

LANCASHIRE LONG MEASURE

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UNTIL comparatively recently a man's wealth was measured in terms of the lands which he possessed. The greater part of the nation's taxable income came from the land: a man's rent was assessed in terms of service on the land. If then we are to form a picture of the life of nine-tenths of the population during the Middle Ages and later, we must be certain that we really do know what was meant by *hide*, *bovate* or *acre*; or at least, that we know what these terms may not of necessity mean. The size of the acre is of interest not only to the social historian in his study of the way in which people lived, or to the political historian in assessing tax values and the like, but also to the economic historian comparing and contrasting farming efficiency then and now. If he is not aware that one acre on paper may be two statute acres on the land, or one windle of seedling half again what the laws of the time decreed, his findings are more than suspect.

Measures of all kinds, but more particularly those of land, were tightly bound up with the life of the time. If we are to understand the past we should be aware of the measures used. The corollary is, if we are to understand the measures, we must know the time and its people.

I. THE EARLY MEASURES

The units which have received most attention in the past have been the fiscal units used in Domesday Survey. Land was valued in terms of the hide, and it is typical of the period that such a unit was not uniform in its meaning throughout *Domesday Book*. One would expect that a tax book, prepared at the orders of the central authority to help it assess the distribution of wealth and taxable resources, would use a uniform standard of measurement throughout. It cannot be doubted that the authorities would favour such a scheme, but they worked through juries of local men. Local prejudices and customs were too strong, and were reflected in the jurors' interpretation of the hide. There were three main types of hide in use in

England during Anglo-Saxon times: the greater, or Kentish, hide of 240 acres; the lesser, or Wessex hide, of 60 acres; and the medium, or Mercian hide, of 120 acres. Domesday Survey shows Lancashire south of the Ribble as having 80 hides, and states that each hide contained 6 carucates of land. Together with the Cheshire hides of one carucate each, these 480 Lancashire carucates made an exact 1,000. Thus, early in recorded history, Lancashire had a measure much larger than that common throughout the country.

From Norman times the knight's fee became the fiscal unit of England for a considerable time. Glanville quotes the knight's fee as being a unit of 4 carucates; in 1682 a legal tract quotes it as 8 carucates. Lancashire, however, had a large and variable knight's fee from early times. Generally the fee may be taken as consisting of 24 carucates—the value given to it throughout the *Testa de Nevill*. The variations were many. Hutton and Layton had knight's fees of 10 carucates; Tarleton and Hoghton 14 carucates; and, exceptional, but not isolated, examples, Great and Little Carleton were assessed at 32 to the fee.⁽¹⁾

The tables tell us that there are 8 bovates to a hide of 120 acres; but though this may be true in general it is certainly not true in detail. In Lancashire the bovate varied between 5 acres, of which there are examples in West Derby, and 24 acres, as in Skerton, Lancaster.⁽²⁾ Elsewhere in the county there were bovates reckoned at 22, 18, 19 and 12 acres. The one thing which does stand out from this maze of figures is that there was no standard; the one constant factor is the absence of a "classical" value to the bovate. In Lancashire the bovate was not a largely theoretical fiscal unit, but an essentially practical one. Just as the carucate replaced, or rather was never replaced by the hide in local business, so the bovate was used where men elsewhere would use the yardland. It remained in fairly common use in Lancashire until the beginning of the fifteenth century.

II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ACRE

Deeds in the De Hoghton collection referring to the townships of Hoghton and Lee, go back to the eighties of the

⁽¹⁾ For Hutton, Tarleton and Layton see *Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey*, Chetham Soc., N.S., Vol. 40, pp. 408, 459, and Vol. 38, p. 156*n*. For Hoghton and Carleton see Record Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire, Vol. 88, p. 32.

⁽²⁾ For West Derby see Record Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire, Vol. 54, p. 83; for Skerton see Chetham Soc., N.S., Vol. 40, No. 367. The value of the bovate was no more constant than the size. West Derby's 5 acre bovate was valued at 4s. 7d., and a 9 acre bovate in Burnley at 3s. 0d.

twelfth century, but *acre* is not found in these deeds until the mid-thirteenth century. In all the documents contained in the *Cockersand Chartulary* and the *De Hoghton* deeds covering the period 1150 to 1250, only 15% mention the acre. During the next half-century this figure rises to 25%. In contrast *oxgang* is mentioned as frequently as *acre* during the first period, but falls to 8% during the second.

After 1300 the proportion of documents mentioning any measure at all declines markedly. This is probably due to the dramatic fluctuations of economic fortunes which characterised the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is a phenomenon which is found not only in England but in France as well. The *bovate* was of ancient tillage, the *acre* of new assart. In Lancashire, where the enclosure of new lands was fairly easy, the enclosed land tended to be divided into individual holdings measured in acres. These acres soon assumed individual names, and became associated with definite families—hence the disappearance of the measure. In local purchases or exchanges the whole community knew the field, so that its measurements were of minor importance. Finally came the period when purchases and exchanges might be made by people with no knowledge of each other, or of the community; hence the re-appearance of the measurement in documents.

The study of the *acre* is the study of the *rod*, *pole* or *perch*, for it was by this that the *acre* was measured. Since there is no evidence that the *perch* was ever measured in units different from the statute feet or yards, or that the *acre* ever consisted of other than 4 roods of 40 poles, the length of the *rod* is the decisive factor in determining the size of the principal unit of land measure. Once we have determined the length of the *rod*, we know the size of the *acre*. The difficulty which arises is that the *rod*, *pole* or *perch* was so much a part of the life of an area, so accepted a part, that its precise length is seldom mentioned. When the length of the *rod* is given in any deed it suggests that at least one of the partners is a stranger to the district, and so requires information which is taken for granted by the most ordinary villager. On the other hand, where the measurement of the *rod* is given we can reasonably accept it as being the length of *rod* by which that field has normally been measured, for the field would have a traditional size, which would not be varied to suit a style of measure alien to the district. It is only in the *terriers* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that one suspects that, in fact, such standardisation has been introduced for the convenience of landowners with large holdings up and down the county.

Originally the acre was a form, rather than an area artificially measured. When the clerk wrote that a field was an *acre in length and in breadth* the emphasis obviously rested on shape. In a number of documents covering the period from 1150 to 1450, I counted prior to 1300, 44 references to *acre*, but in 28 of them the word suggested not a definite area but a piece, or pieces, of land of a recognised size. Such phrases as *One acre lying in two strips, in four strips, or where one strip is one acre* were common. I suggest not that such acres varied greatly in extent, but that no one would have gone to court because any such acres were a little less or more than a measured acre of the district. In the period after 1300, however, *acre* was mentioned 75 times, and in 52 of them there were definite indications that *acre* was, to a much greater extent, used as a unit of measurement. Such terms as *the measured acre, by the great perch, or an acre made of lands in the headlands* testify to the growing recognition of an abstract measurement—the acre. Too much emphasis, however, must not be placed on the word *abstract*, for few people were capable of grasping the mathematical principle involved. One of the statutes designed to enforce the use of a common measure, passed during the reign of Edward III, indicates this by the introduction of a table showing the various lengths and breadths which together would make an acre.⁽³⁾

III. PECULIARITIES OF THE LANCASHIRE MEASURE

Lancashire was isolated from the main stream of English life until well on in the eighteenth century, and rural Lancashire might be considered isolated until an even later date. It was not by chance that so many of the inhabitants of the palatinate remained faithful to the older religion, and it was equally natural that they should remain faithful to their old measures. This isolation was encouraged by the very fact that Lancashire was a county palatine, jealous of its laws and privileges. The mere fact that the London parliament was introducing a national system of measurement was sufficient to make the Lancastrian stick to his own. So powerful was this feeling of independence, or so powerful were the forces which fostered it, that Lancashire's exemption from statutes of measure was recognised in the appendix to the act of 1389. The act was not to hold good "in the County of Lancaster because in that county it hath always been the custom to have greater measure than in any other part of the realm". It was not in Lancashire

⁽³⁾ 14, Edward III c. 6.

alone that this happened. A statute of Edward II complained that the clause of the Great Charter concerning the unity of measures "hath not holden well before this time". Much later the *Surveior's Dialogue* of 1610 stated that "customs of places do differ, for in the Duchy of Lancaster we do have a larger measure". It was not until the reign of Charles I that Lancashire's freedom was questioned, although, as we shall see later, not effectively. "Henceforth shall be but one weight, one measure throughout according to the standard of the Exchequer as well in places privileged as without, any usage to the contrary notwithstanding", said the act.⁽⁴⁾ One hundred years later maps and plans show scales with a perch much longer than the statute measure of $16\frac{1}{2}$ ft. to the rod. In fact this was true not only of Lancashire, with its peculiar geographical and political isolation, but of many other counties much nearer the capital. It is the 18 ft. Oxford perch, not bad mathematics, which explains the letter of a vicar of Prescott, appealing for consideration to the College authorities, when he says "after the measure of our acre, every acre being *almost* two of yours".⁽⁵⁾ Berkshire had a perch of 18 ft., and Hampshire of 15 ft. in general use at the time of the board of agriculture enquiry in 1819. The report of the committee which conducted this enquiry⁽⁶⁾ is a valuable source of information concerning weights and measures over much of the country. Unfortunately it is incomplete, and Lancashire scarcely receives mention. One wonders whether, in fact, those who compiled the report jibbed at the variety of measures in use in the county at that time.

Books of tables intended for general reference in the eighteenth century generally warn their reader of the existence of long measure in Lancashire. Even these do not agree. In some the Lancashire acre will be described as being measured with a rod of 21 ft., in others the rod will be that of 24 ft. Both these are partially true because there was a wide diversity of lengths of rod used throughout the county—so much so that a document of 1697, drawn up by a Lancashire surveyor, contains a series of tables to enable him to convert the customary measures in use in Lancashire into statute measure.⁽⁷⁾ One can assume that the six measures listed were in fairly general use. They are the 18 ft. rod, giving a perch of 36 sq. yd.; the $19\frac{1}{2}$ ft. rod— $42\frac{1}{4}$ sq. yd.; the 21 ft.—49 sq. yd.; the $22\frac{1}{2}$ ft.— $56\frac{1}{4}$

⁽⁴⁾ 16, Charles I c. 19.

⁽⁵⁾ Record Soc. of Lancs. and Ches., Vol. 89, p. 300 *n*.

⁽⁶⁾ Parliamentary Papers 1819, App. B.

⁽⁷⁾ Lancs. Record Office, DDX/12/1.

sq. yd.; 24 ft.—64 sq. yd.; and, added at a later date, the $25\frac{1}{2}$ ft., giving a perch of $72\frac{1}{4}$ sq. yd. Elsewhere I have found evidence of the use of perches of 20 ft., 22 ft. and $24\frac{1}{2}$ ft. So in Lancashire *perch* might mean one of 10 different measures, including statute measure. The resulting acre might vary between 4,840 sq. yds. and 11,900 sq. yds. Every length of perch listed in the parliamentary report for the whole of England was in use somewhere in Lancashire. No attempt to estimate the incidence of population, land utilisation or fertility, or even the comparative wealth of a farmer or landowner can be successful, unless some attempt has been made to define the type of measurement in use at any particular place and time.

IV. THE PERCH IN THE DOCUMENTS

The documents may be said to fall into three groups, so far as reference to measures by exact definition of length is concerned. In the earlier papers it is very seldom indeed that there is any reference to the exact length of the rod used. Such evidence as is found is negative, for when a standard of measurement is given, it is usually *the king's perch*. The very mention of this standard, in the context of hundreds in which the length of the perch is not measured, suggests that the actual length was novel. When transfers of land between two families of the same district took place, there was little need to mention the length of the local perch. It was when an outsider came, and details of law appeared more important, that the measure was stated. Suggestively, in this case it is almost invariably determined that the land should be measured by the *perch of our Lord the King*. In the Finch papers⁽⁸⁾ for example there are some 800 papers. In some half dozen of these is there mention of the length of the perch by which the land is to be measured. In two consecutive pre-1500 documents amongst the De Hoghton deeds which contain such a reference, it is the statute perch which is used. In both the deal is between people of widely different districts.⁽⁹⁾ The subsequent references are to customary perches. It is highly improbable that the customary perch replaced the statute acre; the reference to measurement by the statute acre was necessary because such measurement was exceptional.

After 1500, or thereabouts, reference to the customary perch by which the land was to be measured became more common.

⁽⁸⁾ Historical MSS. Commission, *Report on the MSS. of A. G. Finch*, 1913, 1922, and 1956.

⁽⁹⁾ Record Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire, Vol. 88, pp. 342-5.

By that date, even in Lancashire, people were becoming aware of an ever increasing demand for national uniformity. The demand appears to have been acknowledged, but little more. As more and more business passed through the hands of lawyers trained in and around London, so the working of their legalistic minds is to be seen, not in the use of a measure alien to the spirit of the people—and to the very shape and size of the fields—but in the statement of the customary measure which was in use. It is the documents of the period from 1500 to 1800 which give most information as to the distribution of field measures in the district.

After 1800, however, a change does take place; but not, perhaps, the change which we might expect. The lawyer is in complete control. Not only is the field named, and placed, but its measurement is given to the last square foot. Naturally the scale of measurement had to be defined. The eighteenth-century lawyer drawing up a terrier of estates stretching from Lancaster to Leigh, and from Burnley to Blackpool, used a common measure to determine size and productivity of land. So strong was the insularity of Lancashire, even at that late date, that the measure was the local measure—the 24 ft. Cheshire long measure. Local variations tended to disappear. Lancashire measure was the long measure; the length of the perch was recorded in the text and on the plan, and it tells us little or nothing about the distribution of the various local perches. It was this standardisation which made easy the transition to the statute measure towards the end of the last century. When a chain of 32 yards became a measure in general use from the Westmorland boundary to the Cheshire, and from Yorkshire to the sea, it was a comparatively easy matter, with all the pressure of modern society's demands for standardisation behind them, for lawyers to substitute the chain of 22 yds. for that of 32 yds. in general use. We cannot afford to neglect any period, but the most rewarding to the student of land measurement is undoubtedly the second period, when men were becoming more aware of local differences, but not worried by them.

V. THE LANCASHIRE PERCHES

The perches most widely used in Lancashire were either of 24 ft. or 21 ft. in length; it was the latter which came to be termed the Lancashire long measure. In documents before the middle of the eighteenth century, it is very seldom indeed that one is to be found inside the area of the other. In fact I have

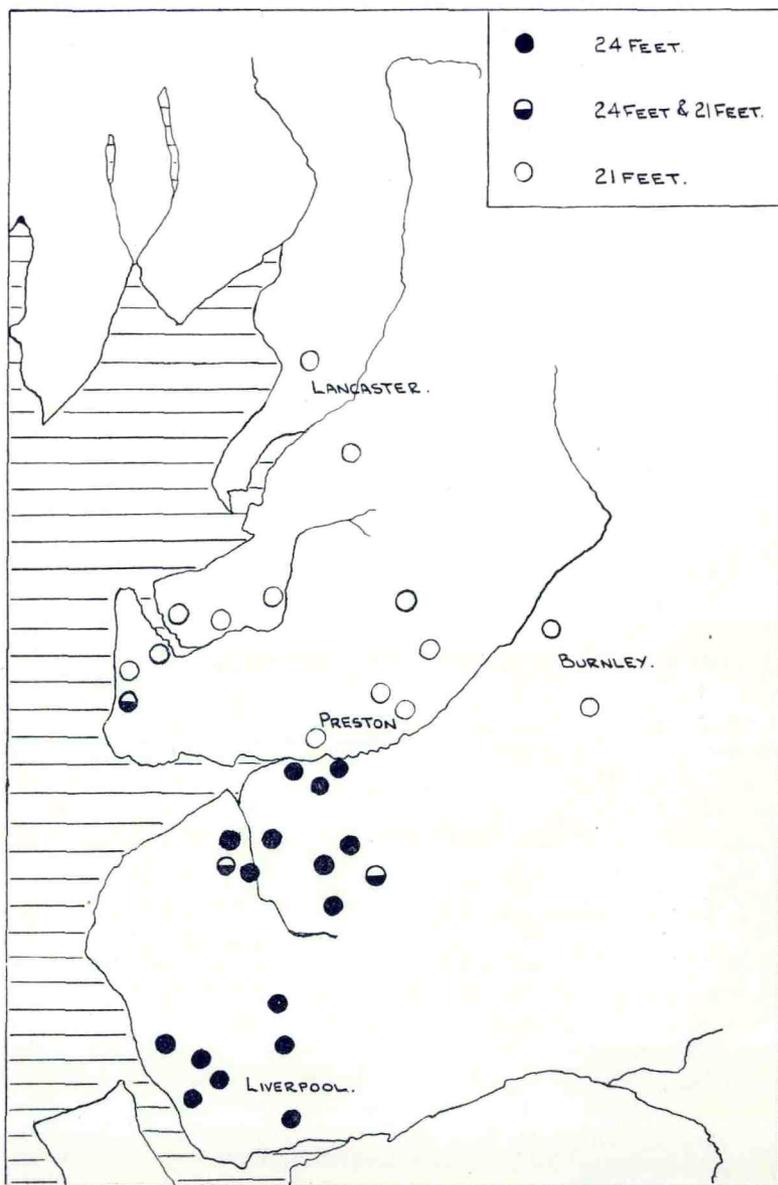


Fig. 1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE 24' PERCH
AND 21' PERCH IN LANCASHIRE

so far uncovered one case only of such a combination of measures. The Ribble appears to have formed a very effective barrier. North of it the perch was usually measured as 21 ft.: south of it as 24 ft. Both measures give an acre considerably larger than the statute acre. In a group of documents which carpet Lancashire fairly completely,⁽¹⁰⁾ I noted 70 occasions upon which the size of the perch by which land was measured was defined. Of these 42 were south of the Ribble, and 28 north. South of the Ribble 74% of the entries referred to a perch of 24 ft., and the remainder to perches of six different lengths. North of the Ribble the supremacy of the long perch of 21 ft. was as pronounced, for 52% of the entries referred to this perch, and the remainder to perches of four different lengths.

Although I have found one example only, at Chorley in 1652, of the use of a 21 ft. perch south of the Ribble, or, at Lytham in 1607, a 24 ft. perch to the north, prior to the eighteenth century, this does not mean that there was no competition. North of the Ribble 38% of the entries refer to rods other than the 7 yd.: south of it 26% do not refer to the 8 yd. perch. Each of the two most popular measures seems to have managed to keep the other at bay in its own area, but less common measures have infiltrated all along the line. There are three references to a 24 ft. pole north of the Ribble, but all the documents in which they appear are from the middle of the eighteenth century. South of the Ribble the 21 ft. perch appears on the same number of occasions at about the same date.⁽¹¹⁾

The statute perch is mentioned four times in all, twice north and twice south of the Ribble. The presence, however, of the statute acre alongside the customary acre does not occasion surprise. It was inevitable that a national standard should be imposed, and it was natural that, during the struggle, both local and national measures should appear side by side. What is more inexplicable is the appearance of several customary acres in the same township. Chorley used measures of 24 ft., 21 ft. and 21 ft. 4 ins.; Stainall 21 ft. and 20 ft.; Altcar, 24 ft.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Cockersand Abbey Chartulary; the De Hoghton, De Lacy, Molyneux, and Norris collections; and the Field Books of the Norfolk, Weld and Walmersley families.

⁽¹¹⁾ Nicholson, E., *Men and Measures*, and Seebohm, A., *Historical Acre* both claim that the long rod, producing a long furlong, resulted in a long mile. If Harrison's mileages do reflect the long perch in Cheshire, they do not appear to do so in Lancashire. Nor do they show any differences between north and south Lancashire. The long mile, however, was known in Lancashire. In *The case of the Corporation of Liverpool in relation to a Bill for making a new church there*, the distance from Liverpool to Walton is given as *two long miles*.

and 20 ft.; West Derby, 24 ft. and 24 ft. 6 ins.; Lytham, 24 ft. and 21 ft.; Mawdesley, 24 ft. and 22 ft. 6 ins. This confusion is not peculiar to Lancashire. Martham, in the south of England, had a tenant's perch of 18 ft. and the lord prior's perch of 18 ft. 6 ins. G. W. Coopland, in his study of the history of the fields of St. Bertin, in France, met a confusion of measures.

This confusion of measures is probably the result of custom, convenience and chance. The Chorley Rental Book, in reality a survey made on the forfeiture of Robert Chorley for delinquency in 1652, begins with the statement that the areas are given "after eight or seven yards to each pole". Several of the holdings in Chorley are measured with the 7 yd. pole, although all holdings outside the township are measured with the 8 yd. pole. No reasons are given, but it must obviously be the outcome of custom. The most likely reason is that some of the original landowners had strong connections with northern Lancashire, and had introduced that area's measure to their own lands for their convenience. Additional evidence for this theory is provided by the fact that in a terrier,⁽¹²⁾ listing lands north of the Ribble and some to the south including Chorley, which had been prepared by lawyers in Poulton-le-Fylde, the areas of the fields are shown under two headings, *customary acreage* and *statute acreage*. The exception is in south Lancashire where the heading of column one is not *customary* but *Lord's*. The pole of 7 yds. 4 ins., "which", says the document, "is the out town's measure" is used on two occasions. Why such a clumsy measure should ever have been used and, even stranger, why it persisted is difficult to determine. It might possibly have been purely a matter of convenience, the rod having been made to fit some particular lands.

VI. THE LESS COMMON PERCHES

The Anglo-Saxons measured different kinds of land by different rods. Marsh and wood were measured by a longer rod than first-class agricultural land. In this way several men getting the same measure of land of varying qualities might reasonably expect the same yield. The 20 ft. perch was certainly not a long measure in Lancashire, but it may be some remnant of this idea that would account for the use of that perch in both Stainall and Altcar, two townships very akin to each other in situation and quality of land in the fourteenth century. The variation of the rod in measuring various types of work

⁽¹²⁾ Field Book, 1734, now in author's possession.

in the countryside, was common practice. A rod of hedging was 21 ft., draining, 18 ft. or 24 ft., digging, 21 ft. or 24 ft.⁽¹³⁾

An unusual combination of measures occurs in a document of 1607, defining land transferred by one Catherine Clifton to Laurence Webster. The land is measured in length at 8 yds. the rood, and in breadth at 7 yds.⁽¹⁴⁾ Here, surely, there must have been a compromise between the exponents of the two principal Lancashire perches, and satisfying to the honour of both. The arrangement does serve to show the extent to which, as late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, measurement was a matter of convenience.

The 22 ft. 6 ins. perch was not uncommon; at least it was sufficiently common for our surveyor⁽¹⁵⁾ to include it in his tables for computing the acreage of the customary perch. It appears to have been peculiar to Lancashire as a measure used to any extent, for it is not listed for any other county in the 1820 *Report to the Board of Agriculture*. The West Derby measurement is even more strange, for a perch of 24 ft. 6 ins. is not listed for any part of the country, including Lancashire. It existed, it would appear *in vacuo*. Why it should do so, and if so why in West Derby, seems inexplicable.

The variety of measures is interesting, and serves as a warning against any acceptance of *acre* at its face value. Realisation of the variety of meanings which the words *rod* or *acre* may have will make the student of Lancashire agricultural and social history ensure that he knows something of the meaning of the vocabulary it is frequently necessary for him to employ. Most of these measures are, however, incidental, for there can be no doubt that the two perches which were, between them, of universal currency in Lancashire were the 21 ft. and the 24 ft. perch. In every township where I have found evidence of the use of any other perch, I have also found evidence of the use of one of these two.

VII. DERIVATION OF THE LANCASHIRE LONG MEASURE

I have already referred to the Saxon custom of using different perches for different kinds of land. A table book of 1682 states that the 18 ft., 20 ft., and 24 ft. perch are called the *Woodland Measure*.⁽¹⁶⁾ Lancashire was undoubtedly a land of woods and marshes, and so it would not be unnatural for the long measure to be introduced, and retained as the standard measure of the

⁽¹³⁾ Parliamentary Papers, 1819, App. B.

⁽¹⁴⁾ L.R.O., DDS/2/2161.

⁽¹⁵⁾ L.R.O., DDX/12/1.

⁽¹⁶⁾ L.R.O., DDM/52.

county. Apart from the fact that it is difficult to explain some discrepancies such as the use of a 20 ft. pole to measure land about the marshes of Altcar and Stainall, the difficult terrain might explain a large measure, but scarcely two large measures. Why were there two rods with two clearly defined areas of distribution in the same county? If the existence of marsh and wood was so important a factor, it seems unlikely that land substantially the same would be measured by two different rods. The land west of the road to the north differs very little from Widnes to Lancaster; field names support the view that for many centuries before the eighteenth century this has been true. Another factor to be considered is land valuations. If valuation depended largely upon the nature of the land, it is obvious that the larger perch would be used to enable a man to get the same return from an acre of poor land as from an acre of good, or to pay the same tax. This theory does not seem too good when we consider Domesday Survey. In its south-west Lancashire is far more lowly valued than Cheshire, yet the large 24 ft. measure was used in both counties.

Domesday Survey, however, may be a clue to the dual perch of Lancashire. It will be remembered that south Lancashire, *Inter Ripam et Mersham*, combined with Cheshire made a 1,000-carucate unit. This area, together with northern Lancashire, had been part of Northumbria in the tenth century. But after the battle of Brunanburgh in 937 it was split from Northumbria, and associated with Cheshire, while northern Lancashire continued to be Northumbrian. It is worth while considering, therefore, whether it was the neighbour, rather than the county itself, which was the clarifying factor in the whole scheme. The 21 ft. rod for long remained the generally accepted measurement in Westmorland, Cumberland, Derbyshire and Northumberland. It seems probable, therefore, that this political unity had its influence on the survival of the 7 yd. perch.

The 7 yd. or 21 ft. perch has been variously derived from the Saxon long measure, the Norman measure, the Guernsey measure and the Irish. The Norman measure is somewhat above the 7 yds., being 7.12 yds. and the Guernsey somewhat below with 6.6 yds. The Saxon long measure gives a perch of 6.5 yds., so that, whilst one might expect it to be the antecedent of the Lancashire measure, in terms of actual figures it is no closer than others. Were the rods to be measured out in ells instead of yards, an acre would be 7,840 sq. yds. almost exactly. This might conceivably be an explanation, but there is another more probable reason for the northern Lancashire acre of that

size. Northumbria was always subject to some Celtic influence, and the invasions of the Norsemen did little to change this, particularly on the north-west coast. The Irish acre was identical with the acre produced by a 21 ft. perch, and not only would the Anglo-Saxons probably have absorbed this form of measurement in the early days, but the Norse invaders from Ireland in the early tenth century might quite easily have brought the same measure with them. If not, they would be sufficiently acquainted with it to accept such an acre if firmly established. Place and field names both suggest peaceful rather than armed infiltration during the ninth and tenth centuries. The use of a common land measure would render this more easy.

Though the land *Inter Ripam et Mersham* became separated from Northumbria about 937, it never became part of Mercia, but remained a royal domain. It was, however, associated closely enough with Cheshire on its southern borders for it to be natural for the compilers of the Domesday Survey to group it with Cheshire as a fiscal unit. Cheshire soon became a county palatine, and a county upon which the continental pattern was fairly rapidly imposed. The French pole was one of 22 ft., and the French foot 12 ft. 8 ins. giving a rod of 24 ft., or 4 fathoms, English measurement. The 24 ft. acre is known as the Cheshire acre, just as the 21 ft. is called the Lancashire acre. This would suggest that it was, more or less, indigenous to that county, and came to be absorbed by Southern Lancashire as a consequence of the close connection between the two. It must be remembered that this part of Lancashire was not completely and finally absorbed into the county organisation until the twelfth century.

VIII. REASONS FOR THE PERSISTENCE OF THE LONG MEASURE IN LANCASHIRE

Why was it that Lancashire clung to these old, and long measures until well on in the nineteenth century? Those who attend land auctions at the present time are well aware of the larger measure, because mention is constantly made of them in the documents which are still not outdated. First and foremost we must place the isolation of the county, an isolation shared in part by Cheshire. New ways and new men were suspect in Lancashire. There was also little sale and purchase with people outside the county because of this isolation; consequently there was less demand for the universal measure. This natural conservatism and isolation was encouraged by the large measure of legal independence enjoyed by the duchy

of Lancaster. Not only was Lancashire's exemption from the statutes of measure recognised by law, as we have seen, but cases were fought and determined in duchy courts by men to whom there was nothing strange or controversial in the long measures of Lancashire.

Finally there may have been the Scandinavian influence, which was strong over much of Lancashire and Cheshire. The long 100, *i.e.* 120, was a Norse measure. It lingered in the count of fish for many centuries, and to this day is used in the Lake District by wood-mongers. Burnley had used the long count for acres in 1297, and Liverpool fishermen were using it more than five hundred years later. The heaped measure of Liverpool was illegal in the seventeenth century; the corporation, eager to encourage trade, frowned upon its use; yet time and time again we find reference to its continued existence in the town. Probably the gill was the long measure which survived most generally into the present times. Standardisation and milk bottles have seen its disappearance as a half-pint unit in the milk trade since 1939, but in any Lancashire inn a gill is half-a-pint to the present day. The derivation of the long measure may be in doubt, but its persistence perhaps lies as much in the character of Lancashire people as in economic facts, in their long memories, and in their pride in "being different".