Chapter 1
Introduction

Like visiting Stonehenge, looking at 'Domesday Book' can be a demoralizing experience. Knowing the name but not much else, people often come to it with exaggerated expectations; and then they are disappointed. The reality does not live up to the brochure.

No book ever written said everything that one might have wished it to say; probably not even the author was satisfied with it for long. If one reads it all, one reads it for what it says; one does not waste time complaining about what it fails to say. There have always been some people who were willing to persevere with 'Domesday Book', overcoming whatever despondency they felt at first. Anyone reading a book about that book is, I suppose, likely to be in this frame of mind already. It is the right attitude, and I have no wish to say anything that sounds discouraging (or at least not quite so soon). But there is no gainsaying the fact that the record of the survey has some severe deficiencies. From time to time, for other people's benefit if not for ours, we need to remember what they are.

Anyone living in Kent – here and throughout, it is Kent that I am thinking of specifically – has not much more than an even chance of finding the place where they live recorded by name in DB-Ke. If they live in what used to be a medieval town, they are certain to find some information (but perhaps not very much); if they live in what used to be a medieval village, they are quite likely to draw a blank. Figures 1 and 2 are complementary maps of the places which existed in late thirteenth-century Kent (existed in the sense that they had their own parish churches): Figure 1 shows the places which are not described in DB, Figure 2 shows the places which are. The places shown in the first map are the places for which one would look in vain; as the reader will see, they are numerous.[1] Some of the dots are disputable, but not enough of them to make much difference to the pattern, as it shows up in small-scale maps like these.

In any other county, we should find ourselves in a quandary at once. Could it be true, we should have to wonder, that these places did not exist in the late eleventh century – that the Isle of Sheppey, for example, or most of the Weald, or much of the Marsh were still uninhabited at the time? Was there some large change in the distribution of population, over the next two centuries? In Kent, uniquely, we know the answer to that question; or at least we have a good idea of the answer. Thanks to a manuscript written at Christ

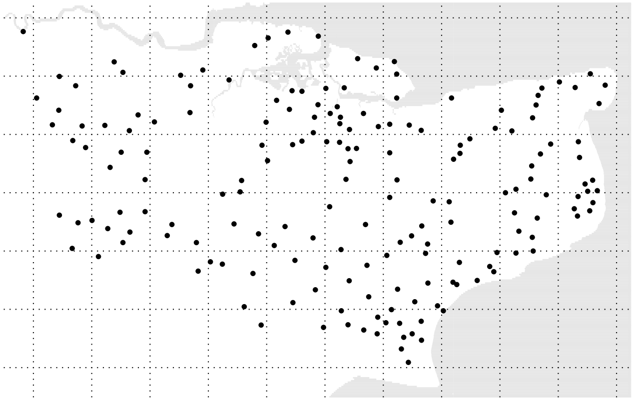

Figure 1. Places possessing a parish church in the late thirteenth century not represented by an entry in DB.

Church within a few years of the survey, we have a number of lists of parish churches belonging to the diocese of Canterbury (below, pp. 228–30). Even added together, these lists are not complete;[2] but they happen to be fairly comprehensive for the areas in question (Figure 3). It can thus be proved, by independent and contemporary evidence, that many places existed at the time which are not mentioned in DB.

Nor is it any great mystery why they were passed over in silence. As we find it in DB, the record of the survey is organized manor by manor, not place by place. If a manor was large enough to comprise several places, all of the information was referred to a single place (the head of the manor, as it was taken to be), and the others dropped out the record.

The largest manor in Kent was the king's manor of Milton, and there are more than twenty places, demonstrably in existence at the time (including those in Sheppey), which have been tacitly absorbed into DB's description of Milton. On a smaller but still significant scale, the same thing has happened elsewhere. The archbishop's manor of Orpington, the earl's manor of Hoo, the abbot's manor of Northbourne – these and other paragraphs in DB appear to be descriptions of single places but in fact are descriptions of several places, consolidated into one.

[1] In case anyone thinks of counting them, I note that the number of dots in this map is 180.

[2] For one thing, they purposely omit most of the churches which belonged to Saint Augustine's. The surviving lists of those churches, and of the churches in the diocese of Rochester, are of rather later date; so they do not prove, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the churches existed at the time of the survey.

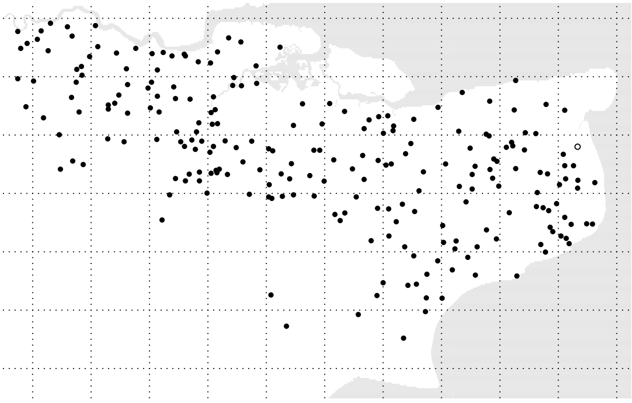

Figure 2. Places possessing a parish church in the late thirteenth century represented by one or more entries in DB.

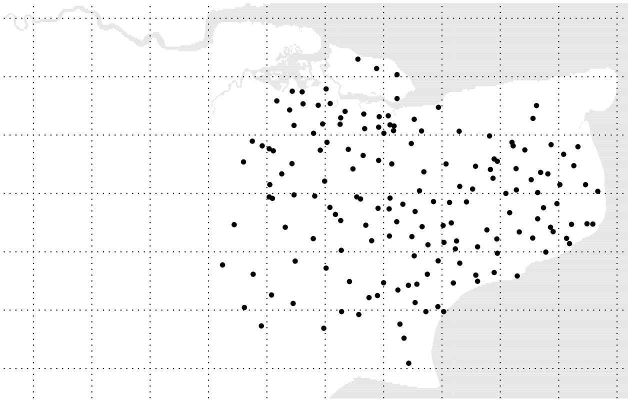

Figure 3. Places in the diocese of Canterbury known to have possessed a parish church in the late eleventh century.

In particular, we do not have to wonder whether the Weald was still an unbroken tract of forest, inhabited only seasonally by herds of pigs and the people who were there to look after them. There may have been a time when that was true; but it had ceased to be true by the late eleventh century. Though the Weald is almost blank in DB, we know for a fact that there were churches here already – and the existence of churches is proof in itself that parts of the forest had been cleared and brought under the plough, and that people were settled here permanently, in numbers sufficient to maintain a priest who would marry them, baptize their children, bury their dead. But these people were – as, by and large, their descendants continued to be – the tenants of manors located further north. Because of the way in which DB is organized, whatever information was recorded about these places was included in the paragraph about that distant manor.

Not just in the Weald but everywhere, that is the nub of the problem. The description of a single manor need not be (and often is not) the description of a single place. Some of the assets that are listed may have been in other places, perhaps a long way off. If we want to know how many mills there were on the manor of Milton, the DB scribe is happy to tell us; but he did not mean to imply that these mills all stood within fifteen minutes' walk of Milton church. And that raises the question how far it makes any sense to try plotting the data on a map, given that the only way to do this is by way of the assumption – never safe and often sure to be wrong – that the data can all be referred to the head of the manor.

1

From the late thirteenth century onwards, we are constantly being told that Kent is a peculiar place, very different, in some important respects, from any other county. Knight's service is the same here as anywhere else, but the peasantry enjoys a form of tenure which is found only in Kent. This tenure has its own name, gavelkind, and that name connotes a number of distinctive features. When a man dies, his land is divided equally between his sons, if he has more than one (or equally between his daughters, if he has no sons). If he is convicted of some felony and hanged, his heirs will still inherit. If he leaves a widow, she is to have half of his land (not one third of it) by way of dower. If the heir or heirs are under age, custody goes to some member of the family (the closest relative who has no prospect of inheriting the land himself): the lord cannot choose a guardian for them, nor can he tell them whom to marry. And so on. Broadly speaking, the effect of these peculiarities is to put the tenant in a stronger position, via-à-vis the lord from whom the land is held, than that of peasants elsewhere. By the thirteenth century, there were prominent families in Kent – the Cobhams and the Northwodes, for example – which had risen from among the ranks of the gavelkind tenantry. (They would not have been amused by being told that they were peasants.) Through the influence of men like these, the 'Customs of Kent' were finally codified in writing (in French, the language of the courts) and accepted by the king's justices as having the force of law.[3]

Anyone who looks at DB-Ke with the hope of finding evidence for the history of gavelkind tenure is – like Neilson (1932a) – sure to be disappointed. There is nothing to be found, not even the faintest hint. Nor is it surprising that this should be so. The commissioners who drew up the description of Kent had work enough on their hands without inquiring into matters not covered by their terms of reference. For the same sort of reason, the exchequer records, when they become available, are similarly unhelpful. The word 'gavelkind' does occur occasionally in twelfth-century charters, being used in a way which implies that everyone was expected to know what it meant without needing to be told. For people like us, who do need to be told, it is the records of the king's courts, surviving only from the end of the twelfth century onwards, which first

[3] The French text was first printed by Tottell (1556, ff. 147v–50v). Dissatisfied with Tottell's version, William Lambard produced a new edition (1576, pp. 416–27), with an interlined translation and a long introduction (pp. 388–415).

offer some enlightenment. (There is, for example, an interesting case which came before the court in 1223. Thomas de Nessendene (occ. 1206–14), who held Nashenden by knight's service from the king, was hanged for homicide, in 1219 or shortly before. Nashenden was promptly seized by the king and given to somebody else: there was no room for dispute about that. But Thomas had also held some land in gavelkind, from the bishop and the prior of Rochester, and his widow Alicia sued for half of this land by way of dower. By exploiting the fact that her husband had been a knight, she was able to invoke the procedure called *grand assise* (a replica of which was later developed for the benefit of gavelkind tenants), and in the end she won her case (*Curia regis rolls*, vol. 11, pp. 101–2, 193).)

Reading the records of the survey, one would not think that Kent was extraordinary. On the contrary, it seems to be a fairly typical county. Comparing its description with that of two neighbouring counties, Sussex and Surrey (contained, as it happens, in the next two booklets written by the DB scribe), one finds approximately the same categories of information, expressed by approximately the same collection of formulas. If somebody took a typical entry from DB-Ke and inserted it (changing one word) into the text of DB-Sx or DB-Sy, I doubt whether it would seem obvious at once that this entry was out of place.

As it is described in DB, the county of Kent has only two features which make it at all abnormal. First, the cadastral structure (if I may call it that) consists of two layers: a small number of large divisions on top, a large number of small divisions underneath. Most counties had only a single layer, but Kent was not alone in having two; the county of Sussex, to go no further afield than that, had a structure which was at least superficially similar. The only feature unique to Kent is the name that was given to the large divisions. As the DB scribe wrote it, the name was 'lest', and I think that he wrote it more or less correctly (see below). Second, for measuring arable land, Kent had a system of its own. Throughout the rest of southern England, land was measured in hides (and quarters of a hide, called virgates); in Kent it was measured in sulungs (and quarters of a sulung, called yokes).

The word 'sulung' was variably spelt (some scribes seem to have thought, for instance, that it should start with 'sw', not 's'), but *sulung* is a well attested form,[4] and most modern writers who have needed to use the word have chosen to spell it like this. For the DB scribe the word is *solin*; in the plural it is *solins*, and the final 's' means that he is treating it as a French word.[5] In its primitive sense, the word meant 'ploughland'. When people spoke of a sulung, they were visualizing a tract of land just large enough (as experience had taught them) to be tilled with a single plough. (Correspondingly, when they spoke of a yoke, they were assuming that a plough-team would normally consist of eight oxen, yoked together two by two.) By the eleventh century, however, the same units – hides elsewhere, sulungs in Kent – had come to be used for assessing the taxable value of every manor. Conventionally a sulung consisted of 200 acres,[6] a hide of 120 acres; when it came to the payment of geld, however, a sulung was equal to a hide. In almost every paragraph of DB, we are told how many of these units the manor has to pay geld for; so we are constantly reminded of the fact that in this respect Kent was unique.

Around more than half of the circuit, Kent was bounded by natural features – the river Thames and the sea – which left no room for discussion or disagreement.[7] The landward boundaries, with Surrey to the west and Sussex to the south, were more or less arbitrary: they were the outcome of decisions which might have been differently made. One stretch of the boundary with Surrey follows the line of a Roman road and is conspicuously straight for that reason. There may have been a time when people agreed that everything east of this road was in Kent, everything west of it in Surrey; but the line of the boundary continued to be negotiable. Somehow or other it came to be decided, for example, that Tatsfield was part of Surrey, not (as might look more logical) of Kent. We have concrete evidence for one adjustment made in the 1170s (see below). The boundary with Sussex is a sinuous line traced through the middle of the Weald. It resulted, one would guess, from a multitude of small compromises, whereby the woodland on one side of some stream or river was agreed to belong to Kent, the woodland on the other side to Sussex. But the details are all forgotten. People remembered the results, not the reasons why. Towards the east, in Hawkhurst and beyond, the boundary follows a stream which eventually falls into the Rother; and then it follows the Rother itself. Even at its widest, however, the Rother does not form the sort of boundary which people could not think of ignoring. It became the boundary, so far as it did, because people chose to let that happen.

At the time of the survey, there was a simple way of deciding whether some particular place was in Kent or not, provided it was under the plough. If the arable land was measured in sulungs and yokes, the place was in Kent; if the arable land was measured in hides and virgates, the

[4] For example, *ðа seox sulung æt Wuldaham*, 'the six sulungs at Wouldham' (Campbell 1973, no. 34), *þara x sulunga boc æt Bromleage*, 'book of the ten sulungs at Bromley' (endorsement on no. 29).

[5] Masculine in French, no doubt, but neuter in a Latin context (3vb24, 5va42, 12ra22). Except once in the first paragraph of the main text (2va4), inflected forms of *solinus* or *solinum* occur only in one particular stretch of text (2rb1–48). In DB that stretch forms part of the preliminary section, where the scribe's usage is less consistent than in the main text – because here (I suppose) he was copying more closely from his source text.

[6] I do not think that there is any doubt about this. A puzzling passage in DB (2rb31–2), which seems to be saying something else, should, in my opinion, be read as a blundered attempt to say precisely this (below, p. 200).

[7] But there was, in fact, a small piece of Kent on the opposite side of the Thames. It was part of the parish of Woolwich; despite being on the Essex side of the river, it was agreed to be in Kent. Perhaps we might guess that the king had once owned some fish-traps here which belonged to the manor of Dartford.

place was not in Kent.[8] In one instance, we can actually see this criterion being applied. The manor of West Greenwich (meaning Deptford) was held by the bishop of Lisieux from the bishop of Bayeux: it was assessed at two sulungs, and (ipso facto) was in Kent (DB-Ke-6vb22). The jurors for Brixton hundred in Surrey are reported as stating that these two sulungs had formerly belonged to the king's manor of Merton; but they agreed that the land was in Kent (DB-Sy-30rb). The bishop of Lisieux held two other manors nearby. They were both assessed in hides, and (ipso facto) were in Surrey (DB-Sy-31va–b). Yet one of these manors (namely Hatcham) was – certainly later, probably then – part of the parish of West Greenwich, which was part of the diocese of Rochester.

As that remark goes to show, the outward boundaries of the two Kentish dioceses – Canterbury and Rochester – coincided very nearly but not quite perfectly with the county boundary. It was agreed that the Kent/Surrey boundary ran through the parish of West Greenwich (Rochester diocese). Where exactly it ran was not so easily settled: as late as the seventeenth century, this question was still open to discussion (Philipott 1659, p. 161). (The question did matter, because prisoners who were being transferred from the custody of the sheriff of Surrey to the custody of the sheriff of Kent were handed over here; and in theory the transfer ought to be made at just the right spot, where one jurisdiction ended and the other began.) Elsewhere a few similar discrepancies existed; but they were only small, and it is unlikely that anyone thought much about them, or found them hard to cope with.[9]

The exchequer roll for 1176 contains an entry of particular interest. It is one of a series of entries resulting from the activities of a team of itinerant justices recently sent into Kent. A second-tier baron named Hugo le Botiller (occ. 1156–79), who held West Wickham and Cooling from the heir of Warin fiz Gerold, ended up being charged with the very large sum of 48000 pence, in part for certain misdeeds which he had committed, in part 'for a boundary made between Kent and Surrey'.[10] From this it seems certain – as was pointed out by Davis (1934), who first drew attention to the significance of this entry – that Hugo was negotiating for a block of land in West Wickham, west of the Roman road, to be taken out of Surrey and put into Kent. We can go further than that. As Davis saw (and as I agree), this block of land can be identified with the unnamed hide of land in Wallington hundred which in 1086 was held from the bishop of Bayeux by Adam son of Hubert (DB-Sy-31vb), the same man who owned West Wickham at the time (DB-Ke-6va50). And we also know that half of this hide, some time later, was given to the monks of Colchester by Radulf le Botiller, Hugo's grandfather (Davis 1934, p. 154, cf. Farrer 1925, pp. 190–1). As late as the 1150s, this land was still being said to be located in Surrey, and still being called a hide. But then Hugo applied for the county boundary to be diverted around it, and the land was annexed to Kent. Whether the hide turned into a sulung in consequence is something we do not know.

The larger cadastral divisions were seven in number, and the name which the DB scribe used for them is 'lest'. Nothing is heard of these divisions before the time of the survey; in pre-conquest documents (dating from around 1000) the only high-level distinction we find referred to is that between East Kent and West Kent: *ægþer ge of East Cent ge of West Cent*, 'both from East Kent and from West Kent' (Campbell 1973, no. 37), *ealra East Cantwarena and West Cantwarena*, 'of all the East Kentishmen and West Kentishmen' (no. 34). By the 1080s, the whole of Kent was divided into seven parts.

It was not the DB scribe's way to latinize indiscriminately, and he did not latinize this word.[11] For him, 'lest' was a French spelling of the English name; I assume that we are expected to pronounce it exactly as it is written. All the way through the main text, whenever he moves from one lest to another, he inserts (in capitals, against the left margin) a heading which informs the reader of this fact. For accidental reasons, these headings are quite frequently omitted or misplaced; but the rule is clear, and the scribe is clearly doing his best to follow it. If we filter out any variation in the wording or spelling by choosing whichever variant is more common, this is what the headings look like:

IN DIMIDIO LEST DE SVDTONE.
IN LEST DE ELESFORD.
IN DIMIDIO LEST DE MIDDELTONE.
IN BOROWART LEST.
IN LEST DE WIWARLET.
IN LEST DE ESTREI.
IN LIMOWART LEST.

Two divisions have the word 'half' attached to them – consistently so, except for an occasional mistake. Nothing is

[8] The only apparent exception (DB-Ke-5ra42) is just a slip of the pen. The scribe forgot for a moment which county he was in.

[9] It was Kilburne's understanding (1659, p. 20) that the parish of Beckenham extended into Surrey, but I cannot confirm that he was right about that. Towards the south, the parish of Frant (Chichester diocese) overlapped into Kent, and the parishes of Lamberhurst (Rochester diocese) and Hawkhurst (Canterbury diocese) overlapped into Sussex. Off to the south-east, a large part of the parish of Promhill, including the church, lay beyond the boundary with Sussex, but that did not prevent Promhill from belonging to the diocese of Canterbury.

[10] *Hugo Pincerna . . . ccc m' pro diss' facta mon' de Roff', et item pro alia diss' Barth' de Caisneto, et pro diuisa facta inter Kent et Surreiam* (GREx 1176:210). The first two items are fines that Hugo had incurred – for dispossessing the monks of Rochester (presumably of land near Cooling), for dispossessing Bartholomeus de Caisnet (presumably of land near West Wickham). Half of the debt was (for reasons which are not explained) forgiven in the following year (1177:205). By 1179, Hugo had reduced the balance to 3600 pence (1179:117); it was finally cleared by his son (1198:200).

[11] Except once in the preliminary section, where, uniquely, the word is in the plural: *homines de quatuor lestis*, 'the men of four lests' (DB-Ke-1rb1–2). In one other place where he might have used a plural, he preferred to repeat the word: *in lest de Sudtone et in lest de Ailesford*, 'in the lests of Sutton and Aylesford' (1va1).

said to explain what this means; but it seems to imply that some yardstick existed – some notion how big a lest ought to be – which people could use to distinguish a half-lest from a whole lest. What this notion might have been is a question I come back to later (below, p. 11).

Four of these divisions (including the two half-lests) each take their name from one specific place: Sutton (near Dartford), Aylesford, Milton, Eastry. A lest, it seems, could be thought of as having a centre, perhaps the place where a meeting of the lest would be held (if it was the case, as presumably it was, that meetings did sometimes occur).

Two divisions are named after groups of people. Though recognizable as English words, both names are oddly spelt: BOR(O)WAR(T), 'the people of the town' (meaning Canterbury),[12] LIM(O)WAR(T), 'the people of Lympne'. The O's in the middle seem to be the DB scribe's contribution: he thinks that we may need some help in pronouncing RW and MW. More significant are the unexpected T's which appear at the end.[13] Though the DB scribe normally makes two words of it (except at 3va32), apparently we ought to read BORWARTLEST, LIMWARTLEST, construing the T as part of the third syllable, BOR-WAR-TLEST, LIM-WAR-TLEST, rather than as part of the second, where it makes no sense. It seems to have been thought by somebody – not by the DB scribe, who did not quite understand what was going on, but by some previous scribe – that in this context, between R and L,[14] a special effort ought to be made to pronounce the English word correctly: he wanted us to read 'Borwar(th)lest', 'Limwar(th)lest'. That is, he wanted us to imitate the sound for which an English scribe would have used the notation 'hl'. In an English text, I gather, the word would have been spelt *hlæst*. That is a common word, and its primary meaning is 'load' or 'burden'.[15] In Kent (so I suggest) it had come to be used in a special sense, presumably denoting some share of some responsibility: 'the half-burden of Sutton', 'the burden of the people of the town', and so so.

The remaining name, WIWARLET, is particularly interesting, for reasons which will become clear in the sequel. WIWAR is another name for a group of people: it means 'the people of Wye'. To this another word has become attached. The DB scribe spells it LET, which we are to read as 'leth'; it represents the English word *læð*. That is a known word, though not a common one: it means 'meeting', 'assembly', or something of that kind.[16] (Hence the verb *laðian* or *gelaðian*, meaning 'to convene a meeting'; hence the noun *gelaðung*, 'the act of convening a meeting' (or, in a religious context, 'congregation').) So 'Wiwarleth' will mean 'the assembly of the people of Wye'.[17]

After surfacing in the records of the survey, the lests drop out of sight again. For more than a hundred years, we hear nothing about them – nothing even to prove that they still existed, though that much we can take for granted.[18] The first to reappear is the lest of Aylesford. In 1197 the manor of Aylesford was given to the count of Mortain (the king's brother Johan), the lest of Aylesford to Willelm de Caiho (three syllables, 'ca-i-o'). Because this caused a loss of income for the sheriff, the facts were recorded in the exchequer roll (GREx 1197:25): the sheriff would otherwise have been receiving a payment of 32 pounds from Aylesford, of which (as we now discover) 6 pounds was counted as the proceeds from the lest.[19]

In the thirteenth century, as the evidence increases in quantity, the lests which appear in the record are recognizably still the same entities; but we discover that some significant changes have occurred in the interim. For one thing, the word itself has been latinized: scribes by now are accustomed to writing it as *lestus* (sometimes as *lestum*, but the word is more commonly masculine than neuter, so far as it is possible to tell the difference). The two half-lests have evolved in opposite directions: Sutton has come to be regarded as a full lest, but Milton has ceased to be regarded as a lest at all.[20] (Without the evidence recorded by the

[12] That is, BORWAR is short for CANTWARBORWAR, 'the people of the town of the people of Kent'.

[13] Unlike the O's, which are found only in the main text, spellings with T occur in the preliminary section too: *Linuuartlest* (1rb3, 1rb44), *Wiuuartlest* (1rb3).

[14] With one exception (14rb40), the T occurs only in this context, after BORWAR and LIMWAR, once also in the variant heading IN WIWART LEST (13vb22).

[15] When a ship departed from the port of Chester, there was a duty to be paid of fourpence per load, *quatuor denarios de unoquoque lesth* (DB-Ch-262va). With the addition of the French suffix *-age*, duties of this kind came to be called *lestage*.

[16] It was not peculiar to Kent. A document relating to Taunton in Somerset (a manor of the bishop of Winchester's) has the compound word *motlæð* (in a plural form): on the day when king Edward was alive and dead, the tenant of land at West Bagborough, 6 miles or so from Taunton, was required to attend *threo motlæðu … on xii monþum*, 'three meetings of the assembly in every twelve months' (Toller 1898, citing Thorpe 1865, p. 433). The text – edited again by Robertson (1956, pp. 236–9) – comes from the Winchester cartulary, BL Add. 15350. Written in English and attested exclusively by Englishmen (except for the local bishop, a foreigner appointed by king Edward), it is connected with bishop Walkelin's campaign to recover full ownership of Taunton, including the right to insist on the attendance at his court of numerous distant tenants: *et ter in anno teneri placita episcopi sine ammonitione*, 'for the bishop's pleas to be held three times a year without summons' (C-So-174r, cf. DB-So-87va) – *ungeboden*, 'without being specially invited', as the English document expresses it. I ought to have cited this document in my discussion of that episode (Flight 2006, pp. 71–3); I would have done so, had I not then been ignorant of its existence.

[17] In the preliminary section, not in the main text, Limwar lest is twice referred to as 'the lest of Limwarleth' (1va13, 2rb5), i.e. the lest of the assembly of the people of Lympne. (There is, by the way, no such thing as 'Borwarleth' in DB, only Borwar lest.)

[18] A writ of archbishop Anselm for the nuns of Malling (Brett and Gribbin 2004, no. 22), addressed 'to all the men of the lest of Aylesford', cannot (in my opinion) be genuine as it stands. (The address itself is suspicious: nowhere else do we find a lest asked to act as a court of record.)

[19] In 1199, when the count became king, Willelm de Cahio was given the manor as well (GREx 1199:59), but the two deductions continued to be recorded separately for several years (till GREx 1206:23). A previous comment of mine (Flight 1997b, p. 21) should be disregarded.

[20] Milton was always a large, important hundred, more or less separately

survey, we should not have known that such a thing as a half-lest ever existed.) All of the eastern lests have changed their names, but in substance they seem to have stayed more or less the same. The reader who wishes to explore this evidence further will find the facts recounted in greater detail in chapter 10.

During the second half of the thirteenth century, the spelling *lestus* came to be replaced by *lastus*. Presumably this change reflects some shift in the pronunciation of the word *lest* itself. In spoken French, the vowel took on a different quality; in written Latin, the 'a' spelling now seemed more apt.[21]

In its specifically Kentish sense, in the form *lastus*, the word survived for as long as records continued to be written in Latin (that is, a simplified form of Latin used as a business language). The latest documents of which I can say for certain that this is true are the accounts of the tax called the 'fifteenth and tenth' collected in 1570–1. The original accounts for Kent (National Archives, E 179/126/405–15) are written in Latin, and the word that appears here is *lastus*. By this time, no doubt, bureaucratization had advanced so far that inertia was a powerful force. The headings which form the framework for this account – *Lastus de Sutton at Hone*, *Hundr' de Rokysley*, and so on – were, very probably, copied unthinkingly from some preceding account. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in Latin, in this sort of context, *lastus* was still the word.

Thus, for anyone who got their first knowledge of Kent by looking at government records, it was easy to discover that this county was divided into districts called by this peculiar name (there were, by now, only five of them); and it was natural to suppose that what was called a *lastus* in Latin would be called a 'last' in English. William Lambard supposed just that. In the 1560s, when he was compiling his 'Topographical dictionarie' – the raw material for a series of books which he was intending to write about individual counties – he made himself a copy of a list of the 'Lastes and Hundrethes' of Kent.[22] In the winter of 1570–1, when he wrote the first draft of the first of this series of books – 'The firste treatise of the Topographical Dictionarie, Conteyninge the Description and hystorie of the Shyre of Kent' – he was still assuming that these districts were called 'lasts'.[23] The word does not occur very often, but whenever it does occur it takes the form 'last' or 'laste'.[24] When the book was eventually published, under the title *A perambulation of Kent*, the same word appeared in all the same passages where it appeared in the manuscript; but here it was consistently spelt 'last' – perhaps because somebody thought that readers unfamiliar with the word would be liable to mispronounce it if they saw it spelt 'laste'.[25] In sixteenth-century spelling (if readers will allow me to remind them of a fact which may seem too obvious to need mentioning), final 'e' is often just a flourish:[26] it was the context, not the spelling, which determined, for instance, whether 'breathe' stood for 'breath' or 'breathe', whether 'bathe' stood for 'bath' or 'bathe'.

Once Lambard had made his home in Kent, once he had let his friends read a copy of his manuscript, it did not take long before he was told, or found out for himself, that 'last' was not the right word. In Kent the current English name for these divisions was 'lath' – often spelt 'lathe', sometimes spelt 'lath', the latter fact being the significant one. Wherever the hint came from, Lambard was quick to take it. He dropped the word 'last' and began to speak of 'laths' instead. One of the final components to be added to his book – a stretch of text which he called 'The particular of Kent' (Lambard 1576, pp. 25–47) – is an English summary of the Latin document to which I referred above, the accounts of the 'fifteenth and tenth' of 1570–1; and here he translated *lastus* as 'lath' throughout, usually (but not invariably) spelling it 'lathe'.

There is no doubt but that Lambard was right to make this change in his vocabulary. Writing in English, he had to speak of laths. The earliest official document known to me which refers explicitly to the laths of Kent is a report submitted by the commissioners of array in October 1569 (National Archives, SP 12/59, no. 1).[27] Its heading begins: 'A

administered; but it was never – or almost never (Putnam 1933, p. xlviii) – referred to as a lest. If it belonged anywhere, it belonged to the lest of Shrewinghope.

[21] A parallel change affected the word *lestage* (above, note 15). In latinized French, *lestagium* was the normal twelfth-century spelling, but later on *lastagium* became more common.

[22] Lambard's manuscript was printed in 1730; the editor's name is not known to me. I have not identified the specific source for this list (p. vi), but any Latin source would have told him that the word was *lastus*. In the printed text the English word is spelt 'laste' six times, 'last' once.

[23] The first finished version of the book is represented by two fair copies, one retained by Lambard as his working draft (Maidstone, Centre for Kentish Studies, U47/48 Z1, some pages of which are reproduced by Warnicke (1973, pls. I–III)), the other intended to circulate (British Library, Sloane 3168, dated February 1571). The first was extensively revised and augmented by Lambard himself, over the next few years; the second has only a few autograph additions, including a note on the title page, dated January 1573, warning anyone who may read this copy that it is already out of date. (A third copy, which I have not seen, belongs to Maidstone Museum. It is reported to have been made by the herald Robert Glover (d. 1588), an Ashford man by birth, and to have none of the additions which appear in Lambard's own manuscript (Livett 1938, p. 247).)

[24] To cite just one example, 'a whole laste of thirtene hundredes' (CKS, fo. 104r), 'a whole Last of thirteene Hundreds' (1576, pp. 248–9), paraphrased by Somner (1640, p. 54, as 'an whole lath of 13 hundreds'.

[25] By contrast, the word 'last' (opp. 'first') is spelt indifferently with or without final 'e'. Similarly 'paste' should be read as 'past' or 'passed' – except once, in the description of the rood of Boxley, 'wyer, paste, and paper' (1576, p. 183).

[26] For example: 'Whiche third and laste opinion, may well inough stand, eyther with the firste, or the seconde' (Lambard 1576, p. 214). Of the words which lack it here, 'third', 'may', 'inough', and 'stand' can all be found spelt with final 'e' elsewhere in the book.

[27] Calendared by Lemon (1856, p. 344). The certificate has no date; a letter which seems to have been sent with it, signed by the same commissioners, is dated Ashford, 1 Oct. 1569.

breefe certificat of all the hable men, armoure and weapon within the lathe of Saincte Augustines, Scraie, and Sheepewaie, and within a smale parte of the lathe of Aylesfoorde in the Countie of Kennt'. Though this document is only slightly earlier than Lambard's book, it suffices to prove that the word was already current.[28]

Nevertheless, it seems to me that Lambard should have stopped to think, and that we should do the same. The word 'lath' meaning 'a strip of wood' can be latinized as *latha*; so why should 'lath' not be *lathus* when it means 'a division of Kent'? There is, on the face of it, no reason why a medieval scribe, writing in Latin, should not have written *lathus*, had that been what he wanted to say. The evidence seems rather to suggest that two different words are in play here. One of them looks like an English word which was borrowed into French. It appears as *lestus* or *lastus* in latinized French; and it survives as *lastus* in bureaucratic Latin long after French had ceased to be the language of government. The second word, no more similar to the first one than 'bat' is to 'ball' (or 'county' to 'country'), does not begin to appear at all frequently till English begins to be used as a language of record; and then we find it being spelt 'lath' or 'lathe'.

The confusion between these two words (if confusion it be) goes back a very long way – as far back as the time of the survey. For the DB scribe himself, there was no confusion at all: in his understanding 'lest' and 'leth' were different words. They did not sound alike; they did not mean the same thing. But a document connected with the survey, surviving as a copy written only a few years later (chapter 2), is (as I read it) proof that the words were already sometimes mixed up. In this text, in a half-hearted sort of way, we are sometimes told which division of Kent a particular manor belongs to.[29] Just once, the expression used is exactly similar to the headings that we find in DB: *in lest de Wiwarleth* (C1-3ra23). Another phrase used just once, *in læd de Wiwarlæd* (4rb51), might be assumed to be a slip of the pen.[30] But when we come across two references to 'the half-leth of Sutton' – *in dimidio led de Sutune* (3rb22), *in medio led de Sudthune* (4vb52) – we can be certain that the person who wrote these phrases was using the word 'leth' in a context where the DB scribe always used 'lest'.

Because of the absence of documents written in English, the only evidence that we can hope to find will consist of an occasional appearance of the word in some Latin text. I am not aware of any such evidence myself, except for one thirteenth-century memorandum drawn up by a monk of Battle (Scargill-Bird 1887, pp. 125–36).[31] The author of this memorandum was trying to understand what the charters of his monastery meant when they claimed (not altogether untruthfully) that there had once been a time when twenty-two hundreds and a half were, in some sense, attached to the manor of Wye. With this aim in view, he tells us how, in his own time, Kent is organized. 'In Kent there are sixty-six hundreds, … and these hundreds are belonging to *leth*, and there are in Kent only six *leth*', of which he then gives us a list.[32] Unlike 'hundred', the word 'leth' is not familiar to him: he does not latinize it, he is doubtful how to form its plural. Perhaps he is not a reliable witness at all – but he has done some research into the question, and 'leth' (not 'lest') is the name which he believes to be current in Kent.

Every so often, the words did become effectively synonymous: for the length of a day, a 'lest' did turn into a 'leth'. In the thirteenth century, this happened regularly twice a year (below, p. 266), when the representatives of each fraction of a hundred (each 'borough', as these fractions were called in Kent) came together for the purpose of being harangued by the sheriff. Listening to the sheriff, these men were as close as they were ever likely to come to being harangued by the king himself. The hundreds met every three weeks; the county met every four weeks; so the meetings of the lest were relatively infrequent as well as important events. It may well be that for most people – the sort of people who spoke English among themselves and only spoke French when they had to – the lest did not impinge much on their lives except on these occasions. Given the circumstances, it does not seem unlikely that people might have fallen into the habit of calling a 'lest' a 'leth'. They came to speak of 'the meeting' when what they meant was the meeting of the lest.

For the sheriff and his minions, by contrast, the lest was something which existed all year round. There was, one would imagine, a constant flow of communication, spoken (in French) and written (in French or Latin), between the sheriff and the officers in charge of the lests. ('The sheriff of Kent to the bailiff of the lest of S— greetings. I order you ….') The English word *hlæst* (if that is what it was), by becoming converted first into a French word, *lest* or *last*, and then into a quasi-Latin word, *lestus* or *lastus*, had got itself built into the language of officialdom. Through frequent repetition, it remained part of that language. Unofficially, people used a different word, *læð* or *leth* or *lath*. But

[28] If anyone can find any evidence earlier than this, I hope that they will make it known. Catch-all expressions – such as 'shyres, ryddynges, hundredes, lathes, rapes, wapentakes, townes, vyllages, and tythynges' (Pynson 1515, sig. C2r–v), 'hundredes wardes wapentakes lathes rapes or such like deuisions' (Berthelet 1543a, sig. I1r; 1546, sig. C1v) – are not what is wanted; to prove the point, the evidence should cite one or more of the laths by name, or at least explicitly connect the word with Kent.

[29] How much weight we allow to this evidence depends on how we evaluate the text as a whole. Here I quote some isolated phrases; I leave it to the reader to recontextualize them.

[30] As the reader can see, the spelling varies, but *læd* is close to the norm. The character 'æ' marks it as an English word. The C1 scribe uses 'ð' elsewhere, but not in his copy of this particular text.

[31] It is dated to c. 1230 by Cam (1933, p. 22); the passage referring to Bertram de Crioil (p. 126) suggests to me that it has to be a little later than that, say c. 1240–50.

[32] *In Cancia sunt lxvi hundredi … et isti hundredi sunt pertinentes ad leth, et sunt in Cancia tantum sex leth, primum Sancti Augustini, Eldinge, Sipweie, … Srewincheope, … Gilesford, Sutthune* (Scargill-Bird 1887, p. 126). The text is slightly corrupt. *Eldinge* should be something like *Edelinge*, *Gilesford* should be *Eilesford.*

that word was hardly even borrowed into French (except perhaps in some specific context); so it had little chance of being written down anywhere, till the time arrived when officialdom began using English as a language of record.

Anyone who has some prior knowledge of the subject will, I realize, find the last few paragraphs hard to swallow. For the moment, I am asking only for one concession: I hope that the reader will understand why I have thought it best to retain the word that was used by the DB scribe. This is not an original idea. Nellie Neilson, writing an introduction for the Victoria History translation of DB-Ke (below, p. 25), made the same decision. In the first few pages her usage vacillates, presumably to give the reader time to adjust, but after that she writes the word 'lest' consistently (Neilson 1932a). A colleague of Neilson's, Bertha Putnam, in the introduction to her edition of a batch of fourteenth-century documents, uses the word 'last' throughout (Putnam 1933).[33] This decision of theirs was deprecated at the time by two contributors to *Archaeologia Cantiana*; but nothing that was said by either Knocker (1934) or Ward (1934, pp. 9–11) persuades me that it was wrong. Neilson and Putnam were both very closely acquainted with the records of central government,[34] They were reluctant to suppose that the word was misspelt by every single scribe, in every single document where it occurs; and that reluctance seems justified to me. Ward's comments in particular are mostly off the point. Nobody is going to doubt the existence of the word 'leth', nor of the word 'Wiwarleth'. The question is (to put it simply) whether the DB scribe knew what he was talking about when he spoke of 'the lest of Wiwarleth'. Like Neilson, unlike Ward, I am inclined to think that he did.

There was no special Kentish name for the smaller cadastral divisions; at the time of the survey and later, everyone seems to have been happy to call them 'hundreds', the same term that was used in the majority of English counties. For the DB scribe, the word was French by adoption, *hundret* in the singular (where 't' should be pronounced 'th'), *hundrez* in the plural (where 'z' is shorthand for 'ts'.) In the earliest booklets that he wrote, he spelt it out in full quite frequently; by the time that he came to the Kent booklet, he was abbreviating it nearly all the time,[35] writing *hund'* or *hd'* and relying on his readers to understand what that meant. Twelfth-century and later scribes treated it as a Latin word, *hundredus* or *hundredum*, but generally felt free to write it in a shortened form, *hundr'* or *hdr'*.

[33] Nellie Neilson (1873–1947) and Bertha Haven Putnam (1872–1960) worked together for many years at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. An article by Hastings and Kimball (1979) gives an account of their interlocked careers, but says nothing about their personal relationship.

[34] So was Helen Cam, who also showed some slight inclination to speak of 'lests' or 'lasts' (Cam 1933, pp. 23–4).

[35] It occurs unshortened only twice (9va3, 14ra39).

Despite the name, the divisions that we find in Kent bear no resemblance to the strictly regimented hundreds, each assessed at some large round number of hides, which occur, for example, in Cambridgeshire. The hundreds of Kent varied enormously in size, and some of them were very small. Though the picture that we see may be incomplete and blurred, we can be sure that this was true in the eleventh century; it was certainly true later on. (Of the hundreds existing in the thirteenth century, one comprised more than twenty parishes, and one comprised just part of a single parish.) Because of the multitude of small and very small hundreds, the total number is much larger than might be expected, considering the size of this county. In Essex there were 22 hundreds at the time of the survey; in Kent there were more than sixty, perhaps about seventy of them. (Later on the number fluctuated slightly but never fell below sixty.)

For as long as danegeld continued to be collected (at least until the 1170s), the measure of size which mattered most, for a county as well as for a hundred, was the number of hides (sulungs in Kent) at which it was assessed. DB does not tell us how many sulungs there are in the whole of Kent. If we enjoy pain, we can try working out the answer for ourselves, from the items of data supplied by DB – but there is an easier and probably a better way. Forty or fifty years later, the exchequer knew (to within a fraction) exactly how many sulungs ought to be paying geld: rounded off to three significant figures, the answer was 1050 sulungs.[36] That total did not include the king's own manors – the same four manors that we find described in the first chapter of DB-Ke. The numbers of sulungs reported there add up to 90 or so; and that brings the total for the county to about 1140 sulungs.

At that rate, the average number of sulungs in a hundred would be somewhere between 15 and 20; but it hardly means anything to take an average when the sizes vary so much. The largest hundred is probably the one dependent on the king's manor of Milton. Here we are told that there are 80 sulungs, and another 4 sulungs which are the king's personal property (DB-Ke-2va46–7). Of the smaller hundreds we can find some examples in chapter 7 of DB, among the lands of Saint Augustine's. The hundred of Chislet includes (as far as we can tell) nothing except the manor of the same name (12rb6), which is assessed at 12 sulungs. It turns out, however, that six of these sulungs were in Thanet (below, p. 185), and possibly they were being counted in Thanet hundred. If they were, there were only 6 sulungs in Chislet hundred. The hundred of Sturry seems also to comprise just one manor (12ra41), assessed at 5 sulungs; but the manor included some land (possibly half a sulung) at Swalecliffe, and we do not know whether that land was being counted as part of Sturry hundred or not.

[36] The unrounded figure was 1051 sulungs plus five-twelfths (Flight 2005, p. 375). If the geld was levied at the rate of 24 pence per sulung, as it was in 1129/30, the fraction would be equivalent to 10 pence. The exchequer was willing to overlook an odd halfpenny, but 10 pence was not a negligible quantity.

Given the sorts of difficulties hinted at here – difficulties which, on closer inspection, become not less but more and more perplexing – it is far from easy to decide exactly how many sulungs there were in any particular hundred. Approximate answers are all that can be hoped for. If we had a good copy of some large part of the B text, as is true for Cambridgeshire, or if we had a copy of some version of the geld account, as is true for Wiltshire and the counties to the west of it, we would know how many sulungs each hundred was assessed for; and then we might be able to use that information to penetrate the ambiguities of the DB text. Lacking any help of that kind, I do not see how we can hope for any definite results.

By and large, the hundreds recorded by DB are the same hundreds which existed in the mid thirteenth century and later (chapter 10). There are some changes that we can be sure of, but they do not add up to much.[37] Three of the hundreds mentioned in DB, Reculver, Chislet and Sturry, became merged into a single hundred, called Blengate (GREx 1179:118). Some of the other hundreds changed their names. The hundred which DB calls Greenwich hundred, for instance, was called Blackheathfield hundred in the twelfth century (e.g. GREx 1166:115, 1191:147), Blackheath hundred in the thirteenth. Sturséte hundred became Westgate hundred, Barham hundred became Kinghamford hundred (GREx 1179:118), and so on. Even these changes may be illusory to some extent, because hundreds could sometimes be referred to by more than one name.[38] Rather than a change of name, the evidence may just reflect a change of preference for one name over another. Similarly it is not impossible that Reculver, Chislet and Sturry, though treated as separate hundreds for the purposes of the survey, were, for some other purposes, already being treated as a single unit.

Nine of the thirteenth-century hundreds cannot be found mentioned under any name in DB. One of them, Codsheath hundred, is in a category by itself, because we find it named – and explicitly identified as a hundred – in a contemporary record (below, p. 160). In this case, therefore, the question which arises can be put something like this. Was it deliberately decided, during the fieldwork phase, that Codsheath did not have the status of a separate hundred? Or did it just happen, during the compilation phase, that the heading for this hundred (which ought to occur at DB-Ke-3ra26) dropped out of the text?

For the remaining eight – Brenchley, Marden, West Barnfield, Great Barnfield, Cranbrook, Barkley, Tenterden, Saint Martin's – we get no contemporary help; but a look at the map will tell us one obvious fact. The hundreds missing from DB are among the southernmost hundreds – Saint Martin's out in the Marsh, the others deep into the Weald. DB's failure to mention these hundreds can thus be seen as a consequence of its failure to mention many of the places here, because they were mostly dependent on places further north (above, p. 2). Cranbrook hundred, for example, as it becomes known to us later, comprises parts of the following eight parishes: Cranbrook, Frittenden, Biddenden, Benenden, Hawkhurst, Goudhurst, Staplehurst, Headcorn (Kilburne 1659, p. 336). Since none of these places was mentioned separately in DB, there was no occasion for the heading IN CRANBROOK HUNDRED to appear there. Yet we know for certain that at least six of these places did exist at the time – did not just exist but had churches (chapter 8).[39] Those places of which we do catch a glimpse – such as Tudeley in Watchlingstone hundred (7vb9), Benenden in Rolvenden hundred (11ra6), Appledore in Blackbourne hundred (5rb33) – have arable land assessed in sulungs, villains with ploughs, churches of their own. In short, they are normal manors. It does not seem much of a stretch to say that people who were numerous and settled enough to need a parish church would also need a hundred court. But that is a matter of opinion. Because nothing can be argued safely from the silence of DB, because the B text and the geld account are both lost, we are left in a state of uncertainty, and will have to learn to live with it.

Subject to some further adjustments here and there (below, p. 267), the thirteenth-century hundreds survived into the nineteenth century. From the late sixteenth century onwards, it was normal for maps of the county to include some schematized representation of the hundred boundaries (below, p. 269); but no accurately detailed maps existed until the Ordnance Survey began publishing the first generation of six-inch maps. As far as Kent is concerned, the surveying was carried out in 1853–70, and the individual sheets were published during the interval 1869–82. Archived copies of these maps (some are slightly damaged, a few are missing) have by now been made available on the web,[40] and the reader who has not discovered them already is in for an agreeable surprise. It is astonishing to see what results

[37] For some places named in DB, identifications have been proposed which, if they were right, would imply some radical change in the hundred map. It was, for example, suggested by Ward (1933, pp. 69–70), that the place which DB calls *Neuentone* should be identified as Newington near Hythe. If we want to believe that, we must also be willing to believe that this place was taken out of Bewsborough hundred and put into Folkestone hundred. For other reasons (reasons which Ward was aware of but chose to disregard), that identification does not seem tenable to me. If dubious cases like this are discounted, the weight of the evidence tells strongly in favour of stability; and I think we should make it a rule not to allow any identification which involves the assumption of a change in the hundred map unless we are given some convincing argument for it.

[38] For example, in a record dating from 1219, we find Codsheath hundred called 'the hundred of Otford', Axstone hundred called 'the hundred of Sutton' (*Book of fees*, p. 269).

[39] One other Wealden hundred, Summerden, came very close to disappearing from the record (11va21). It should also be noted, by the way, that many of the hundreds which do get mentioned in DB get mentioned only once.

[40] The separate sheets can be accessed through www.british-history.ac.uk. Another site, www.old-maps.co.uk, has the same images stitched together to make a continuous map. This site has many good features, but unfortunately only a very small viewing window.

could be achieved with nineteenth-century equipment by surveyors who knew what they were doing.

The boundaries mapped in the nineteenth century – this has often been said but may be worth saying again – are certainly not identical in every respect with the boundaries which existed in the thirteenth century, let alone the eleventh. To cite just one example, the manor of Nashenden (near Rochester) was in Larkfield hundred at the time of the survey (DB-Ke-7rb31), and was still in Larkfield hundred in the fourteenth century (*Book of fees*, p. 1344); but it was inside the boundary defined in the fifteenth century for the liberty of the city of Rochester, a somewhat larger entity than the preexisting hundred of Rochester. Nevertheless, though in the nature of the case we cannot be exactly sure, in general I see no reason to think that the hundred boundaries had shifted to any significant extent since the thirteenth century. It looks to me as if they were, even then, already firmly established in people's minds, as well as in the landscape. People were ready to argue about many things, but (as far as I know) they never argued about the location of the boundary between one hundred and the next. In a suitably tentative way, therefore, I think that we can venture to extrapolate further back. As far as the evidence allows us to verify the facts, we are not going seriously wrong if we suppose that the hundred boundaries were already in place at the time of the survey – but of course it would be foolish to imagine that every single zigzag mapped by the Ordnance Survey had a real existence in the eleventh century.

As well as the hundred boundaries, the six-inch maps trace out all the parish boundaries with the same exactitude. Small-scale maps of the hundreds and parishes, based on the six-inch maps, can be found in various places – in Lawson and Killingray (2004), for instance. To make the whole county fit onto one page, some degree of simplification is unavoidable, and the disappearance of the smaller details makes a noticeable difference to the texture of the map. This is true of the hundred map, but more conspicuously true of the parish map. There were roughly 400 parishes in Kent, some of which were very small, and many of them had detached portions, the smallest of which were very small indeed – sometimes a few acres, occasionally just a fraction of an acre. To see the full picture, to make certain that no significant facts are being overlooked, one still needs to go back to the originals.

Even at a small scale, however, one phenomenon shows up very clearly when the hundred map and the parish map are superimposed again. Over most of Kent, hundred boundaries coincide with parish boundaries, very nearly without exception;[41] in the southernmost third of Kent, hundred boundaries and parish boundaries tend to be disjunct. Cranbrook hundred contained parts of eight parishes (see above), but not one entire parish. The parish of Cranbrook itself overlapped into the hundreds of Great Barnfield and Barkley (Kilburne 1659, p. 64). The parish of Benenden (Pollard and Strouts 2005, fig. 1) was split between four hundreds, and only two short stretches of the parish boundary coincided with a hundred boundary. This is, I think, an interesting phenomenon, worth discussing further; but I do not propose to do more than mention it here. (The first step would be to ask how far the same contrast is observable in Surrey and Sussex, and by asking that I would be exceeding my remit.) One word of warning should perhaps be added: the flat pattern as we see it on the map is intrinsically ambiguous. It could be taken to mean that parishes are generally earlier than hundreds – except in the Weald, where they are later. Or it could be taken to mean that hundreds are generally earlier than parishes – except in the Weald, where they are later. Either explanation would fit the facts; to decide between them we shall need to try to find some other evidence, so as to bring some time-depth into the picture.[42]

Unlike the relationship between parishes and hundreds, which was complicated by this element of contingency, the relationship between hundreds and laths was strictly hierarchical: every hundred was contained in just one lath. The same was true for the relationship between laths and the county as a whole. It was not in the nature of the beast for a hundred to overlap from one lath into another, nor for a lath to overlap from this county into another. But that fact has no chronological implications. It tells us nothing about the order in which these different entities were created.

For what length of time the lests and hundreds had been in existence, before they suddenly spring into view in the records of the survey, is already a difficult question. In DB we can find both lests and hundreds being mentioned in contexts which relate to the time of king Edward; but much of this evidence might be regarded as dubious, if we felt inclined to be hypercritical. When the commissioners wanted to find out what incidental profits the king could expect from Kent,[43] they put the question to the men of the four eastern lests, expecting them (so it seems) to know the answer. Those men did indeed know how things stood in the time of king Edward (DB-Ke-1rb) – but there is nothing to prove that they had gained this knowledge specifically through their participation in meetings of the lests. The best evidence comes, I think, from the statement concerning

[41] Exceptions are so rare that they challenge explanation – as, for example, when we find the parish of Stanford bisected by the Stowting/Street hundred boundary. In this case the explanation is easy to find. Until the sixteenth century there were two parishes here, Stanford and Westenhanger (Frampton 1915), and the hundred boundary preserves the line of the boundary between them. (It is a point to note that the addition of one parish to another did not entail its addition to the same hundred.) Another exception is Nonington, about which I say something in the commentary (below, p. 184).

[42] In this context, I suggest, it will be necessary to give some thought to a mysterious memorandum (Sawyer 1968, no. 1564), important enough to be copied into a Christ Church gospel-book, which was put into print by Kemble (1848, p. 217, from BL Add. 14907, fos. 19v–20r, from Lambeth Palace 1370, fo. 114r). An improved text (Brooks and Kelly, to appear) is already available on the web (www.trin.cam.ac.uk/kemble).

[43] It was the second team of commissioners who had this question on their list (below, p. 194).

some disputed land at Atterton (DB-Ke-13ra37–40).[44] Four groups of people – the hundred, the townsmen of Dover, the men of the abbot of Saint Augustine's, the lest of Eastry – had all been asked to testify as to the terms on which this land was held in the time of king Edward; and that seems to imply that the jurors for the hundred and the jurors for the lest were recognized as having some knowledge of the facts, independently both from each other and from the other groups of witnesses, and as having some status for expressing an opinion. All things considered, it cannot be seriously doubted but that the lests and hundreds did exist before 1066, in more or less the same shape in which we find them recorded twenty years later; but it has to be admitted that even for this unadventurous conclusion the evidence is far from strong.

There is one point of which I think we can feel reasonably confident – as confident as we can hope to be, in the absence of any evidence which bears directly on the case. The hundreds were there first; the lests were created later.[45]

Two lines of argument seem to me to converge on this conclusion. The first starts from the general complexion of the map of lests and hundreds. Suppose it to be true that the hundreds were there first; then what happened would be something like this. For some purposes the hundreds were adequate; it was not proposed to abolish them. For other purposes the hundreds were found to be unsatisfactory: there were far too many of them. It was decided, therefore, to group the hundreds together in such a way as to create a fairly small number of larger entities. Seen as the result of some such process, the lests make good enough sense. Suppose it to be true, on the contrary, that the lests were there first: then what happened would be something like this. For some purposes the lests were adequate; it was not proposed to abolish them. For other purposes the lests were found to be unsatisfactory: there were far too few of them. It was decided, therefore, to divide up the lests in such a way as to create a fairly large number of smaller entities. Seen as the result of some such process, the hundreds rather obviously fail to make sense. The result we would expect to see is that the lests were split into some suitable number of fractions (halves, thirds, quarters, or whatever) of roughly equal size; and the hundreds are a very long way from fitting that description.

The second argument starts from the fact that pairs of hundreds could exist which shared a name. In the thirteenth century there were two such pairs: Great Barnfield and Little Barnfield, Bircholt Barony and Bircholt Franchise. Great Barnfield was part of the lest of Shrewinghope; Little Barnfield was part of the lest of Aylesford. In every respect, as far as we know, they functioned as separate hundreds: except for the name, there was no connection between them. The same applies to the two hundreds called Bircholt; and here we have the advantage of knowing that both were already in existence at the time of the survey. There was a Bircholt hundred in Wiwarleth lest (DB-Ke-13vb22), this being Bircholt Barony; there was also a Bircholt hundred in Limwar lest (4ra2), this being Bircholt Franchise.[46] Given the observable facts – two small contiguous hundreds which share a name – it does not seem a great leap to infer that there was once a time when they formed a single hundred. If we are willing to make that leap, we have to ask how this single hundred came to be split into two; and the answer to that question is written on the map. The split occurred at the moment when the lests were created: the northern half of Bircholt hundred was assigned to Wiwarleth lest, the southern half to Limwar lest.

That is as far as I feel willing to go. The lests were artificial creations of relatively recent date; whatever that date may have been, the hundreds were there before it. Beyond this point, we are in the realm of uncontrolled speculation. The distinction between East Kent and West Kent (above, p. 4) was, I take it, superseded by the division of the county into lests, though it may perhaps have retained some vestigial existence – in the assertion, for instance, made by the men of the four eastern lests that they are not obliged to travel further than to Penenden for a meeting of the county court (DB-Ke-1rb39). I would not rule out the idea that the lests were brought into existence specifically for the purpose of collecting the geld, after it had been found by experience that some new machinery was needed. Since the geld was payable in two instalments, it could be that a meeting of each lest was convened twice a year, and that those meetings continued being held until they were eventually adapted to different purposes – the purposes for which we find them being used in the thirteenth century (below, p. 266). Again, though the figures recorded in the twelfth-century exchequer rolls (above, p. 8) are somewhat smaller than this, there may once have been a time when Kent was assessed at a total of 1200 sulungs. At that rate, if each lest carried a burden of 200 sulungs and each half-lest a burden of 100 sulungs, the total would come out right. But this, if it was ever true, had ceased to be true by the time of the survey. I am not suggesting that the TRE assessments recorded in DB-Ke should be coerced into adding up to a round number, or to the same round number for each lest (or half-lest). The order of magnitude is right; I am saying no more than that.

At the time of the survey, the scope of the cadastral structure seems to have been very nearly comprehensive. Almost without exception, it could be assumed that every place would belong to some given hundred, and that every hundred would belong to some given lest. Almost but not quite.

[44] Recorded, this too, by the second team of commissioners.

[45] At around this point, some readers may be expecting me to mention two publications by J. E. A. Jolliffe – an article (1929) and a short book (1933). I cite them here only for the purpose of saying that I shall not cite them again. The article is a conjuring trick which fails to come off; the book is a work of fiction.

[46] 'Franchise' because it belonged to the archbishop. In the jargon of the time, 'barony' was the opposite of 'franchise'.

There were already some exceptions to the rule – nothing like the number which existed later (chapter 10), but some.

To begin at the bottom, the town (or ghost town) of Seasalter had a peculiar status. In DB we are told only that it lies in Borwar lest (5ra15). A contemporary document – one which gives us the archbishop's view of the facts (chapter 2) – states explicitly that 'this manor is not in any hundred' (C1-4ra4). That form of words was used deliberately: it was a way of saying, but also a way of not saying, that Seasalter was a hundred by itself. Apparently nobody wanted to call it a hundred, perhaps because it was just too small, perhaps because it did not (so it seems) pay geld. And therefore some phrase was needed which would express the fact that Seasalter belonged to a lest without belonging to a hundred – that it was (as we might choose to say) coordinate with a hundred.

The town of Sandwich was another exception, and a much more important one. Again DB does not quite make things clear. Because the relevant paragraph is put into the preliminary section of chapter 2, it can say that Sandwich 'lies in its own hundred' (3ra7) without having to say which lest (if any) it belongs to. Again the other document is plainer: Sandwich, we are told, 'is a leth and a hundred in itself' (C1-3vb50), where 'leth' is to be read as a synonym for 'lest' (above, p. 7). Nowhere else, as far as I know, is Sandwich ever called a lest. It may have been doubted whether this name was suitable; but it would (I suppose) have been agreed that the hundred of Sandwich was not part of the lest of Eastry. This hundred was, however the fact might be expressed, coordinate with a lest.

Whether the town of Dover had achieved a similar status is hard to say. Since Dover was in the king's hands and Sandwich was not, the records of the survey give us a distorted picture. Dover is described in greater detail; but, because this description was put into the preliminary section of DB (1ra), it became unnecessary to say whether Dover was or was not included in the hundred of Bewsborough, whether it was or was not included in the lest of Eastry. My guess would be that the statement made about Sandwich could also have been made about Dover – that Dover too was 'a leth and a hundred in itself'. But the only evidence that I can cite comes from the passage about Atterton (above, p. 11), where 'the townsmen of Dover' seem to have been allowed to have their say on the matter, independently from the hundred and the lest. Two other towns, Hythe and Romney, were later to become allied with Sandwich and Dover, and with Hastings in Sussex, in the confederation of the Five Ports. Both places were in existence at the time of the survey; there is no doubt about that. What is doubtful is whether the men of Hythe and the men of Romney had, by then, managed to make any progress in disengaging themselves from the cadastral structure.

As things stood in the 1080s, the most significant exception was the lowy of Tonbridge – that is, the approximately circular territory surrounding the castle built at Tonbridge by Ricard son of count Gislebert (Ricard de Tonebrige, as he was also called).[47] Ricard held two manors from the king – Yalding in Twyford hundred, East Barming in Maidstone hundred – which are described in the normal way in a chapter of DB-Ke (14rb2–15), but nothing is said there about Tonbridge. Because of the disruption which the creation of the lowy had caused, incidental references to Ricard's territory occur quite frequently in other chapters of DB, but nowhere do we find a description of Tonbridge itself.

Though this fact has caused some puzzlement, the explanation is really rather simple. The lowy of Tonbridge was not part of Kent: it was, in a manner of speaking, a county by itself. If it was surveyed at all, it would have had to be surveyed separately. By the time of the survey (this much we do discover) the lowy had already contracted somewhat. Two preexisting manors, Hadlow and Tudeley, had been taken out of the lowy and put back into Kent. Ricard had conceded that he held these two manors from the bishop of Bayeux (DB-Ke-7vb2, 7vb10). More to the point, he had conceded that Hadlow was part of Littlefield hundred and that Tudeley was part of Watchlingstone hundred; therefore they were both in Aylesford lest, and therefore they were both in Kent.

It is the other side of the story which DB does not report: we are not told what Ricard had gained for himself in return for these concessions. In the light of later evidence, however, the answer seems clear enough. He had gained recognition of the claim that he held the lowy of Tonbridge (in its redefined shape) directly from the king on very special terms – not on the same terms as a manor like Yalding or East Barming, with which the sheriff of Kent might interfere, but on terms which meant that he was answerable to no one except the king. Was a team of commissioners, specially appointed for the purpose, sent to survey the lowy? If it was, why was their report not copied into DB? These are sensible questions in themselves, but there is little point in asking them, given that they only arise because of the absence of evidence.

Whatever it was intended to achieve, the survey was not intended to cover eveything. There certainly did exist a castle at Dover – but there is not one word in the records of the survey which informs us of this fact. Why should there be? If the king had questions he wanted answered, he wrote to the keeper of the castle and demanded an immediate reply. He was not going to wait for the survey to find out the answers.

2

The decision to proceed with a survey of the whole of England, officially known (in Latin) as the *descriptio totius Angliae*, was made at a meeting of the king's court in Glouces-

[47] The word 'lowy' is a stab at an English spelling of French *lieuee*, [lyœˈeə], represented in Latin as *leucata*.

ter at Christmas 1085 (ch. 10).[48] Over the next few months, in every county, a small team of commissioners – trustworthy men, qualified for this task by their knowledge of the county – carried out the investigations which they had been ordered to conduct; and the results were set down in writing (in Latin) in what I call the B text. For one county alone, Cambridgeshire, a large part of the B text survives – not in the original, but in the form of a copy made at Ely in the late twelfth century. If this copy had not been made, or if it had all been lost (as part of it has been), we should know almost nothing about the earliest stage of the survey.

For each county, the B text was organized cadastrally – hundred by hundred, village by village (ch. 8). The unit of inquiry was the manor, but the manors were located inside the cadastral frame. In outline, therefore, the text takes on this shape:

In Cambridgeshire.
– In Staploe hundred.
– – In this hundred Burwell defended itself for 15 hides in the time of king Edward.
– – – Of these 15 hides the abbot of Ramsey holds 10.25 hides . . .

Having descended down the hierarchy to this level, it then reports, for each individual manor, the items of information which form the factual content of the survey:

Who holds it? If not from the king, from whom?
How many hides?
How many ploughs does the land suffice for?
How many ploughs on the domain? How many for the villains?
How many hides of domain?
If there are fewer ploughs than the land suffices for, how many more might be made on the domain? How many more for the villains?
How many villains, bordars, slaves?
How many mills? What are they worth?
How much meadow?
How much pasture?
How much livestock – cows, sheep, pigs, horses – on the domain?
Altogether how much is the manor worth?
How much was it worth when the man who holds it got possession?
How much was it worth in the time of king Edward?
Who held it in the time of king Edward?

Having answered all relevant questions for this manor, it moves on to the next manor; in due course it moves on to the next village; in due course it moves on to the next hundred. Eventually it comes to the end of the last manor in the last village in the last hundred; and then it terminates.

[48] The next few paragraphs are a summary of the conclusions presented in a previous publication (Flight 2006); I cite the chapters where the reader will find a fuller account of the facts. Though I omit much, I mention all the identifiable elements in the parchment trail which recorded the survey's progress.

As soon as it had been completed, the B text was delivered to the king's treasury in Winchester. (Probably the deadline was Lady Day, 25 March.) The next step was for one of the treasury officials – the man whom I call scribe alpha – to collate the B text with the account of the payments of geld which the treasury had received. (The second instalment fell due at about this time.) Hundred by hundred, scribe alpha checked the entries in the geld account with the paragraphs in the B text, making sure that all the proper payments had been made, and that only the proper deductions had been claimed. If he found some discrepancy, as very often he did, he made a note of the fact; and the resulting text survives in the original for Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset (ch. 6).

During the summer months of 1086, every county was visited by a second team of commissioners (four of them in Worcestershire, probably the same elsewhere). Unlike the first team, this team was made up of men who had no vested interest in the county. That was a deliberate policy, as a contemporary observer tells us (ch. 10); it seems also to have been the policy for this second team, unlike the first one, to be headed by a bishop. A team of scribes (probably three of them) arrived from Winchester to meet up with the commissioners: they brought with them the B text for this county and the memorandum containing the treasury's queries. In the course of the formal proceedings, representatives of every hundred were brought before the commissioners. Their names were written down; the section of the B text describing their hundred was read out to them (in French); and they were required to swear that all the facts which the king had demanded to know were correctly reported there. If the hundred contained a manor of the king's, the commissioners expected to be told of any encroachments; if there were problems with the geld account, they insisted on some explanation. If the ownership of any manor was in dispute, the claimant was given the opportunity – now or never – to speak up, and some statement of the facts was put on record. And lastly, from representatives of the county as a whole, the commissioners demanded some statement of any facts, outside the scope of the B text as it stood, of which these men thought the king should be informed.

After that, the modified version of the B text was taken back to Winchester – together with a memorandum replying to scribe alpha's queries, such as survives in the original for Wiltshire – and the fieldwork phase of the survey was at an end, as far as this county was concerned. (Or so, at least, it should have been. But it is not unlikely that questions came up which the second team of commissioners did not have time to deal with on the spot. In that event, I suppose, somebody would have to be appointed – perhaps a third team of commissioners, perhaps a government official – with instructions to look into some particular problem, reporting back when they had got to the bottom of it.)

The B text was the end of one phase of the survey; it was also the beginning of another. Once the finalized reports began arriving back in the treasury, work could begin on the construction of a new version of the survey text, reorganized on feodal lines. From this new version, it would be possible to find out straight away, county by county, which manors belonged to the king himself, and which belonged to each of the his barons. (In this context the expression *baro regis* took on a special sense: any person who held a manor directly from the king was the 'king's baron' with respect to that manor. Quite possibly this person might be somebody else's baron with respect to some other manor, in the same or some other county. But in this county, with respect to this manor, he or she was to be counted as one of the king's barons.)[49]

That was the intention; and someone had worked out in advance a plan for its realization. The first step was the compilation of the C text. For each county, the C text consisted of a collection of booklets – one for the king, one for each of his barons – into which were copied the relevant extracts taken from the B text.

To fit the extracts into this new frame, some adjustment to the wording was needed at the start of each paragraph. The C text for Cambridgeshire, for instance, would include a booklet with the title 'Land of the abbot of Ramsey in Cambridgeshire', and the first paragraph would need to start something like this:

> In Staploe hundred the abbot of Ramsey has a manor which is called Burwell. It defended itself for 10.25 hides, ...

After that, the rest of the paragraph could be copied word from word. The next paragraph would start 'The same abbot has a manor which is called ...', and the scribe could write that much straight away, even before he resumed his scan through the source text, in search of the next paragraph to copy.

Portions of the C text survive in the original for five counties – Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset (ch. 4). These were the last C booklets to be compiled, and by that time it had been decided to simplify the procedure by dropping the cadastral indications (which is why there are no hundred headings in DB, as far as these counties are concerned).[50] In all other respects, however, the surviving C booklets can be assumed to be representative. The most striking fact about them is the large number of scribes who participated in the writing of them. There are three scribes – I call them mu, alpha and beta – who worked on the C text for all five counties (and who also worked on the contemporary geld accounts); these men, it seems clear, were permanently employed in the treasury. The scribes who collaborate with them were men who had been hired to help in the work of the survey. They seem to have been organized in teams of three; for part of the time they were out in the field; during intervals when they were back at headquarters they might help with the writing of the C booklets. Even so, it was two of the treasury's men, alpha and beta, who did most of the work. In principle, the compilation of the C text is a perfectly straightforward business; the difficulty lies in devising some arrangement which will make it possible for five or six scribes to share the task, without constantly getting in one another's way. But it is not impossible for that number of scribes to collaborate, in a reasonably efficient fashion; and it is clear from the result that some suitable arrangement had indeed been devised.

Almost all of the information from the B text found its way into the C text; except that they were organized differently, the contents were nearly the same. Some information was lost, however, because there was no place for it in the C text. In the case of a village, like Burwell, which comprised two or more manors, the individual assessments were reported in C (such as 10.25 hides for the abbot's manor) but the total assessment (15 hides) was not. Nor did C have a place for one of the crucial elements in the finalized B text, the lists of names, hundred by hundred, of the men who had sworn to its accuracy. That information, if anyone needed it, was only to be found in B – which was, after all, the place where it properly belonged.

One after another, the collections of C booklets were handed over to a different team of scribes, the scribes responsible for the production of the D text. Their task was a simple one. For each county, they sorted the C booklets into some suitable order (there were no strict rules about this, though of course the king was put first) and recopied the contents as a continuous text.[51] The start of each booklet of C became the start of a chapter in D. Essentially the D text – which survives in the original as three complete booklets, for Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk – was just a fair copy of the C text. Its only original ingredients were the numbers assigned to the chapters and the index of chapters supplied at the beginning. Unless by accident, nothing was omitted. Nothing was added, because there was nothing to add – unless perhaps some report arrived, resulting from further inquiries in the field, which was thought to be worth recopying as an appendix to the D text.

The D booklets, amounting to roughly 6000 pages (3000 leaves) altogether, comprised the full record of the survey,

[49] The reader should be wary of the expression 'tenant in chief', which is meaningless by itself, but is often used as a shortened equivalent for 'tenant in chief of the king'. The phrase *en chief* denotes the fact that the relationship between this lord and this tenant, with respect to this particular tenement, is immediate, *sans moien*, not mediated by any third party. Everyone who owned any land (or any rents and services deriving from land) was 'tenant in chief' of someone; only rarely was that someone the king. In any case, this is the jargon of thirteenth-century lawyers, and I doubt the wisdom of borrowing their language to talk about the survey.

[50] The decision was made while work was in progress on the C text for Oxfordshire. Up to and including Staffordshire, the C scribes made a point of including cadastral indications (as is proved by the appearance of hundred headings in DB), despite the time and trouble this cost, even though these indications were inessential.

[51] If some division of labour seems desirable, that is easy to arrange. One scribe takes the upper half of the stack of C booklets; he starts from the beginning of the D text. Another scribe takes the lower half; he starts from a point in the middle. Each of them makes a booklet. Once the booklets are complete, the addition of the chapter numbers will be enough to transform them into a single booklet.

in this feodally organized version of the text (ch. 2). But that was still not the end of the story. One after another, the D booklets were passed on to another scribe, who (as far as the evidence goes) was not involved in the production of C or D. His job was to create a shortened version of the text, such as could be contained in a single volume. By employing larger leaves and a two-column format, by omitting some categories of information, by developing an assortment of abbreviated formulas for the information that he meant to keep, this scribe was able to compress the contents of several pages of D onto one page of his own manuscript. By the systematic use of capital letters and red ink, he made it as easy as he could for readers to navigate the text. (He also took it upon himself to change the order of the chapters, in line with some stricter notion of etiquette.) The manuscript which he created is a a very fine piece of work; but it is, essentially, only an edited version of the D text, rearranged, condensed and reworded.

This short version of the survey text, DB, survives in the original for every county (ch. 1), apart from those three for which the D text survives instead. (That is the fact of the matter: DB as it exists and D as it exists are complementary. How that came to be so is another question.) For one county, we have a copy of a portion of the B text which can be collated with DB; for five counties, we have portions of the C text which offer the same opportunity. For the majority of counties, DB stands alone, or very nearly so.

There is evidence from Kent which illuminates some aspects of this process. From Christ Church – that is, from the monastery attached to the cathedral church in Canterbury – copies survive of two versions of a text which seems to be connected with the fieldwork phase of the survey. Both versions are edited below (chapter 2); the first version has been cited occasionally but not printed before. (Unhappily, the only known copy of this version fell into the hands of correctors who thought that they were doing the right thing by making it agree with the second version; but they did not succeed in eliminating all the discrepancies.) In its longer version this text – which I call α – consists of three segments, covering respectively the lands in Kent of (i) the archbishop, (ii) the archbishop's monks, and (iii) the bishop of Rochester. (The restriction 'in Kent' applies to all three segments.) Though every other English bishop held his lands directly from the king, the bishop of Rochester held his from the archbishop (he was the archbishop's baron, not the king's); so it is not a surprise to find a description of the church of Rochester's manors appended to this text. But there are some features of α which (not for lack of trying) I fail to understand. In spite of these difficulties, I still think that it has to be read as the archbishop's reply to a letter from the first team of commissioners, who wanted to be supplied with some basic information about each of the archbishop's manors in Kent. (How many sulungs was the manor assessed for in the time of king Edward? How many now? Altogether how much is it worth?) Because only a few basic questions were being asked, it seems clear that this correspondence took place at a very early stage in the commissioners' proceedings – which means, I suppose, in early 1086.

From Saint Augustine's – the ancient abbey situated in the eastern suburb of Canterbury – there survives a single copy of a sequence of excerpts from the finalized B text for Kent. The text was printed by Ballard (1920); I edit it again below (chapter 3). The copy is late and somewhat inaccurate; some passages included in the text as it survives were certainly inserted into it at Saint Augustine's. Despite the errors, despite the interpolations, the origin of this text – which I call B / xAug – is not in any doubt. Somebody worked through the B text, looking for the paragraphs of interest to Saint Augustine. Having found such a paragraph, sometimes he just made a note of it (a single sentence giving the basic facts), sometimes he copied it in full. The cadastral indications were mostly omitted, but we can supply them for ourselves, with the help of DB; once we do that, it becomes clear that the source text was cadastrally organized, which is the proof that it must have been B. Luckily for us, Saint Augustine owned at least one manor in every lest; so these excerpts give us the full sequence for them. Of the hundreds only a minority are represented, and only a partial sequence can be recovered.

Here, in outline, is the shape of the B text for Kent, so far as we find it reflected in B / xAug:

In Kent.
– In the half-lest of Sutton.
– – In the hundred of Littleleigh.
– In the lest of Aylesford.
– – In the hundred of Eyhorne.
– In the half-lest of Milton.
– – In the hundred of Milton.
– In the lest of Wiwarleth.
– – In the hundred of Faversham.
– – In the hundred of Wye.
– – In the hundred of Felborough.
– – In the hundred of Chart.
– – In the hundred of Boughton.
– – In the hundred of Calehill.
– – In the hundred of Longbridge.
– In the lest of Borwar.
– – In the hundred of Canterbury.
– – In the hundred of Bridge.
– – In the hundred of Downhamford.
– – In the hundred of Chislet.
– – In the hundred of Sturry.
– – In the hundred of Fordwich.
– – In the hundred of Whitstable.
– – In the hundred of Thanet.
– In the lest of Eastry.[52]
– – In the hundred of Preston.
– – In the hundred of Sandwich.
– – In the hundred of Cornilo.
– – In the hundred of Bewsborough.

[52] The placement of this line is doubtful (below, p. 187).

– In the lest of Limwar.
– – In the hundred of Stowting.
– – In the hundred of Blackbourne.

For eastern Kent, where the abbey's manors mostly lay, this gives us a fairly good picture. More than that we cannot expect.

These are the treasures; other archives are less productive. From Rochester, despite the existence of an excellent cartulary compiled in the 1120s, the only relevant document known is an edited version of the third segment of text α (below, p. 65). The manor of Lewisham had belonged since the time of king Edward to the ancient abbey of Saint Peter of Gent (DB-Ke, chapter 8); the manor of Wye had been granted to the king's own foundation, the abbey of Saint Martin of the Battle (chapter 6); from neither quarter do we get any help at all. The biggest disappointment is the absence of any documents from the church of Saint Martin's of Dover – an ancient church, and one whose possessions came in for some special investigation in the course of the survey (below, pp. 196–200). There are no surviving records of any kind. The sad fact seems to be that the monks of Christ Church, when they got possession of Saint Martin's church (as they succeeded in doing in 1139), did not get possession of its archive.

From the evidence of DB-Ke itself, it is possible to draw some conjectural conclusions regarding previous versions of the text. Since we are trying to extrapolate backwards in time, the logical order runs in reverse, from DB to D, from D to C, and finally from C to B. But the few suggestions which I have to make are not dependent on one another; so I propose to reverse the logical order and follow what I take to have been the sequence of events. The evidence which I shall be using comes from the cadastral headings – not just from the ones which occur in just the right place (as the majority do), but also from the ones which are either misplaced or omitted altogether. Table 1 gives a list of the adjustments which I believe should be made to DB's lest and headings, for the facts to be described correctly: on the left (col. 1) are the headings as they appear in DB; on the right (col. 2) are the headings as I think they ought to be. Some of the entries (not just the ones marked with a query) are certainly open to debate, and I explain my reasons for including them (and for not including some others) at a later stage. For present purposes, this table is (in my opinion) sufficiently reliable.

Though it may take a little practice, the reader who studies this table should soon start to recognize some patterning. It sometimes happens, for instance, that a hundred heading occurs a little later than it should. In that case the same hundred will be noted in two successive lines, in col. 2 in one line, in col. 1 in the next. Two lines which pair off like this, such as the ones which mention Chatham hundred, convey the suggestion (which no one is going to dispute) that the heading IN CHATHAM HUNDRED is out of place: to put things right, this heading should be moved back from 8va2 to 8rb48. The lest headings too are sometimes delayed, and pairs of lines in this table reflect that fact as well. There is a pair, for example, which conveys the suggestion that the heading IN LIMWAR LEST should be moved back from 5rb32, where it goes with the heading for Blackbourne hundred, to 5rb28, so that it goes instead with the heading for Ham hundred. (It should be noted that lest headings do not occur in isolation: in DB they are invariably prefixed to a hundred heading.) Small dislocations of this kind could occur at any stage in the compilation process, and it is probably not worth asking at which particular stage some particular heading got put in the wrong place. Similarly, there is some tendency for the lest heading to go missing from the start of a chapter, but that is something which could have happened at any stage, in C or D or DB. Nevertheless, I do see a few indications, in DB and Table 1, which seem to point towards some specific conclusion.

It is an odd feature, possibly a significant feature, of DB that the lest headings are sometimes repeated for no apparent reason. (This happens first at 6vb21, where the heading IN SUTTON HALF-LEST occurs in connection with the heading for Greenwich hundred, though in fact it is redundant: this hundred is already covered by the lest heading at 6ra2.) For obvious reasons, there is no chance for this to happen except in a long stretch of text comprising more than one hundred in a single lest; for reasons which will shortly emerge, there is little chance for it to happen with the eastern lests (but it does happen once, with Eastry lest, at 11rb22). In effect this means that we are unlikely to find lest headings repeated except in the first half of chapter 5 – that is, the very long chapter (representing just over half of the whole text) which describes the lands of the bishop of Bayeux.[53] Where there is some likelihood of it happening, it does happen. Most notably, the heading IN AYLESFORD LEST, which occurs – as it should – at 7ra27 (in connection with Larkfield hundred), is repeated at 7vb9 (in connection with Watchlingstone hundred) and then repeated again, three columns later, at 8va9 (in connection with Rochester hundred).

We can, I think, rule out the idea that these redundant headings originated with the DB scribe. True, he might have thought that it would be helpful for his readers if he repeated the lest headings from time to time; but anyone acting on that thought would repeat the headings more often, and not in the places where we actually find them repeated.[54] We may assume that he found these headings in his source text (i.e. in D-Ke) and copied them by inertia – because he saw no particular reason for omitting them. If we agree to look for some other explanation, we may think it a promising idea that the headings mark the start of quires of D. This idea, as it seems to me, can also be ruled out.

[53] To be precise, this chapter accounts for 52 per cent of the text, excluding the preliminary section.

[54] The logical plan would be to repeat the lest heading in connection with the first hundred heading on each verso page – at 6va15, 7va1, 8va2, 9va3, and so on. That is not at all what we find.

(1) Headings as they exist in DB			(2) Headings as they ought to exist	
	Axstone	3ra18	Sutton	Axstone
		3ra26		? Codsheath
	Reculver	3va11	Borwar	Reculver
Borwar	Petham	3va32		Petham
	Boughton	3vb15	Wiwarleth	Boughton
	Longbridge	3vb46	Limwar ?	Longbridge
Limwar	Bircholt	4ra2		Bircholt
		[4ra10–18]		
	Axstone	4rb1	Sutton	Axstone
		4rb16		Helmstree
		4rb22		Westerham
		4rb29	Aylesford	Eyhorne
	Eyhorne	4rb36		
	Faversham	4rb42	Wiwarleth	Faversham
	Eastry	4va10	Eastry	Eastry
	Heane	4va17	Limwar	Heane
	Helmstree	4vb1	Sutton	Helmstree
		5rb17		? Adisham
	Ham	5rb28	Limwar	Ham
Limwar	Blackbourne	5rb32		Blackbourne
	Wye	5rb38	Wiwarleth	Wye
	Romney Marsh	5rb43	Limwar	? Worth
		5va1	Sutton	Axstone
		5va30	Aylesford	Larkfield
Sutton	Greenwich	6vb21		Greenwich
Aylesford	Watchlingstone	7vb9		Watchlingstone
		8rb48		Chatham
	Chatham	8va2		
Aylesford	Rochester	8va9		Rochester
		8vb41		Wrotham
		8vb49		Shamell
	Shamell	9ra24		
		9vb26		Bewsborough
	Bewsborough	9vb32		
	Barham	9vb35	Borwar	Barham
Eastry	Eastry	11rb22		Eastry
		[11va22–5]		
	Eastry	11va40		
		11vb15		Bewsborough
	Bewsborough	11vb17		
	Loningborough	11vb23	Limwar	Loningborough
	Bircholt	11vb29	Wiwarleth	Bircholt
		11vb39	Wiwarleth	Wye
		12ra21		Canterbury
		12rb24		Canterbury
	Romney Marsh	12vb32	Limwar	Worth
	Greenwich	12vb40	Sutton	Greenwich
		13ra2	Wiwarleth	Wye
Wiwarleth	Longbridge	13ra12		Longbridge
		[13ra37–41]		
	Blackbourne	13vb32	Limwar	Blackbourne
Limwar	Street	13vb35		Street
	Bircholt	14ra15	Wiwarleth	Bircholt
	Twyford	14rb1	Aylesford	Twyford

Table 1. Anomalies affecting the cadastral headings of DB-Ke. (Square brackets distinguish three paragraphs which have fallen so far out of the frame that they can hardly be put back in.)

The quantity of text contained between the two repetitions of the Aylesford heading occupies 1.5 pages of DB. By my estimate (Flight 2006, pp. 26–9), it would have occupied roughly six times that number of pages in D, which is 8–9 pages, not much more than half a quire. (My estimates are crude, but I see no reason to think that they are grossly wrong.) The same applies to C – but it does not apply to B. Of the contents of each quire of B, roughly half would have found its way into the C booklet corresponding with DB's chapter 5; and the other half, chopped up into pieces, would have been distributed among the other C booklets.

That gives us, at last, a plausible explanation. In the B text, it seems, there was some indication of the current lest at or near the beginning of each quire. For the rest, inertia prevailed. Because nobody saw why he should be the one to omit them, these indications were copied from B into C, from C into D, and lastly from D into DB. But how much is that suggestion worth? The argument is tenuous; the conclusion is of little interest, even if it is right. I mention it partly to make the point that we cannot hope to infer very much about B, however hard we try, when all we have to infer from is DB.

A second suggestion which I have to make seems more convincing to me, as well as being of rather more significance. It is a striking fact that the eastern lests, as we find them represented in DB, are in a disorganized state. This is true, it should be noted, whether or not we make the adjustments recommended in Table 1. The headings, that is, are mostly correct as they stand: but sometimes they send us back to a lest which we thought had already been dealt with. To some extent, the disruption seems to result from sporadic dislocations affecting single paragraphs. Several chapters (3, 5, 7, 9) have one or two stray paragraphs at the end which look as if they may have been (at some stage) deliberately left till last because they were problematic.[55] But disruption on a much larger scale occurs in the longest chapter, chapter 5. On the face of it, this chapter ought to be a straightforward reproduction of the B text, lest by lest and hundred by hundred, minus those manors which did not belong to the bishop of Bayeux. But that is not what we find. The western lests (Sutton, Aylesford, Milton) are in good shape; the eastern lests are fragmented, and the headings tend to alternate (Borwar, Limwar, Eastry, Borwar, Wiwarleth, Limwar, Eastry, Limwar, Eastry).[56] Something similar has happened in chapter 9, where only three lests are represented, but where again the headings tend to alternate (Wiwarleth, Limwar, Eastry, Wiwarleth, Limwar).[57] Furthermore, in every chapter where they are both represented,[58] DB puts Borwar before Wiwarleth, though not just geography but also B / xAug would lead us to expect that Wiwarleth ought to come first.

lest	hundred	D / DB
Sutton	Helmstree	4vb1
Aylesford	Littlefield	8
	Eyhorne	18
	Toltingtrough	24
	Maidstone	31
	Shamell	41
Borwar	Thanet	46
	Downhamford	5ra3
	Canterbury	9
Wiwarleth	Faversham	20
	Felborough	26
	Chart	37
	Calehill	42
Eastry	Eastry	5rb7
	? Adisham	17
Limwarlet	Ham	28
	Blackbourne	32
Wiwarleth	Wye	38

Table 2. Cadastral headings for the section of the D text represented by chapter 3 in DB. The headings absent from DB (which may or may not have been present in D) are supplied from Table 1.

These facts, I think, can only mean that the quires which made up the second half of the B text got themselves disarranged, before the C text began to be compiled.[59] To work this out in detail would mean arriving at some reconstruction of the B text, detailed enough to show where each quire began, such that some transposition of these hypothetical quires would produce results approximating to the results observable in DB. I doubt whether that is feasible; certainly I have not been able to do it. But something happened to bring about this fragmentation of the eastern lests; a transposition of the quires of B would cause that kind of disruption; and no other process that I can think of would have a similar effect.

If this explanation is right, there is one corollary which follows. At the time when some excerpts were made from it for Saint Augustine's, the B text was properly organized. Since it is not to be thought that B was made available to outsiders till after the C scribes had finished with it, we have to infer, not only that B was kept for some length of time, but also that somebody went to the trouble of putting the quires back into the right order.[60]

[55] The two paragraphs relating to Hastingleigh, for instance, one at the end of chapter 5 (11vb29) and the other almost at the end of chapter 9 (14ra15), look as if they may both have been postponed because it seemed doubtful at first how much of this place belonged to the bishop of Bayeux, how much to Hugo de Montfort.

[56] The second Borwar heading is the one which needs to be supplied at 9vb35. I disregard the two paragraphs at the end.

[57] The first and last of these headings need to be moved (from 13ra12 to 2, from 13vb35 to 32) but with that adjustment are correct. Again I disregard some stray paragraphs at the end.

[58] Except for chapter 12, where a sporadic dislocation has put Wiwarleth at the very beginning, even before Sutton.

[59] This would seem to suggest that the treasury officials had used the B text for some other purpose – a final check of the geld account, perhaps – before they got round to using it for this one.

[60] Whether this means that B was about to be bound is a question that I leave for the reader.

lest	hundred	D/DB
Sutton	Axstone	3ra18
	? Codsheath	26
	Helmstree	42
	Littleleigh	48
Aylesford	Larkfield	3rb5
	Toltingtrough	11
	Wrotham	19
	Maidstone	35
	Chatham	3va1
Borwarleth	Reculver	11
	Petham	32
	Stursete	43
	Barham	3vb9
Wiwarleth	Boughton	15
	Calehill	22
Eastry	Wingham	34
Limwar	Longbridge	46
	Bircholt	4ra2
	Loningborough	31
	Selbrittenden	42
Sutton	Axstone	5va2
	Bromley	25
Aylesford	Larkfield	31
	Shamell	5vb1
	Rochester	19
	Hoo	28
Sutton	Axstone	4rb2
	Helmstree	17
	Westerham	23
Aylesford	Eyhorne	37
Wiwarleth	Faversham	43
	Boughton	46
	Calehill	4va2
	Teynham	7
Eastry	Eastry	10
Limwar	Heane	17
	Street	25
	Langport	30

Table 3. Cadastral headings for the sections of the D text represented by chapters 2 and 4 in DB.

Third and last, there is something to be said about the D text. The cadastral headings as we find them in DB are, in two places, conspicuously more defective than elsewhere: in the subchapter covering the lands of the archbishop's knights (4rb–va) and in the chapter covering the lands of the bishop of Rochester (5va–b). This fact, I think, should be explained along the following lines. The C scribes, in dealing with the lands of the archbishopric, decided to make two booklets: one for the manors which (to the extent that the B text made this clear) were earmarked for the maintenance of the monks (the archbishop's monks, as DB calls them, i.e. the monks of Christ Church), and another for everything else. The contents of the former booklet were then treated in the regular way – first copied into D, then recopied in an edited form as chapter 3 of DB – and the cadastral headings came through that process as well as they usually did (not perfectly but fairly well). The contents of the latter booklet were treated differently. One of the D scribes decided (or was told) to distribute the contents into three separate sections.[61] Section (i) was to include all the manors which (to the extent that the C text made this clear) were held at least partly in domain; section (ii) all the manors held from the archbishop by the bishop of Rochester; section (iii) all the manors held by the archbishop's knights.[62]

In principle, that is not a difficult task. The scribe just needs to make three passes through the C booklet: for each section in turn, he selects and copies the paragraphs he wants, skipping over the rest. Nothing is likely to go wrong – unless some paragraph gets copied twice, or does not get copied at all.

When the text is reorganized in this way, however, many of the paragraphs will become separated from the cadastral headings by which they were previously governed; so the question arises whether to supply new headings where they are needed. Reorganizing the B text, the C scribes did make a point of doing that. Reorganizing the C text, the D scribe did not. Perhaps the question never occurred to him (unlike the C scribes, the D scribes were not required to exercise much creativity); if it did, he decided to spare himself the trouble. He copied the cadastral indications which were staring him in the face, but did not supply the indications which he would have had to work out for himself (Tables 2–3).

Why do we find a cadastral heading prefixed to the Bromley paragraph in DB (5va25)? Because Bromley was the only manor in Bromley hundred belonging to the archbishop. The C text would have said something like this:

In the hundred of Bromley the same archbishop has a manor which is called Bromley and the bishop of Rochester holds from him . . .

In section (ii) of the D text, that turned into something like this:

In the hundred of Bromley the same bishop holds a manor which is called Bromley . . .

and in DB that turned into this:

IN BROMLEY HUNDRED. The same bishop holds BROMLEY . . .

Why do we not find cadastral headings prefixed to the following paragraph (5va31)? Because Wouldham was not the only manor in Larkfield hundred belonging to the archbishop. The C text would have said something like this:

[61] It seems best not to call them chapters. Whether they were to be counted as separate chapters or not would only be decided later, when the numbering was added.

[62] I see no textual evidence to prove that the sections were placed in this order, but courtesy would put the archbishop first and the bishop next after him. (In later lists of the archbishop's knights, the bishop of Rochester comes first.)

In the lest of Aylesford in the hundred of Larkfield the same archbishop has a manor which is called (East) Malling … The same archbishop has a manor which is called Wouldham and the bishop of Rochester holds from him …

In D the first of these paragraphs went into section (i), carrying with it the cadastral indications, which turn up as they should in DB (3rb5); but the second paragraph went into section (ii), where it was no longer governed by any headings.

This explanation fits the facts about as well as can be expected (not perfectly but fairly well), and I think that it is sure to be right. It also has one incidental advantage, in that it allows us to make sense of a puzzling feature of DB. It seems that the D scribe who wrote section (ii) did not consider it necessary to keep repeating the phrase 'from the same archbishop'. No doubt he thought that it was obvious enough, from the arrangement of the text, that the bishop of Rochester – like the rest of the archbishop's knights, like the archbishop's monks – was one of the archbishop's tenants. But the DB scribe did not understand that. Looking through the D text, deciding (as he normally did) what changes he should make to the order of the chapters, he fell into the mistake of supposing that the bishop of Rochester was one of the king's barons; so he turned section (ii) into a separate chapter, putting it where (by his rules) it ought to be put.[63] The upshot is that anyone reading DB would think that the bishop of Rochester held his lands directly from the king – which is obviously what the DB scribe thought himself. Perhaps we may find it surprising that he was ignorant of the bishop's peculiar status; but ignorant is what he was, and he displayed his ignorance by treating section (ii) as he did. We should see this, I suppose, as one more sign (below, p. 162) that Kent was not a part of the country with which the DB scribe was personally acquainted.

In view of the complexity of the process which resulted in DB-Ke, it is hardly surprising that some paragraphs got lost, somewhere along the way. In DB itself, we see the proof that this could happen: on checking what he had written, the scribe discovered that he had dropped a paragraph (he had jumped ahead, from a point near the end of one entry, to the corresponding point in the next), and so added it in the margin (9rb). If he had failed to make a sufficiently careful check, that paragraph would have been lost. The same sort of risk existed at every stage, and a number of paragraphs – three at least – did indeed go astray. In DB's chapter 2, 'Land of the archbishop of Canterbury', there ought to exist a paragraph for Teynham (a version of which survives in α). In chapter 7, 'Land of the church of Saint Augustine', there ought to exist a paragraph for Ripple (a version of which survives in B / xAug). The third case is not quite so certain, but I think we can be fairly sure that there were two manors called Chalk, only one of which is to be found described in DB (8vb49). These are the only omissions that I have been able to detect; perhaps there may be others.

[63] By his rules (Flight 2006, p. 137), an English bishop (chapter 4) should come after an archbishop (chapters 2–3) but before a foreign bishop (chapter 5).

3

By around 1200, the records resulting from the survey had mostly been discarded or dispersed. They had ceased to serve any useful purpose; sooner or later a new broom swept them away. The thirteenth-century Exchequer had only two of the old books still in its custody: DB itself, and the volume of D which covered the three counties not covered by DB. In spite of the disparities between them, they had come to be thought of as a single book; they shared the nickname 'Domesday'. At first that name was used only by government officials, in informal memoranda. By around 1300, however, it was being used in official records, and many people outside the Exchequer were aware of the existence of the book, and of the legal significance that was attached to it, even if they had no clear understanding what the book contained. Until the mid eighteenth century (see below), 'Domesday Book' was kept in a triple-locked strongbox, not to be opened except with the concurrence of three different officials, each of whom held one of the keys. From Arthur Agard (d. 1615) onwards, several Exchequer employees are known to have taken some serious interest in the book.[64] Even for them, access to the original was not exactly easy. For outsiders, it could be difficult. A letter of introduction was only the first step. There was a not inconsiderable fee to be paid before the book could even come out of its box;[65] on top of that, transcripts were charged for at the rate of fourpence a line.

Before 1700, historians writing about Kent – Lambard (1576), Somner (1640), Philipott (1659) – made very little use of DB-Ke. They were aware of its existence, of course, but only vaguely aware of its contents. It seems to have been known, for instance, that DB had some interesting things to say about Dover, and anyone investigating the history of the Cinque Ports, by asking among his friends, would probably have been able to obtain a copy of someone else's copy of the relevant excerpts. But nobody got closely acquainted with DB-Ke itself.

William Lambard (1536–1601) has one passage mentioning 'Domesday Book' which seems to imply that he had seen the original (whether one or both volumes is not clear): it is notable, he says, that 'Saxon' letters – i.e. the special characters which English scribes had developed for writing English (or English words in a Latin text) – are almost absent here (1576, p. 210). Probably that counts as the first published comment on the palaeography of DB. In writing his book about Kent, however, Lambard seems to have been relying on excerpts made by someone else: 'that copie of Domesdaye booke, whiche I haue seene, concerning the description of this Shyre' (p. 327). A single sentence which

[64] One product of that interest worth noting here is a collection of excerpts from DB-Ke (BL Harley 1905) made by one of the deputy chamberlains, John Lowe (d. 1708).

[65] 'Until of late years it has been kept under three different locks and keys, one in the custody of the treasurer, and the others of the two chamberlains of the Exchequer, and was not to be opened but on paying a fee of 6s. 8d.' (Webb 1756, p. 7).

he quotes – *De adulterio Rex habebit hominem, Archiepiscopus mulierem* (p. 180, from 1rb30–1) – is, I imagine, the first passage from DB ever to be put into print.

William Somner (1598–1669), born and brought up in Canterbury, found employment and made his home there. Within a short walk, he had access to important archives, especially that of the cathedral church, previously almost untouched; and he found in them more than enough material to keep him busy, during the time that he could spare from his official duties. One of his discoveries – the only one which is immediately relevant here – was the manuscript I call C1. From it he printed (1640, pp. 425–40) the first two segments of text α (above, p. 15), omitting the Rochester segment.[66] From internal evidence, he could see that this text was connected with the survey of the whole of England. Beyond that, he could only guess – and his guess was that it consisted of excerpts from 'Domesday Book'. In his later publications, the source cited by that name is often α as he had printed it, not DB itself.[67]

Thomas Philipott (d. 1682), living in Greenwich, had access to many of the records of central government, but shows no sign of having consulted DB. Nearly always, his allusions to 'Dooms-day Book' turn out to be references to Somner's edition of α. The rest are too vague or too garbled to be worth citing.

An important collection of excerpts from DB was published by Thomas Gale (d. 1702), as an appendix to his edition (1691) of a batch of medieval chronicles. Gale's source was a transcript of 'Domesday Book' (both volumes) loaned to him by Sir John Trevor (d. 1717), who, at the time, was speaker of the House of Commons.[68] From this copy of DB-Ke, Gale printed much of the preliminary section (1ra–va, 2ra),[69] and also the Sandwich paragraph from the start of chapter 3 (3ra). Anyone who thought of comparing the paragraph from DB as it was printed by Gale (1691, p. 761) with the paragraph printed from C1 by Somner (1640, p. 433) could have seen that they were, though certainly connected, by no means as simply connected as Somner had supposed.

If good intentions were all it took, John Harris (d. 1719) would be the man whom we should have to thank for putting us in full possession of the evidence. Harris became one of the prebendaries of Rochester Cathedral in 1708; a few years after that, he issued a prospectus for a 'History of Kent' that he was planning to write.[70] The book grew into two volumes: but Harris died while volume I was in the press, and volume II never appeared.[71] Even the volume which did get published falls very far short of the promises which Harris had made for it; in particular it failed to include, as he had said that it would, 'a Transcript of Doomesday Book as far as relates to KENT, with many Corrections and Additions from several Manuscripts and Charters' (quoted by Rawlinson 1720, p. 89). It seems that Harris did follow through with his plan to the extent of procuring a transcript of the DB-Ke text, presumably in its entirety (Webb 1756, p. 13). Some efforts were made later to track it down, but they did not succeed.[72] The transcript made for Harris, if it existed, was never seen again.

By the mid eighteenth century, 'Domesday Book' had at last become more easily accessible. It was kept in the chapter house at Westminster, in the sole custody of Richard Morley, appointed keeper of the records in 1741.[73] A paper read to the Society of Antiquaries in December 1755 and published as a pamphlet soon afterwards – *A short account of some particulars concerning Domes-day Book, with a view to promote its being published* (Webb 1756) – includes a grateful compliment for Morley, 'whose readiness to oblige the members of this society with the inspection of this, and other records in his office, without fee or reward, it would be want of candour not to mention' (p. 7). One of Morley's subordinates was Abraham Farley (1712–1791), whose name will occur repeatedly in the next few paragraphs. (He was, as it happens, a Kentishman by birth; but he moved up to London in his twenties and stayed there for the rest of his life.)

During the 1760s, down in Kent, work was beginning on what would become the first comprehensive history of the county. Edward Hasted (1732–1812) was its author – in the end its only author.[74] There was, briefly, some thought that he might assist Charles Whitworth (d. 1778) in producing a new edition of Philipott's book, revised and brought up to date. Happily that plan fell through. Meanwhile Hasted had made contact with another potential collaborator, Thomas Astle (1735–1803). For a short period, between about 1762

[66] Though Somner is vague about his source, I take it to be certain that the text came from C1. Elsewhere, in speaking of prior Alan (1640, p. 280), he mentions the Palm Sunday incident (below, p. 39), recorded, as far as I know, in this manuscript alone. (The passage which he quotes here is from C1-7va8–10.)

[67] Not always so. Some genuine excerpts from DB are quoted in his book about gavelkind (1660, pp. 122–3), and in an essay about 'The Roman ports and forts in Kent' which was found among his papers (Somner ed. Brome 1693, pp. 35, 47).

[68] The transcript used by Gale was still in existence in the 1750s (Webb 1756, p. 8); it is not heard of again after that.

[69] Everything, that is, apart from the two stretches of text relating to Saint Martin's of Dover.

[70] An edited version of Harris's prospectus was printed by Rawlinson (1720, pp. 88–92), who says that Harris had been at work for 'above eight years' before volume I was published.

[71] The intended contents are listed in the preface to the first volume (Harris 1719, pp. iii–iv).

[72] 'Dr. Harris's papers, on his dying insolvent, came into the hands of Edward Goddard, esq; of Clyffe Pypard, c. Wilts, who had them 1761; but Mr. Hasted has not been able to recover them' (Gough 1780, p. 445).

[73] His predecessor, John Lawton, appointed in 1727, had already obtained possession of all three keys.

[74] Throughout this paragraph I am relying heavily on the biography of Hasted by Black (2001), and on a letter of hers replying to some questions of mine. I thank her for her help.

and 1767, Hasted and Astle were very close friends. Between them they came up with the plan that Astle should marry a Kentish wife (he already had his eye on a suitable young lady), find himself a house in the county, and join forces with Hasted in writing a new 'History of Kent'. None of that came about. Astle married someone else, the friendship cooled,[75] and Hasted was left to write the book by himself.

It was during that period, I think, the period when Hasted and Astle thought of themselves as collaborators, that Abraham Farley was asked to make a transcript of DB-Ke – the transcript which survives as BL Stowe 851, fos. 13–119.[76] Apparently it was Astle, not Hasted, who handled the negotiations.[77] The transcript, once made, was (so I suppose) loaned by Astle to Hasted, and remained in the latter's possession for several years it was certainly in his hands in 1769, when he had occasion to draw up a catalogue of his manuscripts (Black 2001, pp. 187–8). At some uncertain date it was returned to Astle;[78] and from that point onwards it followed the same trajectory as the rest of Astle's manuscripts,[79] finally arriving in the British Museum.

The book which began to take shape was organized topographically – lath by lath, hundred by hundred, parish by parish. (In that respect, and also in starting from the west, its structure bore some resemblance to the B version of the survey text.) Unlike Harris, Hasted did not intend to publish DB-Ke as a connected text: he dissected it into its constituent paragraphs and distributed them among the parishes to which they belonged. For this to be possible, he had to identify the place-names; and that, very largely, he managed to do successfully. With almost no help from previous writers, with little help from anyone else, Hasted was able to identify all of the easy names, and many of the difficult ones (including some which look easy but are not). To say that there are a few mistakes is not to detract from the magnitude of Hasted's achievement. Thanks to him, DB-Ke became reconnected with the landscape of Kent.

[75] In 1767, with Hasted's unwitting help, Astle stole a batch of Anglo-Saxon charters from the library at Surrenden Dering – borrowed them with no intention of returning them. More than forty years later, Hasted was still bitter about that (Black 2001, pp. 126, 351).

[76] The date suggested by Hallam (1986, p. 214), 'c.1775', is certainly a little too late.

[77] Which would explain why Astle knew and Hasted did not know how much this transcript cost. Hasted was under the impresion that it had been charged for at the standard rate, fourpence per line (which would mean, by my reckoning, upwards of 42 guineas). Astle knew that Farley had only charged 16 guineas for it (BL Stowe 851, fo. 1r).

[78] Black (2001, p. 303) suggests that the manuscript was bought by Astle in 1796, when Hasted (in prison for debt) was reduced to selling off much of his library. Astle did certainly buy one manuscript then (BL Stowe 855); but we only know that because he wrote a note on the flyleaf to say so. There is no similar note in the transcript of DB-Ke – nothing to suggest that Astle did not regard it as his own property.

[79] Including the Anglo-Saxon charters stolen from Surrenden Dering (above, note 75), now BL Stowe Charters 1–42. Speaking of one of these charters (Sawyer 1968, no. 111), Hasted says that it 'is in the Surrenden library' (1797–1801, vol. 8, p. 425); he means that it is not but ought to be.

Like most books, Hasted's book grew in the writing and took much longer to complete than had been expected. The first volume appeared in 1778, the second in 1783, the third in 1790, the fourth and final volume in 1799. By the time that the book was complete, very nearly the entire text of DB-Ke had been put into print, piece by piece – a paragraph taken from the transcript made by Farley, followed by an English translation. Before the last folio volume came out, a revised edition, in a smaller, more affordable format, had already begun to appear. It was completed in twelve volumes within four years (1797–1801). Except for one specimen paragraph (vol. 1, p. 392), the excerpts from the Latin text were dropped from this edition, on the assumption that very few people would be capable of understanding them (p. 423); the translations alone were kept.[80]

Well before that, the entire text of 'Domesday Book' had been made available in print. After much discussion and more than one false start, it had been decided to publish an edition of both volumes, primarily for the use of members of the houses of parliament.[81] By 1774, a plan had been devised which was not prohibitively expensive, and the people had been found who were competent enough to put the plan into execution. The text was printed under the supervision of John Nichols (1745–1826), from transcripts of the originals supplied by Abraham Farley. The copy of DB-Ke which Farley had made in the 1760s is a fairly loose transcript, reproducing the substance but not the appearance of the original; the copies which he made for the parliamentary edition – unfortunately none of them survive – were as tight as he could make them. It was Farley's job also to check and recheck the proofs, as they were printed off. He did his share of the work very well.

The type that was used was designed by Nichols, manufactured by Joseph Jackson (1733–1792), and set by a nameless compositor who is the true hero of the story. It was intended to be capable of reproducing most of the special characters appearing in the manuscript; but of course there had to be some limits. Comparing the printed text with a facsimile, one does not need to look very hard before starting to see its defects. Some characters were not available. The compositor had **p(ro)** but not **P(ro)**; while working on the text for Kent, apparently he had no ampersand. Some characters which he did have were redundant: the **ct** and **sl** ligatures used by him were not used by the DB scribe. In this and some other respects, eighteenth-century conventions were too strong to be resisted. Thus **æ** was substituted for tailed 'e', **j** for consonantal 'i',[82] round **s** for long 's' at the end of a word. Nevertheless, within its limitations,

[80] The folio edition (1778–99) of Hasted's *History* remains hard to get hold of; for my part, I have only ever once seen a copy. The 12-volume octavo edition (1797–1801) was reprinted in facsimile in 1972, and (minus the maps) can now be accessed through ECCO.

[81] The prehistory of this edition is recounted by Condon and Hallam (1984), more briefly by Hallam (1986).

[82] In printed Latin **j** denotes [y] (as in 'yet') – except at the start of a word, where it can optionally be read as [dzh] (as in 'jet'), the same as in printed English.

despite its anachronistic features, the parliamentary edition is a splendid piece of typography, almost unbelievably accurate.[83]

To the extent that it was completed – it had no title page or other preliminaries; nor did it have any index – the parliamentary edition was complete by 1783.[84] Since the 1970s, it has taken on a new lease of life, because it was used to provide a ready-made Latin text for the Phillimore edition of 'Domesday Book' (see below). As far as DB-Ke is concerned, I give a list of errata elsewhere (below, p. 150), in case readers who own copies of the Phillimore volume for Kent may like to emend them accordingly.

By the 1850s, the Rev. Lambert Larking was working on an edition of the DB-Ke booklet which, had it been completed, would have advanced the whole question far beyond the point which Hasted had reached.[85] By 1861 he was letting it be known that the edition was under way: there is a paragraph in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1861 which speaks of Larking's book, announcing that it is expected to appear 'early in the ensuing year'.[86] But his health was failing by then, and the edition had still not been published, nor even nearly finished, when Larking died in 1868.

After his death, as much of his draft as was in a fit state for publication was put together to make a book (Larking 1869), edited by his younger brother, J. W. Larking;[87] but that is no more than a shadow of the book which had originally been intended. What ought to have been the most important part of it, the commentary on the text (pp. 149–90), extends no further than the first three pages of DB-Ke (1r–2r), ending with the index of tenants. It is a sad fact that Larking's vast knowledge of medieval Kentish history was never brought to bear on the main text of DB. It is another sad fact that Larking's edition, incomplete but far from useless, has generally been ignored.

One component of Larking's book – as intended and also as published – was a lithographed facsimile of the original manuscript. It was the work of Frederick Netherclift.[88] The plates are superb; but they are not, and cannot be expected to be, accurate in every detail. For each page, the image had to be traced from the original by hand, before being transferred to the surface of the stone from which it would eventually be printed. (In fact, two images were needed for every page, one for the main text and another for the rubrication.) In making this facsimile, Netherclift did not just have to copy every letter; he had to reproduce every single stroke of the scribe's pen. He must have looked at the manuscript more closely and more thoroughly than anyone else has ever done. His accuracy is impressive, but of course it is not quite perfect.

From the 1820s onwards, lithography had been widely used as a means of producing illustrations for scholarly books. It was relatively cheap. It had the advantage over other techniques that corrections were easy to make. It was not just good enough (as long as one did not expect to print more than a few hundred copies); in skilled hands it achieved a subtlety of effect which engraving on metal could not even approach.

By the 1860s, however, hand-drawn lithography was (for this sort of purpose) already obsolescent. A crude technique of photographic reproduction, given the name photozincography, had been invented by the Ordnance Survey in 1859, and the Survey's superintendent, Colonel Sir Henry James (1803–1877), was looking for ways to demonstrate its usefulness. It had recently been decided that 'Domesday Book' should be given a new binding. Knowing that, James came up with the idea of producing a cheap facsimile of DB and D-ExNkSk, county by county, while the sheets were unbound. For anyone who understood the process, it was obvious that photozincography was not really very suitable for making facsimiles of ancient documents. It worked well for reproducing maps, or anything that consisted of black shapes on a white background; but it was not sensitive enough to reproduce a text written in variably dark ink on variably pale parchment. Nevertheless, James made the proposal, and got government approval for it in 1860.[89]

Behind the scenes, Larking tried to prevent the pages relating to Kent from being photozincographed. He had some success; it was agreed that Kent should be put at the end of the queue. But James was not the sort of man who could easily be deflected from his purpose. By April 1863, every other DB county had been dealt with, and Larking meanwhile had made no progress with his book. He withdrew

[83] The actual type used for the parliamentary edition was destroyed in 1808, by a fire at Nichols's printing house, but a font of similar design was used for the publications of the Record Commission. The Pipe Roll Society, when they began printing the twelfth-century exchequer rolls which had not been published previously, used 'Record type' at first; but in 1903 they decided to abandon that policy. It would, no doubt, be feasible now to design an electronic font far better than the one designed by Nichols; perhaps someone has already done it.

[84] The rest of the story is told by Hallam (1986, pp. 147–8). It seems worth adding, by the way, that one page from DB – the first page of the Surrey booklet (30r) – was engraved by James Basire and published by the Record Commission (Basire 1800).

[85] Lambert Blackwell Larking (1797–1868), vicar of Ryarsh and Burham. The Kent Archaeological Society owes its existence very largely to him; he served as its first honorary secretary (1857–61) and edited the first three volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana* (1858–60). There is an obituary by T. D. Hardy in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 7 (1868), 323–8.

[86] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 211, p. 606 (Dec. 1861).

[87] John Wingfield Larking (1801–1891). There is a note of his death in *The Times*, 20 May 1891, 7d; it speaks only of his career in the consular service.

[88] Frederick George Netherclift (1817–1892), lithographic artist and publisher. The plates commissioned by Larking appear to have been made in about 1857, 'at least two years' before the invention of photozincography (Larking 1869, p. viii).

[89] The first results – for the pages relating to Cornwall – were exhibited at the Archaeological Institute in April 1861; there is a report of the meeting in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 210, pp. 652–3 (June 1861). The Cornwall facsimile was published soon afterwards, priced at 4s. 6d. Hallam (1986, pp. 154–7) has the whole story.

his objection, and the Ordnance Survey facsimile for Kent came rolling off the press while Netherclift's plates continued gathering dust.

Thirty years afterwards, it was still possible to buy a complete set of parts of the Ordnance Survey facsimile. (Most were priced at 8 shillings, but the larger counties cost more.) As late as 1893 every fascicle was still available. Kent was one of two counties – Shropshire the other – which had gone out of print by 1896. Gloucestershire and Yorkshire were gone by 1897, Somerset, Staffordshire and Warwickshire by 1910.[90] But the other fascicles were still being advertised for sale in 1913. (I have not tried to trace the story further than that.)

For a long time (much longer than I had realized),[91] the Ordnance Survey facsimile was the image which people had in mind, when they thought about DB. Until the 1970s, it seems to have been fairly generally assumed that one could establish the text well enough by checking the parliamentary edition against the Ordnance Survey facsimile, without ever (or hardly ever) needing to consult the original. This assumption is safe only up to a point. There are many features of the manuscript which could not possibly have been reproduced typographically which also fail to show up in the facsimile. In effect it was being assumed that nothing significant was photozincographically invisible; and that was a risky proposition.[92]

There is a sequel to the story of Larking's edition. One of the sources which Larking had used was the text which I call xAug (above, p. 15). The only surviving copy occurs in a register from Saint Augustine's which had somehow found its way into the collection of 'miscellaneous books' belonging to the Exchequer official called the King's Remembrancer.[93] Larking knew of that copy: from it he transcribed a long stretch of text relating to the city of Canterbury, containing much more information than the corresponding section of DB. When his unfinished book was published, that transcript was included in it (Larking 1869, pp. 34*–5*).

Years later, it caught the eye of Adolphus Ballard (1867–1915). Though Ballard had no particular interest in Kent, he could see that this text might help to elucidate the workings of the survey; so he went back to the original register and made a transcript (not a very accurate one) of the whole of the xAug text. He went on to prepare an edition of it, with the paragraphs of xAug set alongside the parallel passages appearing in DB and C1. (For C1 he consulted the original in Canterbury, not Somner's edition.) The edition was complete by 1910 – that is the date given at the end of the introduction (p. xxvii) – but publication was much delayed. The book did not finally appear until 1920, by which time Ballard was dead.

After 'various vicissitudes' (Page 1932, p. xv), the Victoria History volume containing a translation of DB-Ke came out in 1932.[94] The translation was originally made by the Rev. F. W. Ragg,[95] who also drew the accompanying map; but it was afterwards revised to an unknown extent by the editor, William Page (1861–1934), and some of the place-names came to be identified differently. In consequence of that, the translation is, in difficult cases, quite often in contradiction with the map.[96] Apparently nobody had looked at Hasted, nor at Larking's edition. The changes made by Page were based on some desultory research by L. F. Salzman (1878–1971), who checked through a few manuscripts – all of them late, all of them in London – which were thought to be possibly relevant. Only one of them was really worth consulting, the register from Saint Augustine's in the PRO;[97] Page and his associates seem not to have realized that the most important stretch of text had already been put into print. To be blunt, none of the people principally involved had any special knowledge of Kent, and there are places where their ignorance becomes rather painfully obvious.

An introduction was provided by Nellie Neilson, who was apparently required to take the translation as given;[98] none

[90] These statements are based on the catalogues of current publications which were sometimes bound in at the back of the PRO calendars.

[91] My previous remarks on the subject (Flight 2006, p. 10) were made in ignorance, and the reader should disregard them.

[92] It might have been helpful to know, for instance, that the scribe changed his mind, while he was writing a particular sentence about Sandwich, with the result that two words had to be written over an erasure (3ra13). In order to know that, one has to be able to see that the parchment is not quite as pale or as smooth as it should be, and that the script is not quite as dark or as sharp around the edges as it should be. Photozincography could not capture nuances like these.

[93] It was certainly there by the mid seventeenth century. William Somner cited the manuscript and quoted one sentence from xAug (Somner 1660, p. 122, from A4-19v3–4).

[94] Page images of the whole of this volume can be found online at the Kent Archaeological Society's web site, www.kentarchaeology.org.uk.

[95] Frederick William Ragg (1845–1929), curate of Nonington 1877–80, vicar of Masworth in Buckinghamshire 1880–1906. He translated three other portions of DB for the Victoria History, but these were all published much earlier: Hertfordshire (1902), Bedfordshire (1904), Berkshire (1906). Those were the days when the Victoria History had some impetus behind it.

[96] For example, *Stepedone* (9rb) is marked on Ragg's map (with a query) as a place in Sheppey (which happens to be correct); but the translation has a footnote proposing to identify it as 'a manor in Norton', i.e. as Stuppington TQ 9659, which is not even in the right hundred.

[97] This is the manuscript cited in the footnotes as 'A'. 'B' is a fourteenth-century cartulary from Dover priory (Lambeth Palace 241). As for 'C', this is a late copy of α/C1; these references ought all to have been replaced with references to Neilson's translation of the latter manuscript. (There are also a few footnotes citing BL Stowe 924, a fair copy of the excerpts from Kentish cartularies made by Sir Edward Dering (1598–1644).) The footnote 'Since edited by Mr. Turner for the British Academy' (Page 1932, p. 201) confuses the 'White Book', the register consulted by Salzman, with the 'Black Book', edited in its entirety by Turner and Salter (1915–24).

[98] I notice, for instance, that she makes a point of saying, more than once, that *homines de Walt* (2vb3) means 'men of the weald' (Neilson 1932a, pp. 180, 182, 187); the translation has 'Walter's men' (p. 209). The intro-

of the footnotes attached to the text are credited to her. Unlike Page and his colleagues, she was aware of Larking's edition, and cited it here and there; she also knew that the manuscript which Salzman had consulted in the PRO contained the text which had been edited by Ballard. (It had, by chance, been published in tandem with a text from Lincolnshire edited by her.)

Probably not even Neilson herself thought highly of this introduction. Reading between the lines, one gets the sense that she wrote it because somebody had to, not because she really wanted to. The fact is that DB-Ke does not say much about the questions of legal history which were of interest to her. It is clear that she did a great deal of work, counting and tabulating the data along lines which in other counties had been productive; but here they did not seem to lead towards any definite conclusions. She began by warning her readers that they might find DB 'disappointing' (p. 177); as she approached the end she was still conscious that they might be left feeling 'disappointment' (p. 200).

Probably it was Neilson's suggestion that a translation of the Canterbury manuscript, C1, should also be included in this volume; certainly that is what happened. Since Somner's time, C1 had largely been lost sight of again. A description of it appeared in one of the reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (Sheppard 1881, pp. 315–16); but it was Ballard (1920), by quoting extracts from it in his edition of xAug, who finally brought the manuscript back into prominence. Working from photographs, Neilson produced a translation of almost the whole text,[99] most of which had never been published before. The commentary is inadequate; the place-name identifications are only haphazardly successful;[100] no effort was made to coordinate Neilson's translation of C1 with the translation of DB-Ke, except that they were indexed together.

Whatever its merits or demerits, that translation was soon superseded. Prompted by David Douglas (1898–1982), the Royal Historical Society committed itself to publishing a facsimile edition of the manuscript. The edition came out in 1944: it contained not just a reduced, monochrome facsimile of every page, but also a careful transcription of the entire text, and a long but not altogether apposite introduction (Douglas 1944).

After that, for anyone having access to a good library, it was possible to get hold of all the principal documents relating to the survey of Kent, in one form or another: Douglas's edition of C1, Ballard's edition of B / xAug, the parliamentary edition of DB and the Ordnance Survey facsimile.

duction was written before 1929 (p. 183, note 30a) and (so it seems) only slightly revised in the run-up to publication.

[99] Except for some late twelfth-century documents added at the end, of which she thought, reasonably enough, that a précis would suffice.

[100] Identifications marked with an asterisk are not to be trusted far; those marked with a dagger are at least worth thinking about. The latter are Gordon Ward's suggestions; he published a commentary of his own (Ward 1933) on C1's lists of parish churches.

The aim which inspired the Phillimore edition of 'Domesday Book' (1975–86) was to make 'a cheap text and uniform translation' easily available to everyone.[101] I cannot imagine that anyone would fail to approve of that objective, or fail to admire the efficiency with which the enterprise was carried through. As for me, the work which I have done would not have been practicable without the Phillimore edition: I have said that before (Flight 2006, pp. 10–11) and am glad to have this opportunity to say it once again. For each county, the Phillimore edition consists basically of two components: on the left-hand pages a reproduction of the parliamentary edition, dissected into pieces of suitable size; on the right-hand pages a parallel translation into English. At the end of each volume there are notes, indexes and a map of the county.[102]

It would, I think, be fair to say that the Phillimore translations are not universally liked; their uniformity was achieved by imposing a set of rules which, perhaps, were not all well-advised. They are also more prone to error than one would wish. In passages which consist of something more than a string of formulas, the meaning is sometimes simply misunderstood. Theoretically the 'draft translations' were 'the work of a team', and each of them was 'checked by several people'. But that is only going to work if there is at least one person involved who can recognize Latin idioms when he or she sees them.[103] In any case, I take leave to doubt whether the translation of DB-Ke was checked as thoroughly as that.[104]

The volume for Kent, edited by Philip Morgan, was published in 1983. Some errors in the parliamentary edition were noted and corrected; a few doubtful readings were checked against the original. As far as the place-names are concerned, the Phillimore edition does not advance much beyond the Victoria History; the identifications which were new were mostly wrong.[105]

A new facsimile of DB was published in 1986 (Alecto Historical Editions 1986); the history of the whole project is recounted by Pearson (2001). As in 1861–3, the production of a facsimile was coordinated with a rebinding of the

[101] The quotations in this and the following paragraph come from the 'Introduction', which appears (with variations) in every volume.

[102] It has annoyed me occasionally that the pages are not numbered. If there is information in the notes which one needs to cite, there is no easy way to do it.

[103] Without wishing to be cruel, I suppose that I have to justify this statement by citing a few examples. Here are some from DB-Ke: *si plus opus esset* (1ra15) does not mean 'If there was more labour'; *si abierit domum* (1rb8) does not mean 'If he has gone away from home'; *sin autem* (1rb12) does not mean 'But if'.

[104] For example, nobody noticed that the phrases *et super homines ipsorum* (1rb16) and *in ciuitate* (3va48) are missing from the translation.

[105] Again I suppose that I have to cite an example. There is a list of three places which paid rents to the canons of Saint Martin's – *Nordeuuode, Ripe, Brandet* (2rb17, 34–5) – and the Phillimore edition is wrong about every one. Two of them were successfully identified by Larking (1869); the one which Larking got wrong (Ripple) can be identified by means of the text printed by Ballard (1920).

manuscript. While they were unbound, the sheets were all photographed in colour – the man who took these photographs was Miki Slingsby – and the photographs were reproduced, by way of a process called continuous-tone lithography, to make the facsimile itself. They were printed on sheets and half-sheets which replicated the construction of the original; the gatherings were stitched together but not bound.

Despite the hyperbolic claims that were made for it at the time, the Alecto facsimile is not very good. The reproduction has a muddy look; it failed to do justice to the photographs, or to the manuscript itself. Scanned images of all the photographs taken in 1985 (of D-ExNkSk as well as DB) were made available for sale through the National Archives in 2006;[106] the resolution is mediocre (the PDF files are roughly half a megabyte each), but anyone who looks at these images will see at once how much detail was lost from the facsimile.

It was decided at an early stage (unwisely in my opinion) that the facsimile would need to be accompanied by a translation into English. That meant, straight away, that a huge investment of time and effort was required, beyond what was needed for producing the facsimile itself. Like the facsimile, the resulting translation was printed in gatherings which replicated the construction of the manuscript; and the text was laid out – column by column, paragraph by paragraph – in the same way as the Latin. The smallest marks in the margin (erasures, mysterious dots, and so on) were all meticulously recorded (this was Caroline Thorn's contribution); but no notice was taken of alterations in the main text, which, one might think, are more likely to be significant.[107]

The 'Alecto County Edition' of DB-Ke came out six years later (Williams and Martin 1992). There is nothing specific to be said about the facsimile; the translation was based on the Victoria History version, but extensively revised throughout. By and large, the changes made in the language were changes for the better, but some errors were introduced. (One formula is consistently mistranslated. *Silua x porc'* does not mean 'woodland for 10 pigs'; it means what Ragg took it to mean, 'woodland (to render) 10 swine', i.e. as much woodland as yields 10 pigs by way of rent.) The place-names, with only a very few exceptions (Williams and Martin 1992, p. 67), are identified exactly as they were by Morgan (1983).[108]

[106] www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/domesday.asp.

[107] To bring the story up to date, I should note that the entire Alecto translation, of D-ExNkSk as well as DB, has been reformated (unintelligently) and reprinted as a separate book (Williams and Martin 2002); I leave it to the reader to decide whether the book is worth buying. As far as Kent is concerned, I notice (without looking hard) that a comment added by Agard at the foot of fo. 1v has attached itself to a paragraph with which it has no connection (p. 5) and that the marginal entry on fo. 9r has been dropped (p. 22).

[108] Two places correctly identified by Morgan are misidentified here, for no reason that I can guess at. *Lerham* (4va2) is not 'Lenham (?Heath)'; *Bermelie* (8vb30) is not 'East Barming'.

A long introductory essay by Richard Eales was written especially for the 'County Edition' (Eales 1992). There is no original research in it. It takes the text and translation as given; it cites all the published documents, in their published form, but does not cite any others. It is almost entirely retrospective: it focuses primarily on the period before 1066, secondarily on the interval between 1066 and 1086; the final paragraphs carry the story forward as far as 1088. Within those limitations, it is a thorough, thoughtful review of the evidence, and of the uses which historians have tried to make of it.

For most people, unfortunately, this essay and the others like it are hard to get hold of, because libraries which could afford to buy even one volume of the Alecto edition are few and far between. I had thought that this problem would have resolved itself by now, with the publication of the 'Digital Domesday County Edition'. But that project seems to have ground to a halt, and I cannot discover when, if ever, the disc for Kent is going to be released.

To give the reader some sense of the differences between them, I print two sample passages as they appear in each of these three versions (Table 4). The first is the opening paragraph, part of the description of Dover (1ra4–28), where the Latin text was reporting facts peculiar to this one place; the second is a short paragraph, chosen at random from the middle of the text (7va21–4), where the standard formulas sufficed for what had to be said.

As the reader may have perceived, I am not enthusiastic about any of these translations, but that does not mean that I am planning to produce a version of my own. In the commentary (chapter 5), some passages will be found put into English, with explanatory remarks where they seem to be needed. But these piecemeal translations are not intended to be uniform: sometimes they are tight, sometimes they are loose, whatever the immediate context seems to call for.

Anyone who tries translating DB had to decide on some policy for the treatment of proper names. For my part, I dislike the trend towards spelling the English personal names in a tenth-century West-Saxon manner (so that 'Ulstan', 'Sired', 'Brixi', become 'Wulfstan', 'Sigeræd', 'Beorhtsige'). By the late eleventh century, even English-born scribes would have thought such spellings old-fashioned. (The historian Edmer, who invariably wrote his name *Edmerus*, would have been surprised to find himself turned into someone called 'Eadmær'.) More to the point, it is characteristic of the Latin text (see below) that simplified spellings are preferred, and a translation ought to be faithful in this respect. If the translator thinks it desirable to note that 'Brixi' is the DB scribe's idea of a phonetic spelling for 'Beorhtsige', that can be done, and done just once, somewhere in the apparatus.

The tendency to archaize the English names seems all the more objectionable when it collides with the convention that French names should be spelt in the modern English manner. As it happens, I dislike that convention too. There is, as far as I can see, nothing to be gained by replacing 'Willelm' with 'William', 'Rannulf' with 'Ranulph', 'Goisfrid' with 'Geoffrey'. Any editor who thinks it necessary to state that 'Willelm' is an eleventh-century spelling for 'William' can find some place to do it: a footnote, a table of equivalences, a parenthesized remark in the index. With only some slight exceptions, the DB scribe is consistent in the spelling of these names, and it is not the translator's job to overrule him. The same considerations apply to French place-names used as surnames. It is, for instance, a well-established fact that Radulf de Curbespine took his name from a village near Bernay which is now called Courbépine; but again that fact belongs in the apparatus, not in the translation itself.

4

Transcriptions, translations, and other derivative versions have their uses; but the reader who has access to a facsimile – of DB itself, or of C1 or R1 – should not pass up the chance of approaching that much closer to the original. The men who wrote these manuscripts were good scribes, doing their best to write legibly. They had their quirks, of course, but who does not? It always takes a little effort at first to get used to somebody else's handwriting. Though some medieval scripts are very difficult to read, the sort of script that these scribes were using is not. The alphabet has few surprises; the letter-shapes are mostly familiar enough. Long 's' can be disconcerting at first – but anyone who has looked at a printed book more than two hundred years old will have had to learn to distinguish long 's' from 'f'. It just requires a little practice. The same is true here. Using a transcription as a crib, anyone who tries will soon find that they have taught themselves to read DB, or C1 or R1, at least to the extent of being able to decipher the writing.

Not everyone, I know, was taught Latin at school (as I was, for seven years, by an excellent teacher). But again I would urge the reader not to boggle. This is not literary Latin, intended to be recited aloud before a sophisticated audience. There are no rhetorical tricks, no figures of speech, no jokes. This is business Latin, deliberately kept simple, intended only for making statements of fact. The vocabulary is restricted; the syntax is straightforward. Especially in DB, much of the text consists of short formulas, repeated in one paragraph after another. Using a translation as a crib, the reader who comes across one of these formulas for the first time can discover what it means – and can rest assured that it will mean the same thing the second or the third or the hundredth time, as often as it recurs.

It has often been said that DB is hard to read because the Latin is so heavily abbreviated. I am not even sure that this is true: it rather depends on the reader. The scribe, no doubt, thought that he was making things easier, not harder, by cutting words short as he did. By using a formula like *T'ra e' .. car'*, he was letting his readers know that they were not expected to care about details of spelling and grammar: they should simply take note of the facts. As for me, when I see the notation *TRE*, I do not stop to think that this means *tempore regis Edwardi*, which means 'in the time of king Edward', which means 'before 1066'. I read it as 'tee ar ee'. There must once have been a time, I suppose, when I did not know what that meant, but I know well enough by now. Similarly, when I see a sentence like *ual' iiii sol'*, I do not stop to think that this means *valet quatuor solidos*, which means 'it is worth four shillings', which is 48 pence. I read it as 'val four sol', and I know what that means straight away, without needing to turn it into a well-formed English sentence.

By talking to myself like this, in a mixture of English words and truncated Latin words, I am not doing anything that I think I should be ashamed of. On the contrary, I take it that the DB scribe was expecting his readers to do something similar to this – though the readers whom he expected to have were people who would think, not in English like me, but in French. Abbreviated Latin resembles abbreviated French; the more drastic the abbreviation, the closer the resemblance. The sentence *ual' iiii sol'* is perfect French, if one chooses to read it as such. Subject to the same condition, *iiii* is perfect English. Anyone who writes a numeral – '48 pence' rather than 'forty-eight pence' - is giving his or her readers the option of using the language that they are most comfortable with.

Because the language was dead and the orthography was fossilized, it is always hard to know how a medieval scribe was pronouncing his Latin, or expecting his readers to pronounce it. Spelling mistakes are the only clue that one can look for; and a well-taught scribe, like the DB scribe, does not make mistakes of that kind.[109] The pronunciation current in Rome was of course regarded as the norm; but the church of Rome has (so it is said) traditionally been tolerant of some variation. If an abbot from Normandy, for instance, visited Rome, he would be expected to have a command of Latin grammar; but he would not be expected to pronounce the words in precisely the same way as an Italian abbot. Tolerance, however, is bound to have its limits. It may be that a Norman abbot would have been well-advised to have a few elocution lessons, if he did not want to be sneered at behind his back.[110]

[109] Of the manuscripts mentioned in this book, only C5 has numerous wrong spellings (below, p. 280).

[110] A biography of archbishop Lanfranc, written at Le Bec in about 1140, includes an interesting passage (ed. Gibson 1993, pp. 671–2) which might seem to be relevant here. The author is trying to imagine what it would have been like, a hundred years earlier, for a highly-educated Italian (such as Lanfranc) to enter a primitive Norman monastery (such as Le Bec then was); this Italian, he thinks, would have had to be careful how he spoke his Latin, if he were not to seem to be showing off. But the thought in this author's mind turns out to be, not that the monks of Le Bec might have been pronouncing their Latin differently, but that they might have been pronouncing it wrongly – that they might have been so ignorant of the language that they could not distinguish between long vowels and short

Victoria History (1932)	Phillimore (1983)	Alecto (1992)
DOVERE [Dover] in the time of King Edward used to pay 18 pounds, of which money (*denariis*) King Edward had two-thirds (*partes*) and Earl Godwin the (other) third. [This was one moiety]. And tallying with this (*contra hoc*) the canons of St. Martin had another moiety. The burgesses supplied to the king once in the year 20 ships for 15 days, and in each ship were 21 men. This (service) they did because he had remitted (*perdonaverat*) to them the sac and soc. Whenever the king's messengers came there they paid 3 pence for the passage of a horse in the winter and 2 pence in the summer, the burgesses finding a steersman and one other helper; and if more help was needed it was obtained out of (the steersman's) pay (*de pecunia ejus*). In the interval between (*a*) the feast of St. Michael and (*usque ad*) that of St. Andrew the town was under the king's peace (*trewa* regis erat in villa*). If any one broke it the king's reeve took for the breach a fine from all in common. A permanent settler (*manens assiduus*) in the town paid customary dues to the king (and) was exempted from toll throughout England. All these customs were in force there at the time when King William came into England. Just after he came (*in ipso primo adventu ejus*) into England the town was burnt down, and therefore a right valuation could not be made of what it was worth when the Bishop of Bayeux received it. It is now valued at 40 pounds, and yet the reeve pays therefrom 54 pounds, to the king 24 pounds of pence at 20 to the ore; to the Earl 30 pounds by tale (*ad numerum*). * *Vel pax* is interlined here.	DOVER before 1066 paid £18, of which pence King Edward had two parts and Earl Godwin the third. Against this, the Canons of St. Martin's had the other half. The burgesses gave 20 ships to the King once a year for 15 days. In each ship were 21 men. They did this because he had given over to them full jurisdiction. When the King's messengers came there, they gave 3d in winter and 2d in summer for horse passage. The burgesses found a steersman and 1 other assistant. If there was more labour, it was hired with his own money. From the Feast of St. Michael until the Feast of St. Andrew the King's truce, that is peace, was in the town. If anyone broke it, the king's reeve received the common fine for it. Whoever lived permanently in the town and paid customary dues to the King was exempt from toll throughout the whole of England. All these customs were there when King William came to England. At his first arrival in England the town was burnt. Its valuation could not therefore be reckoned, what its value was when the Bishop of Bayeux acquired it. Now it is assessed at £40; however, the reeve pays £54, that is £24 of pence, which are 20 to the ora, to the King and £30 at face value to the Earl.	DOVER in the time of King EDWARD rendered £18, of which money King Edward had two parts and Earl Godwine the third. Besides this the canons of St Martin had the other half. The burgesses gave to the king once in the year 20 ships for 15 days, and in each ship were 21 men. They did this for him because he had remitted to them the sake and soke. Whenever the king's messengers came there they gave 3d. for the passage of a horse in the winter and 2[d.] in the summer. The burgesses found a steersman and one other helper; and if more help were needed it was hired out of his pay. From Michaelmas up to the feast of St Andrew there was a truce of the king, that is peace, in the town. If anyone broke it the king's reeve took a common fine for it. Whoever dwelt permanently in the vill rendered a customary due to the king [and] was quit of toll throughout England. All these customs were there when King William came into England. On his very first arrival in England the vill itself was burned down, and therefore a valuation could not be made of what it was worth when the Bishop of Bayeux received it. It is now valued at £40, and yet the reeve pays from it £54: to the king £24 of pence at 20 to the ora, to the earl £30 by tale.
Wadard holds NOTESTEDE [Nursted] of the bishop. It is assessed at 2 sulungs. There is land for 2 ploughs. On the demesne is 1; and there are 4 bordars and a church and 4 serfs, and woodland (to render) 3 swine. T.R.E. it was worth 4 pounds, and when received 3 pounds. Now (it is worth) 5 pounds. Ulstan held it of King E(dward).	Wadard holds NURSTEAD from the Bishop. It answers for 2 sulungs. Land for 2 ploughs. In lordship 1. 4 smallholders. A church; 4 slaves; woodland, 3 pigs. Value before 1066 £4; when acquired £3; now £5. Wulfstan held it from King Edward.	Wadard holds NURSTEAD of the bishop. It is assessed at 2 sulungs. There is land for 2 ploughs. In demesne is 1 [plough], and there are 4 bordars, and a church, and 4 slaves. [There is] woodland for 3 pigs. TRE it was worth £4; when received, £3; now £5. Wulfstan held it of King Edward.

Table 4. Three translations of two passages from DB-Ke.

By and large, the spelling of Latin is transparent. Every character has just one value: the sound which it denotes is always the same, and is always to be pronounced. There are two large exceptions, **i** and **u**, which each represent both a consonant and a vowel; and then there are some particular exceptions which offer additional scope for variation. As far as I can catch any hint, the rules which the DB scribe was following would look something like this:

c before **e** or **i** is [tsh] (as in the English word 'cheap')

ch is [k] (only in Greek words)

g before **e** or **i** is [dzh] (as in 'gem')

gn is [ny] (as in 'onion')

h is silent (as in 'honest')

i as a consonant is [y] (as in 'yet')

sc before **e** or **i** is [ts] (as in 'tsar')

u as a consonant is [v] (as in 'vain')

At the start of a word, Latin [y] had evolved into French [dzh] (i.e. the same sound as soft **g**), and this shift tended to feed back into the pronunciation of Latin, among people who had grown up speaking French. A word like *iugum*, for example, could turn from ['yugum] into ['dzhugum], under the influence of the everyday language. My feeling is that the DB scribe would have regarded that as a vulgar habit, not to be encouraged; but I cannot say that I have any solid grounds for this suspicion. On the other hand, there is good evidence to suggest that he was, rather oddly, pronouncing

vowels. What would Lanfranc have done if he had been ordered to mispronounce a Latin word? He would have remembered his vows and obeyed.

sc as [ts] in a word like *scilicet*.[111] (In a word like *scira*, an English word treated as a Latin word, this [ts] is an approximation to English [sh] – a sound for which the DB scribe had no better spelling, because for him it did not exist in either Latin or French.)

The letter **k** is a puzzle by itself. For some reason which I do not understand, this scribe made a point of using it in the word *marka*, where one might have thought, as many scribes did think, that **c** would serve the purpose. Otherwise he did not use **k** at all.

The DB scribe wrote in Latin because he was conscious of writing for posterity; but the posterity which he had in mind was one inhabited by people who – like himself and his friends and colleagues – thought and conversed in French. To put oneself into the place of one of the readers whom he imagined having, it might seem like a good idea to gain some acquaintance with eleventh-century French, as it was put into writing by an eleventh-century scribe.

It *would* be a good idea, if only it were possible. For anyone aware that there survives a great quantity of written English dating from before 1066, it may come as a shock to discover that there is very little written French earlier than the twelfth century. Ker's *Catalogue of manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957) is a big book: concisely worded and closely printed, it runs to more than 600 pages. A catalogue of manuscripts containing Old French, designed on a similar scale and restricted to the period before 1100, would (at a guess) not exceed a dozen pages. As far as I can gather, there is not a single piece of eleventh-century French prose or verse surviving in an eleventh-century manuscript.[112]

That French verse was composed in the eleventh century, and was sometimes put into writing, is not in any doubt. But the very fact that it was written in French branded it as ephemeral. A poet who wanted his work to survive had no choice but to write in Latin. If he wrote a poem in French, he might show it to his friends; if they liked it, they might make a copy; but the chances of any copy finding its way into a library were vanishingly small.

The closest one can get to eleventh-century French is to find a twelfth-century manuscript which looks as if it was copied from an earlier exemplar. There survives, for instance, a manuscript written at Saint Alban's, probably in the 1130s, which includes a copy of a French poem, more than 600 lines long, recounting the legend of Saint Alexis.[113] The scribe, it seems, had no poetic ambitions of his own: he was simply making a copy of the exemplar that he had in front of him. Because this is verse, it can be said for certain that the copy is a rather bad one. Numerous lines do not scan or assonate correctly;[114] a few stanzas have lost a line or two. Most important, it seems clear that there were some grammatical features which this scribe failed to comprehend, because, by his time, they had already dropped out of the language. It is from evidence like this, fitted into some general understanding of the way in which the language evolved, that eleventh-century French can, after a fashion, be reconstructed.

In fact, if I am not mistaken, the French words and phrases that one finds embedded in the Latin text of DB form the largest single contemporary record of the eleventh-century language. By itself, the DB-Ke booklet does not produce much of a crop (Table 5); but in DB as a whole some hundreds of words occur which are either unadorned French, or French only very thinly disguised as Latin. The morsels of French contained in DB were extracted and listed, long ago, in an article by Hildebrand (1884). Via that article, some of them have found their way into dictionaries and manuals of Old French. Perhaps they are too small to be of much linguistic interest: there are none that consist of more than three consecutive words. Even so, it would seem to me that the time is overdue for someone to take another look at the evidence.[115] Hildebrand was working from the printed text; his extracts came from the C text and the D text as well as from DB itself; and of course it never occurred to him to think that DB was all the work of a single scribe – a man with ideas of his own. A closer study, focusing on this one man's work, might turn out to be a worthwhile undertaking.[116]

From this point of view, the value of DB derives largely from one of the innovations which the DB scribe was aiming to make. Most other scribes, when they came to a French surname or place-name, turned it into Latin as a matter of course. The DB scribe (so it seems) regarded this as a foolish affectation, allowable perhaps in a work of literature but not appropriate here. If the word was French, that was how he wrote it. There was a baron who went by

[111] Chiefly from his experiments in spelling *cotsets*, an English word treated as a French word, which occurs very frequently in some booklets (but never in DB-Ke). Both in the middle and at the end, **ts** can be replaced with **z**, which is normal for written French; in the middle only (where it is followed by **e**), **ts** can be replaced with **sc**.

[112] On the other hand, if anyone would like to see a specimen of tenth-century French, I can tell them where to look. The manuscript in question (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale 150), which came from the abbey of Saint-Amand, is (so the catalogue tells me) a ninth-century copy of the sermons of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus translated (from Greek into Latin) by Rufinus of Aquileia. Three blank leaves at the back (fos. 141–3) were used by later scribes for an assortment of additions, and one of these additions (fo. 141v1–15) is a piece of French verse in praise of the Spanish martyr Saint Eulalia. Images and text can be found at bookline-03.valenciennes.fr/bib/decouverte/histoire/cantilene/141v.htm.

[113] The manuscript is now in Hildesheim. It was described in detail, and all the artwork was reproduced, by Pächt, Dodwell and Wormald (1960). An online edition can be accessed through www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/index.shtml.

[114] By assonance is meant that in each stanza the last stressed syllable in every line has to have the same vowel.

[115] It might be worth noting, for instance, that this scribe writes *l'asne* (meaning 'the ass') without regard for the case. If he had been writing poetry, no doubt he would have used the nominative form *li asnes* where the context required it; but here he does not bother.

[116] An article by Clark (1992), though well worth reading, falls short of what is needed.

appevile 9va
barbes 11rb
labatailge 11vb
braibove 8vb
columbels 1ra bis, 2ra, . . . , columbers 11vb
curbespine 1ra, 2ra, 2rb, . . . , curbespin(a) 11vb, 12va
dowai 6vb
(h)erbag(ium) 3vb, 4rb, 9vb
folet 4va
gand 12vb bis
girunde 10va
hesding 6rb, 6va, 9ra
maminot 7ra
mannevile 13va
maresc 10vb, 11ra, 13ra, . . . , maresch 13rb ter
marsuin 5va
molin 6va, molins (plural) 3va
montfort 1ra, 4va, 9vb, . . . , monfort 9rb
ow 4ra, 4rb, 7vb, . . .
paisforere 9vb, paisfor' 10vb, pastforeire 6rb
parag(ium) 7rb, 11rb
pasnag(ium) 9vb, 11vb, 12ra, . . .
pevrel 9ra
port 2va, 2vb, 6ra, . . . , porth 6ra, 10ra, 10rb, . . .
ros 6ra, 6rb, 6vb, . . .
tahum 8va, taum 10vb
tenut (error for *tenuit*) 13vb
tinel 11rb
valbadon 11vb, 12va

Table 5. French words in DB-Ke. (No more than three instances of any spelling are cited; the dots denote that there are more. In Latinized words the Latin elements are bracketed.)

the nickname 'goat'. The C scribes wrote that as Latin and called him Willelm *capra*; the DB scribe wrote it as French and called him Willelm *chievre*.[117] Similarly he made it a rule to write *de curbespine*, not *de curva spina*, *de dowai*, not *de duaco*, *de montfort*, not *de monte forti*, *de valbadon*, not *de valle badonis*. By and large, later scribes came to follow his example.

The spelling which had been developed for French was based, of course, on the spelling used for Latin; but it was not yet as rigidly fixed. In some respects, the DB scribe can be seen experimenting with different spellings, as he goes along (Flight 2006, p. 141); but this does not happen to any large extent. As with Latin, the reader is expected to know that certain characters vary in value, according to the context. In French, however, the demands being made on the reader are very much greater. (One had to know, for instance, that **a** and **e** should be pronounced through the nose if they were followed by **m** or **n**.)

As far as the consonants are concerned, the rules which the DB scribe was following (and expecting us to follow) would look something like this:

c before **a** is [k]

c before **e** or **i** is [tsh] (as in 'church')

ch is [k] where **c** would be [tsh]

d between vowels is [dh] (as in 'mother')[118]

g before **a** is [g]

g before **e** or **i** is [dzh] (as in 'gem')

gl or **lg** is equivalent to **ll**

gn or **ng** is equivalent to **nn**

h is [h] (only in non-Latin words)

i as a consonant is [dzh] (as in 'judge')

ll is [ly] (as in 'million')

nn is [ny] (as in 'minion')

qu is [kw][119]

rr is [rr], the only double consonant that persisted in spoken French (other doublings, **ll**, **nn**, **ss**, **uu**, are merely tricks of spelling)

s between vowels is [z][120]

ss is [s] where **s** would be [z]

t following a vowel at the end of a word is [th] (as in 'thick')

u as a consonant is [v]

uu is [w] (only in non-Latin words)

z is shorthand for **ts**, normally used only at the end of a word

One negative feature should also be taken note of. In words which in Latin began with [sk], [sp] or [st], the tendency in French was to turn the [s] into a separate syllable by starting the word with a vowel (a 'prothetic *e*', as the jargon has it). Thus *spina* 'thorn' would become *espine* [əs'pinə], *scutum* 'shield' would become *escut* [əs'kuth]. The DB scribe did not approve of this tendency. He spelt such words without an **e**, and presumably pronounced them accordingly.

If the DB scribe had been transported forward into the nineteenth century, he could have found people in France who – if they were patient enough to make the effort – would probably have been able to understand something of what he was saying: as far as I can judge, his best hope would have been to try talking to an old lady whose idea of a long

117 Linguists may think it worth noting this as proof that Latin [ka] had (if the syllable was open) shifted to [kie] or [kye] in the sort of French that the DB scribe was speaking.

118 'Between vowels' is a simplification. The same thing happens if **d** is followed by **r** and then by a vowel. Thus *pedre* 'father' is ['pedhrə]. In his spelling of English, to countermand this rule, the DB scribe wrote **dd** for [d] between vowels.

119 Normally so, though possibly [k] in some particular words. That the DB scribe was pronouncing it [kw] is clear from his spelling of English names like *Quenintone* (DB-Gl-167vb), *Querendone* (DB-Bu-149va), *Quintone* (DB-Nn-228va).

120 Again a simplification: **s** becomes [z] before some consonants too. Thus *masle* is ['mazlə], *asne* is ['aznə]. (It is possible, however, that in this sort of context the [z] had already ceased to be pronounced.)

journey was an outing to the market in Valenciennes.[121] I rely on the reader's good sense to treat this experiment in time-travel with a suitable degree of disdain. It is not to be thought that the DB scribe was attempting to transcribe the sort of French which was spoken in the particular town or village where he had chanced to be born. He was aiming to construct a written form of French which would be more or less easily understood by all his expected readers; and those readers might come from any part of northern France, from Flanders to Brittany, which had contributed some of the manpower for the invasion and settlement of England.

The third ingredient of the DB text consists of those words which are neither Latin nor French. Most importantly, that means the place-names. The challenge facing the DB scribe was to devise some system of spelling for these foreign words (foreign to him and his anticipated readers) which could be used consistently throughout the book that he was writing. Nothing like this had ever been attempted on such a scale before. The system had to work for the whole of England; it had to be able to cope with Breton personal names, and with Welsh and Cornish place-names; it had to allow for the fact that English was pronounced rather differently in the north from in the south. But the nub of the problem was how to spell the English place-names, pronounced as they were, at the time of the survey, in the southern part of the country. He had no intention of using the conventional orthography which English scribes had developed for writing English. His readers would not understand it, and would not want to have to learn it. What he planned to construct in its place was some system of phonetic spelling, based on his spelling of French, which would allow his readers (if they were familiar with written French, as he took it for granted that they would be) to pronounce these strange names, without much hesitation, in a tolerably accurate way.

There were, we might guess, some parts of the country of which the DB scribe had personal knowledge. (But it seems fairly clear, by the way, that Kent was not one of those parts.) Some cities and towns were important enough that he had surely heard of them, even if he had not visited them. Most of the time, however, he had nothing to guide him beyond the name of the village as he found it spelt in his source-text – as it had been written down by one of the B scribes, as it had been copied by one of the C scribes, as it had been copied again by one of the D scribes. From that spelling, he had to guess what the English name would sound like; and then he could respell the name, according to his own rules. Sometimes D's spelling misled him into making a wrong guess; that was the risk that he was taking. Sometimes it made no sense to him; and in that case he could only copy it as he found it, hoping at any rate not to make things worse. But in general it was good enough that he could guess correctly at the English name – correctly enough, at least, for us to be able to identify the place in question, from the DB scribe's respelling of its name.

In some respects, the spelling that he used was too simple to be fully adequate. For instance, he had no way of writing [th] (as in 'thick'). In French that sound only occurred at the end of a word: it was written with a **t**, and the reader was expected to know how to pronounce it. In English the sound could occur at the beginning of a word. Having given the matter some thought (as I take it for granted that he did), the DB scribe decided that **t** would be good enough: if his readers said [t] instead of [th], as in *Turneham* (8rb38) for Thurnham, they would still be understood (and not giggled at too much) by the natives. On the other hand, there were some peculiar sounds which they would have to be given some help with. How, for instance, could they be induced to say [kn] (as in Knowlton)? An English scribe would have written **cn**, not expecting his readers to have any trouble with that. The DB scribe decided to turn the [k] into a separate syllable by inserting an **e** between the **c** and the **n**; but that meant that he also had to insert an **h** between the **c** and the **e** (because **cen** would be read as [tshen]); so Knowlton became *Chenoltone* (11rb33), to be read as [kənol'tonə].

The orthography developed by the DB scribe was long-lastingly influential, but not all of his suggestions were accepted by later scribes. One which lapsed was his use of **ch** for [k]. The twelfth-century exchequer rolls (surviving continuously from 1156 onwards) do largely retain this usage at first (*Chent*, *Chemesinges*, *Chingeswude*, for Kent, Kemsing, Kingswood); but sometimes they use **ch** to mean [tsh] (*Chiselherst*, *Chert*, *Cherringes*, for Chislehurst, Chart, Charing), which had already become its value in the approved spelling of literary French.[122] The ambiguity persists for more than thirty years. Each time we meet the notation **ch**, we have to stop and think: are we supposed to read it as [k] or [tsh]? The roll for 1194 (which, without having seen it, I would guess to be the work of a newly appointed scribe) is the first one where we can see a new system at work. In this and the subsequent rolls, except for an occasional hiccup, **ch** is always [tsh]; and words which the DB scribe would have written with **ch** are, to make doubly sure, written with **k** instead of **c**.

For the most part, however, the DB scribe's innovations stood the test of time. Adopted and (in some respects) augmented by later generations of scribes, they became so thoroughly integrated into the spelling of English that it is hard for us to realize that somebody had to think them up and

[121] The sort of French which was spoken in the region called Hainaut – partly in France, partly in Belgium – did not quite fit into the conventional classification of French dialects. Approached from the Belgian side, it seemed too much like Picard to be counted as a form of Wallon; approached from the French side, it seemed too much like Wallon to be counted as a form of Picard. But it was, whatever it was called, decidedly different from Parisian French. The people who spoke it were not only aware of the differences: they made a point of exaggerating them – to the extent, for instance, of dropping the *e* from the front of a word like *eglise*, on the assumption that this was a Parisian affectation (another objectionable prothetic *e*) which they should take care not to imitate.

[122] As fas as Kent is concerned, the first use of **ch** for [tsh] occurs in the roll for 1158: *Cheritun'* (GREx 1158:181) is certainly Cheriton. (But of course one cannot rely on single instances, which might be the result of some momentary misunderstanding. The pattern is what counts.)

put them to work in the first place. But if we stop to wonder why 'know' is written with 'k' instead of 'c', or why 'quick' is written with 'qu' instead of 'cw', a large part of the answer is to be found in DB.

5

So, finally, to business. In chapters 2–4, the reader will find transcriptions of the three surviving texts – α, B / xAug, DB-Ke – which were generated by the survey of Kent carried out in the spring and summer of 1086. These are the primary sources. Chapter 5 is a commentary, to be read in parallel with the DB-Ke text. Without aiming to say everything that might be said, I have done my best to embed the text into the landscape – not just to identify the named places, but also to indicate, as far as possible, which paragraphs are likely to cover some places not mentioned by name. Beyond that, I have used my discretion, commenting only on those passages which seem to me to require some explanation, to the extent that I think I have something useful to say.

Chapter 6 contains a derivative text, essentially just an epitome of DB-Ke, which has some (but not very many) points of interest; I would not have thought it worth printing if it did not survive in a very early copy. The other chapters are not directly connected with the survey, but will, I hope, prove useful. Chapter 7 is a collection of documents (a few of which have not been printed before) which help to illuminate some aspects of the feodal landscape as it existed at around the time of the survey. Chapter 8 consists of lists of parish churches (one not previously printed), the earliest of which do certainly date from the late eleventh century. More distant still, chapters 9 and 10 are a cursory review of some of the thirteenth-century (and later) evidence which, I suggest, the reader will need to take account of. Without some awareness of this evidence, the records of the survey risk being misunderstood, or not understood as exactly as they might be – or so I think the reader who makes the experiment will discover.

Throughout this book, I have concentrated on the prospective side of the question, rather than the retrospective. I have tried to trace connections forward in time, from the late eleventh century as far as the mid thirteenth; I have made little effort to trace them backwards, into the pre-conquest past. Of course that needs to be done as well; but it is not the first thing to be done.