SHARING OUT THE LAND OF THE NORTHUMBRIANS: EXPLORING SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN EASTERN YORKSHIRE THROUGH -*BÝ* PLACE-NAMES AND TOWNSHIP BOUNDARIES
(PART TWO)

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Introduction

The previous article in this series explored some of the ways in which townships distinguished by place-names incorporating the Old Norse (ON) generic -*bý*, referring to a settlement, seem to have been inserted into the pre-existing pattern of Anglo-Saxon communities to the east of Pickering, north of the River Derwent (Fig. 1; Wrathmell 2020). The names of two of them, Farmanby and Roxby, were, like many others in and around the Vale of Pickering, furnished with ON personal-name qualifiers, presumably signifying the identity of people associated with them, possibly with their foundation or perhaps when they first entered the written record (if the two events were not synchronous).

They were inserted into a series of earlier units which were disposed in a relatively uniform, east-west linear arrangement, each with moorland pastures to the north, arable in the centre and marshland pastures in the low grounds bordering the Derwent to the south. It was argued that their insertion may have been achieved through a proportionate allocation to them of open-field strips in one of the pre-existing townships, resulting in a fragmentation of township lands still very evident in the mid-nineteenth century.

It is a pattern broadly repeated in the first of the townships considered here: Aislaby, to the west of Pickering (Figs 1 and 2). Two of the next group – Amotherby[2] and Slingsby – are similarly disposed in linear fashion, but this time running from the Howardian Hills in the south to the marshlands adjoining the River Rye in the north (Figs 1 and 5). Unlike Farmanby and Roxby, however, these are all recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the mid-nineteenth century as having relatively compact territories. They may have started as parcels of land intermixed with their neighbours, subsequently consolidated; or the mechanism by which they were formed may have been different from that employed at Farmanby and Roxby.

A further, and distinctly different pattern of -*bý* townships has been documented in upland areas, on the Howardian Hills and the northern Wolds which form, respectively, the south-western and southern sides of the Vale of Pickering (Figs 1, 6, 7, 8). Here, they constitute blocks of -*bý* township territories, rather than being interspersed with townships bearing other kinds of place-name generics. It will be argued that these differences can be explained by the stage reached in the formation of rural communities at the point at which they were disrupted by Scandinavian settlement.

Aislaby, Middleton and Wrelton townships

Aislaby's place-name incorporates the Scandinavian personal name Áslákr (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 18). It is one of three 'linear' townships immediately west of Pickering, the other two – Middleton and Wrelton – having Old English (OE) -*tūn* names. On the First Edition, Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheet 91, surveyed 1848–50, the field boundaries not only within, but also across these three townships create a remarkably uniform succession of strips clearly resulting from the enclosure of these communities' open fields (Fig. 2). Their mutual conformity of alignment – including the reversed-S shapes of their boundaries – gives the appearance of a swathe of open fields either created at one time or in successive phases as part of an overall scheme. The way that many of the boundaries still, in the mid-nineteenth century, 'ran through' their village settlements seems to suggest that the fields were laid out before the villages were created (see Roberts 2008, 67, 99–101).

Domesday Book records that Aislaby and Wrelton, the township immediately west of Aislaby, were held by Gospatric, one of the king's thegns (Faull and Stinson 1986, 1N, 53, 54; see Keats-Rohan 1999, 234–235); Middleton, on the east side of Aislaby, was listed as a vill in the soke of the king's estate centred on Pickering (Faull and Stinson 1986, 1N, 4). The document known as the Yorkshire Summary omits references to king's thegns (Roffe 2002, 86), and simply lists Aislaby and Wrelton as the king's, along with Middleton, all three in successive entries (Faull and Stinson 1986, SN, D18-19). They were probably all soke of the royal estate of Pickering.

The case for identifying Pickering as a Deiran royal estate centre, in existence by the later seventh century, was discussed in the previous article in this series (Wrathmell 2020, 22). It is only a small step further to suggest that Middleton, Aislaby and Wrelton formed the western end of that estate (see Pickles 2009, 23). As far as Wrelton is concerned, one possible meaning suggested for its place-
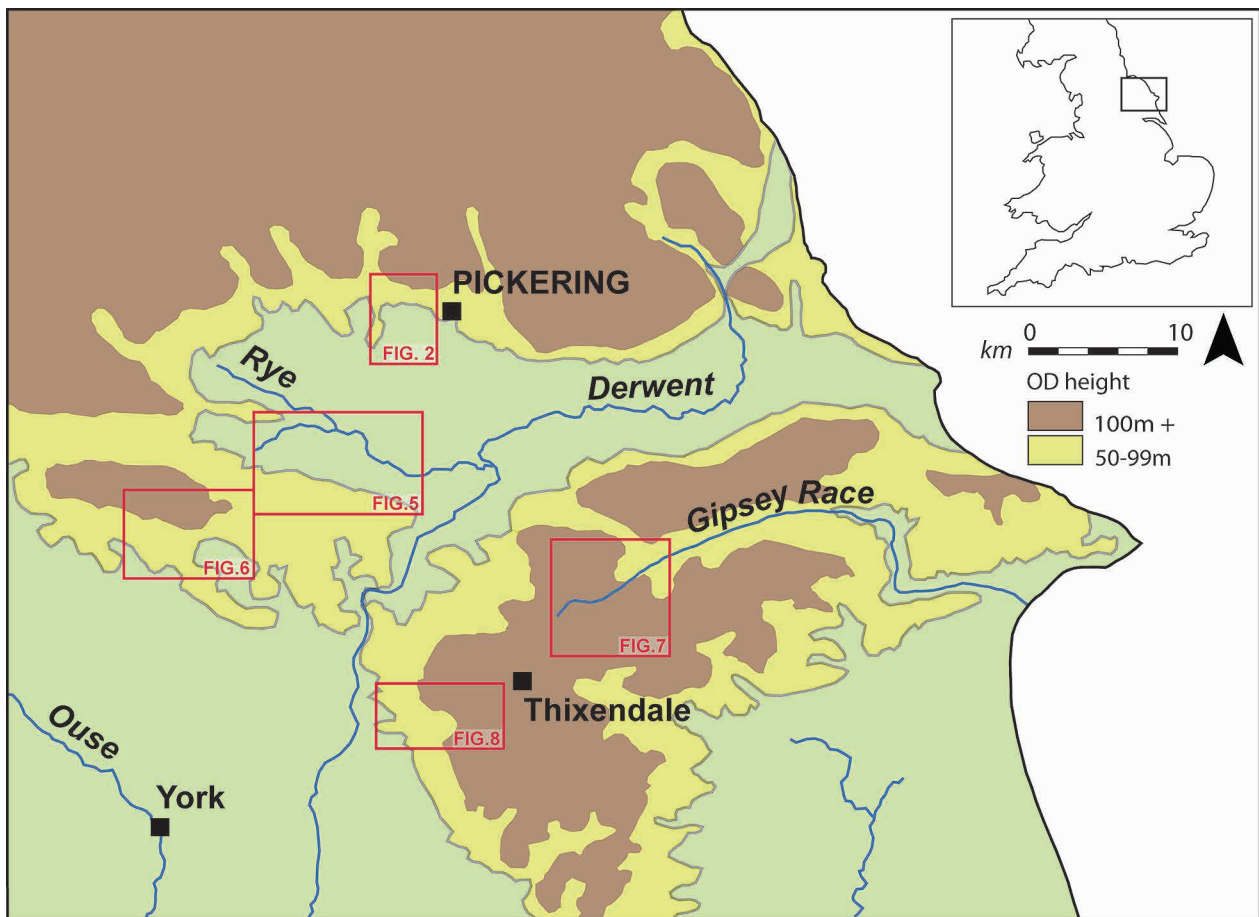
Figure 1   Location map, showing the Vale of Pickering and the Yorkshire Wolds; boxes indicate the positions of the map extracts shown in Figures 2 and 5–8.

name specific is 'felon hill' (OE *Wearg-hyll*: Watts 2004, 704). From the late seventh or eighth centuries onwards, places of judicial execution, including a number marked by the name *wearg*, were often located close to the boundaries of territorial jurisdictions, on major lines of communication (Reynolds 2009, 153–156, 225–226). Wrelton, straddling the main routeway westwards from Pickering, may offer a further instance of this practice.

At first sight, Figure 2 appears to indicate that Middleton, its OE place-name referring to the 'middle settlement' (Watts 2004, 411), was a territory and community established between Pickering and Aislaby at some point *later* in date than the creation of Aislaby. This cannot be disproved; but the hypothesis preferred here is that Middleton was originally a township occupying the ground between Pickering and Wrelton – Middleton and Wrelton possibly being contemporaneous creations – and that Aislaby was subsequently inserted along the boundary between Middleton and Wrelton, perhaps as a single block of land made up of what had earlier been the western lands of the one and the eastern lands of the other.

There are some pointers, individually slight but collectively rather more persuasive, to support the proposed sequence, all of them evident on Figure 2. First, the stepping of Aislaby's township boundaries across the strip fields indicates that the boundaries are later than the field layout; whereas there is no similar stepping

across the strips in the boundary between Middleton and Pickering. Secondly, the village settlement of Aislaby is set awkwardly against its eastern township boundary, as is Wrelton village in relation to Aislaby's western township boundary. Thirdly, the marsh or carr lands in the southern reaches of the three townships are formed by intermixed, detached portions in a way which is difficult to understand unless as evidence of a disruption of an earlier, more uniform resource allocation.

Finally, there is the rather curious south-easterly extension of Aislaby township which intercepts the water course called Costa Beck, in an arrangement which can be seen in greater detail on Figure 3. This stretch of the beck is straight, and evidently a diversion of the original stream whose course is preserved in the boundary line between Pickering and Middleton townships. The canalised stretch served, in the nineteenth century, two flour mills called High Costa Mill and Low Costa Mill, the former set within the extruded corner of Aislaby township, the latter within Middleton township.

It may seem to stretch credibility to suggest that the mid-nineteenth-century milling arrangements here were first instituted a thousand years earlier, to provide water power first for Middleton and subsequently also for the new Scandinavian community of Aislaby; but there is evidence locally that, in the late ninth and tenth centuries, major earthworks might be created to facilitate water-
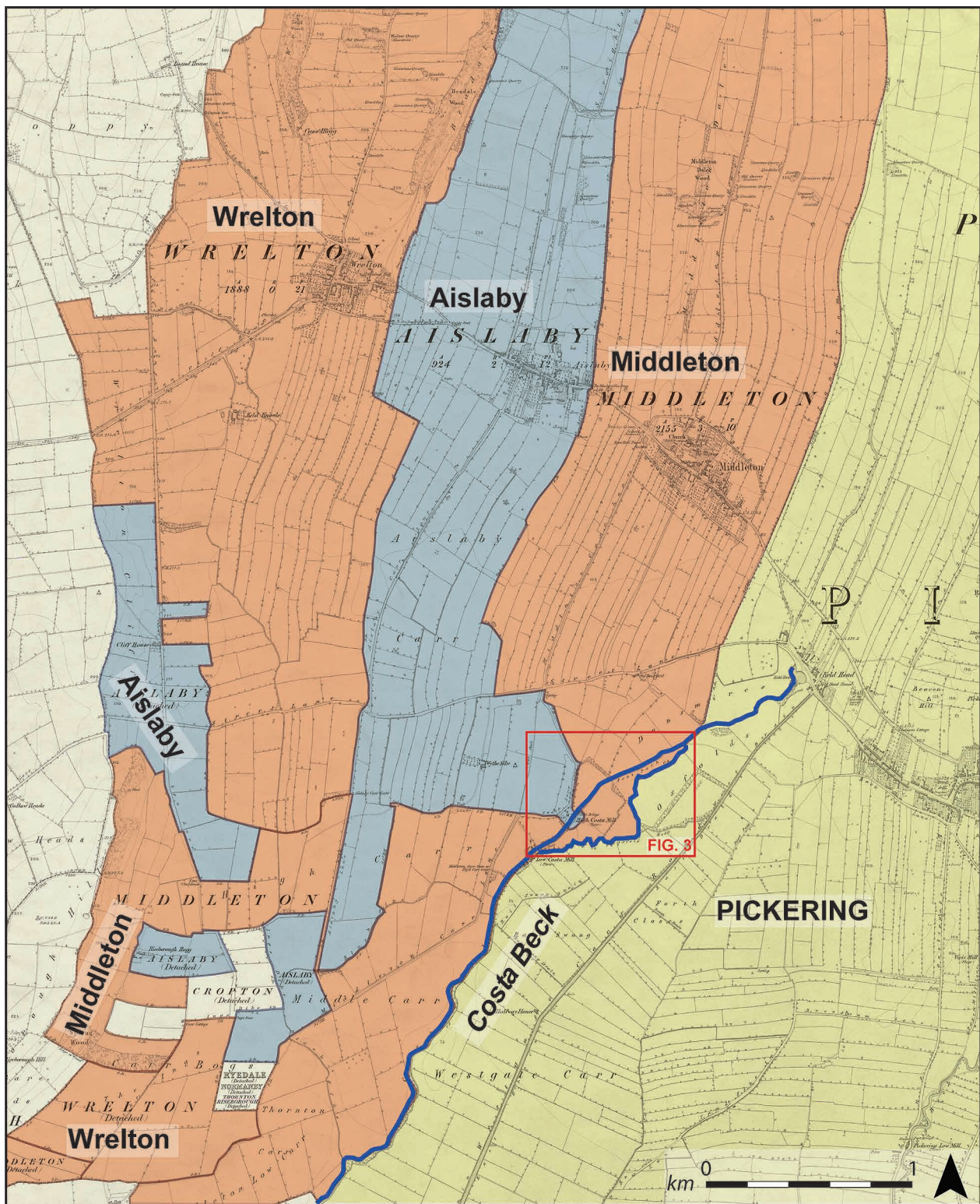
Figure 2   Aislaby, Middleton and Wrelton townships, based on the Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheet 91 (surveyed 1848–1850, published 1854); for location of map see Figure 1. Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

powered milling (e.g. at Wharram Percy: Wrathmell and Marlow-Mann 2005, 225). It may also be significant that the name of this water course, Costa Beck, is an ON name meaning 'the choice stream' (Townend 2013, 125). Might its name reflect the choice of this stream (which, under a different name, had perhaps powered

Middleton's corn-mill in earlier times) to power Aislaby's mill as well?

We should not leave these townships without considering briefly their ecclesiastical provision. In the Middle Ages they were all part of Middleton parish, which Thomas Pickles has identified as one of two
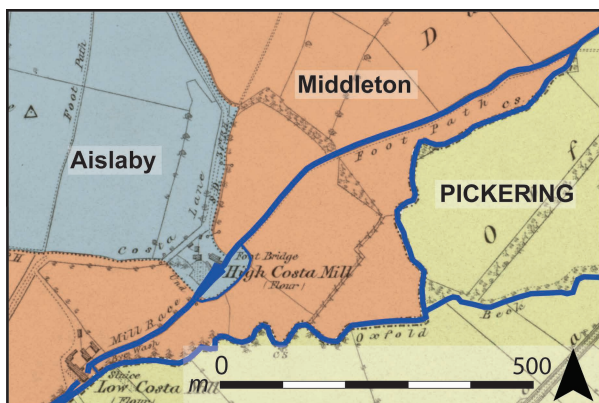
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Figure 3   Detail of Aislaby and Middleton mills on the Costa Beck (base mapping as in Fig. 2). Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Figure 4   Cross plaque of the eighth to early ninth century built into the west wall of the tower of Middleton church (S. Wrathmell).

'mother parishes' serving the pre-Conquest soke estate of Pickering (the other having been centred on the church at Pickering itself: Pickles 2009, 22–24 and map 4). Middleton's ecclesiastical status may well have been established at the time when the township was created (or at least, when it was provided with its current name), in light of the comment by Victor Watts, that 'This p[lace] n[ame] type may sometimes denote a settlement which performed some central function for a group of communities, e.g. a market, rather than one equidistant from two others' (Watts 2004, 411). In this case, the central function would have been the provision of pastoral care.

Middleton church contains an important collection of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture dated to the tenth century (Lang 1991, 181–187), but there is also, built into the west face of the west tower, a stone cross plaque which James Lang identified as probably an architectural feature, indicative of a stone church dating to the eighth or early ninth century (Fig. 4; Lang 1991, 187). There has been much discussion, summarised succinctly by Richard Morris, about whether this architectural feature had been derived from an earlier building on or near the site of the present church, or whether it had been imported from a church elsewhere. Morris notes the planned, rectilinear form of Middleton village and its relationship with the parallel fields, and he describes the churchyard as being integral to the village plan. He observes that such arrangements are usually dated to the late Saxon period or later, and that the tenth-century stone crosses may have commemorated the 'founder-leaders of the planned community and fields' (thus leaving no local context for the earlier cross plaque: Morris 2015, 147).

Two points should be made in relation to these observations. First, there is no reason to suppose that rectilinear planned villages with planned strip fields were unknown in Yorkshire before the late ninth century (especially, as in this case, close to, and subordinate to royal estate centres). Secondly, the people commemorated by Middleton's tenth-century crosses may well have been landholders in Aislaby, Wrelton or any other of the townships located within the *parochia* of Middleton, as well as (or instead of) in Middleton township itself.

The two earliest phases of the present church at Middleton have been dated to the pre-Conquest period by Harold M. and Joan Taylor. They concluded that the primary surviving fabric is represented by the stubs of walling at each end of what was once the west wall of a narrow nave, with quoins formed by large, upright stones. This nave was succeeded by a wider one with side-alternate quoins, probably erected in the same period as the lower stages of the west tower, which has similar quoins. They assigned this second phase to the second half of the tenth century or first half of the eleventh, more probably the latter given that tenth-century cross shafts had been incorporated in the tower walling. The earlier nave was assigned to the earlier tenth century (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 419–423).

Such dating would seem to support the case for Middleton being a community founded in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, but the Taylors clarified that other possible dates could be attributed to their building sequence for nave and tower. The eleventh-century date for the tower is based on the assumption that the cross shafts reused in its walling were inserted at the time it was built. If, on the other hand, they were the result of later repairs, the successive naves and tower could be much earlier, and 'On that basis we would regard the Anglo-Saxon part of the tower as a pre-Danish porch of period B [800–950], and the earlier nave as of period A [600–800]' (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 423; 17 for period dates). Thus, the cross plaque might have been derived from the period A nave or the period B west porch.

-*bý* townships and the Hovingham estate

All the -*bý* townships so far discussed, in both this and the previous article, were located within the royal estate of Pickering. It is therefore necessary to establish whether similar patterns can be found in other pre-Conquest estates in the Vale of Pickering, or whether the interspersion of -*bý* townships among pre-existing communities reflects the policy adopted in the Pickering estate alone. The territorial unit selected for comparison is the soke estate of Hovingham, to the south-west of Pickering (Figs 1 and 5), a territory described by

Richard Morris as being, at the time of Domesday, 'a great estate in decay' (Morris 2015, 144). Hovingham itself has been identified as a Deiran monastic centre. Its parish church houses part of a shrine-tomb dated to *c*. 800, and structural remains beneath the church have been attributed to the seventh to eighth centuries (Morris 2015, 139–143).

There has been much debate about the meaning of its place-name. Watts seems to have been doubtful about Eilert Ekwall's 'hām of Hofa's people' (Ekwall 1960, 253), preferring a derivation from OE *hof* 'an enclosure, a dwelling, a house, a temple' (OE **Hofinge* + *hām*: Watts 2004, 320). As Watts also noted, *hof* could reference the important Roman buildings which once stood nearby: the parkland on the west side of Hovingham village has revealed evidence of a group of high-status Roman buildings, marking either a lavish villa, a palace or a temple complex, linked to the Roman administrative centre at Malton, to the east, by a route which continues in use and is still known as 'The Street' (Morris 2015, 139–140).

The *-bý* and *-tūn* townships discussed below lie along The Street, their disposition mirroring that of Aislaby, Middleton and Wrelton in the Pickering estate. Fryton, Slingsby, Barton, Appleton, Amotherby, Swinton and Broughton comprise broadly rectilinear strips of land aligned north to south, with arable lands towards the centre. Their village settlements are set along The Street or aligned at right-angles to it, a short distance to the north, along tracks leading northwards through the arable lands towards the River Rye and its tributaries. The tracks gave each community access to the extensive low-lying marsh pastures bordering these water courses. Southwards, each community would have had access to the extensive upland pastures along the northern edge of the Howardian Hills, before the development of a series of townships, marked by place-names with *-thorp* generics, on this undulating terrain of ridges and steep-sided, narrow valleys.

Some of the *-tūn* townships seem, from their place-name specifics, to have originated as localities supplying particular products to meet the requirements of a large estate, one based on Hovingham (see Pickles 2009, 27). Appleton, 'apple orchard' (OE *æppel-tūn*: Watts 2004, 16), Swinton, 'pig farm' (OE *swīn* + *tūn*: Watts 2004, 596) and Barton, 'corn farm' (OE *ber(e)tūn*: Watts 2004, 39) are all names of this kind, the name 'Barton' specifically implying 'a component of a larger unit' (Watts 2004, 39). The same can be said of Butterwick, 'dairy farm, farm where butter is made' (OE *butere* + *wīć*: Watts 2004, 106), a township territory confined to the low grounds by the side of the Rye. As Dawn Hadley has remarked, 'Place-names which incorporate elements relating to particular resources or dues imply quite sophisticated estate organisation, with vills possibly either specialising in the production of particular crops or meeting specialised tribute obligations' (Hadley 2000, 86).

By the time of the Norman conquest, at least some of these specialist functions had been replaced by mixed farming regimes, as is evident from the Domesday entries for Appleton (5 carucates) and Swinton (11 carucates: Faull and Stinson 1986, 1N, 68, 69). These townships had come into the hands of king's thegns, along with

part of Broughton, the 'brook settlement' (OE *brōc* + *tūn*: Watts 2004, 93–4; Faull and Stinson 1986, 1N, 67). Barton, on the other hand, was listed in Domesday Book as a berewick of the royal estate of Pickering (Faull and Stinson 1986, 1Y, 4). This linkage presumably accounts for the development, before Domesday, of a township on the Howardian Hills adjacent to Barton, bearing the name Coneysthorpe, 'the king's outlying settlement' (OEScand *kununges* + *thorp*: Watts 2004, 154). It is an example of the use of the *-thorp* generic to distinguish a secondary, dependent settlement of the late tenth or eleventh century (see Cullen *et al*. 2011, 54, 145, 155).

Many of the remaining townships shown on Figure 5 were, however, still recorded as berewicks of Hovingham in the Domesday survey (along with several more outside the scope of Fig. 5). They included part of Broughton and all of Butterwick, along with all or parts of neighbouring townships with place-names showing ON influence: Wath, meaning 'ford' (ON *vath*: Watts 2004, 656) and Fryton, probably Frithi's settlement (ON personal name *Frithi* + OE *tūn*: Watts 2004, 243), together with two *-bý* townships, Amotherby and Slingsby. The particular concern here is not the Hovingham estate as a whole, but the circumstances in which Amotherby and Slingsby were created within it. They are, like Aislaby, place-names with Scandinavian personal name specifics: *Eymundr* and *Slengr* (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 18 and 37).

The township boundaries shown in Figure 5 are those which appear on the First Edition, Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheets 106, 107, 123, 124, surveyed 1848–1854. The most striking aspect of Amotherby's territory is the way in which its northern end expands eastwards and westwards to encompass a much wider area of marsh pastures than would have been anticipated given its otherwise relatively narrow rectangular shape. One possible explanation for this is that Swinton and Appleton townships had originally both run as far north as the Rye, and that subsequently parts of their low-lying pastures were transferred to Amotherby township when it was inserted between them.

Such an insertion, rather like the one postulated for Aislaby, might account for other features evident on Figure 5, by creating a 'knock-on' effect in neighbouring townships. These include the way in which Swinton's eastern boundary skirts the edge of Broughton village, a relationship which would be hard to account for as a feature created when the two townships were originally laid out. It might also account for the eastward displacement of Swinton's Ings at the expense of Broughton township, and the creation of a detached area of Broughton within Swinton Ings. Amotherby's pastures seem also to have been extended into Butterwick township to the north-west. As in the Pickering estate, the emphasis placed on acquiring low-lying, rich cattle pastures during the laying out of *-bý* townships is very clear. A similar emphasis can be seen in the creation of Brawby township in the low ground on the north side of the Rye, just outside the Hovingham estate, its place-name incorporating, once again, an ON personal-name specific (*Bragi*: Fellows-Jensen 1972, 23).

Though the formal characteristics of Amotherby seem, like those of Aislaby, most easily explained in terms of an insertion into a pre-existing row of *-tūn*
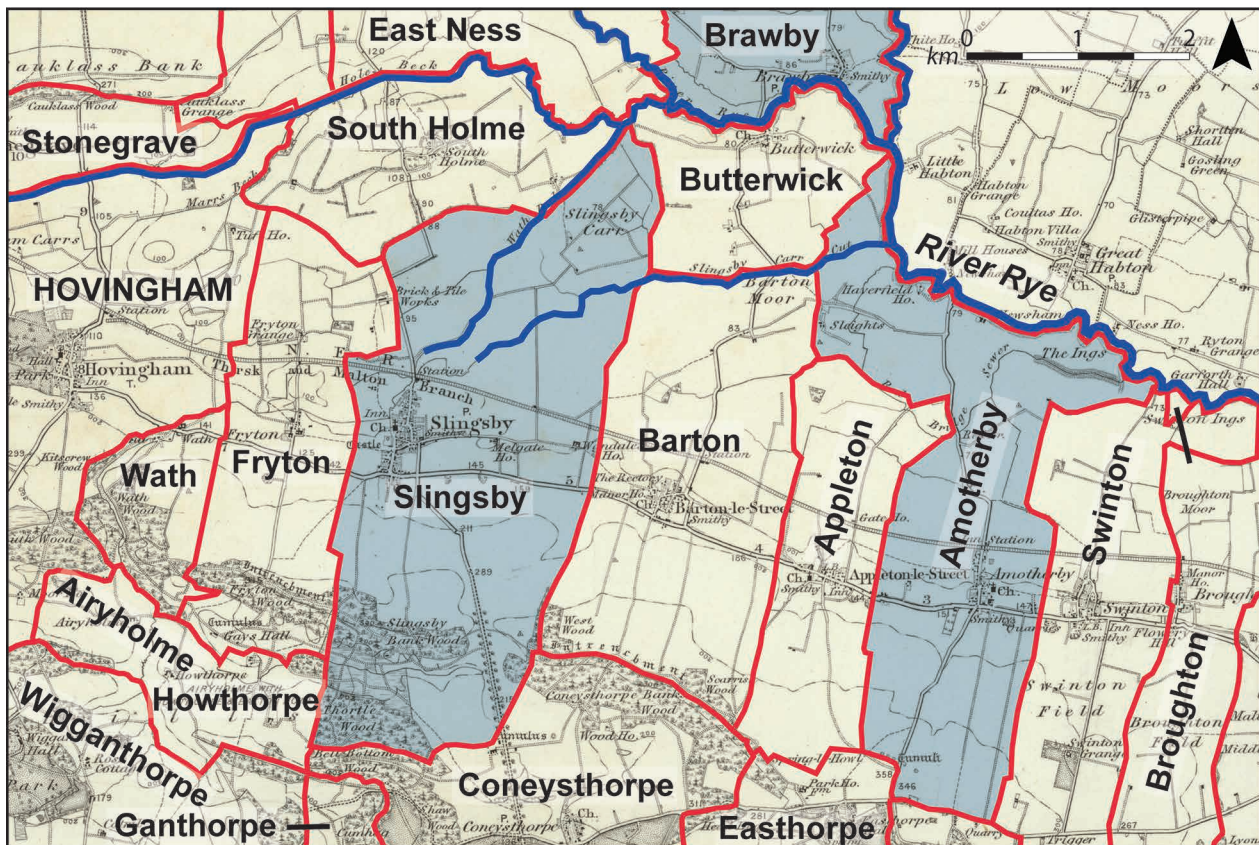
Figure 5   Townships to the east of Hovingham between the River Rye and the Howardian Hills, based on the Ordnance Survey One Inch map sheet 53 (revised 1895–1896, published 1898); township boundaries as shown on Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheets 106–107 and 123–124 (surveyed 1848–1854, published 1854); for location of map see Figure 1. Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

townships, a different explanation seems to be required for the very regular shape of Slingsby. There are two alternative possibilities that might account for this: first, that it signifies a simple renaming of a pre-existing township, presumably one previously bearing an OE place-name; or secondly, that it represents an entirely new entity established in what had earlier been the core territory of Hovingham.

The first possibility seems the less likely of the two on circumstantial grounds: if Scandinavian settlers could achieve their settlement objectives through a strategy of taking over existing townships as going concerns, simply replacing their OE place-names with ON -bý names, why would there also be evidence suggesting that at least some -bý townships were inserted as new units into patterns of townships which continued to bear OE names? If the second explanation is preferred, it would seem that the core territory of Hovingham had earlier extended eastwards as far as the western boundary of Barton, and that the Anglo-Scandinavian period saw the creation of new townships within this core, not only Slingsby but also Wath and Fryton.

Brandsby, Stearsby, Skewsby, Dalby and Whenby townships

The Domesday communities located further west in the Howardian Hills are markedly different (Fig. 6). They are represented by no fewer than five contiguous

townships with -bý generic place-names which occupy a large, broadly rectangular territory. The north-east flank of the block of Howardian -bý townships is marked by a continuation of the same wooded ridges and steep-sided valleys as the -thorp territory to the east (above and Fig. 5), and it is no surprise to find that it supported a major pottery-producing industry in the later Middle Ages (Mainman and Jenner 2013, 1232). The rest of the block is, however, formed by the broader, south-easterly facing and more gently undulating valley of a stream that to the south-east is called Ings Beck. The land here is more amenable to arable farming as well as pasturing cattle.

Gillian Fellows-Jensen has characterised this area rather differently. She has argued that these southern slopes of the Hills were 'unsuited for agriculture and these [-bý names] probably represent exploitation of inferior land in response to pressure from an increasing population' (Fellows-Jensen 1989, 80 and fig. 2). Suitability for agriculture is, however, a matter of relative strengths and weaknesses, not a binary concept. These -bý townships clearly did not develop open fields as extensive or as long-lasting as their counterparts in the lowlands, but they did have areas of cultivation, almost certainly in the form of strip fields. At the time of the Domesday survey, Brandsby and Stearsby were reported as containing eleven villeins who had six ploughs (Faull and Stinson 1986, 23N, 27), and in the later twelfth century Roger de Mowbray confirmed a
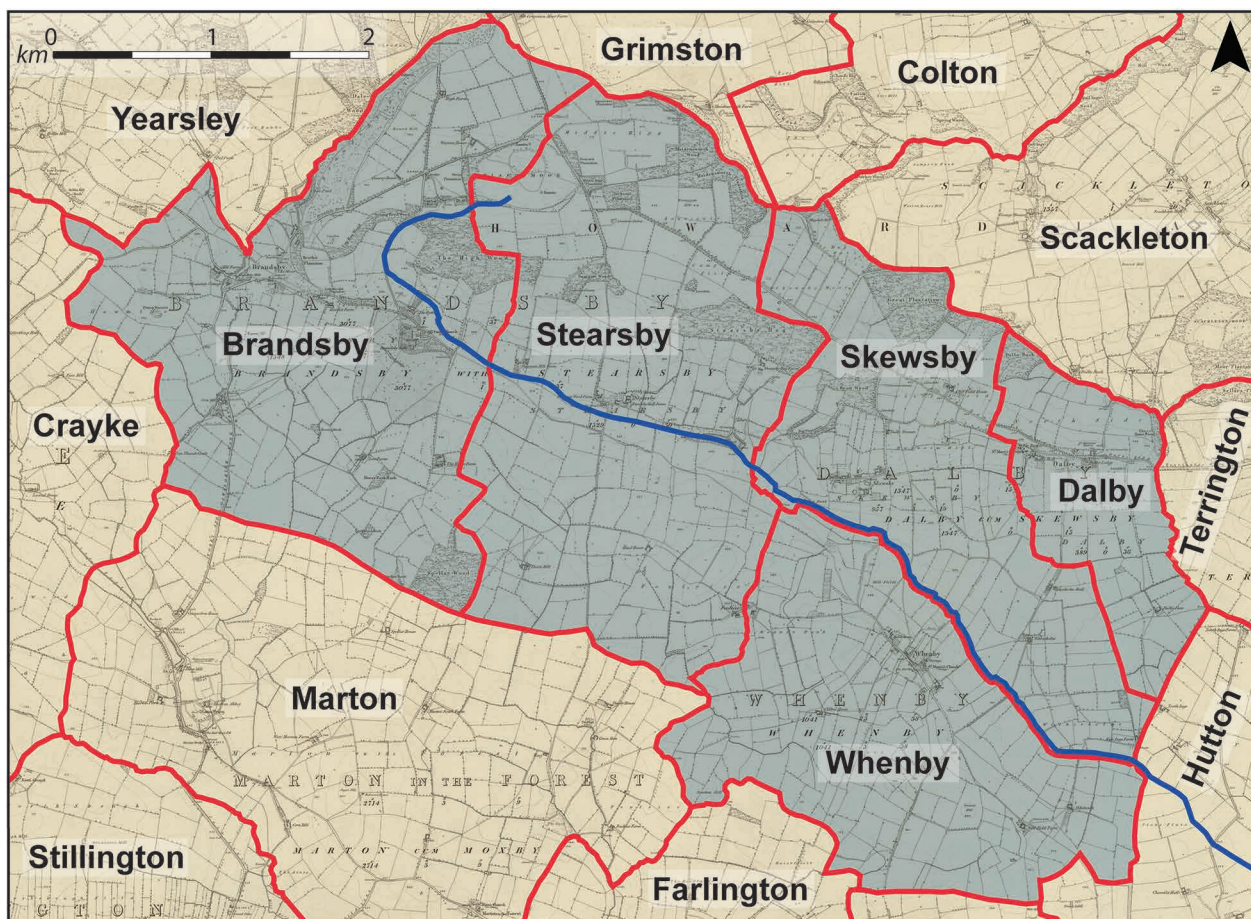
Figure 6   Townships in the Howardian Hills, based on the Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheet 122 (surveyed 1852–1853, published 1856); for location of map see Figure 1. Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

grant of two bovates in Brandsby, noting that the men who used to inhabit the aforesaid arable land, used to have full common in wood and plain and pasture for building and [charcoal] burning (Greenway 1972, 145, no. 206).

Brandsby and Stearsby place-names both have personal-name specifics: *Brandr* and *Styrr* (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 22, 38). At Domesday, Brandsby was a manor and Stearsby its berewick, together rated at eleven carucates. They were furnished with a church and a priest (Faull and Stinson 1986, 23N 27). These two townships cover approximately similar-sized areas, just over 1500 acres (about 620 ha) each. The other three *-bý* townships have more varied sizes, and none of them is likely to contain a personal name specific. Skewsby and Dalby probably contain ON appellatives *skógr* 'wood', and *dalr* 'valley' (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 25, 37), both eminently appropriate for the ridges and woodlands along their northern sides. The recorded boundary separating the two is stepped, perhaps indicating that they had earlier formed a single territory with strip fields.

Whenby is recorded, in the Summary document only, as eight carucates belonging to the king (Faull and Stinson 1986, SN, B18). Its place-name is another appellative, but one referring to women: it preserves the genitive plural *kvenna* of the Scandinavian *kona*, 'woman' (Watts 2004, 671; Fellows-Jensen 1972, 41). Judith Jesch notes only this example and one in

Leicestershire, and wonders 'in what circumstances women (especially in the plural) would own or be solely responsible for a farm in the Danelaw or Northumbria at this period and whether the name arose from the rarity of such an occurrence' (Jesch 2008, 158).

The answer may be that a *-bý* township (rather than a single farm) was assigned to a group of women whose status or condition was, as she suggests, unusual – and different from that implied by those few place-names in *-bý* which have ON female personal name specifics. Among the latter is Helperby in North Yorkshire, an estate forfeited to the archbishop of York in the later tenth century because of illicit cohabitation: 'there were two brothers who had one wife' (Woodman 2012, 134–135, 137–138; for the place-name see Watts 2004, 295).

In part three of this series of articles it will be argued that Helperby was forfeited because *Hjalp*, the woman whose ON name provides the place-name specific, had married (or had been married to) the brother of her deceased husband for the purpose of keeping her estate within the control of her late husband's kin group; and that when the Church finally identified them as close affines, the union was declared incestuous. This sort of case, where a female with a Scandinavian personal name may have inherited an estate, seems to be very different from the allocation of a township to a group of women.

Were these unnamed women acting as settlers in their own right, given the evidence that some Vikings may

have been women, or were they the widows of warriors who had died before their settlement could be achieved? Ben Raffield, in reviewing the evidence for women associated with the Viking armies, has argued that 'these were not simply a group of camp followers travelling in an army's wake, but were instead a sizeable and integral contingent of these groups' (Raffield 2016, 314–319, quote at 318). The place-name Whenby may support his case.

The five -bý townships in the Howardian Hills – and they are the only ones recorded in these uplands – may have been created all at once or, perhaps, in stages given that two have personal name specifics and two are topographical appellatives. In the previous case studies in this and the earlier article, it has been argued that the creation of townships with -bý generic place-names in the long-settled Vale of Pickering was achieved through insertions into the pre-existing pattern of rural communities. It was a negotiated settlement: lands do not seem to have been repurposed wholesale by the Scandinavians for the creation of -bý townships.

Where, therefore, the wholesale repurposing of lands *does* seem to have taken place – in the Howardian Hills and, in the next two cases, on the Yorkshire Wolds – it is reasonable to suppose that these upland areas had not been comprehensively developed into township communities at the point (or points) at which they experienced Scandinavian settlement. It is, on the other hand, very clear that the land occupied by these five -bý townships was not unfavourable to farming. Whereas the more broken and wooded terrain of the Howardian Hills to the east was probably used as intercommon for surrounding communities until divided up into -thorp townships, the same may not be true of the area from Brandsby to Whenby. It may have been an estate or a component of an estate which was much more extensive than a single township, but not in any sense an undeveloped area of marginal land.

The same is true of the Kirby Underdale and Kirby Grindalythe estates on the Wolds, the study area's two remaining clusters of upland townships with -bý place-names. They lie in the three contiguous Domesday hundreds of Acklam, Scard and Thorshowe, which encompass the western half of the northern Wolds and extend into the lowlands as far as the River Derwent (Fig. 1; Wrathmell 2012, fig. 76). The Yorkshire Summary, which lists the county's Domesday vills by hundred or wapentake, includes only nine vills with -bý names within these three hundreds (Faull and Stinson 1986, SE, Sc, Ac, Th). All of them are accounted for in these two clusters.

Kirby Grindalythe, Duggleby, Thirkleby, Thoralby and Mowthorpe townships

The more easterly cluster is centred on Kirby Grindalythe parish (Fig. 7), in what is now called the Great Wold Valley but was known as Cranedale in the Middle Ages. The suffix in Kirby's name refers to the 'lythe' or slope of Cranedale, running gently down to the Gipsey Race, one of the few surface streams on the Wolds (Smith 1937, 4–5, 12–13). The source of the Race is a spring in Wharram le Street township, whence it runs north-eastwards. Though its surface flow is intermittent (Wrathmell 2005,

1), it invests the lythe with significantly greater farming potential than the largely waterless plateaux to the north and south. It is for this reason that Cranedale is home to a number of Butterwick-type settlements which are thought to date to the pre-Viking period, among them one at Lutton which straddles the Race just to the east of the -bý townships. There is another at Wharram Percy, a short distance to the west, located close to the source of a stream which flows northwards into Settrington Beck (Wrathmell 2012, 107, 111–112).

Outside the areas supplied with surface streams, the northern Wolds seem not to have been comprehensively divided up among township communities until the Anglo-Scandinavian period. This can be inferred from the conclusion reached by Gelling in two essays devoted specifically to this region. She argued that there had been a substantial reduction in the post-Roman population on the Wolds, and that an influx of new settlers in the late ninth and early tenth centuries led to the coinage of new names in which a mixture of OE and ON can be detected (Gelling 2004, 348–351; 2006, 88–90).

It is proposed here that the block of -bý townships in Cranedale just upstream from Lutton represents the earliest phase of this late ninth to early tenth-century settlement, occupying the best of the land which had not yet been divided into townships. Strictly speaking these -bý townships formed two blocks in the mid-nineteenth century, one of the townships separated from the others by a -thorp; but there are grounds for supposing that these arrangements were the result of changes to the pattern of townships in or after the twelfth century. Domesday records, in addition to Duggleby, Kirby and Thirkleby, a fourth -bý vill named Thoralby (Smith 1937, 125 and note 2). A twelfth-century charter indicates that it lay between Mowthorpe and Duggleby (Farrer 1915, 387); and its settlement is probably marked by the earthworks recorded in the mid-nineteenth century immediately west of a hill called Thoroughby Hill (see Fig. 7). Its territory seems, therefore, to have been incorporated into Mowthorpe, which itself lost land to Kirby township after the early seventeenth century (Wrathmell 2012, 99–101).

The place-names Duggleby, Thoralby and Thirkleby all contain personal name specifics (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 25–26, 39). Fellows-Jensen implies that there are two Thirkleby townships on the basis of the Domesday Summary's reference to eight carucates *In Turgislebi* and another four *In alia Turgislebi* (Faull and Stinson 1986, SE, Th5). These entries seem, however, to signify two manors rather than two townships, held in 1086 by different tenants-in-chief, and previously by separate antecessors (Faull and Stinson 1986, 5E, 68; 15E, 15). Kirby incorporates the Scandinavian appellative *kirkja*, 'church' (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 31–32). Margaret Gelling has contrasted *kirkjubý*, 'liable to be applied by Scandinavian speakers to any village with a noteworthy church', with 'other names in *bý* which in most instances are newly coined names for new settlements' (Gelling 1997, 234).

Of the townships with personal name specifics, Thoralby incorporates the ON personal name *Þóraldr* (Watts 2004, 608; Ekwall 1960, 466), and Thirkleby the ON personal name *Þorgils* (Ekwall 1960, 466; Fellows-Jensen 1972, 39). Fellows-Jensen (1972, 63) identifies
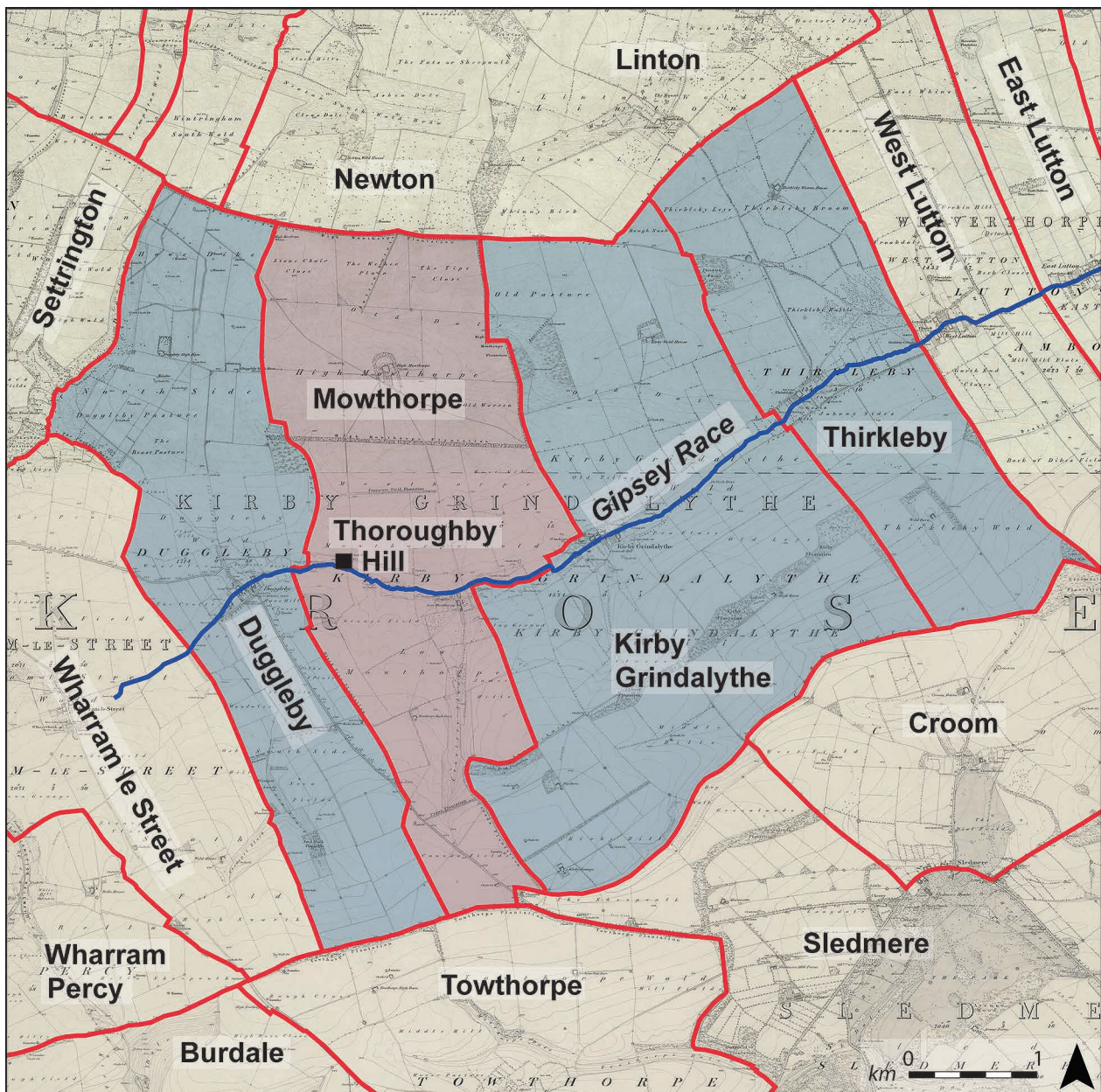
Figure 7   Townships around Kirby Grindalythe in the northern Wolds, based on the Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheets 125 and 143 (surveyed 1850–1851, published 1854); for location of map see Figure 1. Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

the specific in Mowthorp as another personal name, either the ON *Múli* or an OE **Mūla*. The first element of Duggleby contains a Goidelic personal name *Dubgilla* (Townend 2014, 116; Watts 2004, 197; Fellows-Jensen 1972, 25–26). This might be thought to indicate that the first element (at least) of the township's place-name did not become fixed until after the Hiberno-Norse king Ragnald's conquest of York in 919 – but only if Irish, or more general Goidelic influence can be assumed to be no earlier than that conquest.

On the contrary, the *Dubgaill*, or 'dark foreigners', seem to have first arrived in Ireland in the 850s; and in 866–867 they formed a contingent of the Great Army that first captured York and subsequently defended it against the Northumbrians. Written sources also indicate that two of the Army's leaders, the brothers Ivar and Halfdan,

were previously active in Ireland (Edmonds 2019, 52; Townend 2014, 25–28). Furthermore, the material culture associated with Great Army camps at Torksey, in Lincolnshire and at Aldwark, twelve miles north-west of York, includes items with Irish provenances (Hadley and Richards 2018, 12–13; Williams *et al*. 2020, 84). As Matthew Townend has observed, 'It may therefore be a mistake to date Irish influence primarily (let alone exclusively) to the period after 919, as is often done, for example, in stone sculpture studies' (Townend 2014, 117).

The remaining place-name, Kirby, has received considerable attention from numerous scholars over many decades; but one of the most detailed and comprehensive analyses is that undertaken recently by Thomas Pickles. He notes that they 'often have

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good documentary or material evidence for a church, sometimes of the eighth or ninth century, more often of the tenth or eleventh century, and generally gave their name to a parish' (Pickles 2018, 247). He sees the names as marking, not necessarily the locations of religious communities, but rather the lands owned by a church, and consequently named 'farm of the church' by ON speakers who settled nearby (Pickles 2018, 252–253). In relation to Kirby Grindalythe, however, he notes that a stone sarcophagus preserved in the church 'suggests a church housing a high-status burial in the tenth century'; and that the term *monasterium* was applied to Kirby Grindalythe when it was granted to the Augustinian priory at Kirkham in the early twelfth century (Pickles 2018, 250).

If we assume that Mowthorpe was extracted from the territories of the other townships at some point after their initial formation, then the four *-bý* townships can be seen to form a unit rather like that of the Brandsby group. It is, moreover, a unit of similar size, at about 5,500 acres (2,200 ha) despite being divided into fewer townships. The chief difference is the presence of a Kirby within the Cranedale group, and the preservation in the walls of the current church of cross fragments dating from the ninth to tenth and tenth to eleventh centuries (Lang 1991, 150–152). The Brandsby group contains no Kirby though, as noted above, it had a church and a priest at Domesday. The failure of its church to provide pre-Conquest cross fragments is perhaps explained by the complete demolition and replacement of the medieval building in the 1760s (*VCH NR 2*, 103–107).

The medieval parish of Kirby Grindalythe included all the *-bý* townships and Mowthorpe (together with Croom and Sledmere, to the south: Wrathmell 2012, fig. 78). We must therefore allow for the possibility that Kirby's pre-Conquest funerary monuments, like those at Middleton, memorialised the deceased inhabitants of other townships in the parish, as well as Kirby itself. It is perhaps significant in this context that Kirby has produced a sculptural fragment identified as one of the ring-headed crosses which, 30 years ago, were thought 'likely to have appeared in Yorkshire only after *c*. 920 when they were introduced by Norse-Irish colonists' (Lang 1991, 151). Doubts have already been expressed about a *terminus post quem* for Irish influence based on Ragnald's conquest of York, and a connection between the *Dubgilla* of Duggleby's place-name – perhaps one of the *Dubgaill* settlers – and Kirby's ring-head cross may still be valid in the context of a late ninth-century settlement.

There is one final piece of evidence – though a small and eminently portable one – to support the suggestion that the creation of the Cranedale *-býs* can be assigned to the late ninth rather than the tenth century. It is a silver coin recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (YORYM-1BB122), provenanced to Kirby Grindalythe parish, probably to Thirkleby township. It represents one of the early Scandinavian coinages of the Danelaw, an imitative issue of Alfred's Horizontal (Two-Line) type, bearing the name of the moneyer Ludig. Other examples have been found in Stamford and Lincoln (Flaxengate), and 'near York'. The imitative phase of Scandinavian coinage has been assigned to the period before *c*. 895 (Blackburn 2005, 21, 42 Appendix 3, nos 13–15). Its

loss may, therefore, find a context in a late ninth-century Scandinavian settlement of Cranedale.[3]

Kirby Underdale, Garrowby, Thoralby, Uncleby, Bugthorpe and Painsthorpe townships

The second group of *-bý* townships lies on the western edge of the Wolds, mainly across an embayment which, as in Cranedale, offers surface water courses, most notably the Hundle Beck (Fig. 8). The Underdale group comprises the only other 'Kirby' on the Wolds (see Pickles 2018, 246, map 10), and three other townships with names incorporating either certain or possible ON personal names: Garrowby (probably *Geirviðr* or *Geirvarðr*: Fellows-Jensen 1972, 28; cf. Ekwall 1960, 192); Thoralby (*Þóraldr*: Ekwall 1960, 466; Fellows-Jensen 1972, 39), and Uncleby (probably **Hunketill*, **Hundketill* or **Unnketill*': Fellows-Jensen 1972, 40; cf. Ekwall 1960, 486). One of the two *-thorps*, Bugthorpe, has a specific derived from the ON personal name *Buggi* (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 56); the other, Painsthorpe, includes a post-Conquest continental personal name; in Domesday it is simply *Torfe* (Faull and Stinson 1986, 1E, 52). The *-thorps* may have been secondary extractions from the territories of the adjacent *-bý* townships, as has been suggested for Cranedale.

Taken together, these Underdale townships cover just under 5,900 acres (2,400 ha), a slightly larger area than the groups previously discussed but of the same order of magnitude. Lying mainly within the embayment and with access to surface streams, they are located, like the Brandsby and Cranedale groups, in an upland area which was probably not divided up into townships before the late ninth century, but which was still relatively favourable for farming. Underdale contained far more favourable terrain than Thixendale, the township immediately to the east (Fig. 8), which was composed of Wolds plateaux and narrow valleys with no surface water. The contrasts can be seen in Figures 9 and 10, and they almost certainly account for the different ways in which settlement developed in these two areas.

The area name 'Underdale', which appears twice in Henry II's confirmation of grants to St Mary's Abbey, York (Farrer 1914, 272, 274), derives from a compound Scandinavian personal name *Hundulfr*, incorporating *Hundi*, originally a by-name, 'dog', and *Ulfr*, another by-name, 'wolf' (Fellows-Jensen 1968, 144–145, 321–324). Thixendale, recorded as a township name rather than a wider area name, incorporates another Scandinavian compound personal name, *Sigsteinn* (Fellows-Jensen 1968, 235). The final element of each place-name is generally regarded as the ON appellative *dalr* or OE *dæl*, for 'valley' (e.g. Fellows-Jensen 1972, 105). If so, it is comparable to the second element of Crandale, the other area name in this part of the Wolds (Smith 1937, 12–13). Is it possible, though, that Underdale was, at the time of the initial Scandinavian settlement, the share of the Wolds allotted to Hundulfr, and that Thixendale was Sigsteinn's share (drawing their generic instead from ON *deill* meaning 'share': Smith 1956, 128)?

Thixendale covers a large area of the High Wolds,

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[3] I am indebted to one of the anonymous referees for supplying this information and relevant references.
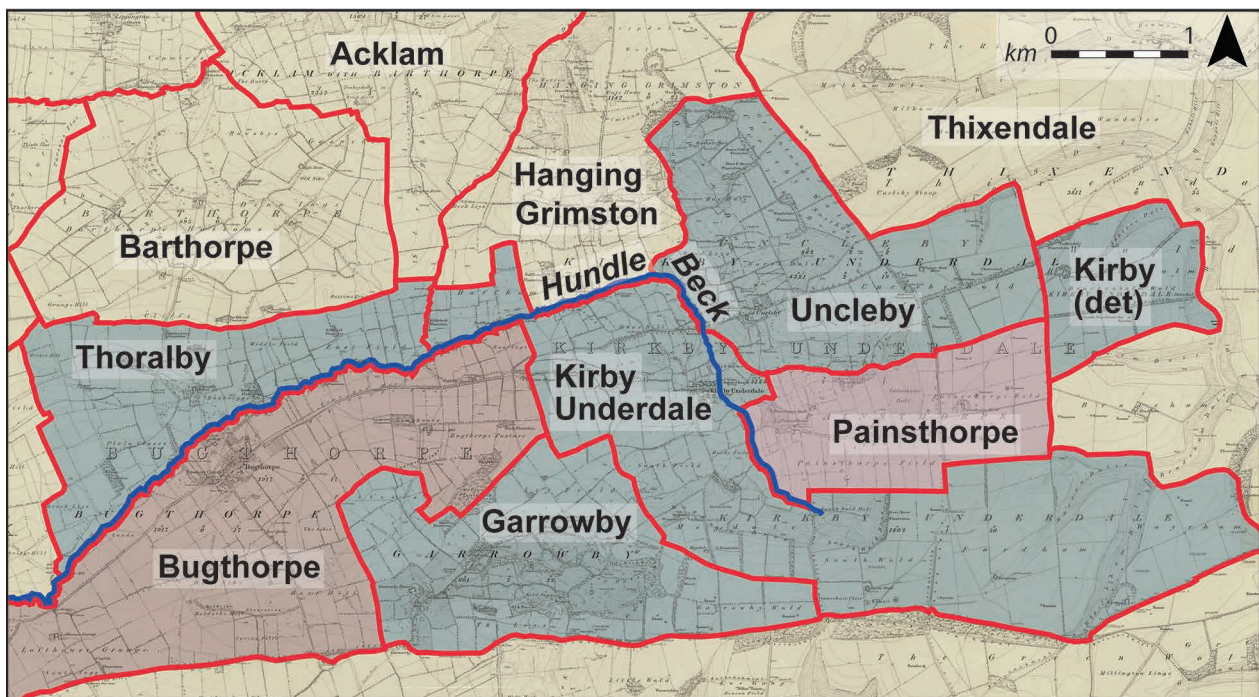
Figure 8   Townships around Kirby Underdale at the west end of the northern Wolds, based on the Ordnance Survey Six Inch map sheet 159 (surveyed 1851, published 1854) with additional township boundary information from Greenwood's map of Yorkshire (surveyed 1815–1817, published 1817); for location of map see Figure 1. Base map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

Figure 9   Kirby Underdale embayment, viewed north-westwards from Painsthorpe (S. Wrathmell).

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Figure 10   Dry valley to the north-west of Thixendale village, viewed south-eastwards from Aldro (S. Wrathmell).

amounting to over 3,800 acres (1540 ha), unusually large for a township. Both its overall shape and the course of its boundaries with adjacent townships strongly suggest that it is a residual area from which smaller units, notably Fridaythorpe township, were extracted (see Wrathmell 2012, fig. 78). Matthew Townend has commented on a number of Yorkshire's 'dale' area names with ON personal name specifics, and has suggested that 'these names possibly indicate Scandinavian lords assuming authority over a wider extent of land than simply a single, closely delimited settlement' (Townend 2014, 111). It may be that Hundulfr's share was soon regarded as suitable for division into viable *-bý* townships, distinguished from one another by the personal-name specifics of the beneficiaries, whereas Sigsteinn's share remained undivided until much later.

The final consideration in relation to Kirby Underdale is its ecclesiastical status. The medieval church and its site have not produced pre-Conquest sculpture, though the nave walls have been identified as 'possibly Saxo-Norman' (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 356). Otherwise, the possible existence here of a church in (and before) the Anglo-Scandinavian period rests upon its place-name. As noted above, Pickles has argued that the name 'Kirby' may simply signify a farm which was a possession of a church. If he is correct, the Kirby place-name in Underdale need not signify a pre-Conquest church building in this location. It might, instead, indicate that the territory which was to become known as Underdale

had belonged to a religious community before it was allocated to Hundulfr, and that the part of it which became Kirby township remained a resource used by the Church to support its ministry to the new Scandinavian communities.

At the Conquest, and at the time Domesday Book was compiled, one of the principal landholders in Underdale was Arngrimr, whose name is another compound Scandinavian personal name (Fellows-Jensen 1968 13). He was a king's thegn, and Domesday records him as holding manors in Kirby and [Pains]thorp (Faull and Stinson 1986, 29E, 17–18). He was clearly a prominent citizen of York: he held St Saviour's church there (Farrer 1914, 270), and is likely to have been one of the city's principal lawmen, the first of the twelve who witnessed a document, broadly contemporary with Domesday Book, which set out the rights and laws of Archbishop Thomas (Rollason 1998, 23–4, 187, 212–13). He had become by then a monk of St Mary's Abbey, York, and he made over his property to St Mary's. On the evidence of subsequent royal confirmations, he clearly held more in Underdale than Domesday indicates, including unspecified holdings in Uncleby and the church at Kirby (Farrer 1914, 264, 272).

These donations may be seen simply as a pious act by a wealthy man taking up a religious life; but they are only part of the story. The confirmation charters of William II and Henry II indicate that St Mary's acquired lands in Kirby Underdale, Painsthorpe, Uncleby and

Hanging Grimston from other holders as well, including the king himself, Odo the Crossbowman, Berenger de Tosny, Goscelin and Gamel Grimesunna (Farrer 1914, 265, 271–272, 274). These grants are reminiscent of those made to Abbot Stephen, founder of St Mary's, after his earlier refoundation of the seventh-century Deiran monastery at Lastingham. The present writer has made a case elsewhere that Stephen's refoundation of Lastingham was accompanied by an attempt to reassemble the lands which had been given to that monastery by the Deiran kings, notably those lying between the Dove and Seven rivers (Wrathmell 2012, 194–195). Therefore, the acquisition by St Mary's of numerous township lands in Underdale may well have had a similar motivation. It was perhaps an attempt to reassemble part of an estate which had been taken from a religious community, and had been given over to Hundulfr at the time of the Scandinavian settlement.

Conclusions

The final article in this series will address some of the wider issues relating to the Scandinavian settlement in eastern Yorkshire, most notably when it took place, and who planned it. This and the previous article have attempted to establish some of the parameters for this broader discussion, based on case-studies from the vale and the uplands. In the first place, the intercalation of lowland *-bý* townships between pre-existing communities suggests that the aim was to limit the disruption caused by the settlement to the host rural society and its economy. It is an objective that was presumably shared by both parties to these transactions – the leaders of the settlers and the leaders of the host communities.

Secondly, there was also settlement in the uplands, through the establishment of blocks of *-bý* townships in areas where the networks of townships had not already fully developed. The pattern again suggests the intention of minimising disruption to the host farming communities. These were not, in any sense, vacant lands which no-one else wanted to farm; but they were territories significantly larger than townships, probably elements of earlier estates, in some cases perhaps monastic. They were shared out among the leaders of the Scandinavians, and most of them were divided up into *-bý* townships.

The question of when this sharing out might have occurred will be explored more thoroughly in the next article, where it will be argued that most of it took place in the final quarter of the ninth century. Twelve of the seventeen *-bý* townships discussed here have ON personal-name specifics and, contrary to some earlier interpretations, these are seen here as evidence of large-scale, rapid settlement, the names of those who received shares at the level of individual communities. Some may have resulted from the further splitting of townships in the tenth century, but there is no sign that they correspond with the pattern of high-level Scandinavian landholding revealed by Domesday, a pattern that was, perhaps, largely established after Cnut's accession in 1016.

A further issue is understanding the precise significance of the Kirby place-names. Two of them are integral to the upland blocks of *-bý* townships, but

these stand in marked contrast to the two lowland Kirbys in the Vale of Pickering – Kirkby Moorside and Kirby Misperton – which are not adjacent to other townships with *-bý* place-names. This contrast may simply reflect the contrast between upland and lowland *-bý* townships generally, the former being integrated in blocks, the latter dispersed among pre-existing communities. There is, however, some evidence that the lowland Kirbys signify a renaming of earlier townships, rather than the insertion of new units into a pre-existing pattern. It is another issue that will be addressed in the final article in this series.

Finally, some reference should be made to place-names of the class which was defined many years ago as 'Grimston hybrids', combining a Scandinavian personal-name specific with the generic *-tūn*. Fellows-Jensen's detailed study of such place-names in Yorkshire identified 42 of them, and she noted that they 'tend to be found on the fringes of areas where *býs* and *þorps* lie thickest on the ground' (Fellows-Jensen 1972, 109). There are four of them in the immediate vicinity of the *-bý* townships discussed here. As can be seen in Figures 6 and 8, two of them, containing the name *Grímr*, lie directly adjacent to two of the *-bý* township blocks: Grimston in the Howardian Hills, and Hanging Grimston in Underdale. A third, North Grimston, lies only a short distance west of the Grindalythe block, separated from it by Wharram le Street township (Fig. 7). In addition, a further probable 'hybrid' name containing the Scandinavian personal name *Friði*, is found in Fryton township, next to Slingsby (Fig. 5; Fellows-Jensen 1972, 127).

Whatever the precise significance of the Grimston hybrids in general, and those containing the name *Grímr* in particular – the possibilities have been analysed by Fellows-Jensen (2012, 352–357) and Townend (2014, 101–105) – two of the *Grímr* examples are simply adjacent or close to two of the upland blocks of *-bý* townships. The third one, however, Hanging Grimston north of Kirby Underdale, has boundaries which seem to interlock with those of Kirby and Uncleby in a way which suggests that it may have been an earlier township which was modified when the *-bý* townships were created. Its subsequent acquisition by St Mary's, along with Kirby Underdale, points to an earlier connection. Yet Fryton, if the above interpretation of Slingsby is valid, seems more likely to have been a new township created subsequent to Slingsby's establishment. Once again, the various strands of evidence for Scandinavian settlement defy simple generalisations.

information on some aspects of the Scandinavian settlement. Judith Jesch has very kindly provided advice on the place-name Helperby, which is discussed briefly in this, and more extensively in the next and final article in this series.

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