Land or Gold? Changing Perceptions of Landscape in Viking Age Lincolnshire

by LETTY TEN HARKEL

This paper looks at the relationship between political conflict and changing perceptions of landscape in England between the ninth and early eleventh centuries AD, focusing on the modern county of Lincolnshire. The period between the ninth and early eleventh centuries AD was a period of continuous conflict, characterised by the Viking raids and subsequent Scandinavian settlement, followed by the unification of England as a result of the West Saxon expansion, and its subsequent conquest by the kings of Denmark. Using different types of material culture, including settlements, metal dress-accessories and funerary sculpture, this paper addresses the relationship between foreign settlement and/or territorial expansion, and the commoditisation of land and its effect on landscape perception.

Keywords: Lincolnshire, Viking, conflict archaeology, landscape archaeology, material culture.

Introduction

The Anglo-Saxon period witnessed some major changes in the structure of the English landscape. Many boundaries that still exist in the landscape today can be traced back to at least the late Anglo-Saxon period. Place-name evidence can provide a historical context for the emergence of individual settlements, which in many cases can also be traced back to the late Anglo-Saxon period. This article argues that such developments in the structure of the English landscape were inherently related to changing perceptions of land and landscape, which, in turn, were related to contemporary political conflict. After a brief outline of the main political events that occurred in Lincolnshire between the ninth and early eleventh centuries, a working definition of the terms landscape and land will be provided. The main body of the paper will be divided into four sections. The first section will discuss the evidence for the development of 'towns' in Lincolnshire, whilst the second section will take a closer look at the process of rural settlement development. The production of metal dress-accessories will form the topic of another section, which will consider the transition from a gift-exchange based society to one whose social organisation was grounded in the control of territory. A brief consideration of the production and use of funerary sculpture in the tenth and early eleventh centuries will close this paper.

The period between the ninth and early eleventh centuries is often referred to as the Viking Age. In popular imagination, this term conjures images of ruthless pagan pirates who employed hit-and-run tactics to steal portable wealth from monasteries and towns, and those initial Viking raids that were documented by ecclesiastical chroniclers indeed fit this profile. The first recorded Viking attacks on England, which was then still divided into a number of independent Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, occurred in the last two decades of the eighth century. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (A: 787) records that during the reign of King Beorhthtir (786-802), 'there came for the first time three ships; and then the reeve rode there ... and they killed him. Those were the first ships of the Danish men which sought out the land of the English race'. More famously, in AD 793, a group of Scandinavian raiders ‘miserably devastated’ the monastery at Lindisfarne in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria ‘by looting and slaughter’ (ASC D, E, F: 793). This second attack prompted an outraged response from Alcuin, a resident scholar at the court of Charlemagne who was originally from Northumbria himself, who considered the attack as God’s punishment for the sins of the Anglo-Saxons (Lapidge 2001: 24; Hadley 2006: 16). Subsequent Viking attacks focused on the southern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, in particular Mercia. The first recorded attack on Lincolnshire, which was part of the kingdom of Mercia, occurred in AD 841, when ‘in Lindsey ... many men were killed by the raiding army’ (ASC A: 838; Hadley 2006: 10).

The phase of hit-and-run tactics in England was, however, relatively short-lived. By the middle of the ninth century, the Viking campaigns were becoming longer. In AD 850-51, a Viking army overwintered for the first time in Kent, then part of Wessex (ASC A: 851; Kelly 2001: 270). In AD 865, an unusually large Viking army (the micel here or great army; ASC A: 866) arrived in East Anglia and ‘made peace’ with the locals, who provided them with horses. Throughout the next
decade continuous raids occurred across the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, eventually culminating in the permanent settlement of the majority of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, with the exception of Wessex and the southwest of Mercia. In AD 872-73, the micel here overwintered at Torksey in Lincolnshire, and ‘the Mercians made peace with the raiding army’ (ASC A: 873). In AD 874, they drove the king of Mercia, Burgred, into exile, and conquered his kingdom (ASC A: 874). In AD 875, part of the army settled in the kingdom of Northumbria, ‘and they were ploughing and providing for themselves’ (ASC A: 876), whilst in the harvest-season of the following year they ‘went into the land of Mercia, and some of it they divided up’ (ASC A: 877). Finally, in AD 879 ‘the raiding army went from Cirencester into East Anglia, and settled that land, and divided it up’ (ASC A: 880). Whatever had prompted the change in tactics on the part of the invaders, it is clear that these developments represent a profound change in their perception of wealth, which now placed the conquest of land over the accumulation of portable wealth.

The Vikings were not the only ones who were intent on the conquest of territory. The early Scandinavian raids had invoked an intense response from a number of contemporary figures, including King Alfred ‘the Great’ of Wessex (871-99). Like Alcuin, Alfred regarded the Viking invasions as God’s punishment for the sins of the Anglo-Saxons (Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 295 n. 6), and, amongst other things, proposed a large-scale educational reform to cure the problem once and for all (Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 124-27). The writings that originated under his patronage (and which supposedly included the now lost first version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) can be read as political propaganda that promoted the sense of an England that was united against a common enemy, the Vikings (Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 41). Whether Alfred believed in his own propaganda is impossible to say, but it did provide him with a legitimate excuse to expand his territory, and unite the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms under his own rule, a goal that was only achieved on a permanent basis under his grandson Eadred (946-55) in AD 954 (ASC D, E: 954).

The expansionist aspirations of the Anglo-Saxon kings were not a new phenomenon, but dated back to the conversion period of the late sixth and seventh centuries at least. In the pagan early Anglo-Saxon period (c. AD 410-650), kingship was supposedly peripatetic, and power relations were based on the personal relationship between a king and his followers, which were typically maintained through gift-exchange (Blair 2005: 8-9, 49-51; Webster 1998). The sources for this period are few and difficult (Campbell 1982: 20; Stenton 1971: 1-3; for Lindsey, see Foot 1993: 128; Yorke 1993: 141), though literary sources such as Beowulf, which was written down in its present form around AD 1000 but found its roots in the pre-Christian period, retain a memory of this earlier time. Especially the use of words such as goldgyfa meaning ‘gold-giver’ (‘lord’: Beowulf 2652) or goldwine meaning ‘gold-friend’ (‘prince’: Beowulf 1171, 1602, 1476, 2419, 2584) serves to illustrate the importance of portable wealth to maintain a social hierarchy. How and why this changed is harder to say. Blair (2005: 49-50) has argued that the success of the conversion, which penetrated society ‘from the top downwards’, was the result of the changing ambitions of the Anglo-Saxon kings ‘as they moved towards a more “political”, less “tribal” organization’ and ‘reoriented themselves towards the Christian world’. In any case, it seems that by the seventh century, as Christianity spread across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, power was increasingly rooted in the possession of territory. This point is further confirmed by the fact that the introduction of the concept of bookland – land that was granted by a charter – also dates from this period. Unlike folkland, which referred to land held by a kin group that could not be alienated from the kin group except under special circumstances, bookland...
could be alienated at will. It was therefore more suitable for the purposes of the Church, which did not have a place within existing patterns of land tenure (Stenton 1971: 307-309; John 1964), whilst it also facilitated the importance of land as a commodity that could be granted to one’s followers as a means to maintain power relations. In the course of the following centuries, as Christian notions of kingship gained a hold on Anglo-Saxon society, a process of territorial consolidation began to take place that was still ongoing when the Scandinavian invaders began to settle in the ninth century.

The West Saxon expansion continued until the middle of the tenth century, in the face of continuous resistance from the inhabitants of the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, in particular those of Northumbria, which was finally conquered in AD 954. During this period, the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were spared any more significant Viking attacks, but these resumed again in the 980s (Keynes 1997: 73-74). The same process, whereby land gradually replaced wealth as the commodity the invaders tried to obtain, is visible in the chronology of events that happened subsequently. In the 980s and 990s, the various Viking armies campaigned across England and caused destruction wherever they went in order to demand ever-increasing amounts of tribute, which was presumably paid in gold and silver. In the eleventh century, however, their tactics changed. When Swein Forkbeard, King of Denmark and a Christian himself, and his son Cnut arrived in AD 1013 AD, their aim was apparently not to obtain tribute, but to conquer England and to add it to their own territory (Keynes 1997: 75-76).

‘Landscape’ and ‘land’

The introduction has summarised the ongoing political conflicts of the ninth to early eleventh centuries, emphasising the increasing importance of land rather than portable wealth as a medium for the negotiation of power. And as land became increasingly commoditised, elite perceptions of landscape must have changed. But what is the difference between land and landscape? The terminology has been the cause of much academic debate. For example, Ingold (1993: 154) has argued that the two concepts are diametrically opposed and that the difference between land and landscape lies in the fact that the former is ‘quantitative and homogenous’, whilst the latter is ‘qualitative and heterogeneous’. In other words, ‘you can ask of land ... how much there is, but not what it is like’, whereas ‘you can ask of a landscape what it is like, but not how much of it there is’ (Ingold 1993: 153-54).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to devise a conclusive definition of landscape and land, but it is nevertheless necessary to define the terms, as they will be used within the context of this article. Whereas Ingold’s (1993) distinction between landscape and land may hold truth to an extent, the two concepts are also inherently related. For example, during the period of Scandinavian settlement in the 870s, land became something that could be possessed and controlled. Those who struggled for control over this commodity would have travelled through the landscape assessing the quality of the land, thereby acknowledging its heterogeneity. Simply put, there was ‘good land’ and ‘not so good land’, and this distinction affected the desirability of a particular piece of land for settlement, and thus, eventually, the structure of the landscape.

The driving force behind the commoditisation of land was a change in existing perceptions of wealth. Once commoditised, the landscape itself became something that people actively tried to (re)structure and control. Land became the cause of political conflict, and certain landscape features – such as roads and rivers – became political boundaries. Ingold (1993: 152) has stated that the landscape is ‘an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves’. Although this is true to an extent, it regards landscape as a reflection or relic of human activity, rather than the cause of human activity. This paper regards landscape as an agent (for a definition of agency, see Gardner 2008; Gell 1998: 16). As Knappett (2002: 100, 115) has demonstrated, agency can only exist and be perceived in the relationships that exist between agents, be they human or non-human. In other words, it is in the interaction between people and the landscape that the significance of the landscape to its past inhabitants becomes apparent. Likewise, it is in the active transformation of the landscape that changing perceptions of landscape can be discerned.
Settlement development in ninth-to eleventh-century Lincolnshire: the emergence of ‘towns’

The ninth to early eleventh centuries witnessed a number of changes in existing settlement patterns in Lincolnshire, as elsewhere in England. These include the development of towns as well as various changes in rural settlement patterns, and the transition of large incoherent minster church territories into parishes whose boundaries were to have a lasting effect on the landscape. To an extent, these changes were rooted in the social unrest that followed the Scandinavian raids and settlement. At the same time, they give a clear indication of the changes that the perception of the English landscape underwent. The following two sections discuss town formation and rural settlement development in Lincolnshire in the context of the Scandinavian settlement, and their relationship with the changing structure and perception of the landscape.

The distinction between urban and rural is problematic, and has given rise to significant and ongoing debate (Biddle 1976b: 99-100; Perring 2002: 9-11; Reynolds 1987: 296; Roskams 1996: 264; Wickham 2006: 591-96). This article will not return to this issue, but accepts the definition proposed by Susan Reynolds (1987: 296), which argues that a settlement could be classed as a town when it was perceived as such by its contemporaries. There is one late eleventh-century written source, Domesday Book, which provides an insight into how individual settlements were perceived. Domesday Book, which provides a list of landholdings across England, was put together for taxation purposes some two decades after the Norman Conquest, but the origins of the situation it describes lie in the pre-Conquest period (Roffe 2000; 2007). It sets three Lincolnshire settlements apart from the long list of rural landholdings. These include the civitas of Lincoln, the burgum regis of Stamford, and the villa of Torksey. The development of these three settlements differed greatly, although some common factors can be identified. They may all have fulfilled certain central-place functions during the middle Anglo-Saxon period, and experienced a period of growth contemporary with the Viking settlement, presumably as the result of elite intervention, when they obtained an increasing monopoly as regional production centres, in particular of wheel-thrown pottery, and obtained mints.

At the beginning of the ninth century, Lincoln was a largely deserted Roman colonia with some evidence for a limited ecclesiastical presence, but no significant domestic or economic activity. According to the Ecclesiastical History of the English People (II: 16), written by Bede in the eighth century, the settlement was the location of an early church, founded by Paulinus in the 620s, after the reeve of the city had become the first person in the region to convert to Christianity. Although the location of this church was never determined archaeologically, excavations have confirmed the presence of two possible early church foundations, at St. Paul-in-the-Bail in the Upper City (Fig.2) and, in the shape of a few possibly middle Anglo-Saxon skeletons, along Silver Street in the Lower City (Vince 2003: 154-56)10. No other structural remains of middle Anglo-Saxon date (c. AD 650-850) have been found in Lincoln: in most cases the late Anglo-Saxon layers are separated from the Roman deposits only by a layer of ‘dark earth’, a homogenous type of garden soil that was probably the result of agricultural activities and general build-up of plant material (Vince 1990).
the walled settlement of the Lower City was re-occupied. Evidence for manufacturing activities can be identified, including wheel-thrown pottery based on Frankish prototypes, and non-ferrous metalwork with Scandinavian stylistic influences. One of the most significant excavations that has taken place in the Lower City, at Flaxengate, demonstrated that a number of dwellings in which metalworking activities took place were centrally controlled, because several buildings were periodically levelled and re-built during single construction events (Perring 1981). In the tenth century, the pottery and metalwork produced at Lincoln found a relatively widespread regional distribution across the surrounding countryside (Symonds 2003: Ten Harkel 2010: ch. 6). Coin production also took place at Lincoln from the late ninth century onwards, and at the beginning of the eleventh century, Lincoln was one of the most prosperous towns of Anglo-Saxon England, its mint ranking amongst the three most productive in England (Blackburn et al. 1983).

The early history of Stamford is less well understood. The settlement itself does not have Roman origins, but may have found its roots as a middle Anglo-Saxon estate centre with an associated church dedicated to St. Peter, situated on the north bank of the river Welland (Hadley 2006: 158-59; Sawyer 1998: 194). The settlement was fortified in the late ninth or tenth century, following the Scandinavian settlement (Mahany 1982: 9; Sawyer 1998: 94-95). At roughly the same time, a pottery industry was established (Mahany 1977: 177; Sawyer 1998: 195; Whitwell 1967: 45), but it is unclear whether this pre-dated the construction of the defences (Mahany 1982: 10). Based on documentary references, it is sometimes argued that the settlement was extended into a double +burh, also encompassing a fortified settlement on the south bank of the river, after the West Saxon conquest of the area in AD 918 (Mahany 1982: 3, 10; Sawyer 1998: 194-96). By the early eleventh century, Stamford had a flourishing pottery industry with a widespread regional and inter-regional distribution, as well as a flourishing mint (Mahany 1982: 4; Symonds 2003).

The development of Torksey has remained even more of an enigma (Hadley 2006: 155-60, 167). No structural remains of Roman or early to middle Anglo-Saxon date have been found at Torksey (Barley 1964; 1981; Brown 2006: 1-5; Sawyer 1998: 197). However, in the winter of 872-73, Torksey was the location for a Viking winter camp (see above), and it has been suggested that this location was chosen because Torksey had been a significant pre-existing middle Anglo-Saxon settlement (Brown 2006: 13-17; Jones et al. 2003: 143). This would fit a pattern identified by Williams (2008), that many Viking winter camps were indeed located in or near pre-existing estate centres. It is possible that its development should be placed in the context of the nearby settlement at Marton, less than 23 miles further north, which has yielded evidence for an early market and whose church has produced a collection of tenth-century funerary sculpture (Everson and Stocker 2006: 218-20). In either case, Torksey’s economic growth resembled that of Lincoln and Stamford. Excavations in the 1960s and 1990s revealed a number of ninth- to eleventh-century pottery kilns, which Sawyer (1998: 197) has directly attributed to the Viking settlement. A cemetery was also uncovered, which probably had tenth-century origins, and may have been associated with the now-lost parish church of All Saints (Buckberry 2004: 405-06). However, very little evidence for settlement activity has been excavated to date, and the settlement does not seem to have had any defences, which has led to the suggestion that Torksey was an undefended trading post (Barley 1981: 264; Brown 2006: 9-10). By the middle of the tenth century, it housed one of the most important pottery industries in the region, and production continued well into the twelfth century (Barley 1964: 172; 1981; Brown 2006: 10; Symonds 2003. For a brief period during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, Torksey also possessed a mint.

The development of the three Lincolnshire towns was characterised by economic growth. In all three cases, the nature of the economic activity that took place was predominantly non-agricultural. This is in accordance with the definition of towns as proposed by Reynolds (1987: 296), who argues that

When we talk of a place as a town, or as urban, we ... assume without thinking about it that we are talking about a permanent human settlement in which a significant proportion of the population is engaged in non-agricultural occupations ... A town therefore normally lives off the food of the surrounding countryside ... and supplies this countryside with other goods and services in return.
The development of towns can thus be seen as a process whereby people's daily activities were increasingly restricted to the production of an industrial surplus in an urban environment, in some cases separated from the rest of the landscape by a visible boundary in the shape of town defences. As a result, people's daily experiences became increasingly divorced from the rural landscape, and from the people who inhabited that landscape. Or, to quote Reynolds (1987: 296) once more,

Because of the distinctive functions of towns their inhabitants normally regard themselves, and are regarded by outsiders, as a different sort of people. However deeply they are divided among themselves they tend to be united at least in regarding themselves as united in their urbanity against the country bumpkins around.

It is interesting to note that this process took place at the same time that an unknown number of people with no previous relationship to the Anglo-Saxon landscape, i.e. the Scandinavian invaders, settled in some of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. In the case of Lincoln, the presence of Scandinavian-style dress-accessories – such as ringed pins and so-called 'Norse' bells (Ten Harkel forthcoming) – and the use of Norwegian soapstone for metalworking moulds (Bayley 2008: 20) furthermore suggest that at least a proportion of its population was of Scandinavian descent. In Torksey, which is documented as a Viking encampment in the 870s, the ninth- and tenth-century metalwork that has been retrieved is of even more explicit Scandinavian character (Brown 2006). The pottery produced in both settlements was inspired by Frankish prototypes, leading to the suggestion that Frankish potters accompanied the Scandinavian settlement (Vince 2005). The same has been argued for the pottery produced in Stamford, which displayed links with contemporary northern French wares (Kilmurry 1980).

But was the increased alienation of people from the rural landscape merely the result of the settlement by a foreign people? In contemporary Wessex, situated outside the area of Scandinavian settlement, a number of burhs were constructed under the patronage of the West-Saxon king Alfred and his successors as part of their policy to protect England from the pagan invaders (Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 24-25; also see Astill 1991; Biddle 1976a; 1976b; Hodges 1982; 1988). A passage from Asser's Life of Alfred (ch. 91), lamenting the tribulations that befell Alfred's life, views the burhs constructed during Alfred's reign as towns, as he exclaims: 'And what of the cities (civitatibus) and towns (urribus) to be rebuilt and others to be constructed where previously there were none?' Town construction, however, is a literary motif associated with great kings in the Classical and Christian tradition (see, for example, Procopius' account of the deeds of the sixth-century Byzantine emperor Justinian) and archaeological investigations have revealed that these burhs were essentially military foundations that did not obtain urban characteristics (in terms of economic activity) or sizable populations until the later tenth or eleventh centuries (Astill 2006: 236, 243, 254). In fact, recent research in the region that formerly was the Kingdom of Wessex suggests that burhs like Wallingford, Lydford and Cricklade remained mostly empty spaces until after the Norman Conquest (Astill 2006).

In Denmark, some of the earliest settlements that could arguably be classed as towns, the emporia at Hedeby and Ribe and possibly Århus, were fortified during the later tenth century. This is usually attributed to King Harald Bluetooth (c. 958-86), who was responsible for the erection of the famous Jelling-stone that proclaimed himself as the king who 'Christianized the Danes' (Lund 1997: 160). In addition to a defensive purpose, these fortifications facilitated control (and therefore taxation) over goods entering and exiting the emporia. It is interesting to note, however, that many of these goods attested to overseas trade, and that it is likely, therefore, that the populations of these emporia included a foreign element.

Although the economic success of towns seems to have been more rapid in areas where a sizable part of the population had no existing relationship with the rural landscape, the intention to build towns seems to have been a shared characteristic of rulers who were intent on establishing their reputation as defenders of the Christian Church. This also holds true for two of the Lincolnshire towns. As discussed above, the earliest post-Roman archaeological evidence from Lincoln was indicative of an ecclesiastical presence, and the earliest settlement core at Stamford may have found its origin as an estate centre with associated church. Blair (2005: 246-90) has argued that the most important forerunners of the tenth-
and eleventh-century towns were not middle Anglo-Saxon wics, but middle Anglo-Saxon minster sites. Although the evidence from Lincolnshire does not support a straightforward linear development from minster to town, there is evidence that two of the three Lincolnshire towns, as they were perceived at the time of the Domesday survey, were associated with, or grew out of, a pre-existing settlement core with an ecclesiastical element, be it a possible monastic foundation or a manorial church. The economic impetus for their growth in the late ninth century, however, was the arrival of foreign immigrants who had no previous connection to the Lincolnshire landscape, and members of rural communities who had been uprooted by the social disruption caused by the Scandinavian settlement. It was these two groups who constituted the first inhabitants of developing towns like Lincoln, Stamford and Torksey, the latter of which may have had an entirely foreign population during its initial economic growth.

**Rural settlement development and parish formation in ninth- to eleventh-century Lincolnshire**

This section investigates the relationship between rural settlement development and changing perceptions of landscape in Lincolnshire. The number of rural excavations in Lincolnshire is limited, and even where Anglo-Saxon settlement remains have been uncovered the scale of the (mostly developer-funded) excavations is often small. Nevertheless, in recent years a picture of rural settlement development has begun to emerge. Traditionally, it was held that during the early and middle Anglo-Saxon periods, rural settlement was mostly (if not exclusively) dispersed. The formation of villages, in particular of the type of settlement that combined a high-status dwelling with a small church and cemetery, often associated with a number of regular house plots for peasants, would have occurred primarily from the later ninth and tenth centuries onwards, contemporary with the development of towns and the Scandinavian settlement in the region (Hadley 2006: 115; Reynolds 1999: 111, 130, 134). In this context, Reynolds (1999: 135) has argued that the development of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms is directly reflected in the development of rural settlements, which evolved from the loosely grouped farmsteads of the fifth and sixth centuries, to the organised communities of the tenth and eleventh centuries (Reynolds 1999: 135-36; also see Everson et al. 1991: 13). More recent investigations have revealed that many of these organised late Anglo-Saxon settlements overlay earlier, middle Anglo-Saxon settlements, which led Reynolds (2003: 131; also see Jones and Page 2006) to state that instead, ‘village origins (with regard to individual settlements) can be found across a period of at least 400 years’.

The process of village formation was not restricted to a specific period in Lincolnshire either. Many late Anglo-Saxon settlements in Lincoln had early to middle Anglo-Saxon origins. One example of this is the settlement at West Halton (Grenville and Parker Pearson 1983; Hadley et al. 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; Hadley and Willmott forthcoming), which has been identified as a possible seventh- to ninth-century minster church site (Blair 1988: 1-2; Hadley et al. 2003: 2). Excavations by the University of Sheffield have revealed two separate early to middle Anglo-Saxon settlement cores, which gradually grew into one settlement in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Hadley et al. 2004: 24; Hadley and Willmott forthcoming). Likewise, the settlement at Barton-upon-Humber in North Lincolnshire, which has been postulated as the site of a monastery founded *at baruwe* (Bede, HE IV: 3) in the seventh century (Leahy 1998: 16), also had middle Anglo-Saxon origins (Bradley 2002; Rodwell and Rodwell 1982; Tibbles and Steedman 1990). During excavations at the church of St. Peter in the centre of the present village, it became apparent that the site had originally been occupied by a number of sixth- to seventh-century buildings with gravel footings, which may represent a settlement that was associated with the nearby early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery at Castledyke, Barton-upon-Humber (Drinkall and Foreman 1998; Gardner and Bunn 2006: 4-5; Rodwell and Rodwell 1982). A substantial eighth- to ninth-century boundary ditch with a timber palisade and earthen bank was identified as the enclosure ditch of a middle Anglo-Saxon manorial centre (Bradley 2000: 28; 2002: 24; Rodwell 2007). It was originally held that an inhumation cemetery just outside the enclosure dated to the ninth century, but recent dendrochronological and radiocarbon dating of several coffins and skeletons pointed to a date for the earliest cemetery phase between 950 and 1150 (Waldron 2007: 29). The present church of St. Peter, whose tenth-century fabric still partially survives, is stratigraphically later than this graveyard as several graves that would have been cut by the foundations were excavated and reburied
Whereas West Halton and Barton-upon-Humber showed little sign of decline in the later Anglo-Saxon period, other Lincolnshire villages that found their origins in the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period were abandoned in the late Anglo-Saxon period, demonstrating that not only village origins, but also village decline occurred throughout the entire Anglo-Saxon period. The 2001 developer-funded excavations at Belton revealed a few sunken-featured buildings and, interestingly, one of the few assemblages of production evidence of Maxey-type ware – in the form of wasters – from Lincolnshire (Young 2001). The absence of late Anglo-Saxon pottery from Belton, however, suggests that the site was abandoned in the early ninth century (Young 2001).

Investigations at Flixborough in the late 1980s and 1990s revealed a settlement sequence that began in the late seventh century AD and continued into the tenth century (Loveluck 1998; 2001; 2007). Part of the earliest phase was a building that has been interpreted as a chapel, associated with a high-status aristocratic centre (Loveluck 2001: 115-16). The discovery of a number of _styl_ as in the early ninth-century layers, as well as an inscribed lead plaque and numerous fragments of window glass, which at that time was usually restricted to high-status minster churches, suggest that the site continued to have ecclesiastical significance, and Loveluck (2001: 100, 116; 2007) has even suggested that for a period the site may have functioned as a minster. In the later ninth and tenth centuries, contemporary with the emergence of the urban sites at Lincoln, Stamford and Torksey, and the Viking settlement in the region, the evidence for craft production decreased significantly, until the site was abandoned and the settlement shifted eastwards onto the limestone escarpment of the Lincoln Edge in the course of the tenth century (Loveluck 2001: 100; Loveluck and Atkinson 2007: 97-104). Loveluck (2001: 90; also see Loveluck and Atkinson 2007: ch. 7) argues that the driving force behind this shift was the desire to construct a stone church (possibly a postulated precursor to the church of all saints in the deserted medieval village of Conesby), which required a harder ground (i.e. limestone) than the windblown sands underlying the settlement remains at Flixborough. Based on the place-name evidence (Conesby meaning ‘the King’s manor’), Loveluck (2001: 117; 2007) furthermore views this phase as the emergence of an Anglo-Scandinavian manor site.

The late Anglo-Saxon period also witnessed the development of new rural settlements. One example is Waterton on the Isle of Axeholme, whose pottery profile suggests an eleventh-century origin (Foreman 1996: 23). The Isle of Axeholme, as well as the lower-lying regions of Holland, remained largely unoccupied until the eleventh century in general, and it has been suggested that their re-occupation may be the direct result of the second wave of Scandinavian colonisation following England’s political conquest in the 1010s (Fenwick et al. 1998: 168; Head et al. 1998: 277; Young et al. 2001: 3).

Elsewhere in Lincolnshire, new settlements also developed as late as the tenth century. One such example is the settlement known as ‘Goltho’, although there has been considerable debate over its precise dating (Beresford 1975a; 1975b; 1981; 1987; Stocker 1989). A number of farmsteads were constructed in the early tenth century (Beresford 1987: 24; Stocker 1989: 628; Symonds 2003: 51). Some fifty years later, the site was cleared for the construction of a fortified high-status dwelling (Beresford 1981: 16; 1987: 3, 12-14, 23), whilst a planned lower-status settlement was also laid out, arranged along a central track-way leading to the fortified manor (Beresford 1987: 23). The manor was situated just to the southwest of the sixteenth-century church of St. George (Beresford 1975b: 1; Whitwell 1967: 50), and although the site of the church was not investigated, it is possible that the original church was of similar date as the construction of the manor. In that case, the village at ‘Goltho’ fits in with a type of nucleated settlement that combined a high-status dwelling with a small church and a number of regular house plots for peasants (Hadley 2006: 115; Reynolds 1999: 111, 130, 134). This type of settlement is typically associated with the beginnings of parish formation, as it has become clear that the boundaries of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction often coincided (Bassett 2006: 117; Reynolds 1999: 134). The later phases of the settlement at Barton-upon-Humber, which likewise combined a high-status dwelling with a church, may also have belonged to this type.

It may be clear from the preceding discussion that rural settlement development was often inherently related to the presence of ecclesiastical foundations – be they minster churches, monastic foundations or parish churches – in the Lincolnshire landscape. In some cases, as at ‘Goltho’, the process of parish
formation may have had an effect on the nature of rural settlement development, whereby the occupant of the high-status dwelling may have been the founder of the parish. Blair (2005: 369) and Hadley (2006) have argued that the majority of medieval parish boundaries found their origins in the late ninth and tenth centuries as the result of the subdivision of larger territories, which had been associated with minster churches, into smaller units. As the average size of the new parishes in the areas of Scandinavian settlement were generally speaking smaller than in the south, Hadley (2006) has furthermore proposed that these developments represent a process of consolidation between the Church and the new Scandinavian landowners, many of whom had recently converted to Christianity. The cooperation between Scandinavian settlers and the Church was mutually beneficial. The Church provided the necessary legitimisation for the invaders' newly obtained power, whilst the new landholding elite assisted the Church in the collection of taxes and dues in return.

The process of parish formation can be seen as a process of secularisation of the Church. Looking at it from this perspective, Carver (2001: 17) has explained the involvement of the new Scandinavian elite in the establishment of new parishes in the following terms:

Perhaps the Scandinavian hostility was not to Christianity but towards state control, taxation and the alienation of land to non-wealth creators. The Vikings, by dissolving the monastic system and substituting a secular alternative, had succeeded in effecting a conversion of their own.

Although Carver’s observations are correct in terms of the effects of the settlers’ involvement in parish foundation, the driving force behind their actions was undoubtedly their commoditised view of the landscape that they were restructuring. Blair (2005: 370) has identified the period between the middle of the ninth and the eleventh centuries AD as a period of ‘more systematic apportionment of peasant settlements and field-systems’ that was related to the growing power of local landholders. This apportionment was driven by economic concerns, and provides evidence that the landscape was becoming increasingly quantitative and objectified. The parishes to the north of Lincoln, most of which indeed find their origins in the period between the later ninth and early eleventh centuries, are arranged in a ladder form, situated on both sides of the old Roman road known as Ermine Street, which ran along the top of the Lincoln Edge, and stretched down the slope on either side towards the more fertile low-lying ground. Their arrangement ensured that each parish had equal access to different resources and communication routes (Everson and Stocker pers. comm.; for an earlier discussion of parish formation, see for example Fox 1989). The relatively small size of these units, each of which was more or less self-sufficient, furthermore rendered the experience of the landscape increasingly static. It is worth noting that this process of landscape fragmentation on economic grounds, itself a symptom of the increased commoditisation of land, was contemporary with the economic growth of towns, which, likewise, required a degree of separation from the rural landscape in order to take place.

The significance of gold in Viking Age Lincolnshire

The previous sections have discussed the evidence for settlement development in Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire, with attention on the increased commoditisation of land. The following sections look deeper into the possible reasons behind this change through an analysis of two types of material culture that were produced and used in Lincolnshire, metal dress-accessories and monumental funerary sculpture. These types of material culture will be analysed using the theoretical concept of materiality, or ‘[the] style of enquiry that engages with the unavoidable qualities of a material’ (Taylor 2008: 297).

As stated previously, early Anglo-Saxon society was essentially a gift-based society. The abovementioned terminology from Beowulf, which highlights the importance of rulers as distributors of wealth, serves well to illustrate this point, as do the majority of high-status grave goods from the pre-Christian period, which, like the dress-accessories found at Sutton Hoo (Carver 1998), were often produced of solid gold. The nature of the Viking raids of the ninth century as well as those of the later tenth century, which were intent on the accumulation of portable wealth in the form of loot or tribute, suggests that gold and other precious materials played an important role within ninth- and tenth-century
Scandinavian society. This is further confirmed by the composition of Viking hoards from this period, which were often composed of objects of solid gold and/or silver, either in the shape of coinage or hack-metal (Blackburn 1986; Gunstone 1981; Kilger 2006; Walker 1945; Williams 2007)

By contrast, there is little evidence that precious metals were as important to the Scandinavians who settled in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the second half of the ninth century. Metal dress-accessories and related artefacts, some of which displayed Scandinavian stylistic influences, as well as production evidence for non-ferrous metalworking activities, were found in the earliest post-Roman occupation layers in Lincoln. The artefacts were entirely made of base metals, including copper- and lead-alloys (Ten Harkel forthcoming) (Fig.3). The exclusive use of base metals for these dress-accessories has alternatively been regarded as a decline in workmanship, evidence that the lower classes could now also afford to wear dress-accessories (Leahy 2007: 148; Owen-Crocker 1986: 206), or the result of a lack of available gold (Blackburn 1993; Williams 2007). The first explanation does not provide an answer to the question why the elite would also be wearing sub-standard jewellery, and although there may indeed be reason to assume that the gold supplies in western Europe had dried up (Williams pers. comm.), there is no indication that a similar fate had befallen the silver, which was still used in large quantities for the production of coinage, but not for dress-accessories. The only regions where dress-accessories made of precious metals still occurred were the Scandinavian-controlled regions of England, most noticeably on sites with a Scandinavian character, such as Torksey. This suggests that high-status dress-accessories were still used for the maintenance and establishment of a social hierarchy amongst part of the population, although here, too, base-metal dress-accessories, which did not fulfil such functions, were increasingly common.

A different explanation may be suggested by reference to the theoretical concept of materiality, which allows for the possibility that different types of metal were perceived to have different qualities, and thus a different social function. In the early Anglo-Saxon period, when kingship was peripatetic, and power relations were maintained through gift-giving, dress-accessories, if they wanted to fulfill this role, had to be made of precious materials. By the tenth century, however, when kingship was instead grounded in the possession of territory, metal dress-accessories were no longer used to create a social hierarchy, and therefore gold and silver were no longer appropriate materials for their production. Interestingly, tenth-century written sources now increasingly express the value of land in gold (Blackburn 2007). It is unlikely that gold ever actually changed hands during those transactions. Instead, it was probably used as a measure of value, a figurative translation of the value of the new commodity (land) into a known quantity (gold).
Again, the instigator behind these changes seems to have been the Church. In a publication discussing the development of Lindsey, Leahy (2007: 148) has commented on the gradual disappearance of the use of gold and gilding for dress-accessories in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries. Analysis of the metalwork finds from Lincolnshire as a whole as listed on the Portable Antiquities Scheme by the current author added further detail to Leahy’s conclusion. It revealed that there was a marked decrease of the use of solid gold in the course of the seventh century, following the conversion of the area by Paulinus in the 620s, whilst the use of gilding disappeared in the course of the eighth century. Solid silver was used only very occasionally for dress-accessories after the seventh century. Although silvering, in particular of strap-ends, was still used in the eighth and ninth centuries, this came to an end in the tenth century.

In an article on the use of gold in late Anglo-Saxon England, Blackburn (2007) has drawn attention to the fact that the use of gold in this period was increasingly restricted to the Church and to kings. The monopoly of the Church on gold may partially be related to the act that gold was one of the three gifts that the three kings from the east presented to the baby Jesus as he lay in his crib, together with incense and myrrh, whose use was also largely restricted to the Church. The continued prerogative of kings to wear and use gold may be related to their position as God’s anointed. At the same time, the increased monopoly of the Church on the use of gold may be seen as a shift in existing power relations, with the Church replacing the king’s secular retainers as his most important ally.

The changing role of metal dress-accessories during the middle and late Anglo-Saxon periods was also reflected in the changing role of the smith within Anglo-Saxon society. The ninth and tenth centuries saw an increasing monopoly of the emerging urban centres, in particular Lincoln, Norwich and York, on the production of non-ferrous metalwork. In Lincoln, the metalworking workshops were centrally organised, and situated in the heart of the settlement in the Lower City. The circumstances of metalwork production in Lincoln contrast sharply with the organisation of the trade in the preceding, middle Anglo-Saxon period. The discovery of a seventh- or eighth-century smith’s grave in Tattershall Thorpe in Lincolnshire has provided an important insight into the different organisation of metalwork production prior to AD c. 800. The smith was buried on the boundary between two territories, suggesting that he was a travelling craftsman who did not form part of the local community (Hinton 2000; 2003). He was accompanied by a large number of grave goods, including metalworking tools and a box of scrap metal containing iron, copper and lead alloys and small quantities of precious metals (Hinton 2000; 2003). Hinton has suggested that the careful manner in which he was buried is indicative of the respect and the fear that his craft inspired in the members of the community where he had accidentally died, and serves as a reminder of the period when kingship was still based on gift-exchange.

As there is evidence that metalworking activities frequently occurred on Church lands, Hinton (2000: 115; 2003: 273) has suggested that the Church was directly responsible for the decrease in the importance of gift-exchange to maintain power relations, and the changing status of the smith in Anglo-Saxon society, from a travelling craftsman with magical powers who existed outside normal communities, to a socially accepted craftsman in the service of the Church. In Lincoln, the two only fully excavated church sites, at St. Paul-in-the-Bail in the Upper City and St. Mark’s in Wigford, have indeed yielded evidence for metalworking activities (Ten Harkel forthcoming). The different position of the smith within Anglo-Saxon society did not necessarily involve a decrease in status. The use of Weland- and Sigurd-imagery on late ninth- and tenth-century Yorkshire sculpture (Lang 1976; 1991; 2001), and the fact that the only profession explicitly mentioned on the Viking Age stone crosses from the Isle of Man was that of a smith (Kermode 1997) suggest that the profession was still held in high esteem. Several references to Weland also occur in Beowulf, and he is the subject matter of the first two stanzas of the Anglo-Saxon poem Deor, written down in the Exeter Book, which has been dated on palaeographical grounds to the second half of the tenth century (Bradley 1982: 201). Yet the changing role of the smith reflects the same process that has been identified in the context of settlement development in Lincolnshire: under the influence of the Church, society was becoming increasingly static, and in some cases divorced from the rural landscape.
The erection of stone sculpture in Viking Age Lincolnshire

The increasingly sedentary experience of the landscape also found expression in the erection of stone sculpture in Lincolnshire, which occurred from the tenth century onwards. There was no local tradition of marking burials with stone sculpture in Lincolnshire prior to the tenth century, nor was stone generally used in a monumental sense at all. From the mid-tenth century onwards, however, funerary sculpture was produced at Lincoln on a significant scale (Fig. 4). Everson and Stocker (1999) have suggested that their production took place under the patronage of the Bishop of Lincoln, who was reinstated in the mid-tenth century after his last predecessor had supposedly fled the area because of the Scandinavian raids. The products of the Lincoln workshops were distributed all across Lindsey.

As there is usually only one funerary monument per parish, Everson and Stocker (1999) have argued that the majority of these funerary monuments were created for the founder’s graves of the parishes. As mentioned above, the process of parish formation, which occurred at the same time as the Scandinavian settlement, can be seen as a process of consolidation between the Church and the new Scandinavian landowners. The erection of funerary sculpture to mark the founders’ graves of the parishes occurs only in the Scandinavian-controlled regions of England, suggesting that a greater need was felt in these areas to express the relationship between the new secular landowners and their newly acquired source of wealth. The relationship between the Church and the new landowners was mutually beneficial, but the Church had another vested interest in the promotion of land as an alternative to gold and silver. The Viking raids in the first half of the ninth century were aimed at the accumulation of portable wealth, which meant that the Vikings posed a particular threat to the Church, where often significant quantities of silver or gold were stored. The most practical solution to the problem was to convince the invaders, like the Church had previously convinced the native Anglo-Saxons, that land was a much better alternative to gold. The fact that this resulted in the Scandinavian settlement of large parts of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms was not an issue, as it did not endanger the position of the Church, but strengthened it through the formation of numerous new alliances. At the same time, the West-Saxon kings took advantage of the situation by treating it as a legitimate excuse to conquer the north.

The suggestion that the commoditisation of land was inherently related to a Christian worldview is confirmed by the changing nature of the Viking incursions of the later tenth and eleventh centuries. Harald Bluetooth’s self-proclaimed reputation as the king who converted the Danes was somewhat optimistic, as it seems that the conversion of the Scandinavian homelands was still underway. The late tenth-century poem The Battle of Maldon, which gives an account of the defeat of the English by the Vikings in AD 991, which resulted in the payment of a large sum of tribute, refers to them as hæthene (‘heathens’; line 55). However, the Danish king Svein Forkbeard, who arrived in England in 1003, was a Christian, and interestingly, his objective was the conquest of territory rather than the accumulation of portable wealth.

The question how and why the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, the Scandinavian settlers and eventually the Scandinavians at home was successful must, for the moment, remains unanswered. Yet the influence that it had on the structure and perception of the Anglo-Saxon landscape was far-reaching. The erection of sculpture made of stone – a very durable material – can be seen as an attempt to lay a permanent claim to that part of the landscape, significantly enough through one’s ancestors, which would make perfect sense in the context of the Viking settlement. The fact
that practically all recognised sculpture fragments in Lincolnshire have been found in the centre of villages, often incorporated into the fabric of the village church, suggests that these graves became focal points in the development of rural settlements.

Conclusions

The theme of this paper has been the relationship between conflict and the transformation of landscape in middle to late Anglo-Saxon England. It has argued that the restructuring of the landscape was the result of the active interference of the Church, which promoted land as a viable alternative to gold as the medium through which social hierarchies were constructed and maintained. The influence of the Church was most directly visible in the development of rural settlement, which bears witness to the increased blending of ecclesiastical and secular power on one level, and, on another level, resulted in a more static experience of the landscape to those who inhabited it. This permanence was reinforced by the erection of stone sculpture (and the subsequent transition to stone architecture following the Norman Conquest).

The transformation of the early Anglo-Saxon landscape, where the concept of territory was fluid, into the late Anglo-Saxon landscape, with its rigid and organised division, was, of course, the result of an ongoing conflict itself. The term conflict, in this context, refers to the gradual replacement of the old pre-Christian worldview with the new Christian order. In the context of this paper, the conflict that stood central to the arguments was the conflict between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons, but this can be placed entirely in the same light, as a conflict between pagan and Christian. The transformation of the landscape that took place in its wake was the outcome of a change in the way the landscape was perceived within this new Christian order.

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1 All translations from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle follow Swanton 2000. Where possible this article only uses the A-version, also known as the Winchester-manuscript, because this is the oldest of the surviving manuscripts, which was copied from the now-lost original at some point in the late ninth century, and continued until the eleventh century (Swanton 2000: xxi-xxii).

2 This passage does not occur in the Winchester-manuscript, which had a strong southern focus. Manuscripts D-F were three closely related versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that were all copied from the same example, which is known as the now-lost ‘Northern Version’. Manuscript D, also known as the Worcester-manuscript, was started in the middle of the eleventh century, probably at Worcester, whose diocese was closely connected to York during the period 972-1016 (Swanton 2000: xxv-xxvi). Manuscript E, also known as the Peterborough-manuscript, is the latest of the surviving Chronicle manuscripts, and was copied from a Kentish original in the early twelfth century (Swanton 2000: xxvi-xxvii). Finally, manuscript F or the Canterbury Bi-Lingual Epitome was a bilingual (Latin and Old English) version started around AD 1100, which drew from the lost ‘Northern Version’ as well as from the Winchester-manuscript (Swanton 2000: xxvii-xxviii).

3 Hadley (2006: 10) has questioned whether there was any intention on the part of the invaders already at this stage to settle permanently, although she does acknowledge that ‘the involvement of the raiders in the internal politics of three Anglo-Saxon kingdoms marked a change in tactics from the hit-and-run raids of earlier periods and paved the way for subsequent Scandinavian rule and settlement in parts of northern and eastern England’.

4 In recent decades, the presence of the raiding army at Torksey has been confirmed through numerous discoveries by metal-detectorists, which this article will return to at a later stage.

5 Blair (2005: 49) has drawn attention to the fact that ‘our archaeological data are consistent, to put it no more strongly, with the proposition that some radical changes occurred in social hierarchies, and in means of controlling resources, at the end of the sixth century’. Nevertheless, the causal relationship between the spread of Christianity and the increased importance of landed wealth is unclear. This is largely due to the fact that the practice of writing did not arrive in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until their conversion in the very late sixth and seventh centuries. Prior to the spread of Christianity, Anglo-Saxon literature had been entirely oral. The first surviving written source that provides an insight into the structure of Anglo-
Saxon society was the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) written by Bede in the 730s, but as the title suggests this was written from a thoroughly Christian perspective, and it is debatable to what extent his perception of Early Anglo-Saxon society was accurate.

6 The inhabitants of these other kingdoms are often characterised as 'Anglo-Scandinavian' as they now included the Anglo-Saxon 'natives' as well as the Scandinavian settlers, and their offspring.

7 This qualitative assessment of land is also reflected in the varying size of *hides* (a unit for land measurement used in the Anglo-Saxon period), which seem to have differed depending on the productivity of the land (Stenton 1971: 279).

8 The different status of these three settlements is further reinforced by a tenth-century entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (A: 942), which refers to Lincoln and Stamford as two of the 'five boroughs' in the Danish territories, also including Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. Torksey is sometimes added to this list, together with York, on the basis of a single reference from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (E: 1015) to the 'seven boroughs' (Hadley 2006: 159; Stenton 1971: 388 n. 2).

9 The evidence for elite involvement in the development of these settlements is evident from the construction of defences in Stamford, the periodic rebuilding of the metalworking workshops in Lincoln as a centralised event, and the presence of a mint.

10 The Upper City is the walled area of the former first-century Roman fortress, situated on top of a steep slope on the highest point in the surrounding landscape, and the Lower City refers to the walled area of the second-century Roman town that was constructed to the immediate south of the fortress, on the slope leading town into the valley of the river Witham.

11 To name a couple of examples, at the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Bottesford in Lindsey, which amongst other things yielded a significant Middle Anglo-Saxon ditch, time constraints only allowed for the excavation of a limited number of features (Carlyle et al. 2003; Morris and Holmes 2002; Tibbles 2001). Likewise, the Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement remains at Belton (see below) were limited to the size of a pipe trench (source: North Lincolnshire SMR records), whilst the excavations at Waterton (see below) were limited to the construction trenches for a number of new pylons (Foreman 1996: 3, 12). The general lack of rural excavations in the area is a result of the largely agricultural nature of the region, with little or no building development to create a need for archaeological excavations.

12 Unfortunately the area of excavation was limited to the size of the construction trenches for pylons, which meant that the spatial and chronological development of the settlement could not be determined (Foreman 1996: 3, 12).

13 ‘Goltho’ is referred to in quotation marks throughout the text because the excavated remains that have entered the published record as ‘Goltho’ should probably be identified with the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Bullington as recorded in the *Domesday Book* (Everson 1988; 1990). The dating presented here differs from that proposed by the excavator (Beresford 1987), and is instead based on a re-assessment of the site chronology based on the pottery data (Stocker 1989; Symonds 2003).

14 Hadley (2006: 116-17) has drawn attention to the fact that a similar process seems to have occurred at the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Firby, also in Lincolnshire.

15 The absence of identifiable high-status smith’s graves from the late Anglo-Saxon period (which, incidentally, contrasts to only one definite middle Anglo-Saxon smith’s grave from Lincolnshire) reflects a general change in burial practice that did not generally include grave goods in the same way as during the preceding period (Buckberry 2004), rather than a lowering in the status of smiths.

16 Weland was a mythical smith who played an important role in Scandinavian and pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon mythology, whilst Sigurd was the foster-son of a smith.
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