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ANGLO-SAXON CHURCHES IN YORKSHIRE

H. M. Taylor

(These notes comprise the substance of the lecture given by Dr. Taylor to the Fourth Viking Congress and of descriptions of certain of the churches given on the sites during a day excursion led by him. On the excursion members of the Congress had an opportunity of seeing in particular the evidence for the modification of early churches by the insertion of later features.)

A. YORK MINSTER

Although there is detailed historical evidence of the foundation of the church of St. Peter as a building erected in wood by King Edwin for his baptism in 627 and as later enclosed in stone by him and by his successor Oswald, nothing seems to remain of either of these early buildings. There is literary evidence to show that St. Peter's Church was still in use in 796 and was laid waste by the Normans in 1069. Alcuin's poem tells of the great new church which Archbishop Albert built and dedicated in the year of his death, 780, but the evidence mentioned above shows that this church, dedicated in honour of Alma Sophia, did not replace St. Peter's. There is literary evidence that Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux (1069–1100) 'found the church despoiled by fire; he repaired and newly covered it so as to serve for a time; he also repaired the refectory and the dormitory and afterwards he built the church that now is from its foundations'.[1] Subsequently, Archbishop Roger de Pont l'Eveque (1154–81) 'constructed anew the choir of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter at York, together with its crypts and the archiepiscopal palace at York'.[2]

Until a disastrous fire in the Cathedral in 1829 it was not appreciated that any part of the Norman or earlier fabric had survived in the present church, which had until then been regarded as wholly of Early English and later styles of architecture. But during repairs after the fire remarkable discoveries were made by John Browne who, with the co-operation of the Cathedral authorities, undertook the excavation of the remarkable crypt beneath the present choir.[3] This crypt and the area to the west of it were

[1] *Historians of the Church of York*, ed. J. Raine (Rolls Series, 71, ii) (London, 1886), 108 and 362.
[2] J. Raine, *loc. cit.* 398.
[3] J. Browne, *History of the Metropolitan Church of St. Peter, York*, 2 vols. (London, 1847).

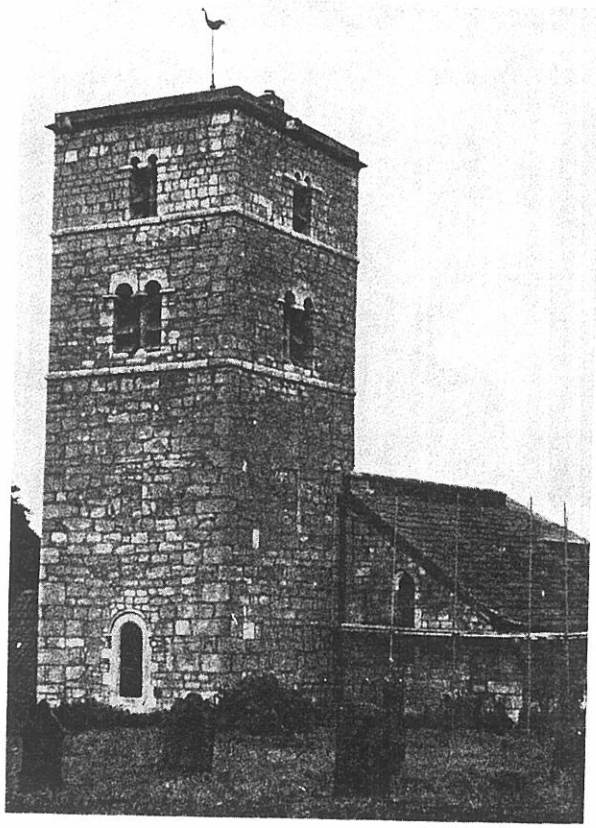


Plate 1. *Appleton-le-Street* (Photograph H. M. Taylor). The tower seen from the south-west.

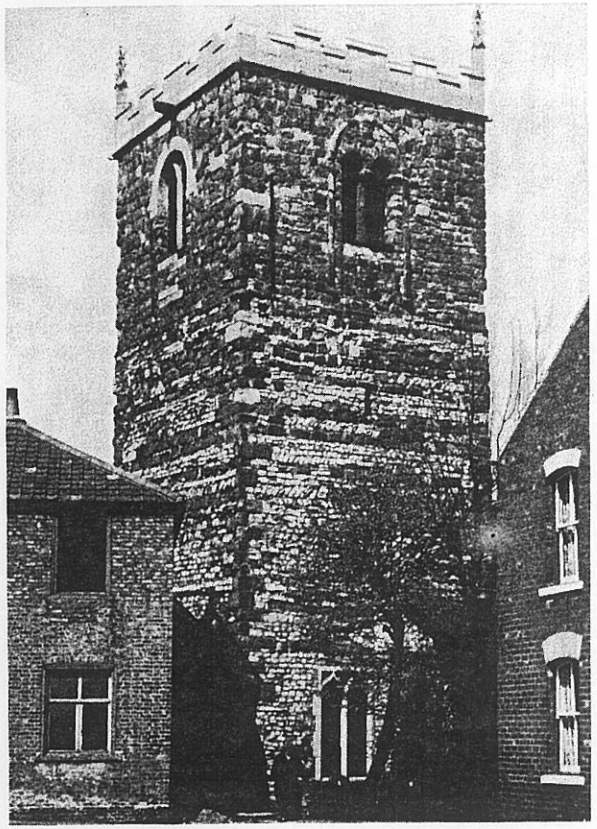


PLATE 2. *York, St. Mary Bishophill Junior* (Photograph H. M. Taylor). The tower seen from the south-west.

covered over after Browne's excavations by a brick vault, but access can still be secured.

In this underground area it is possible to see the outer walls of the Norman choir and also at a lower level the large concrete raft or foundation upon which, and within the space determined by the Norman walls, there are two parallel walls of herring-bone construction to which outer faces have been applied later as part of the Norman crypt.

It is difficult to be certain about the date of the concrete raft and the herring-bone walls. Browne claimed that they were certainly pre-Norman and were probably parts of Archbishop Albert's eighth-century church. Professor Willis ascribed both to the Anglo-Saxon Cathedral Church of St. Peter, and maintained that Archbishop Albert's church was on some totally different site.[1] Other writers between the times of Willis and Peers have supported Browne's ascription of the early fabric to Archbishop Albert's time, while recently serious doubts have been cast on the validity of ascribing any part of the early fabric to a pre-Conquest date.[2]

On balance, we accept the foundations and the herring-bone walls as belonging to a pre-Norman period particularly because:

(*a*) the concrete foundations extend westward under the Norman tower built by Archbishop Thomas;

(*b*) the herring-bone fabric is quite at variance with the surviving Norman fabric, some of which can be seen in the underground area and some in the upper part of the tower above the vaulting of the north aisle of the nave;

(*c*) the herring-bone walls seem to be quite out of relation with any part of the surviving choir of Archbishop Thomas's church and, even in their present state, they define a choir at least 50 feet long with solid walls and a width of under 27 feet. These abnormally long and narrow proportions would be even more striking if, as seems natural, the herring-bone walls continued to the east end of the concrete foundation, thereby defining a choir about 120 feet long, quite at variance with any Norman practice for an aisleless choir.

B. YORK, ST. MARY BISHOPHILL JUNIOR

This church, outside the area of the Roman city of York, has a sturdy west tower with characteristically Anglo-Saxon double belfry windows outlined by the distinctive hood moulding which is found in several Northumbrian churches but not outside that kingdom. The tower-arch

[1] R. Willis, 'The Architectural History of York Cathedral', *Proceedings Archaeological Institute, York, 1847* (London, 1848).

[2] K. Harrison, 'The Cathedral Church at York', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xxxix (1956–8), 442.

is wide and tall and of two separate orders, both of which are of plain square section.The arch is outlined above by a hood moulding which is also of plain square section, and it is interesting to note that in the jambs some of the stones pass through the full thickness of the wall and that the separate orders have been produced by cutting away the unnecessary parts of these stones.

C. LEDSHAM

Although the church of All Saints at Ledsham, about ten miles east of Leeds in the West Riding of Yorkshire, is of quite outstanding interest, it appears to us to have received much less attention that it deserves. Sir Alfred Clapham did not mention it in his book, and Professor Baldwin Brown appears to have been misled into regarding it as being of late-Saxon date by failing to note that a number of features of Norman character are undoubtedly later insertions. The church now comprises a western tower with a spire; a nave with north aisle and south porch; and a chancel with north chapel and vestry. Of this fabric the main walls of the nave, the lower part of the tower, and part at least of the walls of the south porch are Anglo-Saxon of an early type.

Outline architectural history of Ledsham

The history of the fabric may be summarized as follows. The early-Saxon structure was a simple aisleless nave, with a small chancel of which no trace now remains. To this there was added, after a short interval, a gabled western porch with two storeys corresponding to the levels of the two windows which have survived in the south face of the tower. At about the same time a southern *porticus* was added, and possibly a similar one on the north, of which there is now no evidence since that side is now covered by the north aisle. After the Norman Conquest, the western porch was converted into a tower with a Norman belfry stage of white Tadcaster stone which contrasts sharply with the brown stone of the Anglo-Saxon fabric. At this time the original Anglo-Saxon west doorway from the porch to the nave was replaced by the existing and much larger Norman tower-arch, and the south *porticus* was converted into a porch of entry by cutting an outer doorway through its south wall.[1] In the thirteenth century the walls of the nave were continued eastward to form a much larger chancel, to which in the fourteenth century a wide north aisle or chapel was added. In the fifteenth century a wide north aisle was added to the

[1] During the excursion members of the Congress inspected in detail the evidence for the insertion of the Norman tower-arch in an earlier Anglo-Saxon wall, and I believe they were unanimous in agreeing that the evidence is convincing. Not only are the jambs and imposts out of bond with the main fabric of the wall; but also there are trivial stones which are used as in-filling round the curve of the arched head in a way which would not have been the case if the west wall had been built from the first upon the Norman tower-arch.

nave, opening to it through three tall, pointed arches, above which four blocked Anglo-Saxon north windows may still be seen.[1]

The church was restored by Henry Curzon in 1871, when the outer archway of the south porch was given its present pointed Gothic form, with chamfered mouldings in place of earlier plain square mouldings which are shown on a plan prepared by Curzon before his restoration. Unfortunately, Curzon gave no elevation so that it is not possible to say exactly what was the appearance of the earlier outer archway of the south porch.

The nave

The original south and west walls of the nave survive almost intact and are built of well-coursed, roughly-dressed brown sandstone, with exceptionally large stones at the angles, laid in careful side-alternate fashion like those of the early churches at Escomb, Jarrow and Corbridge.

The blocked, round-headed, internally-splayed, original windows call for special description. Externally, their heads are cut in the lower faces of single rectangular lintels, and their jambs are built up of stones which are laid in the same courses as the main fabric of the walls. Internally, their heads are arched with well-laid voussoirs, and their jambs are quite distinct from the courses of the wall, with some large upright stones which alternate with flat stones in the manner referred to by Baldwin Brown as 'Escomb fashion'. The windows are of considerable size, for the external aperture is 23 inches wide by 51 inches high, splayed internally to become 31 inches wide by 78 inches high, with the internal sills about 12 feet above the floor. The walls of the nave are about 2 feet 3 inches thick and about 22 feet in height and the nave itself is 48 feet long by 17 feet 4 inches wide, internally.

The western porch and tower

It is clear that no part of the original western porch was built at the same time as the nave for its walls are nowhere in bond with those of the main fabric of the nave; but that the porch was added soon after the building of the nave may be inferred not only from the similarity of its two south windows to those of the nave but also from the close similarity of the general fabric and of the quoining.

In the present clock chamber, there is most interesting evidence to show that the original western annexe was not a tower but was a porch whose gabled roof was some feet lower than that of the nave. This evidence is clearly to be seen in the patched scar of the original roof line of the western porch, roughly filled in when the porch was raised to become a tower. As at first built, the Anglo-Saxon western porch was of two floors and this gabled roof-space. No trace now remains of the original first

[1] During the visit members of the Congress inspected carefully these north windows and were impressed by the skilful way in which the later arcades had been inserted, in some instances within an inch or two of the undisturbed masonry of the early Anglo-Saxon walling and windows.

floor, but its former existence may be inferred from the existing upper south window and the corresponding eastern window towards the nave. The present first floor of the tower is at about the height of the ceiling of the original upper chamber, above which the internal walling ceases to be of carefully laid stone and is of rough workmanship suitable to a space that might have been left unoccupied or used as a belfry.

The present tower-arch may certainly be regarded as a Norman insertion, probably in replacement of a small western doorway such as still exists at Monkwearmouth. That the arch is a later insertion is clearly indicated by the way its imposts are not coursed with the walling, and by its head having run so close to the window above it that the sill has been built up by one course. Moreover, the original first floor of the porch would have run across the open head of this tower-arch, thereby indicating clearly that the earlier arrangement comprised a smaller western tower-arch.

The remarkable south doorway of the porch is a round-headed opening 2 feet 4 inches wide by 5 feet 7 inches high, with jambs of square section, rather shallow imposts, and a round-arched head of seven well-laid voussoirs. The whole doorway is outlined by a band of strip-work which is carried up beside the jambs and round the head. The imposts are rounded off below in a fashion which is unusual in Anglo-Saxon work and are enriched with ornament which seems to be mainly modern restoration. The enrichment of the strip-work also seems to be modern, probably dating from Curzon's restoration, but with the possibility that the lowest two stones may still show original carving. The inner face of the doorway, which appears to have survived without change from its original form, is also of considerable interest. Unlike the outside, the head is flat, formed of a single lintel; and the jambs are rebated 2 inches behind those of the outer face, for the hanging of a door.

The south porticus

At first sight the present south porch of entry is an ordinary medieval building, but it seems originally to have been a lateral *porticus* which was entered from the nave. This interpretation becomes apparent when the remarkable remains above the medieval south doorway of the nave are correctly interpreted as being the upper part of a tall, narrow doorway which originally opened outwards. That this doorway was made for a door that opened *outwards* is certain because the round-arched head towards the nave rests on jambs that are only 24 inches apart, while on the south face of the wall the head of the doorway is a flat lintel which rests on jambs 28 inches apart and which is itself about 2 inches higher than the round inner head of the doorway.

It is difficult to be certain about the date of the fabric of the south porch, except to say that it is later than that of the nave, because, like the west porch, it is not in bond. It has no overlying Norman fabric, as the west porch has, to prove its pre-Conquest nature, but the walling is of similar thickness and general character to that of the nave and the west porch; and its quoins are of fairly large stones set in side-alternate fashion, so that there is an indication of similar date.

The remarkable height of the doorway from the nave deserves special mention. It was an opening only 2 feet wide and no less than 14 feet high. At Worth, in Sussex, the side doorways of the nave were about this height but they were 3 feet 3 inches wide, in clear. The Ledsham doorway is, therefore, an extreme example of the Anglo-Saxon love of tall, narrow openings, and it seems reasonable to wonder whether such openings had some connection with ritual, as might have been the case if they were designed to give access for the carrying of a tall cross in processions.

D. BARDSEY

Like Ledsham, Bardsey has an Anglo-Saxon church of some considerable interest, with a west porch which was later raised to form a tower; but, unlike Ledsham, the whole tower is of Anglo-Saxon date except for its parapet. The greater part of the walls of the early aisleless nave have survived, but they are now pierced by late twelfth-century arcades. In the eastern face of the wall which contains the chancel-arch it is possible to see the gable of the original roof of the chancel.

The chief interest of Bardsey lies in its tower which contains two successive storeys in each of which a double belfry window has survived in the south face. These are both of closely similar type and it seems reasonable to deduce that the two belfry stages were built at the same time. Moreover, in each of these two belfry stages the eastern windows are of simple, narrow, round-headed shape, cut straight through the wall, with large rectangular lintels in the lower faces of which the round heads are cut. The tower at Bardsey therefore provides clear evidence that windows of the double type were not used by Anglo-Saxon builders to the exclusion of belfry windows of simpler type. There are other instances elsewhere of the use of single belfry windows in Anglo-Saxon churches, notably the triangular-headed windows at Barnack, in Northamptonshire, in which remarkable carved *transennae* have survived, but Bardsey provides a striking instance of the use of double windows in conjunction with single windows on two separate levels. It is also remarkable that, although the tower is about 50 feet in height, excluding the later battlements, the walls of the porch upon which it is built are only 2 feet thick.

E. KIRKDALE

The church at Kirkdale is of particular interest because its erection is dated within a period of ten years by the sundial which has survived over a later south doorway. Thomas Rickman doubted whether the sundial was still *in situ*, but he gave no reasons for this doubt, and we see no evidence in support of it. The sundial records that Orm, son of Gamal,

bought St. Gregory's Minster when it was all broken and fallen and had it built anew from the ground in honour of Edward the King and Tosti the Earl. Since King Harold's brother Tosti was Earl of Northumbria, 1055–65, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, the sundial clearly fixes the rebuilding of the church to this period. The nave is the only part which survives from Orm's rebuilding and it is interesting to note that the side-alternate western quoins of the nave seem to be of two different types, with very much larger stones in the lower part, in a way which suggests that these lower parts may be survivals from the earlier church which Orm bought in a ruinous condition.

The tall, narrow west doorway, now enclosed within a nineteenth-century bell tower, is of two simple orders of plain square section which are curiously arranged side by side in a manner quite at variance with Norman practice in which the outer order would have been built on top of the inner. The chancel-arch has been replaced at a later date, but the jambs seem to be original, and their simple stepped bases are characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon love of forms such as can be made by over-lapping tiles or flat stones, although in this instance they are carved out of single stones.

F. APPLETON-LE-STREET

At Appleton-le-Street, a few miles west of Malton, the church has an Anglo-Saxon west tower with two belfry stages of which the upper is of markedly different construction from the lower, thus indicating, by contrast with the tower at Bardsey, that the upper stage is a later addition to a tower which originally ended above the lower belfry. The contrast between the two belfries can be seen by noting that in the lower part of the tower the quoins are of stones very much larger than the main fabric of the walling, whereas in the upper belfry the quoin-stones are set in the same courses as those of the main fabric of the wall. It thus seems reasonable to deduce that a change in fashion of wall construction had taken place between the time of the building of the lower belfry and the time of the addition of the upper, and this thereby indicates that the lower type of double belfry window was in use at some considerable time before the Norman Conquest.

G. SKIPWITH

The west tower at Skipwith, about five miles north-east of Selby, is unusually spacious, being of the same width as the nave itself. The present nave incorporates the side walls of the Anglo-Saxon nave but occupies the same length as the Anglo-Saxon nave and its chancel. Moreover, the walls of the nave have been raised by adding a clearstorey. In considering the original height of Anglo-Saxon towers, it should be borne in mind that they are generally now seen beside churches which have been greatly enlarged in the way described above both in plan and in height, so that a

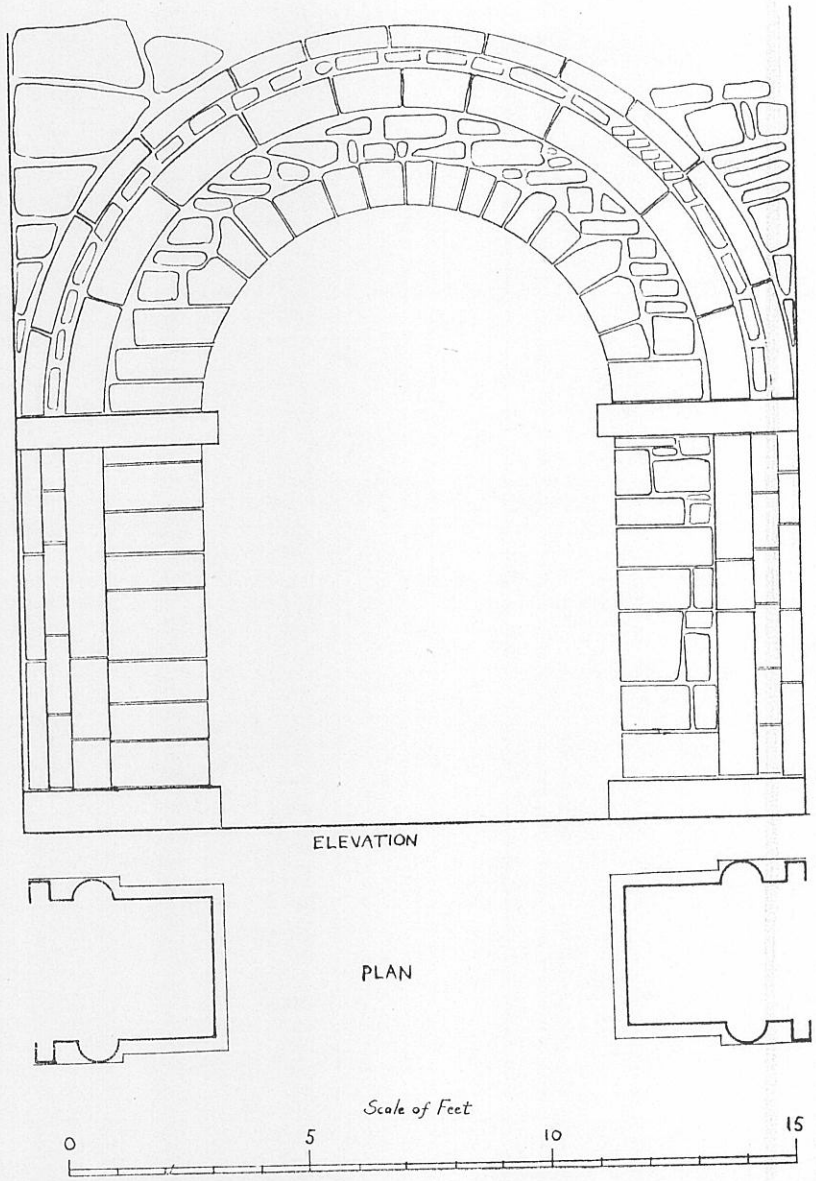
lower tower than at present would have seemed in proper proportion to the smaller and lower original church. At Barton-on-Humber, it is clear that the original tower has been heightened, for the late-Saxon or Saxo-Norman belfry stands on top of the original Anglo-Saxon belfry, which itself has double windows. At Skipwith, the tower has two stages of Anglo-Saxon fabric beneath a Perpendicular belfry which Baldwin Brown described as 'probably replacing the upper part of the Saxon belfry stage, where we may safely assume mid-wall work'.[1] The present proportions of the two stages of the Anglo-Saxon tower would, however, by themselves be in keeping with the original small Anglo-Saxon church whose nave and chancel both stood on the ground now occupied by the present nave, and whose walls were no higher than the sills of the present clearstorey windows. Moreover, the small rectangular windows in the upper stage of the Anglo-Saxon tower may, by careful inspection, be seen to be outlined by the remains of the original Anglo-Saxon belfry windows, which appear to have been round-headed single openings. These were later roughly blocked, no doubt to strengthen the fabric in preparation for the addition of the sixteenth-century belfry.

It will be noted that the side windows of the tower, both in the ground floor and in the first floor, are of double-splayed character. There is, however, a sharp contrast in style between the windows of the ground floor and those of the first floor since the former have monolithic heads and have jambs of large stones similar to those in the adjoining wall, whereas the windows of the upper storey have heads and jambs of quite small rubble. There is a similar contrast between the walling of the lower stage and that of the upper; and there is accordingly a strong presumption that the tower at Skipwith began as a porch of one storey and was later raised to form a tower. Moreover, there is a presumption that the windows of the lower stage were originally single-splayed and were cut later into their present double-splayed shape at the time when the upper storey was added and when double-splayed windows had become fashionable.

The tower-arch at Skipwith is of considerable interest, not only because of its size but also because of the way in which, like the tower-arch at Cambridge, it is outlined both on its east and its west faces by two lines of stripwork of which the inner is half-round in section and the outer square. The arch at Skipwith is remarkable because between it and the encircling hood mouldings there is interposed an area of walling which is horizontally coursed, thereby raising a presumption that the arch and hood mouldings are not parts of the original walling but are insertions in it.

Above the tower-arch a round-headed doorway with stepped bases formerly opened to an upper chamber, but is now blocked. Access to the upper chamber is now obtained by a fixed ladder within the tower, and the chamber is well worth visiting because in its east wall there is a

[1] G. B. Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, 2, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (London, 1925), 479.



Skipwith. This elevation and plan of the tower-arch shows how it is outlined on either face by strip-work in two separate courses of stones. The inner strip is half-round in section and the outer strip is square. Note the unusual jointing of the arch and also the unique arrangement whereby there is an area of horizontally coursed walling interposed between the arch and its surrounding strip-work.

remarkable recess carefully formed in the rubble fabric of the walling, with moulded jambs and lintel in a way which indicates that it served some important purpose.[1] In the south wall of the tower an additional double-splayed window has been provided near the eastern angle, in a way which seems to suggest that its purpose was to provide a good light in the region of this recess.

H. RIPON AND HEXHAM

There is good historical evidence that St. Wilfrid built churches of some magnificence at both Ripon and Hexham between 671 and 678.[2] Remarkable crypts have survived at Hexham and Ripon of a type not otherwise known in England, and it seems unreasonable to doubt that the two crypts are indeed the work of Wilfrid's seventh-century builders. At Hexham there are other architectural survivals of a major church and many fragments of architectural sculpture.

The crypt at Hexham consists of a main chamber and an ante-chamber, and it had three passages of entry. Of these passages two led to and from the ante-chamber while the third led to the main chamber itself. It seems reasonable to assume that the passages leading to and from the ante-chamber were for use of pilgrims who could view the relics in the main chamber from a position in the ante-chamber, and that the third passage was to give access to the main chamber for the clergy alone. The crypt at Ripon is similar but has only two passages of which one led to the ante-chamber and one to the main chamber.

The surviving architectural remains above ground at Hexham seem to establish an aisled church of considerable size with its main altar immediately above the crypt and with a subsidiary separate apsidal chapel of much smaller size a few feet to the east of the main church.[3] The so-called 'Frith Stool' at Hexham can with some certainty be regarded as having been the original stone seat for the abbot, and it may be compared with a somewhat similar, but simpler, stone seat which has survived at Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The architectural sculpture which has survived at Hexham is of great variety, consisting of string courses, imposts, window heads, carved fragments probably from a screen, bases and capitals of pilasters, and fragments of a rood of considerable merit, which were described by Hodges and illustrated by Collingwood but which now seem to have been lost.[4]

[1] G. B. Brown, *loc. cit.* 333.

[2] See, for example, B. Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927), chapter 17 for the building of the church at Ripon and chapter 22 for the building of the church at Hexham, where Eddius describes that the church had a crypt 'of well-polished stone'.

[3] H. M. Taylor and Joan Taylor, 'The Seventh-Century Church at Hexham: a new appreciation', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., xxxix, (1961), 103–34.

[4] W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses* (London, 1927), Fig. 36.

J. DESTRUCTION AND REBUILDING OF CHURCHES IN YORKSHIRE

The pre-Conquest churches of Yorkshire are unique among the churches of England in their evidence of re-use of Anglo-Saxon fabric in later Anglo-Saxon churches. For example, at Hovingham and Kirby Hill there are several window heads of early-Saxon character built in upside down in later Anglo-Saxon walls where they are used as common building stones. At many other Yorkshire churches there is much evidence of rebuilding, and at Kirkdale there is historical evidence for the reconstruction between 1055 and 1065 of a church that was in ruins. In many of these churches the original early plan may survive in whole or in part, and some of the original fabric may remain *in situ*; but it is difficult to be certain, although reasons have been mentioned above for believing that the lower parts of the west wall at Kirkdale may be a survival from the earlier church and there are indications of an early plan and early fabric in the nave at Kirk Hammerton, in spite of the indications of late workmanship in the elaborate character of the chancel-arch and in the hood mouldings round the doorways.

As has been mentioned in several places above, the western towers are often later additions to earlier churches.

9

EARLY TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION IN NORTHERN ENGLAND AND ITS BEARING ON THE SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT

GLANVILLE R. J. JONES

THE Scandinavian settlement of England, as its distinguished exponent Professor Ekwall has emphasized, was no passing episode but a lasting contribution to the development of English life.[1] Yet, to judge from recent publications, there is still much controversy about the precise nature of this settlement and, in particular, about the number of Scandinavians responsible for it.[2] The purpose of this paper is to show how this controversy can be resolved by viewing the Scandinavian settlement against the background provided by pre-existing territorial organization. For the sake of immediate convenience, the area chosen to illustrate this theme is northern England, here defined as embracing the six northern counties but from which Yorkshire will be singled out for special consideration.

I

The earliest recorded settlement for England as a whole was that of 876 when, after several years of activity by a Danish army north of the Humber, Healfdene 'shared out the land of the Northumbrians and they proceeded to plough and to support themselves'.[3] Early in the next century a new Scandinavian influx began, this time of Norwegians from Ireland. These appear to have settled chiefly in the north-west, but many must have followed to the east the Raegnald who established a ruling line at York in 919.

Such is the meagre picture presented by fragmentary literary sources. To supplement it and especially to illustrate geographical variations in the intensity of settlement, scholars therefore turned to the evidence of place-names. Scandinavian place-names in northern England suggest some

[1] H. C. Darby (ed.), *An Historical Geography of England* (Cambridge, 1936), 163.

[2] E. Ekwall, 'The Proportion of Scandinavian Settlers in the Danelaw', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, xii (London, 1937–45), 19–34. R. H. C. Davis, 'East Anglia and the Danelaw', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., v (1955), 23–39. P. H. Sawyer, 'The Density of the Danish Settlement in England', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, vi, no. 1 (1958), 1–17.

[3] D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, vol. i (London, 1955), 179.