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‘More than pirates’, The Development of an Anglo-Scandinavian Society in Mercia, 865-940.

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Table of Abbreviations.

ASC- Anglo-Saxon Chronicles.

Map of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy, *The Anglo-Saxons: a brief History,* Accessed at,

www.history.org.uk/primary/resource/3865/anglo-saxons-a-brief-history, (23rd April 2025).

Introduction.

This dissertation will examine the role of the Scandinavian migration on social and cultural change in Mercia between 865-980. This migration was much more than an invasion; rather, it was a mass movement of people from all levels of society; it involved traders, merchants, rich and poor, men, women and children. Mercia is of particular interest based on the lack of historiography on the region, with the most influential piece of work coming from *Mercia and the Making of England,* by Ian Walker.[1] Additionally, the lack of written material from Mercia has contributed to this academic negligence. As Anne Whitehead poetically stated, 'the story of Mercia is one where so often its leaders stand accused by those who wrote the history, and are not able to defend themselves'.[2] The ASC asserts that in 865, 'A great heathen force came into English land and they took winter-quarters in East Anglia'.[3] The invasion of the Great Heathen Army was the start of an ongoing Scandinavian migration, affecting the social and political landscape of Anglo-Saxon England, resulting in monumental social and cultural change. Furthermore, this dissertation will use the word Scandinavian over Viking, where possible, as the word Viking conjures up images of ruthless murderers. The word Viking appears in the ASC three times, referring to the Scandinavians as robbers; this word conjures images of bloodthirsty pirates, this was far from the truth, as will be demonstrated.[4] Three chapters will be used to explore how the Scandinavian migration contributed to the development of a new Anglo-Scandinavian society in Mercia. This dissertation will explore material culture, linguistics and place name evidence and settlements. There was a momentous change in society with the sudden influx of

[1] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England,* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2000).
[2] Anne Whitehead, *Mercia: The Rise and Fall of a Kingdom,* (Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2020), p. 224.
[3] Daniel Weiss, 'The Viking Great Army', *Archaeology,* Vol. 71, No. 2, (2018), p. 51.
[4] Julian D. Richards, *The Vikings, A Short Introduction,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

Scandinavians in England and, more specifically, Mercia. This dissertation will use the three chapters previously mentioned to present a nuanced and comprehensive argument that the Scandinavian migration created an Anglo-Scandinavian society in Mercia.

The study of Early Medieval England has long been a controversial one, with many opinions and interpretations being debated over the years. In part, this is because of the lack of written material, especially from the Scandinavians; and the little written material available was unusually silent about the scale of the Scandinavian settlement.[5] The study of the Scandinavian migration has attracted scholars from different disciplines, for example, in the 1920s, linguistic scholars suggested that the abundance of Scandinavian-influenced place names suggests a wide-reaching and impactful migration; an interpretation held in the 1950s by Frank Stenton, an eminent historian of Anglo-Saxon studies.[6] In *The Beginning of English Society,* Whitelock suggested that not only was the Scandinavian settlement impactful, but it can still be felt today.[7] This was not a uniform opinion, with Davis and Sawyer both arguing in favour of a small army, later followed by migration.[8] Finburg would also hold this interpretation, stating, 'the invaders who took part in the greater land divisions were numbered in the hundreds rather than thousands, but later they must undoubtedly have been reinforced by waves of immigrants arriving from their homelands'.[9]

Recent historiography has expanded on these early debates, for example, Fellows-Jensen has used place name evidence to place into context, using the evidence to provide

[5] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings In England, Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 1.
[6] Ibid, p. 1-2.
[7] Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginning of English Society,* (Reading, Co and Wyman, 1952), p. 241.
[8] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings In England, Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 2-3.
[9] H. P. R. Finberg, *The Formation of England 550-1042,* (London, Granada Publishing, 1974), p. 157.

for more than the scale of the migration. John Hines, using linguistic and place name evidence, offers an interpretation on the development of Anglo-Scandinavian relations.[10] Moreover, Shane McLeod has interjected into the overarching debate surrounding the word migration and whether the Scandinavian settlement can be labelled as such. Furthermore, the emergence of social history changed the way that scholars view this elusive period; no longer is the focus on the leaders, but rather, as this dissertation will demonstrate, the real challenge is creating a comprehensive argument around the people who migrated, those without a voice in some regards.

Very few written sources have documented the Scandinavian activity in Mercia, with much of this activity being contained in a sentence or two. The most complete and accurate accounts come from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles (ASC). In addition to this lack of written sources, there is no written material of Scandinavian origin, meaning their true intentions are unknown. The ASC needs to be met with extreme caution, due to the nature of its existence, having been constructed at the court of King Alfred in 891.[11] This may have been an attempt to amplify Anglo-Saxon identity, in a somewhat failed bid to curb the growing Scandinavian presence. It is evident that the ASC pushes an Anglo-Saxon agenda; this must be met with both suspicion and prudence. The ASC clearly emphasises the fortunes of the south, in particular Wessex, creating a "us" and "them" dynamic, a message that indicates that no form of peaceful co-existence can occur.[12] The lack of written sources, especially from the Scandinavians, makes it difficult to understand the Scandinavian motives during the

[10] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings In England, Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 6.
[11] Courtnay Konshuh, 'Constructing Early Anglo-Saxon Identity in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles', in Alexander Langlands and Ryan Lavelle's, *The Land of the English Kin,* (Brill, 2020), p. 154.
[12] F. Donald Logan, (2nd ed), *Vikings in History,* (London, Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2003), p. 138.

migration. Archaeological evidence will be used to both fill the gaps that the ASC leaves but also to offer an opposing narrative to one that the ASC pushes.

Archaeological evidence will be used extensively throughout this dissertation, being of extreme value to chapters one and three. Archaeology will be used in compensation for the lack of written material; this does not mean that these finds are perfect and without their problems. One such problem that needs to be considered is that the evidence, especially in Chapter One, is what was discarded at the time, which may indicate a lack of importance to the individual. Additionally, the excavation reports of Repton and Torksey will be important in the second theme of Chapter Three. These reports expand our knowledge of the size of the migration but also of the people who migrated into Mercia. Without the discovery of the exact location of the camp at Torksey this dissertation would have taken an entirely different route, highlighting the importance of new discoveries on our knowledge of a rather unknown period of history.

Chapter one will explore material culture, with the chapter being further split into three themes: jewellery, economy and sculptures. Archaeological finds will be of particular importance, highlighting the overall importance of archaeology in this dissertation. Jewellery creates a personal approach, allowing for an understanding of the people who wore it. Moreover, evidence of a distinct Anglo-Scandinavian style can be seen, forming early into the Scandinavian migration. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence to indicate that the Scandinavians were producing a uniquely Scandinavian style when in Mercia. The next theme will examine the changing nature of the Scandinavian economy. In Scandinavia, the dominant form of economy was in the shape of bartering and trading. A coin-based system would not develop until the late 10th century. Yet there is evidence that will be explored,

indicating that the Scandinavians understood the importance of coins and adapted quickly to use them. This will challenge the narrative that the Scandinavians used coins to melt down for the precious metals. Lastly, the third theme centres around the role of sculptures in creating authority, which leads to a smooth integration. Additionally, some sculptures around Mercia, such as the hogback sculpture at St Alkmunds in Derby, contain both Pagan and Christian motifs, demonstrating that the Scandinavians understood the importance of religion. Moreover, physical religion helps stamp authority on the region, helping to create a hybrid society in Mercia. It is important to note that there is no way of knowing who commissioned these sculptures and the intentions behind them.

Chapter two will examine the linguistic and place name evidence, creating a multi-disciplinary approach, something that is imperative to Anglo-Saxon studies. The ability to communicate is the first step in creating long-lasting relations, however, Old Norse wouldn't have been too dissimilar to Old English, which aided in quick integration. Old Norse and, to a lesser extent, Old Danish greatly influenced Old English, helping to establish the modern version that is spoken throughout the world. Magdalena Bator's *Obsolete Scandinavian Loan Words* was used extensively, highlighting the importance of the study of obsolete words, something rarely considered. Creating a location for linguistic changes is problematic, as these changes would have been uniform throughout Scandinavian England. However, some words are still prevalent in modern Midland's slang, which may suggest their origins came from language changes in Mercia. The study of place names in relation to the overall Scandinavian impact has been used since the early 1900s and was the basis for Stenton's influential hypothesis. However, the focus has largely been on East Anglia and Southern Northumbria. Rarely has the focus of this evidence been used in the context of Mercia, with the primary historiography coming from Kenneth Cameron and Gillian Fellows-Jensen.

Creating a map of the place names with Scandinavian origin does not mean that large groups moved through that region; instead, most likely, they were farmers creating their farmsteads. However, the evidence placed into the context of Mercia suggests that trade was becoming prevalent and that cohabitation was a certainty.

Lastly, chapter three will investigate both the large towns that developed in the southern parts of the Danelaw and the early camps at Torksey and Repton. The development of towns in Mercian Danelaw will be the focus of the first section of Chapter Three. The towns in Mercia must be understood as city-like, not in size but in influence. The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw are: Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford. In this chapter, Nottingham will not be explored due to its similarity with Leicester, additionally, the topography of Leicester makes it a more important town. Hall's *The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw* will be of considerable importance to this chapter as it highlights the current archaeological knowledge of each town. Often viewed as defensive structures, this chapter will corroborate that their role was much more complex, helping to facilitate cohabitation and the creation of Anglo-Scandinavian trade, which helped create long-lasting social and cultural change. The camp at Repton was excavated by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle in the 1970s and 80s. The camp at Torksey was discovered by Hadley and Richards in 2016. Traditionally, the camp at Torksey was thought to have been in the foundation of the modern village, it laid just north of the village. The discovery of the camp at Torksey helped establish the impact of the Scandinavian migration, whilst presenting the Great Heathen Army as much more than military-aged men; rather, it contained families, traders and merchants. The camp at Repton is of considerable importance as, during the excavations, a series of graves were found along with a burial mound. This section will use the Biddles' excavation report, demonstrating the importance of archaeological excavation in furthering

the knowledge of this period. Moreover, the burial mound will be of particular importance to this chapter, as the evidence presents a small but still sizable quantity of female bones.[13]

This dissertation will use the three chapters mentioned above to establish the impact of the Scandinavian migration on Mercia. By taking a social history approach, this dissertation will offer a unique and nuanced review of current knowledge and establish new interpretations to expand the current pool of thought on the Scandinavian role on social and cultural change in Mercia.

[13] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle, *Repton the 'great heathen army' 873-874,* (Oxbow books, 2001), p.81.

Chapter One- Material culture.

The Scandinavian migration saw the development of a strong and unique Anglo-Scandinavian society. This is evident when examining the material culture available, however limited it may be. Material culture has not been used to its full potential in relation to Mercia. Three themes will be explored: jewellery, coinage and the economy, and sculptures and physical religion. These three themes will be used to create a picture of the Scandinavian migration and its effects on society in northern Mercia. Firstly, the role of jewellery on creating social links is imperative when understanding the formation of trading links. The development of a distinct and unique Anglo-Scandinavian brooch style shows that co-existence happened soon after the initial migration. Additionally, the rise in the popularity of necklaces further emphasises this growing Scandinavian influence on Mercia. The evidence of a miscast in Mercia helps establish this idea of the increased role of trade on social relations. Secondly, the changing nature of the economy is of particular interest. It is important to mention that a coin-based economy would not develop in Scandinavia until the late 10th century. However, the idea that the Scandinavians used coins simply to nick for the metal content is misunderstood. The Scandinavian migrants understood that coins were of value, allowing them to become part of the native society. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon kings, Alfred and Ceolwulf, would use coins as a somewhat failed attempt at promoting an Anglo-Saxon identity, as evident in the coin of the 'two emperors'. Lastly, the role of physical religion and sculptures cannot be understated. Historians have often argued that the church was targeted by the Scandinavians, and in some cases, are correct. Yet, the church in Mercia seemed to thrive, adapting to the Pagan settlers, choosing to integrate some of their beliefs. Richard Hutton's, *How Pagan were Medieval English Peasants* will be used to determine how

Christian the people of Mercia were and if this had an effect on the church and wider society.

Jewellery.

Identifying different forms of medieval jewellery comes with complications, in part due to the similarities of the various jewellery types, remembering that the Scandinavians were not a unified group. Typically, the Scandinavian style of brooch was often oval, featuring an attachment loop and frequently made from brass; on the other hand, the Anglo-Saxon style was usually flat with no attachment loop and not typically made from brass.[14] These are very subtle differences between the two styles, which becomes slightly problematic when considering that the Scandinavians did not have a uniform style. To name a few, there are the Borre style, the Oseberg style and the Urnes style. These styles represent the individuality of the Scandinavians, further demonstrating their uniqueness. Moreover, jewellery in this period helps create a picture of those who wore the jewellery. For example, a Thor's hammer necklace was discovered in one of the graves at Repton.[15] Jewellery was a form of self-expression for the Scandinavians, in some cases, choosing to express the person's religion.

Jewellery played an imperative role in creating and maintaining social bonds with the Anglo-Saxon natives. Additionally, it may indicate the precise level of the Scandinavian impact in Mercia and England, something that written evidence does not offer. There is a

[14] Jane F. Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England,* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 2013), p. 21.

[15] Julian D. Richards, 'Viking Settlements in England', in Brinks et al, *The Viking World,* (London, Routledge, 2008), p.369.

lack of evidence to support the Scandinavians creating their own styles in England and more precisely Mercia. However, there is ample evidence that indicates that an Anglo-Scandinavian style was in production in England, which is more localised to the north and east coast, however, some of the evidence suggests that Mercia was also part of the production of this new hybrid style. Kershaw argues that there was no Scandinavian style in production in England, rather there was a combination of the two styles being produced and extensively, for that matter.[16] Yet Kershaw never explicitly explains the reasons for such a lack of evidence. The Scandinavians had been raiding in England since 796 with the sacking at Lindisfarne, meaning that the Scandinavians had already come into contact with this brooch style, resulting in the style being in production before settling Mercia, showcasing the famed Scandinavian adaptability.

Much of the evidence that highlights this adaptability comes from East Anglia and Northumbria, but there is evidence that supports the jewellery production in Mercia. In Towcester in Northamptonshire, an unusually large lozenge brooch, recorded only as a drawing, appeared to lack surface decoration.[17] The lack of surface decoration indicates a miscast of some sort. However, only a small number of Anglo-Scandinavian jewellery has been unearthed in Mercia (fig. one).[18] Most of the finds come from Lindsey, north-east Lincoln, and around the Five Boroughs in north-east Mercia (fig. two).[19] This may suggest that the Scandinavians in Mercia were less likely to leave personal belongings behind, demonstrating both the permanence of their settlement and the less hostile environment in Mercia. This is further explained in the type of settlement in Mercia, the nuclear village. This

[16] Jane F. Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England,* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 2013), p. 133.
[17] Ibid, p. 137.
[18] Ibid, p. 198.
[19] Ibid.

village type is similar to the current village model, a nucleated village surrounded by large open farms. Jewellery is less likely to be lost in this type of settlement as they are more stable.[20]

Other types of fashion demonstrate the Scandinavian influence on society and culture, presenting the role of gender on social change as key. Necklaces had already fallen out of fashion in female dress in Anglo-Saxon England when the Scandinavians first migrated. Typically, brooches and pennants were part of female dress, necklaces were not part of the traditional Anglo-Saxon dress style due to the type of veil, which would cover the neck, that was common.[21] There does appear to be a surge in the popularity of necklaces in the late 10th century, pointing towards a Scandinavian-influenced trend.[22] The surge in female jewellery trends indicates a female migration in conjunction with a male-based one. Moreover, it indicates a willingness to trade from both the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons, presenting the Scandinavian presence as quasi-legitimate. A step towards creating long-lasting relations, moving towards strong social and cultural change in Mercia.

Economy and coinage.

The economy in Norway, Denmark and Sweden came in the form of trading and bartering of metals, instead of a coin-based economy uniform throughout Western Europe. This is not to say that on a local level, bartering was not a practice; indeed, bartering would have been beneficial for small-scale transactions. As Naismith commented, 'At times uncoined precious metals were used in preference to coins in exchange settings, as in Viking-Age Scandinavia,

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, p. 22.
[22] Ibid.

but it persisted alongside coined money on some level throughout the Middle Ages as a higher-value alternative.'[23] From the moment the Scandinavians migrated to England, the importance of the coin-based economy would have been evident to the newcomers. These migrants would have used coins as a way of tapping into existing trading networks, establishing themselves in the local communities. This is evident with the volume of archaeological finds throughout the past twenty years, with coins and bullions, among other things, being unearthed, suggesting some form of Anglo-Scandinavian economy or at least their understanding of the Anglo-Saxon coin-based economy. Moreover, the understanding of the local economy in Mercia helps to create peaceful links with the natives, separating the peaceful migrants and the raiders.

The distribution of coins is imperative to examine when understanding the precise nature of the social change brought about by the Scandinavian newcomers. For example, a coin found in north Yorkshire was minted in Mercia featuring the Mercian King Burgred, 852-874 (fig. three).[24] Coins, such as this one, are a common sight at archaeological sites due to the appeasement strategy Burgred took, choosing to pay the Scandinavians off rather than engage in armed conflict. The general consensus amongst historians is that this failed, leading to his exile in Rome. However, Ian Walker has suggested that Burgred's exile was not at the hands of the Scandinavians at Repton rather came at the hands of a civil war by the Mercian nobility who supported the C dynastic line over the B dynastic line.[25] This amplifies the ambiguity of the history of Mercia, further indicating the problematic nature of the

[23] Rory Naismith, (1st ed), *Money and Coinage in the Middle Ages,* (Boston, Brill, 2018), p. 2.
[24] Portable Antiquities Scheme, *Coin representing King Burgred*, 'Unique ID: YORYM-A14D9B', [coin], accessed at https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/719634.
[25] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England,* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 60.

region poses on creating links that establish social change. Nevertheless, the coin may indicate the Scandinavian adaptability and their willingness to trade with Anglo-Saxon coins.

Historians have often viewed Burgred's successor, King Ceolwulf II 874-879, as a mere puppet king, who owed his position to the Scandinavian at Repton. This idea relies on the commentary of the ASC. The ASC makes it clear that Ceolwulf was no ally to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and was certainly not a legitimate monarch.[26] For example, Whitelock stated, 'Ceolwulf (whom the Danes allowed to rule in Mercia from 874).'[27] The question posed is why would the Scandinavians, if they were truly responsible, choose not to elect one of their own? Perhaps the newcomers understood that this would stir up resentment and hatred from the inhabitants, showcasing the Scandinavians' ability to play politics. The coin of the 'Two Emperors' may suggest that it was not a Scandinavian choice; this coin depicts both King Alfred and King Ceolwulf.[28] Evidently, the ASC did not share the same view as Alfred. The two-emperor coin must be regarded as a form of propaganda, an attempt at unifying the rest of Christian England under the two last powerful leaders. This coin additionally helps legitimize Ceolwulf as king, making the Scandinavian presence seem less troublesome. The two kings hoped to reinforce an Anglo-Saxon style ideology, in a failed attempt to curb the growing influence of the Scandinavians.

The Scandinavians adapted to a coin-based economy significantly quickly, understanding the value of coins in Anglo-Saxon England and more precisely Mercia. The idea that the Scandinavians used coins solely to nick the end, called hacksilver, to melt down the metal, is only partially correct. While hacksilver and gold were a practice, the

[26] Ibid.
[27] Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginning of English Society,* (Middlesex, Penguin Publishing, 1952), p. 121.
[28] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England*, (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 60.

Scandinavians understood the value of the coin, acknowledging that the value was more than the gold or silver content. This is demonstrated with evidence at Torksey of counterfeit imitation coins, mostly made out of copper.[29] The evidence of imitation coins helps to further understand the early aims of the Scandinavian migrants. Showing that they deeply understood the value of coins, early in their migration. The newcomers saw coins as an inroad into the community, hoping to trade with the locals using local currency. Furthermore, the imitation coins point towards an Anglo-Saxon motive; they were willing to trade with fake coins. These forgeries would have been pretty evident that they were such, suggesting that the Anglo-Saxons valued the trade with the Scandinavians, helping to establish strong relations and creating the necessary steps towards lasting social change. Forbye, the minting of coins at Torksey pre-dates that of the minting of coins by Guthrum, further embedding the Scandinavians in changes in Mercia, showing the importance of change in Mercia on the wider changes felt by the Anglo-Saxons.

Physical religion and sculptures.

Sculptures offer insight into the minds of the elites of society, being used to help integrate into society and stamp their authority over the community, and in this case, help examine the social changes happening throughout Mercia. There is a growing belief that both Pagan and Christian symbols are deeply intertwined, for example, hammers and crosses follow a similar pattern and can be easily mistaken for each other.[30] The creation of the Danelaw posed a threat on Christianity in Mercia; the Danelaw was created in 878 due to the treaties

[29] Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *The Viking Great Army and the Making of England,* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2021), p. 103.
[30] Thomas Williams, *Viking Britain,* (London, William Collins Books, 2017), p. 270.

signed by Guthrum and King Alfred. However, the dominance of Christianity posed a choice to the migrating Scandinavians, it presented the option to convert and establish themselves amongst the Anglo-Saxon elites. The stone sculptures, created by the Scandinavian newcomers, reflect the start of a new culture, a new identity in some regards.[31] Interestingly, the difference between the stone sculptures in the north and the south was evident by the 11th century.[32] Stone sculptures often represent the desires of the Scandinavian elites, being used as a manifestation of power and authority, being used as a place marker for power.[33] However, it is important to consider the migration as more than an army, instead being filled with farmers, traders and families, meaning that these sculptures would have been used to assert authority over the Anglo-Saxon natives along with the Scandinavian newcomers.[34]

It appears that Christianity remained untouched, in a sense, by the Scandinavian settlers. The long-held belief that the Scandinavians tried to undermine the church whilst spreading the Pagan beliefs is a misunderstood one. Instead, the Scandinavians understood the sacred nature of the church. A hogback sculpture and a stone cross were discovered at St Alkmunds in Derby.[35] This discovery not only proves that the church was in use during the Scandinavian takeover, it also suggests that the church was potentially thriving. Additionally, there was an understanding of the importance of the church in the community, further indicating a conscious decision to integrate. Richard Bailey has implored historians to view this as a 'fusion' of styles, not the destruction of one over the other.[36] There was never a

[31] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: its social structures, c. 800-1100,* (New York, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 315.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 20.
[35] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: its social structures, c. 800-1100,* (New York, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 228.
[36] Ibid, p. 313.

decision to replace Christianity with Paganism and rather Christianity may have become stronger in the Danelaw. Evidently, the church was adapting to the surge of Pagan practitioners, whilst the Scandinavians were adapting to Christianity.[37]

It is imperative to acknowledge that the Anglo-Saxons may not have been concretely Christian themselves, having shared a similar style of Paganism to that of the Scandinavians a few centuries prior. The question posed is, how Christian were the Anglo-Saxon people in Mercia? Remember that Mercia was the last major kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy that converted. While theoretically the masses were Christian, in reality, many would have kept their Pagan traditions, possibly practicing such traditions, making the Scandinavian transition much smoother. Churches in the Middle Ages contained Pagan carvings, suggesting Paganism had not been forgotten and was, in some regards, practiced.[38] The Anglo-Saxon natives in Mercia may have been accepting towards the Scandinavians, which may have led to King Alfred pushing for a common Christian identity. Furthermore, if the people of Mercia were truly accepting towards the new settlers due to their Paganism then social change would have been inevitable. Richard Hutton commented on this situation, stating, 'this would accord with the impression given by all other sources, of a relatively swift and easy absorption of the Danish and Norwegian newcomers in Anglo-Saxon Christendom.'[39] Evidently, there was a great deal of adaptation from both sides. The Scandinavians relieved the pressure of the overbearing nature of Christianity on the Mercian people; in turn, the Scandinavians adapted to the religion of the elites and, in part, the natives.

[37] Ibid.
[38] Richard Hutton, 'How Pagan were Medieval English Peasants', *Folklore,* Vol. 122, No. 3, (2011), p. 237.
[39] Ibid, p. 239.

Not only are sculptures a way of understanding and identifying changing ideals around religion but they also present the ways in which the elites of society establish their authority, something imperative for the Scandinavians. Additionally, sculptures represent power but also culture and identity. The Great Heathen Army and subsequent migrations were not made up of a collective people, instead, they were made up of individual groups under a larger banner. This is what made the Scandinavian armies effective, they could operate as a large group but easily split into small war bands, all with different aims and objectives. However, sculptures allow for a better, more direct transition, allowing the Scandinavians to effectively place their authority over the Anglo-Saxon community in Mercia. The development of a distinct Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture style in Mercia and Scandinavian England can be seen, becoming the dominant art style, surviving well after the West Saxon conquest of the Danelaw.[40] This indicates that these sculptures helped in the creation of a new Anglo-Scandinavian culture. Evidently, the Mercian Danelaw had become an intermeshed Anglo-Scandinavian society, one that was not Anglo-Saxon but was not Scandinavian either, representing a new Anglo-Scandinavian society and culture.

Lastly, the limitation of sculptures is evident, most notably, there is no way of knowing the true purpose or who commissioned them. This means that the true reason for their existence is unknown. Furthermore, this means there is no way of knowing if the changing nature of society came from an Anglo-Saxon elite willing to accept the newcomers or if it was created by a Scandinavian wishing to stamp their authority on the new lands and its people. The lack of knowledge means that a series of debates are completely possible on

[40] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: its social structures, c. 800-1100,* (New York, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 317.

this subject. That does not mean that sculptures are without their use or merit, rather they must be met with a small amount of caution.

Conclusion.

Overall, there was a clear attempt at social integration by the Scandinavians, which was furthered by the willingness of the Anglo-Saxons in Mercia. This came in the form of culture, fashion and identity. The evidence of a distinct Anglo-Scandinavian style of brooch demonstrates the collective nature of the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians, helping to deeply enrich the culture in Mercia. Interestingly, there was a surge in the trend of necklaces, heavily indicating a Scandinavian influence on the people of Mercia. Metalwork creates trade, trade creates contact, which fuels social and cultural changes. A coin-based economy was not common in Scandinavia until the late 10th century. The evidence of imitation coins, created by the Scandinavians, helps further the idea of conscious integration. Moreover, the Scandinavians understood that coins were worth more than their metal content, being an in road into society. This is why Mercian coins have turned up in hoards around the country. Finally, sculptures and physical religion demonstrate a growing sense of identity and a more Pagan style of Christianity. Sculptures allowed for the new elite to legitimise their position and presence in Mercia. Furthermore, sculptures found in Mercia contain both Christian and Pagan motifs, suggesting a new form of culture becoming dominant in Mercia. Which was furthered by the fact that a lot of the Anglo-Saxon population in Mercia would have been Pagan or at least held some Pagan traditions.

Chapter two-Language, Linguistics and Place name.

Language changes and place name evidence demonstrate the unique nature of the Scandinavian migration, highlighting their willingness to integrate into society. Two themes will be examined: Language and linguistic changes and place name evidence. Firstly, language and linguistic changes in Mercia will be explored. While it is difficult to pinpoint a geographical location concerning language changes, there is evidence in the modern slang of the Midlands that suggests that there were ample amounts of language changes developing in Mercia. Furthermore, obsolete loan words suggest that the level of language change was greater than previously thought. Whether the adoption of Scandinavian loan words came through forced or passive adoption is a separate matter, nevertheless, the ability to communicate is essential to substantial social change. Exploring place name evidence further highlights the influence that the Scandinavians had on society. Mercia is a testament to the considerable number of Scandinavian place names, with East Anglia being the location of academic focus. The development of small Scandinavian towns and villages helped establish lasting language changes in Mercia. Identifying Scandinavian settlements is without much difficulty, with the most common Scandinavian place names ending in ‘By’, followed by ‘Thorpe’. Additionally, many of the Scandinavian farmsteads are along the Fosse Way, insinuating trading links. The evidence of ‘Grimston’ hybrid suggests a form of co-living. Both language changes and place name evidence will be explored due to their importance when tackling how a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian society developed. Cohabitation creates contact, which establishes lasting communication, creating changes throughout society.

Language and linguistics.

When debating social change, it is imperative to look towards the role of language and linguistics. Social change heavily relies on the ability to communicate. However, linguists on Scandinavian loan words are often in heavy debate with one another. For example, the loanword 'evening' placed two distinguished linguists in debate about its meaning. Bjorkman originally argued for the meaning being 'equal' while Dance argued for the meaning being 'Partner'.[41] A separate definition of the word will not be offered; however, it is important to understand that obsolete loan words come with their limitations and cannot be viewed as concrete. Additionally, historians have been hesitant to explore language as a catalyst for social and cultural change, with Townend attributing this to some scholars being unwilling to believe in linguistic evidence.[42]

Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of Anglo-Saxon references concerning Old Norse, with there being only three references in two separate texts. Ealdorman Aethelweard wrote the following account in the 980s of the burial of Ealdorman Aethelwulf in 871. 'The body of the ealdorman mentioned above was carried away secretly, and was taken into Mercia, to the place called *Northworthy,* but in the Danish language Derby'.[43] This account mentions 'Danish language', suggesting the Scandinavian settlers did not have a uniform language. There was clearly a sizable enough distinction between Old Danish and Old Norse to situate them into two different language categories. It can also suggest that northern Mercia may have been predominantly Danish, however, this cannot be concretely stated.

[41] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.55.
[42] Matthew Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', in Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richard, *Cultures in Contact Scandinavian Settlements in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publisher, 2000), p. 89.
[43] Ibid, p. 94.

To fully understand the causes of social change, it is vital to discuss the language changes that took place in early medieval England. Angus McIntosh stated, 'fundamentally what we mean by "languages in contact" is "users of language in contact"'.[44] This creates a distinction between the idea of languages in direct contact and the people using their languages to create a social contract. This concept offers deep insight into the role of languages on this transformative period. For example, the saga of Harald Hardrada in the saga collection Heimskringla, written by Snorri Sturluson (1179–1242).[45] This saga contains an apparent conversation between an Anglo-Saxon farmer and a Scandinavian soldier after the battle of Stamford Bridge. In the saga, a high-ranking officer called Styrkar asked a local farmer to buy his fur coat, to which the farmer replied no and continued to say he recognised the Norwegian dialect.[46] While Sturluson had written this over a century after the events, this semi-fictional conversation offers inroads into cross-communication and language change. Whether the conversation is based on truth or not is irrelevant, as clearly by the battle of Stanford Bridge, there was this concept of the old Scandinavians and the new Scandinavians. Also, the conversation demonstrates the changes that happened in the 9th and 10th centuries, showing that there were profound changes in Mercia and the rest of Scandinavian England. This interaction also presented the Norwegian language as easily intelligible for Old English speakers. By calling it a Norwegian dialect, it is clear that the two languages had fused to become a hybrid language.

By the 11th century, the Scandinavian influence would have been easy to see in the English. However, it can be argued that the development of an Anglo-Scandinavian language

[44] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100,* (London, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 337.
[45] Ivan Chia Kuo Ku, *Language Contact in Viking Age England - A Sociolinguistic Perspective* (thesis), (University of Oslo, 2010), p.18.
[46] Ibid.

or dialect would have been apparent from the mid-9th century. Baugh and Cable suggested that the Scandinavians had been very adaptable to the conditions in which they settled.[47] In this sense, it is clear that the Scandinavian settlers consciously knew that integration would be imperative if they wanted to establish themselves. Additionally, the Scandinavians would have relied heavily on the indigenous population, especially when Scandinavian leaders took over estates and began to become prominent politically.[48] While the physical threat the Scandinavians posed cannot be understated, this alone would not have been enough to subjugate northern Mercia and Northumbria. By adopting Old English, the Scandinavian settlers would have cemented their presence in northern Mercia and would have created a political presence. Language would have been at the centre of this as the Scandinavians would have always been the minority, showcasing the need to create lasting relations.[49] Influencing the language of the natives would have allowed for a smoother and swifter integration into society.

Historians have given more consideration to the importance of language change in the north of England. The language changes that occurred in Mercia have rarely been explored by historians. A key limitation of creating a geographical theme for language change is that it is hard to pinpoint where language change occurred. George T. Folm offers a perspective on the Scandinavian influence of language in the North and the Midlands compared to the South. Folm commented that Scandinavian words were in large numbers in the Midlands of England.[50] The word 'Dillidoun, also known as dillidarling' is still found in the

[47] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.28.
[48] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100,* (London, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 337.
[49] Ibid, p. 335.
[50] George T. Folm, 'NORSE ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH DIALECTS: (A Survey of the Study)', *Saga-Book,* Vol.7, (1911-1912), p.7.

dialects of the Midlands, such as Leicester, Oxfordshire and Northampton.[51] While being present in Yorkshire and as far South as Essex, the word has a strong hold on the dialect in the Midlands. One possible explanation is that the Scandinavians moved swiftly through Northumbria but only gained half of Mercia before the formation of the Danelaw, demonstrating the need for passive integration.. Mercia would have been a hub of contact between the Scandinavians and two types of Anglo-Saxons: those who were hostile to the Scandinavian presence and those more accepting.

Furthermore, around 30% of the Scandinavian loan words are taken in the domain of law.[52] Additionally, a large proportion of the loan words are in the military and seafaring domain.[53] Words such as houscarls and betas would have been widely used in northern Mercia and Northumbria.[54] While both have become obsolete, their adoption into Old English suggests that the Anglo-Saxons lacked a word for such things. However, it is not certain if these words came into England during the invasion of the Great Heathen Army or earlier. The Anglo-Saxons were most likely aware of the Scandinavians, even trading with them. After the attack on Lindisfarne in 793, Alcuin wrote to Higbald, the bishop of Lindisfarne, saying he would write to Charlemagne to seek help in recovering the youths that had been taken.[55] In this sense, the so-called Vikings had not been isolated in Europe and had been in contact with Charlemagne and potentially the Kingdoms in England. While the

[51] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.54.
[52] Ivan Chia Kuo Ku, Language Contact in Viking Age England - A Sociolinguistic Perspective (thesis), (University of Oslo, 2010), p.36.
[53] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100,* (London, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 336.
[54] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.67-71.
[55] Clare Downham, 'The Earliest Viking Activity in England?', *The English Historical Review,* Vol.132, No.554, (2017), p.2.

arrival of the Scandinavians would have created an opportunity to create a hybrid language, the language change may have started before the arrival of the Great Heathen Army.

Although this change may have started before the Great Heathen Army landed in Anglo-Saxon England, it can be argued that the decision to learn to communicate with the Scandinavians came from Mercia. While there is no official document to support such a claim, it can be easily understood that the Kingdom of Mercia played an imperative role in the formation of an Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid language. Walker argued that 'this development must have been viewed with anguish and concern…indeed, the Mercians were well advised to be concerned from they themselves would very shortly be facing the menace presented by this victorious army'.[56] While Northumbria had been forcefully subjugated and potentially forced the people of Northumbria to adopt the dialect of the Scandinavians, the people of Mercia may have chosen to learn to communicate with the new settlers, seeing a benefit in doing so.

Place name.

The extensive place name evidence throughout Mercia helps to map the movement of the Scandinavians, whilst reinforcing their role in the ever-changing community throughout Mercia. Hadley argued that Scandinavian place names do not necessarily mean that Scandinavians solely settled the area, or that they even coined the name.[57] The influx of new settlers forced the invading Scandinavians onto previously unused lands, but it by no means suggests that they would not have lived closely with the Anglo-Saxons. However, if

[56] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia And The Making Of England,* (Gloucester, Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000), p.51.
[57] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100,* (London, Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 330.

they were to be pushed onto unused land, it can be suggested that they would have named the land using Old Norse, which would explain the high number of place names ending in 'By' and 'Thorpe'.

The distribution of Scandinavian rural settlements allows for an in-depth understanding of the movement of the settlers and the social structure developing throughout northern Mercia. Magdalena Bator found there to be over six hundred settlements ending in 'By'; approximately three hundred ending in 'Thorpe'; around three hundred ending in 'Thwaite' and roughly one hundred ending in 'Toft'.[58] Place names evidence is rich in the area of the Five Boroughs, with two hundred and sixty-six settlements ending with 'By'.[59] While a majority of these settlements would have been nothing but rural farmsteads, they nevertheless track the movements of the Scandinavians and present them as less of an invasion and more of a large-scale migration. For example, Fellows-Jensen points out both the settlement of *Asfordby* and *Ashby de la Zouch*.[60] Both would have been little more than rural hamlets, possibly a collection of farms. Strikingly, there are a few more Scandinavian settlements near *Asfordby,* such as *Dalby* and *Frisby*.[61] While each of these seems to have been small farmsteads, their existence creates a more complete map of Scandinavian movement, settlement and social standing.

The placement of Scandinavian settlements in northern Mercia may indicate the types of settlements that the settlers were creating. This map accurately shows the

[58] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.28.
[59] Kenneth Cameron, *Scandinavian Settlements In The Territory Of The Five Boroughs: The Place-Name Evidence,* (Pamphlet), (University of Nottingham, 1965), p.8.
[60] Gillian Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands,* (Copenhagen, institut for Navneforskning, 1978), p. 31.
[61] Ibid, pp. 43-47.

distribution of place names ending in 'By' throughout the East Midlands (fig. four).[62] Interestingly, the main clusters of Scandinavian settlements are in proximity to the major Roman road, the Fosse Way. Roads such as the Fosse Way would create links between Leicester and Lincoln, additionally, they would have made trade with the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms easier. These trading links would have created more opportunities for social growth as it involved the Anglo-Saxon people and the Scandinavians, thus creating an Anglo-Scandinavian society. Furthermore, having a considerable proportion of settlements near important trading roads; it could suggest that these were more than small farmsteads and were the formation of trading towns.

Additionally, the map shows that Derby had more farmsteads, while the likes of Leicester and Nottingham were at the centre of more industrial towns.[63] Alternatively, the lack of Scandinavian place names in northern Derbyshire may simply represent the harsh conditions of the Peak District. Cameron suggested that the reasons for there being an overwhelming number of settlements in the north east of Leicester may boil down to the conditions; for example, this part of Leicester is what is known as Boulder clay.[64] This area would have offered a better water supply, warmer soil and less dense woodland.[65] This, along with the easy access to the Fosse Way, would have created ideal living conditions. It cannot be assumed that they replaced or even lived alongside the Anglo-Saxon natives when establishing these settlements; however, if they chose unoccupied lands, it may have

[62] Kenneth Cameron, *Scandinavian Settlements In The Territory Of The Five Boroughs: The Place-Name Evidence*, (Pamphlet), (University of Nottingham, 1965), image 2.

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid, p.12.
[65] Ibid.

been situated close to Anglo-Saxon farmsteads, creating a close relationship and potential contact, thus helping form an Anglo-Scandinavian community.

Hybrid place names further imply some form of coexistence between the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons. (fig. five) pinpoints place names ending in 'By' and also 'Grimston', indicates both Scandinavian settlements, but also the development of hybrid rural dwellings.[66] There is a clear majority of these 'Grimston' hybrids in and around Leicester, suggesting a focus on co-living. The result of this, although not completely clear, would have been language change, social integration and profound cultural exchange. Moreover, it suggests that the Scandinavian settlers around Mercia were at the forefront of change, as hybrid place names placed the Scandinavians into proximity with the Mercia people, more so than in the place names ending in 'By' or 'Thorpe'. Furthermore, the existence of these hybrid place names allows for a rejection of Gillian Fellows-Jensen's theory. In her theory, Fellows-Jensen argues that the Scandinavians made little attempt to rename settlements.[67] While place names do not by any means suggest large-scale Scandinavian movement, the extensive network of Old Norse place names, coupled with the hybrid place names, reveals that they took an active role in the renaming of settlements or at least influenced the name going forward.

[66] Matthew Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', in Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richard, *Cultures in Contact Scandinavian Settlements in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publisher, 2000), p. 97.
[67] Ibid, p. 99.

Conclusion.

Scandinavian settlers brought significant changes to Mercia, most notably linguistic changes. Coupled with Scandinavian-influenced place names, it is clear to see a profound change in the society in early medieval Mercia. Pinpointing places of language change is not an easy task and can be problematic. It can be suggested that the changes would have occurred in the newer settlements, such as the towns and villages that the Scandinavians established. It would have been in these Anglo-Scandinavian settlements that communication took effect, leading to a drastic change in society. It allowed the Scandinavians to settle into a community, grow trade and survive whilst creating new opportunities for both the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians. One notable issue encompasses the development of Scandinavian place names. Settlements ending in 'By' and 'Thorpe' may suggest social isolation, choosing to settle in old and abandoned lands as suggested by Fellows-Jensen.[68] While some would have preferred isolation, the evidence for hybrid place names suggests prominent levels of co-existence. This co-existence allowed for swifter social change, cultural exchange and communication. Again, it cannot be used as concrete evidence for movement, as there is no way of knowing the level of cohabitation. Just because the place name evidence suggests influence from both Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians, it does not by any means suggest elevated levels of interactions. While both populations would have lived closely, they may have chosen to live in isolation from each other in select locations, with only a select few choosing to cooperate. It can be stated for certain that Old Norse and potentially Old Danish had a profound effect on Old English, only coming about due to close habitation and communication, while not everyone would have been open to integration

[68] Ibid.

and less willing to communicate, the evidence indicates high levels of communication leading to significant social and cultural change in and around north east Mercia.

Chapter Three- Settlements.

The Scandinavian migration in Mercia brought significant urban expansion, evident in the rise of the towns and the early winter camps at Torksey and Repton. Two themes will be of significant interest: the development of the town and the two winter camps at Repton and Torksey. These two themes are of particular interest due to their significance in helping to facilitate co-existence and intensify industry. The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw, being Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln and Stamford, are clear indications of sophisticated urban expansion, as will be discussed. However, Nottingham will not be examined because of the town's similarities to Leicester. Halls, *The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw: a review of present knowledge,* is essential when exploring the nature of the Five Boroughs. Secondly, whilst there was no clear decision to urbanise, the winter camps at Repton and Torksey represent a dense population and a predecessor to the later urbanisation seen throughout Mercia. The camp at Torksey covered a tremendous size, heavily indicating a migration opposed to an army. Moreover, this camp would have been at the forefront of early contact, establishing vital relationships. The camp at Repton represents a much smaller population than Torksey. Yet the burial evidence at Repton helps further understand the changing nature of England and the developing Anglo-Scandinavian society. Both the burial mound and the graves at Repton imply a family-based migration. Both the early camps and the later towns heavily suggest social change; the settlements created forced contact, soon becoming a hybrid society.

The Development of Towns.

The development of towns became a focal point in Scandinavian political and social integration. These towns became centers of large-scale contact, helping to establish an Anglo-Scandinavian society. These towns, commonly referred to as the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw, were: Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln and Stamford. Traditionally viewed as fortifications, these towns were rich centers of commerce, contact and administration.[69] These towns acted similarly to the modern-day city, whilst incomparable in size, their roles were similar. It is important to note that contemporary chroniclers were using the word 'King' to describe the Scandinavian leaders.[70] By using a word reserved for the highest office in Anglo-Saxon England, it demonstrates some level of tolerance, even as far as acceptance. The rise of the towns was essential to this de-escalation of tensions, presenting the Scandinavians as more than blood-thirsty pirates whilst cementing the Scandinavian presence in Mercia. The rise of urbanisation pushed Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians alike into towns, creating a hybrid society. However, some towns did not become urban centers, playing a less than significant role on social change; one such town is Derby.

Derby's position as one of the Five Boroughs is of lesser importance, whilst there is evidence of corn mills, the lack of evidence to support a large market limits the importance of Derby.[71] It appears that Derby was minting large quantities of coins, with its proximity to the lead deposits in the Peak District, this comes as no real surprise.[72] There is no other

[69] Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England,* (Stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2000), p. 75.
[70] Dawn M. Hadley, ''Hamlet and the Princes of Denmark' Lordship in the Danelaw, c. 860-954', in Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, 2000), p.113.
[71] R. A. Hall, 'The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw: a review of present knowledge', Anglo-Saxon England, Vol. 18, (1989), p. 162.
[72] Ibid.

evidence to support any lasting social or cultural change. The topography of Derby explains the lack of urbanisation and significance. Derby can be seen as the entrance to the Peak District, making it difficult to establish trading routes out of the town.

Social and cultural change would have been more prominent in the urbanised towns such as Leicester. The topography of Leicester allowed for the establishment of trading links, creating trade with both the rest of the Danelaw but also the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. The location of Leicester would suggest a defensive structure, but the location could also suggest a vital market town. That is not to say they are mutually exclusive; rather, Leicester served a dual purpose as both a defensive structure, if needed, and a commercial town. Evidence of a kiln can be found on Southgate Street, suggesting a pottery-based industry.[73] Furthermore, the vital Roman road, the Fosse Way, ran through Leicester, linking the town to other markets in the Danelaw and Anglo-Saxon England. The lack of evidence to support any Scandinavian-style defensive structures demonstrates that the original purpose of the town was never a military one; rather, it became such due to Anglo-Saxon aggression.[74] The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles sheds light on this, in both 918 and 940, the ASC recorded Leicester being taken by the Anglo-Saxons, first by Æthelflæd and then by King Edmund.[75] The apparent need to take the town twice, heavily suggests its importance to the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. The urbanisation that the town saw brought together the Anglo-Saxon natives and the incoming Scandinavian settlers into close contact, with this came lasting social and cultural change.

[73] Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England,* (stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2000), p. 76.
[74] R. A. Hall, 'The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw: a review of present knowledge', Anglo-Saxon England, Vol. 18, (1989), p. 168.
[75] Ibid, p. 167.

Lincoln followed a similar pattern to that of Leicester, with it being a pottery-based town with the potential for a large-scale market. Excavations at Lincoln unearthed evidence to support yet another pottery-based town, but it also found evidence of a dense population. Proof of a pottery industry in the ninth century can be found in the rubbish pits on both Silver Street and Flaxengate; further evidence points to urban expansion as buildings were to be constructed shortly after and by the tenth century, further expansion can be seen.[76] Julian Richards argued that Lincoln's industrial boom did not appear till later in the tenth century.[77] This idea is troublesome as it promotes the idea that the industrial nature of Lincoln came at the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. When Edmund gained control of the settlement, Lincoln was already an important urban centre, which was supported by the infrastructural expansion in the early tenth century. Evidence supporting both expansion and industry points towards a prosperous economy and a dense Anglo-Scandinavian population.

Moreover, Lincolnshire was at the heart of a large and successful wool industry. Even though the wool industry in Lincoln predates that of the Scandinavian migration, the influence on the industry is evident. In the Middle Ages, Lincoln became known for exporting long wool; this particular type of wool became highly sort after in Norway, creating a vital trade network with continental Europe.[78] Strikingly, this wool came from a sheep not native to England, suggesting a Scandinavian introduction; moreover, this wool was being produced on old Roman farms, untouched by the Anglo-Saxons, further emphasising Scandinavian adaptability.[79] The introduction of such wool created an immediate demand,

[76] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings In England, Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 163.
[77] Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England,* (stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2000), p. 77.
[78] Rosamond Faith, 'The structure of the market for wool in early medieval Lincolnshire', *The Economic History Review,* Vol. 65, No. 2, (2012), p. 683.
[79] Ibid.

creating a booming economy. This is further demonstrated by the *Doomsday Book,* which records the use of a *Tailla.* Twenty years after the Scandinavian conquest, lords around Lindsey raised the *Tailla,* accounting for seventy-eight percent of the total value.[80] The *Tailla* was highly lucrative to the lords, allowing them to profit from transactions at the markets. This long wool would have been at the heart of this economy, followed by the pottery industry. Lincoln and Lincolnshire were at the centre of strong trading networks, benefiting the local Anglo-Scandinavian society.

Lastly, Stamford stands as the most misunderstood and neglected settlement in Mercian Danelaw. Whilst the other boroughs have developed into large cities, Stamford has drifted into obscurity. Yet Stamford, like the other boroughs, has a rich history of Scandinavian-based industry, culminating in social and cultural change. Unlike the other towns, Stamford was not built on Roman foundations, presenting the town as more than a military fortification. Furthermore, the topography of the settlement shows similarities to Derby. Stamford created a link between Scandinavian Mercia and East Anglia. Stamford's industrial profile was a typically Scandinavian one, having been a pottery-based town. (fig. Six) shows the distribution of pottery that has been excavated and the possible location of a kiln.[81] Yet, Stamford was confined to a small role in comparison to Leicester and Lincoln. Instead, being used to flood the market in Lincoln will produce.[82] Interestingly, the red painted decorations on the pottery suggest influence from northern France.[83] The possible influence from other parts of continental Europe further details the Scandinavian migration

[80] Ibid, p. 678.
[81] C. M. Mahany, and D. R. Roffe, 'Stamford: the Development of an Anglo-Scandinavian Borough', *Anglo-Norman Studies,* Vol. 5, (1983), p. 396.
[82] Ibid, p. 402.
[83] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England, Settlement, Society and Culture,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p.166.

and the vast number of skilled workers who migrated with the Scandinavians. Stamford, although not an administrative centre, contained a somewhat large level of urbanisation, with a further focus on industry. Industry gave skilled craftsmen a chance to practice their crafts, which in turn creates social acceptance.

Early Winter Camps at Torksey and Repton.

The establishment of early Scandinavian settlements was key to the overall permanence of the Scandinavians in England and, more precisely, northern Mercia. The Anglo-Saxon chronicles assert that in 873 the Scandinavian army ‘‘took winter-quarters at Torksey in Lindsey’ and that in 874 the ‘host went from Lindsey to Repton’.[84] By choosing to overwinter in northern Mercia, the Scandinavians were presenting their position as permanent, they were no longer to be regarded as raiders, instead, they were now a permanent feature of Anglo-Saxon England and Mercia. The exact location of Torksey remained, until 2016, unknown. Long believed to lie in the foundation of the modern village of Torksey, it was located slightly north of the village, adjacent to the River Trent (fig. Seven).[85] Torksey later became an important settlement, however, there is no evidence to suggest any major earlier settlement, indicating heavy Scandinavian influence. These early winter camps, Repton and Torksey, became the basis for later urbanisation in other locations; the early Scandinavian migrants aimed to settle in Anglo-Saxon England, later forming a hybrid society.

[84] George Norman. Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles,* (London, Dent, 1953), p. 72.
[85] Dawn Hadley And Julian Richards, ‘The Winter Camp Of The Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire, *The Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. 96, (2016), p. 32.

Historians have long argued as to whether the 'Viking' invasion constitutes a migration. Lund argued that the term migration is not a suitable definition to describe the Scandinavian presence in England.[86] The argument is based on the assumption that the Great Heathen Army numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands, an idea that Sawyer was a great advocate of.[87] The size of the camp at Torksey suggests the opposite. The camp covered an area of 55 hectares (136 acres), essentially proving the idea of a migration.[88] To further place the size of the camp into perspective, the urbanised town of Lincoln covered 38 hectares (85 acres).[89] The size of the winter camp highlights the overbearing nature of the Scandinavian presence in Mercia, this was not a simple military exercise; it was a large-scale migration that culminated in the creation of a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian society.

The location of the camp demonstrates both the understanding of the preexisting trading links and the establishment of Anglo-Scandinavian trade. The camp's location allowed the Scandinavians to monitor Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia.[90] But the location indicates something further; being built on the River Trent was no coincidence.[91] The Scandinavian settlers understood the importance of the river, much like the Fosse Way, the River Trent runs along northern Mercia, linking the camp to the trading networks of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. Walker stated that, 'If we accept the familiar presence of pagan

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[86] Shane McLeod, *The Beginning Of Scandinavian Settlement in England,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, 2014), p. 45.
[87] Gareth Williams, 'Towns and Identities in Viking Age England', in D. M. Hadley and Letty Ten Harkel, Everyday *Life in Viking Age Towns: Social Approaches to Towns In England and Ireland c. 800-1100,* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2013), p.17.
[88] Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *The Viking Great Army and the Making of England,* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2021), p. 91.
[89] Julian Richards, *Viking Age England,* (Gloucestershire, Tempus Publishing, 2000), p. 75.
[90] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England,* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 57.
[91] Dawn M. Hadley And Julian D. Richards, 'The Winter Camp Of The Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire, *The Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 96, (2016), p. 31

Scandinavians as peaceful traders in the seventh and eighth centuries, then it was their transformation into ruthless and violent raiders that came as such a shocking surprise.'[92] While there were Scandinavians who came to England in search of quick wealth and were the embodiment of the word Viking, many travelled as peaceful traders, using the River Trent as a way of entering into the existing networks in hopes of establishing their own trade. Archaeological finds at the camp stipulate such.

Archaeological evidence supports such an idea, while some of the Scandinavians were invaders, many migrated in search of trading opportunities and integration into a new community. A total of 1572 early medieval finds have been found, contributing to fifty-eight percent of overall finds.[93] The distribution of findings indicates the establishment of trading links, with the large amount coming in the north west of the camp (fig. Eight).[94] With a large portion of finds coming close to the river, it is safe to assume that there may have been some form of trading network forming. If these trading networks were successfully established, then contact with the Anglo-Saxons would be inevitable, eventually fostering working relationships. David Stocker suggested that Marton, a northern parish, contained a 'beach market', which is where trade with the Anglo-Saxons may have first formed.[95]

The camp at Repton was most likely a military camp, partially demonstrated by the size. The camp was significantly smaller than Torksey, only covering an area of 1.46 hectares (3.65 acres).[96] The camp may have been used to exert pressure on the Anglo-Saxons, as

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[92] Ian W. Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England,* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 44.
[93] Dawn M. Hadley And Julian D. Richards, 'The Winter Camp Of The Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire, *The Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 96, (2016), p. 38-39.
[94] Ibid, p. 40.
[95] Ibid, p. 59.
[96] Gareth Williams, 'Towns and Identities in Viking Age England', in D. M. Hadley and Letty Ten Harkel, Everyday *Life in Viking Age Towns: Social Approaches to Towns In England and Ireland c. 800-1100,* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2013), p.17.

Repton was an important Mercian administrative and ecclesiastical settlement.[97] This does not mean that the camp cannot offer some understanding of the people in the Great Heathen Army. The excavation revealed an earthwork on the south bank of the River Trent which incorporated the church.[98] The Scandinavians may have symbolically used the church to assert their position on Christianity, fully establishing themselves as Pagans. This structure was not designed to create trade, yet Danielle Trynoski commented that 'it is highly likely that the Vikings and the local inhabitants had interactions'.[99] The burials at Repton may further expand our understanding of the Army and later social change.

Scandinavian burials are scarce around England, showcasing the famed Scandinavian adaptability. However, burials at Repton may shed light on who the Scandinavian newcomers were and their role in social and cultural change. A series of burials were found on the east side of the church, both inside the enclosure and outside.[100] Grave 511 contained a man between the ages of 35 and 45, with this grave being the earliest in the area.[101] Soon after the grave marker had been raised, a second male aged between 17 and 20 was buried (grave 295).[102] Both men showed signs of violent deaths; the position of the graves, being close together, suggests that the younger of the two was a relation to the older man, potentially a son. If so, the two graves present the Scandinavian migration as a family affair. Graves 83 and 84 followed a similar pattern with a man aged c.50 and a younger male being buried close

[97] Julian D. Richards, 'Boundaries and cult centres: Viking burials in Derbyshire', in James Graham-Campbell et. at., *Vikings and the Danelaw,* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2001), p. 99.
[98] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle, *Repton the 'great heathen army' 873-874',* (Oxbow Books, 2001), p. .59.
[99] Danielle Trynoski, 'Viking winter camps: CURL UP AND SHARPEN YOUR SEAXE', *Medieval Warfare,* Vol. 7, No. 1, (2017), p. 34-35.
[100] Ibid, p. 60.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

together. Furthermore, this area became a cemetery for three generations, highlighting the deep connection with the site.[103]

Repton is also the site of a mass burial mound, to the west of the church. The burial mound was found to be at the site of a sunken two-celled building dated to the late 7th century.[104] This structure was possibly the site of a royal Mercian mausoleum; however, whether it was still in use and if the Scandinavians knew as much is pure speculation. An account by Dr Simon Degge of Derby in 1686 commented on a 'stone coffin' and 'saw a skeleton of a Humane Body Nine Feet long and round lay One Hundred Humane Skelentons with their feet pointing to the stone coffin.'[105] Whether this story is accurate or not, the body in the stone coffin has long been lost, however, the coffin may have contained one of the Scandinavian leaders, or at least someone of importance. Yet the other skeletons offer a better insight into the levels of social change that were taking effect.

The burial mound was found to have contained over two hundred and fifty skeletons but the exact number cannot be found due to the nature of the burial. Most of the remains were found to be male of military age, between the ages of 17 and 45, however, there were around fifty women's remains found.[106] These could have been women soldiers, instead indicating a small portion of family units that migrated out of Scandinavia. Moreover, if we expand the number to one thousand, that means two hundred of the total number of the Viking army were women; to further emphasise this if expanded to three thousand, the number generally assumed to be that of the Great Heathen Army, that means six hundred of

[103] Ibid, p. 65.
[104] Ibid, p.67.
[105] Julian D. Richards, *Viking Age England,* (Gloucestershire, Tempus Publishing, 2000), p. 25.

[106] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle, *Repton the 'great heathen army' 873-874',* (Oxbow Books, 2001), p. 81.

the total number were women. These family units migrated, not for wealth, but for stability, for permanence, turning their migration into settlement. This settlement would have brought cohabitation and contact with the native population, sowing the seed for both social and cultural change.

Conclusion.

The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw and the camps at Torksey and Repton demonstrate the high levels of social and cultural change. The towns that developed under Scandinavian rule in the Danelaw saw high levels of urbanisation, especially with Lincoln, where evidence of urban expansion can be seen. Urbanisation, coupled with the industry that Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford boasted, fostered cohabitation and contact, which helped form an Anglo-Scandinavian society. However, it is clear that not all towns were hot spots of social change. Derby was not a large market town and was simply used to exert control over the Peak District. However, Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford all had thriving industries and contained large markets, suggesting a booming economy. The camps at Torksey and Repton indicate early attempts at urbanisation but also suggest family units moving across the North Sea. The size of Torksey and its proximity to the River Trent suggest a huge and dense population, but also an understanding of trading links, bringing them into contact with the Anglo-Saxon natives. Lastly, the burials at Repton further demonstrate family dynamics, with the finding of fifty female skeletons at the burial mound.[107] To further this, the other burials may have been father and son, further suggesting family-level migration, with families settling,

[107] Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle, *Repton the 'great heathen army' 873-874',* (Oxbow Books, 2001), p. 81.

creating communities and promoting the integration of two societies, creating a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian society.

Conclusion.

This dissertation has examined how an Anglo-Scandinavian society formed throughout Mercia due to the Scandinavian migration. The influx of Scandinavians in Mercia led to notable changes in society, helping to establish a hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian society. Additionally, this dissertation has filled the academic black hole on Mercia.

Material culture was the focus of chapter one. Material culture can be seen as a personal approach when understanding the changing nature of society. The development of a distinct Anglo-Scandinavian style, coupled with the lack of evidence of a Scandinavian style being produced in England, signifies that the Scandinavians adapted quickly. Moreover, the emergence of a necklace trend in the 10th century connotes that a large number of women, both Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian, were buying and trading jewellery.[108] The economy demonstrates the nature of Scandinavian adaptability and co-operation with the Anglo-Saxons. The common perception is that the Scandinavians used coins to chip and melt down; however, evidence at Torksey proves the Scandinavians understood a coin-based economy and took advantage of it.[109] Understanding the local economy allows for swifter social integration, leading to overall social and cultural change. Lastly, marking authority in the form of sculpture helps establish the Scandinavian elites in Mercia. Furthermore, the hogback sculpture at St Alkmunds further suggests that the Scandinavians understood the important role of Christianity, using it to blend themselves into the community.[110] This is

[108] Jane F. Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 22.
[109] Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *The Viking Great Army and the Making of England,* (London, Thames and Hudson, 2021), p.103.
[110] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: its social structure, c.800-1100,* (New York, Leicester University Press, 2000), p.228.

further demonstrated by Pagan and Christian carvings on church walls around Mercia and England.[111]

Chapter two successfully established the role of language changes and place name evidence in relation to social change in Mercia. This chapter pinpointed some linguistic changes that happened in Mercia, by examining both obsolete words and modern Midlands slang words. For example, the word dillidoun developed in Mercia and is still used in Midlands slang.[112] Moreover, being able to communicate is essential in establishing concrete relations with the native population. Moreover, the idea that all the Scandinavians spoke a uniform language is false, with evidence that the primary Scandinavian language in Derby was Old Danish.[113] The extensive place name evidence has been the primary point of evaluation by academics of this period, used to demonstrate the influential migration and impact of the Scandinavians. Much of the historiography on place names focuses on East Anglia and Northumbria, with Kenneth Cameron and Gillian Fellows-Jensen focusing on Mercia. Place name evidence in Mercia heavily implies a sizable Scandinavian presence, establishing the wider societal impact seen throughout Mercia. Further presenting the Scandinavians as much more than a few elites leading an army, rather demonstrating the Scandinavians as farmers and families.

Chapter three demonstrated the importance of settlements, both early and later settlements. Starting with later settlements in the Danelaw, the ongoing migration helped establish large towns, in some regards similar to modern-day cities. The Five Boroughs of the

[111] Ronald Hutton, 'How Pagan Were Medieval English Peasants', *Folklore,* Vol.122, No.3, (2011), p.237.
[112] Magdalena Bator, 'Obsolete Scandinavian Loanwords in English', in Jacek Fisiak, *Studies In English Medieval Language and Literature*, (Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2010), p.54.
[113] Matthew Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', in Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richard, *Cultures in Contact Scandinavian Settlements in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publisher, 2000), p. 94.

Danelaw were: Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, Stamford and Derby. Each town varies in degree of importance; Derby, for example, was no more than a small military post, used to keep control of the vital Peak District.[114] The idea that the Five Boroughs served solely as defensive structures is incorrect, meaning scholarship has greatly misinterpreted the Five Boroughs. Leicester was a centre of trade, in turn creating social relations that greatly shaped the culture of Mercia. Stamford follows a similar path, allowing trade with East Anglia. These settlements were also industrial hubs, for example, Lincoln developed a large wool industry due to Scandinavian sheep, producing highly valued long wool.[115] Another industry that Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford all shared was a pottery industry, indicated by the evidence of kilns at all three towns. The early winter camps at Repton and Torksey present the early Scandinavian migrants as more than warriors, instead, they were families, traders and merchants. The size of Torksey demonstrates this, as it proves the idea of a large migration over a small invasion. With families migrating, the aim would have been integration into Anglo-Saxon society, creating a new social order, an Anglo-Scandinavian society. Lastly, the camp at Repton would have been a militaristic one due to the size, yet the excavations that unearthed multiple graves and a burial mound that showed there to be a small but still important number of female bones further suggesting family units, this is backed up by the individual burials that have both older and younger males buried together indicating a father son dynamic.

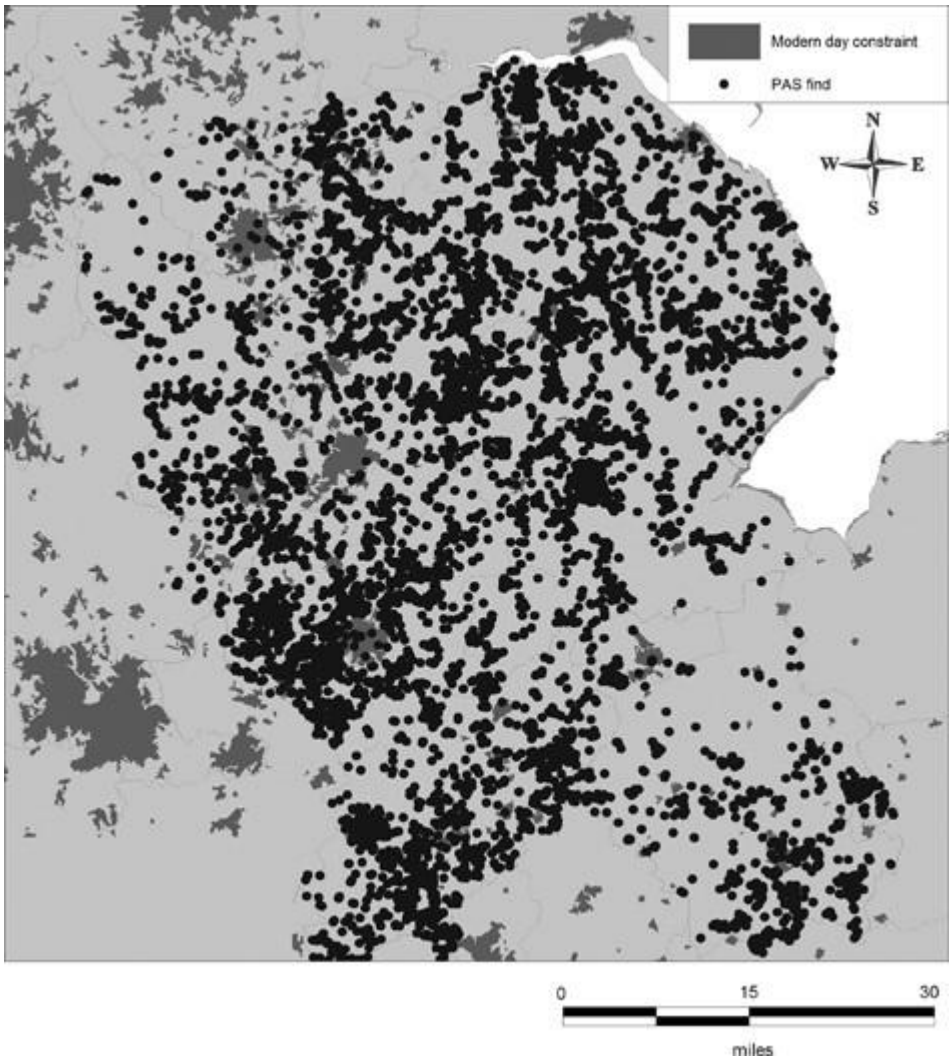
The Scandinavian migration saw fundamental change occur throughout northern Mercia between the late 9th century and the 10th century. Throughout northern Mercia, a

[114] R. A. Hall, 'The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw: a review of present knowledge', Anglo-Saxon England, Vol. 18, (1989), p. 162.
[115] Rosamond Faith, 'The structure of the market for wool in early medieval Lincolnshire', *The Economic History Review,* Vol. 65, No. 2, (2012), p. 683.

distinct and unique community began to form, one that boasted industry and trade, forming an Anglo-Scandinavian society and culture.

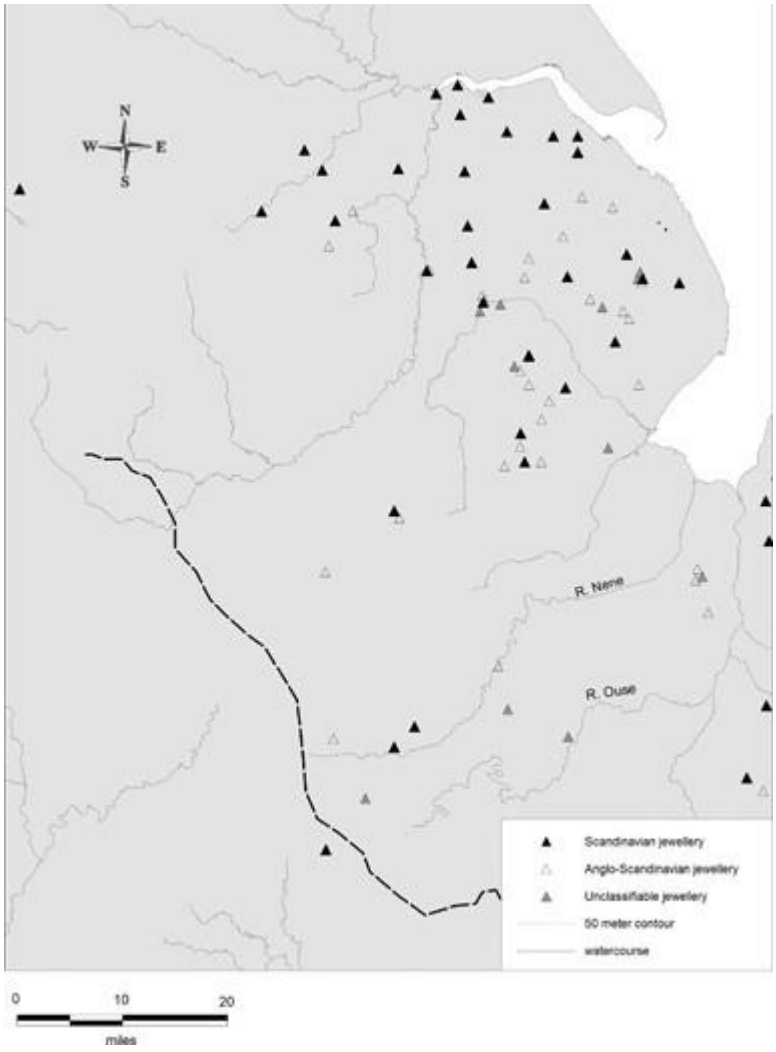
Appendix.

Figure one.



Jane F. Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England,* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 2013), p. 198.

Figure two.

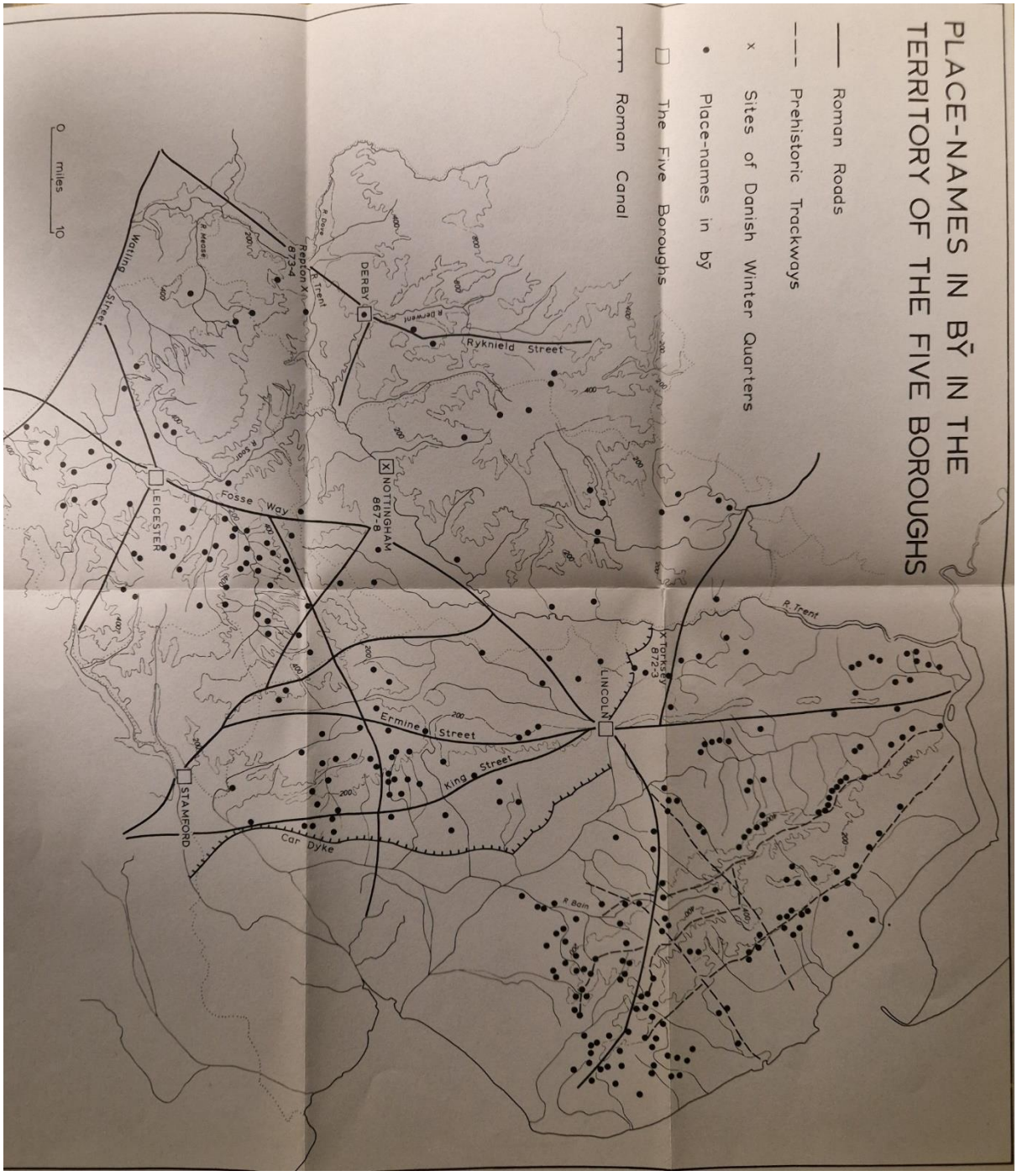


Jane F. Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England,* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 2013), p. 198.

Figure three.

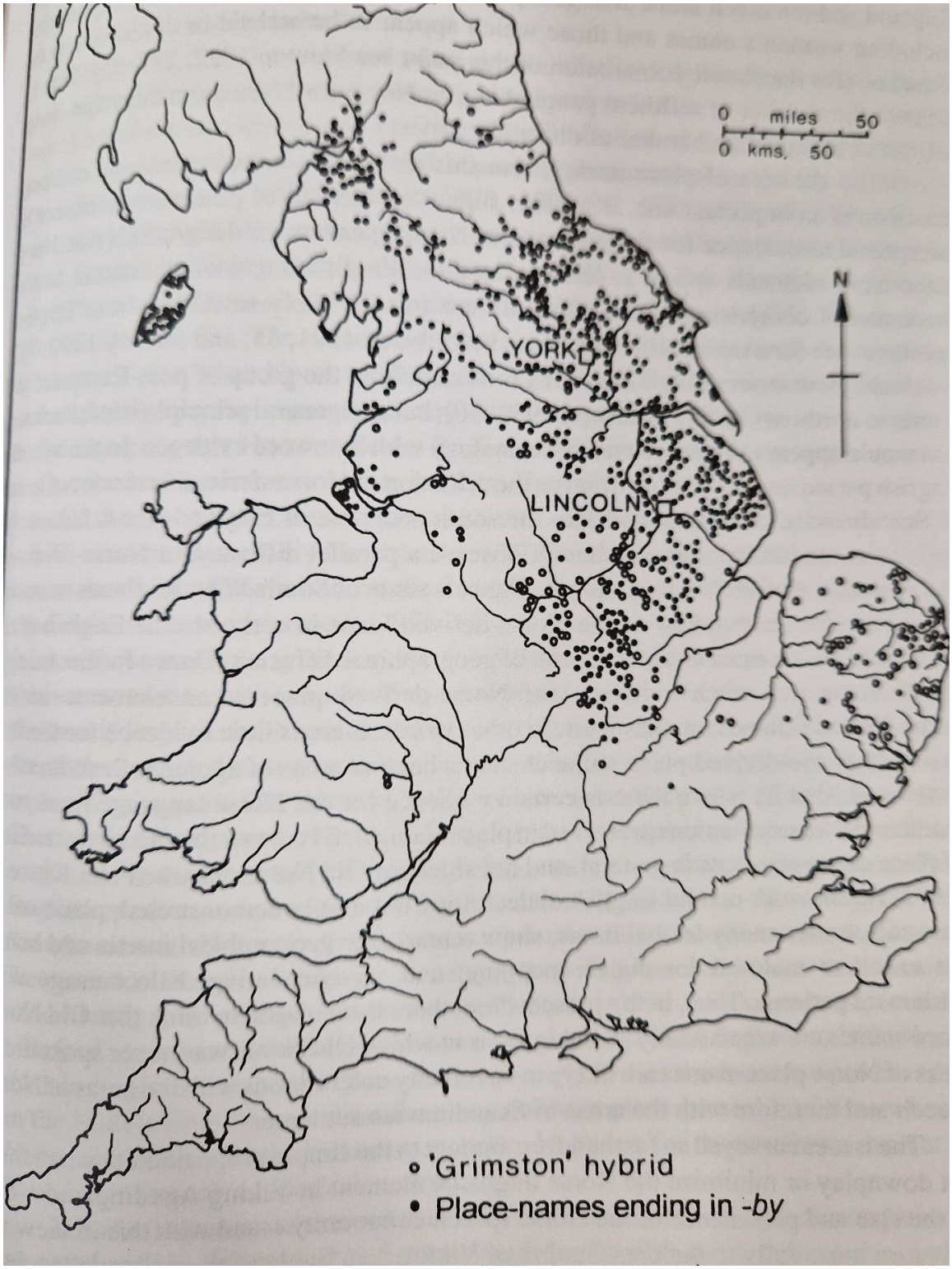
Portable Antiquities Scheme, *Coin representing King Burgred*, 'Unique ID: YORYM-A14D9B', [coin], accessed at https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/719634.

Figure four.



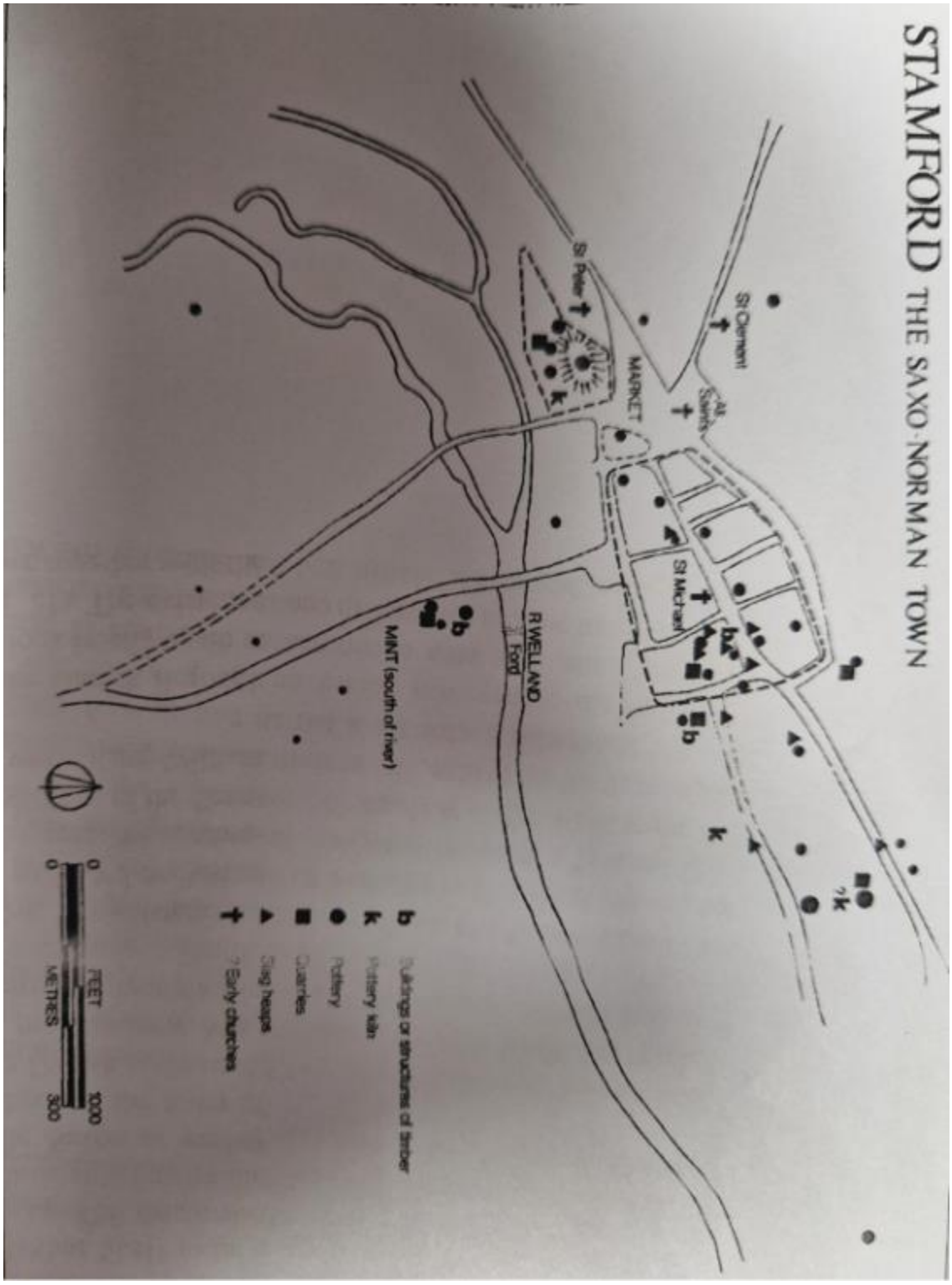
Kenneth Cameron, *Scandinavian Settlements In The Territory Of The Five Boroughs: The Place-Name Evidence,* (Pamphlet), (University of Nottingham, 1965).

Figure five.



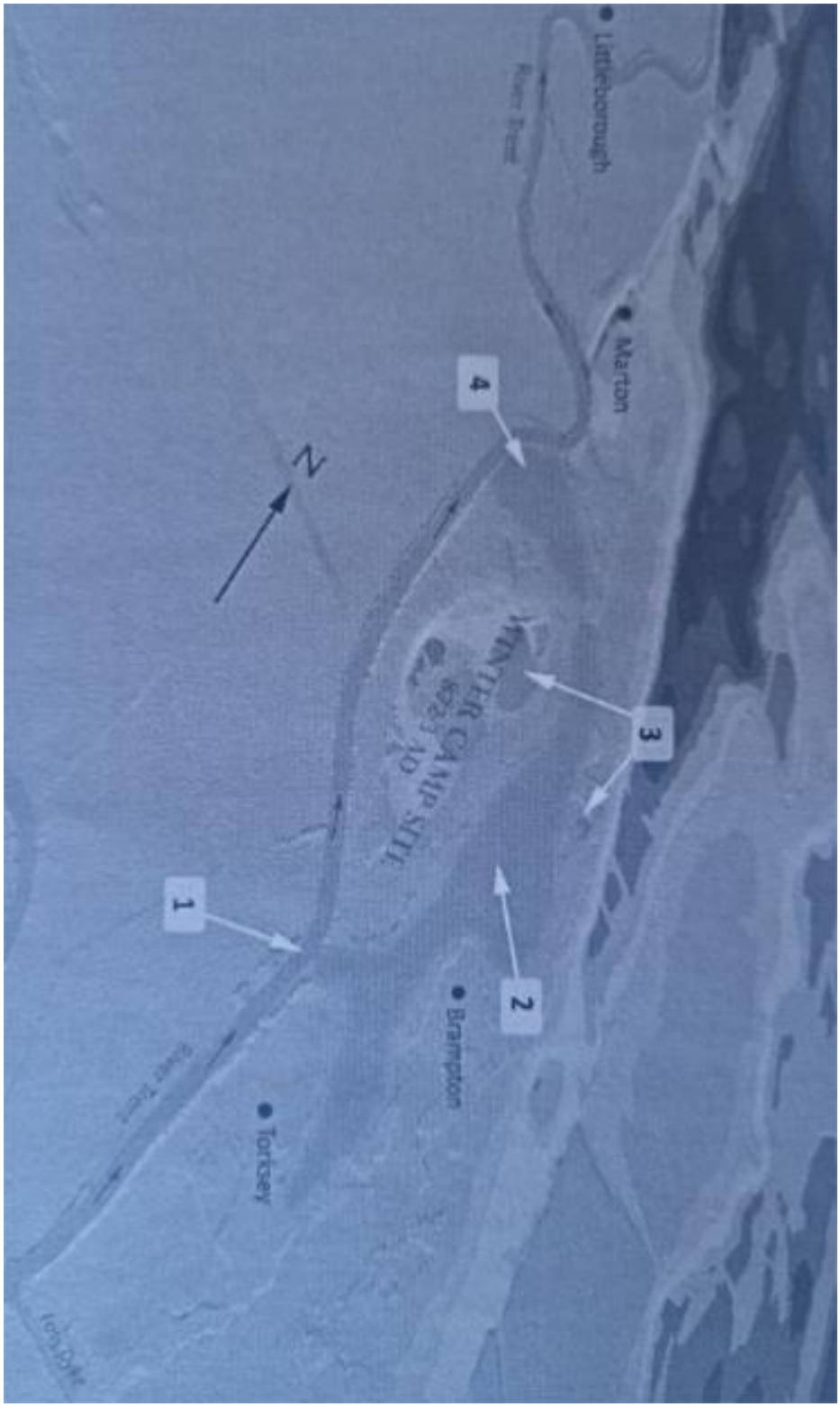
Matthew Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', in Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richard, *Cultures in Contact Scandinavian Settlements in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,* (Turnhout, Brepols Publisher, 2000), p. 97.

Figure Six.



C. M. Mahany, and D. R. Roffe, 'Stamford: the Development of an Anglo-Scandinavian Borough', *Anglo-Norman Studies,* Vol. 5, (1983), p. 396.

Figure seven



Dawn Hadley And Julian Richards, 'The Winter Camp Of The Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire, *The Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 96, (2016), p. 32.

Figure eight

Dawn M. Hadley And Julian D. Richards, 'The Winter Camp Of The Viking Great Army, AD 872-3, Torksey, Lincolnshire, *The Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 96, (2016), p. 40.

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