

comprehensive survey of baptismal-naming from 1066 to, say, 1400; nor, I suspect, is anyone likely to attempt one in the near future. A few good monographs do exist, notably Ekwall's *Early London Personal Names* (1947) and his *Two London Subsidy Rolls* (1951); and there are good articles upon specific points. But most of the rest of the monographs dealing with this period are too unbalanced to afford useful information, except on occasional matters of detail. It is in circumstances like these that *Nomina* might afford assistance, by publishing from time to time *bibliographies raisonnées* on particular topics, bibliographies as exhaustive as possible (for in this context, the dud publications need perhaps even more attention than the exemplary ones), and with commentary as frank as the law permits.

I began by considering, as I thought, ways of bringing to a wider public reliable information about the history of English personal-naming. Soon, however, what I found myself discoursing upon were the principles underlying valid research. For this I make no apology. It is not that I expect readers of *Nomina* each at once to take unto himself or herself a medieval estate-survey and instantly set about analyzing the personal-name system it records. Far from it. My point is that, without a basic understanding of the methodological principles that validate a piece of research, the user of any treatise or any dictionary will lack criteria for evaluating that work, and so will run the risk of being taken in by many a spuriously academic-looking publication.

## Place-Names in *-þorp*: in Retrospect and in Turmoil

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In his study of the *þorp*-names in the territory of the Five Boroughs, Kenneth Cameron demonstrated convincingly that places with names in *-þorp* tend to be settlements of lesser importance than those with names in *-bý* and to have inferior situations.<sup>1</sup> Linking these facts with the sense that the generic is known to have had in the Danish homeland 'secondary, dependent settlement', Cameron argued that the *þorp*-names are a reflection of Danish colonisation in the strict sense, that is of the bringing under cultivation by the Danes of less attractive land that was not being exploited at the time of their arrival. The fact that there was a cognate OE word *þrop/þorp* of similar meaning to the Danish generic is only mentioned by Cameron in passing, but he does make the very reasonable suggestion that the use of the Scandinavian element in the East Midlands may have been encouraged by the existence of the English cognate.

My own work on the *þorps* in other parts of England has not hitherto led me to modify Cameron's conclusions in any significant way. The only direct attack on the use of the *þorp*-names as evidence for Danish settlement has come from Niels Lund, who argued that 'there are reasons for believing that the element found in the Danelaw is the OE word, not the ODan one'.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out, quite correctly,

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The abbreviations used are those listed *ante*, 10 (1986), 210–15, and 11 (1987), 212–13, with the addition of:

*PNLancs*: E. Ekwall, *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922).

<sup>1</sup> K. Cameron, 'Scandinavian settlement in the territory of the Five Boroughs: the place-name evidence, part II: Place-names in *thorp*', *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 3 (1970), 1–49.

<sup>2</sup> N. Lund, '*Thorp*-names', in *Medieval Settlement. Continuity and Change*, edited by P. H. Sawyer (London, 1976), pp. 223–25.

that the formal distinction between *þrop* and *þorp* is not a satisfactory criterion for distinguishing between English names and Danish ones. This is because the element occurs in Old English as *þorp* as well as in the metathesised form *þrop*, and that metathesised and unmetathesised forms alternate in the recorded forms of many of the place-names, both inside and outside the Danelaw. It is not, however, the fact that the names in the Danelaw are overwhelmingly recorded with spellings in *-þorp* that has suggested that these names are of Scandinavian origin, but rather the facts that names in *-þorp* are particularly common in areas where other place-names of Scandinavian origin abound, that the *þorp*-names in the Danelaw are considerably more numerous than the *þorp*-names elsewhere in England, that the specifics of the compound *þorps* are more frequently Scandinavian than English, and that proportionately more of the Danelaw *þorp*-names than of the *þrop*-names in southern England are recorded in Domesday Book. There are reasons enough, then, for believing that the distribution pattern of the *þorps* reflects the influence of settlers from Denmark, although the possibility cannot be entirely ruled out a priori that the formation of the Danelaw *þorp*-names may have been encouraged by the existence of a pre-Danish stratum of Old English *þorp*- or *þrop*-names.

This possibility has never been denied, however, and what prompted me to take another look at the *þorp*-names was not a sudden conversion to Niels Lund's views, but two recent discussions of settlement patterns in the Wolds. The first of these was Margaret Gelling's discussion of the place-names of the Wharram Percy area at the Council for Name Studies conference in Ripon in 1990, and the second a paper by Harold Fox concentrating on the settlement history of the Nottinghamshire–Leicestershire border.<sup>3</sup>

Margaret Gelling's analysis of the settlement pattern on the Yorkshire Wolds around Wharram Percy demonstrated that, although there was archaeological evidence for intense cultivation in the early period of Anglo-Saxon settlement, there was no indication that this part of the Wolds was being exploited intensively at the time when the Vikings arrived in Yorkshire. The place-names of the area point to a

<sup>3</sup> H. S. A. Fox, 'The people of the Wolds in English settlement history', in *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England*, edited by M. Aston and others (Oxford, 1989), pp. 77–101.

sharp increase in population, culminating in considerable recolonisation shortly after 900. The consequent upheaval might then lie behind the reorganisation of the arable fields here that has been identified by Mary Harvey and tentatively located by her to this period.<sup>4</sup>

Harold Fox's study of the settlement pattern in the Nottinghamshire–Leicestershire Wolds and in High Leicestershire, on the other hand, led him to the conclusion that 'many of the purely Scandinavian names on the Wolds may represent new colonization between the end of the ninth century and the eleventh'.<sup>5</sup> Fox found it difficult to understand why the process of fragmentation that has been assumed to be represented by the concentrations of *býs* in the Lincolnshire Wolds, for example, should have proceeded so much more fully there than elsewhere in that county, and why there should have been so much less fission in the lowlands of south Nottinghamshire and east Leicestershire.

There is certainly a marked contrast between the uplands, with many Scandinavian names, and the lowlands, with very few—except in the Wreake valley, where the place-names are predominantly Scandinavian. There is one very significant reservation to be made, however. Fox admitted to having left out of account names in which a Scandinavian personal name is compounded with OE *tūn*, on the grounds that there is little doubt that these are borne by English villages and that they had been adapted to incorporate the names of new Scandinavian owners.<sup>6</sup> If these Grimston-type names had, in fact, been inserted on the map compiled by Fox, then the four lone symbols in Nottinghamshire denoting, if I have identified them correctly, two topographical names (Leake and Holme Pierrepoint), and two *býs* with personal names as specifics (Tithby and Granby), would have been accompanied by symbols denoting Grimston-hybrids (Gamston, Tollerton, Car Colston, Thoroton and Aslockton), as well as two names in *-tūn* whose form has been scandinavianised by the substitution of [sk] for [ʃ] (Screveton and Scarrington). There should also have been a symbol for a name in *-þorp*, Sibthorpe.

<sup>4</sup> M. Harvey, 'Planned field systems in eastern Yorkshire: some thoughts on their origin', *Agricultural History Review*, 31 (1983), 91–103.

<sup>5</sup> Fox, 'People of the Wolds', p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Fox, 'People of the Wolds', p. 90, n. 43.

The settlement pattern to the north of the Trent is quite similar.<sup>7</sup> There are a number of Grimston-hybrids, a Carlton, and an English *tūn*-name which has been subjected to Scandinavian linguistic influence, Fiskerton, as well as a *bý*, Bleasby, whose earliest recorded form is *Blisetune*, suggesting that this name, too, denotes an older English settlement. There are also two *þorps*, Gunthorpe and Caythorpe, whose specifics are Scandinavian personal names, *Gunnhildr* or *Gunni* and *Kati* or *Káti* respectively, and which may well reflect the establishment of secondary settlements on the clayey loam and river gravel of the Trent valley.

There is, however, much more evidence for Scandinavian settlement on the Wolds. Here there are Grimston-hybrids, *býs*, and a single *þorp*, Owthorpe. One explanation of this distribution pattern is that the Danes first took over English settlements and gave them Grimston-type names, and that they subsequently split up old estates into smaller units that were given names in *-bý*, some of which contain English specifics which may represent partial survival of older names, for example Willoughby, Wartnaby and possibly Sileby and Saltby. The valley of the Wreake, where the place-names are predominantly Scandinavian, also yields evidence for the imposition of Danish names on a pre-existing settlement pattern, and the pattern of names in High Leicestershire is not very different from that in the Nottinghamshire Wolds. It would certainly seem that on the Wolds, in the Wreake valley and in High Leicestershire there was greater opportunity for the establishment of new settlements than in the lowlands of southern Nottinghamshire and eastern Leicestershire, but it is significant that on the higher ground, too, the settlements with Danish names betray some traces of an earlier existence from under a blanket-like covering of Danish names.

If we return to the Wharram Percy area, we note that the only Grimston-type name to be found here is Hanging Grimston, on sloping ground with cold, heavy soil, and this is, of course, a good instance of a settlement bearing a derogatory appellative term rather than a manorial name. There are many names of purely Scandinavian origin. The two Kirbys (< *\*kirkju-bý*) are both old parish villages with several dependent townships or chapelries—most of which have names in *-bý* or *-þorp*. These would seem to reflect the splitting up, by the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Cameron, 'Place-names in *thorp*', map 7.

Danes, of large territories into smaller semi-independent units. Dependent on Kirby Grindalythe are a number of settlements which reflect exploitation of the dry river valley of the Gypsy Race. Three of these are *býs* (Duggleby, Thoraby and Thirkelby), and the specific of another, Mowthorpe, is probably the Scandinavian personal name *Múli*. Dependent on Kirby Underdale, in addition to Hanging Grimston, are two *býs*, Uncleby and Garrowby, as well as Painsthorpe, which is recorded as a simplex *þorp* in Domesday Book. Two other *þorps* are dependent upon Wharram Percy, whose dative plural topographical name may be either English or Scandinavian. These are Raisthorpe and Towthorpe, whose specifics are the Scandinavian names *Hreidarr* and *Tófi* respectively. The last *þorp* in the area, Fridaythorpe, distinguishes itself from the others partly in being an old parish and partly in having as its specific what can hardly be other than an Old English personal name *\*Frīgedæg*. To sum up, then, the *býs* in the district, other than the two Kirbys, fit well with the explanation that *býs* are the result of the splitting up of older estates. There are good reasons for believing that Fridaythorpe may have been an old established settlement before the arrival of the Danes, but all the other *þorps* seem likely to have originated as young dependent settlements. In this region there does not seem to be any very marked difference in situation between the *býs* and the *þorps*. It is probably significant that Painsthorpe, which lies right on the chalk of the Wolds, is not named in Domesday Book and might, therefore, be thought to reflect the final, late stage of colonisation.

The various indications of a greater lack of homogeneity among the *þorps* in the Wolds than it has been customary to assume make it imperative to return south to the Nottinghamshire–Leicestershire border to take another look at the *þorps* there. Two of the three *þorps* in the Trent valley seem fairly certain to be comparatively late foundations. Gunthorpe is named in Domesday Book, but although it lies on a gravel terrace, this is very close to the river, and the soil is clayey and tends to hold the water.<sup>8</sup> Its neighbour, Caythorpe, has less land and a similarly damp situation, and it is not named in Domesday Book. Sibthorpe, however, to the south of the Trent, is an old parish, and although Cameron has noted that its site is inferior to that of neighbouring Flintham, it is not very unlike those of the several

<sup>8</sup> Cameron, 'Place-names in *thorp*', p. 47.

Grimston-hybrids in the area. The specific of Sibthorpe is a hypocoristic personal name that might be either English or Danish, but the fact that Danish *Sibbi* forms the specific of no fewer than five *þorp*-names in Denmark tends to suggest that the Sibbi commemorated was a Dane or of Danish descent.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps he took over a settlement that had originally been dependent on Flintham and developed it so successfully that it gained its independence and parochial status. Owthorpe, on the Wolds, is also an old parish, and the specific of its name, too, can be either a Scandinavian or an English personal name, *Úfi* or *Ūfa* respectively. The last two *þorps* in this area are Garthorpe and Edmondthorpe in the valley of the Eye. Both of these *þorps* have OE specifics, the common noun *gāra* 'triangular piece of land', and the personal name *Eadmær* respectively. Both may have originated as settlements dependent on Wymondham. The Danes need not have had anything to do with their foundation.

Faced with the inhomogeneous nature of the *þorps* in two regions, I felt the need to take an overall look at the *þorps* and *þrops* in England. The material on which I have based my study consists of 576 names in *-þorp* and 54 names in *-þrop*, all of which are recorded in sources dating from before 1500. The greatest concentrations of *þorp*-names are to be found in Yorkshire (NR 47, WR 94, ER 83), in the East Midlands (Notts 36, Lindsey (SR) 39, Kesteven 41, Leics 40, Northants 32) and Norfolk (61) (Fig. 1). There are few *þorps* in the north-west, and those that there are would seem to represent an overflow from east of the Pennines. There is nothing like the concentrations of *þorps* among the southern *þrops*. The only counties in which their number reaches two figures are Gloucestershire (15), Oxfordshire and Wiltshire (10 each). It will be noted, however, that the distribution pattern of the *þrops* forms a kind of attenuated tail to that of the *þorps*, and that both the *þorps* and the *þrops* tend to cluster along and near to the two ridges—one of oolitic limestone, the other of chalk—that run in a broad sweep from Yorkshire to the south-west. It would seem that it was on these uplands that secondary settlements were likely to be called *þorp* by the Danes and *þrop* by the English. The comparative rarity of occurrence of the *þrop*-names makes it unlikely, however, that English *þrops* lie behind all or even most of the *þorps* in the Danelaw.

<sup>9</sup> L. Weise, *Stednavne i Præstø Amt*, Danmarks Stednavne, XVI (Copenhagen, 1975), p. 10.

The significant absence of *þorps* from north-western England has been explained as reflecting the fact that this region was settled by Norwegians rather than Danes, an explanation whose validity is drawn in question both by the frequent occurrence of *þorps* in eastern Norway, and by the outpouring of Danish-inspired *býs* into north-western England. The absence may rather reflect the fact that English *þrop* had not been used to form names here. Alternatively, it may simply be that when the Vikings were naming dependent settlements in this part of England, they referred to them quite naturally by the term *þveit* 'clearing', because the settlements could not be established until the woodland had been cleared from their sites. The distribution pattern of the *þveits* in England is roughly complementary to that of the *þorps*. Other secondary settlements in the north-west received names in *-skáli*, *-sætr* or *-ærgi*, referring to their function in a dairy economy. In eastern England, *þorps* are found in the same general areas as *býs*, except that they are comparatively rare in the North Yorkshire Moors and the Lincolnshire Wolds.

The best indication of whether the *þorp*-names were coined by Danish settlers, or by the English before or after the Danish invasions, is probably to be gained from a study of the specifics of the names. The simplex name Thorp(e) accounts for 132 of the 576 instances (23%), while of the 54 *þorps*, twelve (22%) are simplex names, with forms such as Throop or Thrupp. Of the remaining 444 *þorps*, 258 (58%) have specifics that are certainly or probably Scandinavian, 142 (32%) English specifics and 39 (9%) specifics which reflect Norman influence. Of the 42 compound *þrop*-names, all except one have English specifics. The exception is Castlethorpe in Buckinghamshire, containing Old French *castel*.

The most frequently occurring type of specific among the *þorp*-names is the personal name. Personal names account for the specifics of 265 of the compound *þorps* (60%), while only eight of the compound *þrops* (19%) contain personal names. Of the 265 personal names combined with *þorp*, 177 (67%) are certainly or probably of Scandinavian origin, 52 (20%) of English origin, 34 (13%) names that must have been introduced by the Normans, and two names that are probably of Celtic origin. Of these last two names, *Maelcian* in Melkinthorpe in Westmorland is to be associated with the Gaelic-speaking settlers who accompanied the Vikings who came to

north-western England from Galloway or the Hebrides,<sup>10</sup> while the obscure name *Præen* or *Prænd* in Princethorpe in Warwickshire, which also occurs independently in Old English sources, may be of British origin.<sup>11</sup>

The 34 *þorþ*-names containing personal names introduced by the Normans can hardly have acquired the form in which they are recorded before the eleventh century. The 52 *þorps* containing English personal names, on the other hand, may have been coined at any time between the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in eastern England and the disappearance of the personal names in question from the English nomenclature in the first couple of centuries after the Norman Conquest.

The 177 *þorþ*-names containing Scandinavian personal names cannot have acquired this form before the arrival of Viking settlers in the Danelaw, but the possibility was proposed by Niels Lund that the Vikings simply took over pre-existing English settlements with names in *-þorþ*, and substituted for the specifics of these names their own forenames in the same way as they had done with the Grimston-hybrids.<sup>12</sup> One argument against this theory has been put forward by Barrie Cox.<sup>13</sup> In Rutland the only place-names which certainly contain Scandinavian personal names are four *þorps*, and Cox finds it impossible to believe that the Scandinavians who eventually made their way into this English enclave can have been so selective as only to expropriate places with names in *-þorþ*.

Some idea may be gained of the likelihood of the *þorþ*-names' having been coined at an early date, by examining the administrative status and assessment for tax of the settlements bearing the names. Of the 52 *þorps* containing English personal names, 22 (42%) are lost or shrunken settlements and thus hardly likely to have been well-established at the time of the arrival of the Vikings, although they may simply have been poor because their situations did not allow them to prosper. Eleven of the names (21%) are born by parishes:

<sup>10</sup> G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West*, Navnestudier, XXV (Copenhagen, 1985), p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> M. Redin, *Studies on Uncompounded Personal Names in Old English* (Uppsala, 1919), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Lund, 'Thorþ-names', p. 225.

<sup>13</sup> B. Cox, 'Aspects of place-name evidence for early medieval settlement in England', *Viator*, 11 (1980), 35-50, especially p. 49.

Edmondthorpe, Elmesthorpe and Bruntingthorpe in Leicestershire, Edingthorpe and Pensthorpe in Norfolk, Thorpe Malsor and Abthorpe in Northants., Addlethorpe and Winthorpe in the South Riding of Lindsey, Fridaythorpe in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and Bishopthorpe in the West Riding. Since the parochial status of these villages points to their having been well-established in the eleventh century, their foundation may have antedated the arrival of the Danes.

Of the 177 *þorps* containing Scandinavian personal names, 103 (58%) are lost or shrunken settlements. Sixteen per cent of the settlements are so well lost that their sites cannot even be located closely. The loss is proportionately greater here than among the *þorps* containing Old English names. Thirty (17%) of the *þorps* containing Scandinavian personal names are old parishes. The question is whether the parochial status of these settlements reflects their age or the fact that the Danes developed their resources particularly quickly. Eight of the parishes are in Norfolk, six on the Yorkshire Wolds, and five in Nottinghamshire. Four of these last are in the Trent valley and one, Owthorpe, on the Wolds.

Of the 34 *þorps* containing personal names introduced by the Normans, fourteen (41%) are lost or shrunken settlements, while eight are old parishes. Although the *þorps* with parish status could be old settlements that were partially renamed in the eleventh century, it seems more likely that they are in fact young settlements. Four of them are in the South Riding of Lindsey: Grainthorpe, Theddlethorpe, Mablethorpe and Trusthorpe. Arthur Owen argued many years ago that these settlements were the result of colonisation from the older settlements in the middle marsh,<sup>14</sup> but he is now convinced that there must have been occupation of most of the coastal sites before the period of secondary Danish settlement which is suggested by the place-names in the area, although some of the settlements can only have been seasonal because of the risk of flooding.<sup>15</sup> Owen argues, however, that the concentration of Scandinavian names in east Lindsey points to a concentration of Danish landings on its shores, followed by

<sup>14</sup> A. E. B. Owen, 'Hafdic: a Lindsey name and its implications', *JEPNS*, 7 (1974-75), 45-56.

<sup>15</sup> A. E. B. Owen, 'Salt, sea banks and medieval settlement on the Lindsey Coast', in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire: Articles in Honour of Ethel H. Rudkin*, edited by N. Field and A. White (Lincoln, 1984), pp. 46-49.

movement inland along existing roads. As a corollary to this suggestion, it might be proposed that the cluster of *þorps* here containing personal names introduced by the Normans reflects an intensification of the exploitation of the region in the eleventh century, probably in connection with the salt industry, and this industrial exploitation might account for the fact that these villas are parishes.

An indication of the age of a settlement can sometimes be provided by its assessment for tax in Domesday Book. In general, settlements with English names tend to be assessed more highly than settlements with Scandinavian names, and among these latter names, the *þorps* tend to be assessed much more lowly than the *bys*, and quite often they are not even assessed independently in Domesday Book, even when they are named in that source. There are, however, exceptions to this general pattern. Of the 177 *þorps* containing Scandinavian personal names, nine (5%) are assessed at eight carucates or more. Significantly, all of these *þorps* lie on the Yorkshire Wolds. This suggests that, at the time of the compilation of Domesday Book, the Wolds were exceptionally prosperous, and one reasonable explanation for this prosperity is an intensification of exploitation resulting from an influx of Danish settlers.

Four of the 52 *þorps* containing English personal names (8%) have high assessments in Domesday Book. The distribution of these *þorps* is more scattered than that of the highly-assessed *þorps* containing Scandinavian personal names. One, Fridaythorpe, is also in the Yorkshire Wolds, while Addlethorpe is in the South Riding of Lindsey, Woolsthorpe in Kesteven, and Bruntingthorpe in Leicestershire. The prosperity of Addlethorpe, a parish in the middle marshes, is likely to be a result of the development of the salt industry, although it should be noted that the four parochial *þorps* in the area containing Continental Germanic personal names do not have high assessments in Domesday Book. Trusthorpe does not even have an independent assessment, being dealt with together with Sutton in the Marsh. Woolsthorpe in Kesteven lies in the Vale of Belvoir, its closest neighbour the English-named *tūn*, Harston in Leicestershire, which is assessed at twelve carucates, while Bruntingthorpe in Leicestershire lies out on the boulder clay, a situation which would at first sight seem to be unfavourable, but which does not differ greatly from that of its

neighbours Peatling Magna and Parva, with an archaic English name in *-ingas*, each of which is, like Bruntingthorpe, assessed at twelve carucates.

Of the 576 names in *þorþ*, nineteen (3%) are recorded in sources that antedate the compilation of Domesday Book, while 224 (39%) make their first appearance in sources younger than Domesday Book. Nine of the names recorded in pre-Conquest sources are borne by settlements in East Anglia. This is probably simply a reflection of the fact that there are more surviving documents from the pre-Conquest period in this area than in the rest of the Danelaw. The late recording of 224 names does not necessarily mean that all these settlements are late foundations, but it does suggest that a large proportion of the *þorps* were of very low status in the middle of the eleventh century. Of the 54 names in *þrop* outside the Danelaw, three (c. 5%) are recorded in pre-Conquest sources, while 40 (74%) make their first appearances in sources younger than Domesday Book. The fact that a higher proportion of the *þrops* than of the *þorps* is first recorded in such young documents, even though the survival of pre-Conquest sources is much greater in the southern counties than in areas ravaged by the Danes, would suggest that the *þrops* are younger as a class than are the *þorps*, and hence that it is unlikely that many of the *þorps* represent Scandinavianisations of earlier English names.

It is rather noticeable that several of the *þorþ*-names and the *þrop*-names make more than one appearance in England. Sometimes the explanation for this is quite natural. It would seem to have been usual, for example, to give secondary dependent settlements names that refer to their situations in relation to some other locality, for example the mother settlement or the parish boundary. In two cases the relationship is with another *þorþ*, Easthorpe and Westhorpe in Nottinghamshire (*PNNotts*, 176), and Eastrop and Westrop in Wiltshire (*PNWilt*, 26). *þorþ*-names incorporating the four points of the compass are of common occurrence, but the four points are not employed equally frequently. It would seem to have been most usual to have located a *þorþ* in the east, for there are nine *þorps* containing OE *ēast* and three containing cognate Scandinavian *austr*, as well as four *þrops* containing *ēast*. For the other three compass points, there is no way of distinguishing between the Scandinavian and English terms:

eight *þorps* and three *þrops* contain *vestr* or *west*, four *þorps* and four *þrops* contain *súðr* or *sūð*, and two *þorps* contain *norðr* or *norð*.

It is also quite natural for *þorp* to have been combined no less than seven times with OE *myln*, a loanword from Latin *molina* 'mill', although we may rather have to reckon with a compound appellative *\*myln-þorp* functioning as a place-name. There are, incidentally, at least nine *þorps* in Denmark containing the same loanword, which may perhaps have come to Denmark via England. Nor is there anything unusual about finding five *þorps* containing OE *wudu* 'wood', and four containing OE *bēos* 'bent-grass'. Both these words are also combined frequently with OE *tūn*. What does give cause for surprise, however, is to find the Scandinavian word *gaukr* 'cuckoo' combined no less than six times with *þorp* in names recorded before 1500, once in Lancashire, once in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and four times in the West Riding, as well as in two other names in this Riding which are first recorded in later sources. The only one of this group of names to be recorded in Domesday Book is Gowthorpe in the East Riding (PNYorksER, 176). It is just conceivable that some or all of the other *þorps* containing *gaukr* might have been named after the East Riding village, but it seems more likely that Hugh Smith was correct to assume that there was a compound appellative *\*gauka-þorp* 'cuckoo-farm' that was used as a place-name with a derogatory sense such as 'fool's house' (PNYorksWR, II, 102-3). Another possibility is that some of the Gawthorpes and Gowthorpes are manorial names. Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire, for example, may have taken its name from the Gawthorpe near Dewsbury (PNLancs, 248).

If some of the Gawthorpes are to be explained as manorial names, the same may apply to some of the names in *-þorp* containing Scandinavian personal names which make multiple appearances in the Danelaw. The personal names involved are *Grímr* (5x), *Gunni* (4x), *Ketill* (7x), *Klakker* (5x) and *Vifill* (4x). There is, of course, no reason why the same personal name should not have entered into more than one *þorp*-name. Most of these personal names also make multiple appearances in *torp*-names in Denmark: *Grímr* in seven Grimstrups, *Gunni* in nine Gunderups, *Ketill* in nineteen names such as Keldstrup, Kelstrup and Kejlstrup, and *Klakker* in two Klastrup. Only *Vifill* does not seem to occur in a Danish *torp*-name. Three of the personal names in question frequently occur independently in sources from

Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. These are *Grímr*, *Gunni* and *Ketill*.<sup>16</sup> Although *Klakker* and *Vifill* are not of common occurrence in these two counties, both names are recorded there.<sup>17</sup>

There are other possible explanations for the multiple occurrences of some *þorp*-names. One that springs to mind for the five names containing *Grímr* is that they might be parallels to the Grimstons, that is derogatory appellative names given to inferior settlements. None of the five *þorps* has a particularly good situation. In the East Riding of Yorkshire, Grimthorpe is on the edge of the chalk, representing a late stage of colonisation, while a lost *Grimestorp* was situated on the damp silt and clay of the old valley of the Ouse. In the West Riding, Grimesthorpe and Grimethorpe are both in steep, narrow valleys in the Pennines, while in Kesteven, the area to the south of Grimthorpe on the boulder clay was still so uncleared and remote in the twelfth century that the Cistercians were attracted to establish Vaudey Abbey there.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the sites of the five villas are not noticeably inferior to that of other *þorps* in the same areas.

For the four Gunthorpes in the West Riding of Lindsey, Northants., Rutland and Norfolk respectively, it is hardly possible to suggest any other explanation of the specific than that it is the hypocoristic personal name *Gunni*. For the *þorps* which have been assumed to contain the personal names *Ketill*, *Klakker* and *Vifill*, there is a possibility that the specifics might be the topographical terms Scand *ketill* or OE *cietel* 'cauldron', perhaps referring to a cauldron-shaped valley or hill, ODan *klak(k)* or OE *\*clacc* 'hill', and ODan *\*wiwæl* or OE *\*wifel* 'pointed piece of land'. Perhaps the most likely candidate among these names for interpretation as containing a topographical specific is Claythorpe in the South Riding of Lindsey, *Clactorp* (GDB, fos 349r, 375r; Lincs 13/3, 69/12), for its specific is compounded with the generic in stem-form and not in genitival composition. Claythorpe stands on a small, round hill.<sup>19</sup> On the other

<sup>16</sup> G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* [SPNLY], Navnestudier, VII (Copenhagen, 1968), pp. 105-07, 116-17 and 166-69.

<sup>17</sup> Fellows Jensen, SPNLY, pp. 172-73 and 334.

<sup>18</sup> D. M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1971), p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands* [SSNEM], Navnestudier, XVI (Copenhagen, 1978), p. 107.

hand, it should not be forgotten that forms showing genitival and non-genitival composition can be found side by side with each other for one and the same name, so it is possible that a *þorp* whose specific was originally a topographical term in stem-form has been turned into a genitival composition on analogy with the many *þorps* whose specifics are personal names.

The inhomogeneous nature of the *þorps* in England is emphasised by the great variation in their assessments in Domesday Book. Of the 576 *þorps*, 239 are not named in Domesday Book, and this fact alone indicates that, although they may have been in existence at that time, they are unlikely to have been substantial settlements. Of the *þorps* which are named in Domesday Book, 32 are not assessed independently, 85 are assessed at 2 carucates or less, 60 at between 2.1 and 3 carucates, 59 at between 3.1 and 4 carucates, and 30 at between 4.1 and 5 carucates, while the remaining 62 have higher assessments. These figures are problematical, because the basis of assessment seems to have varied from county to county, with a county such as Nottinghamshire apparently being grossly underrated, while assessments in Leicestershire, Kesteven and the East Riding of Yorkshire, on the other hand, are very high.<sup>20</sup> In all the divisions I have examined, however, with the exception of the West Riding of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, both the mean and the median assessments for the *þorps* have been lower, not only than those of the English-named villages, but also than those of the *býs*.<sup>21</sup> In the West Riding of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, the *býs* and the *þorps* have similar assessments.

It is the generally high level of assessments in Leicestershire, Kesteven and the East Riding of Yorkshire that accounts for the fact that, of the eleven *þorps* with assessments of ten carucates or more, six are in the East Riding, two in Leicestershire and one in Kesteven. The remaining two are the originally simplex Tattershall Thorpe and Addlethorpe, containing an Old English personal name, both in the South Riding of Lindsey and assessed at eleven carucates and eleven carucates six bovates respectively.

A survey of the status of the 576 *þorps* confirms the impression of inhomogeneity presented by their assessments. On the one hand, 264 (46%) of the names are borne by lost or shrunken settlements. Lost *þorps* occur particularly frequently in the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire (East 50, or 67%; North 31, or 66%) and Norfolk (31, or 51%). On the other hand, 105 (18%) of the names are borne by vills which had achieved parochial status in the medieval period. While several of the parochial *þorps* seem likely to be settlements whose foundation antedates the arrival of the Danes, and 24 of them (23%) have specifics of English origin, it is rather interesting to note that the double parishes, Mablethorpe and Theddlethorpe, both contain as specifics personal names of Norman introduction, and that another five of the parochial *þorps* also contain personal names that seem most likely to have been introduced by Norman settlers in the eleventh century. There are two other *þorps* in the South Riding of Lindsey: Trusthorpe and Grainthorpe, as well as Stragglethorpe in Kesteven, originally a chapelry dependent on Beckingham, Garthorpe in the Isle of Axholme, and Baconsthorpe in Norfolk. The parochial status of these seven *þorps* shows that young settlements could sometimes achieve high status very quickly.

In summary, the survey has made it clear that the *þorps* in northern and eastern England are a rather varied body of settlements. Niels Lund was correct to assume that some of them antedate the arrival of the Danes, but the comparative youth and scarcity of the *þorp*-names in southern and western England, combined with the fact that the specifics of 58% of the compound *þorp*-names are of Scandinavian origin, suggest that the intensification of settlement as a result of a Danish immigration in the Viking period must account for the creation of the majority of the *þorps*. The *þorps* would normally have been established on comparatively infertile land, and it would have been under particularly favourable circumstances that one would develop into a really prosperous settlement with a high status. Such circumstances were offered, for example, by the recolonisation of the Yorkshire Wolds by the Danes, and by the exploitation in the eleventh century of the coastal strip of Lindsey for the production of salt. In other regions, a few individual *þorps* would seem to have been planted in earth that turned out to be good for one reason or another. In some areas, an absence of *þorps* may simply reflect a lack of available land to

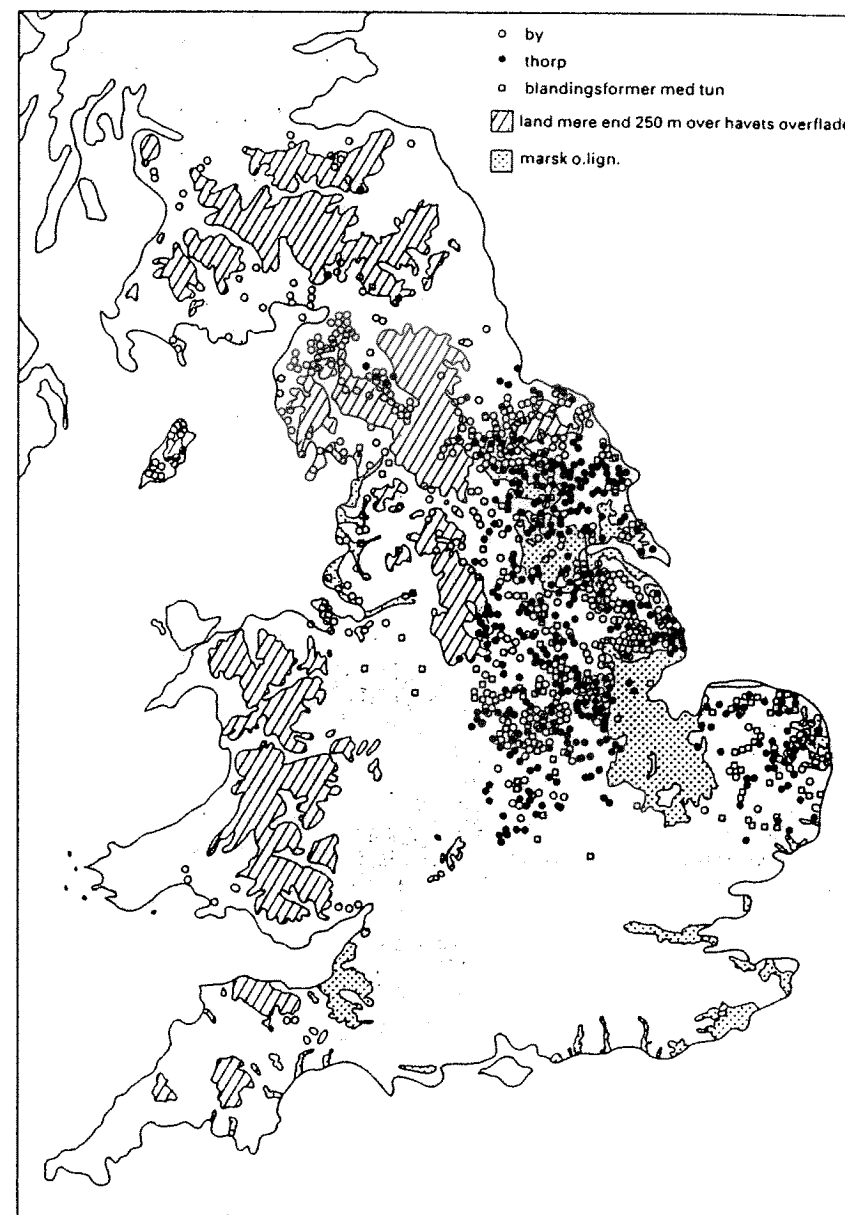
<sup>20</sup> Fellows Jensen, *SSNEM*, pp. 332–36.

<sup>21</sup> G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire*, *Navnestudier*, XI (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 223, and *SSNEM*, p. 338.



be brought under cultivation by an expanding population, while in others it probably reflects the employment of other generics to denote secondary settlements. I am still convinced that the majority of the *þorps* are to be looked upon as a result of Scandinavian settlement, but I must confess that the *þorps* provide less ambiguous evidence of Scandinavian influence than do the *býs* and the *þveits*.

Fig. 1. Map showing the distribution of *býs*, *þorps* and hybrid *tún*s. The settlements avoid marshy areas and land over 250 metres above sea-level. Reproduced with permission from Peter Sawyer, *Da Danmark blev Danmark*, Gyldendal og Politikens Danmarkshistorie, III (Copenhagen, 1988), p. 164.



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The *Worthy*-Names of Devon

Örjan Svensson  
University of Lund

Of the 7,500 place-names dealt with in the EPNS survey of Devon,<sup>1</sup> some 200 end in *-worthy*, which is derived from the OE elements *word*, *wordig* or *wordign*. It is cognate with OLG *wurð* 'soil', MLG *wurt* 'homestead' and LG *wort*, *wurt* 'open place in a village'. Like OE *tūn*, it seems to have meant originally 'fence', then 'enclosure', 'enclosure round a homestead' and eventually 'homestead'. It is used of places which vary in assessment from four to 120 hides, and occasionally of a small vill.<sup>2</sup> The element was obviously in use early in the OE period, since it is recorded in such place-names as Isleworth, Middx (*Gislheresuuyrth* 695 (late copy) BCS 87, Sawyer 1246), Hillborough, Warks (*Hildeburhwurthe* 710 (14th) BCS 127, Sawyer 81), and Ashmansworth, Hants (*Æscmeres wierð* 909 (12th) BCS 624, Sawyer 378). The very high proportion of personal names with which it is compounded (c.75%) indicates that the enclosures or homesteads were individual and personal possessions. In many cases the *word*s have become parish names and are recorded in Domesday Book. No doubt this element remained prolific for several centuries, but the lack of instances compounded with post-Conquest personal names makes it

## ABBREVIATIONS

Apart from the following, the abbreviations used are those listed *ante*, 10 (1986), 212-15, and 11 (1987), 212-13.

LG, OLG, MLG: Low German, Old Low German, Middle Low German.

ModE: Modern English.

TDA: *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association* (London).

TRE: *tempore Regis Edwardi* (before 1066).

TRW: *tempore Regis Willelmi* (after 1066).

<sup>1</sup> J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Devon*, 2 vols, EPNS VIII-IX (Cambridge, 1931-32) [hereafter *PNDevon*].

<sup>2</sup> *EPN*, II, 273.