

Scandinavian Settlement Names in East Anglia: Some Problems

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Fourteen years have gone by since I began to collect material for my study of the Scandinavian settlement names in East Anglia and the volume is still no more than half-finished. This is in part because of rather heavy administrative duties and in part because I have found it difficult to resist the temptation to work on place-names in Scotland, Man and the North Atlantic viking colonies when the opportunity arose or to become concerned with projects involving the compilation of dictionaries of Old Norse and Old English or with the care and conservation of medieval manuscripts. I must nevertheless confess to a certain hesitance in throwing myself wholeheartedly into the writing of the difficult concluding chapters, firstly because the longer I wait the more volumes of Karl Inge Sandred's magisterial *The Place-Names of Norfolk* will have been published.¹ This means that I shall be able to consult his learned and well-balanced interpretations of the county's settlement names and have at my disposition the vast body of minor names that he has been collecting for so many years.

My second reason for delaying, however, has been the marked differences I have noted between the number and nature of the Scandinavian settlement names in East Anglia and those in the other zones of Scandinavian settlement in England. Some of these differences I now feel can be explained without too much difficulty. Others I still find puzzling. I am grateful for being given this opportunity to lay some of my preliminary conclusions before readers who may have helpful comments to make.

A map prepared by Hugh Smith showing the distribution of place-names

This article is a slightly revised version of a paper read at Sheffield in March 1999 to the annual conference of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland. A preliminary version had earlier been presented to the Institute of Medieval Studies in Nottingham. I am grateful to my audiences on both these occasions for many useful comments and suggestions.

¹ K. I. Sandred and B. Lindström, *The Place-Names of Norfolk*, 2 vols so far published, English Place-Name Society, 61, 72 (Nottingham, 1989–96).

in *-ing* etc. suggests that East Anglia must have been rather densely settled in the Anglo-Saxon period² and this assumption is confirmed by the very limited survival of the old British names for streams and rivers shown on a map compiled by Kenneth Jackson,³ where it is only major rivers such as the Colne, Lea, Nene, Ouse and Stour that can be counted as certain or possible examples. There are also hardly any place-names in East Anglia containing Latin elements. Among the exceptions may be mentioned the words *campus* ‘field’, which occurs with the probable meaning ‘enclosure’ in Bulcamp and Campsey, both in Suffolk, *ecclesia* ‘church’, which occurs twice as the simplex name Eccles in Norfolk, *vicus* ‘Roman settlement’ in two Wickhams in Suffolk, and *castra*, in its anglicised form *cæster* ‘Roman camp’ in Brancaster and two simplex Caisters, Caister next Yarmouth and Caistor St Edmund, all in Norfolk.

The only Romano-British place-names certainly to survive even in part are *Branodunum* ‘crow’s’ or ‘*Branno’s fort’ in Brancaster on the northern coast of Norfolk and *Camulodunum* (the Celtic war-god Camulos’ fort) in Colchester Essex, in which the old names of the Romano-British settlements form the specifics of English place-names in *-cæster*, a type of name that occurs all over England to denote an English settlement on the site of a Roman fort. The name Dovercourt is first recorded as *Douorcortæ* in Ælflæd’s will from c.1000.⁴ The specific of this name would also seem to be a British place-name, probably a river-name **Dubris* ‘waters’, identical with the settlement name Dover and the river-name Dour in Kent, while the generic has been explained as Old English (OE) *corte* f. of doubtful meaning but possibly related to a Latin word *curtus* ‘piece cut off’⁵ or *cohors* ‘cohort’,⁶ cf. Old French *cort* ‘courtyard of farm’, which is found in French place-names in the seventh and eighth centuries.⁷ It might conceivably be a word of Germanic origin related to OE *ceart* ‘rough

² A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols, English Place-Name Society, 25–26 (Cambridge, 1956), map 4.

³ K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), p. 220.

⁴ D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 8.

⁵ P. H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex*, English Place-Name Society, 12 (Cambridge, 1935), p. 377; Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 108.

⁶ A. D. Mills, *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 2nd edn (Oxford and New York, 1998), p. 116.

⁷ J. Johnson, *Étude sur les noms de lieu dans lesquels entrent les éléments court, ville et villiers* (Paris, 1946), pp. 46–52.

common', whose distribution in place-names would otherwise seem to be restricted to the light soils of the Lower Greensand outcrop,⁸ although a Scandinavian cognate **kartr* 'rough, stony ground' would seem to occur in Cartmel in Lancashire (*C(e)artmel* 12th cent.). A compound of a place-name or river-name **Dover* with an element related to *ceart* does not, however, seem very satisfactory from either a semantic or a geological point of view.

The name of one major Roman site, *Combretoivium* 'confluence', which was situated on the River Gipping, north of Ipswich, at the focal point for a network of important Roman roads in Suffolk, has been lost altogether. Barrie Cox has suggested that the loss was probably a result of Germanic settlement in the immediate area, a settlement which is reflected in eight villages with names in OE *-h_m* within a radius of three miles of the site.⁹ These are Needham Market, Coddendam, Barham, Baylham, Blakenham, Somersham, Akenham and Willisham.

The survival of some Celtic land-units whose names had been entirely lost has been suggested by Nick Higham,¹⁰ who has pointed to the case of the sixteen estates called Roding in Essex, eight of which are parishes. These had earlier been noted by Stephen Bassett.¹¹ It is possible that the area once formed a Celtic or a Roman estate and that it was taken over by a tribal group known as the *R_dingas* or followers of *Hr_ba*. I do not intend to go further into the question of the Anglo-Saxon settlement here but should like to emphasise that the place-name evidence really does tend to point to something of a clean-sweep or ethnic cleansing by the Anglo-Saxons in East Anglia. The only areas from which Old English place-names are absent are the most marshy and inhospitable ones so that Danes arriving in the late ninth century cannot have found much easily exploitable vacant land.

⁸ Cf. H. C. Darby, 'Place-names and the geography of the past', in *Early English and Norse Studies. Presented to Hugh Smith in Honour of his Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by A. Brown and P. Foote (London, 1963), pp. 2–18 (p. 9).

⁹ B. Cox, 'The significance of the distribution of English place-names in *-h_m* in the Midlands and East Anglia', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 5 (1973), 15–78 (p. 42); *idem*, 'Aspects of place-name evidence for early medieval settlement in England', *Viator*, 11 (1980), 35–50 (p. 40).

¹⁰ N. J. Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1992), p. 142.

¹¹ S. Bassett, 'In search of the origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, edited by S. Bassett (Leicester, 1989), 3–27 (pp. 21–22).

Hugh Smith's map of parish names of Scandinavian origin¹² shows that there is nevertheless a fairly even spread of Scandinavian names over East Anglia but that this thins out markedly towards the west and practically disappears at the Suffolk/Essex boundary. Most striking, however, is the fact that the only really marked concentration of Scandinavian names is to be found at the eastern end of the Norfolk/Suffolk boundary, in the hundreds of Flegg and Lothingland. There are many names in *bý* in the Norfolk hundreds of Flegg, while the Scandinavian names in Lothingland in Suffolk are more varied, although with topographical names in *-holmr* and hybrid names in *-t_n* being the most frequently occurring.

The two hundreds of Flegg are cut off from the rest of Norfolk by marshland to form an island and it is not unlikely that they were only sparsely inhabited before the settlement of the Danes in the area in 880 but they were certainly already under exploitation at that time. East Flegg may perhaps have been an old estate with its centre at the settlement on the site of the old Roman fort at Caister, which had presumably formed part of the Roman coastal defence-system to meet the threat of Saxon invaders,¹³ or less likely at Runham (OE *hruna* 'felled trunk' in the sense 'footbridge' or perhaps a personal name **R_na* + OE *h_m* or *hamm*)¹⁴ but this is only a rather insignificant village now and it was not an old parish. The old estate in West Flegg may have been centred on Burgh (OE *burh* 'stronghold'), a name which may refer to its status as part of the Roman system of coastal defence, although no evidence of any Roman military fortification has been found here¹⁴ and another candidate as estate-centre is Martham, whose specific is the Old English animal-term *mearð* 'marten' and its generic either *h_m* or *hamm*.¹⁶ Karl Inge Sandred has noted that there is archaeological evidence here for a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery and that Martham had a vast expanse of grazing marsh. The concentration of names in *-bý* in Flegg definitely points to an intensification of exploitation in the Viking period. It is difficult to know just how long we can reckon with a marked Danish presence in East Anglia. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, however, records that King Edward ravaged all the territory of the Danes between the Cambridgeshire dikes and the river Wissey in 905 and Norwich is known to have been recaptured by the English in 917. It was probably

¹² Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, map 10.

¹³ *PN Norfolk*, II, 3.

¹⁴ *PN Norfolk*, II, 20.

¹⁴ *PN Norfolk*, II, 48.

¹⁶ *PN Norfolk*, II, 59.

partly because of the density of the early Danish settlement in Flegg and partly because of the isolated situation of the island that so many Scandinavian names survive here.

Of the only nine names in *-bý* to be found in Norfolk outside Flegg, six have Scandinavian nouns or adjectives as their specifics, a type of name which I have argued belongs to the first phase of Danish settlement in England.¹⁵ Two of these are names whose specifics are Scandinavian *kirkja* ‘church’, probably reflecting the taking-over by the Danes of English settlements which already had churches. These are Kirby Bedon and Kirby Cane. There is certainly Anglo-Saxon fabric in the church at Kirby Cane.¹⁶ The taking-over by Danes of English settlements is also suggested in the case of two Ashbys, which clearly have the Old English specific *æsc* ‘ash-tree’, Wilby, whose specific is another English tree-term *wilig* ‘willow’, as well as Aldeby, containing the Old English adjective *ald* ‘old’. These names may all be partial scandinavianisations of earlier English names but this is not necessarily the case.

Of the thirteen names in *-bý* in Flegg, some are also of the characteristically early type, that is names indicating something about the nature of the settlement in question. There is an Ashby which I consider to be identical in origin with the Ashbys outside Flegg but which has spellings pointing to scandinavianisation and which Sandred alternatively explains as indicating that the specific is the rare Scandinavian personal name *Aski*.¹⁷ In my opinion Filby contains as specific the collective *fili* ‘planking’, perhaps referring to a plank bridge or causeway. This seems much more likely than other explanations of the specific as a Scandinavian personal name *Fili* of uncertain occurrence¹⁸ or *Fili*, which is only recorded as the name of a dwarf in mythology, or the Old English by-name *F_la* from OE *f_l*.¹⁹ Mautby I consider to contain the plant-term *malt* ‘malt’. Malt was certainly one of the commonest agricultural exports from England to Scandinavia

¹⁵ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘Anthroponymical specifics in place-names in *-bý* in the British Isles’, *Studia Anthroponymica Scandinavica*, 1 (1983), 45–60.

¹⁶ H. M. Taylor and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 354.

¹⁷ *PN Norfolk*, II, 41.

¹⁸ E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1960), p. 179.

¹⁹ J. Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk*, Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi, LXII (Uppsala, 1994), pp. 121–22.

about the year 1300 and must also have been an important product before that. I do not find the persistent medial *e* in recorded forms of this name and the other four Maltbys in England a valid objection to this interpretation but Sandred and others do and they consider that the specific of these names is the Danish personal name *Malti*.²⁰ This name is unknown in Norwegian and Swedish, and in Denmark, where it is a loan from Continental Germanic, it is not recorded until the thirteenth century. I find it unlikely that it was borrowed early enough into Denmark to appear as the specific of five names in *-bý* in the Danelaw.²¹

The name of Oby, a lost settlement in Ashby with Oby, whose site is now marked by the Manor House, seems to me most likely to contain as specific the Scandinavian adjective *auðr* ‘empty, desolate’, as suggested by Lindkvist many years ago,²² and to refer to the fact that a Dane had established a settlement here on a site deserted by earlier settlers. Lindkvist’s alternative explanation of the specific of this name as a Scandinavian personal name *Auði* has, however, been preferred by Sandred²³ and Insley.²⁴

The specific of Stokesby has been generally accepted to be an older Old English place-name **stocu* with secondary Middle English plural ending *-es*, referring to outlying pastures for cattle,²⁵ and I have tentatively proposed a similar type of explanation for the name Thrigby, i.e. that the specific is a scandinavianised version with [k] for [t] of an earlier Old English place-name **bric*, perhaps referring to a narrow passage through undergrowth. The alternative and formally acceptable interpretation of the specific is as a hypocoristic form *Brykki* of a Scandinavian personal name *Þrýðríkr*²⁸ but I have objected that the first record in Scandinavian sources of the full-form is in a runic inscription on a stone from Dynna in Norway that has been dated to the first half of the eleventh century, while the earliest

²⁰ *PN Norfolk*, II, 10.

²¹ G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands*, *Navnestudier*, 16 (Copenhagen, 1978), p. 59.

²² H. Lindkvist, *Middle English Place-Names of Scandinavian Origin* (Uppsala, 1912), p. 155.

²³ *PN Norfolk*, II, 42.

²⁴ Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk*, p. 81.

²⁵ *PN Norfolk*, II, 22.

²⁸ *PN Norfolk*, II, 27.

record of the hypocoristic form is from 1531²⁶ and there is no record of an occurrence of either of the forms in Danish sources.

I have been reluctant to accept that the specifics of the names in *-bý* in Flegg that I have discussed so far have anthroponymical specifics but there are at least six names there which do seem to contain personal names and thus perhaps to belong to the second phase of settlement, when the Danes began to split up large estates into small independent units. The personal names in question are the compound name *Hrólf* in an archaic form *Hróðulfr* in Rollesby, the very common original by-name *Ormr* in Ormesby St Margaret, three much less common by-names: *Hæringr* in Herringby, *Klyppr* in Clippesby and *Skrauti* in Scratby, and finally the rare hypocoristic form *Heimir* of names in *Heim-* in Hemsby. There are also three *býs* in Norfolk outside Flegg whose specific is a Scandinavian personal name: Alby contains *Áli* or *Alli*, Colby contains *Koli*, and Tyby contains the typically Swedish personal name *Tidhe*.

The final name in *-bý* in Flegg is really problematic. This is Billockby. Various by-names and personal names have been suggested as its specific, with the compound name **Bitlákr* postulated by O. K. Schram and John Insley perhaps being the least unconvincing.²⁷ I, however, am more inclined to treat the specific as a lost place-name **bita* ‘small piece of land’ + *lacu* ‘slow-moving stream’, which can be compared with Potlock in Derbyshire (**potte-lacu*, with recorded forms such as *Pothlac* and *Pollac*).²⁸

Outside Norfolk the *býs* in East Anglia are very few and scattered. There is one name containing *kirkja* in Essex: Kirby le Soken, and four *býs* in Suffolk, three of which have English or possibly English nouns as specifics: *barn* ‘child’ in Barnby, *æsc* in Ashby, *wilig* ‘willow’ in Wilby. The exception is Risby, whose specific may be the Scandinavian noun *hrís* n. ‘brushwood’ in the genitive plural form *hrísa*, although some spellings suggest that Ekwall may have been right to suggest that the specific was Scandinavian *ri_th* in the genitive singular *ri_ths* ‘clearing’, perhaps functioning as a place-name.

²⁶ E. H. Lind, *Norsk-Isländska Dopnamn ock Fingerade Namn Från Medeltiden* (Uppsala 1905–15), pp. 1224–25.

²⁷ J. Insley, ‘The place-names of Norfolk. A Danelaw project in progress’, *Namn och Bygd*, 86 (1998), 105–20 (p. 114).

²⁸ K. Cameron, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, 3 vols, English Place-Name Society, 27–29 (Cambridge, 1959), II, 464–65.

While place-names in *-bý* are of much less frequent occurrence in East Anglia than in Yorkshire and the East Midlands and even than in North-West England, place-names in *-þorp* are more common, particularly in Norfolk, where there are sixty-two instances recorded in early sources. Only the West and East Ridings of Yorkshire have more instances than this, ninety-four and eighty-three respectively. Some of the names in *-þorp* in East Anglia may well be of English origin, first and foremost Souldrup, which contains OE *sulh* ‘furrow’, and Thrup End, a simplex name, both of which are found in Bedfordshire and show the metathesised Old English form of the generic, but also the twenty-seven other originally simplex names, for example Thorpe Abbots in Norfolk, as well as names whose specific is the name of a mother settlement, e.g. Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk, or the five names whose specific is an Old English personal name, e.g. *Æpelsw_b* in Ailesway Thorpe in Norfolk or *Godr_c* in Gooderich Thorpe in Suffolk, or the Old English adjective *_ast* in Easthorpe in Essex, or an Old English plant-term such as *b_ose* ‘bent wood’ in Bestthorpe in Norfolk, or perhaps OE *p_ca* ‘evil spirit, goblin’, which appears in three Pockthorpes in Norfolk that are recorded in early sources, although not in Little Domesday Book, as well as four other Pockthorpes in the same county.

It seems likely, however, that a cognate Danish element *púki* may have been operative here. It is clear that some or all of the younger Pockthorpes must have received their names on analogy with one or more of the older Pockthorpes, or perhaps that there was a compound appellative **pokethorp*, containing OE *p_ca* or Scandinavian *púki*, that was used with derogatory significance to denote small secondary settlements. It is interesting to note that there are a Pugerup and two Purups in Denmark, which have been explained as *torp*-names containing a Danish personal name *P_ki* but which may well be examples of the employment of a derogatory compound appellative **p_katorp* to denote an insignificant settlement.²⁹ Since the word *poke* was used in Norfolk to denote the nets used in eel-traps, it is just possible that four of the Pockthorpes in Norfolk, which lie close to streams, may have been named after such a piece of fishing-equipment but the word seems unlikely to lie behind the other three Pockthorpes. Karl Inge Sandred suggests that the Pockthorpe in Flegg contains an unrecorded Old English

²⁹ Cf. *Danmarks Stednavne* XI, 94 and XII, 181.

personal name **Poca*.³⁰ Names of similar significance to the Norfolk Pockthorpes and the Danish names, if the derogatory sense is accepted, are probably a lost Pockthorpe in the East Riding of Yorkshire,³¹ Pogbie in East Lothian in Scotland, a name that was probably coined by settlers who had moved north from the Danelaw in the post-Viking period,³² and an English Puckrup in Gloucestershire.³³

As well as the many *þorps* which may well be of English origin, however, there are also twenty-five instances of *þorp*-names containing Scandinavian personal names, for example *Ingulfr* in Ingoldisthorpe, whose present form shows confusion with a different Scandinavian name *Ingjaldr*, a loan in Scandinavian from OE *Ingeld*, or perhaps the English name itself. It has been pointed out by John Insley that the *Ingulfr* in question might be identical with the *Ingulfus* who held land in 1086 at Sedgefod, three miles to the north-east of Ingoldisthorp (Little Domesday Book (LDB) 193b;10/20³⁴).³⁵ Six of the personal names would seem to be typically Danish: *Áki* in Akethorpe in Suffolk (cf. several Danish Ågerups³⁶), **Glóir* in Glosthorpe in Norfolk (cf. two Danish Glostrups³⁷), *Kali* in Calthorpe in Norfolk (cf. Danish Kallerup⁴¹), *Fræthi* in Freethorpe in Norfolk (cf. Danish Frejlev³⁸), *Sibbi* in Ellington Thorpe in Huntingdonshire (*Sibthorp* 1327; cf. three Danish Sibberups⁴³), and *Tóki* in a lost *Toketorp* in Norfolk (LDB 145b; 4/14; cf. five Danish Tågerups³⁹). It is probably significant that a man called *Toke* held land in this vill in 1065.

Four *þorp*-names in Norfolk would seem to have Norman personal names as specifics: the surname of Continental Germanic origin *Anger* in

³⁰ *PN Norfolk*, II, 9.

³¹ G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire*, Navnestudier, 11 (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 64.

³² G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavians in Southern Scotland?', *Nomina*, 13 (1989–90), 41–60 (p. 52).

³³ A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire*, 4 vols, English Place-Name Society, 38–41 (Cambridge, 1964–65), IV, 71.

³⁴ The paragraph number refers to the Phillimore edition of Domesday Book, volume XXXIII, edited by P. Brown (Chichester, 1984).

³⁵ Cf. Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk*, p. 229.

³⁶ B. Jørgensen, *Stednavneordbog*, 2nd edn (Copenhagen, 1994), p. 354.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 247.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 311.

Angerthorpe, the surname *Bacun* in Baconsthorpe, the Breton place-name *Karbois*, probably functioning as a surname in the lost *Carboistorp*, and the Continental Germanic diminutive form *Idike* in the lost Dykebeck (*Idiketorp* LDB 253a;31/42). The presence of four Norman names as specifics in the *þorp*-names shows that not all of the Domesday Book *þorps* can have been established before the re-establishment of English rule in 917.

My paper on *þorp*-names read to this society at Leicester in 1991,⁴⁰ begins with a demonstration of a great lack of homogeneity in the status of *þorps* in two areas—the Yorkshire Wolds and the Nottinghamshire-Leicestershire border—so I shall now take a quick look at the *þorps* in East Anglia. First it should be noted that it is extremely unlikely that English names can lie behind most of the sixty-two *þorps* in Norfolk. English names in *-þrop* never occur with this frequency. Where they are commonest, i.e. in Gloucestershire, there are only fifteen instances. It is also significant that in East Anglia it is only in Norfolk that the *þorps* are of frequent occurrence. There are only fourteen instances in Suffolk, five in Essex and two in Bedfordshire.

There is a great variation in the Domesday assessments of the places with names in *-þorp*. None of them has such an extremely high assessment as, for example, Weavertorpe in the East Riding of Yorkshire with its eighteen carucates. There are, however, three *þorps* with assessments higher than seven carucates in East Anglia, a region where the general level of Domesday assessments is comparatively low and where sixteen of the other *þorps* are assessed at under one carucate. The three highly assessed *þorps* are all originally simplex names: Thorpe Morieux in Suffolk, Thorpe Market and Thorpe St Andrew in Norfolk. Thorpe Morieux is named in a pre-Conquest source from c.962⁴¹ and I can see no other reason than its comparative age for the high assessment. Thorpe Market had a medieval market that may have been in existence before Domesday Book but it is now a tiny village that is partially absorbed in the manorial estate of Gunton. Thorpe St Andrew probably already owed its prosperity to its proximity to Norwich, as it certainly did later on.

Two of the *þorps* with Norman specifics: Baconthorpe and *Carboistorp*,

⁴⁰ G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Place-names in **-þorp**: in retrospect and in turmoil', *Nomina*, 15 (1991–92), 35–51.

⁴¹ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, p. 14.

are among those with assessments of under one carucate and both are now lost, although Baconthorpe has given its name to a parish. Thirty-nine of the East Anglian *þorps* are lost and twenty-seven of them are parishes but some of them are both lost and parishes. These last instances must be reflections of the great prosperity of Norfolk in the church-building period compared with its sparse population at the present day.

Apart from the *býs* and the *þorps*, there are only seventeen settlements in East Anglia with Scandinavian habitative place-names recorded in early sources. One is Scole in Suffolk, which would seem to be an instance of *skáli* ‘hut’, although the earliest recorded form *Escales* 1191 would seem to show confusion with the fairly common French place-name *Échelle* < Latin *scala* ‘staircase’ in the sense ‘steep slope’, a name that is not at all appropriate for the site of Scole.

Most of the other instances of Scandinavian habitative names contain the generic *toft* f. ‘building plot’. Eight of the *tofts* are originally simplex names, e.g. Toft Monks in Norfolk. Most of these are in the plural with the secondary Middle English plural ending in *-es*, suggesting that they denote a collection of building-plots and that the generic is the Middle English loanword from Scandinavian in the sense ‘curtilage’ rather than the Scandinavian word used with the sense ‘deserted plot’, as found so frequently in Normandy. That *toft* was adopted into the Norfolk dialect and eventually acquired a technical sense ‘portion of land assigned to a named tenant with certain manorial responsibilities’ has been ably demonstrated by Joan Turville-Petre in her study of ‘The tofts of Aylsham manors’ recorded in the court rolls and court books.⁴² It is, however, difficult to determine whether the numerous *toft*-names recorded in Little Domesday Book in plural form can be evidence of the existence of such an administrative system already in the Viking period.

There are also six names in *-toft* whose specifics are of Scandinavian origin and these would all seem likely to be genuine Scandinavian formations from the early period of settlement. Three contain Scandinavian personal names: *Hlóðvér* in Lowestoft, *Grímr* in a lost *Grymestoft* and *Hundr* in a lost *Hundestoft*, all in Suffolk, while three contain Scandinavian appellatives: *gríss* m. ‘young pig’ in a lost *Grisetoft* in Suffolk, *mór* ‘moor, marshland’ in a lost Mortoft and *skr* ‘opening, depression’ in a lost Scartoft, both in Norfolk. It is probably significant that five out of six of these

⁴² In *Norfolk Archaeology*, 42 (1995), 148–59.

probably Scandinavian formations are borne by settlements that are now lost. Lowestoft alone thrived to become a prosperous medieval fishing-town. The different fate of this one *toft* probably reflects its situation on the coast and the development of the fishing industry in the fourteenth century.

Scandinavian topographical names are both more common and more varied in the early sources than the habitative names. Some reflect the local topography and the demands this made on settlers, for example Felbrigg ‘plank bridge’ and Flegg ‘area where marsh plants, particularly iris, grow’, both in Norfolk. At least seven names contain the word *holmr* meaning ‘island of higher, dry ground in a marshy area’ and these also point to the low-lying nature of much of the region. Other names point to the presence of woodland, for example Haddiscoe and a lost Sco in Norfolk, both containing the word *skógr* ‘wood’, and there are four names in *-lundr* ‘grove’, for example Rockland in Norfolk. This name is identical in origin with that of Rågelund in Denmark and Ruckland in Lincolnshire. The specific is more likely to be the Scandinavian word *hróki* ‘small hill’ than the bird-term ‘rook’.

It would seem that there was earlier more woodland in East Anglia than there is now for there are no fewer than nine settlement names in *-þveit* ‘clearing (in woodland)’ and the same element is found in a number of minor names. The comparative absence of this element from the place-names of Lincolnshire, for example, was once explained as reflecting the fact that *þveit* was a typically Norwegian word, but this is not true and the greater frequency of occurrence of the element in the North Riding of Yorkshire and the Lake District than in the rest of the Danelaw is now thought to reflect the presence there of more woodland to be cleared. The recorded forms of some of the *þveit*-names in East Anglia show confusion with other words, for example Crostwight and Croswick in Norfolk. These corrupt forms of the element suggest that the word dropped out of use in Norfolk at an early date, although its occurrence in some younger minor names makes this doubtful. Karl Inge Sandred in a useful study of the *þveit*-names in Norfolk has noted that the names for which there are early records are all situated close to groups of names in *-bý* and suggested that they can be looked upon as a supplement to these names as indicators of early settlement.⁴³

⁴³ K. I. Sandred, ‘Language contact in East Anglia. Some observations on the

The group of place-names reflecting Scandinavian influence that has the most widespread distribution in East Anglia is that consisting of a Scandinavian element compounded with OE *-t_n*. There are no fewer than 101 of these in all in Norfolk and Suffolk. This frequency of occurrence must in part reflect the fact that Old English names in *-t_n* are also very common in these two counties (232 in all). Many of these English formations are names such as Barton, Preston, Stretton, which occur throughout England. Unlike in other parts of England, however, Norfolk and Suffolk have comparatively many place-names in *-t_n* whose specific is a personal name, occasionally a Norman name, which points to an eleventh-century manorial origin for the place-name, e.g. Continental Germanic *Gerulf* in Garvestone. Many other names contain Old English personal names (thirty-three in Norfolk, forty-three in Suffolk), for example *P_odbeorht* in Theberton in Suffolk. These names may also be manorial and date from the eleventh century or they may reflect a tenth-century reorganisation of land after the Danes had lost control over East Anglia.

The numerous *t_n*-names with Scandinavian specifics show that names in *-t_n* were being coined or reformed while there were Danes in the area. The name Carlton in Suffolk, for example, contains as its specific the genitive plural *karla* of Scandinavian *karl* 'free peasant', possibly replacing OE *ceorlena*. There are a total of twenty names in East Anglia containing a Scandinavian or scandinavianised noun or adjective. Of much more frequent occurrence, however, are *t_ns* with Scandinavian personal names as specifics, for example *Skúli* in Scoulton in Norfolk. At least one *Skúli* held land in Norfolk in 1065, possibly seven different men with small holdings or one man with scattered possessions, so this name may be a young manorial formation but it is not necessarily so. *Skúli* is a fairly common name in Scandinavia and the Danelaw and the sub-tenants of Scoulton in 1065 were unnamed freemen.

Some of the other place-names in *-t_n* with Scandinavian personal names as specifics seem much more probable examples of names coined in the early period of settlement because they occur only rarely in England, for example Bildestone in Suffolk. The Scandinavian personal name *Bildr* is not certainly recorded in England but may occur in a couple of place-names:

Scandinavian place-names in *-thwaite* in Norfolk', in *Proceedings of the XVIIth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences. Helsinki 13-18 August 1990*, vols I-II, edited by E. M. Närhi (Helsinki, 1990), II, 310–17.

Bilthorpe in Nottinghamshire and Bilstone in Leicestershire.⁴⁴

Other examples are Scandinavian personal names that occur in anglicised forms typical of the early period of settlement. John Insley has demonstrated that such forms survive particularly frequently in East Anglia, where Scandinavian immigration did not continue into the tenth and eleventh centuries as it did in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.⁴⁵ This is true, for example, of the form taken by *Ketilbjrn* in Kettlebaston (*Ketelbeornastuna* LDB 369a;14/114⁴⁶; cf. OE *cytel* + *beorn*), and of a number of other names. It is also possible to point to the survival of archaic Scandinavian forms of the personal names which have *-ketill* as the second element. This element had been contracted to *-kell* og *-kill* by the year 1000 at home in Denmark but we find **Ylfketill*, for example, in Ilketshall in Suffolk (*Ilcheteleshala* LDB 300b;4/20) and *Þorketill* in a lost *Tvrchetlestuna* in Suffolk (LDB 420a;36/6).

When I first looked at the Scandinavian personal names which occurred as the specifics of names in *-t_n* in East Anglia, I was inclined to treat *Þjalfi*, an original by-name meaning ‘represser’ which appears in Thelveton in Norfolk, as one of the Scandinavian names that was likely to have been borne by an early settler. Its only other occurrence in England is in a field-name *Thelfeland* in Tivetshall six miles north of Thelveton, as noted by John Insley.⁴⁷ The Scandinavian name is of very rare occurrence in both Norwegian and Danish but quite common in Swedish. A runic inscription on a stone in Landeryd in Östergötland in Sweden commemorates *Þjalfi*, a *drengr* or young warrior who was with Knut in England.⁴⁸ In her comments on this stone in a recent study of the ornamentation and dating of eleventh-century runestones in Sweden, Signe Horn Fuglesang has claimed that it is a reasonable inference that *Þjalfi* died in Knut’s service and thus certainly before 1035 and possibly as early as 1015–16.⁴⁹ She would

⁴⁴ Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands*, pp. 103, 188.

⁴⁵ J. Insley, ‘Regional variation in Scandinavian personal nomenclature in England’, *Nomina*, 3 (1979), 52–60 (pp. 56–57).

⁴⁶ The paragraph numbers in LDB here and below refer to the Phillimore edition of Domesday Book, volume XXXIV, edited by A. Rumble (Chichester, 1986).

⁴⁷ Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk*, p. 390.

⁴⁸ S. B. F. Jansson, *Runes in Sweden* (Stockholm, 1987), p. 76.

⁴⁹ S. Horn Fuglesang, ‘Swedish runestones of the eleventh century: ornament and dating’, in *Runeninschriften als Quellen interdisziplinärer Forschung*, edited by K.

therefore assign the stone to 1035 at the very latest, possibly to the first quarter of the eleventh century. This dating seems reasonable enough but from a historical point of view it is equally possible that *Þjalfi* did not die in Knut's service but had been granted land by him or money to buy land in reward for this and that he had settled in Norfolk at the place that came to be known as Thelveton. We cannot, of course, be certain that the *Þjalfi* of Thelveton had served with Knut but his name is almost certainly of Swedish origin and service as a mercenary with Knut is probably the best explanation for his presence in England.

It will now have become clear that some of my conclusions about Scandinavian settlement in East Anglia unfortunately remain rather preliminary. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that some at least of the names must have been coined in the Viking period proper. I am inclined to believe that this is true of the Scandinavian hundred-names, as pointed out by Karl Inge Sandred,⁵⁰ of all the *býs*, the *þorps* with Scandinavian specifics, the Scandinavian topographical names, most of the names in *-t_n* whose specifics are Scandinavian nouns or adjectives and probably those whose specifics are rare or archaic Scandinavian personal names or anglicised forms of such names, although all the personal names can have been inherited down through generations so that the place-names containing them may in some cases be purely English formations. Other names of comparatively late coinage may be those containing the names of Scandinavian followers of Knut or his sons in the first half of the eleventh century. Some names of frequent occurrence such as Pockthorpe may be analogical formations of an even later date. It is my hope that with a final effort of will I shall be able to publish a reasoned summary of the evidence for Scandinavian settlement in East Anglia before the new millennium is very old.

Düwel (Berlin and New York, 1998), pp. 197–218 (p. 201).

⁵⁰ K. I. Sandred, 'Viking administration in the Danelaw: a look at Scandinavian and English hundred-names in Norfolk', in *The Twelfth Viking Congress*, edited by B. Ambrosiani and H. Clarke (Stockholm, 1994), pp. 269–76.