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## **Ethnicity on the move: new evidence from Viking winter camps**

Debates about early medieval ethnicity and ethnogenesis have had far less of an impact on the study of the Scandinavian settlements in England in the ninth and tenth centuries than in the study of any of the other periods and regions addressed elsewhere in this volume (for exceptions see Hadley 1997; 2006, 298-341; 2011; Hadley and Richards 2000). There are many potential explanations for this discrepancy. In particular, the written record presents scholars with only limited opportunities to explore, for example, the ethnic labels applied in written sources to individuals and groups, which is a source of evidence that has been extensively examined with respect to continental migration in earlier centuries (e.g. Geary 1983; Amory 1993; 1994; Pohl and Reimitz 1998). Moreover, until very recently archaeological evidence has been rather limited (Richards 2000), especially the burial record (e.g. Richards 2002; Hadley 2006, 237-71), which has, again, been the focus of so much research on ethnicity in earlier centuries (e.g. Effros 2003; Halsall 1995). The study of Viking-Age England – unlike other regions and periods of early medieval migration – is also distinguished by being dominated by analysis of place names and linguistic evidence, which both reveal extensive Scandinavian influence; this has repeatedly been taken to negate any possibility of the cultural integration of the settlers (a situation summarized in Abrams and Parsons 2004).

This paper highlights some of the key debates about the Scandinavian impact on England, highlighting the disciplinary differences that underlie the diverse perceptions evident in the scholarly literature concerning the transformation of ethnic identities in the wake of conquest and settlement. It contends that diverse sources of evidence inform us about different aspects of society, and that it is not, as a consequence, so surprising that they appear to convey differing, and sometimes contradictory, impressions. This is an issue compounded by the varying levels of chronological resolution of the diverse forms of evidence. In order to move the debate on, the paper will then focus on one specific aspect of the archaeological evidence – from the winter camps of the Viking ‘Great Army’ of the 860s and 870s – in order to explore something of the processes of cultural integration during short periods of time at the very earliest moments of conquest and settlement.

### **Outline of the debate**

In the last quarter of the ninth century, Scandinavian raiding and political conquest was followed by settlement in parts of northern and eastern England. Assessment of the scale,

chronology, precise locations, and impact of this settlement has, however, proved a difficult task. The available evidence is skewed towards particular aspects of society, and often provides only limited insights or is difficult to date. For example, the written sources focus on raids, battles, and treaties, but provide little information on settlement. Meanwhile, archaeological evidence is more plentiful but cannot always be closely dated, and it is difficult to distinguish evidence for actual Scandinavian settlement from the broader dissemination of Scandinavian material culture through the processes of trade or social emulation, for example. It is, furthermore, problematic that the Scandinavian impact on language and names, extensive in some regions, is typically recorded in sources that post-date the period of settlement, in many cases by at least two centuries (for an overview see Hadley 2006, 1-9). The issues are compounded by the fact that so much of the scholarship on the Scandinavian impact on England is focused on a single source of evidence, with genuinely interdisciplinary studies being rare. This diminishes our understanding, and, furthermore, much scholarship on Viking-Age England is arguably trapped in a decades old historiographical timewarp (for a review of the problem see Trafford 2000), with insufficient attention paid to the specific context of the various sources of evidence, which are chronologically diverse and relate to different aspects of society.

It is helpful to begin with a brief review of the historiographical framework within which research on the Scandinavian impact on England is placed. The earliest scholarship is best captured in the work of Sir Frank Stenton, who in the 1920s observed that ‘all lines of investigation – linguistic, legal and economic – point to the reality of the difference between Danes and English in the tenth century’ (Stenton 1928, 46). This was echoed in the 1970s by Henry Loyn, who wrote of the Scandinavians as ‘an important recognizable element’ in the population of tenth-century England and ‘a distinct community living under separate laws’ (Loyn 1977, 113). Both scholars believed in a large scale settlement of Scandinavians, a deduction informed by the weight of the place-name evidence. In contrast, Peter Sawyer in his book *The Age of the Vikings* published in 1962, considerably downplayed the scale of the Scandinavian settlement, doubting the reliability of written sources for the size of the armies and severity of the raids, and largely dismissing the linguistic evidence as being late. He maintained that ‘before long the settlers were assimilated into the native population’ (Sawyer 1962, 170), albeit that he did not explain how this might have happened. This provoked an immense backlash among place-name scholars. Kenneth Cameron, in particular, found it impossible to accept that anything other than settlement on a massive scale could account for the linguistic impact of the Scandinavians. Accordingly he suggested that if the armies really

were much smaller than had been supposed then there must have been an undocumented 'secondary migration' following in the wake of the military conquest of northern and eastern England to account for the scale of linguistic change. He also pioneered the study of the topographical distribution of certain types of Scandinavian place-names as a guide to the chronology and density of Scandinavian settlement, which has long remained influential (Cameron 1965; 1970; 1971). Yet, Peter Sawyer (1971, 172-3) remained unbowed, reiterating his case in a revised edition of his book and concluding that 'apart from their settlements and their influence on the terminology of law and administration, the Scandinavians do not seem to have made a distinctive mark on England'. This was a position reinforced by the limited archaeological evidence revealing Scandinavian influences that was available to scholars in the 1970s (Trafford 2000, 30).

In the 1970s and 1980s, historians of Anglo-Saxon England began questioning the meanings of the ethnic labels applied to Scandinavians in tenth- and eleventh-century written sources. Notably, however, these discussions were unrelated to the broader study of the Scandinavian impact on England, and largely uninfluenced by emerging broader continental scholarship on ethnicity by historians. In a 1978 paper, Patrick Wormald examined the later tenth- and early eleventh-century legislation of King Æthelred, aspects of which had previously formed the basis for arguments that the Anglo-Saxon kingdom was riven by ethnic difference that could be codified objectively. For example, a law-code issued on behalf of King Æthelred in 997 at Wantage (Berkshire) contains much Scandinavian terminology, in contrast to a broadly contemporary code issued at Woodstock (Oxfordshire), which was formulated as being 'according to the laws of the English'. This clause had long been compared with a clause in a law-code by an earlier king, Edgar, of the 960s or 970s, which stipulated that 'secular rights should be in force among the Danes according to such good laws as they best decide on'. Once regarded as demonstrating that the newcomers were living under separate legal provision (Stenton 1971, 370-1), Wormald (1978, 61-2) interpreted these law-codes differently, arguing that the Wantage code was a product of regional pre-occupation, drawn up by men local to the north midlands, and an expression of regional interests, which placed limitations on tenth-century royal authority. In 1985, Susan Reynolds challenged the evidence on which earlier generations of scholars had maintained a belief in the distinctive nature of Danish communities and identity in the later Anglo-Saxon centuries. She pointed out that, in fact, ethnic difference was rarely articulated in tenth-century written sources. When the 'Danish' identity of individuals or groups was mentioned, it was typically during periods of conflict, particularly towards the end of the tenth century when there were

renewed attacks from Denmark. These ‘Danes’ were, thus, not the descendants of earlier generations of Scandinavian settlers but recent arrivals, ‘invaders and enemies, not subjects of the kingdom’ (Reynolds 1985, 409).

Building on these insights by Wormald and Reynolds, in a paper published in 1997 I explicitly brought into the debate the wider critical reappraisal of ethnic groups among early medieval historians and more broadly among archaeologists. This paper suggested that the study of Viking-Age England had a great deal to learn from this broader scholarly context. I argued then that this research leaves us:

forced to reconsider the appropriateness of the questions we have hitherto asked of our evidence: we cannot continue to ask whether this or that site is ‘Scandinavian’ or ‘native’, or to use place-name evidence to plot the locations and movements of peoples, or to argue over whether this or that feature of the society and culture of the Danelaw is Scandinavian without re-examining the nature of ‘ethnicity’ and identities and adopting a more complex perspective on the ways in which peoples interacted (Hadley 1997, 84).

A few years later, Simon Trafford (2000) observed that a simplistic understanding of ‘identity’ was prohibiting new insights emerging, and he stated that as a direct consequence the study of the Scandinavian settlements in England had ‘effectively stalled’ on the issue of its scale, which has limited all subsequent debate. He further observed that:

The implication seems to be that if the numbers of ‘Danes’ and ‘English’ could somehow be determined precisely, then all other pieces of the Danelaw jigsaw would instantly fall into place, and the baffling complexities of the linguistic, toponymic, and material evidence would resolve themselves into a comprehensible picture of the history of eastern England in the ninth to eleventh centuries (Trafford 2000, 19)

Given that estimations of the scale of the settlement were based purely on assessment of the various forms of evidence for its impact, which are invariably indirect and/or late in date, then this debate was inevitably circular.

At the same time, other archaeologists began to recognise the possibilities of exploring the ways in which the Scandinavian impact may have been articulated locally. For example, Julian Richards (2000, 302-3) argued that it was not appropriate to ask whether

particular rural settlements were ever occupied by Scandinavians, since even Scandinavian-style artefacts could have reached any given site through a variety of means, including trade. Instead, he suggested that it would be more insightful to explore the influence that Scandinavian settlement had on expressions of identity through material culture. For instance, there appears to have been continuity of occupation at Wharram Percy (Yorkshire) from the eighth through to the tenth centuries, but by the tenth century Scandinavian influences can be discerned on elite material culture, including a sword hilt-guard, a belt-slide and strap-end decorated in the Scandinavian Borre style (Richards 2001a, 274-5). Richards pointed out that we simply cannot know whether these items of material culture were possessed by a Scandinavian lord as opposed to reflecting the adoption of Scandinavian styles of lordly insignia by an Anglo-Saxon lord. The evidence betokens the new Scandinavian influence in local society, but does not reliably reveal the ethnic affiliations of the people who occupied the site (Richards 2001a, 276). At the same time, a growing corpus of metal jewellery and dress-accessories, much of it retrieved by metal-detector users, began to be the subject of a number of studies, and this highlighted the fact that much of it combined Scandinavian and English forms and decorative styles, suggesting significant cultural mixing in this medium. Purely Scandinavian artefacts — such as the oval brooches characteristic of Scandinavian female costume — were far less commonly found, and this was interpreted as evidence that the newcomers speedily adopted English styles of dress (Thomas 2000; Leahy and Paterson 2001).

While there was, then, a growing awareness of the need to adopt a more complex theoretical position on identity formation, scholars focussing on linguistic evidence were unconvinced by the approach and the new interpretations. In a volume that focussed on the mutual intelligibility of English and Norse published in 2002, Matthew Townend argued that:

one can easily distinguish the Old Norse and Old English speech communities in Viking Age England and it is for this reason that linguists have been more hesitant than, say, archaeologists and historians to embrace those contemporary ideas about “ethnicity” which substantially downplay the importance of linguistic factors in the creation and maintenance of group identities ... as will become clear, one of the outcomes of this book will be to uphold broadly Stentonian perspectives on the reality of the English/Danish distinction in Viking Age England (Townend 2002, 3).

David Parsons and Lesley Abrams (2004) reinforced this position in a paper that maintained that it was within an entirely Scandinavian-speaking milieu that many of the typically Scandinavian place-names were coined. In particular, that argued that those place-names formed with the characteristic -by ending, which were overwhelmingly formed with Old Norse rather than Old English first elements, probably emerged in the late ninth century among Scandinavian communities. The implication of their argument is that these names emerged before processes of integration and acculturation had commenced.

More recently, there has been a recognition that we need to think not only about ethnic identity when analyzing the Scandinavian impact on England, but also about a range of other forms of identity. In a book published in 2006, I considered a range of identities, including lordship, kingship, gender, and religious affiliation, emphasizing the importance of not losing sight of ‘the multiplicity of identities that the settlers and the local populations possessed’ (Hadley 2006, 279). This approach echoed comments made by Janet L. Nelson (2003, 28), in a study of the Viking impact on the continent, in which she had argued that ‘the ties that bound were not age-old inborn solidarities but man-made lordship and fidelity ... differentiated levels of social power and of rank and status ... partnerships of mutual interest’. The ways in which integration occurred – and it certainly did eventually occur – has begun to be addressed in this recent work. For example, some of the earliest articulations of kingship among Scandinavian rulers in late ninth-century England drew explicitly on Anglo-Saxon models of kingship. In 878 King Alfred stage-managed the baptism of the leader of a defeated viking army, Guthrum, and they subsequently forged a peace treaty, which was essential to the integration of Guthrum and his followers into English society (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 85, 171-2, 311-13; Kershaw 2000). Guthrum subsequently minted coins that were imitative of those of Alfred before minting coins in his new baptismal name of Æthelstan (Blackburn 2001, 127-30; the career of Guthrum is discussed in Hadley 2006, 29-35). Coins minted in the names of Scandinavian kings in York in the 890s bear Latin inscriptions, incorporate liturgical phrases or the names of saints, and display diverse types of crosses. There was an active promotion of Christianity on this coinage (Blackburn 2004, 329-31). Meanwhile, in East Anglia by c.895 Scandinavian rulers were minting coins in the name of St Edmund, the East Anglian king murdered by a viking army in 869 (Blackburn 2001, 135-6).

The ways in which subsequent generations of Scandinavians responded to the circumstances of migration and settlements have scarcely been addressed, although a recent paper by Katie A. Hemer and me (Hadley and Hemer 2011) addressed the impact of the

Scandinavian settlements on children and highlighted something of the complexity of settlement for child migrants and the offspring of migrants. Linguistic arguments predicated on the notion of separate speech communities (outlined above) seem to put off dealing with how integration occurred, and one issue addressed in this recent paper examined the circumstances of inter-marriage between settlers and locals. While there are no clear insights into the linguistic implications of inter-marriage in ninth- and tenth-century England, a later example suggests that mothers may have been significant in language acquisition. The early twelfth-century chronicler Orderic Vitalis was born in the English midlands in 1075 to a French father and English mother (Chibnall 1980, 2), and his writings reveal that he was not bilingual, speaking only the language of his mother. After he was sent aged ten years old to a monastery in Normandy he claims to have felt isolated because, amongst other factors, of his inability to speak French, despite his father's origins: 'Like Joseph in Egypt, I heard a language which I did not understand' (Chibnall 1972, 555; discussed in Hadley and Hemer 2011, 69). The much more voluminous written record from the decades after the Norman Conquest provides explicit evidence for linguistic flexibility and a willingness to dissociate language from ethnic identity. For example, some continental settlers – such as the new archbishops, Lanfranc of Canterbury (1070-89) and Thomas of York (1070-1100) – quickly came to be described, and even to describe themselves, as English, and shortly after his arrival in England the monk Reginald of Canterbury wrote of the 'gens Anglica nostra' (Williams 1995, 179; Thomas 2003, 72-3). Moreover, it is also apparent that individuals might be regarded as having multiple ethnicities, determined by context: the chronicler Gerald of Wales (c.1146-1223) variously described himself as Welsh, English or Norman, while he was able to describe Robert Chesney, bishop of Lincoln from 1148, as 'English by birth, but Norman by ancestry' (Thomas 2003, 72-3; Hadley 2011 draws comparison between the Scandinavian and Norman conquests of England). So the presumed link between language and ethnic self-identification was clearly not immutable in these later examples and we might pause to consider whether this is also applicable to the Viking Age.

Research on ethnic identities in Viking-Age England has been unsatisfactory in marshalling evidence from across a very broad period of time (up to two centuries following the initial period of settlement from the 870s), while the specific contexts in which notions of 'Scandinavianness' and 'Englishness' were adopted and adapted has been insufficiently addressed. Moreover, many aspects of integration, including the time scale and differences according to age, gender and social status, have been examined in very few studies. Rather than continuing to attempt to grapple with a wide array of evidence, and to explain the

reasons for the apparently different insights that emerge from the differing sources of evidence, this paper will now focus on the evidence from a very specific context: that of the winter camps occupied by the Viking ‘great army’ that raided England in the 860s and 870s. The winter camps represent the earliest traceable interactions between the Scandinavians and the indigenous populations in a settlement context, and they are the most closely datable archaeological sites that we have, which means that their broader context is more capable of identification and exploration.

### **Viking winter camps: overview**

In the middle of the ninth century, the Viking impact on England intensified as the armies began to stay all year round. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in 850 ‘for the first time, heathen men stayed through the winter on Thanet’, and from at least 865 this became an almost annual pattern, bar a few years when the continent was more alluring. By the 870s the armies are recorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as dividing up the three Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria (876), Mercia (877), and East Anglia (880) and settling there (Whitelock 1961, 43-50). These winter camps offer up intriguing potential for exploring the initial processes of conquest and settlement, and how the newcomers began to mediate their interactions with local populations and rulers. However, the Chronicle sometimes gives the locations of the winter camps in only very broad terms, such as the 866 entry which states merely that the Viking ‘great army’ — seemingly larger than any that had previously raided England — ‘took up winter quarters in East Anglia’ (Whitelock 1961, 45), while in 874 part of the ‘great army’ ‘took up winter quarters by the River Tyne’ (Whitelock 1961, 48). Even when more specific locations are cited, such as Thanet (865), Nottingham (868), Thetford (870) or London (871) (Whitelock 1961, 45-7), precisely where we should look for the winter camps, or what form they took, has long been unclear (a review of previous discussions about the locations of winter camps can be found in Stein forthcoming).

Why particular locations were chosen by the Viking army to over-winter is not explicitly articulated in the written sources. Presumably, they were defensible locations, but the lure of existing political rivalries that were ripe for exploitation was almost certainly another factor. This is, indeed, reflected, most notably, in the events that took place following the Viking ‘great army’s’ over-wintering at the site of the Mercian royal monastery at Repton (Derbyshire) on the River Trent in 873-4. The king of Mercia, Burgred, was driven out and replaced with one Ceolwulf (Whitelock 1961, 48). Despite being described by the Chronicle as a ‘foolish king’s thegn’, he is widely thought to have been a member of a rival Mercian

royal dynasty to Burgred, perhaps related to the earlier ninth-century Mercian kings Coenwulf (796-821) and Ceolwulf I (821-3) (Wormald 1982, 132-57). The army was probably exploiting internecine disputes, and perhaps was even invited into the situation; indeed, Viking armies could often prove useful, if often duplicitous, allies in internecine disputes as the Irish and Carolingian chronicles make more apparent (Nelson 1997; Ó Cróinín 1995). The ‘great army’ had spent the previous two winters in Mercia, at London and then Torksey, and had each time ‘made peace’, and so must have been becoming increasingly familiar with Mercian politics (Whitelock 1961, 47).

Until recently, the principal archaeological evidence for winter camps came from Repton, following excavations conducted over thirty years ago by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle (1992; 2001). An enclosure was identified on the basis of excavation of sections of a massive V-shaped ditch over 3 metres wide and deep, and by the results of a geophysical survey. It was deduced that the ditch formed a D-shaped enclosure, encompassing an area of 1.46 hectares, which is thought to have had an internal bank. This was interpreted as the winter camp defences, with the church envisioned as serving as a sort of gatehouse into the enclosure (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 57-60). The most important additional insight came from excavation of several furnished graves thought to have been contemporary with the over-wintering. One tellingly contained silver pennies of the mid-870s. A notably lavish burial contained a sword, knives, a necklace including a Thor’s hammer pendant, and an apparently amuletic deposit of a boar’s tusk and the bone of a jackdaw placed in a bag or box between the legs of this 25-35 year old male (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 60-65). The fact that he had died violently, presumably in battle, may have determined this more complex funerary provision than is otherwise found at Repton among furnished, and presumably Scandinavian, burials (Hadley 2008, 274). Excavation of a free-standing mausoleum revealed a mass funerary deposit of the disarticulated remains of over 260 individuals, among which fragments of weapons and coins of the mid-870s were recovered. The finds suggest that the deposit was created during the period of Viking over-wintering, although radiocarbon dating suggests that it also incorporated disturbed remains of much earlier date (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 67-80). Evidence for burning on the church and broken fragments of stone sculpture incorporated in to a stone cairn covering two of the Scandinavian burials may reveal the destruction caused by the over-wintering (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 60, 67). This burial complex and earthwork was apparently a dramatic statement of the Viking army’s occupation of a major Mercian royal and cult centre. This evidence was interpreted as demonstrating a ‘ruthless assertion’ by the Vikings of their

pagan religion (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 85). In an alternative interpretation, Julian Richards suggested that this archaeological record could be interpreted as the Viking ‘great army’ establishing their authority in England by investing it with ‘the authority of the past’ (Richards 2001b, 101).

Yet, the undoubted importance of these insights in to military activities and political statements made at Repton by the Viking ‘great army’ should not obscure the fact that the archaeological insights were of very limited scale. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Viking winter camps were considerably larger than has been envisioned at Repton and involved a much wider array of activities. Metal detecting activity and excavation at a site near York seems, more recently, to have identified the location of another Viking camp probably of the mid-870s, based on the coins recovered, which spans some 30 hectares (Hall et al. forthcoming), while the winter camp site at Torksey in Lincolnshire, occupied the year before Repton, covers c.55 hectares (Hadley and Richards in press). Both are, thus, considerably larger than the enclosure of 1.46 hectares that has been associated with the Viking overwintering at Repton. As we shall see, what has also emerged from investigation of these sites is evidence for manufacturing, trade, and involvement in economic transactions, and traces of the processes by which the Viking armies made the transition from raiders to settlers.

### **The Viking winter camp at Torksey: emergent identities**

The remainder of this paper will focus mainly on the evidence from the Viking winter camp at Torksey, where I am conducting a field project jointly led with Julian Richards of the University of York. Torksey is located on the River Trent, the major water access from the Humber estuary in to midland England. In 872-3 according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: ‘In this year the army went into Northumbria, and it took winter quarters [setl] at Torksey in Lindsey; and then the Mercians made peace with the army’ (Whitelock 1961, 47). This is the only documentary insight that we have on the over-wintering, but over the last 20 years important additions to our knowledge have emerged from metal detecting activity in the fields to the north of the modern village. Over 1000 items of metalwork have been recovered that date to the early medieval period, including over 250 coins (figure 1). As far as we can tell, the latter are not the product of one or more coin hoards; their wide distribution suggests their use and casual loss across the site (Blackburn 2011, 235; Hadley and Richards in press). There are over 30 Anglo-Saxon silver pennies, mostly of the 860s or early 870s, principally the so-called Lunette issues, of Burgred of Mercia, or Alfred of Wessex (Blackburn 2011,

225). The silver content had become increasingly diminished in these mid-ninth-century pennies, and it is thought that they quickly ceased to circulate in the wake of a reform of the coinage to increase silver content in the mid-870s by Alfred and Burgred's successor, the aforementioned Ceolwulf (Blackburn 2002, 135; 2003). This reinforces the association of the finds with the recorded Viking over-wintering of 872-3, as does the absence of any later ninth-century coins. Similarly, the absence of the nicking/pecking of the coins, as a means of ensuring silver content, which became increasingly common once the silver content of coinage increased from the mid-870s is another indication that the coin collection dates to no later than the mid-870s (Archibald 2012). These coins in particular are what really help us pin the finds very precisely to the over-wintering of the Viking 'great army'.

Over hundred Northumbrian copper-alloy stycas are now known from the site. Stycas are not thought to have circulated widely outside of Northumbria, and are accordingly usually only recovered in Lincolnshire as single finds (Blackburn 2011, 225). The number of stycas found at Torksey is similar to the figure from the winter camp site near York, where 90 have been found (Hall et al. forthcoming). It seems likely that the concentration of stycas reflects them having been brought directly to Torksey from Northumbria by the 'great army', rather than having ended up there as a result of being in wider local circulation (Blackburn 2011, 225). Indeed, the 'great army' had retired from Northumbria to Torksey in 872 (Whitelock 1961, 47). It has long been thought that the stycas had ceased to be minted and used before the Viking conquest of York in 867, but these concentrations at the winter camp sites may reflect their continued use (Hall et al. forthcoming). Indeed, examples of stycas with blundered legends may have been Viking imitations, as Gareth Williams (in Hall et al. forthcoming) has recently argued. The blundering of inscriptions is widely regarded as indicative of moneyers working in contexts where their work is not overseen by a literate ruler, and is accepted by numismatists as indicative of minting of coins in a Scandinavian context (Blackburn 2001, 138). In other words, the Scandinavians – from a culture where coins were, on the whole, not minted – were not only using coins (albeit perhaps as bullion) but were also apparently minting them.

The continental coins recovered from Torksey include a silver penny of mid-ninth-century date, and four gold solidi, of which two are gilt copper-alloy forgeries (Blackburn 2011, 228, 252). A strip of lead bearing the impression of dies for striking solidi of Louis the Pious (814-40) was also recovered (Blackburn 2011, 228, 252). This gives support to the notion that imitations of these solidi were being struck not only in Frisia, where many are known, but also in England, where a handful of such imitative solidi have been recovered.

Given the date range of the other finds, and notwithstanding the date of the impressed solidus, the lead strip seems most likely to have arrived at Torksey in the wake of the Viking over-wintering, rather than earlier. While no coins struck from these dies are currently known, there is certainly evidence, as we shall see, for gold working on the site and even for the presence of gold-plated forgeries.

Torksey has produced the largest concentration of Arabic dirhams from an insular site, with over 100 having now been reported (Blackburn 2011, 229-30). This is comparable to the number of dirhams from Scandinavian trading centres, such as Birka, Kaupang and Parviken on Gotland (Blackburn 2011, 230). The Torksey dirhams range in date from c.700 to the 860s, a profile that is typical of that of concentrations of dirhams from Scandinavia, which have been dated to the 860s or 870s, although most such sites also produce dirhams of later date (Blackburn 2011, 230). There are no dirhams datable to any later than the mid-860s at Torksey, and bearing in mind the time it would have taken for coins to make their way from the Middle East to England via the Baltic, then the dirhams provide another piece of evidence for dating the main activity on the site to the 870s. None of the dirhams is complete, most being cut into quarters or even smaller divisions, which is also true of the fifteen dirhams from the winter camp site near York, and is also typical of dirham finds from Scandinavia (Hall et al. forthcoming).

That the coin finds are indicative of the operation of a bullion economy is suggested by the mixed profile and fragmentation of the coins (Blackburn 2001, 134-5). This deduction is reinforced by the recovery of over twenty silver ingots and over fifty pieces of hack-silver, mainly in the form of small cut pieces of ingots, although some of the fragmentary decorative Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Scandinavian metalwork may also have been used for monetary exchange (Blackburn 2011, 230-36). More unusual is the hack-gold from the site, of which thirteen pieces are currently known. Several pieces had been chisel cut from gold ingots, although one twisted piece may have been cut from a plaited arm- or neck-ring. Two cut gold solidi — one Frisian, the other Carolingian — may also have been bullion. There are even some pieces of fake hack-gold in the form of a fragment of a gold-plated copper-alloy ingot and two fragments from worked square rods; this is the first time that fake hack-gold has been recognised before on a Viking site in the British isles (Blackburn 2011, 234).

A bullion economy required weights to allow for the weighing of the metal. And we have, indeed, recorded almost 140 examples. Around 50 of these are copper-alloy polyhedral weights, there is a handful of spheroid copper-alloy weights, and over 50 lead weights, around half of which are inset with decorative elements. It is recognised that both of the

copper-alloy types reflect contact with the Islamic world, as they imitate the design of copper-alloy Islamic weights, and, more debatably, their weight-standards (Blackburn 2011, 236-9). These weights appear in considerable numbers on Scandinavian sites in the third quarter of the ninth century, and there is evidence (e.g. from Birka (Sweden) and Gotland (Sweden)) that they were being manufactured there (Blackburn 2011, 238). These weights are increasingly being recognised from sites in Britain, including the York winter camp site, which has produced 28 polyhedral weights (Hall et al. forthcoming). The mixture of hack-silver, fragmentary dirhams, and polyhedral and spheroid weights is representative of developments in Scandinavia in the 860s and 870s, as hack-silver began to become a standard means of exchange, reflecting an increasingly widespread bullion economy in Scandinavia, which the 'great army' evidently exported to England (Blackburn 2011, 247). Thus, immediately upon beginning the processes of conquest and settlement, the inhabitants of the winter camps were engaged in economic activities, not only through the operation of a metal-weight bullion economy but also, so it seems, through the minting of coins.

Further impressions of the winter camp emerge from evidence for metal-working, in the form of trial pieces for jewellery and lead impressions of coins, including a Burgred lunette (Blackburn 2011, 241-2). While not capable of being closely dated, melts of gold, silver and copper, may also be indicative of metalworking (Hadley and Richards in press). Thus, manufacture, as well as trade, appears to have characterized the winter camps. A similar picture emerges from the winter camp site near York, where, intriguingly, unfinished strap ends of English style have been recovered, presenting an interesting insight into the craftworkers present on the site and the market for their wares (Hall et al. forthcoming). There over 150 fragmentary copper-alloy artefacts from Torksey, almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon in origin, and these may have been intended to be melted down. However, it is also possible that they were being used as a form of low value bullion. Indeed, it is notable that there are a few copper-alloy ingots from Torksey, and this may hint at system of value where copper was of importance in exchange (Blackburn 2011, 235-6). It is unclear whether this accounts for the 100 or so copper-alloy strap ends, overwhelmingly decorated in the late ninth-century English Trehiddle style, and other Anglo-Saxon dress accessories, such as hooked tags. These contrast markedly with a very small number of diagnostically Scandinavian dress accessories. As at the winter camp site near York, this presents some interesting questions about the people who occupied the site. Had the dress accessories been acquired effectively as scrap metal, or was Anglo-Saxon material culture being acquired and worn by Scandinavians even before permanent settlement? Or were there Anglo-Saxons

present at the winter camp site? We cannot say, but it is certainly apparent that the ‘great army’ and its followers were fully acquainted with Anglo-Saxon material culture even at this early stage of settlement (Hadley and Richards in press).

Evidence for other activities comes in the form of spindle whorls, needles, punches and awls, fishing weights and gaming pieces (Blackburn 2011, 244). These are, on the whole, not closely datable, but given the date range of the other datable material from the site it seems likely that these should be associated with the Viking army. There is little in the way of items related to military activity, but this must to a very large degree be connected both to the vagaries of survival of ferrous metal and the tendency for metal-detectorists to be less interested in collecting such material (Hadley and Richards in press).

We have undertaken a small-scale excavation at the south-western edge of the site, after our fieldwalking programme recovered human remains. Two radiocarbon dates were acquired, and these suggest that the burials date to the ninth century (Hadley and Richards in press). Radiocarbon dating does not permit the narrowing of burials to precise years, but we are provided with much food for thought in the light of the aforementioned discoveries at Repton. Unfortunately, modern ploughing had disturbed the site down to the underlying natural clay and we were not able to confirm the presence of graves although further fragments of human remains were recovered. Intriguingly, the human remains include not only an adult male, but also those of two children (Hadley and Richards in press). Along with the evidence of the spindle whorls this serves as a reminder that winter camps included not just warriors, but also women and children. This should hardly come as a surprise if we look at the written record. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 893 the English captured the viking fortress at Benfleet, Essex, and ‘seized everything inside it, both property and women and also children’, while the entry for 895 records that the Viking army ‘placed their women in safety in East Anglia’ (Whitelock 1961, 54-7). There are similar references in continental chronicles to the presence of women and children alongside the viking armies that raided Frankia. For example, Regino of Prüm, writing in the early tenth century, recounts the arrival of a Viking army at the deserted town of Angers in the Loire valley, where the raiders based themselves in 873 ‘with their wives and children’, while the late ninth-century Latin poem *Bella Parisiaca Urbis*, written by Abbo, a monk of St-Germain-des-Prés, refers to the presence of women alongside the Viking army that besieged Paris in 885 and 887 (discussed in Hadley and Hemer 2011).

There are hints in the written record that women and children might also play an important role in the processes of conquest and acculturation. This is, for example, apparent

from a series of events recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the wake of the aforementioned encounter at Benfleet. The wife and two sons of the viking leader, Hæsten, were taken to the West Saxon king, Alfred, but were released because one of the sons was his godson and the other was the godson of Ealdorman Æthelred of the Mercians. The baptism of the sons had occurred at some unknown time prior to the arrival of the Viking army at Benfleet, when Hæsten ‘had given the king oaths and hostages, and the king had also made him generous gifts of money’. This had not, however, prevented him from subsequently ravaging Mercia, which was ruled by Ealdorman Æthelred. Nonetheless, doubtless motivated by the bonds of spiritual kinship he had established with Hæsten and his family, Alfred allowed his captives to go free and he apparently made another endowment when he ‘gave back the boy and the woman’ (Whitelock 1961, 154-7). These are unusually detailed entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which provide a rare insight into the roles of women and children in the processes of acculturation. Hæsten’s wife was not recorded as having been converted along with her sons and so she may already have been a Christian; perhaps he had acquired an English or Frankish wife during his raiding campaigns? If so, the significance of inter-marriage between Scandinavian men and local women may already have been felt at this early stage of conquest and settlement (discussed in Hadley and Hemer 2011).

Our work at Torksey has also focused on the evidence for at least 15 pottery kilns within and around the modern village that date from the late ninth to late eleventh century (Barley 1964; 1981). The Torksey pottery and kilns reveal a considerable transformation to pottery production in the region. Torksey ware is tempered with sand, formed on a fast wheel and fired in up-draft kilns to a reduced grey-black. As such, it contrasts sharply with earlier fabrics from the region, which were coil built, typically tempered with crushed fossil shell, rocks or organic matter, and fired on a bonfire. There was, thus, a wholesale transformation in acquisition of raw materials, preparation of the clay, forming of the vessels, application of decoration and method of firing, while new vessel forms also emerged (Perry forthcoming). The form and fabric, types of decoration, and the use of the fast wheel for the first time since the Roman period, have led to the influences being discerned of continental potters from the northern parts of the Carolingian realm, where such industries were well established (Barley 1980, 289). Torksey pottery has been pretty securely dated to the last decades of the ninth century in excavations at both Lincoln and York (Perry forthcoming). While the precise date at which the industry was founded is unclear, it is not at all implausible that it was founded in the immediate wake of the Viking over-wintering. While Scandinavia was, at this time, broadly aceramic, Viking kings fostered the minting of coinage from the late ninth century in

England even though Scandinavia was not at this time, on the whole, engaged in the minting of coinage either. A further point of similarity is in the influence of continental craftworkers, whose influence on pottery production is mirrored on the coinage, where moneyers with continental names appear in the inscriptions. Moreover, continental prototypes, and even occasionally dies, lie behind the design of some issues minted for Viking kings in England (Blackburn 2001; 2004; 2005).

It is evident from a variety of sources that the ‘great army’ did not merely spend a few months in a locale and then simply move on, without a backwards glance. They sometimes – perhaps typically – put in place measures to maintain some level of control over places where they had been based. Sometimes, this appears to have taken the form of appointing a ruler from the local elite, or forging an alliance with such an individual. This is most clearly demonstrated in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle account of events at Repton the year after the army left Torksey, as we have seen. A similar scenario can be detected a few years earlier, in 867, when the sojourn of the army in York, following the driving out of the Northumbrian king, Osbert, in favour of a rival, Ælla, saw the emergence of one Egbert (seemingly a local man) as king. When Egbert was driven out of York along with Archbishop Wulfstan in 872, the Viking army returned briefly to York. While it failed, if that, indeed, was the intention to return Egbert to the throne, the course of events reinforces the notion that his appointment owed something to the activities of the ‘great army’ (discussed in Hadley 2006, 37-40). In both cases the ‘great army’ seems to have become involved in internecine disputes, and was perhaps partly attracted by such disputes and the potential they offered for the acquisition of allies. To these documented examples, we can add the evidence of coins minted in East Anglia after the death of King Edmund at the hands of a Viking army in 869; these were minted for two otherwise unknown kings – Æthelred and Oswald – who are also thought to have been Viking appointees. This is because, while they both used moneyers employed by King Edmund, the blundered inscriptions have, in the words of Mark Blackburn (2005), ‘all the hallmarks of a Viking coinage’. So do the continental influences, as some of the coins are modelled on the Italian issues of the Carolingian Temple design, minted from the 850s for Emperor Louis II. Beyond the fact that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes that the ‘great army’ made peace with the Mercians at Torksey, the local interactions of the ‘great army’ are unrecorded. Yet if Carolingian potters arrived in the wake of the over-wintering it may suggest that the army put in place some measures to maintain control over a place that was of considerable strategic importance on the Trent (and presumably not just the potters themselves!). Despite the silence of the written sources, the flourishing of the pottery industry

under continental influences, when set in the context of evidence from York, Repton and East Anglia, may suggest something of a lingering involvement in Torksey by the ‘great army’ after the winter of 872-3. Behind the more typically brief Chronicle entries, we can, perhaps, begin to discern something of the processes by which settlement and conquest commenced.

## **Conclusions**

The ways in which Scandinavian settlers interacted with Anglo-Saxon communities, and how they eventually integrated themselves in to Anglo-Saxon society have proven difficult to identify and have been subject to intense, and sometimes vitriolic, debate. It is apparent that the various sources of evidence available to us illuminate varying aspects of society, and privileging one source over another is potentially misleading, while amalgamating diverse sources of evidence can be challenging without recognition of the variability of the evidence and of the insights it provides. The notion that Scandinavian and English communities lived side by side with minimal interaction for generations – something proposed by place-names scholars – makes little sense in the context of the information provided by other sources of evidence, and at the very least it suggests that there were differing responses among the Scandinavians to the circumstances of settlement. By focussing in on the evidence from the earliest phases of settlement – that from Viking winter camps – we can see that even in the 870s members of the Viking ‘great army’ and their followers were adapting themselves to the local social, economic and political circumstances. Larger scale settlement undoubtedly followed in the wake of the activities of the ‘great army’ and must, to a large extent, have been influenced by the manner in which the way was prepared for conquest, settlement and interaction. At the same time, the evidence for a bullion economy alongside a coin-based economy reveals that the earliest Scandinavian settlers adopted different strategies in the wake of settlement. It is the diversity of responses, and the immediate willingness of, at least some of, the settlers to adapt to Anglo-Saxon society that emerges from the evidence from the winter camps. This suggests that discrete ethnic identities rapidly gave way – among at least some of the settlers – to pragmatism and the adoption of new ways of behaving and expressing identity as responses to the circumstances of conquest and settlement. In continuing to explore the Scandinavian impact on England in the ninth and tenth centuries it is the diversity of experience and behaviour that should be the focus of our investigations, and these should prevail over disciplinary obsessions. In sum, the Scandinavian settlers in England seem to have been far more adaptable and flexible than have been modern scholars!

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