

THE TERM 'LOGH' IN MEDIEVAL KENTISH DOCUMENTS

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It was suggested by Doctor Felix Hull in 1958 that the Middle-English term 'lough', which occurs in the Queenborough version of the 'Custumal of Kent',¹ and the Latin *logus*, which is used in the fifteenth-century rental known as 'The Black Book of Gillingham',² had a common origin in the Anglo-Saxon word 'loh', meaning 'place, stead'.³ Yet, nearly two decades later, uncertainty about the derivations of the Middle English and Latin forms, and their relation to the Old English word, persists.⁴ It is believed that clarification will help to penetrate the obscurity of certain applications of the term 'yoke' (*jugum*) in various medieval custumals and rentals, upon the correct interpretation of which a proper understanding of Kentish land tenure and field systems depends.

Dr. Hull's suggestion is supported by the revised edition of Stratmann's *Middle English Dictionary*, which gives 'logh, loogh' from O.E. 'loh-place'.⁵ Only one source is quoted: *The Religious Poems of William de Shoreham*, 'Kent, c. 1315'.⁶

Dr. Hull dates the Queenborough version of the 'Custumal of Kent' (the customs of gavelkind) a generation after 1293, say, c. 1325. Since Dr. Hull wrote, an earlier version has come to light, and is now in Lambeth Palace Library.⁷ The document is dated c. 1285,⁸ though Prof. Du Boulay traces its version of the custumal to 1278 or earlier.⁹

¹ K.A.O., QB/AZ1.

² K.A.O., U398 M1A.

³ *Arch. Cant.*, lxxii (1958), 154-5.

⁴ A. R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin (eds.), *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, Cambridge, 1973, 399.

⁵ F. H. Stratmann, revised Henry Bradley, *A Middle English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1940-67, 404. (In the present paper runic 'thorn' is transliterated 'th', and 'yogh' as 'gh', throughout, except where 'y' is demanded in 'yet'.)

⁶ T. Wright (ed.), *The Religious Poems of William de Shoreham*, Percy Society, vol. xxviii, London, 1849. Wright traced William as first vicar of Chart Sutton during the primacy of Walter Raynolds, 1313-27; but William was instituted Vicar of Bexley in 1286 - *Arch. Cant.*, lxxii (1958), 47-8, and he had been presented to the Chapelry of Hernhill in 1283 - Rev. J. A. Bootle, *The Registers of Boughton-under-Blean*, London, 1903, p. vii.

⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, MS ED 2068.

⁸ J. Sayers, *Estate Documents at Lambeth Palace Library*, Leicester, 1965, 31.

⁹ F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury*, London, 1966, 144.

The Black Book of Gillingham, which is dated 1486 (though its content is in part, at least, dated 1447)¹⁰ uses the term *logus* in names given to tracts of land, which served as units for the assessment of rents and services. These units of land are each defined by bounds to the north, south, east and west. There were 101 such land-units at the time, and of these sixteen were termed *logus*. The commonest term for these land-units was, however, *jugum* (yoke) of which there were thirty. The names of the remaining land-units were various and need not be categorized.

The term *logus* (unlike *jugum*) does not occur in classical Latin. This suggests that in medieval Latin documents it is a latinization of an English word. It cannot, therefore, be argued, as has been argued for the use of *jugum* in the same (Gillingham) context, that the term is a survival from the Roman occupation.¹¹ That there was an English form is evident from *The Black Book of Gillingham* itself. One *logus* was called *Logus atte Mille* (p. 43). On p. 42, where this *logus* is mentioned as an abtument of *Croftus Balet*, it is referred to as 'Melleslogh'.

A custumal and rental of Gillingham dated 1285¹² shows that the system of land-units for the assessment and rendering of services was in use in Gillingham two centuries before the date of *The Black Book*. Although the number of land-units in 1285 was only sixty-eight, there had been an increase of only one yoke by 1486, and no change in the number of 'loghs'. Three yokes had different names, but all sixteen 'logh' names remained (essentially) unchanged. In the thirteenth-century custumal the names of the land-units are given in the margin against each entry; but here they are in English. Among the 'loghs', for example, *Logus Westhelle* of *The Black Book* is 'Westhelleslogh' in the 1285 document; *Logus Sterneshep* is 'Sternesheppeslogh'; *Logus Cobbe* is 'Cobbeslogh'. Similarly, the *juga* are given as 'yokes'. When land-units are referred to in the text of the 1285 custumal they are usually latinized, and are usually in an oblique case, e.g., '... tenent *loghum Augustin*.' '... *de logho Ruge*'. (Note that the English 'gh' has been retained.)

It was shown above that the Middle English 'logh' or 'loogh' is given the meaning 'place' by Stratmann, and that the word derives (as Dr. Hull suggested) from O.E. 'loh'. Clark Hall gives the meanings of 'loh' as 'place' or 'stead'.¹³ Now if the term 'logh' had been synonymous with 'place', the medieval clerks would presumably have translated it into Latin as *locus*. (This is not the place to pursue the possibility that Latin *locus* and Germanic 'loh' had a common Indo-European derivation.) 'Logh' therefore seems to have had a nuance which distinguished it from

¹⁰ *Arch. Cant.*, xci (1975), 194.

¹¹ H. L. Gray, *English Field Systems*, Cambridge, Mass., 1915, 415-6.

¹² Canterbury Cathedral Library, MS E24.

¹³ J. R. Clark Hall, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, London, 1898, 205.

'place', and that nuance is suggested by Clark Hall's alternative meaning 'stead'. There seems to have been no direct equivalent of the English word 'stead' in classical Latin. The English Place-Name Society gives a wide range of meanings for O.E. 'stede, styde'. It is observed that it is 'difficult to find any sort of semantic connexion between the various meanings' and that at least two of the meanings suggest that a 'stede' was 'a place where groups of things or folk were found together'.¹⁴

It has been suggested that the yoke, as a fiscal assessment, dated from the Roman occupation, and that *logus* was applied to 'homesteads' that came into existence at a later period.¹⁵ Even if it were accepted that this system of assessment had its origin in Roman jugation, it could be misleading to introduce the notion of 'homestead'. 'Stead' is a general term, covering a number of concepts. 'Homestead' is a particularization for which no evidence has been seen. Furthermore, if yoke and 'logh' were of similar nature, only distinguished by the fact that one came later than the other, and had the yokes and 'loghs' been homesteads, then Gillingham would have consisted of a large number of scattered farms and small-holdings, each with its dwelling and farm buildings. But like most Kentish villas, so far as can be judged from early maps (which, of course, occur late in the history of settlement) Gillingham appears to have consisted of a village clustered around its church, with a few outlying hamlets and farmsteads. The generalization here applies, of course, only to the ancient settlements; the present discussion is not concerned with relatively late settlements such as those which came with the clearance of the Weald.

Most of the 'loghs', like most of the yokes (and other land-units), both in 1285 and 1486, were each shared by a number of tenants. In 1285, the number of tenants with holdings in a single land-unit ranged from one to sixteen, and in 1486 from one to twelve. The number of tenants does not appear to have any bearing on the distinction between yoke and 'logh', for both had instances of one tenant in 1285 and again in 1486, and both had instances of twelve or more tenants in both periods.

A custumal and rental of 'Upper' (West) Peckham¹⁶ shows an organization of tenancies similar to that at Gillingham. The document is in two parts. The first describes itself as a copy of a rental dated 44 Edward III (1370). The second is a rental of uncertain date, though tentative identifications of one or two tenants are consistent with the handwriting, which is believed to be of the late fifteenth century or early sixteenth century, say c. 1500, with a tolerance of about twenty years

¹⁴ A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, English Place-Name Society, vol. xxvi, Cambridge, 1970, 148.

¹⁵ A. R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin (eds.), *op. cit.*, 399.

¹⁶ K.A.O., U47/45 M21.

either way. In the second part, the first part is referred to as the 'custumale'.

The two Gillingham documents (1285 and 1486), and the two parts of the West Peckham document (1370 and c. 1500), all have in common the feature of assessment of rents and services by land-units rather than by individual tenants. With only one or two exceptions, however, the land-units at West Peckham are merely called 'tenements'. The tenement names are latinized and are given in the margin of the manuscript. Bounds are not given. There is no mention of 'loghs', but that a concept of yoke similar to that at Gillingham existed is suggested by two references (in the texts of entries) to *Tenementum Parmonter* as *Jugum de Parmonter* ('in Jugo de Parmonter'). Acreages of the West Peckham tenements ranged from five to eighty-three, both in 1370 and c. 1500 (that is, apart from one holding of one acre). Tenants per land-unit ranged from one to nine in 1370, and from one to six c. 1500. As at Gillingham, consolidation seems to have more than offset any fragmentation of holdings, for in both manors there was a tendency for the number of tenants per land-unit to decrease.¹⁷

The terms yoke, 'logh' and tenement, as used in these custumals and rentals, were not elements of field-names, and they were not used in place of field-names. Fields with the more usual or, it might be said, traditional names, and with generic elements such as 'feld', 'land', 'dene', 'reede', 'croft', etc., existed within the network of land-units both at Gillingham and West Peckham. The number of such field-names mentioned is insufficient to enable more to be said than that there were often several field-names within a land-unit, and that in one or two cases at West Peckham it is evident that a field extended over the boundary of one land-unit into another. For example, 'Tylden' or 'le Telden' lay partly in *Tenementum Parmonter*, *Tenementum Ric. at Noke* and *Tenementum Arkybole*; 'Deringland' extended over the borders of *Tenementum Johis. at Crouche* and *Tenementum Elie de Stanford*; and 'Cobcroft' over the borders of *Tenementum Will. at Wode* and *Tenementum Johis. at Crouche*. This is considered to indicate that the networks of land-units were imposed on existing field systems.¹⁸

The Gillingham custumal of 1285 is preceded by details of the demesne lands, naming the fields in which they lay; but, of course, no demesne land is described as in a yoke or 'logh'. No field-names are mentioned in the entries for yokes and 'loghs'. The *Black Book* of 1486 ignores demesne lands, but a number of field-names occur in entries under the yokes and 'loghs'. No instance was found where a demesne field-name of 1285 occurred among the fields mentioned under the yokes

¹⁷ A factor to be taken into account, however, is that a marked decrease in population over the period is reflected in Kentish rentals. *cf.*, F. R. H. Du Boulay, *op. cit.*, 161.

¹⁸ See also, F. R. H. Du Boulay, *op. cit.*, 120.

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and 'loghs' in 1486. The most striking illustration of the division of lands between the demesne and tenants is that Westfeld and Eastfeld occur under demesne lands while Northfeld and Suthfeld appear, under *Logus Shortinden* and *Logus Wodelond* respectively, as tenant land.

This division between demesne and tenants' fields seems too clear-cut to have ancient origins. From the fact that many of the yokes and 'loghs' bore *cognomina* surviving among tenant families in 1285, and even in 1486, and that what appears to have been a notional network of yokes and 'loghs' overlay a pattern of fields with traditional type-names, it is inferred that the introduction of the field-units was a post-Domesday expedient to simplify the assessment and collection of rents and services. A likely period for such an innovation was from the turn of the twelfth century when the Church began to recover leased demesnes.¹⁹ What may be a parallel occurred in Essex where, in the thirteenth century, the Abbot of Waltham re-organized holdings at Chigwell with the object of facilitating administration by reducing the number of tenants to be dealt with.²⁰

Investigation of the origin of the land-units of the kind found at Gillingham and West Peckham is outside the scope of this paper; but visualization of an agricultural settlement organized into a network of what appear to have been rectangular areas of land, most of which were shared by a number of tenants, may suggest at least the possibility of some sort of correspondence with the sub-divisions of the open fields, that is to say, 'shots'. It may be that 'shots', or something like them, were the components of the land-units, providing a means of defining their limits where there were no other existing, physical boundaries.

What, if anything, distinguished yoke, 'logh' and tenement one from the other in these manors? The term 'tenement' may be disregarded for, it seems, in the Middle Ages, as today, the legal definition of 'tenement' was 'any species of permanent property'. Thus, to paraphrase Aristotle, all yokes and 'loghs' were tenements, but not all tenements were yokes or 'loghs'.

Yet, it is not suggested that the terms 'yoke' and 'logh' were used arbitrarily. Services due from land-units at Gillingham in 1486 can be grouped into several sets, some of which applied only to yokes, while others applied only to 'loghs'. In none of those examined in detail was a set of services found which was common to both yoke and 'logh'. In the custumal of 1285, services are given in detail only for 'key' yokes or 'loghs'. Those due from the 29 yokes, with two exceptions, are summarized by one of several remarks: 'as other customs of Hempsted

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 198–218.

²⁰ E. J. Erith, *The Strip System of Cultivation in Buckhurst in the thirteenth Century*, *Essex Records*, vol. lvii, 1948, 96–9, cited by Felix Hull in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1950.

Yoke', 'other customs', 'customs pertaining to one yoke', 'all other customs as Peter at Melle and associates' and, in one case only, 'customs for half a yoke'. As Peter at Melle and his associates, with their holdings in 'Mellesyoke' owed services 'as other customs of Hempsted Yoke', the categories are four at the most. Even then, it is suspected that the four apparent categories are the clerk's various ways of expressing the same thing. Among the sixteen 'loghs' there are only two exceptions from 'all customs as Hamon the Miller and associates of Shortynden Logh'. Thus, it is evident that in medieval Gillingham the description 'yoke' was used for lands rendering one set of services (with possibly some variations), while 'logh' was used for lands rendering another set of services (with very little variation).

In their origins yoke and 'logh' were evidently different concepts. Although it is now accepted that in Domesday Book 'yoke' (*jugum*) was a unit for the assessment of geld or land value, and represented a fourth part of a sulung (the Kentish counterpart of the hide and carucate), originally it must have represented a physical quantity of land, was a unit of superficial land measurement (though with considerable variation).²¹ There seems to be no reason to dispute the long-held belief that the sulung (like the hide and the carucate) had its origins, as its etymology suggests, in the area which a plough-team of eight oxen could keep under cultivation; and that a yoke represented (in England, at any rate) a pair of oxen and therefore a quarter of a sulung. But hide and virgate, sulung and yoke, were adapted as fiscal terms. Elton pointed out that 'in the Archbishop's manors of Shoreham and Chevening there are two sorts of free socage land, *Yoke-land*, or the ancient gavel-land, and *in-land*, or those parts of the old demesnes which had been given to the "borderers"'.²² ('Borderer' is Elton's rendering of *bordarius*, today more usually rendered as 'bordar'.) Somner expressed a similar idea rather differently when he said that Domesday Book 'shews *Sulung* (and the like) to have been a term in those days peculiar to this County [Kent], whereby to expresse the quantity of their land, whilst Hide and the like was of like use elsewhere. To this head may be referred *Hide-land*, *Yoke-land*, *Aker-land*, *Rod-land* and the like, being quantities or portions of land let out and occupied by the Hide, Yoke, Aker, Rod, &c. and denominated accordingly'.²³ Whether, then, the yoke is looked at as a superficial measurement of land, or as a unit for the valuation or taxing of land, the term always carries the idea of quantity.

There is no concept of quantity or area in the use of the term 'logh'. It is in its meaning 'stead' that the nuance of its original use is believed to lie. As noted above, the English Place-Name Society suggests as one of

²¹ cf., F. W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, (Fontana edition), 1960, 557-63.

²² C. I. Elton, *The Tenures of Kent*, London, 1867, 110.

²³ William Somner, *A Treatise of Gavelkind*, (2nd edition), London, 1727, 117.

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the definitions of O.E. 'stede', 'a place where groups of things or folk were found together'.

Thus, a tenement, or land-unit, of Gillingham and West Peckham was a yoke when seen quantitatively, either as an area of land, or as a unit of land from which rents or services were due from its tenants. It was a 'logh' when seen as a place where a group of tenants had their holdings.

But the two terms appear to have been adapted to classify land-units according to the services due from them. It will be seen that this special use did not conflict with the essential meaning of either term.

We may now turn to William de Shoreham, Stratmann's sole source for the word 'logh' or 'loogh'. There are three occurrences in his *Religious Poems*. The first is in a poem devoted to the Virgin Mary:

And yet ne were hyt noght y-nogh,
One to agredey hyre loogh
And hegh ine hevene blysse . . .²⁴

Here the reference is to Mary's place in Heaven, a place which, however exalted, is one amongst many.

In the second the poet tells how God may be in a number of different places at once, as befits His power:

He may by wel ine dyvers logh,
Ryght al at ones, wel y-nogh,
That deith hys myghtte.²⁵

The third appears to concern man's place in creation:

Thar-fore God made mannes scheftte,
That ylke logh al for to crafte,
As God hyght thoute.²⁶

In all three instances the use of 'logh' by William de Shoreham is consistent with the concept of place related to group.

Finally, we may return to the 'Customal of Kent'. The well-known couplet from Lambarde's version:

The fader to the boghe (The father to the bough
and the son to the plogh²⁷ and the son to the plough)

must be, as Doctor Hull suggests, a garble of one of the less widely known versions, such as that clearly written in the medieval Queenborough Statute Book as:

²⁴ T. Wright, *op. cit.*, 126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

²⁷ William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent*, 1576, 418. (Note that the spelling 'boghe' of 1576 becomes 'boughe' in the 1826/1970 edition, though 'plogh' remains unchanged.)

Son the fader to the bough (As soon as the father to the bough
son the sone to the lough²⁸ so soon the son to the lough),

or the equally clearly written Canterbury version:

Se ffader to the boghe (As/the father to the bough
Se sone to the loghe²⁹ so/the son to the loge)

or, as we may now see, the Lambeth version where the spelling of 'logh' is that used by William de Shoreham and the Gillingham scribe, and where, except for the intrusive 'p', the form is closest to that quoted by Lambarde:

The fader to the bogh,
The son to the logh.³⁰

It may be that 'plogh' was not so much a misreading as an attempt by a transcriber (perhaps Lambarde himself) to correct what he thought was an error, or to make sense of a word the meaning of which by his time had been lost. All the versions have the same sense: land was not forfeited by a tenant in gavelkind hanged for felony, as was the Common Law, but remained with the heir. Lambarde's version is oblique, but the Queenborough, Canterbury and Lambeth versions are direct and unequivocal – at least to those for whom 'logh' was a familiar word, and whose lands lay in fields divided into groups of holdings.

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²⁸ K.A.O., QB/AZ1.

²⁹ Canterbury Cathedral Library, Register B., f. 418.

³⁰ Lambeth Palace Library, MS ED 2068.