft. intervals.

Scale of Miles

Fig. 1
clays, relieved but slightly by patches of Boulder-Clay, and culmi­ning in the harsh rock outcrops of Charnwood Forest itself. The monotony of this western clay upland is broken in two districts only; in the extreme west, Bunter and Keuper sandstones outcrop to make lighter soils, mainly in the Mease basin; while in the south, an area of lighter soils stretches from the Upper Anker valley to the upper tributaries of the Soar.

East of the Soar Valley, conditions are more inviting. The right-bank tributaries of the Soar are longer than those on the left and they break up the hill country to a greater extent. The Wreak valley, a tributary of the Soar, runs east-west to form an extensive lowland of light soils, the latter due in part to the overlying tracts of Boulder-Clay. To the north of this are the Wolds, rising above four hundred feet, and covered with the lighter soils derived from the Boulder-Clay and the Lincolnshire limestones. The northern slopes of the Wolds are formed of heavy Liassic Clays, cut into by streams flowing northward. South of the Wreak valley are the eastern uplands (six hundred feet), an area of heavy clays interrupted by patches of light soils derived from the Boulder-Clay and the Middle Lias rocks. Many of the right-bank tributaries of the Soar rise in the eastern uplands, and heavy clays are exposed in their valleys. From these uplands to the southern extremity of the county, the soils are largely conjectural. The valleys of the Sence, Welland and Eye Brook, form an extensive lowland, while south of this again there is a rise in the land to above four hundred feet; it is probable that light soils predominate since the heavy clay of the underlying geology is deeply covered with Boulder-Clay.

SETTLEMENTS

"The work of topographical identification", says Professor Stenton, "is the foundation of detailed Domesday Study". In Leicestershire some 300 settlements were recorded in the survey. With the exception of seven, these have all been identified and

3In the introduction to C. W. Foster and T. Longley, The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey (Lincoln Record Society, 1924), pp. xlvii—lxii, and lxxvi—lxxxvii.
4This number includes a few settlements which are now outside the county boundary.
5In the absence of a complete place-name study of Leicestershire this identification is difficult and I am indebted to Mr. S. H. Skillington for his help in eliminating doubtful identification.
LEICESTERSHIRE
MAIN SOIL DIVISIONS

Fig. 2

Map showing the main soil divisions in Leicestershire.

Legend:
- **Heavy Soils**: Lower and Upper Lias, Keuper and upper coal measures, boulder clay with under and overlying sand and gravel, Lincolnshire limestones and Northampton sands, Bunter and Keuper sandstones.
- **Light Soils**: Pre-Cambrian and volcanic outcrops.

Scale of Miles: 4 0 8
are included in Fig. 3. Some of these settlements are to-day represented by farmsteads while others are large centres of population. A few new settlements have appeared since the time of the survey, but the surprising fact is that these are so few. The villages are scattered quite thickly over the whole of the county but a certain pattern reflecting the variety of the soil types is evident. The eastern portion is more heavily studded than the western, and centres of highly agglomerated settlement sites within this region are the Wolds, the Wreak Valley, and the light soil patches on the eastern uplands. W. G. Hoskins notes that a “dependence on the sands and gravels (within the Boulder-Clay area) is revealed in almost every village site to the east of Leicester, whether of the Heathen or of the Christian period”. In the western uplands a close correspondence between light soil and dense settlement is also noticeable, while in the centre of the county the very dense settlement pattern of the Soar Valley stands out.

The recorded populations of these villages show considerable variation as the following list, chosen at random from the analysis, demonstrates:

- Dishley ... ... ... 33
- Donington le Heath ... ... 1
- Dunton Bassett ... ... 20
- East Norton ... ... 16
- Eastwell ... ... ... 25
- Earl Shilton ... ... ... 19
- Edmondthorpe ... ... 37

These figures do not give total populations: but in a discussion about relative prosperity the problem of computing the total from the recorded population does not arise. Whatever factor (whether 4, 5 or 6) must be used to obtain the actual populations from these figures, the fact of their variety is not affected. Extreme variations in size are shown by the settlements of Snarestone and Bottesford, the former a waste vill with no recorded population in 1086, and the latter with one hundred and twenty recorded inhabitants. The distribution of all the villages differentiated according to the recorded population is shown on

6The town of Leicester is excluded from this general discussion and is treated separately below.
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SETTLEMENTS IN 1086

LEICESTER TOWN

Fig. 3
Fig. 4. West of the Soar Valley, villages with more than twenty recorded inhabitants are few and far between, while there are but three with a greater number than forty. In the eastern part of the county large and medium sized villages are much more numerous; certain concentrations of large villages are found along the Soar Valley, the Wreak Valley and, surprisingly enough, on the heavy clayland in the extreme north-east. 8

It is surprising to find that, twenty years after the conquest, Frenchmen were considered worthy of special mention in the survey. The distribution of villages where Frenchmen were recorded shows a limitation to the eastern half of the county, more especially to the south-eastern portion. Not one was recorded in the less inviting western districts. Many of these Frenchmen were following agricultural pursuits, holding land and other possessions in common with the natives. Thus, at Lubenham, it was recorded that “eight villeins with three bordars and two Frenchmen have four ploughs”, 9 and again, in Wymeswold, “with one serf and eleven villeins with four sochmen and four bordars and nine French-Sergeants have ten ploughs between them all”. 10

THE TOWN OF LEICESTER

In the entries relating to Leicester11 the complications of Domesday rights and holdings are immediately apparent. Houses, churches and burgesses all belonged to different owners and, in many cases, had complicated relationships with the villages of the county. 12 In King Edward’s time the city had rendered thirty pounds and fifteen sestars of honey to the king. In addition, when the King went to war the city was bound to help him. If he went by land, twenty burgesses from Leicester were to accompany him. If he went by sea, four horses were sent to London to carry weapons or other articles. By 1086, the royal tax had risen to forty-two pounds ten shillings. Apparently, too, instead of

8For an analogy to this settlement upon heavy clayland, see F. W. Morgan, The Domesday Geography of Berkshire, Scot. Geog. Mag. li, p. 354 (1935).
9D.B. i, 236: “iii servi et viii villani cum iii bordarii et ii francigenae habent iv carucas”.
10D.B. i, 2236-233: “cum i servo et xi villanis et iv sochemannis cum iv bordariis et ix francigenis servientibus habent x carucas inter omnes”.
12For an elucidation of this point see:
(1) C. Stephenson, Borough and Town (1933), p. 221.
(2) A. Ballard, The Domesday Boroughs (1904), pp. 28 and 39.
the older rents in kind, ten pounds were now rendered instead of a hawk and twenty shillings instead of a horse. The money-makers, too, rendered twenty pounds annually, Hugh, the County Sheriff taking one third of this. Apparently, in 1086, there were some 314 houses and, out of these, but two were waste. Six churches were recorded, two of which rendered fifteen shillings annually. Inside the town, five ploughs and two mills were recorded, the latter together rendering some fifteen shillings and four pence. Outside the town, the Countess Judith and the Bishop of Lincoln both held land, on which were eight ploughs, twenty-seven acres of meadow and woodland six furlongs by three furlongs tended, partly at least, by some sixteen inhabitants. Within the city, there were sixty-five burgesses, no agricultural holdings being recorded for them. Thus, it seems that some kind of trade was their means of support. The only other reference to trade in the county is under the heading of Melton Mowbray where "the merchants" rendered "twenty shillings". Concerning this trading activity, the Domesday Survey has indeed withheld much. All we can conclude is that Leicester was a fairly populous city, rich in the estimation of those days, and with, apparently, a considerable trading element.

MEADOW

Nearly all the entries relating to meadow in Leicestershire Domesday are in acres: a few linear measurements are given but they seem to depend upon the whim of the Jurors. The individual entries are shown on Fig. 5, varying in size from a few acres to three hundred acres in the case of Edmondthorpe, and from a few furlongs up to a league by half a league in the case of Old Dalby. On Fig. 6, the information has been plotted in a different way. It was necessary to exclude those measurements of a linear nature from this map owing to the impossibility of assessing their acreage. These are so few as not to invalidate the general considerations of the map.

In Fig. 6, as in all the similar maps that follow, it was found undesirable to use the "hundreds" as unit divisions. Conse-

13 Possibly 319—the 5 houses held by Hugh de Witville may or may not be a duplication of some of those held by Hugh de Grentemaisnil.
14 Including ten burgesses recorded under Arnesby D.B. i, 235 and Poultney D.B. i, 231.
15 D.B. i, 235 b.
16 D.B. i, 233.
17 D.B. i, 235.
LEICESTERSHIRE

DOMESDAY MEADOW

- Over 200 acres
- 99 - 199 acres
- 60 - 99 acres
- 20 - 59 acres
- 1 - 19 acres
- Linear Measurements

Scale of Miles

Fig. 5
sequently, the parishes have been grouped together into areas conforming as nearly as possible with the geographic divisions. This minimises any distortion of the distributions.

It is interesting to note that the pattern of the meadow map is almost (but not quite) the reverse of that of the woodland (compare Fig. 8). The eastern half of the county is much richer in meadow than the western half. In the latter, the river valleys seem to play a controlling part in the distribution; the western uplands are almost devoid of meadow except where the left-bank tributaries of the Soar penetrate. The light soil of the west has quite a number of small meadow entries, probably to be related to the valleys of the Anker and the Mease. The central and upper Soar Valley is quite rich in meadow, but it is surprising to find that the lower valley is very poor; this poverty may be due to the highland region reaching down close to the county border. In the eastern part of the county, although the meadow is almost ubiquitous, the effect of the river valleys upon its distribution is also noticeable. In the south-east the valleys of the Welland and Eye Brook stand out, as does the region covered by the right-bank tributaries of the central Soar Valley. The streams flowing north from the North-eastern Wolds bring the meadow distribution to a fairly high density in that area, while the eastern uplands have numerous entries of meadow (again probably to be correlated with the streams) which, however, are of small dimensions so that the average distribution is low. The upper Wreak Valley shows a surprisingly high average richness. The entries in this region are not particularly numerous but they are of great size—Stapleford, Coston and Edmondthorpe all having one hundred acres or more.

In the eastern part of the county there seems but little connection between meadow distribution and soil type, while in the western districts the connection between river valleys and meadow seems closer than any other relation. A possible explanation of this lack of relation with the soils may be that meadowland was a type of "cultivated" land, and so there was a close dependence upon human development. Pasture is not mentioned in the Leicestershire Domesday nor can its probable distribution be construed from the presence of animals since there are but two direct entries relating to animals themselves (except pigs) in the survey, viz., at Lubbethorpe there were "two ploughs and five plough
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DOMESDAY MEADOW

Fig. 6

Domesday 'acres of meadow' per thousand modern acres.

- 19.0 and over
- 10.5 - 18.9
- 3.0 - 10.5
- 1.0 - 2.9
- Less than 1

Scale of Miles

Fig. 6
Oxen”, and at Sharnford “there are three bordars who have six beasts”. 18

WOODLAND

The Leicestershire woodland was recorded by measurements of two kinds: — 19

(a) Linear measurements—wood $x$ leagues by $y$ leagues.

(b) Areal measurements—$x$ acres of woodland.

In Fig. 7, both these types of entry are recorded. For the linear units, an arbitrary scale has been used and the two measurements given in the survey for each area of woodland have been drawn at right-angles to each other. The distribution is not geographically accurate since the measurements may or may not have been the extreme dimensions of the woodland. The scale of acreage, too, is also an arbitrary representation. These two types, when combined, in spite of their individual imperfections, give a general picture of the pattern of woodland distribution.

A close connection between the woodland and the heavier clay-soils is evident. The claylands of the western uplands are closely covered with wood, but the rock outcrops of Charnwood Forest form a large patch of open ground. The lighter soils in the west and south-west, too, are clear of heavy woodland. Surprisingly enough, however, the Soar Valley, from Leicester downstream, is recorded as heavily wood-covered. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the entries possibly refer to the stretches of clay soil on either side of the valley. The eastern portion of the county is almost free from woodland except for the clay regions of the eastern uplands. The bareness of the rest of the clayland in the east, and of the stretch of clay in the extreme north-east in particular, was probably the result of colonisation and clearing. 20

In the Leicestershire folios, the uses to which woodland was put are not explicitly stated but there are a few hints. Thus, at Ashby de la Zouch there was “woodland one league in length and four furlongs in breadth (sufficient for) 100 swine”. 21 In Noseley 22

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18Lubbesthorpe, D.B. i, 235: “ii caracas et v boves arantes”.

Sharnford, D.B. i, 236 b: “iii bordarii habentes vi animalia”.

19For a fuller discussion of these formulae, see H. C. Darby, An Historical Geography before A.D. 1850, (1935), pp. 200 et seq.

20Compare F. W. Morgan, art cit., p. 355.

21D.B. i, 233: “silva i leuga longa et iv quarentenae ad c porcos”.

22D.B. i, 232: “Ibi xx acrae broce”.

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and Aylestone,\textsuperscript{23} too, brushwood was recorded instead of ordinary woodland, the former being used for firewood and miscellaneous purposes. Again, under Lubbesthorpe, the entry runs: “infertile woodland six furlongs in length and one in breadth”\textsuperscript{24}—“infertile” probably meaning “unsuitable for pannage”. It seems probable that the lack of economic information in the Leicestershire woodland entries was due more to the fancy of the local jurors than to actual economic deficiencies.

**MILLS**

Mills were an important item in Domesday economy. In some cases, a single mill was divided among two or three villages or owners. Thus, the Countess Judith collected five shillings and three pence from half a mill in Leicester town.\textsuperscript{25} It is difficult to see how the valuation of the mills was obtained since the amount of tax rendered varied immensely. Thus, in one village, Birstall, one mill rendered ten shillings, while another but twelve pence. The only factor which would account for these variations was the degree of use to which the mills were put. Apart from these considerations the main facts are clear from Fig. 1. In almost every case the mills stood on rivers or streams, the few exceptions to this probably being due to the tenurial nature of the survey,\textsuperscript{26} while the remarkable concentration of the mills in the eastern part of the county is to be explained by the richer economy of this region.

**PLOUGHS AND PLOUGHTEAMS**

Ploughlands are recorded in the Leicestershire Domesday under four different types of entry, the different types never overlapping in any individual entry. Examples of the four types are:

(a) “There can be one plough…….”.\textsuperscript{27}

(b) “There is land for twelve ploughs…….”.\textsuperscript{28}

(c) In King Edward’s time ten ploughs were there”.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{23}D.B. i, 237 : “Ibi ii acrae brocae”.
\textsuperscript{24}D.B. i, 235 : “Silva infructuosa vi quarantenae longa et una quarantena lata”.
\textsuperscript{25}D.B. i, 230.
\textsuperscript{26}H. C. Darby, Hist. Geog. Eng., p. 226.
\textsuperscript{27}D.B. i, 231 Sharnford : “Una caruca potest esse”.
\textsuperscript{28}D.B. i, 235. Dalby on the Wolds : “Terra est xii carucae”.
\textsuperscript{29}D.B. i, 233. Coston : “Idem H (Henricus de Ferieres) tenet ix carucatae terrae in Castone. T.R.E. erant ibi x carucae”.
LEICESTERSHIRE

FLUGH TEAMS IN 1086

Scale of Miles

Fig. 8
(d) "Three ploughs were there....". 30

Types (c) and (d) state that a certain number of ploughs were there at some time previous to 1086, and it seems that the same number of ploughlands were there in 1086 although in the intervening years they may have fallen out of cultivation. Types (a) and (b) are not quite so explicit. They both infer that in 1086 there was land suitable for the stated number of ploughs. It is uncertain, however, whether these lands were, or had previously been, under cultivation in 1086, or whether the jurors stated the area possible for ploughing with an eye to future colonisation into the waste. In some cases it is certain that the number of ploughs did not equal the number of ploughlands. Whatever the exact significance may be, it is obvious that the four types of entry denote land fit for ploughing in 1086 either by virtue of past cultivation, contemporary condition, or future colonisation. 31

Fig. 8 gives the average distribution of ploughteams recorded for 1086, thus indicating the degree of exploitation of the land at that date. The most striking feature is the high average in the eastern part of the county. Nowhere west of the Soar Valley does the number of ploughs per thousand acres exceed three, while only around Lutterworth in the south does the number fall below three to the east of the Soar. In the west, the heavy claylands show very low averages but the figures rise somewhat on the lighter soil regions of the extreme west and of the southwest around the upper Soar. The whole of the Soar Valley stands out with an average always above four ploughs per thousand acres. East of the Soar, the Welland and Eye Brook valleys and the Wreak valley with the surrounding light-soil area all stand well above the average, but one area only on the eastern uplands, possibly to be correlated with the light soils of the Middle Lias, rises above the average. A surprisingly high figure—just over five ploughs per thousand acres—is recorded for the heavy clay region of the extreme north-east. This, together with the lack of woodland noted above, suggests a development similar to the claylands of northern Berkshire. 32

30 D.B. i, 236 b. Cranoe: "Azo tenet de Co. (Juditae Comitisse) ii carucatae terrae in Craweho. Ibi iii carucae fuerunt".

31 F. W. Maitland writes as follows: "It looks to me as if the variations were due to a clerk's caprice".—*The Domesday Book and Beyond* (1897), p. 421.

LEICESTERSHIRE

DOMESDAY PLOUGHLAND

per thousand acres

- 4.0 and over
- 2.0 - 3.9
- Less than 2.0

Scale of Miles

Fig. 9
The map of the ploughlands per thousand acres (Fig. 9) should reflect more of the agricultural possibilities than the actual development. The four types of entry noted above are all incorporated in Fig. 9. Apparently the whole of the western clayland was considered to be of poor potentiality, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the large areas of woodland. The averages of the light-soil regions of the west and south-west rise a little higher. The middle and upper valley of the Soar has a high average number of ploughlands, the high figures continuing up the Sence Valley to the valleys of the Welland and Eye Brook. The light-soil region of the eastern uplands, together with the Wreak Valley, the Wolds and the heavy claylands of the north-east, all show figures above the average. The rest of the eastern part of the county has numbers varying between two and three ploughlands per thousand acres.

The surprising fact is that almost the whole of the county was, on an average, heavily overstocked. A few areas only—the southern tip of the county, the Wolds and parts of the western upland—were deemed capable of further development by the jurors (Fig. 10). On Fig. 10, too, the individual entries where the ploughlands exceeded the ploughs have been plotted. The entries are divided into two types:

(a) Those where the past number of teams exceed the 1086 teams.
(b) Those where, in 1086, the number of ploughlands exceed the number of teams.

Type (a) is fairly well confined to the eastern part of the county. This seems to point to an early development and to a possible subsequent drop in agricultural activity. On the other hand, places of type (b) are few in number and more widely distributed. In most cases, they seem to occur on or near heavy claylands. However, if the jurors really did estimate the ploughlands with an eye to future development into the waste, it seems probable that greater numbers of type (b) places would be concentrated near the wooded, heavy-soil regions. The overstocking, apparent from a comparison of Figs. 8, 9 and 10, must be treated with caution for two reasons. In the first place, in many entries the figure for the ploughland is missing. Secondly, the map of the ploughlands is based to a large extent upon figures twenty years older than the map of the ploughs; subsequent development may have
LEICESTERSHIRE
PLACES WHERE THERE COULD BE MORE PLOUGH-TEAMS IN 1086

Scale of Miles

Areas where average number of ploughlands exceeded teams.

Fig. 10
altered matters. On the other hand, the individual examples of overstocking are too numerous to be ignored.

VALUES

The whole of the values for Leicestershire are recorded in pounds, shillings and pence, except for Birstall, which was valued at five ounces of gold, and except for the entries relating to the city of Leicester. Thus, in contrast to some counties, it is possible to plot the values. The valuation is generally given in duplicate—the value in 1086 and the value at some previous date. Maitland has suggested that the "valuit" did not refer to the Confessor's time but to "some disorder that followed the conquest". In one case, too, the value is given in triplicate: at Hathern, "the whole was and is worth £40......when the Earl received it, it was worth £10". Professor Stenton suggests that this entry "may refer, not to King Edward's time, but to some unexplained depression in value which affected the county after the conquest". Whatever the exact interpretation may be, it is certain that we have one assessment of the value in 1086, and another at some previous date, probably near the time of the conquest; and so it is possible to discover the differences in values between the two.

The values given for 1086 have been plotted on Fig. 11. They varied from about four shillings to fifty-seven shillings per thousand acres. The region east of the Soar again stood at a higher average figure than that to the west. By far the lowest values lay in a large area stretching from Charnwood Forest westward to the heavy clayland of the Upper Coal Measures. The rest of the heavy clayland of the west was valued at less than twenty shillings per thousand acres. The lighter soil regions of the extreme west, the area of the upper Soar Valley and an encroachment from the lower Soar Valley, all rose above this figure. East of the Soar the average was between twenty and thirty-five shillings per thousand acres.

The increases in land value that had occurred between (about) 1066 and 1086 are plotted on Figs. 12 and 13. Three

33D.B. i, 232.
34See p. 174.
36D.B. i, 237.
major factors have to be taken into account when assessing these increases:—

(a) The actual development between the two dates.
(b) The degree of development prior to the first valuation.
(c) The amount of land laid waste by devastation between the two valuations.

Both (a) and (b) are implicit in the maps; (c) complicates the issue. The wasted lands\(^{38}\) (terræ vastæ) have been plotted on Fig. 14, where they are divided into two main classes—those waste in 1086, and those waste previous to that date. The formulae by which the latter were recorded vary considerably:—

(a) "This land he found waste".\(^ {39}\)
(b) "It was waste, now (it is worth) 40 shillings".\(^ {40}\)
(c) "It was worth 20s.; now (it is worth) 2s.; (Nigel) received it waste".\(^ {41}\)

But, taken together they denote lands which were waste at some date previous to 1086. With the exception of Ravenstone\(^ {42}\) these lands had recovered by 1086. From Fig. 14 the lands waste in 1086 are seen to stretch across the north of the county from Melton Mowbray in the east to Stretton in the west. A second concentration is seen in the southern tip of the county. The two areas may be connected by wasting in and around Leicester itself. The wastage previous to 1086 is almost wholly confined to the north-western tip of the county.

The effect of the wasting upon value increase is further complicated according to whether the wasting occurred before or after the first valuation. In spite of these complications certain facts stand out from Figs. 12 and 13—the one a map of the average increase in value, the other showing the increases in the value of the individual settlements. Very few villages showed a decrease in value, and the increases were as much as four hundred per cent. on an average in some regions. The county falls into a number of general divisions. The eastern half of the county shows a low increase, especially the extreme north-east, the Eye Brook Valley in the extreme south-east, and the area

\(^{38}\)See appendix p. 198.

\(^{39}\)D.B. i, 230 b, Shepshed: "Hanc terram vastam invenit".

\(^{40}\)D.B. i, 280 b, Dishley: "Vasta fuit modo valet xi solidos".

\(^{41}\)D.B. i, 236, Donington le Heath: "Valuit xx solidos. Modo ii solidos. Vasta recepit".

\(^{42}\)D.B. i, 235.
LEICESTERSHIRE
INCREASE IN VALUES 1066-1086

Percentage Increase

- Over 200%
- 101%-200%
- 60%-100%
- Less than 60%

Scale of Miles

Fig. 12
drained by the right-bank tributaries of the Soar excluding the Wreak. The only areas in the eastern portion of the county which show increases comparable to the western region, are the north-east Wolds and part of the Wreak Valley, a small area on the right bank of the lower Soar, and the Welland Valley in the south-east. The rest of the region east of the Soar had but doubled in value in the twenty years. West of the Soar the value increases were much greater; the extreme south-west was the only region not to have doubled in value. The upper Soar Valley and the extreme west showed by far the greatest increases. Between east and west, however, a long strip of low increase stretching from Hathern in the north to the southern boundary of the county covered the whole of the Soar Valley.

Thus, a certain correlation between the regions of high value increase and wood-covered clayland is noticeable. The lighter-soil areas were probably well developed prior to 1066, and so little increase in value was to be expected. The effect of wastages upon the increases is not evident.

**CARUCATION**

Leicestershire was on the southern boundary of Scandinavian England—Leicester itself had been one of the five Danish Boroughs. Thus, it is, that while carucates are the usual notation found in the Leicestershire survey, examples of the southern “hides” are also present. A map (Fig. 15) has been constructed to show the distribution of the carucates per thousand acres but since it is impossible to equate carucates and hides, the latter have been omitted from the calculations. The map shows that, although perhaps the carucation was out of date and assessed at too high a figure, its distribution was in quite close accordance with the facts of economic geography. The eastern half of the county was assessed at a much higher figure than the western half—nowhere east of the Soar being assessed at less than three carucates per thousand acres. The areas with the highest figures were the Wreak Valley, the Welland and the Eye Brook Valleys, part of the eastern uplands, and a portion of the southern tip of the county—all over six carucates per thousand acres. West of the Soar, scarcely any of the

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43 There are some sixteen entries in the county relating to “hides”. These affected the entries of some twenty-one settlements out of a total of approximately three hundred villages.
LEICESTERSHIRE

VILLS WHICH INCREASED IN VALUE 1066-86.

Scale of Miles

Fig. 13
region was assessed higher than three carucates per thousand acres; indeed, only two areas showed a higher figure than two carucates per thousand acres—the extreme west and a small area in the north-west.

POPULATION

Leicestershire was fairly high up in the list of Domesday county populations. Variations within the county are shown on Fig. 16, where the recorded population has been averaged per thousand acres. This map does not show the actual Domesday population but merely that recorded in the survey. The large land-owners are not included since, in all probability, they were not resident in the county. There were some forty-three of these. The population of the town of Leicester, too, has been omitted. In the figures given in the survey there may be discrepancies, since many persons may have been recorded twice in different capacities, and, many others may have been omitted. The distribution shown on Fig. 16, however, may be taken as sufficiently accurate for the basis of general discussion. The average density of the recorded population per thousand acres varies from 2.8 to over 21. The heavy claylands of the west all have an average of less than 6.9 per thousand acres, but the lighter-soil regions of the extreme west and of the upper Soar Valley show higher averages. East of the Soar the average nowhere falls below 10. The most densely populated regions are the Middle Soar Valley, the Welland and Eye Brook Valleys, the lighter soils of the eastern uplands, the Wreak Valley lowlands, and the heavy clay region of the extreme north-east—all averaging above 16 recorded population per thousand acres.

The relation of the above figures to the total Domesday population of Leicestershire is a problem. However, it has been stated that, while the sochmen, villeins and bordars were

45F. W. Maitland writes: "Before we give any figures, it should first be observed that Domesday Book never enables us to count heads. It states the number of tenants of various classes, sochmanni, villani, bordarii, and the like, and leaves us to suppose that each of these persons is, or may be, the head of a household. It also states how many servi there are. Whether we ought to suppose that only the heads of servile households are reckoned, or whether we ought to think of the servi as having no households but as living within the lord's gate and being enumerated, men, women and able bodied children, by the head—this is a difficult question".—Domesday Book and Beyond (1897), p. 17.
THE DOMESDAY GEOGRAPHY OF LEICESTERSHIRE

LEICESTERSHIRE

DOMESDAY "WASTE"

- Waste entries in 1086
- ○ Waste entries in past years
- + Waste entries when received

Fig. 14
probably heads of families, it is possible that the servi were enumerated individually. If this were the case, then areas with large numbers of servi and a small total population would possibly have a higher average recorded population than a region with a higher total population but fewer servi. In this case, a map such as Fig. 16 would be somewhat misleading. In an attempt to elucidate this point two maps have been constructed, one to show the average recorded population without servi, Fig. 17, and a second to show the distribution of the servi in the individual settlements. No definite conclusions could be obtained since the density of servi seemed to vary with the density of the total recorded population. Thus, the servi seem to have been in a fairly constant proportion and thus Fig. 16 is not invalidated.

CONCLUSION

The maps showing the distribution of the ploughteams, ploughlands, values, waste, and population, have individual discrepancies owing to the nature of the material. When taken together, however, the evidence becomes sounder and more conclusive. Individually, the maps each reflect some side of the economic geography and, taken together they must give a fairly comprehensive picture of the geographical condition of Leicestershire in Domesday times.

In 1086, the county consisted, economically as physically, of two parts—a western and an eastern portion. The western region was, in general, one of heavy clay soils, densely wooded and with small amounts of the meadow so valuable in Domesday economy. The arable land was sparse, poorly developed, and carried a sparse agricultural population. Consequently, the value of the land was low. However, the rapid rise in values between 1066 and 1086 shows that development was going on apace. This region was being encroached upon from three points—from the extreme west around the Mease Valley, from the south-west near the upper Soar, and from the extreme north-west near the lower Soar—regions all coincident with light soil types. Each of these three areas recorded less woodland, more meadow, a higher percentage of arable land and of ploughs, a denser population and a greater value, than the rest of the west.

East of the Soar Valley the county was, generally, much richer and better developed and had a greater degree of soil and
physical diversity. Four distinct regions were noticeable—(a) the Welland and Eye Brook Valleys in the south-east, (b) a portion of the eastern uplands, probably to be correlated with the area of light soil (c) the Wreak Valley and lowlands, (d) the heavy clay area in the extreme north-east. All of these stood out as areas with little or no woodland, with a higher agricultural development, with considerable value, and with a tendency to show development between 1066 and 1086. The rest of the eastern part of the county lay mid-way between the poor development of the west and the high development of some parts of the east. The north-eastern Wolds, lying between the two richer areas of the Soar and the extreme north-east, was distinctive by reason of its comparative poverty but very high value increase.

Between eastern and western areas the Soar Valley formed a distinct area. A land of rich river alluvium and gravels, in contrasted strongly with the heavy clay-lands on either side. Consequently, it was a region of arable farming and rich meadowland. By 1086, it was highly developed, so much so, that the lower part of the valley had become overstocked with ploughteams. Between 1066 and 1086, the increase in value was very slight, partly due, perhaps, to the wastage of 1068, but also to the high degree of development which had already been attained by 1066.

Comparison of the figures reveal one general discrepancy. On an average the land was heavily overstocked with ploughteams in 1086 (compare Figs 8 and 9). In contrast, many individual entries showed a less number of ploughteams in 1086 than in 1066 (Fig. 10). Again, between 1066 and 1086 the land values, almost without exception, had risen. This may have been due to an increase in other activities at the expense of arable farming, or it may be just one of the many difficulties associated with the interpretation of the Domesday Book. Professor Stenton comments thus on conditions in 1086: "No other shire in England presents such a striking combination of great poverty with heavy taxation as that afforded by Leicestershire". 46

APPENDIX

The interrelation of values and wasted areas (terrae wastæ) is complex. In the Leicestershire Domesday values are usually given in duplicate—one for 1086, and one for some previous date, the

46F. M. Stenton, V.H.C. Leicester, i, 340.
LEICESTERSHIRE
RECORDED POPULATION
IN 1086

16 and over
11.0 – 15.9
7.0 – 10.9
6.9 and less.

Scale of Miles

Fig. 16
latter usually being taken as being 1066. However, both F. W. Maitland and Professor Stenton have suggested that the "valuit" does not refer to 1066 but to some date just after this, and Professor Stenton has given the Conqueror's March from Warwick to Nottingham in 1068 as a possible time. Professor Stenton has written, too, that manors with less than a four-fold increase indicate the areas devastated by the March. Thus, it seems that the first valuation refers to a date immediately prior to the March in 1068. The chronology for the valuation then becomes:

1066
1st valuation.
1068 Conqueror's March.
1086 2nd valuation.

The "waste" entries are of three main types: (a) Lands which were waste, (b) Lands which were received waste, (c) Lands waste in 1086. The exact application of *terrae wastae* is not certain. Three explanations can be given. In the first place, in Leicestershire at this period much land was probably "waste", in the sense of being unreclaimed from its natural state. The relatively few examples of recorded waste may merely be due to differences in the methods of recording, and would thus be part of a much larger total. In support of this, the entries of type (a) had all (with the exception of Ravenstone) been recovered by 1086 while the regions waste in 1068 are never given a high value for 1068, indeed, in a few cases only, e.g. Burrough Fol. 236 b and Sleafston Fol. 234, is the waste given a value prior to 1086 and in these cases a similar value is given for both times. The only exception is that of Donington Fol. 236 where "It was worth 20 shillings; now (it is worth) 2 shillings. (Nigel) received it waste". A second entry at Withcote, Fol. 235, runs "The same holds in Withcote 1½ carucates of land. This is waste. There (are) 2 acres of meadow. Woodland 1½ furlongs in length and 1 furlong in breadth. It is worth 12 pence". It seems unlikely that woodland and meadow would have been recorded in an unreclaimed region. The limitation of the waste to certain areas (see p. 190) can only be explained on this hypothesis by a system of recording which was not uniform. The waste areas bear little relation to the poorly developed regions.

In the second place the wasted areas may merely have been
LEICESTERSHIRE

RECORDED POPULATION
(WITHOUT SERVI) IN 1086.

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Fig. 17
due to local causes. This explanation, again, is hampered by the limitation of the waste to certain areas.

The third explanation is the one usually accepted. The wasted areas are to be related to devastation usually ascribed to harrying by armies. In this case, since in Leicestershire there are three types of waste entries, which never overlap (except in the case of Ravenstone), it is necessary to have three such occurrences. The chronology would then be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1066</td>
<td>1st valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1068</td>
<td>Conqueror's March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>Land valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st Devastation of &quot;was waste areas&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Devastation &quot;received waste&quot; areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Devastation of areas waste, in 1086</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evidence for the second devastation is supported by the entry at Donington and by another at Hathern, Fol. 237, which runs "The whole was and is worth £40. When the Earl received it, it was worth £10". The difficulty with this explanation is that the "wasted" areas bear little relation to the regions of low value increase and the necessity to invoke three devastations which are not supported by external evidence, unless it be assumed that the harrying by William's army extended over a number of years.

Thus, although a correlation of poor value increase with the passage of William's army seems possible, yet a better correlation with the areas of high development prior to 1066 seems to occur (compare Figs. 11 and 13).

Once again the Domesday Book is tantalizingly incomplete, and it can only be hoped that elucidation will be obtained by a comparison with other counties.

I wish to thank Professor Stenton for his helpful suggestions with regard to the problem of the waste.