Scandinavian Place-Names in England: VII

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Malham and plural farm names in England

In Kirkby Malham parish, West Staincliffe wapentake, West Riding of Yorkshire, is a group of place-names which offers some interesting problems.[1]

1. *Malham*, a village: *Malgum* 1086 DB and frequently to 1312, *Malgon* 1086 DB, *Malchum* 12th and 13th centuries, *Maleghum* 1257, *Malghum* 12th century and frequently to 1461, *Malghun* 1175, *Malghom* 1353 and 1379, *Malhum* c 1150, c 1200, 1285, *Malhom* 1175, 1423, 1441, *Malum* 1285, *Mallum* 1311 and 1571, *Mallom(e)* 1417 and frequently to 1548, *Malgham* 1303 and 1597, *Mallam* 1457, *Malham* 1535, etc. The name is pronounced [mɔ:m, maləm].

2. *Kirkby Malham*, a village, deep-seated among limestone hills c one mile north of Malham; also name of the parish: *Kirkebi* 1086 DB, *Kyrk(e)by, -bi* 12th century and occasionally to 1276. Quite early this name was distinguished from other identical names through the addition of *Malghum* 12th century, *Malgam* 1250 etc., and *(in) Malg(h)edale, Malg(h)dale* late 12th century occasionally to 1328, etc.

3. *Malhamdale*, a farm in a valley by the same name: *Malghedale* 1199 and 1295, *Malhamdale* 1584, etc.; see also under nr. 2 above.

4. *Malham Moor*, a farm on a tract of barren ground by the same name: *Malghemore* 1170 and 1461, *Malghamora* c 1180, *Malgemore, -a* c 1190 and c 1200, *Malchemore* 13th century, *Malghmore, -a* 1198 and 1399, *Malhgmora* 1328, *Mallamore* 1587, *mora de Malhom* 1175, *Malhom More(z)* 1540 and 1566, *Malgummore* 1328, *Malhummore* 1328.

5. *Malham Water* or *Tarn*, a lake, about half a mile across, and a large estate: *Mallewatre, Malhewater* 1175, *Malgewater* c 1190, *Malghwater* 1198, *Malham Water* 1817, etc.; *Malhom Water Tern* 1540, *Malham Terne* 1650; see also nr. 6 below.

[1] *EPNS*, 35.128f.

6. *Water Houses*, farm near Malham Water, distinct from *Malham Water*, i.e., nr. 5 above: *Malwaterhous(e)* 1457, 1535, 1543, *-houses* 1691, *Malwaterhous'* 1615, *Malhamwater houses* 1597, *Watterhouse* 1562.

In addition there are several names prefixed with *Malham*, in most cases of later origin: *Malham Beck* (ON *bekkr* 'a small stream') – *Cove*, a homestead near a limestone, hollow – shaped as a semicircle, an "amphitheatre of rock, 285 feet high,"[2] by the same name (*Malham Cove(s)* 1771 and 1817); *Ho* (*Malholme halle* 1544); *Lings*, a residence in an area consisting of long ridges of limestone by the same name (*Lings* 1849; ON *lyng* 'heather'); *Rakes*, a homestead (OE *hraca* 'a throat, a pass' or *racu* '(the bed of) a stream,' or ME *rake* 'a rough path up a ravine,' dial. *rack* ('a narrow path')); *Scar*, a homestead (dial. *scar* 'a rocky cliff, etc.', from ON *sker* 'a rock'); *Tarn Ho*, a large residence on Malham Tarn, distinct from *Water Houses*, nr. 6 above (*Malham Water House* 1817).

All places whose names have just been mentioned are situated in a spectacular limestone region in or near a valley named *Malhamdale*, which stretches from Bell Busk in the south up to Malham Tarn in the north (see the map-sketch). This is the infant river *Aire*, but the stretch between Malham Cove and Aire Head is called *Malham Beck*, the Aire Head being located at the confluence of this stream and the Gordale Beck. Obviously this point is today considered the beginning of the Aire. Between the Cove and the Tarn runs a dry river bed. Long ago "the limestone was sealed up [south of the Tarn] and the water had to run underground."[3] The underground river flows under the desolate limestone ridges called *Malham Lings* and surfaces again in the Cove, where the Aire springs to light. Phillips[4] describes this natural wonder in the following words: "The water [of the Aire] is supplied by subterraneous channels in the limestone; some no doubt coming by this means from Malham Water ... Looking up at the front of the Cove, we perceive that *if* the water came flowing in abundance over the top, it would make a cascade of almost unrivalled grandeur – and it is *said* that such an event has occurred in consequence of some choking of the channels

[2] *Handbook for travellers in Yorkshire* (London, 1867), p. 382.

[3] Lettice Cooper, *Yorkshire West Riding*. London, 1950, p. 244.

[4] John Phillips, *The Rivers, Mountains, and Sea Coast of Yorkshire*. London, 1853, pp. 92f.

from Malham Water, in time of great floods." – North and east of Malham Tarn is a desolate area called *Malham Moor.*

The interpretation of *Malham* has presented a great deal of difficulty and evoked several attempts to explain it, some of which are hardly much better than guesswork.[5]

Moorman[6] established that the modern termination *-ham* is not original, "but has replaced the earlier dative plural inflexion of O.E. nouns, *-um.*" He suggested that the early ME forms *Malg(h)um,* etc., seem to point back to (*in*) *Malcum* as the OE form of the name, although no such words as **m(e)alc, *m(e)alce* are on record. But since OHG has a word *mal(a)ha,* meaning 'a leather wallet,' which is cognate with Greek μόλγος 'a skin, a hide,' Moorman considered it possible that a corresponding word existed in OE in the sense 'a skin' or 'something made of skins.' Since *in Malcum* could not mean 'among the skins,' Moorman ventured the guess that it might be a personal name, or even a clan-name, and he referred to the personal name *Malchard* and the place-name *Malching* (OHG *Malaching, Malluhhinga*), recorded by Förstemann in his *Altdeutsches Namenbuch.* Applying this idea to *in Malcum* he thinks that the name perhaps may be interpreted as 'among the clan of the Malce, or Malcas,' in the same way that *Jarrow* (OE *in Gyrwum*) means 'among the clan or family of the Gyrwe or Gyrwas."

Moorman's honest attempt at interpreting the name of *Malham* fails already on the false assumption that *Malg(h)-, Malh-* reflects an earlier *Malc-.*

J. Johnston[7] concurred in Moorman's opinion about the forms ending in *-um, -un,* characterizing them as "clearly old locatives of the common Yorks *Dom[esday Book]* type." He continued: "But there seems no OE word to give us *malg-; mæle, mele,* 'a cup, a basin,' seems the nearest – 'among the cup-shaped hollows.' But, then, the *g* must be an error."

Johnston's guess about the *g* was based only on the forms in *Domesday Book,* but in the material known today the forms con-

[5] In the following survey of the various explanations that have been advanced I disregard some old, completely impossible derivations, such as N. Greenwell's in *Old Yorkshire,* edited by William Smith, Vol. 1 (1881), p. 196.

[6] F. W. Moorman, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* (1910), pp. 126f.

[7] James B. Johnston, *The Place-Names of England and Wales* (1915), p. 358.

taining *Malg(h)*- are so frequent in early records that every interpretation of the name must proceed from this stem.

In the first edition of his place-name dictionary Ekwall[8] had this to say about *Malham*: "The dat. plur. of a Scand word related to the Swedish lake-name MALJEN (from *Malghe*), ON *mǫl* 'gravelly soil,' *melr* 'sandbank,' etc. The exact Scand base is not clear (an OScand. *malg*- or an adj. *maligr*, in a def. form *malgi* ?). The name means something like 'stony or gravelly place.'" The same wording appears in the three subsequent editions of Ekwall's dictionary.

Ekwall's suggestion is phonologically and morphologically acceptable. There is no doubt that *Malghum* is a Scandinavian name. Several other names in the same parish have this origin. However, the famous scholar did not find the actual reference and meaning of *Malham* nor a conclusive solution of all problems attached to the whole group of names containing *Malham*.

A. H. Smith in his list of place-name elements[9] construed an ON word **malgr* 'a gravelly or stony place,' related to OE **m(e)alu* 'a gravel ridge' (known only from place-names), ON *melr* 'a sand-bank, gravelly soil.' The construction of an ON **malgr* is obviously based on Ekwall's mention of the Swedish lake-name *Maljen*, to which Smith refers. He continues: "The exact meaning is not known, and it is difficult to decide which aspect of the remarkable scenery at Malham it describes. The allusion might be to loose boulders or the like." It is most doubtful that an ON **malgr* ever existed. Ekwall did suggest a stem *malg*-, but no evidence of it can be produced in the OScand. material known to us or in modern Scand. dialects. Like Ekwall, Smith failed in realizing what the form *Malghum*, etc., originally denoted.

Later,[10] Smith treated the name of *Malham* more exhaustively and somewhat differently. At first he maintains that this difficult place-name "clearly goes back to some appellative like *malg*- in the dat. pl. *-um*, and in the gen. pl. *Malga*- in the compound place-names" *Malhamdale*, *Malham Moor*, *Malham Water*, and *Water Houses*. He also calls attention to Ekwall's collocation of *Malham*

[8] E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (1936), p. 297.

[9] A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* (hereafter abbreviated Smith, *Elem.*), 2.35.

[10] *EPNS*, 35.133f.

with the Swedish lake-name *Maljen*, with ON *mǫl* 'gravelly soil,' and with ON *melr* 'sand-bank.'

Both Ekwall and Smith accepted Hellquist's evidently correct interpretation[11] of *Maljen*, OSwed. **Malghe*, as the definite form of an adj. **malugher*, **maligher* 'sandy, gravelly,' analogous to such Swed. adjectives as *sandig* 'sandy' to *sand* 'sand,' *grusig* 'gravelly' to *grus* 'gravel,' etc. The strong form of the proposed adj. used as a lake-name appears in the distorted Swed. parish-name *Malexander* (OSwed. *Malighxsanda* < *Malighs-* + a case form of *sander* 'sand').

Earlier R. Norrby[12] had expressed the opinion that the latter name has developed from **Malg(s)-sander*, meaning 'sandy beach.' This explanation is obviously based on the assumption that the first element is an unrecorded **malgh(r)* in the sense 'a sandy place,' the same view as the one held by Ekwall, although the two scholars at least to some extent seem to differ as to the morphological origin of the first element. Hellquist insisted, however, that the name of *Malexander* does not mean 'the sandy beach.'

Smith cannot accept Ekwall's interpretation of *Malham* because it does not explain two problems or difficulties connected with the name. One of the obstacles concerns the word form. Smith alleges that the ME "spellings of *Malham* presuppose an original *malg-* or *malh-*." In my opinion there is no such difficulty. The spellings point definitely to *malgh-*. If the name should contain Proto-Germanic *malh-*, the *-h-* would have disappeared long before the Scandinavians came to England.

At the end of the article Smith comments on the supposed retention of the fricative *-h-* in ME *Malg(h)um*. Referring to investigations by H. Pipping[13] and M. Olsen[14] he asserts that "there is evidence (especially runic evidence) which shows that *-h-* was still sometimes retained after 700," but he also admits that "there are forms which show loss of *-h-* earlier." Thus, if *Malham* is a Scandinavian name, and if Smith's etymology is correct, it "would indicate preservation of *-h-* to at least the ninth century." Judging

[11] E. Hellquist, *Svenska sjönamn* (= *Svenska landsmål ock svenskt folkliv*, Vol. 20), 1.390f.

[12] R. Norrby, *När blev Sveriges befolkning bofast?* (= *Svenska landsmål ock svenskt folkliv*, Vol. 19:4), pp. 4.

[13] In *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 16.124f.

[14] M. Olsen, *Stednavnestudier* (1912), p. 58.

from the spellings, the *-h-* would actually have been pronounced at least as late as c 1200. However, this is impossible. The *-h-* was lost already when the Danes invaded northeastern England. This fact makes Smith's suggestion that *Malham* may contain a stem *malh-* unacceptable.

Under "Addenda and Corrigenda"[15] Smith says, probably after communication with Ekwall: "It should be emphasized that in Ekwall's suggested *Malgum*, dat. pl. of **malgi* (a weak form of an adj. *maligr*) retention of *-gh-* in ME would be normal, as in ME *hal(e)ȝen* for OE *halgan* 'saints' (itself a parallel OE derivative of *hālig* 'holy')."

The few occurrences of *-h-* in ME spellings (*Malhum, Malhom*) do not indicate any pronunciation with voiceless velar spirant [χ], but are rather examples of *-h-* as symbol for the voiced velar spirant [ɣ], usually written *-g(h)-*. However, if the reduced intermediate vowel *-e-* in *Malghemore* 1170, *Malghedale* 11th century, *Malgewater* c 1190 disappeared early (cf. *Malghmore* 1198, *Malgdale* 1276, *Malghwater* 1198), it is possible that the voiced fricative *gh* [ɣ] developed into the unvoiced *h* [χ], which normally took place earlier, when *gh* was final and at the end of the first element of compounds.[16] Or *gh* was perhaps replaced by *h*, since voiced *gh* in these words was inconsistent with the phonetic structure of the language. But in these compounds only one spelling with *-h-* occurs, viz., *Malhewater* 1175.

ME *malȝum* probably developed into *malwum* as in OE *folgian* 'to follow' > ME *folȝen* > *folwen*, OE *hālgian* 'to hallow' > ME *halȝen* > *halwen*.[17] Thereafter *al* became *au* (cf. *Maum* 1709),[18] and *-wum* was reduced to *-m*. Thus the pronunciation [mo:m] is what may be expected, while ['maləm] is the articulation of the modern form *Malham*; regarding the origin of *-ham*, see below.

In the twice attested *Malchum* the *-ch-* is due to Anglo-Norman influence.[19]

The second difficulty which according to Smith is inherent in Ekwall's interpretation is a semantic one. He states that the root

[15] *EPNS*, 35.xi.

[16] See O. von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book*, p. 113, and the literature there quoted.

[17] J. and E. M. Wright, *An Elementary Middle English Grammar* (1928), pp. 128f.

[18] See *EPNS*, 14.xxviii.

[19] Feilitzen, *loc. cit.*

**malh-* (ON *mǫl*) is used mostly in the meaning of 'sand, gravel, pebbles,' and he refers to the cognate ON *melr* 'sand-bank' and the *m*-derivatives Goth. *malma* 'sand,' OE *mealmiht* 'sandy,' etc. Since these words are derived from the verbal root in Goth. *malan*, ON *mala* 'to grind,' "the original meaning would appear to be 'something ground small'; hence 'sand' or 'gravel' would be the basic meaning of the word *malh-*." Although the stem in *Malham* is not *malh-*, this reasoning has been quoted, since it also concerns **maligher* 'sandy,' suggested by Ekwall.

However, Smith supplies the following information, which affects Ekwall's interpretation also: "None of the meanings for these various related words is appropriate for Malham; the mountain above has, it is true, many acres of limestone outcrop, but these great clusters of solid hard rock are not the kind of material described by any of the words cognate with *mal.*" Therefore Smith suggests another interpretation, returning to Moorman's thought that *Malham* might be related to OHG *malaha*. Although Smith also operates here with a stem *malh-*, I shall quote his discussion, chiefly because he makes an attempt to substantiate his explanation with topographical facts.

Smith says this: "The most remarkable features of local topography are Malham Cove, a great cliff at the head of the deep valley of Malham Beck which terminates abruptly in a massive limestone cliff, and Gordale, a deep narrow gorge again terminating in a lofty cliff, both results of the Craven fault.[20] There is an ON *malr* 'sack, bag' (earlier *malh-*) corresponding to OHG *malaha* 'a bag, sack,' and this word could well have been used figuratively to describe these two great coves in the limestone. Such an explanation has indeed been made by Olsen (*Arkiv f. nord. Fil.* xxii, 104f.) for the Norw. p. ns. *Maasnes* (NG v, 258) and *Malangen* (ib xvii, 120); the first el. of the former refers to a fishing-water connected by a narrow sound to a much greater water, and that of the latter to a fjord which is broader inside than at its outlet. Such figurative uses in p. ns. can be paralleled (cf. Rygh, NG xvii, 120, EPN i, xxiii and s.v. *bagga*, *cēode* [Smith, *Elem.* 1. 17, 89]), and it is the fact that they are figurative uses and not common appellatives that makes them

[20] The Craven Fault, a vast displacement of the mountain limestone, is one of the most magnificent dislocations in England. It has produced the cliffs of Malham and of Gordale.

rare.[21] Malham may well be from an early ON *í malhum* and mean '(place near) the hollows.'"

Smith's suggestion that the plural name *Malgum* denotes the two coves is hardly realistic. The hollows are too remote from each other – c 2.5 miles – to be referred to in the name of a farm which is situated in the neighborhood of only one of the coves.

In "Addenda and Corrigenda" Smith insists that the topographical difficulty in Ekwall's explanation "still remains."

On the basis of the various objections now raised against Smith's interpretation both on phonological and topographical grounds I feel that it is necessary to seek another explanation of *Malham* and the names connected with it.

The only interpretation offered that is phonologically and morphologically acceptable is Ekwall's presupposition of the definite form *Malghi* of an adj. **maligher*. But it does not satisfactorily solve two important problems, viz., the meaning of the name and the reason for the plural form.

Scandinavian place-names of such nature as the supposed *Malghi* do not normally refer to places or areas (pieces) of ground. As masculines they are usually names for lakes, bays, fjords and the like, e.g., the above-mentioned OSwed. *Malghe*, now *Maljen*, **Skærghe*, now *Skärjen*, name for four Swedish lakes (from **skærugher*, *-igher* 'full of rocks'),[22] the Norwegian fjord-name *Vingfjorden* (from ON **Vindgi*, def. form of *vindugr* 'windy').[23] As feminines such formations normally describe rivers and streams, e.g., Norw., **Sǫndga*, now *Songa*, name for several rivers in Norway (from ON *sǫndugr* 'sandy'),[24] *Augga* (ON **Ǫfga*, def. form of *ǫfugr* 'turned or running backward'),[25] Swed. *Lärje* (from OSwed.

[21] The figurative uses of appellatives in Scandinavian place-names are not rare. They may rather be said to be quite common. In my opinion they also occur more frequently in English place-names than is clear from the interpretations in *EPNS*, where this aspect on name-giving has often been overlooked. In a future article I shall try to prove the validity of this statement.

[22] E. Hellquist, *op.cit.*, 1.556; *Sveriges ortnamn. Värmlands län*, 3.79. Hellquist, *op.cit.*, 2.30, adduces quite a few other parallels. See also Janzén in *Names* 5.106f.

[23] S. Bugge in Rygh, *Norske Elvenavne* (hereafter abbreviated Rygh, *NE*), p. 342; *NG*, 14.47; Hellquist, *op.cit.*, 2.30.

[24] S. Bugge, *op.cit.*, p. 334; *NG*, 7.397.

[25] S. Bugge, *op.cit.*, p. 6; G. Indrebö in *Namn och bygd*, 16.133.

**Lērgha*, def. form of *lērogher* 'clayey'),[26] *Målje* (from **Moldga*, def. form of OSwed. **moldogher* 'earthy, containing earth,' derivative of OSwed. *mold, muld* 'earth, dirt').[27]

A look at the sketch-map attached to this paper indicates (to me) clearly how the names here discussed should be interpreted.[28] The pertinent places are all situated in a valley, *Malhamdale*, along a stream, now named *Malham Beck*. I suggest that the name of this stream originally was OScand. **Malgha*, from the beginning perhaps **Malgha ā*, 'the sandy or gravelly stream,' referring to the nature of the bottom or the banks of the river. The basic word is the adj. **malugher, *maligher* 'sandy,' derived from ON *mǫl*, f. 'gravel,' Proto-Germ. **malhō*. Thus interpreted *Malghedale* is **Malgho-dal(r)*, *Malghemore* is **Malgho-mōr*, and *Malwater* is a hybrid formation **Malgho-water*. If *Malham Tarn* is old enough, it reflects an OScand. **Malgho-tiarn*.

Smith says that *Malghedale* "is named from Malham," that *Malghemore* means "the moor belonging to Malham," and that *Malgewater* is "the water or lake belonging to Malham." The first member in these compounds is said to be gen. plur. *Malgha-*. This explanation is theoretically possible, but there is less than a small chance that it is the correct solution. My analysis offers the most simple and most natural picture of the relationship between the uncompounded *Malghum* and the compounds just mentioned. Compounds in which the terminal is Scand. *dal(r)* quite often have a river-name as the first element, e.g., from Yorkshire, *Airedale, Nidderdale, Swaledale, Teesdale*, etc. Also **Malgho-mōr* 'the moor on the Malgha' is a most natural formation; but see below. The only one of the pertinent compounds that may be analyzed differently is *Malham Water* or *Tarn*. It would not be surprising if **Malgha* were the name of the uppermost part of the Aire between Aire Head and Malham Cove, inasmuch as it is far from uncommon for a river to have different names for different stretches of its course.[29]

The most likely origin of *Malghewater* is the one just mentioned, namely, that the first element is the name of the stream. As a final

[26] *Ortnamnen i Göteborgs och Bohus län*, 4.7, and the literature there quoted.

[27] S. Bugge, *op.cit.*, p. 162; *NG*, 7.370; A. Janzén in *Namn och Bygd*, 42.32f.

[28] For details see *Ordnance Survey of Great Britain*. Seventh Series. Sheet 90 (Wensleydale). 1961.

[29] See, for instance, E. Ekwall, *English River-Names*, pp. xxxixf.

element in compound place-names *water* is often combined with a river-name, e.g., *Crummock Water* and *Derwent Water* in Cumberland.[30] The dry river-bed may have been regarded as a part of the river, especially since it is said to have had water in it at times; see p. 24f. above. However, the ME spelling *Malgewater* could also contain **Malgha-*, the gen. sing. of **Malghi* as the oldest name of the lake. Although the lake is rather small, about half a mile across and c three miles in circumference, it is the most important "tarn" in Yorkshire, where the lakes are few and insignificant.[31] It is therefore quite possible to assume that this body of water could have had the single name **Malghi*. In this case either the name of the stream or the lake could be the primal one. Thus, the lake-name **Malghi* may have been formed on the basis of the river-name **Malgha*, or vice versa, **Malgha* from **Malghi*. It is also possible that both names could have originated more or less simultaneously, so that neither name can clearly be established as the original.

It might be difficult or even impossible to determine which one of the three possible etymologies is the correct or most plausible one. But if the bottom or the banks of the stream are sandy or gravelly, while those of the lake are not, the origin is the river-name. On the other hand, if the sandy or gravelly feature is characteristic only of the lake, the river-name must be secondary in relation to the lake-name. Finally, should the nature of both the lake and the river be consistent with the description embodied in the names, a definite choice among the three possibilities must be left undecided. For the present, in want of information about the pertinent topography, I prefer to consider the river-name **Malgha* as the primal formation and the name of the lake as a secondary compound with *water* and *tarn*.

Perhaps it would be wise to postpone also the final decision about the origin of *Malham Moor* until the primarity of the river-name and the lake-name has been definitely established. The moor is situated around the lake, but also on the east side of the Dry Valley. Therefore, the name of the moor may theoretically have been **Malgha-mōr* or **Malgho-mōr*, containing the name of the lake or the river, respectively. The ME spellings *Malg(h)emore* and the once attested *Malghamora* allow either interpretation. But my own preference is for **Malgho-mōr*.

[30] Smith, *Elem.*, 2.238.

[31] *Hand-Book for Travellers in Yorkshire*, p. 382; Cooper, *op.cit.*, p. 244.

When the ending *-um* in the dat. plur. disappeared from the flexional system of the appellatives, it was retained in many place-names which had fossilized in this case form, by far the most dominant one among names for habitations. These names were easily attracted by other name types ending in *-m*, especially those compounded with *-ham* and *-holme*.[32] The earliest evidence that *Malghum* joined the *ham*-names in its official form is the spelling *Malgham* 1303.

Malham was the most important place in the valley. When its name changed into *Malham*, it is only to be expected that the compound names containing *Malghe-* were altered accordingly. The progress of the transformation is illustrated by such spellings as *Malghemore* 1170, *Malhom More(z)* 1540 and 1566, *Malham more(z)* 1540 and 1562. Some compound and juxtaposed names were perhaps not formed until after the development of *Malghum* into *Malham*. This origin could be suspected of *Malham Mill*, *Rakes*, of which no ME forms are known. The cove is such a spectacular place that it is tempting to assume that its name dates back to early ME time, when it was **Malgho-cofe*. The name of the parish, *Kirkby Malham*, was originally only *Kirkby* (OScand. *Kirkiu-bȳ*) 'church farm or village.' This was a rather common name in the Danelaw, where it occurs in no less than forty places. Many of these names are distinguished from others by affixes added later, e.g., *Kirkby Moorside* in the North Riding, *Kirby Grindalythe* and *Underdale* in the East Riding, *Kirkby Wharfe* in the West Riding.[33]

Before my interpretation of *Malham* can be considered acceptable, a solution must be given to the fundamental problem concerning the function of the plural form of the name. Gordale Beck cannot be included, since it is at least half a mile from Malham at the nearest point. Kirkby Beck is more than a mile apart. Thus, it is perfectly clear that **Malgha* denoted the "beck" that runs through Malham, dividing the town into two parts, called *East* and *West Malham*.[34] It is very likely that farms or houses quite early were situated on both sides of the stream and were called by the same name.

It is a far from unique phenomenon in Scandinavian place-nomenclature that original river-names, as well as other topographical terms signifying lakes, fjords, islands, etc., in the Middle Ages were

[32] Smith, *Elem.*, 2.225f.

[33] See Smith, *Elem.*, 2.4f.

[34] Cooper, *op.cit.*, p. 242.

used in the plural form in order to denote two or more farmsteads or houses which had the same name as the river, lake, etc., on which they were located. Just a few examples among many may be adduced here.

Åm (*Am*) occurs as a farm-name three times in Norway and twice in Sweden. This name is OScand. dat. plur. *ām* of *ā* 'a stream,' although in at least two cases the farms are situated on one single river.[35] But the farms by this name comprise more than one unit. From a fiscal point of view they are villages. In the order the sources are quoted in note 35 the name belongs to habitations of the following character: 1. *Øvre, Vestre, Østre* (i.e. Upper, Western, Eastern) *Am*; 2. *Åm*, not a village fiscally, but during the Middle Ages a church was situated here, which indicates more than one habitation; 3. *Ytre, Indre* (i.e., Outer, Inner) *Åm*; 4. *Östra, Västra Åm* (the former after 1892 named *Landa*); and 5. *Åm*, a village comprising four units.

In three of these instances there does exist more than one stream in the neighborhood of the villages. The first name is said to mean 'the rivers,' because the village stands on a hill at the source of two rivers that flow in different directions. My knowledge of name-giving psychology prevents me from accepting this interpretation. A place where two streams rise and run in two directions would not be called 'the streams,' but perhaps by a name that means 'the source.' Nr. 3 is situated at the confluence of two rivers. Such places are usually not called 'the rivers' either, but *Åmot* 'the confluence.' This name exists in at least two places in the Danelaw, as does OE *ēamōt* in several names, which in some cases may be an Anglicization of ON *ámót*.[36] Nr. 4 is fiscally not a village but two separate farms by the same name on opposite sides of a river. However, it is suggested that the name originally denoted only one of the farms, *Östra Åm*, whose land stretches between two streams. This explanation of the reason for the plural form seems highly improbable and bears the mark of an emergency measure. As to nr. 2 it is emphasized that the name has the plural form although it refers to only one river, and it is pointed out that river-names appear in the plural when they are used as names for the surrounding area. I prefer to say, "when

[35] See *Norske Gaardnavne* (hereafter abbreviated *NG*), 3.17f., 10.448, 13.90; *Sveriges ortnamn. Älvsborgs län*, 15.26, 40; *Sveriges ortnamn. Västernorrlands län*, 1.77.

[36] See Smith, *Elem.*, 1.9, 143.

they are used as names for several habitations in the surrounding area." The village nr. 5 stands on one single river. No other explanation of the form is given than a reference to one of the Norwegian *Åm*, viz., nr. 2 above.

Thus, in two cases the plural name cannot possibly refer to two rivers. The only sensible explanation of the plural form is that it denotes a plurality of habitations.[37] In my opinion this statement applies to all five names *Åm* (*Am*) just discussed. They are names for farms, not for streams.

Two other names in Norway, which in the Middle Ages were written *i Om*, *i Aom*, have the modern form *Ajer*.[38] This strange form is a new formation, created on the basis of the old dative form. To *Āom* or *Ōm* was formed a nominative or rather ground form **Āer*, whereafter a glide developed between *a* and *e*. In one case the name belongs to a village, the part units of which are called *Lille*, *Store* (i.e., Little, Big) *Ajer*; in the other the ONorw. spellings refer to (the habitations in) a whole district. In principle these two names are identical with *Åm*.

A river-name *Gaula* (ON *Gaul*) is known from a couple of places in Norway. In one instance the name of the surrounding region was (in the Middle Ages) *Gaular*, evidenced as *á, af Gaulum*, etc., in the Old Icelandic sagas.[39] In the beginning *Gaular* undoubtedly denoted the several farms in the district.

The Norwegian farm-name *Ottum* (*a Ottom* 1322) is quite certainly a plural dative form of a river-name *Otta*, evidenced in the spelling *i Ottodals eckru* 1336 'in the tilled field of the valley of the river Otta.'[40] There is only one river in the neighborhood.

The present Norwegian farm-name *Akse* is recorded as *i Axaam* c 1360. There is no doubt that this name is a plural form of the name of a nearby stream **Ax-ā* 'the river *Ax*.'[41] It is interesting to note that the lake from which the river runs out is called *Aksevandet* 'the Ax-water'; cf. *Malgha* : *Malghe-water*.

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[37] L. Hellberg, *Plural form i äldre nordiskt ortnamnsskick* (Uppsala, 1960), makes an attempt to prove a hypothesis that the medieval plural forms of Scandinavian place-names normally refer to more than one clearing or piece of land worked up for tillage. This idea might be relevant in some cases, but must not be generalized in the way Hellberg does. The overwhelming majority of old plural habitational names refer no doubt to *habitations*.

[38] See *NG*, 3.80, 7.187.

[39] Rygh, *NE*, p. 65; *NG*, 12.307.

[40] Rygh, *NE*, p. 182; *NG*, 12.14.

[41] *NG*, 12.234.

Jore is the name of a village in southwestern Sweden. From the fourteenth century are on record several such spellings as *i, a Joro*, but once *j Jorom* 1399. The village stands on the banks of a river now called *Jorälven*, originally **Jōra*.[42] From the medieval spellings it is evident that the river-name usually was used also as the name for the village, and that the once attested plural form could be utilized occasionally to indicate the plurality of farm units included in the village. Today the village comprises five fiscal units situated on both sides of the river, and there must have been more than two already in the Middle Ages.

On many occasions we find both singular and plural medieval forms of one and the same Scandinavian place-name. The difference in their function seems to have been the same as between *i Joro* and *j Jorom*. A couple of illustrations may be adduced. In southern Norway the name of a village, now including three fiscal units, appears as a *Uiniu* 1328 and as *j Vinium j væstra gardenom* 1393, 'at Vinjar (plur.) in the western farmstead,' *j øystræ gardenom a Vinium* 1396, 'at the eastern farmstead of Vinjar.'[43] It seems that between 1328 and 1393 the farm was divided into two units or a secondary settlement was established through clearing or the like.

Another elucidating instance is *Østre* and *Vestre Brauter* in southeastern Norway. Among medieval spellings the following are of interest for the problem here discussed: singular forms: *a Brautu* 1335, 1393, *Brauta* (nom.) 1396; plural forms: *i Brautum* 1362, *a Brautom* 1396, *i austra gardenom i Brautom* c 1400.[44] Thus, the name, which appears to be a river-name **Brauta*, was used interchangeably in the singular and the plural form. It seems likely that the former described the village as a connected whole, while the latter indicated the plurality of separate farms included in the village.

The exemplification of Scandinavian names for rivers, lakes, fjords, hills, etc., used in the plural as habitative elements could be extended almost indefinitely. These names may be counted in the thousands. But the usage of plural forms as an expression for the existence of several separate farms within a village is not exclusively

[42] *Ortnamnen i Göteborgs och Bohus län*, 16.41.

[43] *NG*, 2.381.

[44] *NG*, 2.267. The last form, not adduced in *NG*, is *in Biskop Eysteins Jordebog*, edited by H. J. Huitfeldt (Christiania, 1879), p. 411.

Scandinavian. The place-nomenclatures of England and the Germanic part of the European continent also show similar plural formations, although not at all as frequently as in Scandinavia. The following are examples from Germany: *in tribus Hoheimis, in tribus Geochusis* 783, *in Juhhisom thrim* (in the manuscript *thrun*) tenth century. A. Bach[45] translates these spellings quite correctly as 'in den drei Höchheim, Jüchsen,' i.e., 'in the three farms (or villages) named Höchheim' and 'in the three farms (or villages) named Jüchse.'

From England the following names deserve to be noted in this discussion. The spelling *in duabus Tilnis* 1221 seems to denote two parts (*Suthtilne* 1224, *Northtylne* 1280) of the habitation now called *Tiln*, recorded as *Tilne* 1086 DB and *passim* to 1212, *Tilnea* 1189 and 1194, and meaning 'Tila's river or island.'[46] Ekwall,[47] who does not usually look at plural forms of farm-names as denoting parts of villages or the like, says about the plural name *Hatlex* in Lancashire, recorded as *in Magnis Hakelakes* c 1230, *in Parvis Hakelakes, Litel-* and *Mekelhakelakes* c 1250, *de Hakelakes* c 1260: "The plural form is probably due to the fact that there are (or were) two farms of the name." In the light of the discussion above, Ekwall's interpretation is evidently correct.

On another occasion[48] Ekwall mentions the remarkable fact that some place-names derived from pre-English river-names containing the British stem *dubro-* 'water' appear in plural forms. Although the number of the corresponding river-names cannot be established, he holds that "very likely the river-name was plural as well. The river-name then meant 'the waters.'" In Ekwall's opinion other pre-English plural river-names have the same meaning. The relevance of this theory ought to be investigated more thoroughly. I prefer to explain the plural forms as farm-names.

Also in England we find place-names that earlier appeared in both the singular and the plural form. Just one example: *Downholme*, pronounced [du:nəm], in the North Riding of Yorkshire, was written

[45] A Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, 2: 1.67.

[46] *EPNS*, 14.32f.; Ekwall, *Dictionary of Engl. Place-Names* (1960), p. 474. I have a strong suspicion that *Tiln-* is an original river-name, an *n*-derivative of a Proto Germanic root *til-*, probably 'to thrive, to grow'; 'the growing (overflowing) one' is a common meaning of river-names.

[47] E. Ekwall, *The Place-Names of Lancashire*, p. 186.

[48] E. Ekwall, *English River Names*, p. lxxxiii.

Dune 1086 DB, but *Dunum* twice in the 12th century, 1231 and 1292, *Dunoum* 1314. A. H. Smith[49] gives this explanation: "'(Amongst) the hills' from OE *æt þǣm dūnum* ... The DB form is the dat. sing." In my opinion the plural forms probably mean 'the farmsteads of the village *Dun*.'

In the various volumes of *EPNS* plural farm-names are not regarded as signifying two or more farms called by the same name, but instead, unless the names mean 'houses, shielings, cottages' etc., as denoting two or more topographical characteristics. In harmony with this principle are, for instance, the following interpretations of farm-names in the East Riding of Yorkshire:[50] *Croom* (*Crogun* 1086 DB, *Crohum* 12th century and *passim* to 1326), 'at the nooks of land'; *Welham* (*Wellun, Wellon* 1086 DB, *Wellum* 1173 and frequently to 1333), 'at the springs'; dat. plur. of OE *w(i)ella* 'a spring'; there are several springs about: *Holme* (*on the Wolds*), pronounced [ɔum] (*Hougon* 1086 DB, *Hogum* 1100, *Haum* c 1135); OScand. *í haugum* 'on the hills,' dat. plur. of *haugr*, or OE *hōhum*, dat. plur. of *hōh* 'spur of land, hill'; *Yapham*, pronounced [japəm] (*Japun* 1086 DB, *Japum* 1234 and 1235, *Yapum* c 1135 and *passim* to 1350) – the OE adj. *gēap* 'open, wide, lofty, steep, bent,' etc., used as a noun; "The village of Yapham stands high up on the slope of a fairly steep hill and we must interpret the name as 'at the steep places.'" What places ? There seems to be only one hill or slope; *Gardham* (*Gerdhom, G(h)erthum*, etc., c 1200 and frequently to 1379): 'at the enclosures,' from the dat. plur. of OScand. *gerði*; and at least a hundred other names of comparable nature.

I am quite convinced that the plural forms in some cases pertain to topographical features, but I am equally certain that they many times have reference to two or more farms, situated near each other.

As Mawer[51] pointed out, the dative plural forms of English place-names belong to Anglian territory and are much more frequent in the northern counties than in the Midlands. Some of these names are Anglian, others are Scandinavian. After a short survey of the distribution of the dative plural formations Mawer continues: "It is only when we reach the North Midlands, and still more when we come to Northumbria, that these formations become really

[49] In *EPNS*, 4.270.

[50] *EPNS*, 14.127, 140, 163, 182f., 191.

[51] A. Mawer, *Problems of Place-Name Study*, pp. 11f.

common.[52] Taking the distribution as a whole it is noteworthy that these formations are confined to Anglian England . . . Within Anglia itself it is clear that this method of place-name formation was more popular among the Northumbrians than among the Mercians, but the gradual shading off of this feature as we travel south suggests that this was a matter of local fashion rather than of any racial difference among the settlers themselves."

A. H. Smith[53] concurred in Mawer's statements and maintained that the fact that there are more instances of the dat. plur. type in the northern counties than in the southern ones is not due to ON influence, because of the high incidence of the type in Durham and Northumberland, where the Scandinavian penetration was not extremely heavy, and because the type is found more often with OE than with ON elements. He continues: "More precisely, the region east of the Pennines from Nb [i.e. Northumberland] to Y [i.e., Yorkshire], provides most examples with the greatest concentration in YE [i.e., the East Riding of Yorkshire] with over 30 such p.ns."

I feel compelled to announce an opinion different from Mawer's and Smith's as to the reason for the many dat. plur. names in Yorkshire and surrounding counties. To me the distribution of such names gives a clear picture of Scandinavian influence.

As I pointed out above, the usage of plural forms of habitational place-names as a means to indicate a plurality of farms or houses called by the same name was a principle common to all Old Germanic peoples. But as far as we can judge from the earliest material that has come down to us, it was used only sparingly on the European continent and in England. But in Scandinavia this method of indicating the existence of two or more farms close to each other that had the same name developed into an extremely common principle. There must be more than a thousand plural farm-names in Scandinavia.

The sporadic examples of the plural type of place-names outside of the Danelaw and in the parts thereof where the penetration was weak are manifestations of the Old Germanic pattern. The concentration of plural names in the areas that were strongly penetrated by Scandinavians must at least partly, in my opinion, essentially be

[52] Mawer takes the opportunity to correct some mistakes he made in his *Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham*, when he explained some dative plurals as examples of OE *-hām*.

[53] Smith, *Elem.*, 2.225.

due to influence from a structural characteristic of the place-nomenclature of the invading colonists. It is true that ME forms ending in *-um* do occur in Northumberland and Durham, where a comparatively small Scandinavian population settled down. According to Mawer seventeen names of the dat. plur. type have been noted in both counties together. This is not a large figure, especially if we realize that some names mean 'houses, buildings,' e.g. *Bodlum*, *Cotum*, *Sumirhusum*. The heaviest concentration of the type of place-names here concerned is in Yorkshire, and that is the district where the Scandinavians had the greatest influence. The "gradual shading off" towards the south – and similarly to the north and the east – was not, as Mawer thought, "a matter of local fashion," but due to the decreasing Scandinavian influence in these areas.

Smith observes that the existence of more English names than Scandinavian ones in the dat. plur. in ME argues against Scandinavian influence. This argument is of little relevance, since, after all, there are more English than Scandinavian names even in the districts where the Scandinavian settlements were most concentrated. The native Anglians did not only adopt separate Scandinavian place-names and elements, but also the whole principle of name-giving introduced by the powerful foreign colonists.

In addition to the dat. plur. type of farm-names there are some plural names that are not attested in the dative, e.g., *The Flaskes* 1313 (now *Flass*), *Aldacres* 1267 (now *Olacres*), *Haveracres* 1503 (now *Overacres*). It is possible that some of these names would have appeared in the dative if they had been found in sources early enough. But most of them are not names for major habitations and were probably formed after the dative plural ending *-um* had disappeared in the early ME period, but when the principle of using plural forms as an indication of more than one farm by the same name was still retained. Finally, some, perhaps the majority, of these names may denote topographical features.

It is evident from the now concluded brief discussion of plural farm-names in England that my interpretation of *Malham*, earlier *Malghum*, is consistent with a principle of name-giving which constituted a characteristic element in the Yorkshire place-nomenclature.

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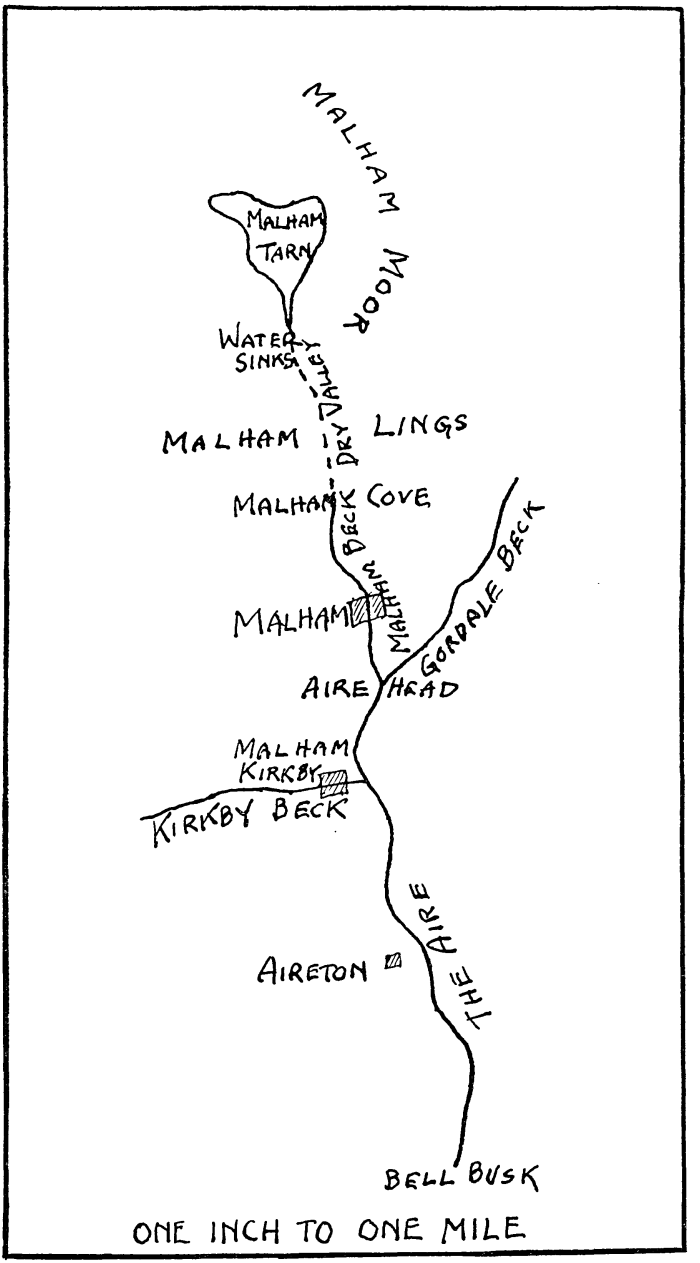
MALHAM MOOR
MALHAM TARN
WATER SINKS
DRY VALLEY
MALHAM LINGS
MALHAM COVE
MALHAM BECK
MALHAM
GORDALE BECK
AIRE HEAD
MALHAM KIRKBY
KIRKBY BECK
THE AIRE
AIRETON
BELL BUSK
ONE INCH TO ONE MILE

MALHAMDALE