THE GELD ACCOUNT ABSTRACTS IN THE LIBER EXONIENSIS

By R. WELLDON FINN, M.A.

The geld accounts incorporated in the Liber Exoniensis, commonly styled the “Geld Rolls” (though there is no evidence that their originals were ever on rolls), are mere abstracts of documents now vanished, which must have been a great deal more elaborate than these tantalizing and puzzling survivals. That they are the result of an official enquiry into the payment and collection of a geld levied at the rate of 6s. upon the hide is plain. Though the term Inquisitio Gheldi makes a solitary appearance—in the imperfect list of breves which closes the Liber Exoniensis as we have it (fol. 532)—it may justly be applied to these summaries of its results.

Though the texts make it plain that the material was treated slightly differently in each of the five shires concerned (as were all the products of the Domesday Inquest), they display a family resemblance demonstrating, as does Domesday Book in all its stages of evolution, the centralized organization which lies behind their production. Though the formulae, the order of appearance of the items, and in some respects the content, varies from shire to shire, each tells us the total number of hides in the individual Hundred, the amount the king and his barons hold in dominio, for which geld is not paid, the amounts for which geld was owing or had not been paid at the time of the audit, and the sum received and for how many hides. Sometimes it is added that geld due in one Hundred has been paid in another.

Three versions of the Wiltshire geld accounts have survived, varying quite appreciably in detail, and it has been shown that they represent different stages in the collection of the geld.² It looks as if the Somerset material surviving is from two different

¹ All folio references are to those of the Liber Exoniensis except where the inclusion of the column number, i or 2, shows they are to the Exchequer text of Domesday Book, referred to as D.B.
versions; one part occurs on fols. 75-82, the other on fols. 526-7. Neither includes an account of a Hundred of Somerton, and there are a number of entries in D.B. which cannot be allotted to a Hundred for which we have a geld account and which are in the neighbourhood of this important royal vill. The material of fols. 526-7 displays unusual features: twice it deals with what is styled manerium, not hundredum (but in the earlier section we find an account for mansio Hame (82), not styled a Hundred—the account also calls it villa), neither of which possesses fiscal demesne; there follows an unique entry dealing with the payments of an individual, Mauger de Cartrai, with whose indebtedness the auditors seem to have had trouble; and then comes a note of the total of geld received for the county, which is said to have reached the Treasury at Winchester, of expenses contracted in transporting it thither and making out the accounts, and of a sum which the carriers of the geld received but for which they could not give an account and in respect of which they had given surety to the royal auditors—the legati regis.1 Finally, as a sort of postscript, in an ink of different colour, comes the geld account for the Hundred of Frome.

A further suggestion that here we have two separate abstracts is the fact that Thurlbeare appears in each (78b, 526b), with the details presented in different ways.

In hundredo Tierleberge sunt iii hidae. De his habuit rex de Gildo suo x et viii solidos, et istos non reddiderunt homines comitis (Moritoniensis) nisi ultimo Gildo (78b).

In manerio Torleberge sunt iii hidae. Inde habet rex de Gildo suo x et viii solidos (526b).

The use of habet, not habuit, is unusual, and it is noteworthy that here and for Thorn Falcon we find the Exchequer version’s manerium, not the Exeter text’s mansio. The Liber Exoniensis contains a suggestion that at some period Exchequer clerks were concerned with its making; here may be an indication first of local and later of national examination of liability for and payment of geld.2

1 Only for Dorset and Devon have we anything similar, but here the information is limited to the total hidage of the county and the total sum received.

The first use made of these geld accounts was by Eyton, who saw in them the apparatus for reconstructing the composition of the Domesday Hundreds. The value of such tentative reconstruction is undeniable, but the results must remain thoroughly unsatisfactory even to those who labour to produce them. While some Hundreds can be reconstructed with absolute certainty, it is more frequently impossible altogether to harmonize the information of D.B. and of the geld accounts. The texts of the latter repeatedly convict themselves of arithmetical inaccuracies; the omissions and errors of D.B. are numerous (some are manifested by the geld accounts themselves); and the fact that the clerks, with far more detailed material than we possess, often included in D.B. what was omitted from the geld accounts, and vice versa, makes collation at times quite impossible.

At times it is difficult to determine the probable hidage of a Wiltshire Hundred because the quantities for the details differ in the three manuscripts. The details, again, often will not produce the totals given. The total of land in dominio for the Hundred of Roborough is in MS. C given as 22 hides, but the details add up to 18; the total hidage of the Hundred is given as 96 ½ hides, but the details consequently add up to 4 hides less (14). In Dole Hundred (1, 7, 13) the Abbess of Wilton is credited with land in dominio, but D.B. includes no Wilton manor in this Hundred; "Wilton" seems to have been inscribed in all three manuscripts in mistake for "Amesbury".

The details of the geld accounts, however, enable us to expose some of the deficiencies of D.B. In Bath Hundred (76) the nunnery of Shaftesbury is credited with land in dominio. No manor which could possibly have been in this Hundred appears in the Abbey's breve in D.B., but other documents show that this refers to Kelston, which seems to have been omitted from D.B. A royal manor of Cranmore is mentioned in the account for Frome Hundred (527), but is absent from D.B.; the Highworth account (9, 15b) implies a royal manor which is not described in D.B. The Dorset Domesday tells us nothing of Robert d'Oyly, but


from the geld accounts it is apparent that he was farming or administering certain royal manors. Places are mentioned in the geld accounts (e.g. Oda, Letfort—Williton, 79b) which do not appear in D.B.; they may have been components, there unnamed, of a complex manor. The reverse is also demonstrated; Roger Arundel is said to have held Pidrie (77b2) at some time from the king, but the Stone Hundred geld account (19) allots it to the bishopric of Winchester, in which fief it appears in D.B. But there would be no reason to mention this in a geld account.

We cannot indeed even trust the total assessments of the Hundreds as they are given. Examination of the manuscript suggests that the clerks did not take their quantities from an agreed source, but added up the details they (or their predecessors) had set down, and not always accurately, inserting the figures in spaces at first left blank. The number of obviously incorrect statements is not small; e.g. on the basis of a geld of 6s. on the hide the assessments and the sums given will not always harmonize, and occasionally the name of the tenant is wrongly given.

There are occasions when it is quite impossible to determine the facts, or to suggest a reason for a discrepancy, e.g. Piccot is in D.B. said to hold Wichemetune (79ai) of Robert of Mortain, but in the Badbury geld account (18) Hubert seems to be holding it. A change of tenancy in an interval between geld collection and the later stages of the Domesday Inquest might account for it, or one man might have been the sub-tenant of the other.

One most marked feature of the geld accounts is their distinction between the lord's demesne, exempt from geld, and the terra villanorum, for which geld had to be paid (tenancies of a portion of a manor could also include demesne: Hervey of Wilton has 1½ hides in demesne in the Elstub account, and this is his sub-tenancy in Netheravon—1, 7b, 13b; 65a2, 74bi). The exemptions recorded are invariably prefaced by such phrases as "the king and his barones" have so many hides in dominio, in

1 Hundreds of Canendone (18b), Hilton (19b), and Buckland (23b).
2 E.g. the figure of £27 in the account of Bempstone Hundred (77b) should be £37. Osbern Giffard is "Osbert" in the Farringdon Hundred geld account (17b). The manor concerned is Hille (82bi).
dominicus. D.B. frequently tells us (though not in the south-west) that King Edward, or King William, or both, have freed a portion of a manor from its fiscal obligation, but such a fact is never mentioned in the geld accounts. But though the reason is never indicated, we are told over and over again that "the villeins of the Abbot of Winchester", "the villeins of Roger Arundel", "the men of Roger of Beaumont" have failed to pay their geld. (Once the expression is reversed; "the men of Walter of Douai" have paid a certain sum in Bempstone Hundred.) It is quite impossible to deduce why these villeins should not have paid, and even if the phrase merely reflects some local agricultural tragedy, resulting in inability to pay, the frequency of its occurrence—there are sixteen instances of it outside the Terra Regis in Dorset and Somerset alone—helps to demonstrate the unsatisfactory return to the king from a levy and the need for close investigation of the results.¹

A second marked feature is the frequency with which it is stated that the villani on the Terra Regis have failed to pay, and this may be coupled with the fact that almost invariably it is recorded how the king has come by the land. The bulk of the manors he had inherited from the Confessor were not liable for the payment of geld, and so are absent from the geld accounts, but where those of the House of Godwine are concerned we are, in Wiltshire and Dorset and Cornwall, here told whose they had been in 1066, or if they had been part of the endowment of Queen Matilda to which her husband had succeeded on her death in 1083. We are told that the king has in demesne so many hides de terra Haroldi, de terra Godwine, de terra reginae Mathildis, and in practically every case the villeins on land similarly ascribed have failed to pay their geld. In Somerset the matter is put rather differently; it is not stated whose the land has been, but we are told that geld has not been paid by "the king's villeins at Keynsham", "the king's men at Chewton", "the king's villeins of Nettlecombe, Winsford, and Dulverton".²

¹ If, as seems certain, the geld was a customary, annual tax, its imposition at the rate of 6s. upon the hide, apparently at short intervals, must have caused frequent financial ruin.

² Is there an echo here of the Exchequer clerks' grouping of the Terra Regis according to whose the land had been in 1066? The geld accounts also mention
The phraseology of the geld accounts makes it difficult to determine whether the villeins on royal manors were always liable for geld or not. When we are told that from certain royal manors the king *non habuit geldum*, the phrase could mean either that he does not normally receive geld or that geld due from them has not been paid, and when the phrase " retained the geld " is used, it could imply that it has not been paid on the grounds that the land is exempt, or that it has been collected from the *villani* but retained by a farmer or administrator of royal manors. It is, however, occasionally stated that the *villani* have retained the geld (e.g. Hundreds of Roborough and Melksham, fol. 14). The phraseology varies; we are told also that " there remain (unpaid) 15s. from the land of Harold which is of the land of the *villani* " (Hilton, 19b). Certainly some of the land was liable, for Fulcred, the farmer or custodian of a number of Dorset royal manors, has paid the geld due from Fleet (26) in Uggescomb Hundred (17b) " in another Hundred ".

Behind these statements must lie some system about which we can do no more than speculate. We might think that from the obligation of paying geld royal manors were exempt, if it were not for the fact that those of the late queen had formerly been Beorhtric's and there would be no especial reason for these to have been freed of liability before the Conquest, though on transference to the royal house they might have been placed on a par with the other royal manors. If the liability remained, did these royal manors expect to be treated as were those of the ancient demesne, or did those who were farming them—and those in Dorset were certainly being farmed—frequently strive to obtain exemption?

There must remain a suspicion that some had used the occasion of a general Inquest and of one into liabilities and immunities to further their own interests. We are told that from the Bishop of Exeter's Hundred and manor of Pawton (72b) " the King has not had his geld this year ", and the phrase suggests that, while that land had been Earl William fitzOsbern's (7, 13), or was " of the gelding land which (Earl) Aubrey had held " (Badbury, 18), or that land Gilbert de Breteville held in demesne was " of the land of Earl Roger " (Scipe, 3, 9). See also the Cornish geld accounts.
the imposition had been exacted in previous years, the bishop was now trying to secure exemption. His charters may have suggested that the land had been granted to the bishopric free of such liability; the monastery of St. Petrock close by possessed thirty hides which had never paid geld to the King (72b). They did indeed pay geld, but St. Petrock received the proceeds.

What certain recurrent phrases in the geld accounts imply is questionable. We are told that from some land the king "did not have his geld" hoc anno, or did not have his "last geld" (ultimum gildum) or that it was not paid "except at the last geld" (nisi ultimo gildo).¹ The first phrase might imply that up to the time of the levy whose accounts are now being audited the holding had paid its geld, or merely that it did not normally pay. The second and third might imply a reference to the geld-levy previous to that under consideration, or to the second of two instalments—it could indeed, if the clerk is studying the results of the final instalment, refer to the first.

These accounts, it is to be presumed, were constructed from a mass of highly detailed material, with the manor, as in D.B., as the unit. The amount of fiscal demesne is given as a total for the Hundred for the individual landholder, but this total must have been arrived at by summing the details for all the manors concerned—an additional source of arithmetical error. The accounting is at times worked out to halfpennies (Hundreds of Yetminster, Buckland; 17, 23b), and quantities of land given with precision; we find recorded, for example, "two parts of a hide less four acres" (Canendone, 18b). Yet approximation may well have been more frequent than is always apparent; what in one manuscript are two-thirds and one-third of a virgate are in two others 7 and 3 acres (Calne, 1, 7b, 13). Mathematically these are impossible quantities, and suggest a 10-acre virgate and its approximate fractions.²

In Cornwall the clerks, though no doubt they had detailed

¹ E.g. Hundreds of Yetminster (17), Hartland (65), Thurlbeare (78b). It would be interesting to know whether, in the Thurlbeare instance quoted on p. 371, ultimo geldo refers to the geld whose accounts are being audited or that immediately prior to it.

² Small quantities in the Wiltshire and Dorset geld accounts, compared with the sums they were due to pay, suggest at times a twelve-acre geld-virgate, at
information at their disposal, did not list the tenants of Robert of Mortain separately, but gave a single figure for their exempt land under the general heading of "the men of the Count". In Somerset many of the lands of the Bishop of Wells are not dealt with under the geld account Hundreds in which they lie, but in a separate section described as "part of the land of Bishop Giso which belongs to the honour of his bishopric" (78b). It might be, however, that the bishop had for the convenience of all concerned obtained the privilege of having the greater part of his lands dealt with as a whole, which might prove economical of time and effort.

The geld accounts, collated with D.B., show vividly what immense need there was for an enquiry into the levy and collection of the tax. Much geld which, it seems, should have been paid, had not been received.¹ Appreciable sums had not been paid at the time at which they were due.² The collectors—who can have had no easy task—had not paid over all they should; sometimes they were unable to render an account of the money they had received.³ They had retained sums which they claimed were due to them as a customary payment, presumably by way of fee for their services as collectors.⁴ Land which should have been gelding had been "concealed", or had been "found".⁵ Some land had apparently never been assessed—the carucatae nunquam geldantes—and no one had troubled to ensure its inclusion in a schedule of assessed properties. Immunity for land in dominio for which there was small sanction was not only others one of ten acres, but impossible arithmetical relationships also appear. A number of the relationships suggest that one geld-acre in six has often been ignored, as could be the case in Calne Hundred quoted above.

¹ E.g. "and from these there is owing to the King for his geld £3 12s." (Whitestone Hundred, 75).
² E.g. "thence the King had £3 12s. after the times ordained for payment" (Frampton, 24).
³ E.g. "the King has not had 34s. 6d. from 5 hides and 3 virgates which the collectors have received" (Frome, 527).
⁴ E.g. "and for half a hide, for which the collectors received the money, which they claim (as theirs) according to custom, the King has not had his geld" (Bullstone, 526b).
⁵ D.B. shows on a number of occasions that, where the king is said "never" to have received his geld, the reason is that the liability has been "concealed" (celatus) from the assessors and collectors (e.g. Bere, 20; Pidela, 56b).
claimed, but, it would seem, successfully claimed; geld had not been paid where, it seems to be implied, the owner was prepared to argue that he had no liability to pay.¹

In the three texts of the Wiltshire accounts we can see something of the auditors' and inquisitors' difficulties and their struggles to produce a satisfactory record.² Sometimes, it seems, they had been obliged to allow claims for exemption. In MS. C of the Elstub Hundred account—the earliest version—Ulwi is said not to have paid his geld; in MSS. A and B the land is treated as being in dominio (1, 7b, 13b). Either the manuscripts contain numerous clerical errors, or there had been argument as to the amounts of land which were in demesne.³ Sometimes the auditors seem to have established liability (the geld is said to be "owed", not "retained"), and someone has been forced to stand surety for the production of the sum due.⁴ Whether retinuit geldum invariably implies that immunity had been claimed but successfully denied is open to personal interpretation.

Attention has been drawn to the difficulties they encountered caused by changes in the composition of manors. Robert of Mortain had acquired, apparently illegally, portions of the Devonshire manor of Werrington (98, 508), and their transference from one county to another made it necessary to make a postscriptal addition to the Black Torrington geld account (78), but they forgot that this would alter the total hidage of this Devon Hundred, and left the original figure undisturbed.⁵ One wonders how many arithmetical discrepancies owe their origins to similar illegalities and to unjustified claims.

Until recently it was assumed that these geld accounts related to the "mickle geld" of 6s. upon the hide which the Anglo-Saxon

¹ E.g. "and Bollo the priest has half a hide for which he gave surety to the king as a guarantee" (that he would pay if it was proved it was wrongly included in the list of exempt demesne) (Uggescomb, 17b).
³ E.g. in the Hundreds of Heytesbury, Melksham, and Warminster.
⁴ E.g. "Wadard's man owes 6s., and Osbern is his surety for this" (Blackgrove, 3).
Chronicle says was levied in 1083-4. But in 1950 Professor Galbraith advanced strong reasons for believing that they refer to a geld levied a couple of years later, and make considerable use of the discoveries and findings of the Inquest of 1086.¹ There is no need here to repeat his arguments, but it will be as well to deal with certain objections to them.

The biggest obstacle encountered by Eyton and others in their reconstruction of the Hundreds was the apparent impossibility of reconciling the quantities of land in dominio as given in the geld accounts and as stated in D.B., coupled with the fact that where we have no Exeter Domesday surviving D.B. does not always record demesne land. The explanation would seem to be this: by the time of the Inquest demesne may be said to be of two kinds, manorial and fiscal. Originally the two must have been coincident; the "home farm", cultivated strictly in its lord's interests, was reckoned (perhaps by rough estimation of measurements) as a certain proportion of the manor's assessment, and at some unknown date this was freed from liability to pay the geld. But demesnes did not invariably remain static: here a proportion of the terra villanorum might become added to the demesne land, there some of the demesne might be converted into thegnland, or granted out as a sub-tenancy; equally the composition of the manor might change, or a part be taken into the royal forest. In conservative pre-Conquest or post-Conquest England it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the royal officials to compel the adoption of a system under which the amount of immunity from geld enjoyed was to coincide with the amount of demesne actually in existence at the time of its levy: incidentally this would have implied a degree of inspection and supervision impossible to exercise. So, while the amount of manorial demesne fluctuated, that of fiscal demesne would remain fixed, traditional, and very difficult to alter. Thus we may find

¹ See Galbraith, op. cit. and The Making of Domesday Book (1961), pp. 87-101. Since the date for payment is given as 25 March or Easter (fols. 18b, 19, 19b, 20b) it was assumed it must refer to a year in which these nearly synchronized, which they did in 1084. But it is improbable that the geld could be collected on a single day—the four collectors, even if not working in unison, probably journeyed from Hundred to Hundred or to several local centres—so too much should not be made of Eyton's argument.
Of the probability that the quantity of demesne could fluctuate we receive a suggestion in the geld accounts themselves. In the Hundred of Thornhill (2b, 9b, 15b) the abbeys of Glastonbury, Winchester, and Shaftesbury have respectively 13½, 17, and 24 hides of exempt demesne. But we are told that 3½, 3, and 6 hides respectively were terra villanorum (and so should have had no right to exemption); when we turn to D.B., we find the quantities of manorial demesne are as the geld account totals (Badeberie, 66bi; Chiseldene, 67bi; Ledentone, 67b2). But the fact that in MS. C geld is said to have been retained by the reeves from the terra villanorum of these three manors suggests that someone had disputed an attempt to take villeins’ land into demesne and claim exemption on it.

The Dorset geld accounts contain almost exactly 200 items of land in dominio; 115 of these cannot be compared with the D.B. figure, for this is not given in the surviving texts. Of those items which can be compared, 60 per cent. of those for the individual manor do not tally with the geld account statements. Some discrepancies are no doubt due to clerical error; some are so small as to be negligible; e.g. 7½ hides in the geld accounts against 7¾ hides in D.B. (Cogdean, 20b; Corf, 80bi). But some are so considerable as to defy harmonization; e.g. 7½ hides and 7¾ hides in the geld accounts, 5 and 6 in D.B. (Cullifordtree, Tollerford, 24, 20; Beincombe, Wenfrot, 78bi, 80b2).

We must, incidentally, guard against interpreting D.B. too literally. When it says that a manor gelds for a certain number of hides, the implication is that it would geld for that number if no immunity of fiscal demesne were enjoyed. This is made completely clear by the Calcutt entry (73bi): “There are 5 hides. T.R.E. it gelded for half a hide. There are 4½ hides in demesne”; in the Staple Hundred geld account (1, 7, 13b) we find 4½ hides in dominio.

It is plain that the demesne of the Cornish Domesday is not that of the county’s geld accounts. The Domesday text, for

---

1 Instances where the geld account gives a single figure for the fiscal demesne of several manors have not been counted.
almost every holding, tells us the number of hides "there", and also the number of hides which actually geld. The difference between the figures is the amount of fiscal demesne. Many of the implications of a Domesday text are concealed by its telegraphic style, but some entries make this difference between fiscal and manorial demesne entirely clear:

In it is a hide of land, and it pays geld for half a hide... and of it he has three virgates and one fertyng in demesne (Lega, 363).

Pawton (199b) was assessed at 44 hides, 36 of which did not geld (73). But whereas there are 36 hides of fiscal demesne, there is only one hide of manorial demesne. We find examples, too, outside the south-western shires:

There are five hides liable for geld (hidæ geldantes). One of these did not geld, because it was in demesne (Leine, 183a2).

It defends itself for five hides and three virgates. . . . These five hides and three virgates are eight hides (i.e 2½ hides are fiscal demesne ; Achelei, 149a2).

These examples and many others demonstrate the care of the clerks to record the total number of hides for which a manor was responsible when fiscal demesne was not exempt.¹

One crux has always been the view that some of the tenurial differences and gains or losses of immunity suggested by collation are to be explained only by an interval between the origins of the documents being compared.² For example, in the geld accounts St. Constantine has half a hide in demesne (72) in his solitary estate, but in D.B. the manor is said "always to have paid geld unjustly since the Count (of Mortain) had it as though it were villeins' land" (207). Two other small ecclesiastical foundations which have exempt demesne in the Cornish geld accounts are those of SS. Goran and Ewe (Che), but neither is recorded as holding land in the Cornish Domesday, while we are told that the land which had been "of the honour of St. Chei" has been taken by Robert of Mortain.³ The reason may be that, while the Count had indeed acquired the land, probably illegally (though

¹ A full discussion of land in dominio will be found in R. W. Finn, The Domesday Inquest (1961), pp. 151-9.
² Eyton, op. cit. assumed that the geld accounts referred to a levy made in 1083-4; Darlington, op. cit. holds the same view.
³ Fol. 72b; Tregauran (251b), Tremaruustel (245b).
it is not mentioned in *Terrae Occupatae*), so that it appears in D.B. (in which the clerks usually entered land under the heading of the *de facto* holder) in his fief, a former immunity was claimed, and perhaps substantiated, by the previous owners at the Inquest or at an enquiry into geld collection and assessment, and the land noted as being *in dominio* when the results of the examination were inscribed.

Something has been made, too, of the fact that persons noted in the geld accounts as holding land *in dominio*, or as having failed to pay, do not appear in D.B., the inference being that circumstances had changed between 1084 and 1086. There are a number of Wiltshire instances, but since collation displays how much was omitted from the material when the Exchequer clerks produced their truncated version, no argument can be based on their absence from D.B. Frequently D.B. does not tell us, though the geld accounts do, of tenancies, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that invariably a tenant holding in 1084 was not there in 1086. Ansger the cook—several times mentioned elsewhere in D.B.—is noted in the Sherborne geld account (23b) as holding land by the king's gift. He is not mentioned in D.B. under any of the appropriate Sherborne manors (77ai), but there is no reason to suppose in consequence that before 1086 he had ceased to possess this holding. Are we to suppose, too, that Hugh Maminot, who is mentioned under Badbury Hundred (18), but does not appear within the account of the Bishop of Lisieux's fief (77bi), no longer held this land from his relative? On fol. 82b2 there is no mention of a tenant of Aiulf's at Blandford. But the Combsditch geld account (20) shows that the holding (or part of it) is held of Aiulf *ad firmam* by the Englishman who "held it before", and if he had held it after the Conquest, and perhaps in 1066, it is unlikely he had ceased to do so shortly before 1086. The Abbey of Préaux has demesne land in the Gillingham geld account (22), but is never mentioned in the Dorset Domesday, where the manor in question (Stour Provost, 80a2) is recorded in the fief of Roger of Beaumont, who is known to have given it to the abbey before 1084. We can hardly suppose that before the Domesday Inquest was held he had revoked his gift; probably the D.B. clerk regarded it as a tenancy. The geld accounts
quite frequently tell us of priests and churches who do not appear in D.B., e.g. the *clerici* of *Holecoma* (65) or the *sacerdotes* of *Niuetona* (65b). They surely were holding land in 1086.

While D.B.'s insistence is on the tenant-in-chief, that of the geld accounts is often on the sitting tenant, and not always do the latter indicate of whom he holds the land. Payment of the geld, then, would seem to be the tenant's responsibility. Crichel (80b2) is listed in the fief of William of Eu; the Knowlton geld account (21b) shows it was held by his mother. Eddeva holds Edmondsham (83ai) of Humfrey the chamberlain; she must be the "certain widow" of the *Albretesberge* Hundred geld account (18); in two other instances, one in *Canendone* (18b) and one in Redhove (19b), the geld accounts mention a thegn who is holding *ad firmam* of the King, and an Englishman, who are unrecorded in D.B. In Godderthorn Hundred (19) Berenger's predecessor has geld-free demesne, which he holds of him *ad firmam*.

The numerous discrepancies between the information given by the geld accounts and by D.B. could not but engender a suspicion that they related to two different points of time. In the Hundred of Mere (1, 7, 13) Godric is said to have one virgate *in dominio*, and this virgate represents the entire assessment of the holding. In D.B. (*Mera*, 74ai) nothing is said about demesne land (it rarely is mentioned in the breve for the King's thegns), but after *tenet i virgatam in Mera* has been interlined *et geldat*. The two statements might seem to be irreconcilable unless the holding, exempt in 1084, was liable for geld in 1086, but probably the explanation is this: Godric had been treating all his land as exempt demesne, and he had not paid the levy which more or less synchronized with the Inquest. But the auditor denied its immunity—it is conceivable that this, and many similar instances, were debated at the Domesday Inquest. The court presumably found against Godric, and a postscript was added to the record, showing that the land must in future be held to be liable for geld.¹

Another mysterious discrepancy (though this could hardly be used as an argument concerned with the dates of documents) is

¹ The addition, as an interlineation, of *et geldat, geld., geldantes*, after the amount of assessment, is quite common in D.B.
in the pre-Conquest attribution of the royal estates in Wiltshire, where the geld accounts and D.B. frequently disagree. In Cawdon Hundred (8b, 15), for example, the land is said to have been Earl Harold's; in D.B. (Cumbe, 65a2) his mother is recorded as the owner. Indeed, the geld accounts themselves do not always agree about former ownership; in MS. B of the Wiltshire record the royal land in Roborough Hundred is in one place said to have been Harold's, in another Tostig's (8, 14). A certain carelessness on the part of a geld account clerk is to be presumed.

It has been argued that geld accounts and D.B. could not have had a common source because of the differences (other than of hidage) that they exhibit. In Dorset, for example, we find:

17b, 23 Hugo de nemore Herberti 83a2 Hugo de Bosch Herberti 23 Comitissa Boloniensis 33 Vxor comitis Eustachii 22b Ascitillus de Carisburgo 83a2 Anschitil filius Ameline 21 filius Eureboldi 83a2 Odo filius Eureboldi

In part the contention depends on what is meant by a "common source". The "original returns" and the initial geld accounts would naturally differ in some respects in provenance and form, and different clerks might well have copied originals or—as they did throughout the texts—used synonyms and paraphrases for style and title. In D.B. Bishop Geoffrey is usually Episcopus Constantiensis; in the Somerset geld account he is Episcopus de Sancto Laudo. Those questioned by the auditors of the geld accounts may have worded their matter quite differently from those giving testimony before Commissioners whose concern was ultimately with the feudal breves.

Moreover, the three Wiltshire texts do not display identity of wording, and this does not seem to reflect records relating to different stages in geld-collection. In MSS. B and C (Cice-methorn Hundred, 8, 14b), land in dominio is credited to Durand (sheriff) of Gloucester; in MS. A (2) to his nephew Robert. Two hides in Alderbury Hundred are in MS. C part of Edward the sheriff's demesne; in B they are said to be "in the King's forest", and A says that "the King took them from him" (2b, 8b,
15). Despite their obvious and general similarities, the three texts may not have been derived from a single source, and (as collation of D.B. with the Inquisitio Eliensis and Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis amply displays) different clerks may have selected different portions of their material, paraphrased, and made use of synonyms. What, too, as a result of Domesday or Geld Inquest was available to one may not have been so to another.

Another argument against identity of date might be drawn from the occasional impossibility of making the hundredal hidages of the geld account even approximate to what D.B. has to tell us. Sixpenny Handley Hundred (21b) is said to contain 50 hides. All the manors within it are Shaftesbury Abbey property, and their assessments in D.B. amount to 53 hides. It might be thought that between 1083-4 and 1085-6 3 hides had been transferred to this Hundred from another. But D.B. not infrequently tells us that not all the land of a manor was within a single Hundred, and the explanation must be that the 3 hides were locally situated in a different Hundred and paid their geld there. Several times in Dorset, and occasionally in Somerset and Wiltshire, it is noted that land situated in one Hundred has paid its geld in a different Hundred. In Huntspill Hundred (78) 18s. had been received for three hides which belong to the Hundred of Locksley; in Williton (79b) Mauger of Cartrai had not paid the geld of 2 hides, but it is noted (perhaps postscriptally in the original) that he has paid this in another Hundred. In these instances no mention of the payment is made in the account of the other Hundred concerned, but in Dorset on almost every occasion the information is given in both places appropriate.¹

But what the right solution to certain other similar problems is must remain uncertain. For seven of the eight Cornish Hundreds it is possible to reconcile the figures of D.B. and of the geld accounts with a high degree of coincidence. But for Stratton the D.B. figures are much in excess of those of its geld account. Whorwellssdown (1b, 8, 13b) has only 78 hides recorded

¹ E.g. the seven virgates for which Thurstan fitzRolf has paid in Godderthorn Hundred (19) are recorded also under the Hundred of Whitchurch in which they lay (17; Stoches, 80b2).
in its geld account, but the manors apparently within it have in D.B. 14 hides more.¹ These discrepancies and certain other factors must make us wonder if the Hundreds of the geld accounts and of D.B. are always coincident. This might be suspected from the survival of two lists of Hundreds for Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset (63-64b), which themselves are not coincident. The most revealing are those for Somerset. The first of these is obviously incomplete; only thirty are noted, which is a quantity less than that of the geld accounts, but it includes Hundreds—e.g. Martock, Dulverton, Wellow, and Wincanton—which are not amongst those of the geld accounts. The second lists fifty-nine, which even allowing for the occasional treatment of two Hundreds as one in the geld accounts is appreciably higher than the number of geld account Hundreds.² The order of appearance of Hundreds is quite different from that of the first list, and is very close to that in the individual fief in D.B. It includes twenty-six which are not in the geld accounts—e.g. Dulverton, Wiveliscombe, Martock, Wellow, and Wincanton—but omits nearly a dozen of the geld account Hundreds—e.g. Keynsham, Cheddar, Yeovil and Abdick (the last, however, appears in the first list of Hundreds). But it is possible that a Hundred is called by one name in this list and by a different one in the geld accounts; for on fols. 64-64b we have Axbridge but not the Cheddar of the geld accounts, and in D.B. the borough of Axbridge is treated as being within the manor of Cheddar (86a2). The names of a number of the Hundreds are those of manors of the Bishop of Wells (e.g. Wellington, Wiveliscombe, and Kingsbury) which in the geld accounts seem to be dealt with under the heading of “part of the land of Bishop Giso which belongs to the honour of his bishopric”; a number are royal manors (e.g. Dulverton and North Curry); and we should expect some of these to give their names to Hundreds. Comparison of D.B. with the geld accounts suggests that the geld account Hundred of Frome covers the three Hundreds of Frome, Kilmersdon, and Wellow, which

¹ But some of the manor of Edington (68a2) seems to have been in a Hundred other than that of Whorwell'sdown.

² In Somerset there is a single geld account for the Hundreds of Taunton and Pitminster (75), and for those of Cutcombe and Minehead (76b).
are consecutive on fol. 64b; these are here followed by Bruton, Wincanton, and Blackthorn, which seem to represent the geld account Hundred of Bruton. But the most illuminating entry is that of the geld account of Yeovil Hundred (79). We are told that Osbern holds 2½ hides of the Bishop of St. Lo "for which he paid geld in the Hundred of Liet ", and further that "in the Hundred of Liet there remain £6 15s. of the King's geld in this Hundred ". A Hundred of Liet or Lieget appears in both the lists of Hundreds (in the first list the name has been substituted for that of Coche—Coker, a royal manor), and from the structure of D.B. and from later evidence the geld account Hundred of Yeovil (which is not mentioned in the Hundred-lists) must have comprised the Hundreds of Tintinhull, Liet, Houndsbarrow or Houndstone, and Stone, which appear in both Hundred-lists. From D.B. it is plain that the record of each of these four Hundreds was examined separately, for the manors in each come together in the appropriate fiefs and the Hundreds do not necessarily appear consecutively.

In the Dorset Domesday there is mentioned a Hundred of Purbeck (82a2) which does not appear in the geld accounts. What, too, is one to make of the case of Collioure? MS. A has no account of it; in B and C (9b, 16) there are 14 hides, and no fiscal demesne is mentioned. The D.B. account of the manor (65b2) gives it 20 hides, of which 5 are in manorial demesne. Was part of it reckoned for financial purposes as being in a different Hundred? Incidentally, Collingbourne is not in the geld accounts styled a "Hundred ". With such a system in operation, we can hardly wonder at the difficulties of reconciling D.B. and geld accounts, nor can we think that minor discrepancies must indicate a difference between the date of each.

Some such system may lie behind the difficulty that in the geld accounts the sum of the hides in Devon is said to be 1,026½, and D.B. furnishes us with more than a hundred more.¹ Here, too, we have the king allotted fiscal demesne in certain Hundreds, e.g. Axmouth and Hayridge (68b, 67), where D.B. gives him no hidated manor.

¹ Devon is also a county in which the lists of Hundreds are not coincident.
That these abstracts of geld accounts are the result of an Inquest is unquestionable. The thegns of Walter of Douai have given evidence that a holding belongs to the Hundred of Bempstone (77b); Lambert of Whatley has been adjudged to be quit for a hide by the testimony of the collectors (Bruton, 81b); some Cornish lands of the men of Robert of Mortain were always exempt from geld “according to the testimony” of the Hundredmen or the English witnesses (72, 72b); the collectors in Winterstoke Hundred could not render an account for some geld due within it (77); the collectors, “according to their statement”, claim a fee for their services (68b). We are even given the name of the bishop who was in the south-west one of the royal commissioners, William (probably the Bishop of Durham), who seems to have been concerned also with the Domesday Inquest, and of one of the members of another body of investigators, Walter (1, 1b, 7, 8). That there were two bodies is shown by the fact that Walter and his companions recovered from the collectors money which the bishop and his associates had found to be owing to the King (2). To a limited degree the Domesday Inquest would have failed of its purpose if assessments to and immunities from the geld had not been investigated, and Professor Galbraith has given numerous and compelling instances of the indebtedness of the compilers of D.B. to the discoveries made when auditing the geld accounts and its collection.¹

A further argument in favour of the connection between the Inquest which produced D.B. and one into the payment of geld is to be found in the occasional appearance in the latter of carucatae nonquam geldantes which “never rendered geld”. I have argued elsewhere that these must represent land, previously uncultivated and settled, and so unassessed, taken into a manor at some time between the original or the latest assessment and 1086.² They may have been “found” by the Commissioners; they may have been reported by their owners because failure to do so would prevent their inclusion in D.B. and make their

² For a full discussion of these “carucates” see R. W. Finn, *The Domesday Inquest* (1961), pp. 131-5.
continued possession hazardous. They appear in the geld accounts, in all probability, because those responsible were at pains to ensure that unassessed land, thus paying no geld, should no longer escape its liability. Since no two shires, and hardly any Hundreds, were treated exactly alike by the overburdened Commissioners and clerks, a lack of uniformity in their treatment resulted. In Dorset those of the Bishop of Salisbury were noted both in the geld accounts and in D.B. (Sherborne, Yetminster; 23b, 17: 77ai, 75b2); those of Glastonbury Abbey appear only in D.B. (Sturminster Newton, 21; Buckland, 23b; 77bi), but though not in the geld accounts, they are in the Summary on fol. 527b. In Wiltshire, where they are all on royal land, they are recorded only in the geld accounts. In Somerset those of the Bishop of Winchester are mentioned at the end of the geld account for the Hundred of Taunton (75) and in D.B. (87bi).

These geld account abstracts, rightly read and interpreted, have still much to teach us. While an improvement in the total to be collected of the king's geld was not solely, as once was thought, or even primarily, the reason for the Domesday Inquest, the Inquest was the obvious opportunity for examining assessments, immunities claimed, and flaws in the imposition and collection of the tax. In what detail and how rigorously these were considered, both Domesday Book and the geld accounts bear ample witness, and it is of immense significance that the text of Domesday Book includes so much bearing on the current assessments and payments and their evasion.