

**COMMUNITIES OF THE HINTERLAND:
SOCIAL NETWORKS AND GEOGRAPHICAL
MOBILITY BEYOND THE WALLS OF LATE
MEDIEVAL YORK**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the society of the wapentake of the Ainsty, part of the immediate hinterland of late medieval York, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its main goal is to explore the ways in which living on the doorstep of a major medieval English city interacted with the social behaviour of the wapentake's inhabitants. The thesis uses both historical and sociological methodologies, particularly a social network approach, to examine the dynamics of social relations in the Ainsty in order to assess how they differed from and incorporated urban society. In particular, it assesses the relationship between geographical mobility and the formation of social networks.

The main source materials are probate registers, cause papers from York's ecclesiastical courts, and a variety of documents produced by York's civic government, local religious houses, and the crown. Each type of source was examined for evidence of social networks in the broad and interconnected categories of marriage, kinship and household; neighbourhood, landholding and occupation (interpreted broadly to include socio-economic status); and devotion and parish. It was found that kinship, neighbourhood and occupation were the most significant categories in which social relationships were formed, maintained and altered as manifested in the records studied. In many cases, relationships were multifaceted, incorporating two or more of these aspects with varying degrees of intensity.

Social networks spread across localities encompassing several vills and sometimes two or more parishes, and often, but not always, incorporated individuals from York. The intensity and nature of interaction with York varied throughout the wapentake, with some individuals preferring to limit their social networks to a more restricted neighbourhood, and others choosing to associate with people in the West Riding beyond the borders of the Ainsty. Networks that bound different vills together were reinforced, rather than fragmented, by mobility.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	8
LIST OF FIGURES.....	9
LIST OF TABLES	10
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	12
0.1 Individuals, Networks and Communities.....	14
0.2 Place, Movement and Identity.....	19
0.3 Why York?	21
0.4 The Structure of the Thesis	24
CHAPTER ONE: INFLUENCES ON PATTERNS OF MOBILITY: THE TOPOGRAPHY, ECONOMY AND TENURIAL HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL YORK'S HINTERLAND	27
1.1 Introduction: Rural-Urban Connections.....	27
1.2 Migration.....	31
1.2.1 Source and Chronology.....	33
1.2.2 Circumstances of Migration and Mobility: Motive, Distance and Effects	38
1.3 Geography and Topography of the Hinterland of York.....	47
1.3.1 The Wapentake of Ouse and Derwent	50
1.3.2 The Wapentake of Bulmer	56

1.3.3 The Ainsty: Jurisdiction and Parochial Structure.....	59
1.3.4 The Topography of the Ainsty	63
1.3.5 Lordship and Tenure in the Ainsty.....	68
1.3.6 The Economy of the Ainsty	75
1.4 Conclusion.....	83
CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN YORK'S HINTERLAND: SETTINGS, PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES IN THE TESTAMENTARY EVIDENCE.....	84
2.1 Introduction: Social Relations and Networks in a Context of Mobility.....	84
2.2 Social Relations and Networks: a Framework	86
2.3 Probate and Testamentary Evidence in the Ainsty: an Overview	95
2.4 The Household and Beyond: Social Networks from the Ainsty Testamentary Evidence	103
2.4.1 Marriage, Kinship and Household	104
2.3.2 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation.....	124
2.3.5 Parish and Devotion	139
2.4 Conclusion.....	152
CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS	153
3.1 Introduction: A Legal Framework for Social Networks	153
3.2 The Ecclesiastical Courts	155
3.2.1 The Consistory Court and its Personnel.....	157

3.2.2 Procedure.....	160
3.2.3 Sources: The Cause Papers and Act Books.....	164
3.3 Social Networks in the Cause Papers.....	166
3.3.1 Social Status, Migration and Mobility	169
3.3.2 Marriage, Kinship and Household	176
3.3.3 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	190
3.3.4 Parish and Devotion	196
3.8 Conclusion: The Significance of Activity Fields	198
CHAPTER FOUR: LAND, EXCHANGE AND DISPUTES	200
4.1 The Social Dynamics of Land Exchange: The Ainsty in Deeds and the Records of Local Religious Houses	203
4.1.1 Marriage, Kinship and Household	208
4.1.2 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	213
4.1.3 Parish and Devotion	217
4.2 The Ainsty from an Urban Point of View: The York Civic Records.....	218
4.2.1 The York Memorandum Books and the York House Books	220
Marriage, Kinship and Household	222
Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	226
Parish and Devotion	233
4.2.2 The Chamberlains' Account Rolls and the Bridgemasters' Accounts...	235

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	237
4.2.3 The Sheriffs' Court Books	240
Marriage and Kinship.....	240
Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	241
4.3 Ainsty Social Networks in the Records of the Central Government	245
4.3.1 The Certificates of Statute Merchant in Chancery.....	246
4.3.2 The Feet of Fines.....	251
4.3.3 The Inquisitions <i>ad quod Damnum</i> and the Inquisitions <i>Post Mortem</i> ..	252
Marriage, Kinship and Household	253
Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	255
4.4 Conclusion.....	258
CONCLUSION	259
Marriage, Kinship and Household	262
Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation	264
The Parish and Beyond: Devotion and Piety	270
Mobility, Migration and Localisation in the Hinterland	275
The Significance of the Hinterland and Relations with York.....	277
APPENDIX ONE: AINSTY SETTLEMENT NOTES	280

APPENDIX TWO: CHOICE OF EXECUTORS AND SUPERVISORS IN THE
AINSTY 287

APPENDIX THREE: CAUSE PAPERS RELATING TO AINSTY TOWNSHIPS 315

BIBLIOGRAPHY 322

 Primary Sources 322

 Secondary Literature 326

 Unpublished Works..... 346

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AGHEW</i>	Ed. E. Miller, <i>The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. III, 1348-1500</i> (Cambridge, 1991).
BIHR	York, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research (Now Borthwick Institute for Archives, based at the University of York)
D/C	York, Dean and Chapter of York Minster
<i>EYC</i>	Ed. Farrer, W. <i>Early Yorkshire Charters: Being a Collection of Documents Anterior to the Thirteenth Century Made from the Public Records, Monastic Chartularies, Roger Dodsworth's Manuscripts and other Available Sources.</i> 3 Volumes. Edinburgh, 1914-16.
<i>CIPM</i>	Chancery, <i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Prob. Reg.	Probate Register
SS	Surtees Society
TNA	The National Archives
UY	University of York
VCH York	Ed. P.M. Tillott, <i>Victoria County History of the County of York: The City of York</i> (Oxford, 1961).
<i>YAJ</i>	<i>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal</i>
YAS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society
YASRS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series
<i>YMB A/Y</i>	Ed. M. Sellers, <i>York Memorandum Book</i> , 2 vols., Surtees Society 120, 125 (1912-15).
<i>YMB B/Y</i>	Ed. J.W. Percy, <i>York Memorandum Book</i> , Surtees Society 186 (1969).
YML	York Minster Library

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1: Map of wapentakes in the hinterland of York	50
Fig. 2: Map showing position of parishes in the Ainsty and Ouse and Derwent wapentakes before 1832	54
Fig. 3: Parishes in the wapentake of Bulmer in the North Riding before 1832	57
Fig. 4: Map of the Ainsty and surrounding area. Ainsty boundaries c.1820 demarcated by white line	60
Fig. 5: The Beneficiaries and Witnesses of William and Alice Tomlinson of Bilton	119
Fig. 6: Network Density and Directional Flow in Acaster Malbis, c.1400-1499	130

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The 1334 Lay Subsidy and the Wapentakes of Ouse & Derwent, Bulmer and the Ainsty	53
Table 2: Ainsty Settlements in the Lay Subsidy and Poll Tax Returns	76
Table 3: Summary of Ainsty Probate Records c.1321-1514	96
Table 4a: Testators Naming Individuals from York	132
Table 4b: Testators Naming Individuals from Locations Other than York	134
Table 5a: Bequests to York Religious Houses	143
Table 5b: Bequests to Religious Houses in the Ainsty and its Vicinity	144
Table 5c: Bequests to Religious Houses (excluding nunneries) outside York and the Ainsty	147
Table 5d: Bequests to Nunneries outside the Ainsty	147

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a study of the society of an area of the hinterland of York over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the following chapters I begin to fill what is still a surprisingly persistent historiographical gap: the society inhabiting the ‘grey area’ between town and country in late medieval England. Despite increasing acknowledgments on the parts of historians that the divide between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ was not as sharp as the existence of imposing stone city walls ostensibly implies, town and countryside still tend to be examined separately.¹ This is not to say that researchers have behaved as if urban and rural society existed in their own vacuums; it is taken as a given that towns could not have survived without the immigration of rural human and material resources, and the markets for urban goods provided by hinterlands.²

Rural-urban interactions have thus long been viewed as important subjects of exploration by historians, sociologists, anthropologists and particularly archaeologists. However, rural hinterlands are often seen as just that—rural—when in fact, although in economic terms primarily agricultural, their societies also incorporated characteristics that have been seen as stereotypically urban. The particular economic characteristics of some medieval hinterlands have enjoyed some sustained recent attention within the larger context of the study of internal trade networks.³ These studies focus especially on how market trends in towns influenced those in the country, but there are also a few corrective studies which

¹ Miri Rubin alludes to the ‘urban/rural dichotomy’ in ‘Small Groups: Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages’, in J. Kermode (ed.), *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1991), p. 132. For an acknowledgement of the closeness of towns to the ‘rural world in which they were set’ see E. Miller and J. Hatcher’s survey, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts 1086-1348* (London, 1995), p. 257. See also L.R. Poos, *A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex, 1350-1525*, Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy, and Society in Past Time (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 40-1.

² Miller and Hatcher (eds.), *Towns, Commerce and Crafts*, pp. 256-58; D.M. Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain Volume I, 600-1540* (Cambridge, 2000). For a detailed discussion of migration to towns and its historiography, see Chapter One.

³ See particularly the excellent collection edited by J.A. Galloway, *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c.1300-1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series 3 (London, 2000).

have observed the impact on towns of economic changes in their hinterlands.⁴

There has also been some recognizance of the possibility that medieval hinterlands represented relatively distinct zones in terms of culture, in both the medieval and early modern periods.⁵

What this thesis adds to this literature is an in-depth exploration of the *society* of one particular late medieval hinterland.⁶ How did its inhabitants negotiate living on the doorstep, so to speak, of York, a centre of major economic, administrative and ecclesiastical importance? How did they form, maintain and alter social relationships with one another and with their urban counterparts? Recently, David Gary Shaw has maintained, in agreement with many other historians and sociologists, that urban social hierarchies were more fluid than the rural, largely due to the commercial aspect of many relationships.⁷ One of the tasks of this thesis is to assess how the hinterland of late medieval York fits into this conceptualization, by looking at, for example, the frequency and duration of social interactions and the nature of the networks formed through these interactions, whether they were ‘close-knit’ or more diffuse, who was forming them, and where.⁸

⁴ For the influence of economic changes in the countryside on the urban market, see M. Kowaleski, ‘Town and Country in Late Medieval England: The Hide and Leather Trade’ in P.J. Corfield and D. Keene (eds.), *Work in Towns, 850-1850* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 57-73.

⁵ E. Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance: Popular Culture in Town and Country* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2006), particularly pp. vii-viii, 7-8, 47-48, 56, 78. Elisabeth Salter considers the metropolitan hinterland in order to explore the flow of cultural ideas through a range of types of places along the urban-rural spectrum, including hamlets, villages and towns, and posits London as a cultural influence on its surrounding area. Her work, particularly her discussions of material culture and the descriptions of objects in the last will and testament, has been influential during both my MA and PhD. Her vision of the hinterland as a space for social relations has meshed well with my own.

⁶ A. Mitson provides an excellent example of a study of part of the early modern hinterland of Nottingham in ‘The Significance of Kinship Networks in the Seventeenth Century: South-West Nottinghamshire’, in C. Phythian-Adams (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 24-71. Her primary focus, unlike that of this thesis, is not to gauge the influence of the county town on hinterland social life, but to investigate the impact of the presence of dynastic families on neighbourhoods encompassing several parishes.

⁷ D.G. Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2005), p. 79.

⁸ The criteria I have used for analysing social relations and networks are detailed in Chapter Two.

0.1 Individuals, Networks and Communities

The exploration of a local society is a major undertaking. In common with many recent studies conducted by historians who have embraced multidisciplinary, it has involved coming to grips with a number of academic fields: historical demography, social history, economic history, cultural history, local history, landscape history, administrative and ecclesiastical history, sociology, anthropology, and occasionally archaeology. In particular I have taken sociological and anthropological ideas and methods as my starting point.⁹ I have also developed some of the ideas from studies of the post-Reformation period, in particular their advanced use of social science methodologies. I have translated these approaches to the late medieval context, although of course this has a different set of historical contingencies and source materials.¹⁰

There are benefits and challenges involved in historians' use of anthropological and sociological methodology.¹¹ Such methodologies provide historians with valuable tools for analysing topics important to social history in recent decades, such as kinship, marriage and friendship. On the other hand, we have to be aware of the nature of the source material and its historical context. We must always be mindful of the potential impact not only of the administrative and cultural filters imposed on medieval documentary sources and how these may differ from the perspectives of modern sociologists and anthropologists, but also of our own cultural and experiential lenses.¹² Moreover, even as we focus on our own

⁹ Good examples of medievalists who have adopted sociological methodologies are J.M. Bennet, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (Oxford); R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours in a thirteenth-century Suffolk community', *Journal of Family History* Fall (1979): 219-56; C. Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies* 33:4 (1994): 340-80; A. Polden, 'The Social Networks of the Buckinghamshire Gentry in the Thirteenth Century', *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006): 371-94; L. Bowdon, 'Redefining Kinship: Exploring Boundaries of Relatedness in Late Medieval New Romney', *Journal of Family History* 29:4 (2004): 407-20.

¹⁰ The exploration of social networks over a locality has long been a subject of study for scholars of the early modern period. See, for example, D. Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* 113 (1986): 38-69 and the essays in C. Phythian-Adams (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993).

¹¹ These are summed up nicely in D. O'Hara, 'Ruled by my friends: aspects of marriage in the diocese of Canterbury, c.1540-1570', *Continuity and Change* 6:1 (1991): 9.

¹² It is a commonplace that historians must always bear in mind the authors and functions of their source material, and the literature discussing the nature and importance of these 'filters' in history, sociology and anthropology is vast. A good starting point is Nathalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France* (Oxford, 1987). A recent

discipline, we should try to keep abreast of the full range of relevant sociological and anthropological methodologies and the latest developments in these fields.¹³

Nonetheless, some of the theories that have acted as both a guiding force in my research and a framework for the structure of this thesis's chapters are decades old and have endured their share of criticism and reworkings. My main approach is a methodology for analysing social networks, based upon symbolic interactionism.¹⁴ David Gary Shaw's interpretation of the 'social self' as individual identity constructed from interactions with other individuals and within groups helpfully encapsulates my approach.¹⁵ I have envisioned society being driven by the agency of individuals as members of ever-changing and overlapping networks and the social meanings resulting from their interactions. In the initial stages of my research, it became clear that such interactions resulted in the formation of networks, or webs of sociability, sections of which medieval documents often allow us to see. It is through these partial networks that I attempt to reconstruct some of the experiences of social life in York's hinterland.¹⁶

It has been noted that a social network approach is a good way to 'conceptualize kinship and community'.¹⁷ This thesis takes the view that such an approach is also invaluable to conceptualizations of communities, groups and

overview that engages deeply with theory in regard to the ways in which we read source material is provided in Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 3-19. See also Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. xiii-xxv and S. McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 11-13. This discussion is particularly resonant with those who study the last will and testament, given that source's attendant debates about the respective roles of the scribe and testator in shaping its contents. For a good summary of this problem, see E.J. Carlson's 'Introduction: The Historical Value of the Ely Consistory Probate Records', in E. Leedham-Green and R. Rodd (eds.), *Index of the Probate Records of the Consistory Court of Ely 1449-1858, Part I: A-E* (London, 1994). The related, inevitable issue of modern researchers imposing their own experiences and agendas onto historical sources has been a driving force in the development of cultural history, especially in its adoption of anthropology and specifically ethnography. Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 4-11.

¹³ D. O'Hara, 'Ruled by my friends', p. 9.

¹⁴ Symbolic interactionism, as originally imagined in the first half of the twentieth century by George Herbert Mead and later coined by Henry Blumer, analyses the symbolic cultural meanings made by individuals when they interact. A good recent introduction is J.M. Charon, *Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction, an Interpretation, an Integration*, 3rd edn (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 2007).

¹⁵ D. Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions*, pp. 1-20.

¹⁶ It should be noted here that I am not utilizing the total range of methodologies of social network analysis, which involves the use of sophisticated software and mathematical techniques, but am rather adopting its ideas as a frame of reference in order to reconstruct fragments of networks through linking names within and across documents.

¹⁷ C. Wetherell, A. Plakans and B. Wellman, 'Social Networks, Kinship, and Community in Eastern Europe', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24:4 (1994): 639.

relationships formed beyond (but often incorporating) the sphere of kinship. I therefore also use networks to explore experiences of neighbourhood, landholding, work and religious devotion. I have thus used a ‘ground up’ or ‘patchwork’ approach to reconstruct social networks and their meanings through studying them from a variety of angles. These varying perspectives include different classes of documents, different fields for social interaction, such as family, work and parish, and different points in time, both over an individual’s life course and across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁸ A network approach lends itself to viewing entities often treated as structures, such as household or parish, rather as the results of processes, whose continual shifting reflects that of the networks themselves.¹⁹

Many recent studies, including those of David Postles and Elisabeth Salter, have stressed the significance of personal agency as well as contingent circumstances in the formation of social networks.²⁰ This elevation of the role of agency complements a social network approach. Much of my research, particularly that conducted during the early stages of this thesis, has been inspired by a new generation of studies, including that of Salter, which use the last will and testament to help reconstruct social networks.²¹ These studies have eloquently demonstrated the subtle interactions between personal choice and contingent and structural factors such as local environment and administrative and ecclesiastical rules in influencing strategies of inheritance. While I devote one of my chapters to such an analysis of hinterland wills, I have also applied similar ideas about agency to my study of the depositions in the cause papers of York’s ecclesiastical courts and

¹⁸ The structure of the thesis, including the documents used and the concept of fields for social activity is discussed below in this Introduction, pp. 26-28, and Chapter Two, pp. 92-102.

¹⁹ For scholarship that prefers processes to structures, see, for example, Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 37, 46-47, 51-52; A. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester, 1985); *idem* (ed.), *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures* (Manchester, 1986); J. Carsten, *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge, 2000); McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, pp. 12-13.

²⁰ Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 3-4, 97-121; Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 34-35, 46. See also Bowdon, ‘Redefining Kinship’, for an example of a recent work that takes personal agency as given. P.J.P. Goldberg is another scholar whose work has influenced my own ideas about agency, especially regarding migration and marriage. See Goldberg, ‘Debate: Fiction in the Archives: The York Cause Papers as a Source for Later Medieval Social History’, *Continuity and Change* 12:3 (1997): 433; *idem*, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 212, 214-15, 234.

²¹ Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 14-18, 21-44, 50-94, 111-36. See also K.J. Lewis, ‘Women, Testamentary Discourse and Life-Writing in Later Medieval England’, in N.J. Menuge (ed.), *Medieval Women and the Law* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 57-75.

other documents, including those produced by York's civic government, religious houses, and the crown, to be discussed in the second half of the thesis.

Seminal works theorizing the nature of telling stories, the believable semi-fictional or fictional narratives found in administrative documents, particularly records of court proceedings, have also been particularly helpful in my own research.²² In line with my aforementioned emphasis on individual and social agency, this thesis takes the view that individuals' reconstructions and constructions of past events were inextricably intertwined with the formation, maintenance and alteration of social networks.

My historiographical ancestors also include those who have emphasized the importance of studying 'ordinary people', the 'middling sort' of much early modern history. This thesis did not start out as a study of the 'county community' and it has not evolved into one, but does use some of the ideas explored by recent scholars such as Carpenter and Polden who employ social networks in their work on the late medieval English gentry.²³ This thesis applies these ideas to the study of the social level below the gentry rather than the gentry itself, because the former group has been less studied, and also because there exist rich fragments of source material pertaining to the prosperous peasant agriculturalists, merchants and artisans who inhabited York's hinterland.

This is an appropriate place to explicate the use of the term 'community' in my title and elsewhere in the following chapters. As most social historians will have realized, it is a controversial word, not least because of its overuse, and my own use of it thus requires some justification.²⁴ Many have pointed out its functionalist, 'rose-tinted' connotations, and others have defended its use as a 'term of convenience'.²⁵ Here I signal that, whilst I sometimes use 'community' to mean a group synonymous with the village, manor, parish or neighbourhood, it should be understood that I view communities as encompassing formations of social networks that cross the structural boundaries of village, parish, etc., in a manner

²² Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*; Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. xiii-xxi.

²³ Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 365-75; Polden, 'Buckinghamshire Gentry', pp. 371-94.

²⁴ For the popularity and overuse of the term, see, for example, Rubin, 'Small Groups', pp. 132-34; Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 276-77.

²⁵ Postles and Carpenter review this debate. See Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 276-77 and Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', pp. 342-44

akin to the ‘emotional communities’ or ‘communities of knowledge’ used by other scholars.²⁶

In keeping with my ‘ground up’ approach, I strive not to take the existence of communities for granted, but construct and reconstruct what I can from evidence that often pertains to individuals and their contacts.

This thesis brings the role of the witness (or deponent) to the fore, in order to explore the ways in which they interacted with individuals and groups in local societies. Although a few historians studying social networks have included discussions of witnesses, few have made explicit statements regarding their significance within these networks.²⁷ Exceptions include analyses of the documents of the nobility and gentry.²⁸ Philippa Maddern’s work on the gentry’s practices in choosing witnesses is notable for its exploration of trust and reciprocity.²⁹ I take these ideas and both emphasize those witnesses chosen by the gentry who were of lower socio-economic status, and also examine witnesses chosen by people below the gentry. These men (and occasionally women) often acted as bridges or brokers between different networks. In keeping with the emphasis I place on witnesses, the law itself as a field of activity/arena for the practice of social relations will be foregrounded throughout the thesis. People engaging with the law also engaged with one another. The act of witnessing or executing a will, testifying before an ecclesiastical court or an escheator, and engaging in transactions governed by law all provided opportunities for creating,

²⁶ B.H. Rosenwein, ‘Worrying About Emotions in History’, *The American Historical Review* 107:3 (2002):821-45; Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community’, p. 344.

²⁷ For example, Salter focuses on testamentary beneficiaries, making only a very brief mention of witnesses in her otherwise very detailed and valuable explication of how individuals used personal preference, text and performance to represent their social identities and networks in their wills. This is interesting, given that it could be argued that witnesses could be a key component in the initial performance of the last will and testament. *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 20-60, especially pp. 56-7. David Gary Shaw focuses on arbitrators and principals in disputes, but links status within networks to one’s order within witness lists in civic records, and names witnessing as one of the ways in which members of elite civic networks interacted. *Necessary Conjunctions*, pp. 43, 106-7.

²⁸ Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community’, pp. 368-69, and particularly Polden, ‘Buckinghamshire Gentry’, pp. 371-94.

²⁹ P. Maddern, ‘Friends of the Dead: Executors, Wills and Family Strategy in Fifteenth-Century Norfolk’, in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 155-74; *eadem*, ‘Best Trusted Friends’: Concepts and Practices of Friendship among Fifteenth-Century Norfolk Gentry’ in N. Rogers (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, Lincolnshire, 1994), pp. 100-117.

reviving and manipulating relationships at different spatial, temporal and cultural levels, perhaps, than those at which pre-existing relationships operated.

0.2 Place, Movement and Identity

Fundamentally, this thesis is about a place, and as such, it has also adopted aspects of regional, local and micro-historical approaches. It has been suggested that ‘local historians’ are sometimes not taken seriously in academic circles, although academic local historians distinguish themselves from non-professional researchers.³⁰ While the reputation of local histories is occasionally undeserved—many fine studies have been written in recent years, and the Victoria County Histories are indispensable—this thesis, while using some methods, source material and geographical scope of local historians, goes beyond the parochial because it critically examines and interrogates the evidence for the dynamics of social relationships within a locality. I align myself with English local historians who have identified one of the agendas for local history as the study of societies within localities. Poos, Phythian-Adams and Salter, among others, have stressed the importance of small interactions within limited geographical areas in producing social change on a larger scale.³¹

Studies of localities, apart from being significant in their own right, provide invaluable opportunities for comparison with other areas. Such studies of localities, or of aspects of or people in a particular place, abound in recent literature and have covered practically the whole of the medieval and early modern periods.³² Partway through my research I discovered Charles Phythian-Adams’ edited collection of approaches to local history, *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History*. Although they deal with the early modern and modern periods, the essays in this book have helped me articulate my belief that regional and local history can facilitate and energize historians’ attempts to approach ‘lived experience’, particularly when a social network

³⁰ Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, p. 8; ‘Editorial Forward’, in C. Phythian-Adams (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993), pp. xi-xiii.

³¹ Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 2-3; Phythian-Adams, ‘Introduction’, *Societies, Cultures and Kinships*, pp. 2-9; Salter, *Cultural Creativity*, pp. 166-69.

³² For a locality study *par excellence*, see Poos, *Rural Society*.

methodology is applied. Even more recently, Christopher Dyer's edited collection, *The Self-Contained Village*, adds to the body of material recognizing the links between different village, manors, parishes and towns within a locality.³³ David Postles and his discussion of localities as *espaces vécus* covering several parishes is also a good recent example.³⁴ However, as indicated above, few local studies have focused on hinterlands *qua* hinterlands.

Rather than focusing on a single village, manor or parish, this thesis investigates a jurisdictional region, the wapentake of the Ainsty, which encompassed nearly forty townships, hamlets, and parts of villages. As has been commonly observed in studies of localities and regions, the jurisdictional boundaries of this wapentake did not act as a hindrance to the formation of social relationships. The region did not, of course, exist in a vacuum. While this thesis will explore the multiplicity of networks joining its residents to inhabitants of York and villages elsewhere in the hinterland and beyond, the scope of the thesis required me to limit my research to communities within these somewhat arbitrary jurisdictional bounds.

This thesis is thus about space, and movement, and identity. Many sociologists, geographers and historians posit space as the primary field for social relations, that relations *are* spatial.³⁵ Postles views the belief in Purgatory as the driving force in the formation of *espaces vécus* beyond the confines of a single parish, rightly citing the testamentary evidence for bequests by a single individual to several parish churches within a region.³⁶

While this thesis certainly considers the role of devotion in the formation of networks in the Ainsty, it also considers the significance of kinship, landholding patterns and commercial transactions. Postles acknowledges the potential of migration for the purpose of land acquisition as a factor in the formation of social networks in localities, as well as demographic factors resulting in the spread of a

³³ C. Dyer (ed.), *The Self-Contained Village? The Social History of Rural Communities 1250-1900*, Explorations in Local and Regional History 2 (Hatfield, Hertfordshire, 2007).

³⁴ Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 97-121.

³⁵ E.W. Soja, 'The Spatiality of Social Life: Towards a Transformative Rethorisation', in D. Gregory and J. Urry (eds.), *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1985); Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 97-121.

³⁶ Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 97-121.

kinship group over a number of villages.³⁷ A substantial amount of work has been done on these phenomena in the early modern period. Mitson, for example, has explored kin networks spread over more than one parish.³⁸ This thesis seeks to further explore these patterns as manifested in York's hinterland.

The formation of networks between villages and across parish boundaries of course involved a degree of movement, geographical mobility and even migration. The historiography of migration in medieval England is discussed in detail in Chapter One, but it should be noted here that the interaction between marriage, life-cycle service and migration has long proved an attractive and fruitful subject of study. Here, I signal my intention to (re)examine that interaction from the point of view of York's hinterland, but also to explore the dynamics of geographical movement and other social relations besides those of work and marriage, thus widening the scope of what has been explored in great detail by, for example, Dr. Jeremy Goldberg.³⁹

0.3 Why York?

The area of York's hinterland under discussion, the wapentake of the Ainsty, possessed in the late middle ages a unique identity as the 'County of the City of York'.⁴⁰ This designation opens the way for future comparative work to determine whether, in keeping with its jurisdictional status, this part of the hinterland experienced more involved social relations with the city than other parts of York's hinterland, or than the hinterlands of other medieval English towns. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that this special jurisdictional relationship may have meant that Ainsty affairs were recorded in the civic registers in greater proportions than business involving other areas of the hinterland.⁴¹ Despite its

³⁷ Postles, *Social Geographies*, pp. 108.

³⁸ Mitson, 'Significance of Kinship Networks', pp. 24-71.

³⁹ P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Marriage, Migration and Servanthood: The York Cause Paper Evidence', in P.J.P. Goldberg (ed.), *Women in Medieval English Society* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 1-15; *idem*, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 212-304.

⁴⁰ See Chapter One for an explanation of the Ainsty's jurisdiction.

⁴¹ The main civic records consulted were the published editions of the York Memorandum Books and the York House Books. See M. Sellers (ed.), *York Memorandum Book, Part I (1376-1419)*, Surtees Society (henceforward SS) 120 (1912); *idem*, *York Memorandum Book, Part II (1388-1493)*, SS 125 (1915); J.W. Percy (ed.), *York Memorandum Book III*, SS 186 (1973); L.C. Attreed (ed.), *York House Books 1461-1490, Volume I: House Books One and Two/Four and Volume II: House Books Five-Six* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1991).

special status, the wapentake has received little sustained scholarly attention, with the exception of scattered mentions in works on York and some local surveys of varying quality of particular townships.⁴² Through this thesis I begin to fill this lacuna.

Alongside the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century material in the civic registers, plentiful other documents associated with the city and its hinterland provide the opportunity to compare very different sets of records covering a long time span.⁴³ The city's position as an ecclesiastical centre helped attract the foundations of religious houses in the suburbs and hinterland, whose cartularies afford us glimpses of local networks from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries up until the dissolution.⁴⁴ At the same time the ecclesiastical institutions within the city and its suburbs that exercised control over pockets of peculiar jurisdictions within the Ainsty also produced cartularies.⁴⁵ Similarly, York's function as a staple helped draw hinterland participation in commerce. Some two hundred Chancery records of such transactions, spanning the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, survive in the National Archives in the form of certificates of statute merchant and statute staple.⁴⁶

The geographical proximity to York's ecclesiastical courts also facilitated the registering of wills, which survive for the Ainsty in some numbers from 1389, while people from the hinterland also took advantage of the presence of the sheriffs' court.⁴⁷ The source most unique to York is the large body of Church court

⁴² Examples include M.J. Harrison, *Four Ainsty Townships: the History of Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck, Colton and Steeton, 1066-1875* (York, 2000); *eadem*, *The History of Acaster Selby in the Parish of Stillingfleet 1066-1875* (York, 2003); G. Hodgson, *A History of Acomb (Richardson's History Revised and Enlarged)* (York, 2001).

⁴³ The archival sources examined are probate records and church court cause papers. All other primary sources have been published editions, translations or calendars.

⁴⁴ There are two published cartularies for Ainsty houses. These are J.S. Purvis (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh*, YASRS 92 (1936) and G.C. Ransome (ed.), 'The Chartulary of Tockwith alias Scokirk, a Cell to the Priory of Nostell' in J.S. Purvis (ed.), *Miscellanea III*, YASRS 80 (1931), pp. 149-205.

⁴⁵ J.E. Burton (ed.), *The Cartulary of the Treasurer of York Minster*, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 5 (York, 1978).

⁴⁶ The certificates are filed at the National Archives under the reference number C241. The National Archives website provides a very useful calendar summarizing each transaction; it is this that I have consulted.

⁴⁷ Probate Records are held at the Borthwick Institute for Historical Research (henceforth BIHR), now known as the Borthwick Institute for Archives, located at the University of York. For the sheriffs' court, see P.M. Stell (ed. and trans.), *Sheriffs' Court Books of the City of York for the Fifteenth Century* (York, 2000).

cause papers containing depositions.⁴⁸ These provide detailed witness testimony for causes in which Ainsty inhabitants were participants, the earliest of which dates from the 1340s. Several medievalists have based studies of rural networks on long series of manorial court rolls, which in many respects are ideal for a study of the interaction between geographical mobility and social relations in late medieval England, given that they provide the opportunity to discern changes over time in the same location.⁴⁹ Such long series of manorial records for the Ainsty are lacking. Accounts and court rolls for several manors survive for very short runs of one to a few years in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These are held in various repositories throughout England and abroad, and almost none has been published.⁵⁰ Constraints of time and the scope of the thesis have focused my energies in the archives on the more plentiful cause papers and probate records. Although the lacuna in manorial documents is regrettable (and something I hope to remedy in future research), the cause papers and probate records do provide a depth of information for the entire range of Ainsty settlements. The circumstantial and often value-laden detail found in the depositions is vital to an understanding of social networks. These documents are supplemented by other records generated locally and by the crown, including published deeds, poll-tax returns, feet of fines, and Inquisitions Post Mortem.

Using these documents, the thesis explores the extent to which the influence of York, its laws, economy, society and culture, interacted with the society of its

⁴⁸ The cause papers are also held at the Borthwick Institute, under the designations CP.E (fourteenth century) and CP.F (fifteenth century).

⁴⁹ For the primary examples of this methodology, see J.A. Raftis, *Tenure and mobility: studies in the social history of the mediaeval English village*, Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 8 (Toronto, 1964); and J.M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford, 1987).

⁵⁰ The medieval Ainsty court rolls are: Acaster Malbis (court rolls, 1477-83 and 1492-1501, Northallerton, North Yorkshire Archive Service, ZDV(F) mic 3091/0120ff); Bickerton (court roll with Cowthorpe, 1475-81, Leeds, YAS, DD121/2/4 and survey, 1500, Maidstone, Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle U1475/M288); Bolton Percy (account roll, 1478-79, San Marino, California, Huntington Library, Hastings HAM/71/9); Dringhouses (ministers' accounts with other manors, 1443-45, Kew, National Archives, SC 6/1087/11); Healaugh with Tadcaster (court roll, 1497-98, private collection, enquiries to Chichester, West Sussex Record Office, Petworth PHA 6970; court roll, with other manors, 1521-22, private collection, enquiries to Chichester, West Sussex Record Office; court roll, with other manors, 1522-25, Alnwick, Alnwick Castle, X.11.6 Box 5); Nether Poppleton (court roll, 1447, Leeds, YAS, DD88/1); Tockwith with Wilstrop (court roll, 1400-02, Leeds, YAS, MD112). The only published series of court rolls to date is that from Acomb: H. Richardson (ed.), *Court Rolls for the Manor of Acomb Vol. 1*, YASRS 131 (1969).

hinterland. It will demonstrate that York and its inhabitants were significant, and certainly commonplace, in the formation of Ainsty social relationships, but that it was not omnipresent. It was felt more keenly in some places than others, and was determined in part by individual choice: residents of the hinterland could in some respects choose their own level of involvement with urban society. It will be shown that the level of engagement with York, as well as with individuals in neighbouring and other villages, also varied according to spheres or fields of social activity.

0.4 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured according to two main criteria, document type and domains of social interaction. Firstly, the chapters are organized according to document class. This is in order to emphasize the importance of a multi-document approach in investigating a particular region or locality. Many studies have been based on document series of varying size, for example, wills, manorial court rolls, or even ecclesiastical court cause paper depositions. Whilst these studies are invaluable, my own research has shown that one category of records can provide insights into individuals, villages, parishes and wapentakes that another class may well conceal. Using multiple categories of documents also, of course, enables record linkage. I begin with probate records, specifically the testament, the most ‘personal’ of my documents in that it recorded the point of view of the individual, then move outward to those documents recording interpersonal relations as part of church court litigation, and finally to records of institutions: religious, civic and royal, some of which also illuminate interpersonal relationships. Each successive chapter builds on the conclusions of the previous, particularly when new links in a social network discussed beforehand are revealed by examining a different source.

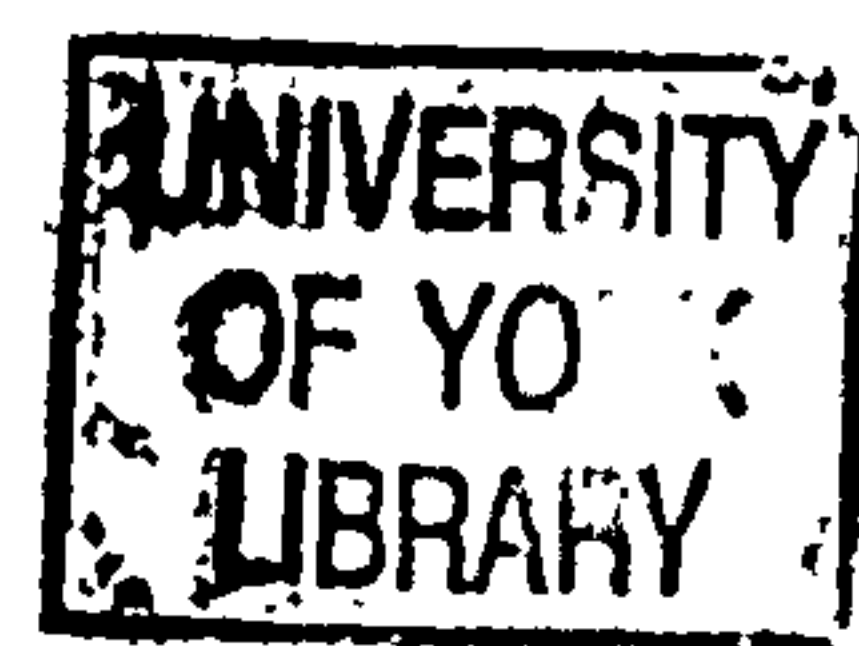
Following an overview of the theory and background appropriate to the source material to be discussed, each chapter is then subdivided into sections covering three broad fields in which social relations could take place.⁵¹ The first comprises marriage, kinship and household; the second work, landholding and

⁵¹ For a detailed explanation of these activity fields and their significance for the study of social networks, see Chapter Two.

neighbourhood; the third devotion and parish. These are, of course, arbitrary categories that most scholars would agree could rarely be separated in lived experience. My purpose in creating these subdivisions is to assess the relative importance of that activity field to the social relations as a whole manifested in each class of document. For example, my second chapter asks questions about the relative significance of kinship and neighbourhood within testamentary evidence. In each subdivision within the chapters (or occasionally in the chapter conclusion), I discuss how geographical mobility interacted with social processes. In the concluding section of each chapter, I draw attention to the interconnections between these categories, and assess the impact of York on the resulting networks.

This and the following paragraphs summarise the structure of and documents used in the four chapters of the thesis. The purpose of the first chapter is to both introduce the geographical area under discussion, and outline the theories of and introduce evidence for migration and mobility that affected those who lived in and moved through it. This chapter is based on secondary literature and some primary sources that are useful in reconstructing the topography, economy and tenurial and parochial makeup of the Ainsty. These latter include poll tax returns, hundred rolls, and Inquisitions *post mortem*. While this thesis does not subscribe to a deterministic view of social action, it is necessary to take some account of the geographical, economical and cultural forces to which the people of the hinterland responded and with which they interacted. Such responses, it will be shown, included varying degrees of mobility and residential stability throughout the wapentake, which in turn facilitated the formation of networks of varying characteristics.

Chapter Two deals in depth with the principles and methodology of assessing social relations and networks. The main primary sources in this chapter are probate records, and these are also the most numerous of all the sources for the Ainsty. These records are ideal for exemplifying the processes involved in the formation, maintenance and alteration of relationships and networks. Using the complementary evidence of poll tax returns, I emphasize geographical patterns in network formation in order to draw out the ways in which testators might have viewed their local society and that of York and elsewhere. I also employ a number of case studies of particularly illuminating wills, and a group of wills that



demonstrates the interplay of testamentary (and social) behaviour within a particular Ainsty parish.

The third chapter discusses the witness depositions found in the cause papers produced in York's ecclesiastical court, following an explanation of the workings of the courts themselves. A significant proportion of the relations and networks in this chapter are based on change and conflict as well as affectivity. I focus less in this chapter on quantitative patterns, and rather elaborate on a smaller number of case studies. The number of cause papers involving Ainsty individuals is not large, but the depositions are occasionally numerous and quite rich with detail that reveals much about the interplay between geographical movement, sociability and the variable influence of the city.

My fourth and longest chapter covers a wider variety of documents: the records of local religious houses, deeds, York's civic registers and accounts, the records of the sheriffs' court, and crown documents including certificates of statute merchant and statute staple, feet of fines, and the witness depositions in the Inquisitions Post Mortem. Due to constraints on space, the discussion of each category of record is shorter than in the previous chapters. The focus of the chapter is on land and commercial transactions, as these often proved fruitful grounds for social relations. As in Chapter Three, there is an emphasis on conflictual relations as well as solidarities.

The Conclusion, also necessarily of substantial length, draws together and compares the conclusions drawn from the individual documents discussed in the preceding chapters. The Conclusion retains the subdivisions of kinship, occupation and devotion. Thus, for example, the relative significance of marriage for social life in the hinterland will be compared across wills, cause papers, deeds and civic and crown records. The role of localized movement in creating social neighbourhoods will also be assessed across the records. Throughout the Conclusion, a number of case studies of individual networks that can be traced across records are also employed. These networks provide glimpses of the various ways in which hinterland inhabitants negotiated their relationships with one another and with York, and ultimately fashioned local identities.

CHAPTER ONE: INFLUENCES ON PATTERNS OF MOBILITY: THE TOPOGRAPHY, ECONOMY AND TENURIAL HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL YORK'S HINTERLAND

1.1 Introduction: Rural-Urban Connections

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. It gives an overview of late medieval mobility and migration in England against its historiographical and theoretical background, and establishes the nature of York's hinterland as a framework for discussing patterns of physical movement in a social context in the following chapters. After outlining the historiography of the interactions between town and countryside in this introduction, the second section of the chapter discusses different types of mobility and factors that could influence movement. Later chapters delve more deeply into the concept of movement, and flesh out the geographical framework introduced in this chapter by suggesting that physical mobility was a marked feature of society in the lands surrounding later medieval York. It will be seen that this mobility both reflected and influenced the social, cultural and economic ties between town and country, as well as the local topography and tenurial structures.

Before exploring patterns of migration and social interaction between medieval York in its rural hinterland, and within the hinterland itself, however, some topographical and historical description of the area of the hinterland under discussion must first be offered. The third section of this chapter thus describes the hinterland of York in terms of environment, geology, topography, economy and seigniorial rule. The first two subsections outline how topography influenced the economy in York's hinterland, but focus primarily on two of the wapentakes immediately adjacent to York, Bulmer and the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent. The third, fourth and fifth subsections will discuss the topography, tenurial history and economy of the Ainsty, the wapentake to the west of the city and the geographical focus of this thesis.

Few scholars would challenge the statement that an important symbiotic relationship existed between most medieval towns and their hinterlands.¹ Although medievalists acknowledge the social and cultural implications of these relationships, most research has dealt with the economic dynamic between town and country, and it has long been assumed (probably rightly) that a town's social hinterland coincided with its economic sphere of influence.² Moreover, as Jonathon Finch has pointed out, the debates over the nature of this economic relationship have been largely argued from an urban point of view, stressing towns' roles as centres of consumer demand and catalysts for change.³ In the broader arena of medieval economic history, Richard Britnell has criticized James Masschaele for what he sees as Masschaele's overemphasis of major towns as markets for the produce of medieval rural England.⁴ Therefore, this chapter also emphasises the economic and social conditions that obtained *within* the rural hinterland as well as the interrelations between town and country. The idea that the hinterland consisted of geographical and administrative gradations and migration fields will also be noted: despite city walls and jurisdictional divisions, the boundaries between town and country were seldom clear cut.

As the contributions of other disciplines, including geography, archaeology and ecology, have been increasingly taken into account, long-standing scholarly

¹ Following recent scholarly convention, it must be acknowledged that the term 'hinterland' should be used with caution. The original German word refers to a broad area surrounding a town in which all sorts of goods are exchanged, while the more restricted area in which food was marketed, and which forms the geographical focus for this thesis in the case of York, is called the *umland*. C. Dyer, 'Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration, 1300-1600: A Summing Up', in J.A. Galloway (ed.), *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c.1300-1600* (London, 2000), pp. 103-9. For reasons of convenience, the generic terms 'hinterland' and 'surrounding countryside' will be used throughout, modified by 'immediate' or 'extended' to indicate geographical emphasis.

² A.F. Butcher, 'The Origins of Romney Freeman, 1433-1523', *EHR* New Series 27:1 (1974): 27; C. Dyer, 'Market Towns and the Countryside in Late Medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History* 31 (1996): 33.

³ J. Finch, 'Regionality and Medieval Landscapes', in D. Perring (ed.), *Town and Country in England: Frameworks for Archaeological Research*, CBA Research Report 134 (York, 2002), p. 107.

⁴ R. Britnell, 'Urban demand in the English economy, 1300-1600', in J.A. Galloway (ed.), *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c.1300-1600* (London, 2000), pp. 1-21; J. Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150-1350* (London, 1997). I believe Britnell has overemphasized Masschaele's focus on large towns and the role of smaller rural markets as their suppliers. Masschaele discusses small scale, private intramural trade, such as the type elucidated by Christopher Dyer in 'The Hidden Trade of the Middle Ages: Evidence from the West Midlands of England', *Journal of Historical Geography* 18:2 (1992): 141-57. Despite Britnell's claims to the contrary, Masschaele indicates the ways in which developments in the countryside influenced towns' economies, rather than only the other way around.

debates continue to be between those who view towns as a driving, positive force in the economic environments of their hinterlands, which nonetheless existed to serve the towns' economic needs, and those who see towns as more 'parasitic', having detrimental effects on the environments and resources of their surrounding lands.⁵ One aspect of this thesis is therefore an exploration of this debate from the point of view of York's hinterland, arguing that the effects of the town on the countryside in terms of the thorough exploitation of the latter's resources has been overemphasized, in light of recent archaeological evidence, to be discussed below. It will also be shown that the social effects of York's interaction with the hinterland varied in intensity across the Ainsty wapentake.

This is not to say that towns did not stimulate change in the ways in which their hinterlands produced, used and circulated resources. One such resource in the middle ages was, of course, human labour, the availability of which fluctuated with demographic and economic changes. Urban historians have long discussed the role of mobility and migration in medieval (and early modern) demography and the market economy, mainly in terms of migrants' roles in replacing towns' populations, especially in periods of high mortality.⁶ Indeed, many studies of migration focus on rural-urban movement.⁷ The social impact of such migration and of the economic environment in which it took place has been relatively less

⁵ R. Roseff and D. Perring, 'Towns and the Environment', in D. Perring (ed.), *Town and Country in England: Frameworks for Archaeological Research*, pp. 116-26; and E.A. Wrigley, 'Parasite or Stimulus. The Town in a Pre-Industrial Economy', in P. Abrams and E.A. Wrigley (eds.), *Towns in Societies* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 295-309. See also K. Giles and C. Dyer (eds.), *Town and Country in the Middle Ages: Contrasts, Contacts and Interconnections*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 22 (2005). Britnell and Poos are among those who are sceptical about the magnitude of urban influence, in this case that of Colchester over rural Essex. R.H. Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 46-7, 156-7, 248-53; Poos, *Rural Society*, p. 41.

⁶ E. Miller, 'Medieval York', in P.M. Tillot (ed.), *Victoria County History of Yorkshire: City of York* (London, 1961), pp. 85-7; P. McClure, 'Patterns of Migration in the Late Middle Ages: the Evidence of English Place-Name Surnames', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series 32:2 (1979), pp. 180-2; R.B. Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom of the City of York in the Later Middle Ages', *The Economic History Review*, 2nd Series 26:1 (1973): 11; D.M. Palliser, 'A Regional Capital as Magnet: Immigrants to York, 1477-1566', *YAJ* 57 (1985): 111-23; E. Rutledge, 'Immigration and Population Growth in Early Fourteenth-Century Norwich: Evidence from the Tithing Roll', *Urban History Yearbook 1988* (1988); Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 96-7, 158, 202-5.

⁷ D. Postles, 'Migration and Mobility in a less mature economy: English Internal Migration, c.1200-1350', *Social History* 25:3 (2000), pp. 285-6.

studied, although the historical enquiry it has provoked has been incredibly fruitful, particularly in the realms of marriage and social dislocation.⁸

As studies of medieval migration, notably Peter McClure's essential essay, have shown, a medieval town, as a central place, could expect to have a certain 'primary catchment', or migrant-producing area, extending a certain number of miles in each direction, depending on topography.⁹ This is the region with which the town would share its strongest economic, social and cultural links. Towns, including York, acted as natural magnets to many country dwellers seeking waged employment, including life-cycle service, as well as those who wished to conduct commerce in the large urban markets and engage in the political life of the city. Conversely, since the common fields immediately surrounding an English town, and in which citizens enjoyed rights of pasture, would often be insufficient to sustain the urban population, citizens needed to import large quantities of agricultural staples, thus doubly ensuring trade and market contacts with the hinterland.¹⁰ Moreover, as will be discussed in more detail below, urban

⁸ For some new approaches to the rural-urban relationship that emphasise the need to account for social dynamics in future research, see D. Perring (ed.), *Town and Country in England: Frameworks for Archaeological Research*; and S.R. Epstein (ed.), *Town and Country in Europe, 1300-1800* (Cambridge, 2001). A.F. Butcher also made an early call for analysing the social aspects of the causes and effects of migration. Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 16-27. There is a considerable literature on the detrimental effects of mobility in the late middle ages and early modern period, such as vagabondage. The main example is M.K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge, 1998). Dr. P.J.P. Goldberg in particular has raised important questions regarding the impact of rural-urban migration on marriage formation in late medieval England. P.J.P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520* (Oxford, 1992). See also P. Maddern, 'Moving On: Geographical Mobility and Serial Monogamy in Late-Medieval England', paper given at the York Medieval Seminar, 16 February, 2005; *eadem* 'Moving Households: Geographical Mobility and Serial Monogamy in England, 1350-1500', *Parergon* 24:2 (2007): 86-92. For the early modern period, see, for example, V. Brodsky Elliott, 'Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Ages, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619', in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981), pp. 81-100.

⁹ McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', pp. 167-82. The relationship between catchment areas and Central Place Theory will be discussed later in this chapter, in the sections on migration. Here, it should be noted that in order to have ascribed to it the label 'central place', a place should fulfil all or most of the following central place functions: administration, judicial, ecclesiastical and exchange. M. Aston, 'Post Roman Central Places in Somerset', in E. Grant (ed.), *Central Places, Archaeology and History* (Sheffield, 1986), pp. 49-51.

¹⁰ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, p. 148; Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 16-17, 22.

individuals also often invested in land in the countryside, binding hinterland and city even closer together through their travel.¹¹

1.2 Migration

The modern study of migration was pioneered by E.G. Ravenstein's research on nineteenth-century urbanisation in Germany. The 'laws' of migration that he developed, which have since been debated and expanded, have influenced the study of migration and mobility to this day, although the bulk of this research in England has focused, again, on the nineteenth century and its industrialised cities in particular.¹² This having been said, an impressive amount of research has also been done on migration and mobility in early modern England, and medievalists have long acknowledged the importance of movement as well, despite our comparative lack of resources, notably parish registers.¹³

As Richard M. Smith has pointed out, medievalists have investigated migration mainly in the context of demographic studies.¹⁴ The essential early study of rural movement is the work of J.A. Raftis on the connections between tenure and mobility on the Ramsey Abbey manors before and after the Black Death.¹⁵ Raftis discussed mobility as a regular feature of medieval rural life, as does Lawrence Poos for rural Essex.¹⁶ Both emphasise peasants' integration into the manorial economy and social life, while still privileging the agency of the tenant in the choice to move when discussing the complex interaction between personal motivation and external factors.¹⁷ A.F. Butcher, however, has criticised the work of Raftis and other early migration scholars for their emphasis on the 'composition of particular communities' rather than the 'phenomenon of migration itself'.¹⁸ As this thesis examines the *effects* of mobility, however, I propose that it is necessary

¹¹ Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 17, 22; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 38, 259-60.

¹² D.B. Grigg, 'E.G. Ravenstein and the 'Laws of Migration'', in M. Drake (ed.), *Time, Family and Community: Perspectives on Family and Community History* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 147-64.

¹³ See the fascinating collection, *Migration and Society in Early Modern England*, P. Clark and D. Souden (eds.), (London, 1987); also J. Patten, *Rural-Urban Migration in Pre-industrial England*, School of Geography Research Paper 6 (Oxford, 1973).

¹⁴ R.M. Smith, 'Demographic Developments in Rural England', in B.M.S. Campbell (ed.), *Before the Black Death: Studies in the 'Crisis' of the Early Fourteenth Century* (Manchester, 1991), p. 73.

¹⁵ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*.

¹⁶ Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 159-79.

¹⁷ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 129-204.

¹⁸ Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', p. 16.

to take into account the composition of individual communities, including the ways in which tenurial structure interacted with individual movement and Ainsty inhabitants' integration into the hinterland's economy.¹⁹

McClure's work, along with the Butcher's article on migration to Romney, in Kent, have inspired the research of several other scholars working on particular manors, towns, and regions, all of whom raise important questions about different aspects of migration both before and after the Black Death.²⁰ Poos, for example, has examined tithing rolls to calculate the rate of population turnover among adult males in early-fourteenth-century rural Essex, and Jones has concluded that Spalding Priory, with its strict style of lordship, suffered increasing problems with absent and fugitive villains in the post-plague period.²¹

Analyses of rural-urban migration based on individual towns include the work of Britnell on Colchester, which charts the nuances of the changing market environment in town and hinterland before and after the Black Death.²² E. Rutledge relates the rate of mobility to community size in her study of a pre-plague tithing roll from Norwich, which she sets within the context of population pressure and land hunger in the city's early fourteenth-century hinterland. Her argument that the resulting influx of poor immigrants led to a decline in social cohesion has implications for this thesis, which touches upon movement to and from the Ainsty in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. My evidence, however, has suggested continuity in social networks during this period rather than dislocation due to loss of population to York.²³ Recently, Richard Goddard's book on Coventry utilises surname evidence available in the hundred, deed and eyre rolls for the city in order to emphasize how migrants would have perceived the rapidly

¹⁹ Postles has suggested that Raftis undervalued the impact of seignorial rule on migration. Postles, 'Migration and Mobility', pp. 289-90. See also H.S.A. Fox, 'Exploitation of the Landless by Lords and Tenants in Early Medieval England', in Z. Razi and R.M. Smith (eds.), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996): 518-68; *idem*, 'Servants, Cottagers and Tied Cottages during the Later Middle Ages: Towards a Regional Dimension', *Rural History* 6:2 (1995): 125-54.

²⁰ Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 16-27.

²¹ L.R. Poos, 'Population Turnover in Medieval Essex: The Evidence of Some Early-Fourteenth-Century Tithing Lists', in L.R. Bonfield, R. Smith, et. al. (eds.), *The World we have gained: histories of population and social structure* (New York, 1986), pp. 1-22; E.D. Jones, 'Villein Mobility in the Later Middle Ages: the Case of Spalding Priory', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36 (1992): 151-66.

²² Britnell, *Colchester*.

²³ Rutledge, 'Immigration and Population Growth', pp. 24-8.

developing town as economically attractive. Goddard's work also explicates the links between rural-urban migration and trade, but fails to take into account the growing rural population of the late thirteenth century as a motive for migration.²⁴

Each of these studies has confirmed Raftis's impression of a highly-mobile society in town, suburbs, hinterland and countryside. Postles has provided an excellent, comprehensive review of the implications of much of the research of the past several decades, emphasising, for example, the need to move beyond the quantitative study of migration fields and population turnover.²⁵ Like Poos, I propose that it is also important to study movement within a locality or region, rather than simply to or from a specific settlement, in order better to study the contours of mobility that crossed manorial and parochial boundaries.

1.2.1 Source and Chronology

Documentary evidence for medieval migration varies with time and region, and such contingencies have required a certain amount of ingenuity on the part of those producing statistical studies. Although this and the following chapters use some rough and ready statistics to illustrate broad trends, my focus is on building up a patchwork picture based on case studies to explore how mobility interacted with social networks in the hinterland. Some explanation of how sources are typically used is nonetheless necessary. The freemen's rolls have been the most utilised resource for migration into York, reaffirming through place-name surnames the importance of the immediate hinterland as a catchment area.²⁶ Later chapters will show that many of these migrant freemen retained ties with their village of origin throughout the late medieval period.

Lay subsidy and poll tax returns also furnish place-name evidence. Particularly useful are the relatively full returns for the 1379 poll tax for the West

²⁴ R. Goddard, *Lordship and Medieval Urbanisation: Coventry, 1043-1355* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 137-55.

²⁵ Postles, 'Migration and Mobility', pp. 285-99.

²⁶ F. Collins (ed.), *Register of the Freemen of the City of York Vol. I, 1272-1558*, SS 96 (1897); J.C. Russell, *British Medieval Population* (Albuquerque, 1948), pp. 315-16; McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', pp. 171-72, 177-82; Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', pp. 11-14; Palliser, 'Regional Capital as Magnet', pp. 111-23.

Riding, which included the Ainsty.²⁷ Tax returns are limited by serious caveats, however, including problems of under-enumeration and evasion. The biases of these sources towards men generally and both men and women of economic and social standing are well known.²⁸ It is also difficult to assess the validity of studies of migration based on place-name surnames for the period with which this enquiry is concerned: by the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, hereditary naming had become more common in northern England.²⁹ Given the varying stability of surnames, it is difficult to tell, for example, whether an individual named in the poll-tax returns of one parish, who possessed a surname indicative of a parish or location elsewhere, was an actual migrant, or merely the spouse, child or grandchild of a migrant.

Double place-name surnames, i.e. 'Forename Place-name Surname 1 *de* Place-name 2', are likelier indications of recent migration. In the late fourteenth-century poll-tax returns for Yorkshire, as well as its late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century wills, however, there are only a few examples of such surnames. Further problems arise from these sources in the study of female migration, as wives were assessed together with their husbands, often designated only as *uxor*, and servants were usually designated by forename only.³⁰

Similar vigilance regarding gender and status biases must be exercised when studying probate records, but the qualitative, circumstantial evidence available in wills, as when an individual mentioned a parish of origin or a place where he or she had land or relatives, seems more solid. Wills, however, rarely make direct mention of birth-place.³¹ Similarly, records of land transactions can be suggestive about mobility when there is information about an individual living and holding land in more than one locality. This aspect of these records will be discussed in Chapter Four.

²⁷ C.C. Fenwick, *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381. Part 3 Wiltshire-Yorkshire* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 281-82, 287, 421-27. See also the earlier printed edition, 'Rolls of the Collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Ric. II'. *YAJ* 7 (1884): 174-86.

²⁸ M.W. Beresford, *Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes* (Bridge Place, 1963), pp. 19-29. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 26-28, 362-75.

²⁹ McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 168.

³⁰ R.M. Smith, 'Geographical Diversity in the Resort to Marriage in Late Medieval Europe: Work, Reputation, and Unmarried Females in the Household Formation Systems of Northern and Southern Europe', in P.J.P. Goldberg (ed.), *Women in Medieval English Society* (Stroud, 1997), p. 35.

³¹ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 281.

Manorial records have fuelled studies of emigration from particular rural areas, particularly evidence pertaining to payments of chevage and merchet, or marriage fine.³² It was indicated above that manorial records are scarce for the Ainsty.³³ The court rolls for Acomb, an Ainsty manor only a few miles from York, survive only from the 1540s, and thus largely fall outside the chronological range of this thesis.³⁴ It is nonetheless worth noting that the entries dating to the last few years of Henry VIII's reign indicate a high level of movement between York, the Ainsty and other parts of the hinterland.³⁵

Presentments for violations of labour legislation, and fines for housing strangers or servants, are further possibilities for exploring the nature of mobility and migration, especially among the non-elite, both before and after the Black Death.³⁶ The Yorkshire Peace Rolls, for instance, contain examples of women and men migrating in order to earn higher wages for their labour during the harvest season.³⁷ Especially relevant to this thesis are the York church court depositions, which, with the wealth of biographical detail and anecdotal evidence they provide for deponents across a relatively wide social spectrum, are capable of illuminating a great deal about migration and mobility in Yorkshire.³⁸ The records of ecclesiastical courts, and particularly the cause papers containing these depositions, have increasingly been used to study the dynamics of migration and marriage.³⁹ It

³² Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 280; Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 139-44, 178-9.

³³ See Introduction. For the area close to York, there survive some late thirteenth-century extents of the prebends of York Minster, including lands in York's eastern hinterland, in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent. These contain detailed information about the services owed by tenants, including leyrwite, merchet and carting duties. Some printed extents may be found in T.A.M. Bishop (ed.), 'Extents of the Prebends of York c.1295', *Miscellanea Vol. IV, Part 1*, YASRS 94 (1937), pp. 1-37.

³⁴ Richardson (ed.), *Acomb Court Rolls*.

³⁵ Richardson (ed.), *Acomb Court Rolls*, pp. 1-2.

³⁶ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 130-8, 268-70; L.R. Poos, *A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex 1350-1525* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 199; Goldberg (ed.), *Women in England c. 1275-1525* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 175-79.

³⁷ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 295; Goldberg, *Women in England*, pp. 178-79.

³⁸ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 27, 168, 217-25, 282-304; Frederik Pedersen has rightly pointed out that the proportions and range of socio-economic backgrounds of the witnesses in Church court depositions is not entirely representative of late medieval English society as a whole. However, the depositions do provide the opportunity to recover information about certain lower status groups that are even more severely unrepresented in, for example, testamentary evidence. F. Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London, 2000), pp. 177-206; F. Pedersen, 'The York Cause Papers: a Reply to Jeremy Goldberg', *Continuity and Change* 12:3 (1997): 447-54.

³⁹ M.M. Sheehan, 'The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register', in J.K. Farge (ed.), *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe:*

will be seen in Chapter Three that these and other types of causes in the church courts often evolved from the consequences of mobility, and precipitated further travel (and sociability) themselves. Similarly, although they are not nearly as detailed, disputes recorded in York's civic records, including the sheriffs' court books, demonstrate the propensity for individuals from different vills to interact.⁴⁰

As we saw in the discussion of surname stability, chronology is an important factor in studies of mobility, as it is in any demographic enquiry. There is a general consensus among historians that the century before the Black Death was a time of high population and a resulting pressure on resources, landed and otherwise. This population pressure influenced the movement of country-dwellers in many regions, perhaps contributing to social problems in villages and towns resulting from an influx of unskilled labour.⁴¹ The situation in York may have reflected that observed for Norwich before the plague.⁴² This is suggested by York's Civic Ordinances of 1301 against the activities of regrators, forestallers, and prostitutes. Some of these may have come from the hinterland as several female hucksters and forestallers possessed Ainsty locative surnames.⁴³

On the other hand, some freemen listed as violating the ordinances also had Ainsty surnames, as did several individuals assessed as possessing substantial wealth in the 1334 lay subsidy for York.⁴⁴ The York Freemen's Register also

Collected Studies (Toronto, 1996), pp. 51-53, 63, 66; R.H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in English Legal History (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 59-66, 75, 80-81; C. Donahue, Jr. 'Female Plaintiffs in Marriage Cases in the Court of York in the Later Middle Ages: What Can We Learn from the Numbers?', in S. Sheridan Walker (ed.), *Wife and Widow in Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1993), pp. 204-05; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 217-304; Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 134-39, 164-79; *idem*, 'The Heavy-Handed Marriage Counsellor: Regulating Marriage in some Later-Medieval English Local Ecclesiastical-Court Jurisdictions', *The American Journal of Legal History* 39:3 (1995): 294-96; Maddern, 'Moving Households', pp. 69-92; L.B. Smith, 'A View from an Ecclesiastical Court: Mobility and Marriage in a Border Society at the End of the Middle Ages', in R.R. Davies and Geraint H. Jenkins (eds.), *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 64-80.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Four. The sheriffs' records are printed in translation in P.M. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books of the City of York for the Fifteenth Century* (York, 2000).

⁴¹ R.H. Hilton, 'Lords, Burgesses and Hucksters', *Past and Present* 97 (1982):10, 13; Rutledge, 'Immigration and Population Growth', pp. 25-6; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 282.

⁴² Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 52-3, 109-10.

⁴³ Rutledge, 'Immigration and Population Growth', pp. 25-6; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 86, 282-88; M. Prestwich (ed.), *York Civic Ordinances of 1301*, Borthwick Papers 49 (York, 1976), pp. 11-14, 16-17.

⁴⁴ R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, Records of Social and Economic History New Series II (London, 1975); P.M. Stell and A. Hawkyard (eds.), 'The Lay Subsidy of 1334 for York', *York Historian* 13 (1996): 2-13.

contains a fairly large proportion of Ainsty surnames before 1350. However, apart from these hints and a handful of wills, cause papers and records of land transactions, pre-plague evidence for the impact of immigration and emigration to and from the Ainsty is limited.⁴⁵ Early-fourteenth-century village by-laws that reflect the presence of unwanted immigrants in other parts of the country, for example, have not survived for our wapentake.⁴⁶

This thesis, however, focuses on the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and scholars at least agree that migration occurred with increasing frequency in the post-Black Death period.⁴⁷ Labour scarcity pushed up wages and created work opportunities in towns and in other rural areas for country dwellers, especially women: the institution of service became particularly important for women at this time.⁴⁸ Towns became more attractive as land-use declined in the wake of decreasing populations. Between roughly 1370 and 1420, the national population shrunk while the larger towns grew in terms of size and wealth.⁴⁹ Indeed, in the decades after 1350, studies using the York's register of freemen suggest an increasing radius for the city's catchment area from twenty miles to forty miles.⁵⁰ Although it might be assumed that this increasing migration field would have had a significant impact on social relations in town and country, it will be seen in later chapters that evidence for social dislocation due to immigration into the Ainsty from further afield or emigration from the Ainsty to York and elsewhere is ambiguous.

The fluctuating fortunes of town and country in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are particularly important when considering migration in the

⁴⁵ McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 180. A quick perusal of a randomly chosen entry in the Freemen's Register, that for the year 12 Edward II, reveals five individuals with Ainsty surnames, out of a total of sixty-two. Collins (ed.), *Register of Freemen*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 132-6.

⁴⁷ This increased movement occurred despite attempts of some landlords to discourage tenants from leaving by charging higher chevage fines, but evidence for such methods on the part of Ainsty landlords is lacking. Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 143-5. Poos, however, cautions us not to exaggerate the level of post-plague mobility in reference to earlier levels. *Rural Society*, pp. 159-62.

⁴⁸ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 289-91; R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society 1000-1500* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 164-66.

⁴⁹ D.M. Palliser, 'Urban Decay Revisited', in J.A.F. Thomson (ed.), *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1988), p. 17.

⁵⁰ McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 180.

fifteenth century, and the 'urban decline' debate has been ongoing for years.⁵¹ Most historians agree that population declined in the long term in towns, including large centres like York, although York seems to have grown after 1377, only to shrink in the later fifteenth century. The *per capita* taxable wealth of towns, relative to that of the countryside seems to have increased, although York dropped from the third-wealthiest town in 1334 to the fifteenth in 1524.⁵² For York, the circumstances of this economic decline are often explained in terms of the shift of the textile industry from the established provincial capital to smaller West Riding industrial villages and towns such as Leeds and Wakefield in the later fifteenth century, but regional differences, particularly a national movement of wealth to the south and west must also be taken into account.⁵³ Despite Palliser's optimistic assessments of rural migration to late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century York, it is clear that by the later fifteenth century York no longer possessed the major pulling power that it had during the decades surrounding the Black Death.⁵⁴ It did, however, become more closely tied than ever to the Ainsty through back-and-forth movement and landholding in both places.

1.2.2 Circumstances of Migration and Mobility: Motive, Distance and Effects

Despite the occurrence of long-distance migration into towns throughout the late middle ages, especially after the Black Death, theories of migration fields and other models of migration take into account the predominance of local, short-distance migration over long-distance movement.⁵⁵ This type of movement was

⁵¹ The literature on this topic is vast. Some of the most important writings include C. Phythian-Adams, 'Urban Decay in Late Medieval England', in P. Abrams and E.A. Wrigley (eds.), *Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 159-85; Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1979); Britnell, *Colchester*; A. Dyer, *Decline and Growth in English Towns, 1400-1640* (London, 1991). For York, see the seminal article by J.N. Bartlett, 'The Expansion and Decline of York in the Later Middle Ages', *Economic History Review* 12:1 (1959): 17-33; and R.B. Dobson, 'Urban Decline in Late Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 27 (1977): 1-22.

⁵² Palliser, 'Urban Decay Revisited', pp. 9-14.

⁵³ Bartlett, 'Expansion and Decline of York', pp. 29-30; Palliser, 'Urban Decay Revisited', p. 17-8.

⁵⁴ Palliser, 'Regional Capital as Magnet', pp. 111-18.

⁵⁵ P. Clark and D. Souden, 'Introduction', in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), pp. 14-17. Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 162-64. Patten and Palliser have suggested that movement from hinterland to town should not be considered migration at all, but merely mobility. Indeed, customary tenants of manors were not normally expected to travel a distance greater than that which could be covered easily in one day when travelling to

predominant in the Ainsty, as in other areas of 'densely settled, highly stratified local population'.⁵⁶ 'Seasonal' migration undertaken, for example, to labour in the fields at harvest, is perhaps the most obvious and regular type of short-term movement to be found among both men and women (although not as prevalent in the middle ages as in the early modern period), and figures frequently in manorial court rolls and peace sessions' records.⁵⁷ However, although this type of migration no doubt took place in the Ainsty as it did in other parts of York's immediate hinterland and throughout England, it is not emphasised here, as evidence for the wapentake is elusive.⁵⁸

Some sociologists and historians have suggested that moving away from home would have weakened or even severed ties with family members who remained.⁵⁹ This was not always the case, as seasonal labourers usually returned, and there are documented instances of life-cycle servants moving back to the family farm, and of other individuals inviting relatives to join them in their new homes.⁶⁰ Moreover, Raftis's examination of the manor court rolls of Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire has revealed that the relatives, friends and neighbours of even long-distance migrants could provide the courts with detailed knowledge of their whereabouts and circumstances, suggesting that migrating villains kept in

market or carrying out carting duties for their lord (approximately seven miles, according to Bracton), and this was the distance travelled by many actual migrants who ended up settling where they had moved. This dissertation will refer to a one-way (semi-) permanent move as 'migration', but any regular movement back and forth that can be detected will be termed 'mobility'. Patten, *Rural-Urban Migration*, p. 24; Palliser, 'Regional Capital as Magnet', p. 114; McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 176; Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, p. 62-3, 141, 204-7; Postles, 'Migration and Mobility', p. 296.

⁵⁶ Poos, *Rural Society*, p. 164.

⁵⁷ Clark and Souden, 'Introduction', p. 25; P. Clark, 'Migration in England During the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), p. 242; Raftis, *Tenure and mobility*, p. 174; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 12, 295; S.A.C. Penn, 'Female Wage-Earners in Late Fourteenth-Century England', *Agricultural History Review* 35 (1987): 1-3; 5-6.

⁵⁸ Inhabitants of the vill of Escrick and Stillingfleet in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, just east of York, undertook seasonal labour migration. Goldberg (ed.), *Women in England*, pp. 178-9. Stillingfleet shared a border with the Ainsty along the river Ouse, with ferry access. M.J. Harrison, *The History of Acaster Selby in the Parish of Stillingfleet 1066-1875* (York, 2003), pp. 12, 21, 24.

⁵⁹ P.R. Schofield, *Peasants and Community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (New York, 2003), p. 88; J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford, 1974), p. 88.

⁶⁰ J. Leland, 'Leaving Town to Work for the Family: the Counter-Migration of Teenaged Servants in Fourteenth-Century England' in K. Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150-1650* (Toronto, 2002), pp. 323-36.; Jones, 'Villein Mobility', pp. 161-2.

touch with those who remained on the home manor.⁶¹ Raftis, Rodney Hilton, and E.D. Jones have helped confirm that migration rarely meant a permanent ‘break with the past’ by observing that several villains left valuable chattels behind on their home manors.⁶² Bennett has cited opposing evidence in the case of a female villager of the manor of Brigstock, who apparently lessened public ties with her natal kin after marriage.⁶³ It will be shown throughout this thesis that even if the character of the relationship changed following migration, the tendency in the Ainsty was to maintain or reactivate such ties, even in cases of long-distance movement.

The likelihood that migration would have severed family ties is lessened when the predominance of short-distance migration, as within a parish or between neighbouring parishes, is taken into account.⁶⁴ The occurrence of ‘circular’ migration, the concept of leaving and then returning to the origin of travel after series of small moves, has been verified for both the medieval and early modern periods. Circular migration applied particularly to seasonal migrants, as well as women looking to marry, and servants.⁶⁵ Butcher, however, has noted the same tendency among more affluent freemen who originated in the environs around Romney in Kent.⁶⁶ We shall see that relatively wealthy migrants from the Ainsty to York also retained connections with their home villages.

‘Step’ migration, or migration in a series of smaller moves, as from manor to manor in the same parish, or movement to a suburban area and thence into the city, was also common in the middle ages.⁶⁷ Ravenstein stated in 1885 that ‘the inhabitants of the country immediately surrounding a town of rapid growth flock into it; the gaps thus left in the rural population are filled up by migrants from more

⁶¹ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 153-4.

⁶² R.H. Hilton, ‘Lords, Burgesses and Hucksters’, p. 10; E.D. Jones, ‘Villein Mobility’, p. 162.

⁶³ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 53, 135-39.

⁶⁴ The size of individual parishes should also be considered, as these varied greatly, with some rural Yorkshire parishes being very large indeed.

⁶⁵ Clark, ‘Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, p. 215.

⁶⁶ Butcher, ‘Romney Freemen’, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Butcher, ‘Romney Freemen’, p. 23; Jones, ‘Villein Mobility’, p. 164; Grigg, ‘Ravenstein’, pp. 148, 152-53.

remote districts...'⁶⁸ It has been noted that York and other provincial and lesser towns received an influx of female migrants, most of them local, after the plague.⁶⁹

Suburban areas could be considered stepping stones from the hinterland to the city, and were often home to many rural migrants. The question of to what extent suburban areas were perceived as transient is an important one.⁷⁰ They were certainly inhabited by many low-income, marginal individuals, who were nonetheless interspersed with wealthier, more stable landholders.⁷¹ The term 'suburban' in this thesis will refer to areas immediately outside the walls of York, which were delineated as suburbs in contemporary wills (and thus, perhaps, in the consciousness of testators), and which often had a separate church to serve them. The fact that these churches often served inhabitants of settlements further outside the walls, and that such settlements were often located along major routes to the city, adds weight to the concept of hinterland gradations.⁷² The suburbs to the west of the city, including Clementhorpe, as well as neighbourhoods within the walled city that had some characteristics of suburbs, such as Micklegate, are particularly significant for our purposes, as these became popular with individuals with Ainsty connections, including some gentry and prosperous dynastic peasant families.⁷³

Scholars have assumed that migration involving small market towns, as opposed to major provincial centres like York, was probably similar in character to movement to and from villages, as each would have offered similar economic

⁶⁸ Quoted in Grigg, 'Ravenstein', p. 148.

⁶⁹ Some historians, having studied men's migration from such sources as manor court rolls, which inevitably under-represent women, have assumed that women's migration followed merely the same pattern as men's. However, modern migration 'laws' suggest that women generally migrated shorter distances, and that they also tended to move more often than men. Late medieval Englishwomen may therefore have been prime candidates for step migration. The question of gendered patterns of migration is a large one, and its implications for social relationships will be explored in later chapters. See Grigg, 'Ravenstein', p. 154; Raftis, *Tenure and mobility*, pp. 179-81; Hilton, 'Lords, Burgesses and Hucksters', pp. 10, 13; Razi, *Life, Marriage and Death*, p. 120; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*; Postles, 'Migration and mobility', p. 289; Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 134, 142, 153, 157, 175, 189.

⁷⁰ J. Boulton, 'Neighbourhood Migration in Early Modern London', in Clark and Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), p. 111.

⁷¹ D.J. Keene, 'Suburban Growth', in M.W. Barley (ed.), *The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England and Wales*, CBA Research Report 14 (1976), reprinted in *The Medieval Town. A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540* (London, 1990), pp. 115-6.

⁷² Keene, 'Suburban Growth', pp. 99, 112.

⁷³ S.R. Rees Jones and F. Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker and J. Wogan-Browne (eds.), *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* 9 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 239-52.

opportunities. McClure has noted similar proportions of place-name surnames in Nottinghamshire villages and market towns.⁷⁴ However, it remains to be seen that villages and small towns in all parts of the country would have had invariably similar migration fields, given the more robust trading functions of market towns, and the fact that McClure does not seem to have taken the presence of fairs, trading and market contacts found in court records, or differing topographies, into account.⁷⁵ For example, Tadcaster, a small town directly to the west and incorporating parts of, the Ainsty, generated a stronger migration field than other areas of the Ainsty, and, as we shall see, acted as an alternative focus to York for social, economic and devotional ties for some people in the Ainsty. A perusal of the 1379 poll-tax returns for Tadcaster reveals, in addition to a healthy complement of merchants, innkeepers and artisans, a larger proportion of locative surnames (particularly from the West Riding) than was typical for other Ainsty settlements, including those immediately adjacent to York, like Dringhouses.⁷⁶

Migration and mobility from and within the hinterland of a city were likely to differ in character from movement from or in more remote areas. Some scholars have dismissed hinterland migration as ‘mere local undynamic mobility’, a ‘natural consequence of a close relationship between a city and its hinterland’.⁷⁷ It was, however, the very dynamism and variability that characterized this mobility that contributed to the closeness of the urban-hinterland relationship. Inhabitants of the hinterland were likely to enjoy more choices and opportunities for involvement in market activity. Their settlements also experienced more traffic, and inhabitants may have been privy to more word-of-mouth communications regarding work opportunities or superior living conditions in other locales. On the other hand, it shall be seen that much mobility was localized, choice-driven, and served to bind groups of villages together and to York itself.

The implications of this ‘hinterland’ migration for the social networks of the individual migrants form the subject of the following chapters. It might be

⁷⁴ McClure, ‘Patterns of Migration’, p. 174.

⁷⁵ C. Dyer, ‘Market Towns and the Countryside’, pp. 19-26; R.H. Hilton, ‘Small Town Society in England before the Black Death’, *Past and Present* 105 (1984): 75.

⁷⁶ ‘Rolls of the Collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Ric. II’. *YAJ* 6 (1881): 142; Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421.

⁷⁷ Patten, *Rural-Urban Migration*, p. 24; Palliser, ‘Regional Capital as Magnet’, p. 114.

assumed, for example, that migrants in general would have been more likely than those who remained sedentary to create broad social networks made up of relationships from a variety of groups and communities. However, higher status individuals from the hinterland who were less likely to be (permanently) mobile also enjoyed large and varied public networks.⁷⁸ The subtle distinction consists of the likelihood that migrants would enjoy more relationships characterized by a single aspect, such as kinship, but fewer multidimensional contacts, than people who remained in one place.⁷⁹ It will be seen that migrants could revive latent aspects of relationships when it suited them.

Studies have often characterised migration in terms of motive or cause, as 'betterment' or 'subsistence'.⁸⁰ This is a useful, if simplistic, distinction between those who moved out of choice and those who migrated out of necessity. Different kinds of peasants were more likely to migrate than others. Issues of age and sex have already been touched upon. Migrants were predominantly teens and young adults, especially those in service. Marriage migration was especially important for women, as they often moved upon marriage, although Ramsey Abbey court rolls have produced several examples of male villains leaving their home manors to marry.⁸¹ In fact, both men and women at Ramsey generally married 'outsiders' with great frequency, and we shall see that the case was similar for inhabitants of Ainsty villages.⁸² Life-cycle service influenced marital exogamy, and Schofield has suggested that the Church may have also had a role to play in encouraging exogamy in order to prevent consanguineous marriage.⁸³ I propose that social networks leading to familiarity with a larger neighbourhood beyond one's own village or parish also contributed to exogamy. This kind of migration is best described as betterment migration, and is more visible in the records than subsistence migration.

⁷⁸ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 51-54, 71-73, 104, 123, 127-41.

⁷⁹ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 88. For a fuller explanation of these concepts, see Chapter Two.

⁸⁰ See for example, McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 168; Clark and Souden, 'Introduction', pp. 24-5, 30-1; Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 23-4.

⁸¹ Grigg, 'Ravenstein', p. 154; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 98-9; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 212, 295; Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 179-80.

⁸² Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, p. 129.

⁸³ Schofield, *Peasant and Community*, p. 117.

Other types of individuals liable to move included poorer peasants, non-inheriting siblings, and individuals from areas with less emphasis on arable husbandry or customary manorial labour services.⁸⁴ Clearly, medieval rural inhabitants made the decision to either remain in their place of birth or move based on a variety of external and internal factors.⁸⁵ These are often described as ‘push’ or ‘pull’ factors and can include local environment, social, tenurial and economic status, family structure, inheritance customs, work conditions and opportunities, lordship and unforeseen circumstances, among others. Ravenstein’s ‘law’ that economic factors were always predominant in the choice to move did not necessarily always apply, although declining rural settlements certainly produced migrants in Yorkshire.⁸⁶

Economic and status differences within communities could act as both push and pull factors. Pastoral areas, as in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, probably provided more employment opportunities for women, such as sheep-shearing, milking and turning out other dairy products after the Black Death, but adverse environmental conditions such as flooding could also have influenced them to leave.⁸⁷ Hinterland dwellers could find waged employment within their own villages: wealthier peasants were known to employ their less wealthy neighbours, even as life-cycle servants, but the existence of wealthier peasants on other manors or in other townships could therefore be a ‘pull’ factor encouraging individuals to move.⁸⁸ The 1379 poll tax returns for the Ainsty featured not only sons and daughters apparently living apart from their parents but within the same village, but many single people with locative surnames from nearby villages who probably provided service or labour in the parish in which they were taxed.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ B.A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1986), p. 69-78.

⁸⁵ Poos, *Rural Society*, pp. 172-3, 178.

⁸⁶ Grigg, ‘Ravenstein’, pp. 149, 159; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 293.

⁸⁷ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 291. Even before the Black Death, many female cottars resided on the lands of the prebends of York Minster within this wapentake. Their manorial extents make numerous references to pastoral activities. Bishop (ed.), ‘Extents of the Prebends’.

⁸⁸ H.S.A. Fox, ‘Servants, Cottagers and Tied Cottages’, pp. 127, 129-31, 142, 144; *idem*, ‘Exploitation of the Landless’, pp. 524-27; and Schofield, *Peasant and Community*, pp. 125-6.

⁸⁹ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 420-7. See below, pp. 82-4.

In the post-Black Death period, manors with customary obligations were far less likely to attract tenants, and would probably ‘push’ them away instead.⁹⁰ In the fifteenth century strict landlords could encourage longer distance migrations as tenants became fugitives seeking to avoid recovery.⁹¹ Other actions on the parts of lords could influence peasant decisions. For example, the Wolds in the East Riding were largely enclosed and abandoned by the fifteenth century.⁹² Yorkshire examples of depopulations due to both economic decline and seignorial decisions, particularly those that occurred in the Ainsty, will be discussed later in the chapter. Landlords’ demands also influenced localized, temporary movement. Carting works (particularly to York itself) were commonly owed by tenants of the prebends of York Minster in the late thirteenth century. The prebendal lords occasionally specified that men from different settlements were to perform their duties together.⁹³ As late as the 1540s, the treasurer of the Minster demanded his tenants’ participation in a ‘customary’ Palm Sunday procession from Acomb to the Minster.⁹⁴

On a more positive note, lordship could influence mobility by providing tenants with ‘information fields’ by giving them access to knowledge about places with which the home manor enjoyed contacts.⁹⁵ There are numerous examples of people travelling long distances between dispersed manors that formed part of a single estate, both in the course of working for their lord, and as a result of kin networks. This is particularly relevant due to the Ainsty’s numerous ecclesiastical landlords, who held lands in other counties.⁹⁶ Certain areas might share other

⁹⁰ E.D. Jones, ‘Villein Mobility’, pp. 152, 154-9, 163, 165; Schofield, *Peasant and Community*, p. 66; P.J.P. Goldberg, ‘Population and Settlement in the Later Middle Ages’, in R.A. Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire* (Otley, West Yorks., 2003), p. 96.

⁹¹ E.D. Jones, ‘Villein Mobility’, pp. 162-5; Postles, ‘Migration and Mobility’, p. 290.

⁹² H.S.A. Fox, ‘The People of the Wolds in English Settlement History’, in M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer (eds.), *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England. Studies dedicated to Maurice Beresford and John Hurst* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 96-100.

⁹³ Bishop (ed.), ‘Extents of the Prebends’, pp. 1-38, particularly p. 25.

⁹⁴ Richardson (ed.), *Acomb Court Rolls*, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Postles, ‘Migration and Mobility’, p. 290.

⁹⁶ The Archbishop of York’s and Dean and Chapter’s estates included land in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. G. Lawton, *Collectio Rerum Ecclesiasticarum de Dioecesi Eboracensi; Or Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Diocese of York. To which are Added, Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Diocese of Ripon. Vol. I* (London, 1840), pp. 1-2, 4-5; G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant (eds.), *A History of York Minster* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 38, 55, 82, 102. Some of the Minster’s prebends were also created in these counties. Bishop (ed.), ‘Extents

traditional links: tenurial, parochial, economic, and so forth. Neighbouring settlements, whether belonging to the same manor or not, could enjoy frequent contact if they shared resources. For example, in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, the settlements of Elvington and Wheldrake shared common fields and woodland.⁹⁷ Trade and market links between rural settlements and with towns of varying sizes would have been another obvious reason for movement, and it is the economic factor that authors often emphasize when discussing migration motives.⁹⁸ Rural parishes were often large, incorporating several dispersed settlements; the inhabitants of the latter would have to travel to the parish church for major holidays and life-cycle events.⁹⁹ Such movement occurred on a smaller scale in the Ainsty, which encompassed extra-mural sections of urban parishes and liberties as well as villages that belonged to parishes outside the wapentake, such as Stillingfleet, separated from the Ainsty by the river Ouse.

Historians have thus interpreted migration and mobility as forces for both stability and dynamic, even detrimental change.¹⁰⁰ Physical movement served to bind city and country together in innumerable ways, economically, socially and culturally. It boosted the population and economy of urban centres in times of high mortality, but could also contribute to social problems in the form of large numbers of unskilled, urban poor. Mobility could cause dislocation in the countryside as frustrated landlords dealt with labour shortages in the post-plague period, although we shall see that such problems do not seem to have been too pronounced in the Ainsty records, despite evidence for depopulated villages. We must now turn to our exploration of York's hinterland in order to set the scene for later discussions of the social dynamics of mobility.

of the Prebends', pp. 31-4. Examples of interactions between Ainsty inhabitants and people hailing from these counties may be found in all of the following chapters.

⁹⁷ K.J. Allison (ed.), *A History of the County of York, East Riding Vol. III, Ouse and Derwent Wapentake* (London, 1976), p. 15.

⁹⁸ Butcher, 'Romney Freeman', pp. 23-4; Goddard, *Lordship and Urbanisation*, pp. 150-2.

⁹⁹ In fact, it is the inconvenience of travel within large parishes or detached parochial lands that often led to the formation of chapelries, and occasionally to the granting of burial rights in the chapel cemetery. This will be discussed below. See D.M. Owen, 'Chapelries and Rural Settlement: an Examination of some Kesteven Evidence', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change* (London, 1976), pp. 66-71.

¹⁰⁰ Clark and Souden (eds.), 'Introduction', p. 22.

1.3 Geography and Topography of the Hinterland of York

Yorkshire was physically the largest county in medieval England, but it had never been as wealthy as the southern, home counties; in fact, it ranked above only Devon, Cornwall, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland and Durham. The West Riding was the least prosperous division of the county, with the North Riding being only slightly better off. The East Riding fared somewhat better during the later middle ages.¹⁰¹ York, therefore, was a wealthy city—ranked after London and Bristol in 1334 and after London only in 1377—in the centre of a less prosperous countryside.¹⁰² There is no doubt that medieval York, a leading provincial town, fulfilled modern scholars' criteria for central-place functionality. It bordered on all three Yorkshire Ridings, and was the city upon which important trade routes converged.¹⁰³ Place-name studies have confirmed the city's centrality by demonstrating that York's pre-plague primary sphere of influence extended an impressive twenty miles or more in all directions, an area encompassed by the region known as the Vale of York, which extends the full length of Yorkshire from north to south, and from the Pennines in the west to the Wolds in the east.¹⁰⁴

Three rivers drain the Vale: the Foulness in the east, the Derwent in the centre and the Ouse in the West; all three flow south to the Humber. The Derwent and Ouse enjoy more extensive catchment areas than the Foulness, and the Ouse is the source of several tributaries, including the rivers Swale, Ure, Nidd and Wharfe.¹⁰⁵ These waterways provided the region with good communication networks, and help confirm the observation that social territories tended to coincide with drainage basins.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ E. Miller, 'Yorkshire and Lancashire', in Chapter 2 of E. Miller (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol. III 1348-1500* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 42.

¹⁰² A. Dyer, 'Appendix: Ranking Lists of English Medieval Towns', in D.M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. I 600-1540* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 755, 758.

¹⁰³ C. Daniell, 'Communications', in R.A. Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire* (Otley, West Yorkshire, 2003), pp. 101-2; B. Harrison, 'Evidence for Main Roads in the Vale of York during the Medieval Period', *Sciart Presentes* 13, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Medieval Section (1984): 4-7.

¹⁰⁴ McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', pp. 171, 177-79.

¹⁰⁵ Van de Noort and Ellis (eds.), *Wetland Heritage*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ T. Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Macclesfield, Cheshire, 2003), p. 40.

The Vale of York is mostly lowland, its soil made up of sandstone, mudstone and siltstone, providing good land for both arable and grazing.¹⁰⁷ The agricultural environment is quite similar to that obtaining in the Midlands.¹⁰⁸ The western section of the Vale, including the Ainsty and other areas around the Ouse, had more arable farming than in the east, where grassland was more prominent.¹⁰⁹ Extensive assarts occurred throughout Yorkshire as a result of population expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and led to more arable farming on open fields.¹¹⁰ This intensified farming also resulted in soil drainage and clearance of much woodland, and many areas classified as woodland were comparatively densely inhabited. Some wooded areas, however, still remained attached to many villis. The density of woodland in the Vale of York was less by the later middle ages than it had been at the time of Domesday, but still exceeded that found on the Wolds, or in the Vales of Pickering and Mowbray.¹¹¹

Within the Vale, the city's main hinterland stretches from Thirsk, a market town twenty-three miles north by northwest of York to the Humber River in the south, and from Malton, another market town on the banks of the Derwent River eighteen miles northeast of York to the land between Leeds and Tadcaster to the southwest.¹¹² The very flatness of the topography in the Vale undoubtedly facilitated York's influence over its hinterland. Studies of other towns in late medieval Europe, such as Marseille, surrounded by hilly terrain on its landward sides, have shown that these places enjoyed less influence over their hinterlands, although frequent contact still occurred.¹¹³ The perimeter of the medieval hinterland was thus marked by other markets as well as changes in geology and topography. Such markets interacted with topography to set limits to the

¹⁰⁷ K. Atkinson, 'Glacial History', in Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas*, p. 10; R. Muir, *The Yorkshire Countryside: a Landscape History* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ M.W. Beresford, 'The Lost Villages of Yorkshire, Part I', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 37 (1951): 484.

¹⁰⁹ Van de Noort and Ellis (eds.), *Wetland Heritage*, pp. 15-16.

¹¹⁰ Muir, *Yorkshire Countryside*, pp. 156-8.

¹¹¹ T. Gledhill, 'Medieval Woodland', in Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 75-9; Muir, *Yorkshire Countryside*, pp. 158-60; J. McDonnell, 'Pressures on Yorkshire Woodland in the Later Middle Ages', *Northern History* 28 (1992): 118.

¹¹² J.J. Sheahan, *History and Topography of the City of York and the North Riding of Yorkshire Vol. II* (Beverley, 1857), p. 146.

¹¹³ D.L. Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca, New York, 1999), pp. 42-44.

hinterland; these circumstances can be explained using Central Place Theory.¹¹⁴ There were, however, several smaller markets set up within the hinterland itself, including those at Selby, Drax, and Sherburn in Elmet, but these were all in the southern region of the Vale, and could thus be considered as limiting the hinterland as well.¹¹⁵

Over 110 possible moated sites have been located in the Vale.¹¹⁶ Unlike in parts of central England, where moated settlements were most common in relative isolation and were often associated with dispersed woodland settlement, archaeological remains have demonstrated that Yorkshire moats were found mostly in lowland arable areas, following river lines, and a high proportion were situated in or near a village, perhaps emphasising close ties between landlords and their tenants in this region.¹¹⁷ Since a moat could provide security for occupation on newly cleared land, their presence sometimes indicated a desire on the part of free peasants or gentry—knights, esquires and gentlemen—to display their status, newly acquired from prospering from reclamation and the land market during the thirteenth century.¹¹⁸ According to Le Patourel, assarts were normally moated by members of the gentry and by freemen, as opposed to prosperous customary peasants in Yorkshire.¹¹⁹

Therefore, moats can occasionally provide material evidence of seignorial rule (including ecclesiastical and monastic landlords), especially in the pre-plague period. There would have been accompanying implications for mobility of tenants, depending on the style of lordship obtaining at the moated site in question, and how the nature of that lordship changed from the time of the moat's foundation through the fifteenth century. For example, moated granges were founded by monastic houses but by the late middle ages were often leased to lay tenants, who sometimes subsequently acquired the holdings. Lay seignorial moated sites outnumbered

¹¹⁴ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets*, p. 82; Dyer, 'Market Towns', p. 27.

¹¹⁵ R. Britnell, 'Boroughs, Markets and Fairs' in Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas*, p. 103; S. Letters, 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516', [Available Online] <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>, 20 June, 2005.

¹¹⁶ H. Fenwick, 'Medieval Moated Sites in the Vale of York: distribution, modelling and wetland potential', in R. Van de Noort and S. Ellis (eds.), *Wetland Heritage of the Vale of York: an Archaeological Survey* (Hull, 1999), p. 255.

¹¹⁷ H.E.J. Le Patourel, *The Moated Sites of Yorkshire*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series 5 (London, 1973), pp. 7-15.

¹¹⁸ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, p. 15.

ecclesiastical sites, which in turn outnumbered the moats of freemen in this region.¹²⁰ Ecclesiastical and lay sites could interact: Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, founded the College of St Andrew in Acaster Selby in the late fifteenth century next to a moated site that his family (originally York freemen) probably constructed after they acquired land there several decades earlier.¹²¹

Since this study focuses on the interactions between people living and moving about in York's immediate hinterland, the following paragraphs will concentrate on the three wapentakes surrounding the city: Ouse and Derwent to the southeast, Bulmer to the north, and the Ainsty to the west (Fig. 1). It will be shown throughout the following chapters that people from the Ainsty associated with individuals from the West Riding and the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent more frequently than with those from Bulmer.



Fig. 1: Map of Wapentakes in the Hinterland of York. Used with permission of C. Hinson, 1997.

1.3.1 The Wapentake of Ouse and Derwent

Ouse and Derwent wapentake, first mentioned c. 1200, lies in the centre of the Vale, at the western end of the East Riding, bounded by the two rivers that give it its name. It is touched by York to the northwest. The region's neighbours were

¹²⁰ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, pp. 8-10, 13.

¹²¹ Harrison, *Acaster Selby*, pp. 30-31; W. Brown (ed.), *Yorkshire Deeds Vol. I*, YASRS 39 (1907), p. 5.

the lowland wapentakes of Howdenshire to the south, and Harthill, east of the river Derwent.¹²² The countryside of Ouse and Derwent is mainly low-lying and flat, with some gently rolling terrain. The geology consists of glacially deposited clay, sand and silt, except for the Escrick and York moraines, formed from well-draining boulder clay and gravel.

These latter, lying above the marsh, provided a convenient location for Roman roads and later served as Anglian and Scandinavian settlement sites. These areas of higher relief came to be typified by small open fields in the later medieval period. The marshes could hinder mobility and communications, but waterways mitigated these problems.¹²³ Villages were also located close to the rivers, which often changed course during the middle ages. Such settlements were liable to flooding in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as court records show in the cases of parishes such as Escrick, Stillingfleet and Thorganby.¹²⁴

Despite these adverse environmental conditions, wetland settlements were prominent in the landscape and enjoyed solid ties with the city. Places in Heslington and Fulford paid geld with the city at Domesday. Throughout the middle ages York citizens had rights of common pasture in these settlements, a situation underlining the close relationship with the hinterland. Indeed, some land belonged to St. Leonard's Hospital, St. Mary's Abbey and the Dean and Chapter of York Minster; this was taxed separately as part of these liberties in 1334.¹²⁵ The surviving late thirteenth-century extents of the lands of the prebends of York indicate that bond tenants were often expected to cart the lord's grain to York.¹²⁶

Unsurprisingly, the rivers and their fisheries were a mainstay of the area's economy, and the latter are recorded in the middle ages at manors including

¹²² Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 129.

¹²³ H.C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 93, 142. Wheldrake Ings was especially impassable. J.A. Sheppard, 'Pre-Enclosure Field and Settlement Patterns in an English Township: Wheldrake, near York', *Geografiska Annaler* 48B (1966): 59, 68.

¹²⁴ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, pp. 1-4, 17, 101, 112. I am grateful to Dr. Sarah Rees Jones for allowing me to read a draft of 'The City and its Landscape', Chapter 6 of her forthcoming monograph on York. Short-lived or troubled riverside settlements have been researched elsewhere in England. C.C. Taylor, 'Whittlesford: the Study of a River-edge Village', in M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer (eds.), *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England. Studies dedicated to Maurice Beresford and John Hurst* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 223-7.

¹²⁵ Glasscock (ed.), *1334 Lay Subsidy*, pp. 363-4; 366-8; Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, pp. 29-36, 66-74.

¹²⁶ Bishop (ed.), 'Extents of the Prebends', pp. 2, 7.

Elvington, Fulford, Hemingbrough, and the prebendal and episcopal manors of Durham at Riccall.¹²⁷ The diversity of the wapentake's economy doubtless contributed to its prosperity. In the 1334 lay subsidy the wapentake was assessed at a total of £25.14s.2d, but only seventeen settlements were assessed, and three of these were assessed together with larger settlements. Three settlements were assessed at the rate of £1, two at £2, two and £3 and one, Wheldrake, at the impressive rate of £5. Most land in Wheldrake, it should be noted, was held by Fountains Abbey by the early thirteenth century.¹²⁸ Land held by ecclesiastical landlords, such as the land in Fulford and Escrick held by St. Mary's Abbey, and the land in Riccall under the peculiar jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter, were also assessed at comparatively high rates. When these are added to the seventeen places mentioned above, it is clear that settlements in Ouse and Derwent wapentake were assessed at a total of £37.5s.10d (Table 1).¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, pp. 15, 33, 41, 86. The Fenlands, possessed of a similar environment, also had an economy that was highly reliant upon fish and other wetland products. Darby, *Medieval Fenland*, pp. 22-32.

¹²⁸ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 123; J.A. Sheppard, 'Pre-Enclosure Field and Settlement Patterns', p. 66.

¹²⁹ Glasscock (ed.), *1334 Lay Subsidy*, pp. 363-4; 366-8.

Wapentake	1334 Assessment	Number Settlements	St. Mary's	St. Leonard's	Dean & Chapter	Totals
Ouse & Derwent	£25.14s.2d	17 (incl. 3 assessed with other places)	£6.16.8d (3 settlements)	√ (1 settlement)	£4.16s (4 settlements)	£37.5s.10d
Bulmer	£26.19.5½d	36 (incl. 6 assessed with other places)	£14.8d (14 settlements, incl. 2 assessed with other places)	√ (assessed together with St. Mary's)	£12.12s.6d (15 settlements, incl. 3 assessed with other places)	£53.12s.7½d
Ainsty	£23.14s.6d	28	£9.9s (9 settlements)	√ (3 settlements)		£33.3s.6d

Table 1: The 1334 Lay Subsidy and the Wapentakes of Ouse & Derwent, Bulmer and the Ainsty

Source: R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, Records of Social and Economic History New Series II (London, 1975)

Key: √ = Settlement(s) assessed but no monetary value listed. N.B. The values indicated in the 2nd column do not include those settlements and parts of settlements assessed under the three liberties; these are listed in the 4th, 5th, and 6th columns. The numbers of settlements listed in the 3rd column represent the total number of place-names listed: when two or more settlements were assessed together, this has been indicated in brackets in the same column.

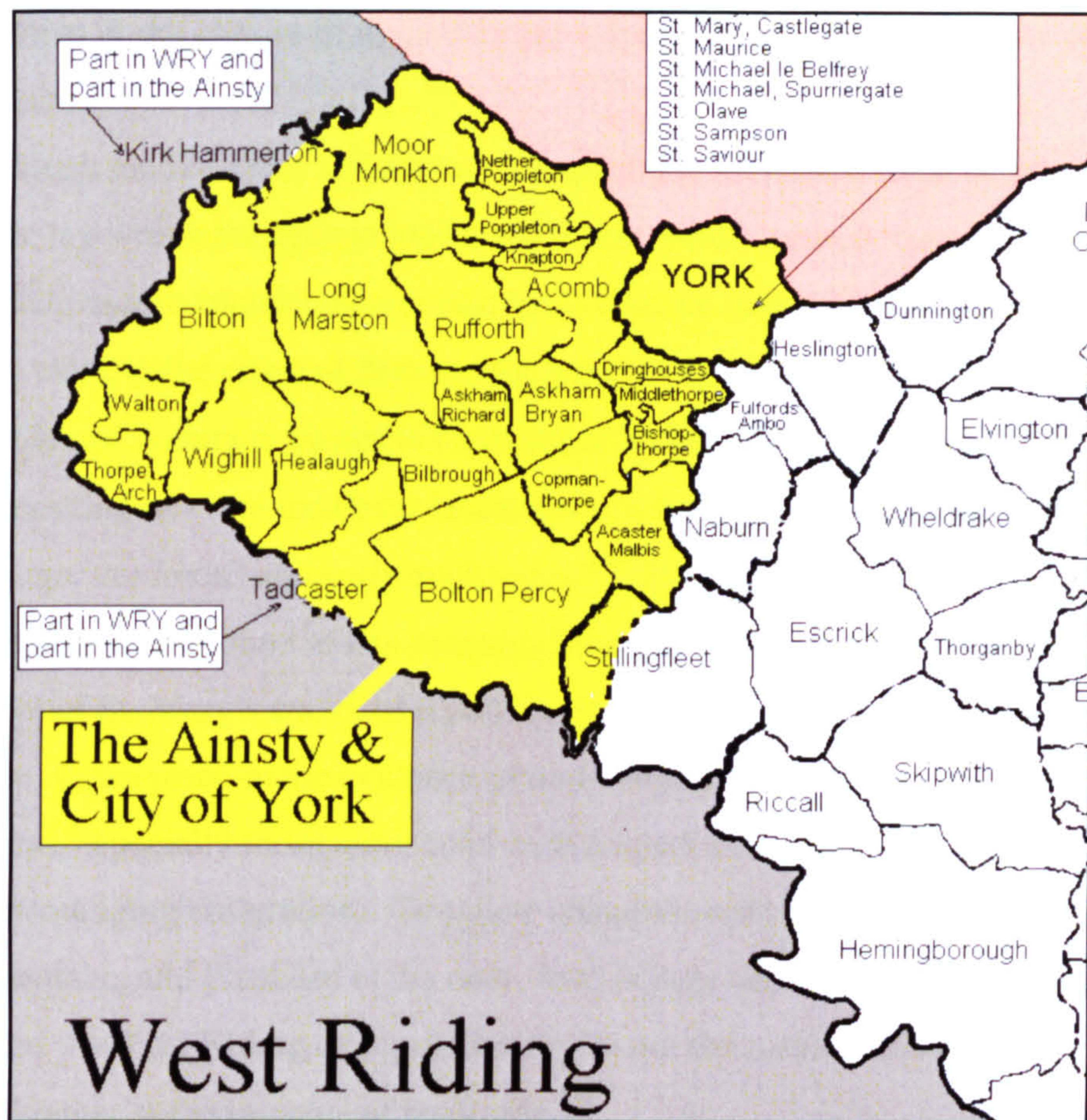


Fig. 2: Map showing position of parishes in the Ainsty and Ouse and Derwent wapentake before 1832. Reproduced with permission of C. Hinson.

However, the parishes of this wapentake apparently remained on the whole comparatively small and under-populated.¹³⁰ The 1377 poll tax recorded only ten settlements, most of which were home to only 100 to 250 individuals (Fig. 2).¹³¹ Eight further settlements were taxed in 1379, but again, these were small.¹³² These local circumstances could have been a factor encouraging individuals to seek

¹³⁰ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, p. 94; and Rees Jones, 'City and its Landscape', pp. 4-5.

¹³¹ Goldberg, 'Population and Settlement', p. 98.

¹³² There were around 1,300 poll-tax payers in the wapentake in 1377, excluding some, but not all, of those living in the Liberty of St. Peter. Some Ouse and Derwent settlements do not have returns for 1377, but do for 1379. Fewer settlements (only eight) were taxed in 1379, with a total of about 630 poll-tax payers, including 76 in St. Cuthbert's fee in the soke of the Bishop of Durham at Riccall. These figures are included in *VCH Vol. III*, and do not appear in David Crouch's 'Gazetteer of the Religious Gilds and Services of Late Medieval Yorkshire', [Available Online] <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cms/resources/gilds> (10 July, 2005).

employment in the city, or in neighbouring wapentakes such as the Ainsty or Howdenshire.¹³³

Much land in Ouse and Derwent wapentake, including some of the wetlands, lay within the eponymous royal forest, which ceased to exist as such in the early thirteenth century, due in part to its relative lack of productivity, its situation close to the city and demand for land.¹³⁴ Land hunger caused extensive woodlands and common wastes to be assarted both within and without the royal forest, resulting in a late medieval landscape consisting of smaller than usual open fields, larger commons and early enclosures.¹³⁵ Examples of early land reclamation may be found at Dunnington, Elvington, Wheldrake and Escrick.¹³⁶ The abbot of St. Mary's enclosed a park in Escrick in the late thirteenth century, and there is also place-name evidence of early enclosure in Hemingbrough.¹³⁷ Enclosures, especially those associated with emparkment, may have been another factor encouraging emigration. Complete abandonment of settlements was rare in this wapentake, and Eastburn is the only 'lost' village identified by Beresford. He concluded that East Riding depopulations were not the result of plague, but occurred rather at the impetus of landlords.¹³⁸

Several moated sites are located in the wapentake, supporting Le Patourel's observation of a concentration of such sites in the southern part of the Vale of York.¹³⁹ A good example is the moated site at Skipwith. This was possibly the site of the manor house, mentioned in 1320, of the Salvain family, and was part of the Percy fee.¹⁴⁰ Moats were often situated on areas of heavy soil which made for easy digging; these marshy floodplains were good for pastoral farming which helped meet the city's demand for livestock products.¹⁴¹ This urban demand would have increased the likelihood that individuals from parishes such as Skipwith,

¹³³ Goldberg, 'Population and Settlement', p. 96.

¹³⁴ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 1; and Rees Jones, 'City and its Landscape', pp. 4-5.

¹³⁵ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 1.

¹³⁶ Sheppard, 'Pre-Enclosure Field and Settlement', pp. 67-8.

¹³⁷ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, pp. 24, 39.

¹³⁸ M.W. Beresford, 'The Lost Villages of Yorkshire, Part II', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 38 (1955): 46-9.

¹³⁹ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 92.

¹⁴¹ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, pp. 7-15; Rees Jones, 'City and its Landscape', p. 3. Sheppard has discussed the evidence for the importance of pastoral farming at Wheldrake. Sheppard, 'Pre-Enclosure Field and Settlement Patterns', pp. 65-66, 74.

Hemingbrough, Stillingfleet, Wheldrake and Escrick would have enjoyed at least some ties with the city.¹⁴² However, O'Connor has noted that the zooarchaeological evidence from throughout the medieval period points to a more arable-based agriculture in which cattle and sheep were not slaughtered until their owners had taken full advantage of the milk, manure, wool and pulling power they provided—indicating that the city's demand was not as insistent as has previously been supposed.¹⁴³

A number of lesser rural markets and fairs were located in the wapentake, at, for example, Kexby, Riccall, Hemingbrough and Skipwith. Such small markets would have enhanced the economic vitality of the wapentake, at least temporarily, by fostering links with larger markets and the main markets in York. However, most markets and fairs in Ouse and Derwent wapentake seem to have been founded late, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and following the pattern in the rest of the country, these late markets seem to have been unsuccessful at competing with larger established markets, as no mention is made of them in the records subsequent to their foundation.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps their location in the vicinity of marshland diminished their potential. The only market and fair which seem to have been successful were those first granted by Henry III to Roger de Thurkilby at North Duffield in the parish of Skipwith in 1253.¹⁴⁵ Despite the absence of formal markets, a number of villages with merchants and merchandise nearby in the East Riding between York and the river Humber were assessed in the 1340 *Nonae* rolls.¹⁴⁶

1.3.2 The Wapentake of Bulmer

Bulmer, situated to the north of the city, was the southernmost wapentake of the North Riding and was largely coterminous with the royal Forest of Galtres, a productive lowland and wetland forest. Watered by the Ouse and Derwent, the

¹⁴² Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, pp. 109-17.

¹⁴³ T. O'Connor, 'Bones as Evidence of Meat Production and Distribution in York', in E. White (ed.), *Feeding a City: York. The Provision of Food from Roman Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Totnes, 2000), pp. 50-1.

¹⁴⁴ Letters, 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs' (5 April, 2005); Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, pp. 170-1. Markets in the north of England tended to be founded later than those in the south. Britnell, *Commercialisation of English Society*, pp. 17-18, 166.

¹⁴⁵ Letters, 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs' (5 April, 2005).

¹⁴⁶ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets*, p. 95.

wapentake contained fertile arable land, but was also relatively well-wooded, if only in comparison to the forest in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent. Even so, it was largely broken up by villages and hamlets by the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁷ One of these, Tollerton, apparently served as a station providing travellers with protection from the less desirable forest inhabitants in return for a toll. This arrangement is suggestive of the routine nature of mobility and travel, and how these must have been perceived by the region's inhabitants!¹⁴⁸

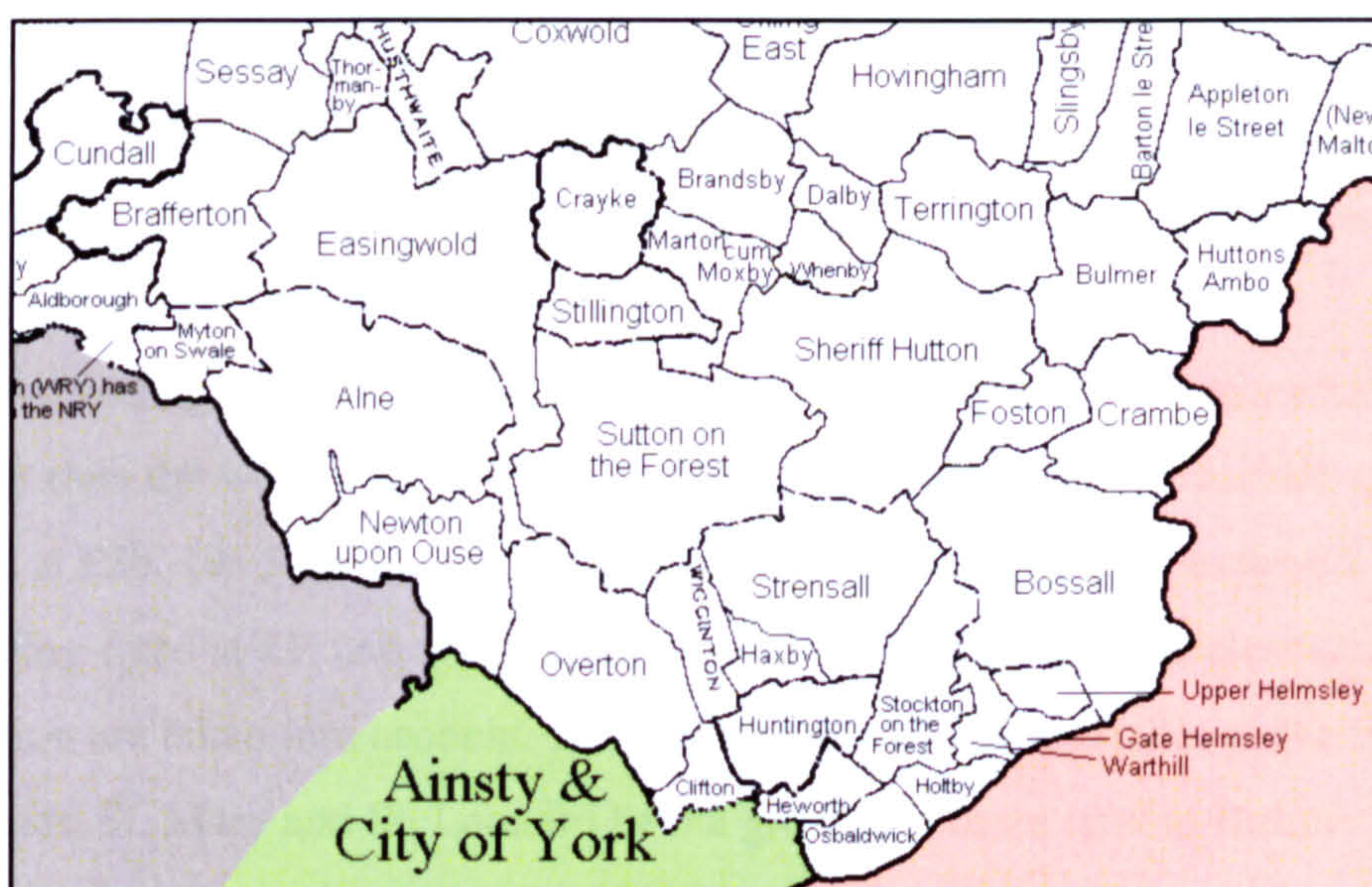


Figure 3: Parishes in the wapentake of Bulmer in the North Riding before 1832. Reproduced with permission of Colin Hinson.

Proximity to woodland could cause problems for forest inhabitants, as in the case of Gate Helmsley, where a fourteenth-century complaint was registered on the part of 'la moyte de Gatehemelsay' that their township had been absorbed into the forest again.¹⁴⁹ Tensions could also arise between tenants and forest officials, as at the royal manor of Easingwold in the fourteenth century.¹⁵⁰ Some settlements were also liable to flooding. Haxby, for example, was periodically flooded by the

¹⁴⁷ I. Dormer, 'Medieval Forests and Parks' in R.A. Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire* (Otley, West Yorkshire, 2003), p. 79; McDonnell, 'Pressures on Yorkshire Woodland', p. 118.

¹⁴⁸ Sheahan, *North Riding, Vol. II*, p. 563. Sheahan was quoting the early antiquarian Francis Drake.

¹⁴⁹ W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria County History of the County of York, North Riding Vol. II* (London, 1923), p. 139.

¹⁵⁰ Page (ed.), *VCH North Riding Vol. II*, p. 128.

river Foss. Haxby was a chapelry, perhaps because flooding made it difficult to reach the parish church.¹⁵¹ Such situations were common, and have implications for 'push' and 'pull' motives for migration.

As in the case of Ouse and Derwent, some areas in the wapentake of Bulmer could be considered suburban, although still rural in character: the townships of Heworth and Osbaldwick, each about one mile outside the city walls (but immediately adjacent to the parishes of St. Nicholas, St. Helen-on-the-walls, St. Cuthbert and St. Olave, which were themselves immediately outside the walled city), were entered under the city in Domesday.¹⁵² Many settlements in Bulmer, such as Haxby and Osbaldwick, were the purview of St. Leonard's, St. Mary's, and the Liberty of St. Peter, and other citizens of York either hailed from or owned land in the forest, as at Holtby.¹⁵³

According to the lay subsidy returns for 1334, Bulmer was somewhat wealthier than the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent during the later middle ages, assessed at £26. 19s.5½d, but in this case over 29 settlements were assessed, with seven being rated at £1, and only one at £2.¹⁵⁴ When lands under ecclesiastical jurisdiction are taken into account, the figure increases substantially, as the liberties of St. Peter, St. Mary and St. Leonard held a great deal more land in Bulmer than in either Ouse and Derwent or the Ainsty (Table 1).

While the dangers of the forest, as we have seen, could have inhibited mobility, the wapentake's southern half enjoyed good communications networks in the form of important roads, including the road from York to Stamford Bridge which skirted along Bulmer's southern border, and the road from York to Malton, which cut northeast through the forest. Moreover, the river Foss bisected the wapentake into eastern and western halves.¹⁵⁵ There was a successful market within the forest at Easingwold, less than fifteen miles from the city, again

¹⁵¹ Page (ed.), *VCH North Riding Vol. II*, p. 137.

¹⁵² Allison (ed.), *VCH East Riding Vol. III*, p. 83; W. Page (ed.), *VCH North Riding Vol. II*, p. 164; Digital Domesday, Yorkshire County Edition [CD-ROM], Phillimore, fo. 379.

¹⁵³ S.R. Rees Jones, 'The City and its Landscape', p. 3; Page (ed.), *VCH North Riding Vol. II*, pp. 144-5.

¹⁵⁴ Glasscock (ed.), *1334 Lay Subsidy*, p. 376.

¹⁵⁵ C. Daniell, 'Communications', p. 102; Page (ed.), *VCH North Riding Vol. II*, pp. 139, 146.

emphasising that even within its own hinterland York competed with other markets which must have fostered mobility in their own right.¹⁵⁶

1.3.3 The Ainsty: Jurisdiction and Parochial Structure

Surprisingly, the Ainsty, the wapentake immediately to the west of York has received relatively little attention from scholars. Indeed, although the Victoria County History volume for the city of York includes a brief discussion of the wapentake, largely as it relates to civic administration, and mentions it in various contexts throughout, no VCH study of the West Riding, with which the Ainsty is often associated, has ever been undertaken.¹⁵⁷ Today, York and most of the Ainsty is included in North Yorkshire, and thus studies of the modern county of West Yorkshire have also excluded the Ainsty.¹⁵⁸ Even studies of the Vale of York have neglected the northern part of this important area.¹⁵⁹ This vacuum of scholarship has only partially been filled, largely by local historians focused on specific manors, villages, parishes and townships.¹⁶⁰

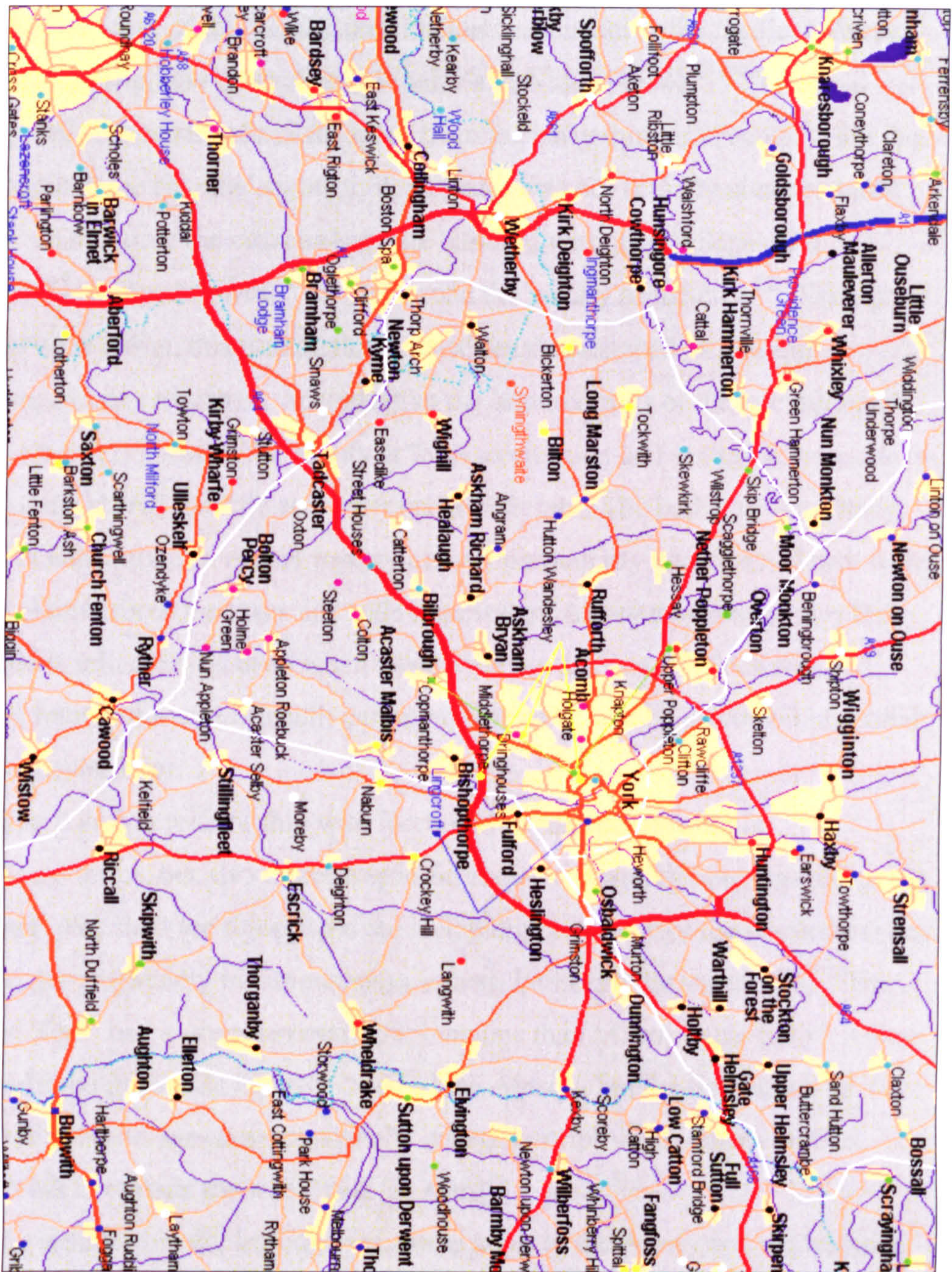
¹⁵⁶ Letters, 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs' (19 February, 2005); Sheahan, *North Riding Vol. II*, pp. Easingwold, an ancient demesne in the Soke of Pickering, was the only settlement in Bulmer wapentake to be assessed at the higher rate of a tenth, rather than a fifteenth, in the lay subsidy of 1334. Glasscock (ed.), *1334 Lay Subsidy*, pp. 357, 382.

¹⁵⁷ E. Miller, 'Medieval York', in P.M. Tillott (ed.), *A History of Yorkshire: the City of York* (London, 1961), pp. 33-34.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, M.L. Faull and S.A. Moorhouse (eds.), *West Yorkshire: an Archaeological Survey to A.D. 1500* (Wakefield, 1981).

¹⁵⁹ R. Van de Noort and S. Ellis (eds.), *Wetland Heritage of the Vale of York: an Archaeological Survey* (Hull, 1999).

¹⁶⁰ See especially M.J. Harrison, *Four Ainsty Townships: the History of Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck, Colton and Steeton, 1066-1875* (York, 2000); *eadem*, *The History of Acaster Selby in the Parish of Stillingfleet 1066-1875* (York, 2003); and G. Hodgson, *A History of Acomb (Richardson's History Revised and Enlarged)* (York, 2001); C.A. Appleby and D.B. Smith (eds.), *Of Malet, Malbis and Fairfax: A History of Acaster Malbis* (York, 2000).



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Fig. 4: Map of the Ainsty and surrounding area. Ainsty boundaries c.1820 demarcated by white line. Reproduced with permission of C. Hinson.

The territory of the Ainsty, the smallest wapentake in the medieval West Riding, lies between the rivers Ouse, Wharfe and Nidd (Fig. 4).¹⁶¹ The city's authority over the wapentake is recorded from the early thirteenth century, but the crown disputed the citizens' rights to it, so that it was not actually annexed until 1449. From that time the citizens had 'the hundred with its privileges and franchises', and together with York, it formed the county of the city.¹⁶² Even prior to official annexation, this jurisdiction created tensions as well as binding wapentake and city together. According to the hundred rolls of the late thirteenth century, when York leased the Ainsty at farm, corruption and extortion were rife on the part of the sheriff, bailiffs and other urban officials. The bailiff of the Ainsty, Thomas of Bickerton (an Ainsty toponym), was particularly notorious. There were also complaints about the taxes and tolls imposed on Ainsty dwellers as they led their animals into the city, even when these were not for sale.¹⁶³ Such tensions, echoed in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century documents, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

The Ainsty's relationship with York was expressed not only in jurisdictional terms, but also through specific choices regarding language use in the documents. We shall see throughout the following chapters that the wapentake was described geographically in various ways in both Latin and the vernacular. 'The Ainsty of York' had more proprietary implications than '*Ainsty iuxta Ebor*'. Urban records referred in generic terms to 'men of the Ainsty', but the inhabitants of various villages and parishes occasionally added descriptive modifiers such as 'next to York', 'outside the walls' and 'in Ainsty'.

As indicated in the Introduction, some areas of the Ainsty were extramural portions of urban parishes, so that many inhabitants of the wapentake would have been obliged to travel to the city for vital events such as baptisms and religious feasts, and frequently chose to be buried there.¹⁶⁴ Individuals from Knapton and Dringhouses in the Ainsty attended church at Holy Trinity, also known as St

¹⁶¹ M.C. Punshon, 'Government and Political Society in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1399-1461' (PhD thesis in History, UY, 2002), p. 17

¹⁶² Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 33-34, 69, 77; P.M. Tillot, 'The Boundaries of the City', in P.M. Tillot (ed.), *A History of Yorkshire: the City of York* (London, 1961), pp. 318-19.

¹⁶³ B. English, *Yorkshire Hundred and Quo Warranto Rolls*, YASRS 151 (1996), pp. 88-93.

¹⁶⁴ P.M. Tillot, 'The Parish Churches', in P.M. Tillot (ed.), *A History of Yorkshire: the City of York* (London, 1961), pp. 374-5, 379, 382, 391-3.

Nicholas, in the Micklegate area of York, which may have been seen as a suburb itself.¹⁶⁵ Inhabitants of Copmanthorpe and Upper Poppleton belonged to the parish of St Mary Bishophill, Jr. People from Dringhouses were divided between Holy Trinity, Micklegate, and Bishophill, Jr., while Middlethorpe was associated with St Mary Bishophill, Sr.¹⁶⁶ Ainsty residents also attended St. Clement's, located near the nunnery in Clementhorpe, another suburb outside Micklegate Bar.¹⁶⁷ The implication that such a situation would have fostered the formation of wider social networks through frequent mobility will be discussed below, in Chapter Two.

While parishes were generally fixed administrative frameworks, the communities and neighbourhoods formed within them exhibited characteristics of processes, rather than structures, since they were also social entities. Parishes in the Ainsty were sometimes large, and sometimes contained more than one village and/or manor. Similarly, villages occasionally contained more than one manor. The composition of manors often changed over time as well.¹⁶⁸ Inhabitants of the same township normally would have attended the same courts and been members of the same tithings, so that they interacted within these manorial as well as parochial structures. However, parishes and manors possessed differing jurisdictional rights, and administrative boundaries would not always have delimited the areas within which networks were formed. In the case of the parish of Bolton Percy, Bolton Percy was the eponymous parish town, while the townships of Appleton Roebuck, Nun Appleton, Steeton, Colton and Hornington belonged to the parish as well. On the other hand, these townships were not all part of the same manor. As we shall see, there were numerous connections and interactions between inhabitants of the several settlements of the parish of Bolton Percy, as with other Ainsty parish towns and their satellite settlements, but social relations were by no means limited to the parish, even a large one.

Any assessment of parish-based sociability in the Ainsty is made more challenging due to the lack of extant guild and parochial churchwardens' records. Only Bishopthorpe, Bolton Percy and Tadcaster boast indications of membership in

¹⁶⁵ Keene, 'Suburban Growth', pp. 113-14.

¹⁶⁶ Lawton, *Collectio*, pp. 25-7, 60, 72.

¹⁶⁷ Parts of these urban and suburban parishes associated with the Ainsty were rural in character, with many of its inhabitants living by agriculture.

¹⁶⁸ Bailey (ed.), *The English Manor*, pp. 5-7.

religious guilds and fraternities.¹⁶⁹ Few individuals living in the Ainsty are recorded as having been members of such organisations based in York, perhaps indicating that the presence of the city did not have a hugely significant impact on this aspect of devotional social life in the hinterland.

1.3.4 The Topography of the Ainsty

Like much of the rest of the Vale of York, the land of the Ainsty is mainly flat and low-lying. It contains good soil for arable and pastoral farming, and most villis practiced a combination of the two. The western part of the wapentake includes the eastern margins of a Magnesian limestone ridge which boasts good drainage and rich farmland.¹⁷⁰ The Ainsty also contained part of the lower Wharfe valley, where meadowland was a significant feature of the physical and economic landscape.¹⁷¹ The Ainsty was less well-wooded than the wapentakes of Bulmer and Ouse and Derwent, although there are several references to woodland in medieval charters.¹⁷²

The price for rich soil could be high, as some parts of the area were also, like the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, liable to flooding because of their location near two tidal rivers, the Ouse and the Wharfe. Complaints in manorial records, as at the ‘lost village’ of Hornington, place names such as ‘Marsh Lane’, or names containing ‘ings’, and physical evidence including the siting of churches on areas of raised elevation testify to the wet nature of the area.¹⁷³ Marshland was not nearly as prevalent in the Ainsty as in the lands between Ouse and Derwent, and thus mobility would not have been greatly hindered. The desire for good fishing and communications again overrode the dangers and inconveniences of flooding, and villages were frequently located in close proximity to rivers as well as roads and other lines of communication.

The important Roman road leading from York to Tadcaster bisected the Ainsty. Thanks to this favourable topography and communications networks, the

¹⁶⁹ Crouch, ‘Gazetteer of Religious Guilds’.

¹⁷⁰ K. Atkinson, ‘Soils’, in Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas*, p. 29.

¹⁷¹ Digital Domesday Yorkshire, fos. 321v, 329; Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, p. 2.

¹⁷² T. Gledhill, ‘Medieval Woodland’, in Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas*, p. 77.

¹⁷³ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 6, 70, 272-3.

lower part of Ainsty was already well-cultivated before the Conquest.¹⁷⁴ Ainsty settlements were typified by a regular linear layout of tofts and crofts, examples of which include Acomb, Appleton and Colton. This linear 'street' pattern, it has often been argued, indicates a relative degree of village organisation, which in turn may reflect a certain stronger style of lordship, originating in the pre-Conquest period along with the field systems, or even, it has been suggested in some cases, the re-foundation of villages wasted during the Conqueror's Harrying of the North.¹⁷⁵ Regular plans obtained even in villages with multiple lords, like Upper Poppleton.¹⁷⁶ Nucleated villages, of which the street pattern is a developed form, have been seen as a response to a shortage in pasture, and thus a way of 'containing' the arable land.¹⁷⁷ Regardless of its origins, such organisation probably encouraged community cohesiveness, with the public space of the street running through the village's centre.¹⁷⁸

In addition to the Anglian and Scandinavian field systems, a great deal of assarting took place in many Ainsty settlements during the later middle ages, including Appleton Roebuck and Bolton Percy, as evidenced by the frequent occurrence of the word 'ridding' and 'thwaite' in place names.¹⁷⁹ Assarting could

¹⁷⁴ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, p. 1; M. Harvey, 'The Development of Open Fields in the Vale of York: a Reconsideration', *Geografiska Annaler* B 67:1 (1985): 44. Domesday Yorkshire, fos. 321v, 329; B. Harrison, 'Evidence for the Main Roads in the Vale of York', p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ J.A. Sheppard, 'Medieval Village Planning in Northern England: some Evidence from Yorkshire', *Journal of Historical Geography* 2 (1976): 2-20. Scholars have recently questioned the extent of the damage caused by the Harrying. D.M. Palliser, 'Domesday Book and the 'Harrying of the North'', *Northern History* 29 (1993): 1-23. Even Sheppard's article demonstrates that there were many regular-planned villages in the Ainsty that were not recorded as waste in Domesday. 'Medieval Village Planning', pp. 6-12. It is probable, however, that if any settlements were re-founded in the aftermath of the Harrying, it was along similar lines to their pre-Conquest organisation. Harvey, 'Development of Open Fields', p. 41. Palliser and others have concluded that regular-plan villages in the region were founded for a variety of reasons and over a number of years, from the Anglo-Scandinavian period through to the twelfth century. 'Harrying', pp. 6-7.

¹⁷⁶ Sheppard, 'Medieval Village Planning', pp. 14-15.

¹⁷⁷ Roberts, *Making of the English Village*, pp. 47-8; R. Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History* (Exeter, 2000), pp. 180-1; D. Hall, 'Field Systems and Township Structure', in M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer (eds.), *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 192-6; Sheppard, 'Medieval Village Planning', pp. 17-19.

¹⁷⁸ R. Muir, *Yorkshire Countryside*, pp. 132-3; B.K. Roberts, *The Making of the English Village* (Harlow, Essex, 1987), pp. 33-62.

¹⁷⁹ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, p. 72; R. Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History* (Exeter, 2000), p. 14. A.H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire Part IV, Barkston Ash, Skyrack and Ainsty Wapentakes*, English Place-Name Society Vol. XXXIII (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 217-60.

occur at the impetus of lords and landowners.¹⁸⁰ At Appleton Roebuck, Philip Fauconberg may have been responsible for assarts on his land in the thirteenth century, as the name 'Philip Ridding' suggests.¹⁸¹

Some settlements, on the other hand, were so small that arable farming was not economic, and may have become depopulated or changed their form prior to the lay subsidy of 1334.¹⁸² Hornington and Pallathorpe are examples of 'lost' villages whose taxpayers may or may not be included in the Bolton returns. Several other 'lost' medieval settlements in the Ainsty include Bustardthorpe, Haganby, Malchetone, Mulhede, Iuxta Urbem, and Bithen. Most of these were lost before the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316, and the last four before the late thirteenth century, as they do not appear in Kirkby's Inquest of 1284.¹⁸³

It has been suggested that very early enclosure for sheep farming may have contributed to their depopulation, but it is also possible that they lost some emigrants to York during the latter's expansion during the thirteenth century, or that their populations became incorporated into those of larger neighbouring villages.¹⁸⁴ Oulston, for instance, does not appear in the *Nomina Villarum* or the 1334 lay subsidy, but was assessed with Catterton in the 1379 poll tax.¹⁸⁵ Haganby disappeared from the tax records several decades after the entire vill, including arable land, wood and pasture, was given to Healaugh Priory in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.¹⁸⁶

In fact, the term 'lost' may be misleading, as several Ainsty places that Beresford classified as lost before the end of the medieval period (Bustardthorpe, Hornington, Pallathorpe and Scagglethorpe) still appear in deeds, probate, civic and crown records in the fifteenth and even sixteenth centuries.¹⁸⁷ They may have

¹⁸⁰ H.C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 42-55; Schofield, *Peasant and Community*, pp. 68-9.

¹⁸¹ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, p. 72; Smith, *West Riding Place-Names IV*, pp. 217-60.

¹⁸² Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 274, 282.

¹⁸³ M.W. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1954), pp. 404-6.

¹⁸⁴ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 274, 282. M.W. Beresford, 'The Lost Villages of Yorkshire Part III', *YAJ* 38 (1953): 222; Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 40.

¹⁸⁵ Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', p. 230-1; Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 422.

¹⁸⁶ J.S. Purvis (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh*, YASRS 92 (1936), pp. 19-20. It is possible that the priory enclosed more land in the vill. Also, the tenants of Healaugh Priory withdrew suits and services owed to the crown in the Hundred Rolls of the late thirteenth century; perhaps the remaining inhabitants of Haganby managed to avoid later taxation as well! English (ed.), *Hundred and Quo Warranto Rolls*, pp. 88-9.

¹⁸⁷ Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', pp. 230-33. For Bustardthorpe, see Chapter Four.

shrunk or ceased to be recognized as official vills, but they still played a role in the social landscape. The fact that some smaller places were taxed together with their larger neighbours has implications for the character of social networks within the locality. The inhabitants of such settlements, it will be seen, nurtured particularly close links with vills nearby.

The Black Death did not directly cause desertion of Ainsty vills, but its economic impact is testified by circumstantial evidence such as the remark in the 1359 Inquisition Post Mortem of Sir John de Grey of Rutherford that two thirds of the arable in Dringhouses lay fallow because 'no one will hire or sow it'.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, land in Hutton Wandesley was 'ruinous' and 'uncultivated' in the 1380s.¹⁸⁹ Two vills, Steeton and Wilstrop, received tax reliefs in 1352 and 1354.¹⁹⁰ The population crises of the fourteenth century, and the continuing population decline in the fifteenth century, as is well known, led to the abandonment of much colonised land in England.¹⁹¹ A shift from arable to pastoral farming occurred in the fifteenth century throughout the country, and outlines of ridge and furrow may still be seen in the rough pasture fields of this region.¹⁹² More is known regarding these depopulations resulting from enclosure. Steeton, in the parish of Bolton Percy, and Wilstrop have both been excavated as deserted villages. Depopulation of Steeton may have begun in the late fourteenth century under the auspices of the Fairfax family, and was completed by 1478.

Wilstop, in the west of the Ainsty, was assessed at a relatively high rate in the 1377 and 1379 poll taxes (despite the relief it received in the years immediately following the Black Death). Star Chamber proceedings indicate that tensions arose due to Wilstop's enclosure around 1485 by the Wilstop lords, whose family

¹⁸⁸ *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and Other Analogous Documents preserved in the Public Record Office X*, p. 408.

¹⁸⁹ *CIPM XV*, p. 90.

¹⁹⁰ Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', pp. 231-2.

¹⁹¹ C. Dyer, 'The Retreat from Marginal Land': The Growth and Decline of Medieval Rural Settlements', in M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer (eds.), *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England. Studies dedicated to Maurice Beresford and John Hurst* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 45-57.

¹⁹² Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 293; R. Muir, *Yorkshire Countryside*, pp. 160, 165-7. Even if the visible ridge and furrow pattern is the result of early modern cultivation, it is likely that this reflects the medieval layout. G. Astill, 'Fields', in G. Astill and A. Grant (eds.), *The Countryside of Medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), p. 70. See also English Heritage's searchable online national historical environment database, PastScape, <http://www.pastscape.org> for concise summaries of the archaeological record at specific Ainsty sites.

cartulary is extant.¹⁹³ The underlying circumstances in the late 1490s were complex: a dispute between the Wilstrops and Gascoignes found expression in the breaking of park enclosures by a combination of gentry and villagers (who apparently still lived in Wilstrop). Moreover, when father and son Miles and Guy Wilstrop ‘destroyed...corne felde’ they cut into the tithes of the parson of Moor Monkton, who was responsible for baptisms, marriages and burials in Wilstrop. The dispute itself, which came to a head in 1514, occasioned mobility and social interactions. Wilstrop engaged men to harass his opponent and persuaded his neighbour, Sir Anthony Ughtred of Scagglethorpe (parish of Moor Monkton), to summon the parson to his manor court.¹⁹⁴

The concentration of depopulated settlements in the Ainsty is striking when it is recalled that the West Riding possesses the smallest percentage (six per cent) of lost villages in Yorkshire as a whole. Forced depopulations aside, this phenomenon probably also indicates the ‘pull’ power of the city.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, there are examples of similar ‘shadow’ rings of deserted settlements outside major towns elsewhere in England.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, the fact that settlements in the Ainsty were far from isolated, and that movement between them was so common, suggests that any impact of depopulation was nuanced, binding some of those who remained in the wapentake closer together and to people from York, and in other cases contributing to disputes.

Moated sites were also quite common in the Ainsty, and whilst they were scattered throughout the wapentake, they clustered in the southern half of the wapentake, as at Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck, Acaster Selby, and even some lost villages like Pallathorpe.¹⁹⁷ As in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, these moats were associated with village settlements, a proximity which may indicate a close lord-tenant relationship. Some moated sites also included fishponds and were

¹⁹³ Beresford, *Lost Villages*, pp. 59-61, 71, 141, 301-15.

¹⁹⁴ Beresford, ‘Lost Villages of Yorkshire III’, pp. 224-5. For more about the interactions between the Wilstrops, Gascoignes, Ughtreds and the city of York, see Chapter Four.

¹⁹⁵ Rees Jones, ‘City and its Landscape’, p. 7; Palliser, ‘Regional Capital as Magnet’, pp. 111, 116-7.

¹⁹⁶ Palliser, ‘Urban Decay Revisited’, p. 18; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 160, 205.

¹⁹⁷ Le Patourel, *Moated Sites*, pp. 121-9; Beresford, ‘Lost Villages of Yorkshire III’, pp. 231-2; Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 8, 70.

often associated with areas of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century parkland, as at Pallathorpe.¹⁹⁸

1.3.5 Lordship and Tenure in the Ainsty

Ainsty vills were characterized by a complicated patchwork of different tenures. The presence of many demesne landholders within single vills doubtless contributed to both the lack of large-scale farming and generally light labour services that were typical of the Ainsty.¹⁹⁹ These constellations of landholding shifted often throughout the later medieval period. It is, moreover, difficult to ‘pin down’ tenants-in-chief and their subtenants to one vill or district of the Ainsty, as they often held land in multiple townships, a situation complicated by intermarriage. The next few paragraphs describe the basic contours of the landholding hierarchy, in order that the ways in which proximity and other links between landholders contributed to the frequency and nature of interactions between inhabitants of different vills may be more easily demonstrated in the following chapters.

There were a number of ecclesiastical landlords in the region, including, as in the other two wapentakes, the Dean and Chapter of York Minster, St. Mary’s Abbey, and St. Leonard’s Hospital. The abbot of Selby also held land, as did the nunneries of Nun Appleton, Nun Monkton and Clementhorpe, the priory of Healaugh Park, the Templars and later the Hospitallers. While ecclesiastical manors were more likely to exert a conservative style of lordship, and to exact labour services, there is evidence to suggest that by the late fourteenth century they were finding it increasingly difficult to do so and still attract tenants, and were thus leasing their land.²⁰⁰ The Dean and Chapter’s common and prebendal estates in the

¹⁹⁸ C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (Macclesfield, 2001), p. 118; Beresford, ‘Lost Villages of Yorkshire III’, p. 232.

¹⁹⁹ Archaeological and documentary research has produced little evidence for ‘intensive demesne farming on a large scale’ in the modern county of West Yorkshire, which, in its eastern section, contains the westernmost part of the Ainsty, including Thorp Arch and Walton. Labour services were also generally lighter than in the Midlands. D.J.H. Michelmore, ‘Township and Tenure’, in M.L. Faull and S.A. Moorhouse (eds.), *West Yorkshire: an Archaeological Survey to A.D. 1500, volume 2* (Wakefield, 1981), pp. 258-9; E. Miller, ‘Yorkshire and Lancashire’, in Chapter 7 of E. Miller (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol. III, 1348-1500* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 604-7; C. Dyer, ‘The West Midlands’, in Chapter 7 of E. Miller (ed.), *AGHEW III*, pp. 636-9.

²⁰⁰ Schofield, *Peasant and Community*, p. 66; C. Dyer, ‘The West Midlands’, pp. 636-9.

city of York were held largely by leases or tenancies at will during the fourteenth century.²⁰¹ Moreover, ecclesiastical and religious lands in the Ainsty often consisted of small parcels, which were held side by side with those of lay landholders, again inhibiting large-scale farming. Ecclesiastical landlords dominated in certain vills and parishes, notably Acomb near York, the domain of the treasurer of York Minster.²⁰² Tenants in nearby Middlethorpe frequently held their land of the abbot of Whitby, and as we have seen that vill belonged to the parish of St Mary Bishophill, Sr.²⁰³ Upper and Nether Poppleton were in the liberty of St Mary's Abbey.

Lay nobles were not always resident in this area of the Vale of York, although they held much of its land for centuries. The Mowbray fee (which had earlier been the fee of Arches) was by far the largest tenant-in-chief in the Ainsty, with land in almost every vill at the time of Kirkby's Inquest in 1284-85. They continued to hold land after the Black Death. The Percys were also prominent (tenants-in-chief in Bolton Percy, Hornington, Pallathorpe, Steeton, Oxton), although they sometimes bumped elbows with the Mowbrays within the same vill (e.g. Steeton). Members of junior Percy branches were actually based in the area. Although the Yorkshire seats of the main Percy lines were Spofford and Topcliffe, they did have demesne at Tadcaster, and the Earl of Northumberland's rambunctious son, lord Egremont, resided at Healaugh in the mid-fifteenth century.²⁰⁴ A third fee was that of the Paynel family, the tenants-in-chief in Bilbrough, Moor Monkton and Hessay in the late thirteenth century. After the Black Death, the Pouger branch of the Paynel family inherited this fee.²⁰⁵ During the same period, Dringhouses, Knapton, some of Bishopthorpe and most of

²⁰¹ S.R. Rees Jones, 'Property, Tenure and Rents: Some Aspects of the Topography and Economy of Medieval York' (Unpublished PhD thesis., University of York, 1987), p. 13.

²⁰² J.E. Burton (ed.), *The Cartulary of the Treasurer of York Minster*, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 5 (York, 1978); J. Kaner, 'Acomb Grange', *York Historian* 10 (1992): 2-17; H. Richardson, *A History of Acomb: an Ancient Village of the West Riding of Yorkshire now Incorporated with the City of York* (York, 1963), pp. 5- 6; Hodgson, *History of Acomb*, pp. 3, 7-8, 12, 18.

²⁰³ *CIPM IX*, p. 392; *XX*, pp. 161-2; *XXII*, p. 86.

²⁰⁴ A. Rose, *Kings in the North: The House of Percy in British History* (London, 2002), p. 482.

²⁰⁵ *CIPM X*, p. 446.

Bustardthorpe belonged to the Luttrell fee.²⁰⁶ Parts of some vills belonged to the Honour of Eye (Acaster Malbis, Acaster Selby, Bishopthorpe and Middlethorpe) and the Honour of Richmond (Askham Bryan).²⁰⁷

As for the subtenants, many were of knightly status. The family of de Brus held of Mowbray in many townships until the fourteenth century. The Methams held land of the Mowbrays in Colton, Thorp Arch, Long Marston, Tockwith and Rufforth in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁰⁸ The Whitchurch family held of the Mowbrays in Wighill, followed by the Stapletons after the Black Death, and the Gascoignes held the manor of Thorp Arch of the Mowbrays in their guise as Earl Marshall and earl of Nottingham in the early fifteenth century, and the Wilstrops held of them in Wilstrop. Le Waleys held land in Moor Monkton of Paynel in the late thirteenth century. They also held (in partnership with the Vavasours) of Brus in Bilton, and were present in Healaugh in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.²⁰⁹

Percy tenants in the various vills encompassed by the parish of Bolton Percy included the Vescy family, the Vavasours, Plumpton, Roos of Ingmanthorpe, and the Umfraville earls of Angus in the fourteenth century. The latter four families were linked by marriage; these kin groups were also related to the Waleys and another family, the Kymes of Newton Kyme.²¹⁰ The Vavasours held of both Percy and Brus. The Fauconbergs were also prominent in the area of Bolton Percy and Bilton. By the twelfth century they were related by marriage to the families of Arches, Brus, St Quintin and Percy.²¹¹ The Malbis family held land of the Honour of Eye (once held by the Malets, granted to the Pole earls of Suffolk

²⁰⁶ J.V. Lyle (ed.), *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids; with other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office. A.D. 1284-1431, Vol. VI, York and Additions* (London, 1920), pp. 14-7.

²⁰⁷ Lyle (ed.), *Feudal Aids*, pp. 14-7; *CIPM XIII*, p. 36; *XIV*, p. 134; *XVI*, p. 221; *XX*, p. 135; *XXI*, p. 85.

²⁰⁸ *CIPM XVIII*, pp. 87-8; *XXI*, pp. 100-1; *CIPM Henry VII Vol. I*, p. 77.

²⁰⁹ Lyle (ed.), *Feudal Aids*, pp. 15-6; *CIPM X*, pp. 66-9; Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', p. 250; Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 52-3.

²¹⁰ T. Midgley, 'Family of Annora De Umfraville, wife of Stephen II Le Waleys', 2007, [Available Online] <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lanc/8771/annora.html>, 12 September 2008; P. Dalton, 'Kyme family (per. c.1080-c.1380)', *ODNB*, Oxford, 2004, [Available Online] <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54509>, 12 Sept 2008; *CIPM XIII*, p. 67; *CIPM XIV*, p. 231.

²¹¹ W. Farrer (ed.), *Early Yorkshire Charters: Being a Collection of Documents Anterior to the Thirteenth Century Made from the Public Records, Monastic Chartularies, Roger Dodsworth's Manuscripts and other Available Sources* (Edinburgh, 1914), Vol. I, pp. 415, 419-20.

in the late fourteenth century).²¹² The Greys of Rotherfield, knights, held land alongside the Stapletons in Askham Bryan as of part of the honour of Richmond in the late fourteenth century, and held the manor of Dringhouses of Holy Trinity Priory.²¹³

The area around the small vills of Bustardthorpe, Middlethorpe and Bishopthorpe seems to have largely avoided the overlordship of the Mowbrays and Percys; the Bustards and Clyftons held of the king in chief, the Thornton family, and the abbot of Whitby.²¹⁴ Some landlords eponymously took on the names of their manors very early on, their families keeping the names throughout the middle ages: the primary examples are Wilstrop of Wilstrop, Alan de Catterton and Alan de Folifoot. Some of these latter families, as we shall see, were quite involved in local society.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, several gentry families held of these landlords. These included Basy of Bilbrough, Dayville of Bilton, Fairfax of Steeton and Walton (they also held land in Acaster Malbis from the fifteenth century), Thwaites of Marston (also held in Moor Monkton), and Stapleton of Wighill. Along with two other branches of the family, Stapleton of Bedale and Hathelsay, they also had land in Long Marston, Hutton Wandesley, Hessay, and Askham Bryan in the late fourteenth century. The Creppings in turn held of the Stapletons in Hutton Wandesley.²¹⁵ Ughtred of Scagglethorpe (knights who held of the Mowbrays and Thwengs in Moor Monkton and Steeton) was active well into the sixteenth century.²¹⁶ The Depedens of Healaugh (also briefly held land in Thorp Arch) married into the family of le Waleys, but died out in the early fifteenth century.²¹⁷ The Grammarys of Bickerton held of the de la Poles, who held of the Mowbrays, in the mid fourteenth century. These gentry landlords were also likely to have exacted lighter labour services, and by the later fourteenth century, their

²¹² Lyle (ed.), *Feudal Aids*, pp. 14-7; *CIPM XX*, pp. 135-9.

²¹³ *CIPM XVIII*, pp. 37-8, 67; Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 1-2

²¹⁴ Parkin (ed.), *CIPM XXII*, p. 86.

²¹⁵ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 64-5. The Dayvilles were Vescy tenants as early as the twelfth century. Farrer (ed.), *EYC Vol. III*, p. 434. For the Stapletons, see *CIPM*, XVII, pp. 44-5.

²¹⁶ *CIPM XVIII*, pp. 204-5.

²¹⁷ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', p. 250; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 88v-89v.

tenants would have largely enjoyed free tenure, although some gentry landlords preferred to manage their demesnes directly rather than leasing them out.²¹⁸

Other prominent landholders included freemen of York who rose to gentle status. The most important families include Chaumont, Fairfax, Sampson, Serf, Stillington and Brocket. The Chaumonts of Colton were particularly successful. Gace de Chaumont was mayor of York in 1255, and the family had married into a branch of the Mowbray family by the fourteenth century.²¹⁹ They held land in Colton, Askham Bryan, Marston, Appleton and Hessay in the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries, for both knight's service and money rents. Most of the lands in Colton, Askham Bryan and Marston were held of Stapleton, but also of the Methams in Colton, while the land in Appleton was held of Fauconberg of Bilton, the land in Steeton of Roos and Percy, and the land in Hessay of the abbot of St Mary's, York. Other lands were held of the king in chief.²²⁰ Similarly, the Fairfaxes of Walton were descended from an early-thirteenth-century York reeve.²²¹ The rise of the Brockets was not as spectacular. At least one was free as a York draper in the 1390s, and a butcher in the early fifteenth century, but the family had resided in the townships of Bolton Percy long before then, Nicholas Brocket having been assessed at Steeton as a brewer in 1379.²²² As we shall see in the following chapters, they enjoyed particularly large networks within the Ainsty.

Appleton Roebuck is a prime example of the importance of areas in the Ainsty to York men, including members of the gentry and ecclesiastical lords: such contacts led not only to increased contact between town and country, but also to a greater flow of general traffic as these lords carried out their business arrangements and administrative duties. John Sampson and his wife Mary held the manor of Southwood in Appleton in the late thirteenth century. Not only was Sampson elected mayor of the city five times in the last decades of the thirteenth century, he was also an attorney and one of the keepers of the Exchange (exchequer) at York in

²¹⁸ J.M.W. Bean, 'Landlords', Chapter 6 of E. Miller (ed.), *AGHEW Vol. III*, pp. 575-9; E. King, 'The East Midlands', in Chapter 7 of E. Miller (ed.), *AGHEW Vol. III*, pp. 630-1; Britnell, *Commercialisation of English Society*, p. 198.

²¹⁹ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 45.

²²⁰ *CIPM XIII*, p. 149; *XVI*, p. 42.

²²¹ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 45.

²²² Collins (ed.), *Register of Freemen*, pp. 90, 116; Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 422.

1280, after which he was knighted.²²³ His presence at the manor would have generated a fair amount of traffic to and from the city, and the Sampson connection with York persisted throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²²⁴ Similarly, Acomb Grange served as a place of residence for the Master of St. Leonard's Hospital and by the late thirteenth century, the Manor of Acomb was held by the Treasurer of York Minster.²²⁵

There were several farmers, landholders who leased demesne, in the Ainsty in 1379. The presence of farmers sometimes indicated a correlation with ecclesiastical estates, and thus the abandonment of customary services in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For example, Knapton, where St. Mary's Abbey held land in 1334, was home to John Symson and Robert del Park, who were both designated *firmarius* in the 1379 poll tax. Other St. Mary's lands with affluent agriculturalists in 1379 include Appleton Roebuck, which had both a franklin and a farmer; Acaster Selby and Nether Poppleton had a farmer each, while Upper Poppleton had three. Dringhouses, partly in the Liberty of St. Peter, also boasted a farmer, as did Copmanthorpe, in the Liberty of St. Leonard.²²⁶ Such tenures of course meant formal restrictions on movement would have been eased, and tenants from elsewhere perhaps more easily attracted. Several vills were home to tenants at will and free tenants, including Easedike, Bishopthorpe and Hornington.²²⁷

The networks forged by the gentry of the Ainsty, and by their tenants and the inhabitants of their manors as well, will be discussed in the following chapters. Here, an example of the interconnections based on kinship, land exchange and devotion between the settlements of Thorp Arch, Walton and Healaugh illustrates some of the points discussed in the previous paragraphs. Throughout the medieval period, Walton served as a chapel of ease for Thorp Arch, and it was not until the late fourteenth century that the chaplains at Walton won the rights of baptism and burial.²²⁸ All three vills were part of the Mowbray fee. The mesne lords who held land there by knight's service included de Brus, Fairfax, Stapleton and Depeden,

²²³ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 72-3; Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 30, 34, 45.

²²⁴ See Chapter Four.

²²⁵ Hodgson, *History of Acomb*, pp. 7-8; Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. ix, 45-7.

²²⁶ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421-7; Glasscock (ed.), *1334 Lay Subsidy*, p. 387.

²²⁷ *CIPM IX*, pp. 101, 392; *XV*, p. 176.

²²⁸ Lawton, *Collectio*, p. 81.

among others.²²⁹ The interests of the Mowbray lords, as dukes of Norfolk, lay mainly elsewhere. Their absence may have had a bearing on the ways in which their lands were cultivated, with less direct demesne farming.²³⁰ The absence of the tenants in chief did not have an adverse effect on the local economy, for Thorp Arch and Walton were among the most populous and prosperous settlements in 1379.²³¹ Healaugh was also exceptionally wealthy, and the Depedens held it and Thorp Arch until 1401, when the latter was quitclaimed to two family chaplains. Sir John Depeden died the following year, and the Percy earls of Northumberland acquired Healaugh.²³² The Depedens and the Fairfaxes were also linked by virtue of their ties with the Percys, who granted land to both families in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²³³ The Depedens and Fairfaxes also maintained frequent contact with York due to their office-holding activities. Both were Justices of the Peace, the former was a sheriff, and the latter acted as counsel for the city of York.²³⁴

The connections between these communities and others in the vicinity were manifested physically. Thorp Arch included detached parts between Bilton and Walton, and land in Walton included a gate that opened onto the road leading to Syningthwaite.²³⁵ Again, parish and township boundaries did not coincide: the township of Walton lies in both the parishes of Walton and Wighill.²³⁶ Roads connected Healaugh Park Priory to both Wighill and Thorp Arch (where there was a quarry).²³⁷ Administrative boundaries, therefore, did not delimit social relationships in this localised area. Religious houses increased the density of this landholding network. Healaugh Priory had been granted land by noble and gentry landlords in all five of the abovementioned places.²³⁸ It shall be seen in later chapters that apart from their lords, inhabitants of this district of the Ainsty

²²⁹ Lyle (ed.), *Feudal Aids*, pp. 15, 125, 188, 280.

²³⁰ Bean, 'Landlords', p. 574.

²³¹ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421-2.

²³² Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 250-1.

²³³ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 250-2.

²³⁴ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 224-5, 250-2.

²³⁵ D.J.H. Michelmores, 'Township Gazetteer', in M.L. Faull and S.A. Moorhouse (eds.), *West Yorkshire: an Archaeological Survey to A.D. 1500, volume 2* (Wakefield, 1981), pp. 536, 550.

²³⁶ Michelmores, 'Township Gazetteer', pp. 536-7; 550-1.

²³⁷ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 7, 65

²³⁸ See Chapter Four for the networks of Healaugh Priory.

engaged with York somewhat less frequently than their counterparts closer to the city, perhaps because of their networks within the locality.

1.3.6 The Economy of the Ainsty

Despite the favourable geology and topography discussed above, the Ainsty, according to the 1334 lay subsidy returns, seems to have been less prosperous than the other two wapentakes in the vicinity of the city. Many tiny settlements were assessed together with larger ones: some of these small settlements became ‘lost villages’ during the fifteenth century; as we have seen, there was a slight correlation between low tax assessment and/or assessment with other settlements and depopulation. Twenty-eight Ainsty settlements, not including land in the liberty of St Mary’s Abbey, but including some tenants of St Leonard’s hospital, were assessed at £23.14s.6d. Eleven settlements paid at least £1. St Mary’s Ainsty lands appear to have been more prosperous; at least one was assessed at £1, while Upper and Nether Poppleton were assessed at over £2 each, and Acomb was assessed with Holgate at £3.8s. The Ainsty, therefore, was assessed at £33.3s.6d (at least) in 1334 (Table 1).

Nearly half a century later, three decades after the first outbreak of plague, the Ainsty (again excluding those lands assessed separately with the ecclesiastical liberties) was assessed at £27 (Table 2).²³⁹ Despite its small size and population, an average assessment of 4.3d per person indicates that it enjoyed greater wealth than the other wapentakes in the West Riding.²⁴⁰ A total number of 139 individuals in at least thirty-two settlements paid tax above 4d in the 1379 poll tax, giving an average number of about four of these more affluent tax payers per vill. Despite the Ainsty’s generally rural character, of the 139 poll-tax payers charged over 4d, only fifteen were designated as farmers, four as franklins, four as esquires, and two as knights—the majority of the rest of these individuals were tradesmen of some sort. The returns also give a rough idea of population density. Beresford calculated the mean number of taxpayers per acre in the wapentake (0.034),

²³⁹ Unfortunately, it is difficult to compare the taxation situation in the Ainsty with Bulmer or Ouse and Derwent, for the 1379 returns for the latter wapentakes do not survive in full.

²⁴⁰ Punshon, ‘Government and Society’, p. 17.

concluding that although the density was far less than in York itself, the Ainsty was twice as crowded as the rest of the West Riding.²⁴¹

Table 2: Ainsty Settlements in the Lay Subsidy and Poll Tax Returns

Sources: R.E. Glasscock (ed). *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*. Records of Social and Economic History New Series II (London, 1975); C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381. Part 3 Wiltshire-Yorkshire* (Oxford, 2005); 'Subsidy Roll for York and the Ainsty'. *YAJ* 4 (1877): 170-201.

Key:

† = Land assessed under the Liberty of St. Mary

‡ = Land assessed under the Liberty of St. Leonard

- = Before the name of a settlement, indicates that it belongs to the larger parish usually sharing the name of the (non-indented) parish town above the entry concerned

▲ = Assessed with parish town above the entry concerned

↑ = Assessed with settlement immediately above entry concerned

²⁴¹ Beresford, *Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes*, p. 26.

Settlement Name	1334 Lay Subsidy	1379 Poll Tax	1524 Lay Subsidy
Acaster Malbis, parish town	£1	14s.10d	£3.3s
Acaster Selby, pa. Stillingfleet	†£1.5s	18s.8d	26s.10d
Acomb, pa. town	†£3.8s	31s	51s.2d + £3.7s for Acomb Grange
-Knapton	†	7s.2d	11s.6d
-Holgate	▲	↑	21s.2d
Askham Bryan, pa. town	£1.10s	11s.10d	33s.10d
Askham Richard, pa. town	15s	11s.2d	18s.10d
Bilbrough, pa. town	£1	18s	45s.6d
Bilton, pa. town, Lib. St. Peter	8s	23s	32s.4d
-Syningthwaite		▲	
-Bickerton	14s	12s.10d	30s.8d
-Tockwith	8s	13s.8d	3s
Bishopthorpe, pa. town	13s.4d	19s	7s.10d
Middlethorpe, pa. St. Mary Bishophill Sr.		↑	10s.2d
Bolton Percy, pa. town	£1.6s.8d	6s.8d	£3.19s.6d
-Appleton Roebuck	†£1.3s	27s.2d	26s.6d
-Nun Appleton		↑	
-Colton	18s	10s.8d	31s.2d
-Steeton	£1.4s	12s.4d	26s.8d
Copmanthorpe, pa. St. Mary B'phill Jr., part in Lib. St. Peter	‡£1.13s.4d	18s.4d	16s.2d
Dringhouses, pa. St. Mary B'phill Sr., Holy Trinity Micklegate, Acomb, Lib. St. Peter	6s.8d	15s.4d	11s.4d
Healaugh, pa. town	15s	64s.4d	9s.10d
Long Marston, pa. town	£1.2s	19s.6d	£3.14s.11d
-Hutton Wandesley	£1	26s.10d	17s.2d
-Angram		↑	↑
Moor Monkton, pa. town	†10s	9s.6d	40s.2d
-Scagglethorpe	3s	▲	▲
-Hessay	†£1.10s	2s.6d	9s.10d
Nether Poppleton, pa. town	†£2.3s	14s.6d	17s.8d
Rufforth, pa. town	‡18s	12s.2d	
Oxton, pa. Tadcaster	8s	31s.8d	9s.2d
Catterton, pa. Tadcaster	‡7s	↑	↑
Oulston		↑	
Thorp Arch, pa. town	£1.8s	20s.2d	36s.4d
Upper Poppleton, pa. town	†£2.8s	14s.10d	27s.6d
Walton, pa. town	15s	20s.2d	32s.6d
Wighill, pa. town	16s	15s.6d	£4.16s.10d
-Easedike		▲	
-Follifoot	10s.6d	2s.8d	
Wilstrop, pa. Kirk Hammerton	17s	9s.10d	15s.2d

It is possible that the above-described patterns of lordship correlate with the lower valuation of Ainsty settlements in the lay subsidies and poll taxes, as lay and ecclesiastical lords alike may have been adept at tax evasion.²⁴² For example, the Malbis lords ran the manor at Acaster Malbis, which was assessed at only 14s.10d in 1379.²⁴³ At Bolton Percy, the tenant-in-chief, Robert III de Percy (of a minor branch of the Percy line) leased the manor to Isabel de Vescy c. 1303, and Walter de Heslerton, the under tenant, later sold the manor to Isabel's brother, Henry, Lord Beaumont.²⁴⁴ According to Henry's Inquisition *post mortem* of 1340, the Beaumonts, a wealthy family with royal connections, held their land by knight's service.²⁴⁵ During that year, the parishioners of Bolton Percy (including Appleton Roebuck, Nun Appleton, Colton and Steeton) claimed that they could not pay the tax of the ninth, assessed on agricultural produce, although the vill of the parish combined contributed £2.16s.10d in 1379.²⁴⁶

Only three quarters of expected revenue could be collected, and local jurors testified that no merchant lived there "except those living from agriculture".²⁴⁷ It may be cynical, however, to surmise that the record does not reflect a degree of actual hardship. Almost two generations later, the only tradesmen recorded in the 1379 returns for the *township* of Bolton Percy were two tailors, who paid 6d, while the other seventeen households paid the labourers' amount of 4d. However, although the 1379 returns show a relatively small number of poll tax payers (thirty-three, including wives assessed with their husbands), two years earlier there had been a poll tax population of ninety.²⁴⁸ This discrepancy is unsurprising, given the more widespread evasion in 1379.²⁴⁹

²⁴² Dr. S.R. Rees Jones, personal communication, 4 July, 2005; and P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240-1400* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 105-9.

²⁴³ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 423.

²⁴⁴ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, pp. 7-9.

²⁴⁵ Harrison, *Ainsty Townships*, p. 10; *CIPM*, VIII, p. 190.

²⁴⁶ Exchequer, *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii temp Regis Edward III* (Record Commission, 1807), p. 240; Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 422, 427.

²⁴⁷ *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, p. 240.

²⁴⁸ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 427; Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, p. 86; Crouch, 'Gazetteer of Religious Gilds' (25 May, 2005).

²⁴⁹ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 42-3; Beresford, *Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes*, pp. 21, 24.

Parishes and townships in the Ainsty varied in terms of size and wealth. Within the parish of Bolton Percy, Appleton (comprising Appleton Roebuck and Nun Appleton, whose status as a vill is questionable) seems to have been the wealthiest and most populous township, followed by Steeton and then Colton. Appleton Roebuck boasted a franklin and a farmer in 1379, while Nun Appleton was home to a mercer. Appleton had an impressive eleven artisans, nine of which resided in Appleton Roebuck. Other communities, such as Upper Poppleton, mentioned a few artisans, but also a few relatively affluent agriculturalists, paying 12d in 1379. Upper Poppleton was home to three farmers and three carpenters, and Wilstrop possessed a fulling mill and two fullers lived there in 1379.²⁵⁰ In a few cases the number of artisans should not be overestimated, as in the case of Acomb. Acomb's taxes were assessed along with Holgate, and the six artisans listed may have been divided between the two communities.²⁵¹

Several vills were home to more artisans, notably Walton and Wighill with Easedike. Many of these artisans were involved with textile industry. The former village had twelve individuals (the highest number for the whole of the Ainsty) paying above the standard 4d rate in the 1379 poll tax, at least seven of whom were artisans involved with textiles. Two of these, a tailor (*cissor*) and a webster, paid above the standard 6d for artisans.²⁵² It has been mentioned that Walton, located close to the river Wharfe and on the ancient Roman road, 'Watling Street', was one of the seat of the gentle Fairfax family, of the fee of Mowbray. Perhaps the family's wealth influenced the prosperity of its tenants.²⁵³

It has been mentioned that there was a concentration of smallish settlements which housed merchants and merchandise in the East Riding. A smaller but similarly dense distribution manifested itself in the West Riding when the *Nonae* collection was assessed in 1340.²⁵⁴ This West Riding concentration lay within the Vale of York, and thus included the Ainsty settlements mentioned above that

²⁵⁰ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421-3, 426-7; Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', pp. 223-4.

²⁵¹ Hodgson, *History of Acomb*, p. 10.

²⁵² 'Rolls of the Collectors in the West Riding of the Lay Subsidy (Poll Tax) 2 Ric. II'. *YAJ* 7 (1884). pp. 174-86 (henceforth '1379 Poll Tax Returns', *YAJ* 7); Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 422.

²⁵³ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 65-6, 217, 243, 252; G. Webb, *Fairfax of York: The Life and History of a Noble Family* (York, 2001), pp. 7-13.

²⁵⁴ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, p. 95.

numbered merchants among their inhabitants in the 1379 poll tax returns. Merchants were also taxed in the returns for Askham Richard, Wighill, Healaugh and Tockwith. The first three villages are located within a few miles of one another and from the main road to Tadcaster, while Tockwith was located nearer to the York-Knaresborough road (See Fig. 4).²⁵⁵ It is possible that communities in which merchants were prominent might also have enjoyed greater knowledge of local markets, towns, and the surrounding countryside.

As for the placement of markets, the Ainsty seems to have followed the pattern described by Central Place Theory whereby such commercial sites are located in 'transition zones' near the boundaries of areas of different geology and environment.²⁵⁶ Tadcaster and Wetherby (formerly Walshford) were the two chartered market sites in the Ainsty. Tadcaster was ten miles from York and seven from Wetherby, whilst Wetherby is about fifteen miles from the city.²⁵⁷ Both were situated on or near rivers in order to optimise access to goods. While Tadcaster lies on the Ouse, Wetherby is located at the western limit of the wapentake on the Wharfe (Walshford was closer to the Nidd), where the flat, low-lying lands begins to slope upward to the ridge of Magnesian limestone to the west.²⁵⁸ The population of the Ainsty also of course frequented the markets of York, particularly for corn and salt, and this aspect of the mobility between town and country will be discussed further below.²⁵⁹

The local rivers, of course, also played a major part in the economy of the Ainsty, as with the other settlements in the Vale of York. Acomb and Holgate, for example, had access to a landing on the Ouse, the former via a throughway known as Carr Lane.²⁶⁰ Many of these settlements thus relied on fishing to supplement their livelihoods, although not to the same extent as Ouse and Derwent. It may be suggested that good communications were more significant than diversity of

²⁵⁵ Daniell, 'Communications', p. 102.

²⁵⁶ Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants, and Markets*, pp. 101-3.

²⁵⁷ T. Langdale, *A Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire; Containing the Names of All the Towns, Villages, Hamlets, Gentlemen's Seats, &c. in the County of York* (Northallerton, 1822), in 'History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, Volumes I & II by Edward Baines, and The Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire, by Thomas Langdale', CD-ROM produced by C. Hinson, pp. 422, 444.

²⁵⁸ Daniell, 'Communications', pp. 102-5; A. Raistrick, *The Making of the English Landscape. West Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1970), pp. 17-9.

²⁵⁹ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 42.

²⁶⁰ Hodgson, *History of Acomb*, p. 42.

production for the economy of the wapentake. Bequests in wills testify to the importance of the transportation network in the Ainsty: William Deighton of Hutton Wandesley, Long Marston, bequeathed cash towards the upkeep of the bridge heading to York in 1484.²⁶¹

Employment of servants was less common in rural Yorkshire than in the towns in the later middle ages.²⁶² Goldberg has estimated that in the West Riding as a whole, about one-sixth of households employed servants.²⁶³ A minimum of fifty-seven Ainsty households kept at least one servant; quite a few kept two, and several kept three. Servants were not always found in the households of those paying above 4d, or were even located in the wealthiest or most populous settlements. Live-in life-cycle servants were clearly a feature of the Ainsty. It has been observed that some late medieval householders employed extra servants when their own children were old enough to work, although adolescent children and non-kin servants usually performed the same tasks. They were often treated similarly in manorial and royal records, and children living in their parents' house were sometimes called 'servants' in tax returns, emphasizing their economic, rather than their familial function.²⁶⁴

Parents sometimes sent children to work in immediately neighbouring townships, if surname evidence can be trusted. Two men named John Segrayve and their wives were assessed in Steeton, and a William Segrave was to be found in Colton. John Glasedale and his wife were assessed at 4d in Colton, with Henry de Glasedale paying the same amount in Appleton.²⁶⁵ These three vills, it will be remembered, belonged to the parish of Bolton Percy. Rufforth and Knapton may have engaged in similar practices: each township listed a singlewoman with the surname Crauncewyk, and a William de Knapton lived in Rufforth. Other singletons seem to have stayed within their settlement of origin and worked for neighbours, again, if the order found in the tax returns can be considered reliable.

²⁶¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 227.

²⁶² Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 165-67

²⁶³ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 161-67.

²⁶⁴ Fox, 'Exploitation of the Landless', pp. 521, 531-32, 550, 555, 558-68; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 62-63, 70, 83; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 166-67.

²⁶⁵ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, 422-23.

Some townships, including Nether Poppleton, feature a pattern of a couple, followed by a singleton, almost all the way down the list.

It is unclear whether villages with large numbers of servants concentrated in any particular area of the Ainsty. There does not seem to be a correlation between larger numbers of servants or 'singleton clustering' and proximity to York: Acomb, Dringhouses, Bishopthorpe and Middlethorpe all had moderate to large numbers of servants, but so did villas on the Ainsty's western fringes, such as Thorp Arch. Concentrations of servants were, however, found in settlements with connections to religious and secular manors. Acomb with Holgate, Bilton with Syningthwaite and Healaugh all had large numbers of servants, and all were in the vicinity of ecclesiastical estates of some sort: the grange of the treasurer of York Minster, the nunnery at Syningthwaite, and Healaugh Priory.²⁶⁶ Bilton, moreover, was the seat of the Dayville family, and many of the servants in Healaugh were employed by the knights Brian and Miles de Stapleton. Not all of the servants were attached to the households of the most powerful families; other households in these villas were also more likely to keep servants.

In some villas, there was either a great deal of residential clustering of servants (especially when groups of single individuals appear in the middle of the list), or the tax assessors deliberately left them at the end of the roll—although this was relatively common throughout England, it does not seem as if it would be as convenient or as logical as listing all dependents under the household head. Moreover, Fox describes demesne *famuli* and cottagers who worked for lords and tenants living in cottages clustered around the church in a region of arable farming. It is possible that the singletons in the poll-tax returns equated with the tenants of cottages mentioned in the various Inquisitions Post Mortem who may have provided a pool of labour within a vill.²⁶⁷

The returns indicate that female clustering, the phenomenon of not-married women living close together and so appearing sequentially in the returns, existed in the context of the hinterland, and that there seems to have been an inverse

²⁶⁶ It is of course possible that a large number of servants may be an optical illusion in townships assessed together with a smaller vill, like Acomb with Holgate.

²⁶⁷ H.S.A. Fox, 'Servants, Cottagers and Tied Cottages', p. 137.

correlation between prosperity and female-headed households.²⁶⁸ There were also several townships with inordinate numbers of single males, especially Acaster Selby, Acomb, Wighill with Easedike, and Appleton. It may be that some of these were labourers.²⁶⁹ Several possessed occupational surnames, but whether these occupations were actually practiced cannot be verified from the returns. It is also difficult to tell what percentage of single taxpayers would have been servants, since it may be unwise to count as servants the singletons listed directly after a married couple, even where the household head had a known occupation and was assessed at a higher amount in the tax. Occasionally, singletons are listed immediately *before* a married couple sharing the same surname; these may be adult children.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the concepts and issues associated with later medieval migration and mobility. The sketch of the topographical, tenorial and economic conditions obtaining in the Vale of York during this period has been related to the mobility and sociability of its inhabitants, and questions have been raised about the ways in which environment may have interacted with human behaviour, particularly the decision to move or to remain in one's native settlement. Emphasis has been placed on networks formed within localities consisting of more than one township and/or parish. The following chapters will develop these ideas through an exploration of individual and communal relationships within and between communities of the Vale of York.

²⁶⁸ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 311-13.

²⁶⁹ See Fox, 'Exploitation of the Landless'.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN YORK'S HINTERLAND: SETTINGS, PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES IN THE TESTAMENTARY EVIDENCE

2.1 Introduction: Social Relations and Networks in a Context of Mobility

The primary purpose of this chapter is to introduce a methodology for studying social relations in the late middle ages, and then analyse what can be learned from probate evidence of the social relations and networks of people living in York's immediate hinterland during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As discussed in the previous chapter, this thesis takes the position that individuals living in the hinterland of the major provincial centre of York would be more likely than their remoter counterparts to be aware of broader horizons, and therefore perhaps more liable to migrate short distances and move about between town and country as well as between rural or suburban parishes.

As indicated above, the ultimate goal of my project is to assess the impact of such mobility, among other factors, on the social and kin networks of the inhabitants of the hinterland. Were networks, relationships and communities fragmented by frequent mobility, or did people who moved use their wider geographical horizons to create and maintain relatively broad networks of family and friends? How did socio-economic status affect both an individual's tendency to move, and his or her ability to form and maintain social relationships? The effects on network formation of landholding and inheritance customs, as well as settlement geography and the presence of York must also be examined.¹

Although such questions have been addressed in the past by scholars undertaking the quantitative analysis of large, continuous runs of manor court records, we can approach the issues another way by integrating detailed readings of wills with select Church court cause papers and information from lay subsidy and poll tax returns, as well as other documentary and some literary sources. The use of wills provides us with a perspective rarely available to the scholar or manor

¹ For a thirteenth-century example of a study asking similar questions, although without the focus on mobility, see R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours in a Thirteenth-Century Suffolk Community', *Journal of Family History* (1979): 249.

court records alone: a window onto the affective, qualitative nature of personal relationships and networks. Wills allow us to glimpse the ways in which individuals felt—or at least how they wished to be publicly perceived to feel—about the people and places that influenced, informed and enriched their lives, at a particularly significant point in the lifecycle, that preparatory, liminal phase between life and death. How did the men and women of the Ainsty view the places in which they lived and moved, their kin and neighbours, kin from other settlements, and townspeople from York, and how did they go about perpetuating or modifying their relationships with these places and people after death? Is it possible to determine how these relationships affected other members of their respective social networks, of their communities as a whole?

In order to begin to answer these questions, this chapter begins by outlining criteria and techniques that can be used in a study of social networks. The interactional criteria of individuals' social networks will be discussed, as well as structural features such as the size of groups and alliances formed within and between households, townships and parishes.² The second part explores social relations using testamentary evidence complemented by the poll tax records, according to the theoretical framework laid out in the first section. Relationships will be discussed under the broad and interlocking categories of geographical proximity, administrative and seigniorial frameworks, work, church and marriage, which also involve concepts of kinship, neighbourhood and community. These categories, or activity fields, provided opportunities and contexts for social interaction, and could involve, for example, exchanging information at the local market, meeting a future spouse at a church festival, exchanging land at the manor court, or bringing a suit of defamation against a quarrelsome neighbour in the Church courts of York.³

Within the categories of the activity fields noted above, this chapter explores the affective, value-laden foundations of different types of relationships, as well as changes across the life cycle. It will examine the experiences of men and women side by side, and distinguish as far as possible according to socio-economic

² For definitions of 'interactional criteria' and 'network structure' see pp. 89-98, below.

³ For an explanation of 'activity fields', see p. 90, below.

status. Throughout, it emphasises the geographical environment of its subject, a society existing on the doorstep of a major late medieval town.

2.2 Social Relations and Networks: a Framework

Relationships can be assessed at different hierarchical, yet interrelated levels, and according to a number of structural criteria, defined below. It is important to use a standard list of criteria for identifying and assessing social relationships and networks in the hinterland of late medieval York, in order to foster comparisons with other regions and time periods. Social network analysis describes a set of invaluable, if complex, tools that are useful for analysing medieval court records with a view to discovering the range and depth of an individual's social ties, but it may also be used in the study of testamentary evidence.⁴

In more general terms, following on the work of researchers such as the behavioural-interactionist Jeremy Boissevain, medievalists will find it useful to

⁴ For an introduction, see J. Scott, *Social Network Analysis: a Handbook* (London, 2000). Judith Bennett, especially influenced by the anthropologist Boissevain, analyzed the numbers and types of social contacts enjoyed by individuals, as manifested in manor court rolls. She emphasizes multiplexity and frequency of interaction in assessing individual relationships, while size and degree of connection, the features of networks most readily calculated from the court rolls, are her main tools for analyzing structure. In discussing the public-private dichotomy common to many studies of medieval life, Bennett also suggests some of the activity fields I will be using in this thesis when she names associations between individuals based on 'close settlement, communal agriculture, and shared lordship'. Rural dwellers would have come into frequent contact with 'tenants, neighbours, manorial officials, traders, and many others'. J.M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock Before the Plague* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 6-7. Bennett also explores how the subordinate political and legal status of women, changing throughout the lifecycle, affected their ability to form and maintain social relationships both within and without the kin network. Her conclusions about the implications of the subordination of women remain to be seen in relation to my research. A decreased mobility on the part of wives makes sense, given the increased domestic responsibilities of married women, but the Ainsty testamentary evidence does provide some indications of the mobility of wives and widows. According to my reading of Bennett, she perhaps overemphasizes the impact of marital and socioeconomic status vis-à-vis gender in her assessment of social relations. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 37, 50, 65. Although Dr. Goldberg has questioned Bennett's use of manorial court records, Bennett acknowledged the legal biases of her source material, which do not appear to detract greatly from her conclusions with respect to the public manifestation of social networks. However, Bennett's method of using manor court rolls to trace the numbers of social contacts enjoyed by each individual in the course of their court appearances is potentially less useful in the case of young people, especially servants, due to their increased mobility. Such individuals must be traced in a variety of records. Goldberg also criticizes what may be viewed as Bennett's overly pessimistic view of the position of women in the conjugal household, and instead emphasises the wider influence of regional economy on women's relative independence. P.J.P. Goldberg, 'The Public and the Private: Women in the Pre-Plague Economy', in P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth-Century England III* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 82-85.

broaden the structural-functionalist approach of many social anthropologists. It is important to take into account the inherent dynamism of social networks and individual motivation in forming them, as well the more usual study of normative behaviour associated with membership in groups (e.g. tithings, guilds).⁵ The dyadic contract model takes the dynamism advocated by Boissevain to its logical conclusion with its emphasis on individual agency, and has been criticized for failing to take into account the socio-economic differences within rural society.⁶ A partial solution may be found in the recent work of Lynne Bowdon, who discusses the role of individual agency in negotiating socio-economic similarities and differences among the people mentioned by a testator.⁷

According to Boissevain, following on the work of J.A. Barnes, any one individual's relationship with another individual may be described using **interactional criteria**, while larger social networks may be explained in terms of **structure**. In this and the following chapters, I have adopted Boissevain's interactional criteria: *multiplexity, transactional content, directional flow, frequency and duration of interaction*.⁸

The 'smallest' social unit to be considered is thus the relationship between two individuals, whether husband and wife, master and servant, lord and tenant, two blood or marital relatives, business partners, friends, etc. The most promising sources for studying such relationships are wills and court records, whether from village manor courts or ecclesiastical causes. Although customs of frankpledge and tithings did not operate in the north of England, pledging in court was practised, and such pledges, as well as the depositions of witnesses, provide further evidence of individual social relationships and clues as to how and why they were formed.⁹ An analysis of witness depositions from the hinterland, which provide us with even

⁵ J. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 4-23.

⁶ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', note, p. 244.

⁷ L. Bowdon, 'Redefining Kinship: Exploring Boundaries of Relatedness in Late Medieval New Romney', *Journal of Family History* 29:4 (2004): 408, 411-13.

⁸ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 28-45.

⁹ M. Bailey (ed.), *The English Manor c.1200-c.1500* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 172, 179-80, 185-86. R.M. Smith, Bennett, and Pimsler are among those scholars who have investigated the reciprocal dynamics of pledging. R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 223-25, 240-41, 246-7; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 24; M. Pimsler, 'Solidarity in the Medieval Village? The Evidence of Personal Pledging at Elton, Huntingdonshire', *Journal of British Studies* 17:2 (1977): 3-11.

more anecdotal evidence about individual relationships and social networks, forms the basis of the next chapter.

A relationship is *multiplex* if the two individuals are in contact with each other in more than one role, or within more than one **activity field**.¹⁰ Two men living in a late medieval village might be brothers, *and* neighbours, *and* business partners or joint landholders *and* members of the same parish guild. John and Richard Saul of Bilbrough, for example, were brothers and fellow parishioners of St. Nicholas, Micklegate, and John acted as executor of his brother's testament in 1434.¹¹ They were thus in contact within the fields of kinship, devotion and the legal functionality of will-making.

Multiplexity is fluid and dynamic. Long-standing relationships are liable to become multiplex, even if they had been single-stranded to begin with.¹² Similarly, relationships can become less multiplex with changing circumstances. Multiplexity is especially likely to occur in 'relatively isolated' communities, but it is clear that individuals from the Ainsty occasionally enjoyed multiplex relationships with individuals from outside their current residence—including York.¹³ Even before the Black Death, many men and women knew each other in several different capacities in villages that demonstrably engaged in frequent communications with other nearby settlements, including towns.¹⁴

While medieval evidence, especially wills, demonstrates multiplexity in some cases, there will of course be innumerable other instances in which no multiplexity is apparent, but where the silence of the document bears no resemblance to historical reality. For example, a relationship that, in a testament, appears merely functional or instrumental—such as the relationship between testator and witness—probably had more purely sociable aspects as well.¹⁵ As we shall see below, multiplexity in wills can usually be taken as an indication of multiplexity in life. Comparison with other classes of record, such as ecclesiastical

¹⁰ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 29.

¹¹ BIHR Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 32, and Prob. Reg. 3 fo. 384r.

¹² Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 30.

¹³ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 29.

¹⁴ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 29; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 11, 51-3, 221-2; R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 248-9.

¹⁵ B. Kapferer, 'Social Network and the Conjugal Role in Urban Zambia: Towards a Reformulation of the Bott Hypothesis', in J. Boissevain and J.C. Mitchell (eds.), *Network Analysis. Studies in Human Interaction* (Paris, 1973), p. 95.

cause papers, deeds or Inquisitions *post mortem* might well reveal legal and business connections between individuals, where the testament had only shown, say, a kin or devotional relationship. A corrective may be found in twentieth-century anthropological studies that reveal widespread multiplexity within village and small town society.¹⁶

Transactional content views social contacts as exchanges, and describes what exactly is being exchanged, whether gossip or other information, greetings, cash, rents, labour or knight services, or assistance such as pledging for another in court, for example. Some sociologists separate sociable and instrumental content when describing relationships, but in actual lived experience the two aspects may be intertwined.¹⁷ As we shall see, the transactional content of relationships as manifested in testamentary evidence may provide clues as to the intensity and relative importance of particular relationships to the testator. *Directional flow* indicates the direction in which these elements are being exchanged, and is thus another way of thinking about the degree of reciprocity within a relationship. Equal or reciprocal exchanges usually indicate equal investment and power on the part of each actor, while asymmetric directional flow implies unequal power, meaning that the individual investing more in the relationship will be more likely to acquiesce to the requests or pressures of the more powerful party.¹⁸

Frequency and duration of interaction are essentially self-explanatory. While a high frequency and long duration of interaction may both imply a 'close' (and often multiplex) relationship, Boissevain rightly points out that duration of contact, rather than frequency, is more likely to produce and/or maintain intimacy.¹⁹ For instance, it would not be surprising if an individual had a relationship of greater depth with a sibling living in another village that he or she saw a few times annually than with a trader he or she dealt with at a weekly market. The several servants hailing from neighbouring Ainsty villages could have had

¹⁶ A. Trouwborst, 'Two Types of Partial Networks in Burundi', in J. Boissevain and J.C. Mitchell (eds.), *Network Analysis. Studies in Human Interaction* (Paris, 1973), pp. 113-4; Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 72-4.

¹⁷ Kapferer, 'Social Network and Conjugal Role', p. 95.

¹⁸ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 33-4.

¹⁹ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 33-35.

qualitatively strong relationships with kin and friends from their native villages, for example, even in the absence of multiplexity. Evidence for sustained and frequent contact among individuals living in different Ainsty communities will be elaborated upon below, later in this chapter and in Chapter Three.

A good example of a relationship between two individuals that demonstrates at least some of the above interactional criteria is commonly manifested in testamentary evidence. A parish priest, rector or vicar may have been chosen as an individual's executor, received one or more bequests, and also witnessed the drawing up of the will. As mentioned above, an individual fulfilling more than one role in a will probably also enjoyed a multiplex relationship with the testator in life. In this case, the testator knew the cleric in his capacity as a religious advisor, and perhaps also as a neighbour and even a purchaser of the testator's agricultural surplus or goods and services. At the moment of drawing up the will, the transactional content of the relationship consisted of the exchange of trust, service and money or goods. A generous bequest to the cleric, or naming him as an executor or supervisor, might indicate high intensity, or frequency and duration, of interaction.

Thomas Colynson, a husbandman from the vill of Easedike in the parish of Wighill, provides a 'real life' example. Thomas had a brother, William, who was also a cleric in the village, and who witnessed and supervised the former's will in 1452-3.²⁰ The relationship was thus clearly multiplex. In terms of transactional content, as a witness, William offered his assistance and the weight of his reputation, while as a supervisor he undoubtedly contributed his spiritual, clerical and legal know-how—and, since no other clerics are mentioned as being present, it is possible that William even transcribed the original document! Although William is not specifically named as a beneficiary of Thomas's will, we may imagine that performing such services served to increase the vicar's reputation for trustworthiness and usefulness. William Colynson was, in fact, experienced as a witness, as he had performed the service for his father, Richard, in 1442.²¹

Directional flow of the relationship (especially over the course of the testator's life) is more difficult to ascertain from testamentary evidence, although

²⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 260v.

²¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 77v-78r.

most transactions, material as well as spiritual, set out in a will could probably be considered reciprocal. In exchange for the material and symbolic value of bequests, the beneficiary offered prayer to the recently departed, and in exchange for the testator's trust and acknowledgement of the cleric's good standing in the community by naming him executor, the latter undertook to fulfil the last wishes of the deceased. Thomas Colynson's testament does not give us an indication of what, if anything, William received in exchange for his deathbed services, so the directional flow appears to be unbalanced in favour of Thomas. On the other hand, William Carter of Acaster Malbis left William Yorke, a canon in his parish church, a cash bequest in 1460; Yorke in turn acted as a witness to the testament.²²

While such examples of reciprocity are not infrequent in the Ainsty, they were more prevalent in York's parishes, whose testators, particularly the women, included more specific requests to both religious and lay men and women to pray for their souls, and more clearly designated rewards for past kindness or service.²³ Alice Thwaite, a vowess who had once lived in Moor Monkton, behaved in more of an 'urban' manner in 1485, in that she attached conditions to several bequests and clearly designated others as rewards for 'true and longe service', but this wealthy widow in fact had a house in York in the neighbourhood of Bishophill.²⁴

Frequency and duration of interaction is also often unclear from testamentary evidence. We know that as brothers, William and Thomas Colynson were in contact in both 1442 and 1452, since both turn up in the will of their father, Richard Colynson.²⁵ Thomas and his other brother, Robert, had acted together to execute their father's will, of which they were among the main beneficiaries—and William again acted as a witness.²⁶ In contrast to the more effusive wills from urban parishes such as St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York, wills from the Ainsty only occasionally give long-term insight into the quality of the testator's relationships over the course of his or her lifespan, which could also be determined by examining court records in order to measure pledging behaviour, for instance. An

²² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 462r.

²³ B. Hamblen, 'Gender, Social Networks and Testamentary Giving in Fourteenth-Century York: The Women of the Parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey before and after the Black Death' (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of York), pp. 41-7.

²⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 276.

²⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 77v-78r.

²⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 77v-78r.

exception is the case of Sir Richard Basse of Bilbrough and his servant of at least two decades, Nicholas, who received a sum of 11s.3d along with a tunic, in 1393-4.²⁷ It is interesting to note that despite the multiplexity of relationships in the Ainsty, urban wills show greater evidence for affectivity, which one would intuitively associate with long-term relationships. It is possible that enthusiastic demonstrations of affectivity in urban wills could indicate not only greater prevalence of movable wealth, but also a sort of coping mechanism used by urban people, especially women, trying to deal with a society in flux, typified by frequent mobility and higher mortality.²⁸

The structure of the individual's social network may be classified according to *size, density, degree of connection, centrality, and clusters*.²⁹ The numerical size of a network is again self-explanatory, although it is important to note that since social anthropologists calculate the other structural components of networks as a proportion of size, all of these ratios will be altered when the size changes.³⁰ Size is the most fundamental, yet one of the most elusive structural aspects of the study of social networks. The numbers involved in analysing the complete network of an individual, from an egocentric point of view, are imposing. A network is composed of both primary and secondary (i.e. people an individual does not know directly, but with whom he or she could come into contact through an acquaintance) contacts, as well as actual and potential contacts. In any given situation, an individual may choose to communicate with certain members of his or her network rather than others; these others remain potential contacts, since they could have been chosen under different circumstances.³¹ It is thus more practical to study partial networks. Given the limitations of the medieval evidence, the partial networks examined will often be quite small, but, indeed, this makes analysis much

²⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 68v.

²⁸ Of course, more urban than rural women actually made wills, so the impression of emotional reticence could in fact be the effect of a preponderance of male wills, limited in scope by the custom of legitim, by which a third of the testator's property was reserved for his heir. The third with which the testament normally dealt was therefore to be dispersed for the good of the soul. M.M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England from the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the End of the Thirteenth Century*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 6 (Toronto, 1963), pp. 292-95.

²⁹ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 28-45.

³⁰ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 35-37.

³¹ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 35-7. The listing of witnesses at the end of a medieval testament forms a good example, given that the witnesses chosen must often have been a matter of convenience as testamentary strategy.

more practicable, as wills, for example, provide networks with ready-made boundaries.

Density and *degree of connection* are both related to the extent to which members of an individual's network are in contact with one another. Density deals with the potential of the members of a network to communicate, while degree of connection measures the average number of actual transactions or communications.³² Network density is one of the prime indicators used to describe social groups, just as multiplexity is one of the most frequently studied aspects of individual relationships. Researchers, including medievalists, have observed a close correlation between level of multiplexity and network density.³³

As with high multiplexity, high density is likely to occur in smaller, relatively isolated communities where most people are likely to know one another. It has been observed that high network density often leads to shared values, as we shall see below, in the discussion of devotional practices. If ego is aware that the individuals with whom he or she interacts communicate with one another in turn, a degree of constraint is placed on behaviour and perhaps even thoughts.³⁴ As we shall see, therefore, witnesses, executors and supervisors are precisely the individuals who contributed to increased network density and degree of connection. They were also in the best position to be aware of the nuances of the social networks in which they and the testator were enmeshed at the time of the drawing up of the will, and perhaps even influenced the behaviour of the testator.

Ainsty wills demonstrate a contrast with those of the parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York, where there was very little overlap manifested in the individual beneficiaries, executors, supervisors and witnesses named by testators, so that it is difficult to tell to what extent the individuals named in Michael-le-Belfrey wills were in contact with one another, independent of the testator.³⁵ On the one hand, this is in keeping with modern studies that have maintained that both multiplexity

³² Density and degree of connection may be described using mathematical formulae. Density (D) = $(100 * Na) / (\frac{1}{2} N * (N-1)) \%$, where Na = total actual number of links excluding those with ego, and N = total number persons in network excluding ego. Degree (d) = $(2 * Na) / N$. Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 39-40. The term 'network density' tends to be used generically to describe both density and degree of connection.

³³ Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', p. 232.

³⁴ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 37-40.

³⁵ Hamblen, 'Testamentary Giving', p. 47.

and density are low in urban situations; people living in cities will have large numbers of single-stranded, or uniplex, relationships, and keep the various spheres or activity fields of their lives separate, so that their acquaintances are less likely to know one another.³⁶ On the other hand, most of these studies have focused on modern, post-industrial cities. In this sense, the York findings are surprising, given the parochial nature of medieval and early modern urban life.³⁷ We know that a high level of occupational zoning and spinster clustering took place in York; individuals who followed similar occupations living close together would have fostered social cohesion and network density.³⁸ It is possible that the apparent low network density of the urban parish was related to the mobility of its inhabitants.

Centrality is a measure of how accessible, in terms of paths of communication, an individual is within a particular network. A person who is more central will know more people in any given network and will therefore normally hold greater influence than other, less connected members of the same network. Central people in the Ainsty may be represented in the testamentary evidence as popular witnesses, testators or beneficiaries. Thomas Hornsy, vicar of Acaster Malbis during the 1460s, must have been quite central, as three out of seven testators during the 1450s, 1460s and 1470s named him. Two men chose him as a witness and one as an executor. Institutions can also be central, and some sociologists have endeavoured to count institutions as nodes in human networks.³⁹ As will be discussed below, York Minster featured as a beneficiary in a large proportion of Ainsty wills. This act of remembrance connected those who bequeathed to the cathedral to all the urban dwellers and other inhabitants of the hinterland who did so as well.

Clusters are branches of networks with a greater degree of connection and higher density than the rest of the network—the members of clusters are linked

³⁶ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 123-24; J.C. Mitchell, *Social Networks in Urban Situations: Analyses of Personal Relationships in Central African Towns* (Manchester, 1969); J. Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration in early modern London', in P. Clark and D. Souden (eds.), *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), pp. 110-11.

³⁷ J. Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', pp. 110-11.

³⁸ H. Swanson, 'Craftsmen and Industry in Late Medieval York' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 1980), pp. 453-62; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 312-18; C. Beattie, 'Women without Husbands in Late Fourteenth- and Early Fifteenth-Century York' (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of York, 1996), pp. 42-53; J. Boulton, 'Neighbourhood migration', p. 113.

³⁹ Barnes, *Social Networks*, p. 23.

together more tightly and know one another better.⁴⁰ The clusters most often featured in testaments include members of kin groups, whether the testator's own, or two or more members of another family or even household that he or she had chosen to remember. For instance, Thomas Appleton of Acomb made bequests to both John Wightman and John's son Thomas in 1436.⁴¹ Groups of servants or individuals sharing a similar occupation also constitute potential clusters. Richard Basseley of Bilbrough grouped together his bequests to his servants and the staff in his household: a sergeant, his cook, and two servants received various garments and domestic items, including tunics and beds, as well as pay increases, in 1393-94.⁴² Grouped bequests and witness lists thus provide clues to clusters within the actual social network of a testator.

2.3 Probate and Testamentary Evidence in the Ainsty: an Overview

The following paragraphs describe the will-makers of the Ainsty by outlining the geographical and occupational distribution of men and women. In order to locate Ainsty wills, I searched a computerized database of medieval Exchequer and Prerogative Court wills at the Borthwick Institute for Archives. The database covers the years from 1389 to 1514, and is based on the printed *Index of Wills in the York Registry* published by the Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Additional testamentary material is filed with the probate registers of the Dean and Chapter of York Minster.⁴³ I searched a total of forty-three places in the wapentake of the Ainsty that featured in the 1379 poll-tax returns for the West Riding (**Table 3**). Sixteen of these settlements were parish towns, fifteen were smaller settlements assessed together with the parish towns, and eight were under the jurisdiction of other parishes, either in York or outside the Ainsty.

⁴⁰ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 43-44.

⁴¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 460v. Appleton actually left a larger cash bequest to Thomas Wightman than he did to his own grandchildren.

⁴² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 68v.

⁴³F. Collins (ed.), *Index of Wills in the York Registry, 1389-1514*, YASRS 6 (1889), *idem*, *Index of Wills from the Dean and Chapter's Court at York, 1321 to 1636; with Appendix 1524 to 1724*, YASRS 38 (1907).

Table 3: Summary of Ainsty Probate Records c.1321-1514

Sources: F. Collins (ed.), *Index of Wills in the York Registry, 1389-1514*, YASRS 6 (1889);
idem, *Index of Wills from the Dean and Chapter's Court at York, 1321 to 1636*, YASRS 38
(1907). Totals for parish towns exclude totals for satellite vills.

Key: T = testament PA = Probate Act @ = Administration INV = Inventory
D/C = from Dean and Chapter probate registers AP = Acomb peculiar jurisdiction

VILL	TOTAL PROBATE POPULATION	LAYMEN	WOMEN	CLERICS
Acaster Malbis, parish town	20	11T, 4PA, 1@	1T, 1PA, 1@	1
-Naburn	3	3T	0	0
Acaster Selby, pa. Stillingfleet	8	2T, 4PA, 2@	0	0
Acomb, pa. town	3	1T, 1AP INV	0	1D/C T
-Knapton	4	3T, 1PA	0	0
-Holgate	1	1D/C INV	0	0
Askham Bryan, pa. town	0	0	0	0
Askham Richard, pa. town	10	2T, 2PA, 1@	1T, 1PA	3T
Bilbrough, pa. town	7	5T, 1PA, 1@	0	0
Bilton, pa. town, Lib. St. Peter	12	6T, 1PA, 1@	1T, 1PA	2T
-Bickerton	2	2T	0	0
-Sinningthwaite	4	1T	2T	1T
-Tockwith	8	6T, 1PA	1T	0
Bishopthorpe, pa. town	15	3T, 4PA, 2@	1T, 1PA	4D/C T
Bolton Percy, pa. town	9	4T, 3@	1@	1T
-Appleton Roebuck	7	4T, 2PA, 1@	0	0
-Colton	5	3T, 2PA	0	0
-Hornington	1	1PA	0	0
-Nun Appleton	3	1T, 1@	1T	0
-Paddockthorpe/ Pallathorpe	0	0	0	0
-Steeton	0	0	0	0
Copmanthorpe, pa. St. Mary B'phill Jr., part in Lib. St. Peter	4	3D/C T, 1 D/C PA	0	1D/C T
Dringhouses, pa. St. Mary B'phill Sr., Holy Trinity Micklegate, Acomb, Lib. St. Peter	14	9T, 1PA, 3@	1T	0
Healaugh, pa. town	11	7T, 1@	1T, 1@	1T
Long Marston, pa. town	15	7T, 2PA, 1@	0	4T, 1PA
-Angram	1	1T	0	0

-Hutton Wandesley	2	1T	0	1PA
Middlethorpe, pa. St Mary Bishophill Sr.	15	5T, 5PA, 1@	2T, 1PA, 1@	0
Moor Monkton, pa. town	9	3T, 1PA, 3@	0	1@, 1D
-Hessay	3	3T	0	0
-Scagglethorpe	1	1	0	0
Nether Poppleton, pa. town	1	0	0	1
Rufforth, pa. town	7	6	1	0
Catterton, pa. Tadcaster	3	3T	0	0
Oxton, pa. Tadcaster	0	0	0	0
Oulston	0	0	0	0
Thorp Arch, pa. town	5	3T, 1@	0	1T
Upper Poppleton, pa. town	1	0	0	1D/C PA
Walton, pa. town	5	2T, 1@	0	1T, 1PA
Wighill, pa. town	3	2T	0	1T
-Easedike	4	4T	0	0
-Follifoot	1	0	0	1T
Wilstrop, pa. Kirk Hammerton	0	0	0	0

When I began doing wills research for this thesis, the first thing that struck me was the small scale of the testamentary evidence available for Ainsty parishes in comparison to those of the city of York.⁴⁴ For my Master's dissertation, I examined women's wills from the wealthy urban parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, part of the peculiar jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter, whose registers survive from 1321. Sixty-seven fourteenth- and fifteenth-century women's wills survive for this parish alone. This represents 40% of the testamentary population of that parish, a far larger proportion than that obtaining among their counterparts in the hinterland.⁴⁵

In this respect, the profile of Ainsty testators is typically rural, with its will-making population strongly biased in favour of men. Men make up about 90% of a total testamentary population, including clerics, of 297, and nearly 89% of the lay population.⁴⁶ Only twenty-nine women make an appearance in the probate records for the Ainsty. Several wives' and widows' husbands also appeared in the records. Eight additional women identified themselves as widows, and two as wives, but their husbands do not appear in the records. These percentages are close to the male to female ratios in the York Exchequer Court as a whole over the fifteenth

⁴⁴ Although wills technically pertained to the transfer of landed property, while testaments covered moveable goods, I follow convention here and use the generic term 'will' for simplicity.

⁴⁵ Research has demonstrated the qualitative differences between urban and rural wills (both men's and women's), especially the emphasis on land and agrarian goods in rural wills as opposed to a greater variety of household chattels in urban wills. An exception is the wills of the rural and hinterland elite, who understandably had more luxury goods to distribute. Since women tended to bequeath moveable goods rather than real property, their more robust presence in urban wills is perhaps understandable. C.M. Barron, 'Introduction: The Widow's World', in C.M. Barron and A.F. Sutton (eds.), *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500* (London, 1994), p. xvii; M. Howell, 'The Properties of Marriage in Late Medieval Europe: Commercial Wealth and the Creation of Modern Marriage', in I. Davis, M. Muller, and S. Rees Jones (eds.), *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, *International Medieval Research* 11 (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 38, 45-6; Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity in Later Medieval England: a Material Culture Perspective', paper given for the Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household conference, Fordham University, New York City, 13 March, 2005; Sheehan, *Will in Medieval England*, p. 283; M. Howell, 'Fixing Movables: Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai', *Past and Present* 150 (1996): 26-45; K.J. Lewis, 'Women, Testamentary Discourse and Life-Writing in Later Medieval England', in N.J. Menuge (ed.), *Medieval Women and the Law* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 72; C. Richardson, 'Household Objects and Domestic Ties', in C. Beattie, A. Maslakovic, and S. Rees Jones (eds.), *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c. 850- c. 1550: Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body* (Turnhout, 2003), p. 437.

⁴⁶ These figures include records in the Dean and Chapter probate registers: eleven men, including seven clerics.

century.⁴⁷ Only 211 men and fifteen women actually have wills that survived; the rest are administrations of the goods of those who died intestate, probate acts and a small number of inventories.⁴⁸

Fourteen places have only men in their probate records for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and a further three, Askham Bryan, Wilstrop and Steeton, returned no results at all. Although Wilstrop and Steeton are counted among the number of deserted medieval villages, both settlements were still in existence until the late fifteenth century, so their depopulation on the impetus of their lords cannot entirely explain the complete absence of wills. Copmanthorpe and Upper Poppleton were both in the York parish of St. Mary Bishophill Jr., and thus fell under the peculiar jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter of York Minster.⁴⁹ Acomb, Holgate and Bishophorpe also have some documents, including inventories, among the Dean and Chapter's probate registers, while a single inventory survives for Acomb's own peculiar jurisdiction.⁵⁰

Although we saw that many women were present in the 1379 poll tax returns, the only Ainsty settlement notable for its female testamentary presence in the late middle ages was Tadcaster, with seven women. It was a market-town from the late thirteenth century, and the parish is only partly in the Ainsty, at its south western edge. The other eleven places have one to three female testators. If the search is extended further west and south to include the entire New Deanery of the Ainsty, the only other locale with a significant number of women appearing in the probate records is Cawood, an important centre of ecclesiastical administration. It is thus surprising that some of the most populous, wealthiest and most occupationally diverse Ainsty parish towns in 1379 are also among those for which

⁴⁷ P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Mortality and Economic Change in the Diocese of York, 1390-1514', *Northern History* 24 (1988): 39.

⁴⁸ This figure includes the Dean and Chapter records, all of which pertained to men. Of these eleven records, one is an inventory and two are probate acts. The rest are testaments.

⁴⁹ The Dean and Chapter probate records for the Ainsty are broken down as follows. Only four men's records survive for Copmanthorpe before 1530, while Upper Poppleton produced only one clerical record. Those from Acomb and Bishophorpe also belonged to clerics. There are several also documents in the registers of both the Exchequer/Prerogative and the Dean and Chapter courts pertaining to the parishes of St. Mary Bishophill, Jr. and Sr., the mother parishes for some Ainsty vills, and some of those that were examined demonstrated connections with Ainsty individuals.

⁵⁰ The inventories are printed in P.M. Stell and L. Hampson (trans. and eds.) 'Probate Inventories of the York Diocese 1350-1500', Unpublished typescript (York, 2003).

no women's wills survive, since the opposite was the case within the city walls. These settlements include Walton, Thorp Arch, Oxton and Oulston. The latter two were assessed together with Catterton. This discrepancy underlines the need to integrate several different types of sources when studying medieval societies, especially women.

There are fourteen men's and three women's wills that were made by members of elite families introduced in Chapter One. The knights' wills were concentrated in Wighill and Healaugh, which were located about two miles apart, and those of the esquires in Bilbrough, Bilton, Marston, Steeton (parish Bolton Percy), Tadcaster and Walton.⁵¹ As for the elite women, one was Sybil Malbis, the widow of a knight, Sir Richard Malbis, of Acaster Malbis, the other Lady Elizabeth Woodcock of Nun Appleton (parish Bolton Percy), probably also a widow who had retired to the nunnery there.⁵² With the exception of Steeton and Nun Appleton, all of these were parish towns, clustered across the centre of the Ainsty. Walton was the seat of the prominent Fairfax family, which has already been mentioned in connection with the deliberate depopulations at Steeton.

Each of the settlements just mentioned (again excepting Steeton and Nun Appleton) boasted a number of different occupations in the tax returns. Healaugh was notably populous and wealthy, and was home to the only merchant in my sample who made a will. It may be suggested that the presence of these lords together with religious houses in the vicinity fostered prosperity by attracting tenants to their manors (as to a central place) and creating demand for servants, labourers and artisans on their estates.

The majority of men who named their occupations were husbandmen, who, nonetheless, often lived quite close to the city, as at Dringhouses and Acomb.

⁵¹ John Depeden, knight, Lord of Healaugh, made a will in 1402. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 88v-89v. Brian and John de Stapleton, knights, based at Wighill, made wills in 1394 and 1454, respectively. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fos. 69v-70r and Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 313r-314r. Bilbrough was home to two esquires: Richard Bassey (d. 1393) and John Norton (d. 1493). BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 68v and Reg. 23, Rotherham, fos. 358v-359v. Other gentry families in the testamentary records include Dayville of Bilton and Thwaites of Marston. Henry Vavasour, esquire, was buried in Hazlewood Chapel at Tadcaster in the mid-fifteenth century. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 262r. Two men of the Fairfax family, Guy (d. c.1446) and William, Lord of Walton (d. c.1453), were also esquires. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 143v and fo. 279v.

⁵² It is possible that Lady Elizabeth had lived locally prior to her retirement, as the only other churches she mentions in her will are the parish church of Bolton Percy and York Minster itself. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 574v.

Similarly, most women who named their husbands' occupations were wives of husbandmen, well-to-do peasant agriculturalists. There are also signs of some industry. For example, Agnes Milner of Askham Richard, whose probate administration dates from 1455, was married to Thomas, a miller, as his surname suggests, for he left two mills to their son William in his will of 1453.⁵³

Most of the more specialised artisans, mainly practitioners of clothing trades, resided in Dringhouses, a vill only a mile or so outside of York, within easy reach of the city, where demand for artisans' work would have been great.⁵⁴ There were fewer women who can be clearly shown to have been married to artisans: Emma Makebliss of Dringhouses, for example, was the wife of a weaver, Ralph, who also has a will: they paid 6d in 1379, the level at which artisans were typically assessed.⁵⁵

It is rare to be able to match testators with poll tax payers because of the chronological gap between 1379 and the mainly fifteenth-century wills, but Matilda Wawne of Acaster Malbis, who has a probate administration for 1408, appears in 1379 paying 4d, the minimum amount.⁵⁶ There are, however, more instances where descendants of those taxed in 1379 were mentioned in wills even if they were not testators themselves. Richard Greneake, a carpenter of Thorp Arch, was assessed with his wife in 1379. More than sixty years later, Alice Greneake received a bequest in the will of William Leventon, the vicar of Thorp Arch.⁵⁷ Clues such as this suggest a moderate degree of residential stability over a generation or more even within a single vill. The relative difficulty involved in matching individuals from the poll tax returns with wills may reflect the paucity of that source from the fourteenth century. When population turnover did occur, whether due to mobility or mortality, these circumstances might nonetheless facilitate changes in social networks even when members of several families, usually higher status, remained within the community for generations.

⁵³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 285r and 313r.

⁵⁴ H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 454, 460-1; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 616r and 649v; C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381. Part 3: Wiltshire to Yorkshire*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series 37 (Oxford, 2005), p. 421.

⁵⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 578r; Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 423.

⁵⁷ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 421; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 673r.

2.4 The Household and Beyond: Social Networks from the Ainsty Testamentary Evidence

While the above interactional criteria and structural components of networks are crucial concepts, which will be used throughout this thesis, it is perhaps also useful to think of structures in medieval societies as the ‘end results’ of processes or chains of interactions. Structures such as the household or parish provided the frameworks, contexts and opportunities for social relationships, and can be viewed as stages upon which networks were formed and maintained—or, in the language of social anthropology, activity fields. By viewing the household, guild, open fields and pastures, village, manor, parish or market as activity fields, we can begin to define these terms according to some of the social relations by which they were characterized, and then determine which classes of activity fields were the most significant for different types of social interaction.

The following sections discuss social relationships in terms of activity fields, examining firstly ties formed through family, marriage and household; secondly geographical proximity and landholding, then work relationships and occupation, and finally relationships fostered by ecclesiastical institutions and lay devotion. The implications of status, mobility and lifecycle are interwoven throughout the discussion of the quantitative and qualitative, affective aspects of these relationships. While the categories of **kinship, household, neighbourhood, work and devotion** are artificial and arbitrary, they are necessary for the sake of organisation in this thesis. Nonetheless, quite apart from the problem of whether these broad areas cover all types of social relations adequately, it is difficult to discuss them separately, as they were often intertwined. The way people appeared in taxation lists could have as much to do with family and lifecycle as with landholding or occupation, for example. The choices people made regarding their social participation did not occur in a vacuum. The choice of burial place inscribed in testaments emphasizes the way in which the activity fields of family and socio-economic status as well as lay piety were interlinked through a culture of commemoration. Marriage choice similarly linked the activity fields of work and church with status.

2.4.1 Marriage, Kinship and Household

Much recent writing on the topic of the medieval household reveals debate and seemingly endless possibilities as to what the household actually was.⁵⁸ To mention one of many possible interpretations, Bennett has argued that the peasant household, the type with which we will largely be dealing, was often based on conjugality, and could consist of nuclear kin, and, less frequently, extended kin, as well live-in servants and apprentices. She contends that separate, discreet households were normally founded upon marriage.⁵⁹ This model was subject to many variations and nuances, however, and the early-modernist Diana O'Hara has warned against misusing outdated anthropological models for describing kinship and marriage processes. Early modern 'kinship terminologies' have been described in older studies as 'loose' or 'fluid' and the emphasis has been placed on biological, genealogical kinship, while more recent scholars explore the ways in which the language of kinship could be employed to encompass affines, neighbours, relations arising out of godparenthood, and other classes of 'fictive' or 'surrogate' kin.⁶⁰

Bowdon has also recently argued for a broad view of both kinship and the household, suggesting that medieval women, in particular, may have had different concepts of 'relatedness'. Similarly, Miranda Chaytor has rightly observed that kinship should not be 'artificially detached' from family and household relations.⁶¹ Kermode's work on northern merchants has suggested that some servants and apprentices were considered household members even after they ceased to be employed, and this occasionally occurred in Ainsty (non-mercantile) households as well as in the city, as when John Wakefield of Easedike gave lengths of cloth to Margaret, '*quond[am] famule mee*'.⁶² In the case of this thesis, the household is a

⁵⁸ See, for example, C. Beattie, A. Maslokovic and S.R. Rees Jones (eds.), *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe c.850-c.1550: Managing Power, Wealth and the Body* (Turnhout, 2003); S. Rees Jones, F. Riddy, C. Beattie, C. Carpenter, M. Holford, L. McClure, S. Williams, J. Rimmer, J. Goldberg, B. Hamblen, I. Davis, R. Moss, W. Tai, B. Kane, K. McLean, 'The Later Medieval English Urban Household', *History Compass* 5:1 (2007): 99-145.

⁵⁹ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 48, 54-64, 100, 129-136.

⁶⁰ D. O'Hara, 'Ruled by my friends': aspects of marriage in the diocese of Canterbury, c. 1540-1570', *Continuity and Change* 6:1 (1991): 9-11, notes pp. 33-36.

⁶¹ M. Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *History Workshop Journal* 10 (1980): 29.

⁶² J. Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival: Family and Friends in Late Medieval English Towns', *Journal of Family History* 24:1 (1999): 11.

challenging concept to define and to reconstruct, due to the paucity and ambiguity of the evidence.

If we consider Bennett's emphasis on conjugality, however, marriage might be viewed as a transaction that opened up a new activity field, the household, for the individuals involved.⁶³ Although in the case of wills, we are seeing a particular household in transition, perhaps even at the end of its life, rather than at its formation, it is important to realise that social networks with various interactional and structural characteristics both within and outside of the household and local community functioned to bring marriage partners together. Marriages in both town and country were often geographically exogamous.⁶⁴ The institution of life-cycle service often introduced exogamous partners to one another, especially in an urban milieu, but also, as we shall see, in the Ainsty.⁶⁵ Occupation was another factor: Kermode has noted that urban merchants, although usually intermarrying within the same class and occupational group, relied on immigration to bolster their ranks.⁶⁶ In the Ainsty, prosperous peasant agriculturalists from different vills, as well as members of the gentry, also intermarried.

Geographical exogamy is, however, sometimes difficult to discern in testamentary evidence lower down the social scale than among the gentry.⁶⁷ There are, nonetheless, a few examples of marriages between natives of different villages. Alice, the daughter of William Barnard of Middlethorpe, married one of the Egles of neighbouring Bishopthorpe; both were prosperous, residentially stable families whose ties lasted more than one generation.⁶⁸ Joan, wife of Adam Fox of Bilton, left cash to the perpetual vicar of the parish of Healaugh, and Thomas Milner of

⁶³ For marriage as a transaction, see the recent collection of essays, I. Davis, M. Muller, S. Rees Jones (eds.), *Love, Marriage and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, (Turnhout, 2003). See also Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 58; F. Pedersen, "Romeo and Juliet of Stonegate": a Medieval Marriage in Crisis', *Borthwick Papers* 87 (1995): 1-31; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 238, 245, 290-91, 295-96. It must be remembered that conjugal households also included some clerical households, which will also be discussed in this chapter.

⁶⁴ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 212-13; Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 129, 179-80; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 97; M.M. Sheehan, 'The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register', in J.K. Farge (ed.), *Marriage, Family and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies* (Toronto, 1996), pp. 63-4.

⁶⁵ See Chapter Three. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 212-13.

⁶⁶ Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival', pp. 5-8.

⁶⁷ Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*, pp. 129, 178-81.

⁶⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 635r; Prob. Reg. 5, 52v-53r.

Askham Richard left his wife, Agnes, *her* lands and tenements in Stillingfleet, on the opposite bank of the river Ouse.⁶⁹ Similarly, John Mawnby of Acaster Malbis gave lands in Wheldrake (wapentake of Ouse and Derwent) to his wife in 1483.⁷⁰ The former example could be an indication of Agnes's previous residence prior to marriage, as it is likely that more women than men in medieval England left their birthplaces to live with their spouses.⁷¹ On the other hand, Mawnby's lands in Wheldrake were specifically part of his own inheritance.

The social unit of the 'household', then, provides a starting point for discussion of both interactional criteria and network structure, which measures may help at least partially to recover an idea of what the household and kinship were like in the Ainsty. Despite the fact that the household was usually the arena in which the last will and testament was drawn up, it is elusive as an activity field in the probate evidence, not least because it is not always clear who the members of a particular household were. Some of the following discussion is therefore framed in hypothetical terms, but the manner in which kin and servants are mentioned in wills (particularly those of the elite) provide ways of imagining the household that will be fleshed out in Chapter Three.

Whether or not all household members always shared the same residence, the relations between members would be necessarily multiplex, since they could know each other as kin, workmates, fellow parishioners, and so on. They were also linked legally and financially, given that poll tax payers within a household were normally assessed together. Transactional content would be highly varied, including exchanges of affection, sex, assistance, conversation, and food and drink, among other things. Felicity Riddy has suggested the household as a space for shared reading and learning, as well as eating, sleeping, working and socializing.⁷² York cause papers, along with contemporary literature, give evidence for sexual activity, marriage vows, and other types of social exchange taking place within and around the house, although certainly not all of the participants would have been

⁶⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 285r, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 73r.

⁷⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 82v.

⁷¹ Razi, 'Interfamilial Ties', p. 378; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 295.

⁷² F. Riddy, 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text', *Speculum* 71 (1996): 66-86.

considered permanent household members.⁷³ Some wills and the few inventories surviving for the Ainsty support the image of multiple people using space in multiple ways. The freehold house of John Hall of Holgate, husbandman, included in the hall a variety of tables and benches, along with some tubs. The hall was fit to entertain in, with a moderate level of display: a decorated dorser, seven cushions and a banker, and brass candlesticks. The chamber and storeroom, appraised together, contained a good supply of bedding, linens and tableware, including pewter items. The presence of livestock, grain in the fields and a fair amount of agricultural equipment suggests a need to employ servants or labour.⁷⁴

As we shall see, the testamentary evidence suggests that directional flow between spouses was generally complementary, if not equal. As elsewhere in England, widows and widowers performed the requests of their late spouse's wills.⁷⁵ Alice Kitson of Acaster Malbis fulfilled her late husband's desire for masses, and John Gell, Jr., of Tockwith dealt with his wife's burial in 1482.⁷⁶ In the case of other members of the household, wills are less forthcoming. They do, however, give an idea of the power and authority exercised by household heads, which in turn suggests that directional flow would likely favour the householder (and, if applicable, his or her spouse). Less powerful members of the household, including children and servants, would probably have been more likely to honour his or her requests than vice versa.⁷⁷

Servants' dependence on their masters for food, shelter, wages, surrogate kinship and support within the larger community probably meant that servants invested more, in the way of good service, in their relationships with their masters

⁷³ See Chapter Three. Goldberg, *Women in England*, pp. 103, 114, 215, 219-22.

⁷⁴ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 247-8.

⁷⁵ E.J. Carlson, 'Introduction: The Historical Value of the Ely Consistory Probate Records', in E. Leedham-Green and R. Rodd (eds.), *Index of the Probate Records of the Consistory Court of Ely 1449-1858 Part I: A-E* (London, 1994), p. xxi; Helmholz, 'Married Women's Wills', pp. 166, 169; A.J. Kettle, 'My Wife Shall Have It': Marriage and Property in the Wills and Testaments of Later Medieval England', in E. Craik (ed.), *Marriage and Property: Women and Marital Customs in History*, 2nd edn. (Aberdeen, 1991), pp. 89, 100-1.

⁷⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 140; Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 37v.

⁷⁷ For assessments of the authority of (male) household heads, see F. Riddy, 'Looking Closely: Authority and Intimacy in the Late Medieval Urban Home', in M.C. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York, 2003), pp. 212-28; C. Beattie, 'Governing Bodies: Law Courts, Male Householders, and Single Women in Late Medieval England', in C. Beattie, A. Maslakovic and S. Rees Jones (eds.), *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c.850-c.1550: Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 199-220; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 66-7.

than vice versa.⁷⁸ Brian de Stapleton of Wighill, a member of the local gentry, bestowed numerous gowns, almost as livery, upon his servants and retainers in 1394.⁷⁹ This manner of displaying power would have bound his inferiors to him and his family. Ainsty householders, elite and otherwise, made efforts to maintain status and good order in their households after their decease, sometimes attaching conditions to bequests of household goods and cash. John Jonkyn of Acaster Malbis set aside the residue of his will for his widow to maintain (*ad exhibitionem*) their *male* children during their minority.⁸⁰ This concern with status and the male line may have had something to do with the family's acquisition of land in York itself.⁸¹ By the early sixteenth century, at least one member of the family, Richard, was established in the city as a shipman, while retaining an interest in Acaster Malbis lands and ties with kin who still resided there.⁸²

On the other hand, in times of labour scarcity, employers would have been similarly dependent upon their servants, as demonstrated by complaints involving violations of labour legislation in the post-Black Death period, indicating that directional flow could sometimes favour servants.⁸³ More generally, testators made vulnerable by illness and simple loneliness, particularly in the case of widows and widowers, found themselves reliant on servants as well as kin and neighbours, although such reliance did not preclude choice or affectivity.⁸⁴

Frequency and duration of interaction between household members would both be high. The different but complementary tasks completed by men and women did not prevent the two sexes from being in contact with one another during the day.⁸⁵ Husband and wife, children, servants, and any other co-residents

⁷⁸ Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival', p. 11.

⁷⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fos. 69v-70r. The Anglo-Norman testament describes the gowns as '*de le meyns*', which I have interpreted to mean 'of lesser quality' ('*meins*', or less) but could also be a mangled spelling of '*maisnie*', or household or retinue. K. Urwin (ed.), *A Short Old French Dictionary for Students* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 54, 57.

⁸⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 208v.

⁸¹ See Chapter Four.

⁸² W. Brown (ed.), *Yorkshire Deeds Vol. II*, YASRS 50 (1913), p. 4.

⁸³ Goldberg, *Women in England*, pp. 91, 176-9.

⁸⁴ Beattie, 'Women without Husbands', p. 40; Barron, 'Introduction: The Widow's World', pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

⁸⁵ Goldberg, 'Public and Private', pp. 76-82; J. Grenville, 'Houses and Households in Late Medieval England: An Archaeological Perspective', in J. Wogan-Browne et al. (eds.), *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain. Essays for Felicity Riddy*, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 3 (Turnhout, 2000), p. 311.

had to work together continuously to ensure that the household functioned properly.⁸⁶ Children in rural areas, including the West Riding of Yorkshire, tended to stay at home and assist their parents longer than urban children, with the effect of increasing both frequency and duration of interaction in these households.⁸⁷ Even in York's immediate hinterland, as in Askham Richard, for example, Johanna, daughter of John Stephenson was apparently still living in her widowed father's household. In Nether Poppleton, John Pynder still lived with his parents. In Bilbrough, Robert Motour and his wife had both a servant, William, and their daughter, Constancia, living in their household.⁸⁸

Moreover, although servants might only be employed in a household for a year or more, they were integrated enough into the household to be remembered in wills, as were children who had left the natal home.⁸⁹ Affectivity brought about in part by frequency and duration of interaction was commonly symbolized by bequests of the very material of the household, particularly domestic objects the recipient had once used. The vowess Alice Thwaite bequeathed one of her sons a 'feder bed which he lyed on', and her married daughter another featherbed 'lyeng in my house at York'.⁹⁰ In this way, the testator simultaneously preserved his or her own household (whether in reality or symbolically by inserting his or her possessions into the households of others) and acknowledged the fluidity of the system, the formation of new households and the fact that one person might belong to several over the course of the life cycle.⁹¹ High frequency and duration of interaction within a household usually manifested in elite testaments, with householders like Richard Bassey of Bilbrough and Alice Thwaite rewarding those long in service with bequests. Although Alice bequeathed domestic items to a number of female servants, she singled out Isabel Marshall for her 'true and long service', leaving her a cluster of domestic items, including a mattress with two coverlets, a pair of sheets, a kettle and a 'litle brasse potte'.

⁸⁶ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 115-8

⁸⁷ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 165-7

⁸⁸ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 424-5.

⁸⁹ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 173-75

⁹⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 276.

⁹¹ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 144, 150-1, 170; Richardson, 'Household Objects and Domestic Ties', pp. 438-47.

Since no Ainsty testators can be identified as servants or former servants, it is difficult to determine from wills how members of a household interacted independently of a householder/testator. However, if the household is viewed as a self-contained, partial network (for the moment ignoring its connections with the outside world), it seems safe to assume that it would have a high density and degree of connection, as nearly all members would be in contact with one another, even if some members spent much of their time in the fields or workshop. Exceptions might include very large households, such as that of the crown or of the secular or ecclesiastic elite, or monastic houses, all of which would have featured occasionally absent household heads and changing configurations of visitors. These households would still have a high density, since that measure deals with potentialities, while the degree of connection might well be lower.⁹²

Testamentary evidence gives the impression of the householder being a central figure in the extended social network of the household. Manorial court records from elsewhere in England paint this picture, but these documents, like wills, are biased towards householders generally.⁹³ Nonetheless, he or she would often have been the most easily accessed by other members of the community, and other people would know each other through him or her, given the public prominence accorded especially to married male householders in terms of official duties.⁹⁴ However, when probate records survive for both a husband and a wife, as in the case of William and Alice Tomlinson of Bilton or Ralph and Isabelle Makebliss of Healaugh, we shall see that the female testaments in both cases reveal more links, including trade and occupational contacts, with the local community.

In the case of conjugal households, if assumptions about gendered public and private spheres are accurate, it may well be the case that sometimes the householder's wife was more accessible to other members of the household itself, especially if the husband was often absent.⁹⁵ A high proportion of urban women, both wives and widows, remembered servants who were or had been employed in their households.⁹⁶ In the Ainsty, however, the few wives (and widows who made

⁹² See C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, 1999).

⁹³ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 7-8, 21-36, 46.

⁹⁴ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 104.

⁹⁵ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 116-19.

⁹⁶ Hamblen, 'Testamentary Giving', pp. 42-3, 60, 62-3, 65.

wills within days of their husbands in years of high mortality) made no bequests to individuals specified as servants. Robert and Joan Egle of Bishopthorpe drew up testaments in November and December of 1481, respectively, and only Robert made a bequest to his servant (*servienti meo*), John Hall, although it is of course possible that Hall had died in the meantime.⁹⁷

Similarly, although Adam Fox of Bilton had employed three servants in 1379, Joan, who had been Adam's widow for six years when she made a will in 1400, failed to specify any of her legatees as servants.⁹⁸ Among Ainsty women, then, mainly high status widows like Alice Thwaite, the vowess from Moor Monkton who still possessed a house in York, made personal bequests to household servants.⁹⁹ Elite male householders in the hinterland like Richard Basseley of Bilbrough and Brian de Stapleton of Wighill, who presumably would have often been engaged in duties away from their manors, managed to remember several servants and/or retainers in their wills along with their kin.¹⁰⁰ Other male testators, including clerics, slightly lower down on the social scale in the Ainsty, also often included servants, both male and female, in their wills.

On the other hand, servants themselves, especially adolescents with contacts in other houses, might enjoy central positions in some households. The more varied the servant's duties, the more likely he or she would be to come into more frequent contact with other household members. It is thus possible that female domestic servants were more highly connected than, say, a young male apprentice who occupied most of his day in the workshop. Evidence for the centrality of female servants within the community will be presented in Chapter Three.

If clusters formed within the household, they might be gendered, or based on shared occupation (e.g. service), conjugality or kinship. Testaments provide little evidence for kin-based clusters in households, as even when a testator mentions more than one member of the same family in his or her will, there is rarely any indication that the named individuals lived together under one roof. The

⁹⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 52v-53r.

⁹⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 42.

⁹⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 276.

¹⁰⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fos. 69v-70r.

way in which Richard Bassey of Bilbrough grouped his servants into a cluster in his will could have reflected reality. The 1379 poll tax returns hints at the existence of similar clustering involving servants. At Healaugh, certain kinds of servants, including those who worked in the kitchen and chamber of either Brian or Miles de Stapleton, were grouped together by the assessors.¹⁰¹ As we shall see in the next chapter, cause paper evidence suggests that certain households acted as foci for socialising.¹⁰² If this was indeed the case, perhaps clusters were more likely to form between rather than within households.

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Household is only one of several ways members of a kin group could be in contact with one another: neighbourhood ties, with groups of relatives residing within the same village or parish, could be just as important.¹⁰³ Indeed, it has been pointed out that multiple, varied individual ties within and across the categories of household and kinship were vital for holding society together. The occurrence of servants and other men and women socialising in the homes of their neighbours provides an illustration of this point. Different strands of a given kin group (not necessarily coterminous with 'household') may be pulled together from wills, tax returns and court records.¹⁰⁴ Members of the same kin group might very well be neighbours, especially in areas (unlike the Ainsty), that practiced partible inheritance, or in times of land shortage before the Black Death.¹⁰⁵

Fifteenth-century Ainsty testamentary evidence tells us that individuals belonging to the same kin group lived in the same village, at least, even if we do not know whether or not they were direct neighbours. The 1379 poll tax evidence suggests that relations did often live close by. In Dringhouses, for example, several householders and individuals with the surname Watson are listed in relatively close succession.¹⁰⁶ In Appleton, John Dycces Jr., John Dycces Sr., and William Dycces and his wife are each separated by several other households and individuals in the

¹⁰¹ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 424-5.

¹⁰² Goldberg (trans. and ed.), *Women in England*, pp. 99, 101-2, 103, 107-109, 114, 192.

¹⁰³ Razi, 'Interfamilial Ties', p. 369.

¹⁰⁴ The problems involved with the processes of nominal linkage are numerous, and have been debated by many scholars of historical demography and household formation. See J.M. Bennett, 'Spouses, Siblings and Surnames: Reconstructing Families from Medieval Village Court Rolls', *The Journal of British Studies* 23:1 (1983): 28, 36-43.

¹⁰⁵ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', p. 256; Razi, 'Interfamilial Ties', p. 378.

¹⁰⁶ '1379 Poll Tax', *YAJ* 7: 174-75.

listings.¹⁰⁷ Such relations based on kin and propinquity would, in all probability, have been multiplex with varied transactional content, frequent interaction and long duration, depending on socioeconomic status and tendency toward mobility.¹⁰⁸

The relative importance of kinship to ego differed according to gender, life cycle, status and perhaps, location. Kermode and others have noted wider kin recognition among urban populations than among rural people,¹⁰⁹ although Razi observed a correlation between large rural landholders and increased kin interaction in Halesowen.¹¹⁰ In the case of the Ainsty, the wills of the gentry and substantial agriculturalists (the men more so than their wives) included more frequent bequests and mentions of kin, but they also named more individuals overall. One characteristic of the wills of the gentry and prosperous agriculturalists is a more frequent use of the term *consanguinus/a meus/a*, which probably meant cousin, but may have referred to an unspecified kinsman or kinswoman. Brian Dayville of Bilton, a member of the middling gentry, named Guy Fairfax of Steeton as *consanguinum meum* in 1463.¹¹¹ Joan Fox of Bilton, who, although not a member of the gentry, stood out for her large number of rich bequests, referred to one Elizabeth as ‘*cognate mee*’.¹¹² John Hurtsky of Acaster Malbis, an affluent husbandman judging from the richness of his bequests and his burial in the choir of his parish church, remembered three men and a woman designated ‘*consanguineo/a meo/a*’.¹¹³ Perhaps members of higher status groups placed greater weight on kinship, especially with kin belonging to the same socio-

¹⁰⁷ ‘1379 Poll Tax’ YAJ 7: 177.

¹⁰⁸ Several scholars have tackled the question of the relative significance of the kin group in individual social networks over the course of the late medieval period. Bennett, for instance, has emphasised pledging assistance among family members before the Black Death. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 58. On the other hand, many court-record based studies of specific villages and manors have revealed an orientation towards the extra-familial. R.M. Smith, ‘Kin and Neighbours’, pp. 219-20, 225; Z. Razi, ‘Interfamilial ties and relationships in the medieval village: a quantitative approach employing manor-court rolls’, in Z. Razi and R. Smith (eds), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 369-91; K. Wrightson, ‘Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex 1500-1700’ in R.M. Smith (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 313-332.

¹⁰⁹ Kermode, ‘Sentiment and Survival’, p. 6.

¹¹⁰ Razi, ‘Interfamilial Ties’, pp. 373-74.

¹¹¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 290r.

¹¹² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 42r-v.

¹¹³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593r-594v.

economic strata.¹¹⁴ The greater emphasis on non-nuclear kin in higher status wills may also indicate a tendency for more substantial individuals to avoid migration, with the result that a greater proportion of the kin group would have remained in the same area, albeit one that could encompass more than one vill.

Much has been written about the quality of kin relations as derived from testamentary evidence, including otherwise uninformative administrations of goods.¹¹⁵ The naming of executors, supervisors and administrators in probate evidence has been observed to be a good guide to those individuals in whom testators placed the most trust. Those named invariably enjoyed close relationships with the testator and/or exhibited qualities of trustworthiness and good repute.¹¹⁶ A discussion of the affective nature of such relationships forms much of the content of the following paragraphs.

Spouses, immediate family (especially children, and particularly sons) and unrelated males, sometimes clerics, were thus among the most popular choices in the Ainsty for both men and women, as elsewhere in late medieval England and Europe (see Appendix Two).¹¹⁷ In Ainsty communities for which larger numbers of probate records survive, spouses far outnumbered other types of relationships when it came to the responsibility of setting the estates of the deceased in order. About two thirds of the individuals in Acaster Malbis and Bolton Percy named a spouse, while half did in Bishopthorpe. Widows who carried out the provisions in their late husbands' wills or administered their goods when they died intestate survived all twelve men in the probate records for Long Marston.

Remarriage seems to have nuanced, rather than complicated, the social networks involved in the choice of executors. Helen, the wife of Robert Lilley of Middlethorpe, was the former wife of Roger Goldesburgh.¹¹⁸ Although she designated Robert as her executor, she nominated her parochial chaplain as a

¹¹⁴ Punshon, 'Government and Political Society', pp. 68-74. See also C. Carpenter (ed.), *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 23-26.

¹¹⁵ M. Zell, 'Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century wills as historical sources', *Archives* 14:62 (1979): 67-74; Bowdon, 'Redefining Kinship', pp. 407-20; Howell, 'Fixing Movables', pp. 3-45.

¹¹⁶ P. Maddern, 'Friends of the Dead: Executors, Wills and Family Strategy in Fifteenth-Century Norfolk', in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 169-70.

¹¹⁷ See M.L. Zell, 'Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Wills', p. 67; Maddern, 'Friends of the Dead', pp. 169-70; R.E. Archer and B.E. Ferme, 'Testamentary Procedure with Special Reference to the Executrix', *Reading Medieval Studies* 15 (1989): 3-34.

¹¹⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. Bowet, fo. 370r.

supervisor in 1418. The implications of remarriage in general on Ainsty social networks are difficult to assess, as only a few cases of widowers marrying a second time can be traced. William Emonson of Askham Richard, blacksmith, requested burial next to his first wife in the parish church, trusting his second wife as executrix to fulfil this request.¹¹⁹ It is entirely possible that the two women had known each other in life.

The presence of reciprocity, or directional flow, is therefore key to understanding the choice of executor(s), especially when close kin were involved. The process of kinship was subjective and constantly changing through the interactions of its members. The issue of conjugal trust is raised in the testament of Thomas Northeby, drawn up in 1431: he publicly named his wife his only executor in the presence of more than four male witnesses, including the rector of the parish church of Moor Monkton.¹²⁰ This deathbed scene may well be representative of a dense local network that Northeby employed to publicise his choice of his wife as his representative, projecting the legacy of the couple outside the household. In cases such as this, choice of executor could often indicate affective ties between spouses, multiplexity, frequency and duration of interaction. On the other hand, perhaps he exploited this dense network, in which all the witnesses were known to one another, in order to ensure that his wife would better carry out his wishes.

Spouses were not, of course, the only kin chosen to execute Ainsty wills. Thomas Copeland of Dringhouses made his daughter his executor and gave the residue of his goods to her and her children in 1490.¹²¹ William Tankard of Acaster Malbis chose an interesting strategy: he made his wife and daughter his executors, but directed two of his sons to supervise them.¹²² Perhaps Tankard

¹¹⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 197r. The lack of evidence for remarriage in the Ainsty is interesting, given the relatively larger number of 'dynastic' or 'core' families in Ainsty parishes, since a concern to keep wealth and prestige within 'dynasties' was a motivating factor for remarriage among the merchants of York. A higher rate of remarriage could lead to the creation and strengthening of horizontal links within social and occupational groups as opposed to vertical, patrilineal links within society, especially in cities. Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival', pp. 7-9; B.A. Hanawalt, 'Remarriage as an Option for Urban and Rural Widows in Late Medieval England', in S. Sheridan Walker (ed.), *Wife and Widow in Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 153-54. Such reinforcement of occupational links was accomplished in other ways in the Ainsty, however, and will be discussed in the next section.

¹²⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 600r.

¹²¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 385v-386r

¹²² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 369.

envisioned his family working together in harmony, as presumably the act of fulfilling his deathbed instructions would have served to bind these family members together. John Hurtsky of Acaster Malbis left the residue of his goods to the children of one son, naming another son his supervisor, but making his wife one of his executors.¹²³ Alice Thwaite, the vowess mentioned above, chose her sons and a daughter as executors, in addition to making them the primary focus of her bequests.¹²⁴ Occasionally the probate records reveal the maintenance (or activation) of kinship ties between York and the Ainsty, as when Richard Boy of York administered the goods of William Boy of Thorp Arch in 1442.¹²⁵

In other instances, the choice of executor may also be indicative of directional flow, centrality and status, especially when the executor enjoyed a higher status than the testator, or when someone was chosen to supervise the execution of the will. Such instances will be discussed below, but here it should be noted that it is important to determine the extent to which such choices only occurred in the absence of a spouse or other close kin, and whether such a choice might express an unbalanced directional flow, or interactions that are less frequent or have a shorter duration. For example, William Wright of Bishopthorpe named two men, including at least one relative, as his executors, despite the fact that his wife was still living.¹²⁶ Thomas Watson of Dringhouses and Richard Smith of Rufforth behaved in a similar manner.¹²⁷ Robert Dayville of Bilton named two chaplains as his executors, while leaving the residue of his estate to both them and his wife in 1471-72.¹²⁸

On the other hand, where other evidence, such as from a spouse's will, is available, it is clear that husbands and wives often named the same executors. Robert and Joan Eagle of Bishopthorpe both named William Barnard as their executor, for example.¹²⁹ From the will of William Barnard, Sr., we learn that the two families were linked by marriage. Barnard Sr.'s daughter, Alice, had married

¹²³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593v-594r.

¹²⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 276.

¹²⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 50v.

¹²⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 322v.

¹²⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 296r; Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 246v.

¹²⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 170.

¹²⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 52v-53r.

an Egle, so Robert may have been her son.¹³⁰ The existence of mutual acquaintances of the couple could have put pressure on the widow to fulfil the requests of the deceased, or, on a more positive note, given her (or him) much needed assistance. Other instances of husbands and wives naming the same individuals may indicate network density. In the case of Richard and Alice Kitson of Acaster Malbis, Richard's relations with John Bulmer and John Tanfield would have affected Alice's relations with Bulmer and Tanfield, while Bulmer and Tanfield's relations with one another could have affected their relations with Richard and Alice.¹³¹

Understandably, greater similarities between the wills of husband and widow seem to have occurred more often when the time span between their deaths was quite short. Sociologists who have studied married couples have sometimes concluded that they may be seen as representing a single social unit in a network.¹³² There are also a few cases of husbands and wives making joint testaments, making testaments in succession, or having their goods administered jointly, particularly during years of high mortality, as in 1438 and 1483.¹³³ Robert and Joan Eagle of Bishopthorpe, mentioned above, both have wills registered on the same folio in 1481,¹³⁴ and Roger and Emmot Newport of Bolton Percy had their goods administered jointly in 1484.¹³⁵

However, while husbands, and especially wives, made public, testamentary pronouncements of their familial connections, they also possessed individual social networks and behaved in different ways towards social relations that they shared. William and Alice Tomlinson of Bilton made separate wills, one day after the other, which appeared on the same folio of Probate Register 3 in 1438.¹³⁶ However, Alice's is much more detailed and features more witnesses, only two of which she shared with her husband (Fig. 5). Even given the custom of legitim in Yorkshire, by which the wills of most men disposed of their third only, and by which women were not restrained, the use of different witnesses is striking. The

¹³⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 635r.

¹³¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 140.

¹³² Barnes, *Social Networks*, p. 5.

¹³³ BIHR Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 505v; Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 205r and 226r.

¹³⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 52v-53r.

¹³⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 226r.

¹³⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

couple names even different clerical figures. William's testament seems more oriented toward ecclesiastical institutions and a few kin bequests, most likely to his brothers, while Alice handles other acquaintances and charity for the poor in addition to more personal bequests to their children and female kin. Some of these acquaintances of Alice's may be business contacts, as quantities of grain are bequeathed. Alice's gifts to their parish church also seem more personal, especially the towels she left to the high altar.¹³⁷

It is difficult to tell to what extent the two wills should be viewed as a unit, displaying aspects of the social networks of the couple, as it can be assumed, if all individuals named in both wills lived in Bilton, that they all would have been in contact with one another to a certain extent. It would be tantalizing to know the identities of the several men to whom Alice bequeaths grain, as some of their wives receive grain as well—she seems to have a tendency to remember couples and families as a unit, similar behaviour to that found in urban wills. John Jackson and his wife, two of Alice's beneficiaries, lived in nearby Hunsingore just outside of the Ainsty, and another legatee, John de Hale, was from the neighbouring village of Long Marston.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Pious bequests will be further discussed later in this chapter.

¹³⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

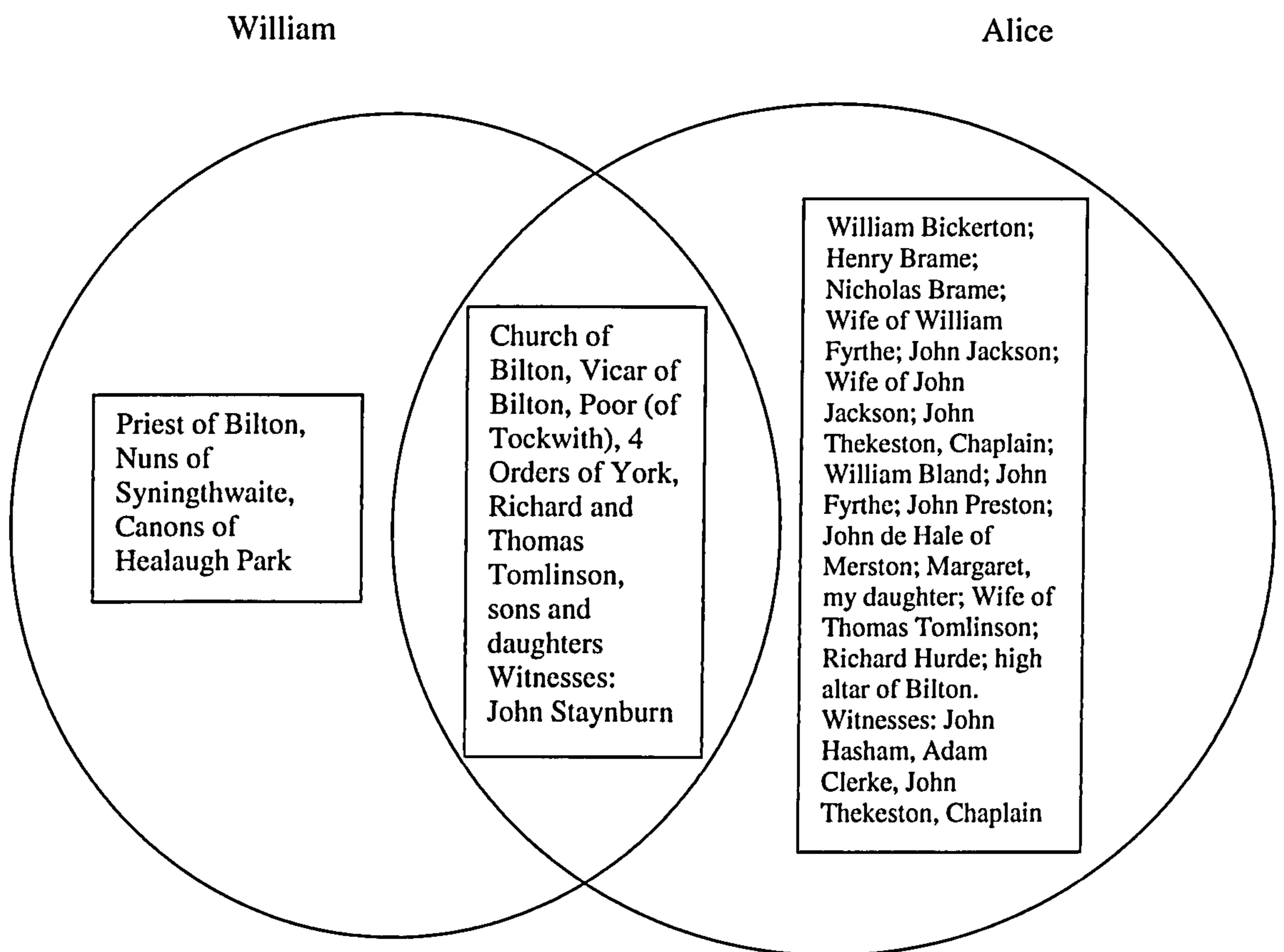


Fig. 5 The Beneficiaries and Witnesses of William and Alice Tomlinson of Bilton

Sixteen men and fourteen women had a spouse, parent or one or more other male kin (usually a son or brother) also appearing in the probate records. Mentions of kin beyond the conjugal unit enable larger parts of networks to be reconstructed. The case of William Northeby is interesting; he and his father Thomas, whose will is mentioned above, were both from Moor Monkton, but William had moved to York, established relationships with several urban tradesmen, and asked to be

buried in the cemetery of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, when he died, presumably of plague, in 1438.¹³⁹ Although William identified himself as Thomas's son, his father, who had died only seven years earlier, failed to name this particular son in his will, while he stipulated that his wife and the rest of his children should divide his third of the estate into equal portions.¹⁴⁰ In the testamentary evidence, at least, the transactional flow between father and son is unbalanced. While it is clear that Thomas could have provided for William through an *inter-vivos* transfer, is it possible that the latter's departure for the city had created a rift in the family?

It has been observed that young people and women interacted with kin in court more frequently than older men, which has been interpreted to indicate the greater dependence of the former on (male) relatives.¹⁴¹ The same tendency may be found in only a few Ainsty wills. John Chawbyr of Thorp Arch, for example, wished a number of his kin to work in concert to maintain his wife and children in 1497.¹⁴² He named as his executors his father, wife, and two brothers, one of whom did not share his surname and was probably an affine, perhaps a brother-in-law. The will was witnessed by two more brothers, one of whom was also the vicar of the parish. It might be expected that the testamentary evidence would suggest a similar reliance on affines and male kin on the part of women in the Ainsty, since research has suggested that it was generally more common for women than men to 'adopt' their marital family.¹⁴³ Alice Tomlinson of Bilton, for example, bequeathed a girdle to her daughter-in-law.¹⁴⁴ However, Ainsty women seem more likely to have focused their bequests on their own children and chosen, as their executors, males presumably unrelated to themselves, and more often lay than clerical.

The male testators of the Ainsty occasionally mention marital kin, apparently more often than the women, although this may be an accident of men's greater tendency to make wills in the first place. William Tankard of Acaster

¹³⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 557v.

¹⁴⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 600r.

¹⁴¹ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 38, 84-8.

¹⁴² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 508.

¹⁴³ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 133-136.

¹⁴⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

Malbis made bequests to his wife's children from a previous marriage in 1489.¹⁴⁵ John Hurtsky of Acaster Malbis, husbandman, made a particularly lengthy will, in keeping with his long life. In addition to remembering his grandchildren, he left bequests to the female kin *and* affines of his male relatives.¹⁴⁶ John Firth of Bilton also remembered marital kin in 1462.¹⁴⁷ John Makebliss of Dringhouses made several bequests to his wife's brothers. Isabelle Makebliss, on the other hand, remembered her own brothers and the wives of her husband's witnesses.¹⁴⁸ Thomas Milner of Askham Richard left another lengthy will, and he bequeathed several animals and domestic utensils to his son and his daughter-in-law as a unit, binding the woman even more closely to her adopted, marital family.¹⁴⁹

More common was the experience of John Moyse, also a husbandman of Acaster Malbis, who paid relatively special attention to his brothers in his will of 1430. Richard received a cloak and a black cloth, and witnessed the will, while William received a red hooded cloak and was chosen as one of John's executors. John, presumably a widower, also made special provision for his daughter, Sibilla, bequeathing her cash '*ad suam sustentationem*'.¹⁵⁰ John Mawnby of Acaster Malbis mentioned few kin other than his son and three daughters.¹⁵¹ In 1471, William Northfolk of Acaster Malbis left much of his estate to his sister and her family, and made his sister and her son two of his executors.¹⁵²

The testamentary evidence presents us with at least one example of a kin network in action. The will of Thomas Colynson of Wighill, discussed above, takes on an unusual form. Witnesses are named first, followed by a statement to the effect that Thomas agrees to divide his portion equally with his brother Robert. It is tempting to wonder if there was a possible element of coercion involved in this exchange: the effect of William Colynson being in contact with Thomas, as well as their brother Robert, the main beneficiary of the will, is to be wondered at.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 369.

¹⁴⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593v-594r.

¹⁴⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 295.

¹⁴⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 205r.

¹⁴⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 285r.

¹⁵⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 641r.

¹⁵¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 82v.

¹⁵² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 25.

¹⁵³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 260v.

It has been mentioned that clustered bequests sometimes occur, where members of the same family each named members of another family in their wills. John Rawcliffe, a husbandman from Dringhouses, and his son William each left bequests to members of the Hykson family. John Rawcliffe also remembered different members of the Cartwright family.¹⁵⁴ Bolton Percy and its satellite communities provide an example of kinship contributing to density within a network: John Brokett of Bolton Percy, a husbandman who died in 1472, named individuals with the same surname as people remembered by William Brokett of Bolton Percy, who died in 1508.¹⁵⁵ William Brokett thus maintained the clusters relationships enjoyed by his late relative, contributing to long duration of interaction.

Given the occurrence of these clustered bequests, it is unsurprising that Lynne Bowdon, also employing the approaches of cultural anthropology, has argued for a broad view of social relations beyond the immediate nuclear family. Like Boissevain, she emphasizes personal agency within local political and cultural structures in her discussions of the intersections of multiplex social interactions. She advocates a new focus on the ‘underlying concepts of affective/moral/reciprocal values’ in addition to assigning categories to the ‘basis for these relationships’ (i.e. shared habitation or work), urging that historians should ‘get away from merely categorizing to look at the whole range of interconnections’.¹⁵⁶ Cordelia Beattie has also elaborated on the different types of social interactions which could entered into by women without husbands.¹⁵⁷ ‘Surrogate kin’ and other extra-familial relationships and affective ties based on, for example, proximity and religiosity, in addition to blood and marriage, are significant, and express different types of relatedness.

Widowhood often would have had major implications for the social networks of which these women were a part, as they tended to ‘add on’ to their social circles by developing relationships with servants, neighbours, and other men and women in the community, often fellow widows.¹⁵⁸ Such networks

¹⁵⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 524 and Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 505v-506r.

¹⁵⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 76; Prob. Reg. 7, fo. 60.

¹⁵⁶ Bowdon, ‘Redefining Kinship’, pp. 407, 416-17.

¹⁵⁷ See Beattie, ‘Women without Husbands’.

¹⁵⁸ Bowdon, ‘Redefining Kinship’, pp. 408, 411.

undoubtedly would have been quite dense, although the poor survival of women's wills makes it difficult to make definitive statements regarding the situation in the Ainsty. Alice Thwaite, the vowess, seems to have confined her testamentary relationships to her immediate family, mainly her children, and her servants, in 1485.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, this 'adding on' behaviour seems to have been rare in the Ainsty, but can be seen in the case of Joan Fox of Bilton, who drew up a will in 1400, six years after the death of her husband. Her case will be discussed below, in the paragraphs on women's networks in the next section.¹⁶⁰

Female testators choosing other women as executors occurred in the Ainsty, but not as frequently as within urban parishes. One of Lady Elizabeth Woodcock's executors is female, for example, and Alice Talbot of Bishopthorpe named another woman as her executor. Women who named female executors thus tended to coincide with those few women who did not name husbands or former husbands. These were, in all likelihood, widows; there is only a slight possibility that some were singlewomen.¹⁶¹

I have chosen to mention this feature of women's wills, those of widows in particular, under the section on kinship because recent scholars have good reason for describing such relationships as 'surrogate' kinship, in which an individual 'adopts' an individual from another family, or indeed the entire family, as their own in the absence of or in addition to surviving blood or marital relatives.¹⁶² Such relationships would be multiplex, with high frequency and duration of interaction. In terms of transactional content and directional flow, the widow would have been able to 'reward' the adopted individual or family for the social and material comforts that they provided by remembering them in her will. We have seen that transactional content, in the form of testamentary gift-giving, can provide clues about the frequency and duration of interaction.

¹⁵⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 276.

¹⁶⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 42.

¹⁶¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 338r, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 574v.

¹⁶² Bowdon, 'Redefining Kinship', pp. 413-4; Carsten, *Cultures of Relatedness*, pp. 14-29.

2.3.2 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

'Clustering' in tax records, even when a discrete household cannot be assumed, can help to reconstruct larger neighbourhoods, as well as kin groups. Bennett called neighbourliness 'vital to rural living', while pointing out that men had 'opportunities for neighbourliness' not enjoyed by women.¹⁶³ This and the following chapters will attempt to reconstruct what it meant to be a 'neighbour' in late medieval England, by analysing the different types of interactions entered into by inhabitants of the Ainsty. The notion that closer ties with neighbours rather than kin indicate a 'harmonious, corporate community' in stasis has been rightly discarded in favour of interpretations that emphasise dynamic interactionism.¹⁶⁴ In effect, neighbourhood ensured frequency and duration of interaction. The intersection of neighbourliness and work is an important issue, as families who inhabited neighbouring dwellings, for example, often also worked adjacent strips in open-field type villages, so that relationships created through proximity and work overlapped.¹⁶⁵

R.M. Smith, for example, has noted a high network density and degree of multiplexity among neighbouring individuals in his network analysis of thirteenth-century manor court records of Redgrave.¹⁶⁶ Such a degree of precision in measuring network structure is not possible in the absence of court records, but this chapter will also discuss to what extent it is possible to discuss neighbourliness as a function of socio-economic status, in addition to its interaction with the spheres of marriage, work and devotion. In urban areas, for example, the wealthy often lived alongside the less well-off, and it is important to ascertain whether circumstances differed in the countryside, especially in the hinterland of a major town.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, it is possible that in the hinterland, the affluent were as likely as not to live in proximity of their less substantial neighbours. John Rawcliffe of Dringhouses and Thomas Haksok of Middlethorpe provided for funeral feasts for

¹⁶³ Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 37, 44.

¹⁶⁴ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', p. 219; Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility*.

¹⁶⁵ Geographic mobility would have been especially significant for such relations, in light of the practice of hiring 'servants in husbandry' and seasonal labour. In addition to forming relationships and networks of their own, new people entering into the community could have had a significant impact on existing relationships.

¹⁶⁶ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 219-56.

¹⁶⁷ Hamblen, 'Testamentary Giving'.

their neighbours, in 1428 and 1466, respectively, although the status of these neighbours is not known.¹⁶⁸ The inventory of John Hall of Holgate in the parish of Acomb indicates that he provided funds for a wake for his friends and wine for his neighbours.¹⁶⁹ It would be interesting to know whether or not the ‘friends’ and ‘neighbours’ were mutually exclusive, which seems unlikely, and to what extent they belonged to the same socio-economic status group. Perhaps Hall’s ‘friends’ were those individuals who enjoyed multiplex relationships with the testator. Generally, this seems to have been more of an urban practice, undertaken by several women dying in the parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, for instance. It should be noted that the three townships mentioned are almost directly outside of York, and that Haksok belonged to the urban parish of St. Mary Bishophill Sr, while Hall left the same parish a horse for his mortuary.¹⁷⁰

In most Ainsty settlements, poll tax assessors seem to have recorded at least some of the most substantial property owners first: those gentry, farmers or artisans who paid more than 4d. Other higher taxpayers are scattered in among the rest in no particular order. There are often two or more artisans and/or substantial agriculturalists listed sequentially in the midst of those paying 4d. While some of those paying 4d may very well have been servants, it is clear that many others had households of their own, listed right below or above their better-off counterparts.¹⁷¹

In the absence of maps, terriers or manorial extents it is impossible to tell how far these higher status households lived from their nearest neighbours, but it is logical to assume that assessors proceeded from the household of the last person in the higher ‘tax bracket’ to their nearest neighbour. Only rarely does Ainsty testamentary evidence provide clues to individual landholding patterns. An excellent example is that of Thomas Ellison of Long Marston, who lived next to Thomas Thwaite, esquire, and made the latter the supervisor of his will in 1473. Ellison actually identified the higher status Thwaite as ‘my neighbour’.¹⁷² Such information was usually revealed when the testator described the boundaries of a

¹⁶⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 524; Prob. Reg. 4, fos. 258v and 250r.

¹⁶⁹ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), ‘Probate Inventories’, p. 248.

¹⁷⁰ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), ‘Probate Inventories’, p. 248.

¹⁷¹ ‘1379 Poll Tax’, *YAJ* 7: 174-86.

¹⁷² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 204.

parcel of land to be bequeathed. Thus John Norton, esquire of Bilbrough had as his neighbour Henry Marshall in 1493.¹⁷³

Elite and higher status men and women, and those associated with them, including, occasionally, servants, were less likely to migrate permanently and more likely to enjoy long-term socio-economic contacts. There are instances in Acaster Malbis of prosperous agriculturalist testators providing for grandchildren, and even step-grandchildren, but it is unclear where these beneficiaries lived. It is difficult to find surnames lower on the social scale than those of the gentry lasting more than two generations in Ainsty communities, but whether this should be attributed to mortality, mobility, or both is unclear.

Smith found that in pre-plague Suffolk, network densities of the elite were not as large as those of the middling tenants, and that the former were less likely to be closely tied with neighbours. Although Smith found that larger landholders were more likely to be engaged in patron-client, contract-like relationships with smallholders who might hire themselves out as servants or labour, testamentary evidence sometimes provides a corrective.¹⁷⁴ Sometimes servants in the fifteenth-century Ainsty can be shown to have been employed in the long term, as in the case of Nicholas, servant to Richard Basseley of Bilbrough, esquire, in the 1379 poll tax return.¹⁷⁵ He was apparently still Basseley's servant twenty years later when he was named as a beneficiary in his master's will.¹⁷⁶

Alliances between members of the gentry are also evident in the probate records. Two of the local knightly families, the Depedens of Healaugh and the Stapletons of Wighill mention one another in their wills in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.¹⁷⁷ The Stapletons of Wighill also had contacts in Bilbrough, as Richard Basseley of Bilbrough witnessed the will of Brian de Stapleton in 1394.¹⁷⁸ Richard Malbis of Acaster Malbis and Thomas Fairfax of Walton were related by marriage.¹⁷⁹ Guy Fairfax of Walton seems to have executed and supervised testaments of several members of the local gentry, including that of

¹⁷³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 23 (Rotherham), fos. 358v-359v.

¹⁷⁴ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 244-45.

¹⁷⁵ '1379 Poll Tax Returns', *YAJ* 7: 182.

¹⁷⁶ BIHR Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 68v.

¹⁷⁷ BIHR Prob. Reg. 1, fos. 69v-70r and Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 88v-89v.

¹⁷⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fos. 69v-70r.

¹⁷⁹ J. Raine the Elder (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia Vol. 1*, SS 4 (1836), p. 204.

Robert Davell of Bilton in 1471-72.¹⁸⁰ Fairfax's ubiquity undoubtedly owed something to his legal expertise.¹⁸¹

Gentry alliances were greatly influenced by proximity and topography, so the boundaries of the Ainsty did not, of course, prevent the formation of ties with other West Riding gentry. The dispute between the lords of Wilstrop and Sir William Gascoigne of Gawthorpe in Harewood in the late fifteenth century was discussed in Chapter One.¹⁸² Testamentary ties also existed between the Thwaites of Marston and Roucliff of Cowthorpe, as when William Thwaite designated Guy Roucliffe as the supervisor of his will in 1434.¹⁸³ Smith's findings on thirteenth-century Suffolk may thus relate in another way to the fifteenth-century Ainsty. He observed that although the most substantial landholders did not tend to engage in close relations with others in their immediate proximity, they did enjoy networks over a wider geographical range, encompassing, for instance, an entire manor and beyond.¹⁸⁴ Then there is also the example, mentioned above, of Thomas Ellison and Thomas Thwaite, esquire, being neighbours and assisting one another; presumably Ellison was of a lower status, perhaps a tenant of Thwaite's. Similarly, William Norton, esquire of Bilbrough, witnessed the testament of Richard Saul of Bilbrough.¹⁸⁵

As implied above, the upper middling sort, substantial agriculturalists, seem to have been more likely than their titled counterparts to engage in multiplex, dense relations with individuals of similar status living in the same community, a state of affairs which probably relates to the apparent residential stability of their status group. Groups of wills belonging to individuals of the same community who died within a short time of one another are particularly useful for revealing such networks. Often the same witnesses and executors are used by a number of testators, and several different testators will also name beneficiaries belonging to the same families. Indeed, this group occasionally seems to have made use of

¹⁸⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 170.

¹⁸¹ *ODNB* Vol. VI, (London, 1949-50), p. 997.

¹⁸² Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', pp. 224.

¹⁸³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 405.

¹⁸⁴ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 240, 242-49.

¹⁸⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 384r.

groups of witnesses nearly as large as those listed by the testators of the gentry.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, Smith's study observed that thirteenth-century peasants who held land of middling size seemed to interact with their immediate neighbours more than did members of higher and lower status groups. He also posits geographical mobility and contract-like work relations as a contributing factor in the tendency for lower status individuals to be less socially involved with their neighbours.¹⁸⁷ When an individual moves, his or her network becomes larger, while density and multiplexity decrease.¹⁸⁸

Despite the increased mobility normally associated with the post-Black Death period, several Ainsty communities during years of high mortality, including Bolton Percy and Dringhouses around 1470, demonstrate the multiplexity and network density that we would expect from residentially stable well-to-do agriculturalists. Acaster Malbis around 1460, another probable plague period, is also a good example demonstrating multiplexity and density in social networks. Both William Carter and William Acomb name John Moyse and the vicar, Thomas Hornsy, as witnesses, while John Hurtsky had named Hornsy as one of his executors.¹⁸⁹ This group of wills provides another opportunity for examining the longevity of the families of well-to-do agriculturalists in the Ainsty, since the John Moyse named by Carter and Acomb was in all probability a descendant of the John Moyse who drew up his will thirty years earlier.¹⁹⁰ When John Jenkyn made his will in 1473, Thomas Hurtsky reciprocated previous assistance by witnessing Jenkyn's will: Jenkyn had done the same for Hurtsky's father, John, a generation

¹⁸⁶ For witnesses of gentry testaments, see P. Maddern, "Best trusted friends": concepts and practices of friendship among fifteenth-century Norfolk gentry', in Nicholas Rogers (ed.) *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, 1994), pp. 100-117.

¹⁸⁷ R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 244-45, 248.

¹⁸⁸ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 88. At the start of my research, I hypothesised that people who migrated might be more likely to have broad, varied social networks. Bennett found that upon marriage, women who moved lost contact with their natal families—these contacts became less 'publicly important', supporting the findings of social anthropologists who noted decreased multiplexity and density upon moving. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 133-36. It is, however, difficult to determine to what extent keeping in touch with kin and friends from former homes was a matter of personal preference, as opposed to tradition or deterministic factors.

¹⁸⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593v-594r, 458r, 462r.

¹⁹⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 641r.

earlier.¹⁹¹ A decade later, in 1483, it is clear that the network is even larger and more complex, for John Mawnby is linked to both John Jenkyn and William Carter through the witnesses he names in his will (see Fig. 6).¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 208v.

¹⁹² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 82v.

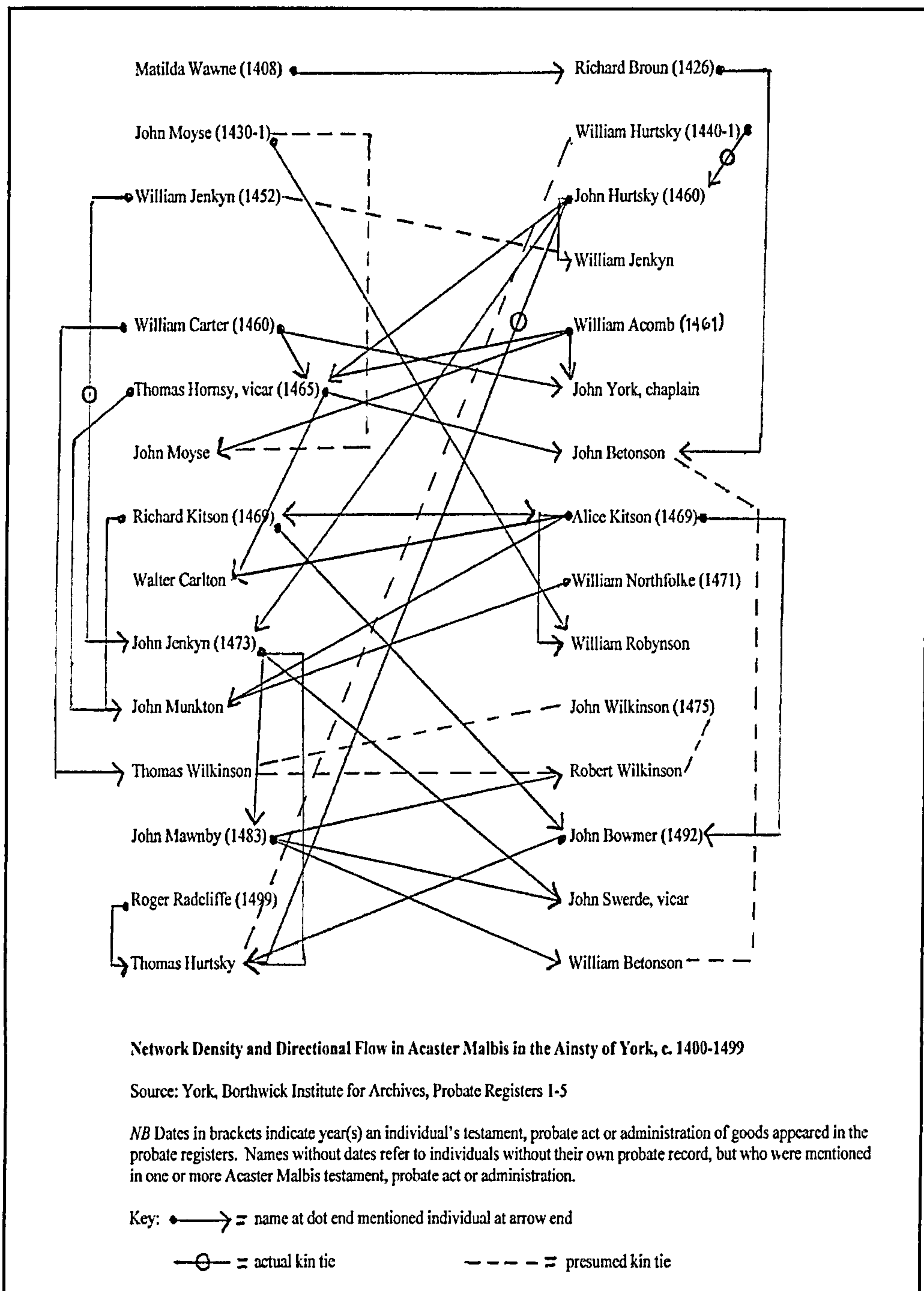


Fig. 6: Network Density and Directional Flow in Acaster Malbis, c.1400-99

As we saw with the example of Thomas Ellison and Thomas Thwaite of Long Marston, the naming of executors has the potential to reveal status and occupational networks as well as ties based on kinship. Lay males, presumably unrelated to the testator, were more popular choices for executors and supervisors than clerics (about forty percent of testators chose one or more unrelated laymen, as opposed to about fourteen percent who chose clerics), as choices for executors and supervisors, and this may be an indication that ties based on shared occupation, neighbourhood or social status were more significant than the spiritual authority of a local religious figure, or even kinship. Laymen in the Ainsty had a marked tendency to name other laymen as executors in addition to their wives. Indeed, a few clerics themselves chose high status laymen to administer their estates. These results are similar to Kermode's findings for York merchants, but more research is needed to determine the extent to which the inhabitants of the Ainsty emulated urban practices, as part of a regional network, as opposed to general custom in late medieval England as a whole.¹⁹³

In men's wills and administrations more often than the women's, the place of residence of executors and witnesses is specified, and these individuals are occasionally indicated as being 'of York', emphasising once again the ties between city and countryside (Table 4a). John Dycson of York witnessed the will of Adam Fox of Bilton in 1394, for instance.¹⁹⁴ While there was certainly an affinity between men belonging to similar professions and status groups observable in the choice of executors, this was not always the case. A weaver from York administered the goods of James Dancer, a pardoner from Dringhouses.¹⁹⁵ A few men of the Ainsty, some husbandmen, and even a gentleman, John Tinworth of Acomb, also named merchants from York in their wills.¹⁹⁶ John Hall of Holgate, Acomb, left an inventory in which his debt of 2s to John Feryby, mercer, was mentioned.¹⁹⁷ Their presence in the wills of rural husbandmen may indicate business or trading relationships. There is a potential here for an increased

¹⁹³ Kermode, 'Sentiment and Survival', p. 12.

¹⁹⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 73r.

¹⁹⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 387r.

¹⁹⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 602v.

¹⁹⁷ Stell, 'Probate Inventories', p. 248.

likelihood of mobility, or at least of greater knowledge of the city and parts beyond, which the testator could have shared with his family and household.

Table 4a. Testators Naming Individuals from York

Key to Tables 4a and 4b:

A = administrator

L = legatee/beneficiary

E = executor

S = supervisor

W = witness

VILL	TESTATOR	OCCUPATION	NAME OF YORK INDIVIDUAL	ROLE OF YORK INDIVIDUAL
Acaster Malbis	Sibyl Malbis	Widow of Richard Malbis, Knight	Master John de	A
	Thomas Hornsy	Vicar	Richard Claybrook	W
Acomb	John Tinworth	Gentleman	Henry Claybroke, merchant	L/E
(Holgate)	John Hall	Husbandman	Vicar of St. Mary Bishophill	L
Bilbrough	John Norton	Esquire	Gilbert Salisbery, chaplain of St Mary Bishophill, Sr.	L/E
Bilton	Adam Fox		John Dycson	E
(Sinningthwaite)	Nicholas Storom	Chaplain	William and John Cliff	W
Bishopthorpe	William Wright		John Hall, barber	L
	Sir John Waterson	Chaplain	John, Subtreasurer of YM; Richard Barden, cordwainer; William Capper; Adam ?Hunby	W
Bolton Percy	Roger & Emmot Newport		William Herryson	A

	William Lascelles	Chaplain	Richard Alper	L/E
Dringhouses	Ralph Makebliss	Weaver	Thomas, chaplain	E
	James Dancer	Pardoner	Nicholas Pympton, weaver	A
	Thomas Watson	Tiler	William Jackson, chaplain	S
	Thomas Shilton		Robert Roce, pardoner	A
	Robert Roos		William Dekyn	A
Healaugh	Sir John Depeden	Knight	John de ?Nenton, Treasurer of YM	L
Long Marston (Hutton Wandesley)	William Deighton		Sadler	L
Middlethorpe	John Barnard		John Thorp, cleric	E
	William Barnard		John Thorp, cleric	E
Moor Monkton	William Northby		chapman	E; W
	John Mason	Rector	John Appleton, Subtreasurer of YM	Involved in a donative
Rufforth	John Farnham			E
Tadcaster	Margaret Simpson		Archbishop?	E?
	Thomasin Driffield		Widow?	E?
(Catterton)	Robert Forester		William Hanke	E
Thorp Arch	William Boy		Richard Boy	A

Table 4b. Testators Naming Individuals from Locations Other than York

VILL	TESTATOR	OCCUPATION	NAME	LOCATION	ROLE
Acaster Malbis	William Acomb	Husbandman	Thomas Marshall, husbandman	Copmanthorpe	E
Acomb (Knapton)	Robert Fernham		Robert Monkton; Richard Colson	Rufforth; Poppleton	L; L/E
(Holgate)	John Hall	Husbandman	Nicholas Halyday	Bishopthorpe	Owed 4d by the deceased
Askham Richard	William Palmar	Vicar	Thomas, vicar	Askham Brian	W
Bilton	William	Vicar	Dom. Richard Ottelay, chaplain	Marston	W
	Joan Fox	Widow	Dom. Peter de Birdesall, perpetual vicar	Healaugh	E
(Tockwith)	Alice Tomlinson	Widow	John de Hale	Long Marston	L
	John Walour		William Fabre	Cattall	L/E
(Sinningthwaite)	Nicholas Storom	Chaplain	Vicar; canon, vicar, priest; chaplain; vicar; Richard, chaplain; vicar; vicar; priest; Thomas Clerk; Master Thomas Daythill; John de Alkor; Thomas Coke	Wighill; Bickerton; Kirk Hammerton; Whixley; Thorp Arch; Walton; Green Hammerton; Bishophill; Vicar of Kirk Hammerton; Deighton; Ouseburn	
(Sinningthwaite)	Alice Banke	Widow	William Willesthorpe	Wilstrop	L/E
Bishopthorpe	William Waite, Sr.		Thomas Makebliss Sr. and Thomas Makebliss Jr.	Water Fulford	L
	William Wright		William Lightfoot	Poppleton	L
	Robert Egill		William Barnard	Middlethorpe	L/E
	Joan Egill		William Barnard	Middlethorpe	L/E
Bolton Percy (Appleton)	William Sampson		John Sayvell		E

	William Milner		Robert Derwent	Bilbrough	A
	William Lascelles	Chaplain	Rector of Ryther; Master Thomas Tone, Doctor	Ryther; Beverley	L; L/E
(Nun Appleton)	Sir Thomas Squire	Chaplain	Thomas Carter	Church Fenton	A
Copmanthorpe	John Bartram		John Jackson; Matilda Vavasour	Poppleton; Ryther	L; W
Healaugh	Sir John Depeden	Knight	Robert Wycliff, parson; Richard de Stokketon, parson; Richard Jackson; John Wryght; Sir John Darell, vicar	Rudby; BurghWaleys; Sherburn; Wighill; Thorp Arch	L/E; L; L; L; E/W
	Thomas Hunter		Master Peter, perpetual vicar	Birdsall	E
Long Marston	Richard de Thornton (PA)	Rector	Nicholas Storum, chaplain	Syningthwaite	E
	William Thwaite		Robert Smyth	Bickerton	Goods in his custody
Middlethorpe	Thomas de Thorpe		William Marshall	Copmanthorpe	L
	John Barnard		Thomas Wawne	Bishopthorpe	E
	John Copper		John Moyse; William Copper	Acaster Malbis; Copmanthorpe	A; A
Moor Monkton	John Mason (don.)	Rector	William and Henry Carter; Master John Shupton, chaplain	Poppleton; Rufforth	Involved with donative
Thorp Arch	William Leventon	Vicar	John Esedyke, chaplain; Unnamed 'cognato meo'	Walton; Cowthorpe	W; L
Wighill (Easedike)	Richard Colynson		William Colynson, canon	Healaugh Park	W

	Thomas Colynson		William Colynson, vicar	Thorp Arch	W
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Business relationships between men and women of the Ainsty and other communities, including York, are sometimes evident from probate inventories. Such relationships based on exchange involved an element of mobility and perhaps familiarity with the customs of the environs of the individuals involved. William Gale of York, judging from debts paid and owed to him in 1472, seems to have been particularly involved with Ainsty settlements. Individuals from Poppleton, Holgate, Askham-Brian, Acaster, Acomb, Clementhorpe, Cowthorpe and Appleton are mentioned, some of whom were craftsmen, such as weavers from Acomb and Askham Brian. It is unclear whether or not these relationships were multiplex, but sometimes relatively large sums were involved; individuals in the Ainsty and elsewhere in the hinterland owed Gale cash in excess of £1.¹⁹⁸

The testamentary evidence has the potential to be useful for a study of local mobility, as there are instances of men, and fewer women, naming property, places or people outside of their parish. Poos found this to be a common feature of rural Essex in the post-plague period as well.¹⁹⁹ Both men and women had a tendency to name places nearby, often in a neighbouring township or parish. It will be recalled that Joan Fox of Bilton left cash to the vicar of Healaugh. Robert Forester of Catterton (parish of Tadcaster), left land and resources in Healaugh to his wife and son in 1428.²⁰⁰

There seem to have been more intense testamentary connections between certain neighbouring townships than others in the Ainsty, including Long Marston and Moor Monkton. Testators from Middlethorpe expressed links with Copmanthorpe and Acaster Malbis, some of which were reciprocated. These connections seem to have been based primarily on kinship, by both blood and marriage. Thomas de Thorpe of Middlethorpe named his brothers-in-law, Thomas and William Marshall of Copmanthorpe in 1434.²⁰¹ William Acomb of Acaster Malbis also named Thomas Marshall of Copmanthorpe and John Moyses of Acaster Malbis three decades later.²⁰² John Copper of Middlethorpe named William Copper of Copmanthorpe as well as John Moyses of Acaster Malbis also in the

¹⁹⁸ Stell and Hampson (trans and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 260-64.

¹⁹⁹ Poos, *Rural Society*, p. 196.

²⁰⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 542v-543r.

²⁰¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 397.

²⁰² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 458r

1430s.²⁰³ There may also have been a parochial connection, as both Copmanthorpe and Middlethorpe were detached parts of St Mary Bishophill, but the latter was associated with Bishophill, Jr., while Middlethorpe was part of Bishophill, Sr.

Female networks, some of them associated with occupation, are also occasionally visible in wills. The phenomenon of singleton clustering observed in the poll-tax returns is difficult to verify from testamentary evidence. For example, Alice Talbot of Bishopthorpe left only a probate act, so it is difficult to ascertain her economic status or social networks.²⁰⁴ Some women bequeathed to a broad range of family, friends and neighbours. Joan Fox of Bilton bequeathed to several women unrelated to her, as did Alice Tomlinson of Tockwith, also in the parish of Bilton. The latter also bequeathed quantities of grain to several different men, and may have been a brewster.²⁰⁵ Several other husbandmen of the same township witnessed the will of Alice Kitson, the widow of Richard, a husbandman who lived in Acaster Malbis, and Sibyl Fox of Askham Richard also named husbandmen as witnesses—some of whom appear in the probate records.²⁰⁶ The fairly frequent occurrence of similar choices might indicate that these women chose to identify with their husbands' work-based social networks, adopting them as their own, as they may well have done with their marital family. Such bequests clearly have great potential for revealing information about women's social and business relationships, and for suggesting the ways in which they perceived their kin and neighbours, examples of which will be discussed in Chapter Three. On the other hand, men sometimes chose female witnesses. In the early fifteenth century, John Bartram of Copmanthorpe named several women as witnesses, including his wife and at least one woman from Ryther.²⁰⁷

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Another occupational activity field important for the formation of relationships and networks was service, which can be difficult to separate from the discussion of the household. Relationships were formed between the master or

²⁰³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 501r.

²⁰⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 338r, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 103r-v.

²⁰⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

²⁰⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 42r-v, Prob. Reg. 4, fos. 140r-v.

²⁰⁷ YM, D/C Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 171.

mistress and their employees, or among the servants themselves. It has been observed that the brewing and textile trades especially fostered relationships between female servants and their mistresses.²⁰⁸ Such ties are not particularly visible in the Ainsty: Alice Tomlinson of Bilton, a brewster, named no servants.²⁰⁹ Mainly during the adolescent phase of the life cycle, servants from the same as well as different households socialised as they went about their daily routines.²¹⁰ Again, as testaments give us no clear indications of such behaviour, we will turn to cause papers in the next chapter for anecdotal evidence. It is clear, however, that such associations would have produced dense networks, since even households not linked through the interactions of their household heads could be linked through the activities of their servants. Nonetheless, it seems that unlike in the urban parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, almost no Ainsty testators made bequests to the servants of *others*.

2.3.5 Parish and Devotion

Any discussion of networks based on the parish will be complicated by the overlap between parish and neighbourhood. People formed and maintained relationships as a function of sheer proximity, but also acknowledged their shared loyalties to the religious loci within that same locality, and beyond. This section therefore discusses these constellations of devotion as manifested in burial choice and bequests, and then briefly discusses the networks of the clergy themselves.

Choice of burial place in testamentary records has been cited as evidence for many phenomena. It is almost universally agreed that burial choice reveals a great deal about the kinship ties, status and self-identification of testators, and it may also be informative in determining mobility, both geographical and social.²¹¹ Therefore it is interesting that John Hurtsky and William Carter, both husbandmen in Acaster Malbis, chose to be buried inside their parish church rather than in the cemetery. Perhaps they wished to be identified with John Fairfax, the local

²⁰⁸ See J.M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England. Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 35-39, 49-50, 56.

²⁰⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

²¹⁰ Beattie, 'Women without Husbands', pp. 38, 78-94.

²¹¹ See, for example, R. Dinn, 'Monuments Answerable to Mens Worth': Burial Patterns, Social Status and Gender in Late Medieval Bury St. Edmunds', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46:2 (1995): 1-19; and C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London, 1997).

gentleman who had been buried inside the building sixteen years earlier.²¹² It is unfortunate that Fairfax mentions few non-relatives in his will, and lists no witnesses, as these could have given us greater insight into the density of the devotional aspect of this particular network—could Fairfax have been a central figure both before and after his death?

While the men and women of the Ainsty behaved in ways broadly in line with patterns of pious practice observed elsewhere in England, in that most chose to be buried in the cemetery of their parish church, with the wealthier testators naming places within the church, some chose to be buried elsewhere. John Sacker of Dringhouses asked to be buried at Holy Trinity, Micklegate, while bequeathing forgotten tithes to his parish church of St. Clement in the suburbs of York. It will be recalled that the situation in Dringhouses was complicated, the settlement being divided between several parochial jurisdictions; Sacker negotiated this fragmentation by remembering several of them.²¹³

Identification with more than one parish usually represented loyalty to one's native vill following migration, landholding in more than one place, or both. In many cases, such examples speak to a focus of devotional loyalty within a neighbourhood locality beyond the parish, in which kinship, church and landholding intersected. When testators appear to identify with more than one parish, it may suggest that they felt connected to people in each location as well. Two brothers, John and Richard Saul, from the parish town of Bilbrough, over five miles from York, moved to the city and, like William Norby, became members of the parish of St. Michael-le-Belfrey, where they chose to be buried, while still remembering their former parish in their bequests.²¹⁴ If the Saul brothers had moved to York together, their choices may have as much to do with family ties as with loyalty to their adopted parish. On the other hand, William Grammer, whose family had been established in the vill of Bickerton in the parish of Bilton for centuries, had moved to the York parish of All Saints in Peasholme but decided to come home to be buried next to his mother in the nunnery at Syningthwaite in

²¹² BIHR, Prob. Reg. , fos. Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 80v, 462r, 593v-594r.

²¹³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 484v-485r. Parts of Dringhouses belonged to the parishes of St. Mary Bishophill Sr., Holy Trinity Micklegate, and Acomb in the Liberty of St. Peter.

²¹⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 384r.

1433.²¹⁵ Alice Bankes of Syningthwaite wished to be buried next to her husband in the church of St. Mary of Whixley, over five miles to the northeast.²¹⁶

Other examples include Peter West of Bilton, who was particularly attached to Swine in the East Riding, where he chose to be buried in 1435; the Gild of St Mary there was also the recipient of a bequest.²¹⁷ William Waite, Sr., of Bishopthorpe, chose to be buried further outside the city at Acaster Malbis in 1456. He apparently identified with both parishes, as he bequeathed forgotten tithes to each church. He also nurtured an attachment to a family in Water Fulford, nearby, but in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent.²¹⁸ William Wright, also of Bishopthorpe, also expressed loyalty to an area encompassing the river Ouse when he left cash to the parish church of Stillingfleet in 1500.²¹⁹ William Tankard of Acaster Malbis remembered parish churches of Poppleton and Leathley when he drew up his will in 1489.²²⁰

Burial choice was sometimes influenced by the presence of chapels in certain communities. The primary Ainsty example was Walton. Chapels of ease were founded when parish churches could no longer fulfil the spiritual needs of a large local population, and were common in areas where the terrain made travel to the parish church difficult, as in remoter areas of Yorkshire or the flood-prone wapentake of Ouse and Derwent.²²¹ In the Ainsty, chapels were associated with elite local patrons, including the Fairfaxes, who seem to have re-built the chapel in Walton shortly after Thomas Fairfax acquired the manor in 1349.²²² By 1369, the chaplains at Walton were awarded baptism and burial rights, the composition between the chapel St Mary and the Holy Angels (to which Walton chapel had

²¹⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 495v-496r.

²¹⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 360v-361r. For more on the Bankes family of Whixley see Chapter Four.

²¹⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 447v.

²¹⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 334r-v.

²¹⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 322v.

²²⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 369.

²²¹ D.M. Owen, 'Chapelries and Rural Settlement: an Examination of some Kesteven Evidence', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change* (London, 1976), pp. 66-71; K.J. Allison (ed.), *A History of the County of York, East Riding Vol. III, Ouse and Derwent Wapentake* (London, 1976), pp. 66-74.

²²² Michelmores, 'Township Gazetteer', p. 551; P. Ryder, *Medieval Churches of West Yorkshire* (Leeds, 1993), pp. 52, 178.

been appropriated) in York and the convent of Nun Monkton citing the difficulty of carrying infants and corpses the mile or so to Thorp Arch.²²³

Given the paucity of probate evidence for Walton, more research is needed to assess the impact of the presence of chapels on local social networks, and vice versa. It might be imagined that they might have fostered more closely-knit communities, especially in areas where the terrain inhibited travel, or where loyalty to a local founding patron was strong. Wills from Syningthwaite and Thorp Arch, however, indicate close connections with Walton well into the fifteenth century. Where burial rights had not been granted, the relationship between chapelry and parish was, of course, strong. Bickerton, in the parish of Bilton, possessed such a chapel, and inhabitants of the former made bequests to both chapel and parish church.²²⁴

Despite the limited nature of the evidence, some information about the devotional ties between city and countryside may be uncovered, apart from the examples of burial choice just mentioned. As is to be expected, nearly all the men's and women's wills include gifts to their parish churches, but almost all men, and several women also made gifts (usually of cash) to York Minster. While it must have been traditional to do so, it is possible that the act of making such bequests demonstrated an individual's ties to the city. A few women, including Joan Fox, widow of Adam Fox of Bilton, also bequeathed cash to the Franciscans of York.²²⁵ Despite the appeal that mendicant orders appear to have held for women in England during the late middle ages, most of the men in my sample favoured these groups as well, especially, again, the Franciscans.²²⁶ John Hurtsky, the husbandman from Acaster Malbis, was typical in his gifts of grain to urban religious orders, reflecting the agrarian economic outlook of many of these testators.²²⁷ Other popular choices were St. Mary's Abbey and St. Leonard's Hospital, to which William Jackson of Appleton bequeathed in 1471.²²⁸ The testators of Rufforth seem to have had a particular attachment to St. Leonard's

²²³ Lawton, *Collectio*, p. 81.

²²⁴ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 662r; Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 580.

²²⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 42r-v.

²²⁶ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 322.

²²⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593v-594r.

²²⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fos. 157v-158r.

Hospital (Table 5a). Within the Ainsty, the frequency of bequests to urban religious foundations did not decrease with distance from the city walls.

Table 5a: Bequests to York Religious Houses

VILL	TESTATOR	St Mary's Abbey	St Leonard's Hospital	St Andrew's Priory	Holy Trinity Priory	Leper House
Acaster Malbis	John Hurtsky (1460)	√		√		
Acomb	Thomas Appleton (1436)	√	√		√	
Bilbrough	Richard Saul (1434)				√	
	John Norton, esq. (1493)				√	√
Bilton	Brian Dayville (1463)					√
Bolton Percy	William Jackson (1471)	√				
Dringhouses	John Rawcliffe (1427)				√	
	Robert Leeds (1481)				√	
Long Marston	William Thwaite (1434)	√		√		
(Angram)	Thomas Milner (1473)	√				
Moor Monkton (Hessay)	John Langton		√			
Rufforth	John Farnham (1446)		√			
	Richard Smith (1452)		√			
	Thomas Talior (1469)		√			
Wighill	John de Stapleton (1454-5)					√

Men in the Ainsty were slightly more likely than the women to focus on bequests to religious orders, sometimes even to the exclusion of family and friends, who were probably provided for through transactions during the lifetime of the

testator. To return to a now-familiar example, that of William and Alice Tomlinson of Bilton, William made a bequest to Syningthwaite Nunnery, while Alice concentrated on secular individuals. Could this division represent forward planning on the part of the couple? Ralph Makebliss of Dringhouses bequeathed to Clementhorpe Nunnery, but his widow, Emma, remembered a specific nun there. On the other hand, Sir John Depeden of Healaugh bequeathed to a very large number of nunneries, as well as to specific nuns in more local foundations.²²⁹ Richard Bassey of Bilbrough also bequeathed to several individual churchmen.²³⁰

The women who left a greater variety of gifts to laypeople also tended to be the ones who made several religious bequests, effectively inserting themselves into regional ecclesiastical networks. Several men, and fewer women, stood out for their bequests to a comparatively wide variety of religious foundations and guilds, including some as far away as twelve miles from York, the gild of St Robert at Knaresborough. Alice Bankes, the widow from Syningthwaite in Bilton, stood out for her bequests to several religious houses, including the nuns of Syningthwaite, Mount Grace Priory, and Knaresborough.²³¹ In the case of bequests to religious foundations, transactional content linking individual or family to institution consisted of material provision in exchange for spiritual benefits such as prayer. When an individual also wished to be buried by the institution to which he or she made a bequest, transactional content becomes more varied and directional flow might be altered.

Table 5b: Bequests to Religious Houses in the Ainsty and its Vicinity

VILL	TESTATOR	Sinningthwaite Nunnery	Tockwith Canons	Nun Appleton Nunnery	Nun Monkton Nunnery	Healaugh Park Priory	Clementhorpe Nunnery
Bilbrough	John Norton (1493)	√		√	√	√	√
Bilton (Tockwith)	John Walour (1394-7)		√				

²²⁹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 88v-89v.

²³⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 68v.

²³¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 360v-361r.

	Joan Fox (1400)	√					
(Sinning- thwaite)	Nicholas Storom, chaplain (1405)	√			√	√	
(Sinning- thwaite)	Alice Banks (1432)	√					
	William Loves, vicar (1432)	√				√	
(Sinning- thwaite)	William Grammer (1433)	√					
(Tockwith)	William Tomlinson (1438)	√				√	
(Bickerton)	Adam Butler (1439)	√					
	Robert Mossdrop (1447)	√					
	John Firth (1462)	√					
(Tockwith)	Robert Stainburn (1475)	√					
	William Grange (1480)	√					
	Matilda Leak (1482)	√					
	Henry Carbott (1483)	√					
Bolton Percy (Nun Appleton)	Nicholas Fewster (1459)	√					
	John Brocket (1472)	√					
Dringhouses	Ralph Makebliss (1431)						√
	Emma Makebliss (1432)						√
	Henry Wright (1478)						√
Healaugh	John Depeden (1402)	√		√		√	√
	John					√	

	Makebliss (1483)						
	Isabelle Makebliss (1483)					√	
	James Longfellow (1486)					√	
Long Marston	William Thwaite (1434)	√					
	Thomas Ellison (1473)	√				√	
	William Nottingham (1474)	√				√	
	William Nottingham (1484)	√				√	
(Hutton Wandesley)	William Deighton (1484)					√	
Tadcaster (Catterton)	John Dresser (1471)			√		√	
(Catterton)	Thomas Clough (1471)					√	
(Catterton)	Robert Forester (1428)					√	
Thorp Arch	Robert Gillet (1489)	√			√		
Wighill	John de Stapleton (1454-5)					√	

Table 5c: Bequests to Religious Houses (excluding nunneries) outside York and the Ainsty

VILL	TESTATOR	Knaresborough	Mount Grace Priory	Beauvale Carthusian Priory, Notts. ²³²	Witham Carthusian Priory, Wilts. ²³³	Fountains Abbey	Selby Abbey
Bilton (Sinningthwaite)	Alice Bankes (1432)	√	√	√	√		
Bolton Percy (Appleton)	John Bachelor	√					
Long Marston	William Nottingham					√	
Moor Monkton	Alice Thwaite (1485)						√
Wighill	John de Stapleton (1394)	√					

Table 5d: Bequests to Nunneries outside the Ainsty

VILL	TESTATOR	Arthington (WR)	Barking	Esholt (WR)	Swine (ER)	Watton	Wilberfosse
Bilton (Sinningthwaite)	Nicholas Storum, chaplain (1405)	√		√			
	Peter West (1435-6)				√		
Healaugh	John Depeden	√	√	√		√	√

²³² 'House of Carthusian monks: The priory of Beauvale', in W. Page (ed.) *A History of the County of Nottingham: Volume 2* (1910), pp. 105-109, [Available Online]: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40088> (1 March 2009).

²³³ J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 80-1.

Boissevain has suggested that modern Catholics are more likely to be sociable than their Protestant counterparts.²³⁴ In the late middle ages, the doctrine of Purgatory and the concept of the intercession of prayer had a marked impact on Christian sociability, one manifestation of which, funeral feasts for neighbours, has already been discussed.²³⁵ Guild membership was another expression of devotional sociability. In Chapter One it was mentioned that few records of Ainsty guilds or Ainsty residents that belonged to guilds elsewhere survived. These socio-cultural links were not entirely lacking, however. Lady Elizabeth Basy of Bilbrough (also of York) numbered among the founding members of the Corpus Christi Guild of York. Some of the Fairfaxes were members, and in 1462 the chaplain of the parish of Bolton Percy made a bequest to the same guild, as did William Wright of Bishopthorpe in 1500.²³⁶ At the margins of the city, the two parishes of St. Mary Bishophill and the Micklegate parishes produced large numbers of members.²³⁷ There was, of course, a strong bias in guild membership towards high status men, which may help to explain the fact that wealthier parts of the hinterland, including settlements such as Escrick and Heslington in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, produced several members of York guilds.²³⁸

Some communities had denser devotional networks than others, and the presence of guilds, monasteries and local lords seem to have had an influence. Bequests by many individuals in the same or nearby communities to similar institutions could also be the result of shared values engendered by high network density, as well as the dissemination of religious ideas and norms via members of larger ecclesiastical and secular regional and country-wide networks.²³⁹ An extremely localized network is suggested by the bequests of Thomas Morton and William Jackson of Appleton to the Guild of St. Mary in Bolton Percy in 1470 and 1471, respectively.²⁴⁰ The devotion to St. Leonard's at Rufforth has already been mentioned. Dringhouses seems to have had more of a local, suburban identity.

²³⁴ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 82.

²³⁵ Daniell, *Death and Burial*, pp. 56-7.

²³⁶ Crouch, 'Gazetteer of Religious Guilds'; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 322v.

²³⁷ D.J.F. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire 1389-1547* (York, 2000), p. 150.

²³⁸ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, pp. 86-93; Crouch, 'Gazetteer of Religious Guilds'.

²³⁹ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 37, 78-83, 220-28.

²⁴⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fos. 154, 157v-158r.

Most religious bequests are to Clementhorpe Nunnery, or to its prioress, rather than to foundations within the walls.

Again, Acaster Malbis provides a good example of a dense network, this time with the parish church as one of its nodes. William Carter, John Hurtsky and William Acomb provided for the upkeep of lights associated with an altar dedicated to the Virgin within the parish church.²⁴¹ Status and self-identity may have helped to inform this network as it did with their choice of burial place. Alternatively, the vicar, a potential central figure, may have helped to promulgate shared devotional values, particularly at a time of apparent crisis mortality in 1460-61. Interestingly, many of these wills from Acaster Malbis exclude the fabric of York Minster, and even the friaries in York, as beneficiaries. The Abbey of St Mary of Newburgh, however, was the recipient of bequests from John Hurtsky (1460), Thomas Hornsy (1465), and Roger Radcliffe (1499). Acaster Malbis had been appropriated to the Abbey by Richard Malbis in the fourteenth century, and the bequests may indicate stronger ties to the lords of the manor than to York itself.²⁴²

As in other activity fields, women's devotional networks are harder to discover in the Ainsty. We do know that Lady Elizabeth Basy, wife of Richard Basy of Bilbrough, founded a chantry in St. Mary Bishophill Sr. in 1403.²⁴³ The relative dearth of parish guild documents and churchwardens' accounts means that records of churching ceremonies, that ritual whereby women who had recently given birth were readmitted into the church community, are absent. This is unfortunate, since most recent studies of these ceremonies have emphasised the strong bonds of female kinship, friendship and neighbourliness that these rituals reflected and reinforced, and it would be instructive to investigate whether the effects of mobility were manifested in these female gatherings.²⁴⁴ There was also a distinct lack of female parish guilds in northern England.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 462r

²⁴² Lawton, *Collectio*, p. 45; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 593v-594r; Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 112; Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 339.

²⁴³ Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, p. 169.

²⁴⁴ G. McMurray Gibson, 'Blessing from the Sun and the Moon: Churching as Women's Theatre', in B.A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace, *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England* (Minneapolis, 1996), pp. 139-54.

²⁴⁵ K. French, 'Maidens' Lights and Wives' Stores: Women's Parish Guilds in Late Medieval England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29:2 (1998): 405.

Other possible outlets for female sociability include the practices of domestic piety, such as the collective worshipping of female saints such as Sts. Sitha, Bridget and Anne, and participation in and observation of cycle and mystery plays. The first activity may have been common in York, and the second was certainly so, but it is doubtful that much evidence for their impact on the hinterland will be uncovered. However, there is one woman, Joan Fox of Bilton, whose unusual testamentary dedication, dating to 1400, included St. Helen, to whom her parish church was dedicated.²⁴⁶ It is tempting to think that if other women from the village had made wills similar dedications would have cropped up.

The interrelated gentry and mercantile families in the York neighbourhoods of Micklegate and Bishophill (including families with residences in the Ainsty, including Fairfax of Steeton, Ughtred of Moor Monkton and Thwaites of Long Marston) cultivated devotion to these saints, as well as the martyred Archbishop Scrope. Ainsty Testamentary connections with the nunnery of Clementhorpe (St Bridget), near the site of Scrope's execution, may thus take on a greater political as well as devotional significance.²⁴⁷

Another form of domestic piety open to women was to become a vowess following the death of a husband. This could involve remaining in one's own household, or moving to a convent, although the second option did not cut off the widow from the outside world. Several high status women in the Ainsty chose this option. Alice Banke of Sinningthwaite decided to move after her husband's death, choosing to become a vowess residing in the nunnery at Synningthwaite. Such a move had the potential to generate an entirely new set of social relations, of a different, female-oriented nature. Other vowesses included Margaret, widow of Sir John Stapleton (1455), Margaret, widow of Thomas Davell of Bilton (1464), Ellen, widow of William Palmes of Naburn (1478-9), and Anne, widow of Thomas Davell of York (1507). Anne, the widow of the second Thomas Davell, would have been well aware of Margaret Davell's choice to take the veil, and thus used shared devotional practices to strengthen kinship ties with another Davell woman

²⁴⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 42.

²⁴⁷ S.R. Rees Jones and F. Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker and J. Wogan-Browne (eds.), *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 9 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 239-52.

(even if she had died in the meantime), simultaneously insuring that the Davell name would not disappear upon remarriage.²⁴⁸

Women's tendency to bequeath very personal items to the fabric or interior of a church has been observed by several researchers.²⁴⁹ It is probable that such bequests would have served to bind the deceased closer to those that she (or he) had left behind, perhaps even creating spiritual and social links where none had existed before. Such links should not be discounted when analysing medieval networks, given the prominent position occupied by the dead within the world of the living.²⁵⁰ This phenomenon does not seem to have occurred in Ainsty testaments, however, as I have found only a few examples, and one of the testators was male! Richard Saule of Bilbrough bequeathed a Flanders chest to the chapel at Bilbrough in 1434, while Alice Tomlinson of Tockwith, Bilton, left the high altar of her parish church a towel and a hanging a few years later.²⁵¹

Surprisingly, Ainsty individuals only occasionally chose clerics as executors and supervisors. Despite this relatively low frequency, the same clerics inevitably show up in several probate records from the same community around the same time, usually as beneficiaries and/or witnesses, demonstrating their centrality in the lives of laymen and women. John Emson, the chaplain of Bickerton, provides an example of this centrality over three decades in the mid-fifteenth century, when a vicar and six laymen in the parish of Bilton (including the vills of Tockwith, Bickerton and Syningthwaite) named him as a beneficiary, executor, witness or combination thereof.²⁵² The clerics themselves formed networks based on occupation and devotion, often remembering other clerics from a wider geographical base than laymen and women. The circle of Nicholas Storom, the chaplain of Syningthwaite, included a cleric from Bishophill in York, as well as several from the western part of the Ainsty and the vills beyond its western

²⁴⁸ J. Raine the elder, 'Dispensations for Marriage, Marriage Licences, etc.', in *Testamenta Eboracensia* Vol. 3, SS (1864), pp. 333, 337, 343, 365.

²⁴⁹ Goldberg, 'Women, Family and Sexuality: Problematizing the Domestic in Later Medieval England', Lecture, University of York, 4 May, 2004; K.L. French, "'I Leave My Best Gown as a Vestment:': Women's Spiritual Interests in the Late Medieval English Parish', *Magistra* 4 (1998): 57-77.

²⁵⁰ See B. Gordon and P. Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 2000).

²⁵¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 384r and fo. 525r.

²⁵² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fos. 161, 617; Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 295, 495v-496r, 525r, 580; Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 39v.

boundary: the chaplain of Bickerton and the vicars of Wighill, Walton, Kirkhammerton, and Whixley.²⁵³

2.4 Conclusion

According to the probate evidence, Ainsty society was characterised by relations that were multiplex and networks that were dense. However, not all activity fields of the same type were equal in all communities. Neighbourhood and local society seems to have been more significant in the formation of social networks, sometimes including those founded on common devotion, in the case of prosperous agriculturalists. Links with York, the Ainsty beyond the immediate locale, and elsewhere in the West Riding seem to have predominated in the case of the gentry. Kinship connections were evident within a single vill as well as between neighbouring vills and beyond and included blood kin and affines. Affective ties with servants as ‘surrogate kin’ were not manifested as clearly in the Ainsty as in York.

The impact of York’s presence on social networks in the activity fields of household and kinship varied in the Ainsty. Sometimes there is nothing particularly obvious that marks the hinterland out from the rest of rural society. York was often mentioned only in the context of devotional networks, with ecclesiastical and religious institutions as nodes. Patronage of urban institutions, including friaries, did not lessen the loyalty to the parish church: both were enthusiastically accommodated. Only with further analysis of a greater range of testamentary evidence and other sources, including royal administrative records and Church court cause papers, can we determine why, for example, men in Acaster Malbis shared devotional links missing from the records of other communities, why certain men and women commemorated larger social networks than others in their testaments, and how these relationships impacted the community as a whole.

²⁵³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 245.

CHAPTER THREE: SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS

3.1 Introduction: A Legal Framework for Social Networks

This chapter continues to explore the intersecting activity fields of kinship, work and devotion through the lens of ecclesiastical cause papers in order to broaden and deepen our picture of social networks in York's hinterland. Scholars in recent decades have enthusiastically embraced ecclesiastical court records, particularly the witness depositions, for the valuable insight they provide into the interactions between the everyday practice of the laity and the application of canon law, especially in connection with the institution of marriage, over a broad geographical range.¹ Indeed, Charles Donahue, Jr. and Larry Poos, among others, have urged quantitative analysis of Church court depositions for the study of marriage, while Jeremy Goldberg and Donahue, in other articles, have also advocated for a close reading of individual case studies.² Happily, for scholars of York and the surrounding area, the records produced by the archbishop's courts are among the best in England for the large numbers of witness depositions preserved in the cause paper files for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³

In addition to the wealth of information about the social relations involved in the formation and breakdown of marriage, Church court records also provide us with sometimes vivid 'snapshots' of movement and migratory activity and the social relations thus engendered. While A.J. Finch has used ecclesiastical court depositions to explore the disintegration of marital relations in later medieval England and continental Europe in general terms, Goldberg, Llinos Beverley Smith and Philippa Maddern have suggested explicit correlations between marital

¹ For an explanation of the canon law involved in marriage disputes, see R.H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in English Legal History (Cambridge, 1974); for canon law as it applied to defamation cases, see *idem*, *Select Cases on Defamation to 1600*, Selden Society 101 (London, 1985).

² C. Donahue, Jr., 'Female Plaintiffs in Marriage Cases in the Court of York in the Later Middle Ages: What Can We Learn from the Numbers?', in S. Sheridan Walker (ed.), *Wife and Widow in Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1993), pp. 183-85; L.R. Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts of Pre-Reformation England', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25:4 (1995): 585-607; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 2, 11-12, 27, 217-66; and *idem*, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation in the Church Courts in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of the Court of York', *Gender and History* 19:1 (2007): 52-5.

³ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 12; F. Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London, 2000), pp. 17-19; Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', p. 185.

instability, lay attitudes towards marriage, and the impact of the economic climate, life-cycle service, migration and mobility on that institution.⁴ Research for this thesis has suggested that these associations between mobility and marriage may be applied to the Ainsty in the late middle ages, although, as will be shown below, the number of surviving court case records related to marriage is relatively small.

The social relations and networks involved in marriage formation have received sustained attention. Despite the Church's dissemination among the laity of the doctrine that the consent of the contracting parties alone created a binding marriage, most scholars of medieval marriage and family would not dispute the involvement of kin, friends and employers in the marital choices of many men and women, although the nature of this involvement changed over time and across geographical regions.⁵

Only a few historians, however, have studied this issue in detail using Church court records. Shannon McSheffrey has partially filled the lacuna with her studies on the involvement of relatives, employers, friends and civic officials in the process of marriage formation in fifteenth-century London.⁶ Sara Butler, too,

⁴ A.J. Finch, 'Repulsa Uxore Sua: Marital Difficulties and Separation in the Later Middle Ages', *Continuity and Change* 8:1 (1993): 11-38; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, esp. chapters 4-7; Llinos Beverley Smith, 'A View from an Ecclesiastical Court: Mobility and Marriage in a Border Society at the End of the Middle Ages', in R.R. Davies and Geraint H. Jenkins (eds.), *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 64-80; P. Maddern, 'Moving On: geographical mobility and serial monogamy in late-medieval England', Paper given at the York Medieval Seminar, 16 February, 2005. All of these historians make extensive use of Church court depositions.

⁵ E.M. Searle, 'Seignorial Control of Women's Marriage: The Antecedents and Functions of Merchet in England', *Past and Present* 82 (1979): 3-43; M.M. Sheehan, 'The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register', in J.K. Farge (ed.), *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies* (Toronto, 1996), pp. 38-41; *idem*, 'Choice of Marriage Partner in the Middle Ages: Development and Mode of Application of a Theory of Marriage', in J.K. Farge (ed.), *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies* (Toronto, 1996), pp. 91-110; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 47-50; R. Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation, 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 62-4; M. Ingram, 'Spousals Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts c. 1350-c. 1640', in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981), pp. 48-51; Hanawalt, *Ties that Bound*, pp. 197-204; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 88-99; P. Maddern, 'In myn own house': the troubled connections between servant marriages, late-medieval English household communities, and early modern historiography', Paper given at the Late Medieval Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, London, 18 November, 2005. I am grateful to Philippa Maddern for sending me a copy of her paper and allowing me to cite it.

⁶ S. McSheffrey, 'I will have none ayenst my faders will': Consent and the Making of Marriage in the Late Medieval Diocese of London', in C.M. Rousseau and J.T. Rosenthal (eds.), *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B.*, *Studies in Medieval Culture* XXXVII (Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan,

discusses the influence of external parties in her article on coerced marriages, taking many of her examples from York, although she focuses on the special case of prospective husbands coercing women into marriage.⁷ Frederick Pedersen's detailed exposition of the fourteenth-century York case, *Huntington v. Monkton*, nicknamed the 'Romeo and Juliet of Stonegate', demonstrates that witness depositions sometimes make explicit the influence of external parties, particularly parents, on marriage behaviour.⁸ Goldberg has taken a broader view, paying particular attention to the different levels of involvement of family, employers and others in the marriage choices of men and especially women from urban and rural backgrounds in both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁹

Despite the work of these scholars, Church court depositions have not been employed as intensively in the study of social relations and networks beyond the institution of marriage. A large portion of this chapter also explores the social networks of marriage partners in the Ainsty, but goes beyond the institution of marriage to determine the networks at work in defamation causes, tithe disputes and recognisances for breach of faith. In all of these types of causes, as we shall see, the circumstances leading to dispute, and subsequently to litigation, almost invariably involved a certain degree of mobility and the formation of social relations within and outside the Ainsty.

3.2 The Ecclesiastical Courts

The cause papers cannot be read as a totally straightforward record of social relations, for they were inevitably shaped by canon law established in previous centuries.¹⁰ The courts' application of and the litigants' perceptions of canon law

1998), pp. 153-74; and *eadem*, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia, 2006).

⁷ S.M. Butler, "I will never consent to be wedded with you!": coerced marriage in the courts of medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History* 39:2 (2004): 247-70. She includes examples of suitors and husbands manipulating their own and their potential brides' networks in order to force a marriage.

⁸ Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 29-34.

⁹ Goldberg, 'Gender and Marriage Litigation', pp. 46-48.

¹⁰ Canon law was well developed with respect to marriage by the twelfth century and by the first half of the thirteenth century for defamation cases. A series of conflicts between the Royal and ecclesiastical courts over tithe jurisdictions also played out in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sheehan, 'Choice of Marriage Partner', pp. 91-117; *idem*, 'Formation and Stability of Marriage', p. 39; Ingram, 'Spousals Litigation', p. 37; Helmholz, *Select Cases on Defamation*, p. xi; N. Adams, 'The Judicial Conflict over Tithes', *The English Historical Review* 52:105 (1937): 1-22.

influenced not only the types of cases most often brought before the courts, and the characteristics of individuals most likely to engage in litigation, but also the types of witnesses called and the sorts of testimony they were encouraged to give.¹¹ Nonetheless, the records left by the ecclesiastical courts are particularly suited to the study of social interaction, for in addition to allowing individuals to alter unsatisfactory situations (e.g. unhappy marriages) created in part by past social interaction, partly by reviewing and reconstructing that interaction in the public forum of the court, the litigation proceedings themselves also presented a further activity field by providing opportunities for new types of social interaction.

Sessions of the consistory court ordinarily took place in York, and thus litigation normally required some travel for most participants living outside the city. Proctors and advocates needed to be appointed and hired, and witnesses contacted. The employment of witnesses involved interactions such as transactions of cash in exchange for legal support, for litigants generally paid the expenses, including cost of travel, of their witnesses. A list of the plaintiff's expenses survives for a tithing case of 1397: Thomas Porter, rector of the parish church of Ryther, paid for the citation, examination and expenses of four witnesses, as well as wine for the examiner.¹² Witnesses sometimes accompanied their litigants to court, so that the credulity of modern scholars is somewhat strained when deponents almost invariably answered negatively when their examiners asked if they had been 'instructed or corrupted'.¹³ Witnesses clearly often collaborated with

¹¹ Much has been said, for example, about how lay knowledge of the canon law regarding marriage not only enabled individuals to manipulate this knowledge to their advantage in court, but also influenced the social relations involved in marriage formation, to the extent that prospective spouses and their facilitators and witnesses adopted actions that they knew would later allow the marriage to stand or fail under the scrutiny of an ecclesiastical court. There is, however, some debate about when and the extent to which the laity adopted the Church's standards for marriage formation, with Helmholz arguing that this occurred very late during our period due to laypeople's reluctance to let go of the idea that marriage was a private affair. Pedersen, on the other hand, believes that the laity 'wholeheartedly accepted' ecclesiastical courts' jurisdiction over marriage. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 5, 31-33, 167-68; C. Donahue, Jr., 'The Policy of Alexander the Third's Consent Theory of Marriage' in *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Monumenta Iuris Canonici* (Toronto, 1976), p. 262; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, p. 118. See also Sheehan, 'Choice of Marriage Partner', pp. 99-117 and 'Formation and Stability of Marriage', pp. 38-76. McSheffrey has pointed out the possibility of lay attitudes and practice actually influencing the marriage liturgy itself. *Sex and Civic Culture*, pp. 22.

¹² BIHR, CP.E 228. The defendant, John Webster, lived in Acaster Selby in the Ainsty, about 3 miles northeast of Ryther; he was apparently in the habit of carting away and selling tithes of coppice wood rightfully owing to Porter.

¹³ J.A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (Harlow, Essex, 1995), p. 132.

one another, whether through a simple revisiting of past events (which would have also involved an element of the construction of the memory of their past interaction), or outright fabrication to support their party's case. Instances of depositions illuminating aspects of such interactions will be discussed below.

The quantity of social interaction arising from court activity was not insignificant, for the amount of business that passed through the Church Court of York was considerable. Indeed, there is evidence that the laity at York and elsewhere in late medieval England had come to view the ecclesiastical court as one of several possible venues in which to address their grievances and conflicts judicially.¹⁴ The provincial court covered the large northern archdiocese, including, of course, the Ainsty, from which several cases survive.¹⁵ The Ainsty itself comprised a rural deanery, one of twenty-four in the archdiocese of York, and belonged to the archdeaconry of York, one of five archdeaconries comprising the archdiocese.¹⁶ The next several paragraphs seek to describe the workings of the court, especially in relation to social networks, and then to place the Ainsty cases in the context of the York cases as a whole.

3.2.1 The Consistory Court and its Personnel

The archiepiscopal court at York consisted of three branches: the consistory court, the court of the archbishop's exchequer, which dealt with probate and testamentary causes, and the archbishop's personal court of audience, which heard particularly important cases, some cases on appeal or in contempt of a lower court, and cases dealing with clerical discipline and spiritual offences including heresy, among others.¹⁷ The consistory court was the branch of the court of York which

¹⁴ Secular courts included those associated with the crown, manors, boroughs and liberties. C. Donahue, Jr., 'Roman Canon Law in the Medieval English Church: Stubbs vs. Maitland Re-Examined after 75 Years in the Light of Some Records from the Church Courts', *Michigan Law Review* 72:4 (1974): pp. 700-701, 705-708; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 137; R.M. Wunderli, *London Church Courts and Society on the Eve of the Reformation*, Speculum Anniversary Monographs 7 (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp. 137-39.

¹⁵ See Appendix Three.

¹⁶ K.F. Burns, 'The Administrative System of the Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese and Province of York. Part I: The Medieval Courts', Leverhulme Research Scheme (York, 1962), pp. 9-13; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷ Burns, 'Administrative System', pp. 48-52, 56; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 11-15. For a detailed analysis of the workings of the exchequer court see D.M. Smith, 'The Exercise of the Probate Jurisdiction of the Medieval Archbishops of York', in D. Wood (ed.), *Life and Thought in*

dealt with the bulk of the cases examined in this chapter, that is, marital disputes, defamation cases, tithe disputes, and recognisances for breach of faith. As noted above, scholars who have made detailed studies of the cause papers in the context of canon law have noted that the court's function, both in the eyes of the laity and the court itself, was more akin to providing a forum for dispute settlement rather than enforcing canon law.¹⁸

The personnel of the court instead focused on 'bringing out the facts of the case' (although the way this was handled often seems rather ineffective or even suspect to the modern historian) in an effort to settle disputes.¹⁹ The archbishop's official and his deputy, the commissary general, were the chief officers, and judges of the court of the court.²⁰ There were also examiners attached to the court, including an examiner general, occasionally the same person as the court registrar. The examiners heard and took down witness depositions, while the registrar and his notaries and scribes kept the court's records, including lists of excommunications and sanctions against contumacy, and distributed copies of the depositions to parties. According to Archbishop Greenfield's statutes of 1311, the court's staff should include eight proctors and twelve advocates, although Burns observed only five to eight practicing at any one time during the period for which fifteenth-century Act Books survive.²¹ The proctors represented the litigants while the advocates argued points of law.

Within the framework of the court and its proceedings there is some evidence for the occasional involvement of York court officials at varying levels of personal commitment in individual causes.²² Pedersen has suggested that in the 'Romeo and Juliet' case, the female plaintiff manipulated intersecting kin and social networks in order to bias the court personnel against Simon Munkton, the defendant. Agnes Huntington had hired three proctors (half of those practicing at

the Northern Church c. 1100-c. 1700: Essays in Honour of Claire Cross (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1999), pp. 123-44.

¹⁸ Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', pp. 705-8; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 113, 118, 121

¹⁹ Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', pp. 705-8.

²⁰ As indicated in the previous chapter, cases of probate were heard by the archbishop's exchequer.

²¹ Burns, 'Administrative System', p. 100; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, p. 97.

²² Goldberg, Donahue and Pedersen have each discussed examples of such cases. Goldberg, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation', pp. 52-53; Charles Donahue, Jr., 'A Legal Historian Looks at the Case Method', *Northern Kentucky Law Review* 19 (1991): 21-31; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 40, 43-45.

the time), one of whom was the brother of a neighbour who was demonstrably sympathetic to her case.²³ Evidence for the involvement of court personnel in the Ainsty cases is rare, but telling. The most striking case, *Joan Ingoly c. John Middleton and c. Robert Easingwold and his wife Ellen Wright* (1430), has been discussed in some detail by Charles Donahue.²⁴ He suggests that ties of kinship and/or geographic origin may have linked one of the defendants, Robert Easingwold, with his proctor, another Robert Easingwold, and with the judge himself, the commissary general, Roger Easingwold.²⁵ Donahue claims that these circumstances paved the way for a corrupt case in which canon law procedure was loosely applied, and occasionally outright ignored, especially in the way that the testimony of relatives of the plaintiff was allowed.²⁶

With the exception of the Ingoly case just mentioned, I have not come across any instances in the Ainsty where court officials can be shown to have been related by blood or marriage to the litigants. However, it is certainly possible that occasionally more than one litigant might have known the proctors representing each party, increasing the density of the network formed through court interaction. The proctors and other court officials could be local men, and their small numbers meant that anyone who engaged in business at the Court of York more than once would likely encounter the same men working there. This was certainly the case in the southern provincial court, where individuals who engaged in multiple suits hired the same proctor on each occasion.²⁷ The ubiquitous name, Robert Esyngwald, can be used to illustrate a further example from the Ainsty. Robert Esyngwald, possibly an ancestor of the proctor and judge in the 1430 case mentioned above, had dealings with the defendant in the 1347-48 defamation case, *Richard of Acomb, Clerk c. Simon de Sedburgh*.²⁸ Esyngwold testified on Sedburgh's behalf, saying that he was in his company all day as Simon conducted

²³ Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 40, 43-5.

²⁴ BIHR CP.F.201; Donahue, 'Case Method', pp. 21-31. Joan Ingoly was from Bishopthorpe, while Robert Easingwold hailed from Poppleton, although it is possible that he or his father originated in Easingwold, a market town twelve miles north of York.

²⁵ Donahue located a Robert Easingwold in York's Register of Freemen who may also be identified as our defendant. 'Case Method', note, p. 26.

²⁶ Donahue, 'Case Method', pp. 25-7. This case will be discussed in further detail below. It is the only Ainsty case I have found so far in which the testimony of witnesses related to a litigant through kinship and marriage were admitted by the court.

²⁷ Woodcock, *Canterbury Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 43-4.

²⁸ BIHR, CP.E.44.

legal business in the Minster Close and elsewhere in York. Many of Sedburgh's other witnesses were also clerks who mentioned dealings in York's law courts in their depositions, and of course the plaintiff himself was also a clerk, although I have found no links between Richard of Acomb and other clerks from York.

Donahue observed probable links of kinship, geographical origin and patronage among different generations of court officials, including the Easingwolds.²⁹ Similarly, Helmholz suggests that due to their frequent interaction of long duration, relations between lawyers and judges would have been close and informal, fostering a casual atmosphere of bargaining and negotiation during court proceedings. For example, during the period from 1380 to 1389, it seems that two proctors, Nicholas Esyngwold and John Stanton, Jr., represented the same or opposing parties in the same cases; they must have built up quite a rapport.³⁰ Such an atmosphere would have affected social relations not only among court officials, but between them and the litigants and witnesses, and among the litigants and witnesses themselves.³¹ Officials of the court would have had to possess good 'people skills'.³² Sandy Bardsley has pointed to several examples of litigants and witnesses (and sometimes, the court officials themselves) disrupting court proceedings with chatter, gossip, or outbursts, for example when the case was not proceeding according to their wishes.³³

3.2.2 Procedure

It was against this busy, informal and flexible background that a case progressed through its various stages. It is generally agreed that the litigants themselves controlled the way in which cases proceeded.³⁴ This state of affairs is reflected in the fact that instance litigation (litigation between parties begun at the instance of one of the parties rather than disciplinary action initiated by the court

²⁹ Donahue, 'Case Method', pp. 25-7.

³⁰ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 119-20; Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', p. 710. In one Ainsty case, CP.E.148 (1387-88), Nicholas Esyngwold represented the plaintiff, Thomas de Newporte, while Master William de Calthorn, clerk, represented the defendant, Joan, daughter of Thomas Thwaite of Long Marston.

³¹ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 119-20.

³² Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 119-20, 141.

³³ S. Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues: Speech and Gender in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 100-101.

³⁴ Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', p. 705.

itself, known as *ex officio* business), represents the overwhelming majority of court business. The Ainsty cases seem typical in this respect; out of all the cause papers and entries in the act books, I have found only three *ex officio* cases.³⁵ Moreover, there is a probability that many cases did not reach the sentencing stage, being often either settled out of court, arbitrated, or simply not pursued if the plaintiff wished to let the case drop. Such courses of action were technically against canon law but were pursued in practice.³⁶

Despite these few examples, canon law procedure was, in the main, respected in York. However, the line between interaction within and outside of court could often be blurred, for the litigants and witnesses as well as the court officials themselves. For example, Pedersen has made much of the occurrence of pre- and extra-curial tribunals.³⁷ These would have possessed differing levels of formality, but they all involved social networks, and linked kin with religious men and women and court officials. To use marriage as an example, much as the relatives and associates of a prospective bride and groom often met to negotiate aspects of the match, similar groups of people could meet later to discuss the validity of the marriage and the need to go to court if something went wrong. *Foston v. Lawless* (1393) involved a meeting in the cell of a nun at Clementhorpe near the Ainsty in the suburbs of York during which the nature of the couple's marriage vows was discussed.³⁸ In *Clerk c. Sedburgh*, mentioned above, the presence among the twelve documents comprising the cause paper of a record of a petition in which Sedburgh had sued Clerk for forty shillings he was owed suggests that the defendant may have tried to persuade Clerk to pay the debt in an extra-curial encounter that may have gone awry, resulting in the defamation suit.³⁹ The

³⁵ Even *ex officio* cases were often driven by the accused, for example, when an individual wanted the chance to clear his or her name through canonical compurgation. In other examples, cases were brought to the attention of the Church court by neighbours or acquaintances of the accused. Again, the primary aim of the court was mediation and dispute settlement rather than law enforcement. See Poos, 'Sex, Lies and the Church Courts', pp. 587-88; and R.H. Helmholz, 'Crime, Compurgation and the Courts of the Medieval Church', *Law and History Review* 1:1 (1983): 20, 23-6.

³⁶ Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', pp. 705-8; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 135-8. The bulk of the business dealt with by the consistory court in the southern province of Canterbury also consisted of instance litigation. B.L. Woodcock, *Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury* (Oxford University Press, London, 1952), pp. 30-4.

³⁷ Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 105-18.

³⁸ BIHR, CP.E.198. This case is discussed briefly in Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 114-5.

³⁹ BIHR, CP.E.44.

aforementioned meetings of witnesses to discuss aspects of the case prior to giving testimony (the examinations themselves took place outside the court) opened up another field for social interaction which will be discussed at greater length below.

When the case eventually did come before an official seating of the court, the latter could assign separate terms, or meetings, for the various stages of the case. These could include the production of the plaintiff's libel or statement of his or her complaint, the positions and articles or interrogatories (the questions to be put to the witnesses), the production of witnesses and the defendant's exceptions to them, if any, and, of course, the sentence.⁴⁰ However, these separate terms were sometimes conflated, depending on the complexity of the case and the attitudes of the parties. The length of the case and the number of times the court met to discuss it would have had an effect on the frequency and duration of interaction of those involved; it is possible that this interaction sometimes prompted decisions to settle out of court. Helmholz has calculated that the average length of York marriage cases for which the dates of both the libel and the sentence are known was seven months.⁴¹ It seems likely that the longer the litigants, particularly the plaintiff, were willing to spend pursuing a case, the higher in socio-economic status they were likely to be. Indeed, the Ainsty cases for which a large volume of documentation (thus implying a more extended period of litigation) survives tended to involve clerics, such as William Crosse, the rector of Bolton Percy, and the prioress of Wallingwells, or the lesser gentry, such as John Northfolke of Naburn, designated as a *donzel*, or squire.⁴² The example of the expenses paid by Thomas Porter, rector of Ryther has already been mentioned.⁴³

The practice of choosing a proctor to represent one's interests in court meant that personal appearance was not always necessary. It was, however, expected during the early stages of the case and for the propounding of the definitive sentence.⁴⁴ Several documents in Ainsty cause papers, moreover, testify to the personal appearance of the parties and witnesses. Citations against contumacious defendants or cases that involved witnesses too infirm or far away to

⁴⁰ Cases for which records documenting each of these stages survive are relatively rare.

⁴¹ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 115.

⁴² BIHR, CP.F.34 (1408-9) and CP.F.89 (1425).

⁴³ BIHR, CP.E.228 (1397).

⁴⁴ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 124.

make the trip to York could involve shifting the activity field of the court, as represented by an apparitor, to the defendant or witness's home parish, often near his or her home or parish church.⁴⁵ It is interesting that one of the few examples of both citations for contumacy and the constitution of a proctor that I have found for the Ainsty are associated with a woman originating from Scrooby, a village in Nottinghamshire under the archiepiscopal peculiar jurisdiction of Southwell.⁴⁶ Alice Cok of Scrooby was a defendant in a marriage and divorce case, with the other parties hailing from Bishopthorpe in the Ainsty, and Cawood, just outside the wapentake's southern boundary. Her chosen proctors, John Lepyngton and John Bispham seem to have been two of the lesser known and experienced proctors of the York court.⁴⁷ Although the choice of proctor(s) could depend on the reputations of the proctors themselves, as suggested above, it could also be influenced by the nature of one's social network.⁴⁸

The stage of a court case most likely to produce the ripest opportunities for social interaction were the production, examination and presentation of the depositions of the witnesses, of which canon law required at least two. The rule that kin, affines and servants of the principals were excluded as witnesses meant that litigants often had to rely on friends, colleagues and neighbours to support their case.⁴⁹ These prohibitions were only variably applied. We often come across the statement that a deponent was not related in any way to either of the parties, but only slightly less frequently is the witness described in terms of his or her relationship with a litigant. Some York cases feature witnesses explicitly related to the principals, such as the marriage case involving William Gell of Kirkhammerton (directly beyond the northwest borders of the Ainsty), in which his brother Richard Gell of neighbouring Cattall testified on his behalf.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 124.

⁴⁶ BIHR, CP.F.133 (1421-22), *Joan Radcliff of Cawood c. William Kyng of Bishopthorpe and Alice Cok of Scrooby*; C. Hinson, GENUKI [Available Online], <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/NTT/Scrooby/>, (24 February 2009).

⁴⁷ BIHR, CP.F.133. The citation and constitution appear to be fine copies, and still have seals attached.

⁴⁸ Woodcock, *Canterbury Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 43; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, p. 99.

⁴⁹ Donahue, 'Proof by Witnesses', pp. 130-131.

⁵⁰ BIHR, CP.F.168.

Witnesses were actually encouraged to meet and ‘refresh their memories’ regarding the details of the case prior to testifying.⁵¹ These encounters provided opportunities for those involved to remember, reconstruct and construct aspects of their relations with the litigants and with one another. Typical questions they were required to answer, including (for marriage cases) the clothing worn by the principals, the circumstances and time of day, the locations of the key players and whether they were sitting or standing, would help to create and reinforce social custom and symbolism.⁵² Witnesses’ testimonies, sometimes years after the fact, offer eerily similar details about clothing and weather, indicating a degree of collusion.⁵³

Conversations and social gatherings, however, would have to be reported in a way believable to the court, and thus deponents employed various mnemonic devices to account for how they managed to remember details of an incident after a period of time had elapsed. Events relevant to the case were thus linked with important events in the deponents’ own lifecycles as well as events with a wider impact, such as pestilence and war.⁵⁴

3.2.3 Sources: The Cause Papers and Act Books

The handlists compiled by D.M. Smith of the Borthwick Institute make it possible to count the numbers of different categories of cases for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Ainsty and compare them to the numbers for the Court of York as a whole.⁵⁵ Causes originating in the Ainsty or involving individuals specifically stated as hailing from the Ainsty account for five (or seven if we include Tadcaster) out of a total of 256 cause paper files surviving for the court of York for the fourteenth century, or less than two percent. About eighty-eight out of the 256 fourteenth-century cause papers deal with marital disputes of some sort,

⁵¹ Donahue, ‘Proof by Witnesses’, p. 152, note 103.

⁵² See BIHR, CP.F.133, in which a marriage contract took place after dinner at the time when the men of the vill of Wistow were playing football.

⁵³ See BIHR, CP.F.168, in which several witnesses agreed that Roger Serle had been sitting on a bench (*scabello*) and that William Gell had been wearing, among other things, a ‘felthatte’.

⁵⁴ J.T. Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 1-62; B. Kane, ‘Memory, Geography and Gender in the Late Medieval Church Court of York’, paper given at Leeds International Medieval Congress, July 2007.

⁵⁵ D.M. Smith, *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York: the Court of York 1301-1399* (York, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 14, 1988) and *idem*, *The Court of York, 1400-1499* (York, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 29, 2003). See Appendix Three.

while benefices comprise fifty-eight cases, tithes thirty-four cases, defamation twenty cases, testamentary disputes nineteen cases, breach of faith fourteen cases, and jurisdictions nine cases.⁵⁶ There are three matrimonial cases (or five if we include Tadcaster) for the fourteenth-century Ainsty, as well as one each dealing with tithes and defamation.

Despite the much remarked-upon decline in the quality and detail of the cause papers and Act Books in both archdioceses during the following century, more material is extant for the Ainsty due to the survival of fifteenth-century consistory court Act Books for York.⁵⁷ Out of 308 surviving fifteenth-century cause paper files, 125 pertain to marriage cases.⁵⁸ Only two of these originated in the Ainsty. There are only three (or four, including Tadcaster) tithe cases for the Ainsty, plus one cause of indeterminate nature, for which cause paper files survive. I have only been able to locate one Ainsty cause paper from the second half of the fifteenth century, and that is of indeterminate date.⁵⁹ That the majority of Ainsty cause papers survive from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries correlates with the period from which a greater volume of York cause papers survive as a whole.⁶⁰ However, the consistory court Act Books, which survive in five volumes, covering the years 1417-20, 1424-30, 1484-89 and 1497, only eighteen years in total, provide basic details about forty-four Ainsty cases, nearly three times the total number of Ainsty cause papers over both centuries.⁶¹ The large number of recognisances for debt involving Ainsty individuals corresponds with a similar increase in the court records for England as a whole during the fifteenth century.⁶²

It is not unreasonable to suspect that there would have been many more cases, the records of which have not survived, from the Ainsty. Frederick Pedersen

⁵⁶ D.M. Smith, *The Court of York, 1301-1399*, pp. vi-vii; Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, p. 19.

⁵⁷ D.M. Smith, *The Court of York, 1400-1499*, pp. iii; Donahue, *Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 116; Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', p. 185, p. 208, note 10; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', p. 185.

⁵⁹ BIHR, CP.F.270. This was an argument over tithes, with the prioress and convent of Nun Monkton and Richmond archdeaconry as the plaintiffs and the rector of Moor Monkton as the defendant.

⁶⁰ D.M. Smith, *The Court of York, 1301-1399*, pp. vi-vii; Donahue, *Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 116.

⁶¹ D.M. Smith, *The Court of York, 1400-1499*, pp. iii-iv.

⁶² Woodcock, *Canterbury Ecclesiastical Courts*, pp. 89-92.

and other scholars have observed a correlation between the origins of litigants and witnesses and the locations of major travel routes.⁶³ It makes sense that those with easier access to the urban court, such as the inhabitants of the Ainsty, would be more likely to engage in litigation, and the cause papers that have survived contain numerous references to travel in the local area and beyond.⁶⁴ The gender and status of the participants also had a bearing on their appearance in court; this will be discussed further below.

Although, as Poos and Donahue have asserted, the cause papers and Church court records as a whole lend themselves to quantitative analysis due to the probability that their survival is relatively ‘haphazard’ and ‘random’, the cases pertaining to the Ainsty represent too small a sample to be statistically significant.⁶⁵ It is thus more fruitful to examine individual cases in order to attempt to ‘chart’ social ‘undercurrents’ within and across various activity fields.⁶⁶ This is the task of the remainder of this chapter.

3.3 Social Networks in the Cause Papers

One sociological pattern that seems to emerge from many cause papers, the centrality of the litigants, is probably a side effect of the nature of instance litigation, particularly matrimonial suits. The litigants, both plaintiffs and defendants, male and female, appear to be at the centre of their circle or network of witnesses. Litigants seem to be the links that the witnesses had in common; they knew at least one of the litigants even if they did not know one another, and if they *did* know one another, that information was not always recorded. In one early fifteenth-century example from the city of York, a witness to the marriage of Agnes Grantham and John Thornton described how and how long he had known two of the litigants, but could not recall the forename of the man whose garden provided

⁶³ Pedersen, ‘Demography in the Archives: social and geographical factors in fourteenth-century York cause paper marriage litigation’, *Continuity and Change* 10:3 (1995), pp. 418-31; idem ‘The York cause papers: a reply to Jeremy Goldberg’, *Continuity and Change* 12:3 (1997): 449-51; Donahue, ‘Female Witnesses’, note, p. 207.

⁶⁴ Specific cases, notably CP F.201 (1430), in which witnesses mention no fewer than six moves to or from York and the surrounding countryside, will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

⁶⁵ Poos, ‘Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts’, pp. 586, 593-95, 597-600; Donahue, ‘Stubbs vs. Maitland’, pp. 657-60.

⁶⁶ Poos, ‘Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts’, p. 600.

the setting for the marriage contract.⁶⁷ This state of affairs makes sense in marriage cases, since men and women often invited close acquaintances or ‘respectable’ people of solid socio-economic status to witness their contracts, and later, if necessary, recalled them to testify. On the other hand, prospective brides and grooms could also activate ‘weak links’ with acquaintances who happened to be passing by when witnesses to a marriage contract were needed.⁶⁸

Witnesses to defamation disputes, given that defamation was by its nature a crime that normally took place in a relatively public location, had the potential to be more random, but we know that close, kin, friends and neighbours could be drawn in to disputes that eventually produced defamation litigation.⁶⁹ Indeed, witnesses to marriage contracts, defamation and tithe disputes often seem to know one another independently of the litigants who required them to testify on their behalf.⁷⁰ There is no question that at least some of the networks exhibited in the cause papers were dense, and often multiplex, the key players encountering one another in the activity fields of kinship, household, parish, neighbourhood, work as well the court itself: when deponents referred to one another in their testimony, the phrase *contestibus suis*, ‘[his/her] fellow witnesses’ was invariably added.

Sometimes clusters of men and women who were more closely connected and enjoyed higher frequency and duration of interaction with one another, or who formed what is known as an ‘action set’ during an event, may be discerned within larger groups. Thus occasionally words are used denoting a closer kind of relationship. After the widow Agnes Grantham of York, had been abducted by John Dale near Acomb, John Eberston deposed about his rescue of Agnes with his *consocius* (comrade or fellow), Robert Selby. We shall see that Agnes Grantham’s network was dense in parts, and encompassed clusters from the parishes of Michael

⁶⁷ BIHR, CP.F.36 (1410-11). Richard Ulkelf thought the man’s name might have been Robert, William, John, or ‘some other such name’ (*aut tali no[m]i[n]e consimili*). Although two of the litigants in this three-party case lived within the city walls, I have included it in my study due to the fact that the plaintiff was attached to the household of the Master of St Leonard’s hospital at Acomb Grange, and that much of the ‘action’ described in the depositions takes place in various locales in the Ainsty.

⁶⁸ BIHR, CP.F.104. For a translation, see Goldberg, *Women in England*, pp. 114-17. McSheffrey notes that this practice took place in later fifteenth-century London. *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, p. 27.

⁶⁹ Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, pp. 109-13, 128-29, 136.

⁷⁰ See BIHR, CP.E.70, *Maud Shippen of Steeton c. Robert le Smyth of Bolton Percy*. For discussion of network density in this case see below, pp. 206-7.

le Belfrey and All Saints Pavement, as well as Acomb Grange. This is not to say that there were no connections between them at all: Agnes's late husband had connections with All Saints and Acomb, as did Agnes herself.⁷¹

On the other hand, where depositions on behalf of both (or more) parties to the litigation survive, there often seem to have been two or more groups of witnesses, testifying on behalf of the plaintiff on the one hand and for the defendant on the other. It seems that there was not always overlap between these groups. It is striking that when one party originates in York and the other hails from the Ainsty, the social separation between the two groups becomes more marked. In two examples, the witnesses from York for the most part know one another but either do not mention the opposing witnesses from the Ainsty or have trouble remembering their names. This is the case in the defamation cause, *Acomb c. Sedburgh*, mentioned above.⁷² The above-mentioned John Eberston of the parish of St Michael le Belfrey in York, one of the witnesses for Agnes Grantham in her case against John Dale, recalled a confrontation that took place in the Ainsty that pitted him and his neighbour from York, Robert Selby, against Agnes's abductors, John Dale, '*cum Thomae Wakfeld et alio tertio cuius nomen iste iuratus ignorat*'.⁷³ However, as we saw from the example of the witness to the marriage of Agnes Grantham and John Thornton, neither did witnesses from York always know fellow inhabitants of the city. Moreover, the question of how and how long a witness had known the parties to a dispute was by no means universally asked, so it is occasionally difficult to determine the nature of social ties, including frequency and duration of interaction.

As with the testamentary evidence discussed in Chapter Two, transaction content, what was exchanged in these relationships, was not always tangible. An individual could act as a witness to a contract (and later, during litigation) in return for a kind of influence in the marriage, the new alliance. In a case discussed in more detail below, John Selby, a weaver who lived in Micklegate, York, offered his property as a venue for marriage negotiations (the prospective groom was

⁷¹ P.M. Stell and L. Hampson (trans. and eds.) 'Probate Inventories of the York Diocese 1350-1500'. Unpublished typescript (York, 2003), pp. 61-8.

⁷² BIHR, CP.E.44 (1347-48). See above, p. 169.

⁷³ BIHR, CP.F.36 (1410-11).

Selby's brother-in-law) in exchange for influence in the match, which he exercised by giving advice and questioning the couple about their intentions.⁷⁴ During the process of a late medieval marriage, the man and woman themselves of course exchanged vows, gifts, ritual eating and drinking, friends and families.⁷⁵

In the case of defamation disputes conversation, insults and even violence were exchanged, often in response to some prior exchange, real or imagined, involving sex or material goods: common defamation suits involved accusations of improper sexual behaviour or theft.⁷⁶ Acquaintances in the vicinity, often kin, both men and women, offered their support against the 'offender'; this might gain them kin solidarity, perhaps future favours, a more esteemed place in the kin group, household or neighbourhood, or moral capital.⁷⁷ In tithe cases, the root of the dispute was often the exchange of goods, cash and legal and moral support (e.g. witness testimony) for spiritual support.⁷⁸

The remaining sections of this chapter will examine what we *can* discover about social networks and relations as manifested in the cause papers under three main headings. The first groups together the interrelated activity fields of kinship, marriage and household; the second neighbourhood and occupation; and the third, parish and devotion.

3.3.1 Social Status, Migration and Mobility

Fifteenth-century London plaintiffs and witnesses tended to be of the 'middling sort'; servants, artisans and merchants, while the same is generally true for urban York in both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁷⁹ The witnesses chosen by litigants have the potential to reveal much about the social context of the case, including the standing of the litigants themselves. Unlike many of the

⁷⁴ BIHR, CP.F.168.

⁷⁵ For marriage rituals and the exchange of tokens, see Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 238-40; McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 42-43; idem, *Sex and Civic Culture*, pp. 40-41, 58-66; and D. O'Hara, 'The Language of Tokens and the Making of Marriage', *Rural History* 3:1 (1992): 1-40.

⁷⁶ Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, p. 77, 112-13. For sexual slander in the Early Modern period, see L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996).

⁷⁷ Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, p. 75.

⁷⁸ See BIHR, CP.E.228 (1397), in which Thomas Porter, rector of Ryther, was deprived of his tithes of coppice wood by John Webster of Acaster Selby, who had been taking the wood and selling it.

⁷⁹ McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, p. 11; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 160; Goldberg, 'Fiction in the Archives', p. 429.

London ecclesiastical court depositions translated by Shannon McSheffrey, however, depositions from the Ainsty rarely included the occupation of the litigants or witnesses. Exceptions include cases in which the witnesses were clerks, and *William Gell c. Joan Serill*, in which a witness from York was described as a weaver.⁸⁰ Usually, however, only where the witness was from, his or her age, and whether he or she was of 'free condition and good fame', was recorded.⁸¹ Ainsty witnesses were invariably specified as being free, as serfs were ineligible to testify under canon law, although other studies have shown that there were exceptions.⁸²

Social status may be guessed at by using circumstantial evidence from depositions, but even then, it can be difficult to discern. Descriptions in the Ainsty depositions often reveal individuals engaged in agricultural activities, including ploughing, threshing and visiting the mill, as well as stealing wood and carrying it away to the river in order to sell it.⁸³ We see the experiences of employers and employees, including domestic servants and temporary labourers. Other records, including the probate evidence, tax returns and Inquisitions *post mortem*, show that some of the individuals involved in litigation can be connected to longstanding and prosperous agricultural families. Members of the Helwys family of Acaster Selby, for example, appear as jurors in the 1340 *Nonarum* Inquisitions, as witnesses in a matrimonial cause of 1355-56, and are listed in the 1379 poll tax returns, one as a *firmarius* paying 2s.⁸⁴

In London marriage cases, preferred witnesses seemed to have been older men, especially for causes from the rural hinterland.⁸⁵ Contrastingly, in York cases, even those of rural origin, witnesses were often women, some presumably young. Goldberg has noted that the sex of the deponent often varied according to the type of case, the gender of the litigant, and rural or urban origin and changed over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸⁶ In the case of married

⁸⁰ BIHR, CP.F.168 (1427-28).

⁸¹ S. McSheffrey (ed.), *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 40-42, 57, 59-64.

⁸² Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 155.

⁸³ See BIHR, CP.E.70 for the mill and CP.E.228 for the theft.

⁸⁴ *Nonarum inquisitions in curia scaccarii temp Regis Edward III*, Record Commission, (1807), p. 230; BIHR, CP.E.70; C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381. Part 3: Wiltshire to Yorkshire*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series 37 (Oxford, 2005), p. 423.

⁸⁵ McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, p. 10.

⁸⁶ Goldberg, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation', pp. 46-9.

couples, often both husband and wife were interviewed, mostly giving quite similar statements in their depositions. Indeed, sometimes both claimed to have been present at the marriage contract or incident in question.

In *Matilda Shippen c. Robert Smyth* two witnesses, a husband and a wife, were present at Smyth's house in Bolton Percy. The wife was lying ill in the cellar or 'kowbos', where she overheard words of contract being exchanged. It is not explicitly stated why this couple were at Smyth's house, but their surname, Theker, suggests that they were thatchers, one of the lower status building trades.⁸⁷ Smyth himself objected to William Theker being a witness on the grounds that he was '*pauper humilis vilis et abiecta persona levis opinionis et male fame*'.⁸⁸ Smyth's witnesses do not comment on the character of Margaret Theker, Shippen's star witness, but doubtless William Theker's reputation would have been perceived to be directly linked to that of his wife, who was, after all, legally under his authority. It would seem, then, that Smyth was or perceived himself to be of higher socio-economic status than his employee(s), and the household in which the alleged events took place was described to the court as his own. His occupation is not explicitly stated, but in the positions and articles he is identified as Robert *le* Smyth, probably indicating his trade.

Other sources provide clues about socio-economic status. In the fascinatingly complicated fifteenth-century case between Agnes Grantham and John Dale, the witness testimony of the words exchanged during a subsequent marriage contract are interesting: the groom, John Thornton, addresses Agnes Grantham in the informal '*te*', while she speaks to him with the formal '*vos*' and includes his surname in the vow. Thanks to the high profile of the individuals involved, we know that John Thornton was indeed of high status, and that Agnes Grantham was the widow of the wealthy former employee of Thornton's even higher status neighbour and friend, William Pontefract. Thornton and Pontefract were both York drapers, one of the highest status trades in the city, and frequently

⁸⁷ A thatcher and helper on manors in Winchester earned an average 5d per day in the decade 1351-60. J. Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy, 1348-1530*, Studies in Economic and Social History (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1977), p. 49; H. Swanson, 'Craftsmen and Industry in Late Medieval York', Unpublished PhD thesis in History (University of York, 1980), pp. 423, 452; H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 82-97.

⁸⁸ BIHR, CP.E.70.

appear in the civic records as participants or witnesses to land transactions.⁸⁹

Agnes was the widow of an unusually prosperous mason and was herself a brewster with powerful clients. The character witness Thomas Marshall testified that she might have lands outside of York and that she was accustomed to perform acts of charity. The probate inventory of her recently deceased husband, Hugh Grantham, reinforces the image of a highly affluent household, and revealed that she had been left more than £48 in addition to the household itself upon her husband's death: a potent incentive for John Dale's abduction.⁹⁰

In a further example, the defendant in a marriage case, Joan Serill, filed exceptions to one plaintiff's witnesses and based her appeal on their bad reputation and character and lowly social status, pointing out that they had no goods.⁹¹ Certainly one of the witnesses, Robert Symson, was a servant, but his master, a weaver from York, cannot have fit her description, which was, in part, formulaic. As we shall see, Joan also took exception to the fact that some of the opposing witnesses were blood relations of the plaintiff, and that they were always close with him, promoting and favouring his cause. Her appeal is thus based on socio-economic reputation and kin ties.

Helmholz cites examples of witnesses providing hearsay evidence, rather than giving eyewitness accounts. This state of affairs can probably be linked with the nature of late medieval marriage and the practice of the canonical theory of consent, and the (sometimes) semi-private nature of sexual relations. *Shippen c. Smyth* provides a prime example, with Margaret Theker accidentally overhearing the contract, and her husband stating that he knew of the contract through his wife.⁹² Hearsay evidence is not particularly characteristic of the Ainsty, but it does speak to social networks. When she had been abducted and forced into marriage by John Dale, Agnes Grantham knew that she would have to find 'witnesses' as soon as possible to demonstrate that she had been coerced into contracting with

⁸⁹ S.R. Rees Jones, 'Historical Introduction' in R.A. Hall and K. Hunter-Mann, *Medieval Urbanism in Coppergate: Refining a Townscape* (York, 2002), pp. 693-94. J.W. Percy (ed.), *York Memorandum Book*, SS 186 (1973), pp. 20-2, 30, 49.

⁹⁰ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 61-68. The inventory includes lands in Kirkhammerton, just outside the Ainsty.

⁹¹ CP.F.168 (1427-28). According to Joan and her proctor, William Gell's witnesses '*sunt fals' perieur' et male fame levis que opinionis ac viles et abiecte persone infames que...nichil in bonis habentes...*' Note the echo of the exception to witnesses in the earlier case, *Shippen c. Smyth*.

⁹² BIHR, CP.E.70.

Dale. Her son and servant knew this as well, and ran back to York to alert some of Agnes's prosperous male neighbours from the parish of St Michael le Belfrey. She and a few of these men approached William Feryby, Master of St Leonard's Hospital, at Acomb Grange to protest her treatment. Later, Agnes described her abduction in her own household to a gathered group of male neighbours.⁹³

*

The Ainsty cases for which cause papers survive are all instance cases, with implications for the social status of the plaintiffs. Most scholars have observed the bias of litigants in favour of those individuals of some means, such as the clerics in the Ainsty tithe and defamation cases. Pedersen points out that plaintiffs were more likely to originate from villages that were not only close to York, the location of the ecclesiastical court, but also along major routes, such as the York-Tadcaster road.⁹⁴ On the other hand, their location suggests that travel expenses for Ainsty witnesses could not have been prohibitive. I have argued that being so located might encourage inhabitants of these villages to engage in social interaction with a broad range of individuals, and having access to an urban church court might well increase such interaction.

There does not seem to be a demonstrable difference in the social status of those involved in cases where each party originates in the same community as opposed to those in which litigants came from separate townships or were more widely travelled. Urban litigants could have had wider variety *immediately* available in their witness pool, but litigants from the hinterland also had access to witnesses from York and elsewhere. Cases in which both parties hail from the same place still mention travel, as in *Shippen c. Smyth*, and the marriage case, *Agnes, daughter of William Moryz c. Walter de Tiryington*, where both litigants were from Tadcaster, but had contact with kin and others in Wilstrop, Wetherby and Newton Kyme.⁹⁵

A frequent defence used in Ainsty cases, like other cases in both ecclesiastical provinces, was the alibi defence, wherein the defendant denied that a precontract could have taken place because he or she was someplace else at the

⁹³ BIHR, CP.F.36.

⁹⁴ Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes*, pp. 183-85.

⁹⁵ BIHR, CP.E.95 (1367-68).

time.⁹⁶ This is also a common reason for taking exception to witnesses: they could not have witnessed the contract because they can be placed elsewhere. The fact that such defences were deemed acceptable by the court attests to the commonplace nature of regular mobility, but it is difficult to determine from Church court cases alone, in the absence of a statistically significant number of cause papers, whether the population of the Ainsty was markedly more mobile than the inhabitants of other areas whose Church court records have been studied.

Migration did not always play a part: John Stillington, one of the principals in a tithe cause from Acaster Malbis, based his case on the testimony of witnesses who explicitly stated that they had lived in the village since infancy, or for ‘thirty years and more’, as was common in cases involving tithe or boundary disputes.⁹⁷ The witnesses still had regular contact with individuals from other communities, particularly Bishopthorpe, and it will be recalled that the Stillingtons were a family of York freemen recently established at Acaster Selby.⁹⁸ If any of the witnesses enjoyed other contacts with York and elsewhere, the nature of the tithe case would not have required nor encouraged such testimony. Significantly, Acaster Malbis is a township for which we have testamentary evidence of significant numbers of wealthier peasants, precisely the types who were likely to remain settled in the village for several generations.⁹⁹

According to Poos and McIntosh, if there was, in fact, greater migration in the hinterland than in other areas, we should expect more defamation cases as a result of social dislocation and anxiety caused by increased population and mobility in the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Bardsley, on the other hand, has observed substantial numbers of defamers of middling status.¹⁰¹ The Ainsty may not be an appropriate testing-ground for this debate, as there are very few extant defamation causes, and the major case, *Richard Clerk of Acomb c. Simon de Sedburgh of York*, involved

⁹⁶ Donahue, ‘Female Plaintiffs’, p. 188; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 156-57.

⁹⁷ BIHR, CP.F.183 (1447).

⁹⁸ See Chapter One.

⁹⁹ See Chapter Two, pp. 136-7.

¹⁰⁰ Poos, ‘Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts’, p. 598; and McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior*, pp. 129-33, 157-62. McIntosh dealt with scolding and ‘back biting’ in local manorial courts rather than defamation cases in the ecclesiastical courts, but the same local concern with social order, mixed with anxiety about reputation, doubtless contributed to the circumstances of defamation.

¹⁰¹ Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, pp. 121, 136-37.

clerks rather than women or marginal individuals, and took place before the Black Death.¹⁰²

The numbers of witnesses called upon to testify can also say something about the social networks of the litigants and of the witnesses themselves. One must, however, employ caution, as certain types of cases, especially tithe cases, tended to generate depositions from numerous witnesses, sometimes even up to forty, the limit set by canon law.¹⁰³ Thus, a large number of witnesses could have as much to do with the nature of the case as with the social status of the plaintiff, in that the clerical litigants involved in tithe cases may have been able to ‘afford’ many witnesses because of income. Goldberg has noted that the social status of the litigants varied where large numbers of deponents were involved: some were demonstrably high status, others less so. Both Goldberg and Bronach Kane have emphasised the prevailing preference for older, established men in tithe cases.¹⁰⁴ The Ainsty is no exception. While the defendant in an Acaster Malbis boundary dispute called on only five witnesses who testified to his long residence and regular participation in parish activities, William Crosse, rector of Bolton Percy, launched a major campaign spanning two years and employing many witnesses to recover his tithes of coppice wood from two men from York, Thomas Note and Robert Lonesdale.¹⁰⁵

It is not farfetched to speculate that marriage or defamation cases with large number of witnesses could be an indication of skilful marshalling of social networks as much as social status. Defamation was an inherently public offence; the words spoken had to have been heard, preferably by people of high social standing, for the case to have merit. Simon de Sedburgh allegedly accused Richard de Acomb, clerk, of murder and theft in front of a number of men, including a chaplain, at a woman’s house in Acomb where they may have been gathered at her deathbed.¹⁰⁶ In cases of marriage, the number of witnesses depends on the type of marriage (private/informal vs. public/solemnized) and thus, to some extent, on

¹⁰² BIHR, CP.E.44 (1347-48).

¹⁰³ Donahue, ‘Proof by Witnesses’, p. 149; and *idem*, ‘Stubbs v. Maitland’, p. 676.

¹⁰⁴ Goldberg, ‘Gender and Matrimonial Litigation’, p. 46, n. 25; Kane, ‘Memory, Geography and Gender’.

¹⁰⁵ BIHR, CP.F.34 (1408-09). For a similar case in Acaster Malbis, see BIHR, CP.F.183 (1447).

¹⁰⁶ BIHR, CP.E.44.

whether the marriage occurred earlier or later within our period, as solemnization became increasingly popular during the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁷ We can see both types of contracts in a multi-party suit in which events took place during the early fifteenth century, *Joan Ingoly of Bishopthorpe c. John Midelton of Bishopthorpe and Robert Esyngwald of Poppleton and Ellen Wryght*.¹⁰⁸ None of the principals were particularly high status. According to the description of the private precontract between Joan and Robert that took place sometime around 1407-8, the vows were said in the garden of a house in Poppleton, witnessed by a small, concrete number of named fellow servants of a similar age, 'no more, no less', some of whom also happened to be kin to the litigants.

About a year later, Robert Esyngwald and Ellen Wryght solemnized their marriage, and six years after that, Joan Ingoly and John Midelton had their marriage solemnized in the city of York. In the description of the two marriages that were formally solemnized, on the other hand, it seems that witnesses were chosen and people are mentioned in order to convey a sense of kinship, but also piety, community and perhaps prestige: Joan was related by marriage to one of her witnesses, John Croxton, a York baker, but a merchant, Robert Lonnedale of York, is the first wedding witness he mentions. Named clergy also play a significant role in the witnesses' descriptions of the marriage ceremonies at church door and the subsequent festivities. The repeated mentions of nuptial feasting convey a sense of community, although, apart from the witnesses themselves, the wedding guests at the marriages of Joan and John and Robert and Ellen consist of a rather nebulous but large crowd of men and women whose names the witnesses apparently no longer remember.

3.3.2 Marriage, Kinship and Household

As we saw in Chapter Two, it is difficult to conceive of topics in the social history of later medieval England more fraught with debate than marriage, kinship and household. The relationship between kin group and household, the size and composition of the household, and the quality of relationships formed within and between households represent only a few of the contested areas. These debates

¹⁰⁷ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 167-8.

¹⁰⁸ BIHR, CP.F.201 (1427-28).

aside, the married couple represented a basic, if not the most fundamental, economic and political unit of late medieval English society, despite the informality of many marriages (about which more below). This section explores how the household, marriage and kinship appear in the cause papers.

We have already seen that there is some debate as to the relative centrality of the married couple vis-à-vis the male householder both within the late medieval English conjugal household, and in the wider community.¹⁰⁹ While witness testimony in ecclesiastical court cases tends to accentuate by its very nature the centrality of the litigants themselves, regardless of gender and whether they were householders, married or single, some support is provided for the centrality, in sociological terms, of the married couple.¹¹⁰ If we view the marriage formation process as the formation of alliances between the bride and groom's kin, friends, acquaintances and neighbourhoods, then the married couple has the potential to be central indeed. The cause papers produce several examples of Ainsty couples acting together, often as witnesses to the formation processes of the marriages of others in both city and hinterland, and sometimes working together or socializing as a unit with other couples, often outside of the household itself.¹¹¹ Marriage was thus an activity field important for high density networks incorporating kin, colleagues and neighbours with varying degrees of multiplexity.

However, the evidence is sometimes ambiguous, and lends support to the idea that networks could contain more than one central individual. As we saw in Chapter Two, married men and women often formed distinct but overlapping social networks including kin and non-kin, and the cause papers provide suggestive

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter Two. For the centrality of the conjugal couple as manifested in cause papers, see S. McSheffrey (ed. and trans.), *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London* (Kalamazoo, 1995), p. 1; *eadem*, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia, 2006), p. 4. For the centrality (deriving from relative public participation and importance) of the male householder and the legal dependency of women, see Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 6-8, 24, 27, 37, 104, 106, 138-139; *eadem*, 'Medieval Women, Modern Women', pp. 152, 154; and D. Gary Shaw's excellent *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2005), pp. 18, 28-9, 134-44.

¹¹⁰ When I refer to the centrality of the married couple as opposed to the male householder, I do not mean to imply that the man and the woman constituting the couple would have necessarily considered themselves or been perceived as 'equals'. Perhaps, as Shaw argues, the wife could be considered a kind of social extension of the husband, the marriage broadening both their networks. *Necessary Conjunctions*, pp. 134-44. For a discussion of male agency in the actions of marrying couples, see McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, pp. 121-34.

¹¹¹ BIHR, CP.F.201, CP.F.36, and CP.E.70 provide a few examples.

evidence of these groups as well, both at the point of the marriage contract and later during the lifecycle. *Gell c. Serle* may offer support for the male householder being central. Here, it seems that the alliance was more between the fathers of the bride and groom.¹¹² However, the prospective bride, along with a male (related by marriage to the prospective groom) in whose household the discussion and contract take place, act as brokers and negotiators between the two fathers. In *Dale c. Grantham*, William Pontefract (a male householder), Agnes Grantham's late husband's employer and family friend of John Thornton, a man with whom Grantham claimed to have a contract of marriage, seems to be a central character, and his network also appears to be dense. Agnes herself, however, had connections with the master of St. Leonard's hospital and members of his household at Acomb Grange, apparently during both her marriage and widowhood.¹¹³

This section takes the social relations of marriage partners in matrimonial court cases as a starting point, but also discusses the networks of the widowed and the never married. Defamation, tithe and breach of faith cases also involve aspects of marriage, kinship and household in varying degrees. Much of the activity described in the witness depositions took place outside of the conjugal household, within and between both hinterland and city, and other types of households such as the clerical household of the master of St Leonard's Hospital at Acomb Grange and the monastic household at St Mary's Abbey in York also play a part.¹¹⁴

There is a substantial literature on marriage formation and regimes in late medieval England, and the ways in which marriages were shaped in practice by lay reception of canon law, particularly the canonical theory of consent, refined by Pope Alexander III in the twelfth century.¹¹⁵ As noted above, the concept, acknowledged (if not always respected) by the laity that a valid marriage could be made through the mutual consent of the couple alone did not remove the influence

¹¹² BIHR, CP.F.168 (1427-28).

¹¹³ BIHR, CP.F.36 (1410-11).

¹¹⁴ BIHR, CP.F.36; CP.E.238 (1398-99), *William Scargill of York, dwelling in St Mary's Abbey c. Alice daughter of Roger del Park of Moor Monkton*.

¹¹⁵ For the canon law regarding marriage, see particularly Sheehan, 'Choice of Marriage Partner', pp. 92-117 and 'Formation and Stability', pp. 38-76; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*; Donahue, 'Consent Theory', pp. 251-81; *idem*, 'Formation of Marriage and Social Practice', pp. 144-58; and Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 70-75.

of other interested parties. It did, however, mean that these interests had to be negotiated differently.

Following a brief description of the Ainsty matrimonial causes, the next several paragraphs will discuss the kin groups and wider social networks involved in marriage formation, as this is the stage in the marriage which witness depositions in most cases were intended to describe. Ainsty matrimonial causes, like those arising in other parts of the diocese of York and elsewhere in later medieval England, usually hinged on the circumstances surrounding the beginnings of a marriage: whether a marriage contract had been made with the mutual consent of both parties using words of present tense or words of future tense followed by sexual intercourse, who had witnessed the contract, whether or not the contract had been subsequently solemnized, and if there were any impediments to the match, the most common being a prior contract of marriage, usually informal (as in two-party litigation). This section will also analyze a few cases in which a long period of time had elapsed between the alleged marriages and litigation, giving us a glimpse of the principals' social networks later in married life, and how these were remembered, constructed and manipulated to promote a particular side in the legal dispute. Finally, this section will explore the wider role of kin networks and household in Ainsty society, and the ways in which kinship interacted with non-biological ties.

Only nine marriage cases survive in the cause papers pertaining to individuals originating in the Ainsty and its immediate environs, plus one further case relating to the associated York parish of St. Mary Bishophill.¹¹⁶ Nearly all of these derive from the second half of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, as is true for the York cases as a whole before the early modern era.¹¹⁷ At least a further four entries in the Act Books also involve marriage, plus one matrimonial case from Bishophill. The cases in the Act Books also nearly all originated in the earlier fifteenth century, although there are a few cases featuring plaintiffs and defendants of the opposite sex, the subject matter of which is not clear, but some of which may have been matrimonial, dating from the late fifteenth

¹¹⁶ See Appendix Three.

¹¹⁷ Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', p. 185.

century.¹¹⁸ This is a small sample, but the detailed witness depositions allow us to build up a picture of the social relations within, associated with, and fostered by marriage in the hinterland, at least before the second half of the fifteenth century.

Following the pattern observed in the Church courts as a whole, most Ainsty marriage cases involve the enforcement of a marriage, often based on a precontract, rather than separation (divorce *a mensa et thoro*) or an annulment (divorce *a vinculo*).¹¹⁹ Nine marriage causes in my sample (the exception being the case from Bishophill) were being pursued in order to enforce at least one marriage. The Ainsty cases regarding marital disputes are also all instance cases, as indeed are nearly all those deriving from York diocese. The implication that the Ainsty plaintiffs were often relatively socio-economically well-off has been discussed above. The preponderance of instance cases may also suggest that plaintiffs were concerned with reputation and the socio-economic benefits of marriage, in conjunction with whatever other emotions were involved.¹²⁰

When Maud Shippen of Steeton sought to enforce a marriage to Robert Smyth of Bolton Percy, who vigorously denied the contract, she did so possibly because, having apparently been coerced into consenting to sex, she perhaps felt that her chances of marriage with another man had been reduced.¹²¹ We know nothing of Shippen's status, and the fact that her opponent was able to provide witnesses who disparaged the character of Shippen's own witnesses probably cast aspersions on her own reputation. In William Gell of Kirkhammerton's suite against Joan, daughter of Roger Serill of Cawood, Joan apparently balked at the marriage when animals promised by the parents of both parties as a marriage portion were not forthcoming.¹²² Even more cynically, John Dale, a member of the household of William Feryby, Master of St Leonard's Hospital and Acomb Grange, having abducted and threatened the prosperous widow Agnes Grantham in order to

¹¹⁸ D.M. Smith, *The Court of York, 1400-1499*, pp. 56-181. See Appendix Three.

¹¹⁹ For example, Helmholz counts only twelve divorce cases among the eighty-eight matrimonial suits in the fourteenth-century York cause papers. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 74. Donahue, however, counts nineteen. For the fifteenth century, Donahue counts seventeen divorce suits out of a total of 125 matrimonial cases. 'Female Plaintiffs', pp. 185-87.

¹²⁰ Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', pp. 197, 205.

¹²¹ BIHR, CP.E.70 (1355-56). The rape aspect of this case is discussed in S.M. Butler, "I will never consent to be wedded with you!": Coerced Marriage in the Courts of Medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History* 39:2 (2004): 255-56.

¹²² BIHR, CP.F.168 (1427-28).

extort a contract of marriage, wanted the alleged marriage enforced, possibly to gain access to the latter's wealth.¹²³

The gender of the plaintiffs was almost evenly divided, with four cases being brought before the commissary court by men, and five by women.¹²⁴ Of the five Ainsty cases entered in the Act Books that can be definitely identified as involving matrimony, three had female plaintiffs and one, from the parish of St. Mary Bishophill, was brought by a man.¹²⁵ In London courts in the later fifteenth century, men pursued litigation to enforce a marriage more often than women, but according to Donahue the opposite seems to have been true for York.¹²⁶ Donahue suggests that women valued marriage more than men, given the greater frequency with which they pursued cases to enforce a marriage.¹²⁷

The Ainsty cause papers do not give strong evidence in favour of Donahue's position; neither do they fully contradict it. In terms of numbers, the Ainsty cases seem to fall somewhere in the middle, although women outnumber men as plaintiffs at the consistory court by a very slight margin. In the Ainsty, motives for bringing matrimonial cases may have been complicated. Alongside Maud Shippen's enforcement case, we have four-party marriage and divorce cases such as *Ingoly c. Midelton, Esyngwold and Wright* in which collusion between the parties, or even 'wife swapping' has been suggested.¹²⁸ The issue of which party was more eager to pursue litigation becomes muddled by appeals against the

¹²³ BIHR, CP.F.36 (1411). Butler, 'Coerced Marriage', pp. 264-65. Some of the depositions, including that of Roger Marschall, alias Tayliour of the parish of St Michael le Belfrey, imply that although Agnes Grantham and John Dale were both of good standing, Agnes may have received additional income from rents. The probate inventory of Agnes's late husband, Hugh Grantham, has already been mentioned. See Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 61-68.

¹²⁴ Men and women in York's hinterland acted as plaintiffs to enforce a marriage throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The cases with male plaintiffs are: BIHR, CP.E.148 (1387-88), CP.E.238(1398-99), CP.F.36 (1410-11) and CP.F.168 (1427-28). CP.E.40 (1341), CP.E.70 (1355-56), CP.E.95 (1367-8), CP.F.133 (1422) and CP.F.201 (1430) had female plaintiffs.

¹²⁵ There are a further five cases whose subject matter cannot be identified positively as matrimonial, but which feature opposing male and female parties. In these cases, three of the plaintiffs are female, and two are male. The cases are: Matilda Hermes of Appleton c. William Asshewra of Little Askham (1420, Cons.AB.1, fos. 175v, 176r); Richard Hill of Marston c. Katherine Smyth of Healaugh (1487, Cons.AB.4, fos. 120v, 122v, 123r, 125v, 126r); Katherine Nottingham of Marston c. George Chapman of Deighton (1484, Cons.AB.4, fo. 13v); John Burton of Moor Monkton c. Emmota Lowson (1485, Cons.AB.4, fo. 53r); Margaret Milner of Wighill c. Thomas Carman of Tadcaster (1424, Cons.AB.2, fos. 15r, 18r, 19v, 20r, 21v, 22v, 23r).

¹²⁶ McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, p. 8; Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', pp. 197, 201.

¹²⁷ Donahue, 'Female Plaintiffs', pp. 197-205.

¹²⁸ BIHR, CP.F.201. For an interesting account of this case which argues powerfully for conspiracy, see Donahue, 'Stubbs v. Maitland', pp.

original sentence, when the role of the parties essentially became reversed; it therefore makes sense to endeavour to determine who the original plaintiff was. While witness depositions help to suggest motivation, and often give us clues as to what went wrong at the start of the marriage, they also provide tantalizing information about the social dynamics at work.

One of the most basic aspects of marriages in the hinterland that arises from both the cause papers and Act Books, and which is corroborated by marriage licenses and dispensations surviving in the registers of the archbishops of York, is the relatively high level of marital mobility and exogamy.¹²⁹ Twelve marriage licenses and dispensations involve at least one spouse from an Ainsty township; nine of them married an individual originating from another township either within or outside of the Ainsty, or from York itself. Many of these couples were of relatively high status.¹³⁰ Similarly, at least eight out of nine cases in the cause papers involved at least one exogamous marriage.¹³¹ In the York fifteenth-century cause papers as a whole, forty cases involve marriages in which the parties originated in different parishes, while thirty-eight were endogamous within the same parish.¹³²

I have not come across any instances of depositions that shed direct light on the circumstances in which these exogamous couples met, but in most cases, the distances between the villages involved were not great, both partners often originating from within or just beyond the borders of the Ainsty. Goldberg's

¹²⁹ J. Raine the elder, 'Dispensations for Marriage, Marriage Licences, etc.', in *Testamenta Eboracensia* Vol. 3, SS 45 (1864), pp. 311-73. Licenses were given if the couple were to be married in a church that was not their parish church, including private chapels and oratories, and if banns were to be asked less than three times.

¹³⁰ Licenses: Thomas Webster of Bishopthorp and Alice Scoreby of St Mary Bishophill, Sr. in 1408, p. 319; John Hewick of Bolton Percy and Isabella Fitz-Richard of Nun Appleton in 1455, p. 333; Thomas Fairfax of Walton and Elizabeth Sherburn of Mitton in 1460, p. 335; Martin de la See and Elizabeth Hawley to be married in manor house of Sir William Stapleton of Wighill in 1480, p. 344; Nicholas Cliff and Margaret Smith both of Askham in 1488, p. 353; William Thwaite of Hutton Wandesley and Margery Mauleverer of Hutton to be married in chapel in manor house of Woodsome in 1489, p. 354; Brian Palmes of Naburn and Ellen Acclom of Stillingfleet to be married in chapel in manor house of Moreby in 1493, p. 358; William Nottingham of Marston and Joan Bentley of Adel in 1506-7, p. 365; Henry Newark of Heminbrough and Isabell Thwaite of Marston in 1512, p. 367; John Stillington and Elizabeth Scalby of Stillingfleet to be married in chapel in College of Acaster in 1518-9, p. 370. Raine, 'Dispensations and Licenses'.

¹³¹ See Appendix Three.

¹³² Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 80. I have counted the number of marriages involving couples from different villages or townships rather than parishes, but, as we saw in Chapter One, the villages in the Ainsty comprised many parishes, and many of the townships were, in fact, parish towns.

research on marriage and lifecycle service shows that domestic service makes a likely candidate for an activity field that fostered matchmaking, and some of the litigants were certainly servants at the time of the marriage contract. *Ingoly v. Midelton, Esywald and Wright* is one of the most striking examples.¹³³ In 1430, it was being claimed that Joan Ingoly of Bishopthorpe and Robert Easingwold of Nether Poppleton had pre-contracted marriage in a private ceremony in Poppleton with only a few witnesses nearly twenty years in the past. At that earlier time, Joan had been in service at Over Poppleton, and the witnesses to the marriage included fellow servants. Isabella Croxton was Joan's sister. Isabella's husband John, a baker of York, also testified. Joan's kin network also extended to Nether Poppleton, where another sister Alice had married one Robert Dalton. Dalton had been a servant to a York tailor at the time of the precontract, and Alice herself had been in service to John Croxton, the York baker and brother-in-law to her and Joan.

The high level of mobility and exogamy demonstrated by this and other Ainsty cases has been suggested as one of the contributing factors to the informality that has been seen to characterize many late medieval marriages. This phenomenon has been termed 'self divorce' and 'serial monogamy'.¹³⁴ Given the difficulties involved in obtaining an annulment or separation through the ecclesiastical courts, it is probable that many unsatisfied couples simply agreed to separate, or in some cases, one spouse simply abandoned the other and moved away, as Joan Ingoly ostensibly experienced at the hands of Robert Easingwold.¹³⁵ In an earlier case from the mid-fourteenth century, Peter le Walker of Tadcaster was appealing against the court's sentence to enforce his marriage to his current wife, citing a precontract which had taken place five years earlier near Gainsborough in Lincolnshire.¹³⁶ He was apparently from Lincolnshire, as his sister still lived there, and the witnesses testified that the existence of the earlier marriage was well known in the surrounding area.

¹³³ BIHR, CP.F.201.

¹³⁴ Maddern, 'Moving On'; McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 7-8; Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 59; Beverley Smith, 'A View from an Ecclesiastical Court', pp. 64-80; Finch, 'Repulsa uxore sua', pp. 11-12, 17-25.

¹³⁵ See Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 59-66.

¹³⁶ BIHR, CP.E.40 (1341).

In both the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, migration and mobility did not lead to complete abandonment or severing of ties with the place of origin. Peter le Walker of Tadcaster was able to call upon networks in Lincolnshire five years after the events concerned had taken place in order to bolster his case. This network included his biological sister as well as the sister of the woman with whom he claimed to have a precontract, along with another woman whose relationship to the parties is unspecified. In the Ingoly case mentioned above, the plaintiff, Joan, was able to call on an even wider (and denser) range of witnesses more than twenty years after the marriage contract she claimed had taken place.¹³⁷ Joan Ingoly and her current husband, John Midelton, were from Bishopthorpe, while her witnesses came from Poppleton and the city of York.

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In addition to creating a social, cultural and legal climate in which informal marriages were possible, the canonical consent policy of marriage almost invariably led to interactions and sometimes conflicts between the prospective bride and groom and their families. Such instances give scholars the opportunity to analyse the two different but intersecting activity fields of marriage and kinship. In a case from 1427-8 mentioned above, the defendant, Joan, daughter of Roger Serill of Cawood, filed exceptions to the witnesses of one of the competing male plaintiffs, William Gell of Kirk Hammerton, based on, in part, their blood relationships with the defendant—two of them were his natural brothers.¹³⁸ She was acquainted with them, or at least their reputations, as she accused them of being ‘vile and abject’ and testifying ‘falsely and maliciously’, being notorious perjurers. More significantly, in terms of kinship ties, was the way in which her documents described these men’s relationships with their William. Not only were they *consanguinei et affines...infra secundum gradum...sibi notor’ attingentes*, they were also *auctores fautores et speciales promotores cause huiusmodi ac mediatores...in hac parte*.¹³⁹

Joan assumed that as witnesses, the father, brothers and brother-in-law would be biased in favour of their kinsman, the male plaintiff. Indeed, it is

¹³⁷ BIHR, CP.F.201

¹³⁸ BIHR, CP.F.168 (1427-28).

¹³⁹ BIHR, CP.F.168.

suggestive of medieval attitudes towards kinship that the canon lawyers who discouraged the use of deponents related by kin or affinity to the litigants were doubtless making the same assumption.¹⁴⁰ In this case, canon law seems to have been correct, for Gell was able to mobilize a dense kin network and social network, and his witnesses also brought Joan's own father into the mix, testifying that he had been present along with Joan, William and William's kin at the making of the marriage contract. Apparently, the two families had been acquainted with one another prior to the match, and the fathers, Roger Gell and Roger Serle, had been in conflict over some movable property in the form of animals which was to be given to the couple upon marriage.

The Ainsty also provides examples of relatives of one party testifying on behalf of the opposing party. When Walter de Tiryngton of Tadcaster wanted his marriage with Alice Moryz of Tadcaster annulled (presumably because he had met and subsequently married one Imania from Newton Kyme), he was presumably able to activate his affinal links with Alice's maternal aunt, Matilda Stirgys, and her husband William.¹⁴¹ They both testified about a precontract between Alice and Henry Lister of Wetherby that had taken place in the house of another couple, Richard Hare of Wilstrop and his wife. Matilda Stirgys added that the newlyweds had then lain together naked in the house in which she, Matilda, and William used to live.¹⁴²

In a case such as this, it is difficult to state with certainty whether William, who wanted an annulment, gained the assistance of the Stirgyses against Alice's will, or whether Alice was complicit in their testimony. The testimony of one Agnes Payge, apparently a mutual friend of Walter and Agnes and an acquaintance of Matilda, suggests that the latter may have been the case. She testified to Alice and Walter's stormy relationship, describing how Alice and Walter would fight together, and how Alice would run away.¹⁴³ It seems that Agnes Payge also testified that Matilda Stirgys somehow influenced or engineered her niece's

¹⁴⁰ Donahue, 'Proof by Witnesses', pp. 130-1.

¹⁴¹ BIHR, CP.E.95 (1367-68).

¹⁴² BIHR, CP.E.95. *Henricus et Agnes infra domu in qua eadem iurata et maritus suus tunc morabatur iacuerunt nudus cum nuda...solus cum sola in eodem lecto prout ipsa dicit quod vidit...*

¹⁴³ Alice and Walter *contendebat adinvicem et ipsa qua' pluries fugiebat / et divertebat se a consorso...*

marriage with Walter Tiryington: '*matrimonium solempnizatum inter...Aagnetem et Walterum...fuit cautelorem ducta per Matild'...*' If this is the case, we have an example of a woman who occupied quite a central position in social networks.

The medieval 'wedding' has been theorized as a process with several successive stages with varying degrees of social interaction.¹⁴⁴ In almost all of these stages, witnesses were of vital social, moral and legal importance. Various activity fields were important for and interacted with that of marriage formation. Witnessed negotiations and contracts took place in domestic homes, gardens, outbuildings, roads and taverns, within and across wide ranging and varied geographical locations. Individuals were requested to come to an Ainsty township from York to witness the marriage contract between Joan Ingoly and Robert Easingwold, and parties from the Ainsty also went to York, although the motives for the specific choice of location are often difficult to discern. In *Gell c. Serle*, the final stage in marriage negotiations and the contract itself took place in the 'werkhow's' of John Selby, a weaver who lived in Micklegate, despite the fact that the principals and the other witnesses were from Kirkhammerton, Whixley and Cattal.¹⁴⁵

In most instances, it is not easy to say who chose the location. In the case just mentioned, did John Selby himself suggest the workhouse or did someone request the use of his space? Selby was related by marriage to William Gell, his wife's brother, so it is not farfetched to suggest that the Gells favoured discussions on their own turf, but perhaps at a more 'neutral' location as a concession to the Serles. There seems to have been some conflict between the families of the prospective bride and groom over animals that were to be given to the couple at the time of their marriage; could Selby have been chosen because he was perceived to be a more neutral mutual acquaintance? Moreover, was the workshop chosen for the privacy or the publicity it afforded?

Cause papers dealing with marital cases frequently mention the house or property of the father or male relative of one of the principals (usually female).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 234-43; McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, pp. 9-10; O'Hara, 'Ruled by my Friends', pp. 23-25.

¹⁴⁵ BIHR, CP.F.168 (1427-28).

¹⁴⁶ See BIHR, CP.E.238 (1398-99), *William Scargill of York c. Alice daughter of Roger del Park of Moor Monkton*.

It is possible that this choice of location indicate householders' centrality in the social lives of litigants, as much as their tendency to be young. McSheffrey also notes the common use of the bride's father's property as the location for marriage contracts, suggesting that male agency in such choices.¹⁴⁷ Other than mentioning parental property as setting for marriage negotiations or celebrations, parents are rarely mentioned in the Ainsty cause papers. Goldberg has observed looser parental control and supervision of marriage in the urban cause papers in comparison with the ones originating in the countryside, where meetings between the families of the parties prior to the marriage contract itself seem to have been more common.¹⁴⁸ Again, the Ainsty cases appear to fall somewhere in between the urban and the rural, with cases in which the principals were life-cycle servants at the time of their contract demonstrating little evidence of parental involvement. In *Gell c. Serle*, the bride contracted conditionally upon her parents' consent, and was thus more typical of rural marriage behaviour, yet the contract itself took place within the city walls.

The involvement of other kin seems to have been more common. In addition to the fathers present in the negotiations described in *Gell c. Serle*, we also find blood brothers and a brother-in-law (the fathers and the brother-in-law seem to form a core, active group during the negotiations, however).¹⁴⁹ The involvement of an aunt and uncle in *Moryz c. Tiryngton* has already been mentioned.¹⁵⁰ In *Bernard c. le Walker of Tadcaster* the contract in Lincolnshire took place on the property of the alleged bride's brother-in-law, in the presence of her sister (but apparently not the brother-in-law, the home-owner himself), the groom's sister, and one other woman. Aside from the groom, Peter le Walker, there were no men present. The bride's sister was a local brewster and ale-seller, a fact emphasized by all the witnesses, which may account for the specific location for the marriage, the brewhouse.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, pp. 122-28.

¹⁴⁸ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 203-79, esp. p. 245; and *idem*, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation', pp. 48-49.

¹⁴⁹ BIHR, CP.F.168.

¹⁵⁰ BIHR, CP.E.95.

¹⁵¹ BIHR, CP.E.40.

Drinking establishments do not feature in the Ainsty cause papers as locations for marriage discussions or contracts, even in those cases where the contract takes place in York. It is unclear why this is the case, given the mentions of inns, taverns and alehouses in depositions in matrimonial cases elsewhere in England, particularly London and sometimes York.¹⁵² Despite the substantial number of brewers and brewsters recorded in the poll tax returns for the Ainsty, and the area's location near good transportation networks (which would presumably foster a market for inns), I have not come across evidence for the locations of drinking establishments within the Ainsty itself, and it may well be that other locations, especially domestic premises, were more convenient.¹⁵³

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Helmholz posits a growth in matrimonial stability by the end of our period, observing the adoption of Church's standards, including solemnization at church door, and the rising proportions of suits for divorce as opposed to *competitores* suits, themselves a symptom of a society in which 'serial monogamy' was common.¹⁵⁴ The calling of banns and the public solemnization at church door might be an aspect of wider community control in which the new social ties created and transformed by the marriage were witnessed and thus symbolically and ritually accepted by the community, including its important, elite members.¹⁵⁵ In the Ingoly case, such witnesses included York citizens who were perhaps chosen for the air of authority and legitimacy they could lend to the marriage.

I have not detected any signs in the Ainsty of increasing patriarchal supervision of marriage and sexuality during the later fifteenth century, as McSheffrey has observed for London.¹⁵⁶ *Gell c. Serill* (1427-28), which involved the heavy influence of two fathers and a brother-in-law, is from the earlier fifteenth century.¹⁵⁷ Two of the cases involving the most overt manifestations of patriarchal authority involve the elite, the gentry. These provide examples of singlewomen and widows being subject to kin and wider community pressures. A complicated

¹⁵² McSheffrey, *Sex and Civic Culture*, pp.; and Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 237-8.

¹⁵³ Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421-7; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, pp. 47-8.

¹⁵⁴ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 166-68.

¹⁵⁵ O'Hara, 'Ruled by my friends', p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ McSheffrey, *Sex and Civic Culture*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁷ BIHR, CP.F.168. See also CP.E.238 from 1398-99.

case from 1425 pitted Isabel Durem, prioress and convent of Wallingwells and John Northfolk of Naburn against Robert Arhyngton of Arthington, Richard Castelay, John Roos of North Deighton and Agnes, wife of Richard Haldenby of York. Katherine Northfolke, the niece of John Northfolk, a squire from Naburn, had been allegedly forced into the nunnery of Wallingwells by her uncle and abducted thence by her mother, Agnes Haldenby. The high level of interference by the various parties in this case has been attributed to a dispute over Katherine's inheritance¹⁵⁸ Christiana Haryngton of Bishophill, widow of Sir Robert Haryngton of Hornby, had pressure put on her when her alleged husband, Sir Thomas Sayvell of Thornhill, requested Christina's brother-in-law to use his influence to persuade her to consummate the match.¹⁵⁹ Contrastingly, there does not seem to be a great deal of supervision in lower-status cases such as *Shippen c. Smith* or the Ingoly case, which involve peers rather than parental or patriarchal authority.

As we saw in Chapter Two, marriage and kinship links helped give form to neighbourhoods and communities. The existence of some 'dynastic' families of prosperous peasants, some spread over a few different townships, can be found in testaments and in the cause papers. The Gell family mentioned above is one such example; their members resided in a cluster of villages in the northwest corner of the Ainsty and spilling over its borders, including Moor Monkton, Kirk Hammerton, Cattal and Whixley.¹⁶⁰ The few miles separating them certainly did not prevent them from keeping regular contact with one another, if the testimony of the opposing party in the case can be believed. The Gells also appear in the records over a time span of more than one generation.

The influence of marriage, kinship and household can be felt in other types of cases appearing before York's consistory court. When the vicar of Tadcaster initiated a tithe case against the inhabitants of Hazlewood in 1417, Margaret, the widow and executor of Henry Vavasour, knight, acted as the representative of her

¹⁵⁸ BIHR, CP.F.89. This case is discussed in detail by Sharon Hubbs Wright, who teases out the networks running through a large, densely connected group of witnesses. 'Women in the Northern Courts: Interpreting Legal Records of Familial Conflict in Early Fifteenth-Century Yorkshire', *Florilegium* 19 (2002): 27-48.

¹⁵⁹ BIHR, CP.F.263 (1443). This case is discussed in detail in Butler, 'I will never consent to be wedded with you!', pp. 257-60.

¹⁶⁰ BIHR, CP.F.168; BIHR, Prob.Reg. 2, fo. 482v (1463).

dead husband in relations with the incumbent.¹⁶¹ Husbands and wives also played important parts in the ways deponents remembered tithe rights and parish boundaries, in the context of community religious festivals that they attended together. In the Acaster Malbis tithe case, Thomas Weston, described seeing the defendant John Stillington with his wife and ‘familia’ attending the parish church, and also saw Stillington’s wife near the church at the time of her churching ceremony (*post partum..prolis purificaru[m]*).¹⁶² Parish inhabitants gave tithes in return for spiritual support in which households and kin groups (to the extent that the latter belonged to the same parish or neighbourhood community) were involved. Members of a household would have to work together to raise the tithes, a portion of the household economy. The testimonies in the tithe disputes in the Ainsty supported the incumbent’s right to the tithe, but also by naming family members, acquaintances and former incumbents the deponents were able to include these people in the spiritual community united, in part, by the giving of tithes: family members, friends and neighbours supported the incumbent together.

3.3.3 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

By combining the evidence of cause paper depositions and the 1379 poll tax returns, it is possible to show that the litigants and witnesses in some disputes, or their kin relations, resided in the same township over the course of more than one generation. For example, the surnames Custson/Cusson, Grymeston, Harald, Bryght and Fraunkeleyn appear in the poll tax returns for Nether Poppleton, and resurface nearly fifty years later as witnesses to the solemnization of the marriage between Robert Esyngwold and Ellen Wright at the parish church of St Everildas.¹⁶³ Robert Harald, the vicar who actually solemnized the marriage, seems to have had a number of ancestors in the village in 1379. It is probable that these men, as longstanding residents, were considered senior men of social standing in the village, and for this reason were chosen as witnesses. John

¹⁶¹ BIHR, CP.F.370 (1417-19).

¹⁶² BIHR, CP.F.183 (1447).

¹⁶³ BIHR, CP.F.201. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 424. It is possible that Ellen Wright may have had relations in the village as well, as one William Wright appears in the 1379 poll tax returns, but as Wright is a far more common surname than the others mentioned, it would be dangerous to conclude that the existence of a relation is anything more than speculation.

Fraunkeleyn, a farmer assessed at 12d in 1379, was presumably the ancestor of Harald Frankleyn, whom Joan Ingoly approached prior to the marriage between Robert and Ellen asking for advice, since Robert was Joan's husband 'before God'. The fact that Joan approached Harald Frankleyn may suggest that he was perceived to be a respectable man who had a finger on the social pulse of the village. This appears to be another dense network, more reminiscent of what historians have traditionally envisioned as a typical rural social scene, until one remembers Joan's links with York and the other villages of the Ainsty. Joan links with York and elsewhere relate to kinship and life-cycle service.

Work and landholding were thus important activity fields for social interaction as related in the cause papers. It is during these activities that disputes, especially over property, perhaps leading to defamation, occurred. Helmholz notes that in *ex officio* cases of secular crimes tried in the ecclesiastical court, the locations of the alleged crimes were most frequently fields and homes.¹⁶⁴ In the tithe case brought by Thomas Porter, men who worked together in the fields of Ryther were willing to testify about both the longstanding rights of Porter and the actual act of the theft of the coppice wood tithes.¹⁶⁵

In a defamation case which took place in 1347-48, shortly before the Black Death, Richard Clerk of Acomb accused Simon de Sadburgh of York of defaming him of murder. It was alleged that Simon had defamed Richard both in York and in Acomb, where Richard was present with a number of other men in the house of one Agnes de Paris. Simon evidently accused Richard of procuring and allowing the death of William, cleric of Milford, and also of stealing some of Simon's corn.¹⁶⁶ A close reading of the case reveals a variety of social relations at work. Simon de Sadburgh was probably an up-and-coming young man. He had gained the Freedom of the City of York in 1343, about four years before the start of litigation.¹⁶⁷ He had also recently married one Alice, daughter of Nicholas de

¹⁶⁴ Helmholz, 'Crime, Compurgation, and the Courts', pp. 10, 13.

¹⁶⁵ BIHR, CP.E.228 (1397).

¹⁶⁶ BIHR, CP.E.44. Simon *imposuit quod idem Ricardus falso et furtive surripuit vestura blade septem acrarum terre ipsius Symonis / qu' apportavit contra voluntate...Symonis.*

¹⁶⁷ F. Collins (ed.), *Register of the Freemen of the City of York Vol. I, 1272-1558*, SS 96 (1897), p. 38.

Hesyll. He was a landowner in Acomb but apparently did not reside there.¹⁶⁸ His occupation is not clearly stated in the cause paper documents (or in the entry in the list of Freemen), but his activities, as described by the witnesses who testified in his defence, reveal someone engaged in law, involved in proceedings at the archbishop's palace and at the court of the tollbooth.

The underlying disputes seem to have been about debt and landholding.¹⁶⁹ Bundled with the documents relating to the defamation suit is a *reconventio* in which Simon claims that Richard owes him 4s as part of a marriage portion, owing to Simon upon the solemnisation of the marriage between himself and Alice Hesyll. It is unclear in exactly what capacity Richard was involved in Simon's marriage (perhaps as a guarantor in the matter of the marriage portion?) but it would be interesting to find out whether Simon and Richard had met as a result of Simon's landholding in the Ainsty. Given the alleged accusation of the theft of grain, it is certainly possible that the two men tilled neighbouring pieces of land, and it is not difficult to imagine that the tensions involved in the debt and landholding issues fed into one another, exacerbating the already strained relations.

As a man familiar with the law and the workings of the courts, Sedburgh may have had access to information about the death of William, cleric of Milford. Richard claimed that Simon accused him of playing a part in the death by not preventing his servant (*famulus*) from killing the other cleric. According to Richard, Simon must have made an effort to find him, as he was in the home of Agnes de Paris in Acomb along with five other men, including Adam the chaplain (or *pretens*, alleged chaplain, as Simon's documents referred to him). Although the depositions do not state what the men were doing in Agnes's home, it is possible to speculate from the context, particularly the presence of the chaplain, that they were witnesses at the woman's deathbed. The house is described as hers, so although it is certainly possible that she was never married, it is more probable that she was a widow. The case paints a picture of tensions and rivalries between the city and its hinterland. Sedburgh's witnesses are all urban, and they give the impression of a

¹⁶⁸ BIHR, CP.E.44.

¹⁶⁹ Poos has noted that 'Business dealings and property disputes were fertile arenas for suspicion' resulting in defamation. Interestingly, he cites an example from the hinterland of London in which defamation occurred once legal proceedings were already pending between two men, as is the case in BIHR, CP.E.44. Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts', pp. 592, 602.

group of men, to which Sedburgh belonged, whose members were far too busy conducting important business to bother defaming a man a mile outside of York.

When Maud Shippen of Steeton attempted to enforce an alleged contract of marriage with Robert Smyth of Bolton Percy, her two witnesses, as discussed above, consisted of William Theker, a thatcher, and his wife, Margaret.¹⁷⁰ The latter overheard the contract whilst lying ill in the cellar of Robert Smyth. The Thekers were present on Smyth's property because William was in Smyth's employ. It is not known whether Margaret assisted her husband in his work when she was not ill, but deponents for Smyth suggest not. His witnesses placed the Thekers in the village of Acaster Selby, a short distance to the east of Bolton Percy, for the entire day the alleged marriage contract took place. William was working on the roof of the house of John and Marion Helwis. Marion deposed that Margaret was present at the Helwis home because her husband, William Theker was covering the roof with straw.¹⁷¹ Another witness from Acaster Selby, William Fynche, saw Margaret later in the evening when she made a visit to the local mill. He enquired as to why she was still there in Acaster Selby, and she responded that she remained because her husband was still working.

Thus, it seems that Robert Smyth knew the Helwis family, or at least knew of them, and that the Thekers knew both Smyth and Helwis through working for them. It would be interesting to discover how Smyth was able to assemble his witnesses: did he in fact have direct prior contact with the Helwises, or did he come to know of them through the Thekers or through someone else? Did he then make contact with the other witnesses from Acaster Selby through the Helwises?¹⁷² Maude Shippen's exceptions to Smyth's exceptions to her witnesses stated that Theker was of good fame and opinion and had a good reputation among his neighbours for as long as he had lived in Bolton Percy, implying, perhaps, that at one point he had not. One of Smyth's other witnesses was John Jordan of Acaster Selby, who was also working for the Helwises as a labourer, ploughing and

¹⁷⁰ BIHR, CP.E.70.

¹⁷¹ BIHR, CP.E.70. *Margareta uxor Willelmi Theker...presens fuit in villa / de Acastre Selby in domo Johannis Helwis et a principio illius diei usque ad hora vesperarum eiusdem diei cum marito sue Willelmo / Theker qui laboravit ibidem tunc temporis cooperiundo.*

¹⁷² Unfortunately, the witnesses in this case do not depose about how long they had known Smyth, Shippen, or the Thekers.

threshing. He did not spend all of his time outdoors, however, for he saw Margaret Theker inside the house, and knew William Theker to the extent that he was able to comment on Theker's *bad* reputation as a 'false man', including the bizarre detail that he had heard Theker say that he wanted to go to the church of St Mary of Lincoln to make an offering in order to ensure that the king of England would have bad fortune.¹⁷³ He does not say whether or not he heard Theker make this utterance whilst they were both employed by the Helwises, although it certainly seems possible that labourers would gather with the rest of the household for meals or other breaks.

In terms of centrality in this case, it seems that the Helwises in Acaster Selby were quite connected through their contacts with labourers and fellow villagers. Marion Helwis mentions Simon, keeper of the blessed lamb (or Agnes?) of the parish church of Stillingfleet, who spent time in her house around the time that the Thekers were employed there. On the other hand, the Thekers themselves seemed to be well-known, even if their reputation was not always good. William Fynche knew who Margaret Theker was and what she and her husband were doing in his village when he expressed surprise that she was still there in the evening, for example. Maude Shippen was from Steeton, a small village in the parish of Bolton Percy, and she was able to testify about the Thekers' reputation amongst their neighbours in the township of Bolton Percy. The case took place about five years after the Black Death; in this context it would not be surprising if labourers such as Theker and his wife, travelling from village to village within this localised region of the hinterland, made contacts in the course of their daily movements.

It seems unlikely, however, that duration of interaction between labourers like the Thekers and their employers, or amongst fellow labourers, would be very substantial. Frequency of interaction might have been great during a concentrated period of time, as when Theker was engaged in a thatching job, or during certain months of the year when particular agricultural activities, like ploughing, were performed. The case also throws up some interesting questions regarding the gendered division of labour: Marion Helwis comments on the presence of Margaret Theker in her household. Is it possible that Margaret accompanied her husband in

¹⁷³ BIHR, CP.E.70. William Theker *vellet / offerre unum obolum singulis annis Sancte Marie Lincoln sub eo pacto quod...Rex Angl' haberet mala fortuna / et mala expeditionem in suis agendis.*

order to generate some supplemental income, performing domestic chores in whatever household he was thatching, or was she ill, and would have assisted her husband if healthy? Margaret's trip to the mill could suggest that she was assisting Marion.

The city of York did not come up in *Shippen c. Smyth*. A narrower spectrum of work-related networks are in evidence in the Ainsty cause papers as in those from York itself, or when Ainsty litigants bring in witnesses from York, as in the Ingoly case.¹⁷⁴ We have seen in previous chapters that commercial transactions took place between the Ainsty and York. Agnes Grantham provided ale to Acomb Grange, while one would expect the provision of food and ale to be the other way round, from hinterland to city.¹⁷⁵ The circumstances of the case demonstrate that it could be crucial for business relations between town and country to have a social aspect; the planned dinner meeting could act as 'social lubrication'. After escaping from John Dale and his accomplices, Agnes hoped that her business alliance with Feryby would prompt him to assist her in her predicament, the coerced marriage contract with John Dale, when she appealed to him in front of many other members of his household. In the end, Agnes's urban ties of neighbourhood and parish proved more efficacious than the link brought about by trade with Feryby, as affluent (usually male) neighbours and other men from York, rather than the Ainsty, testified on her behalf. Could this have been due to Feryby having stronger ties with members of his own household (i.e. Dale)?

John Thornton and William Pontefract, the wealthy drapers in *Dale c. Grantham*, were neighbours and business partners in York; they were named together in the probate inventories as owing £4 to Agnes's dead husband as well as to Thomas Dalby, archdeacon of Richmond, who himself had ties in the Ainsty.¹⁷⁶ I have not been able to find direct connections between the archdeacon and Grantham.¹⁷⁷ It is thus difficult to tell how dense and how extended this business network actually was. Nonetheless, the cause papers flesh out the relationship

¹⁷⁴ BIHR, CP.F.201.

¹⁷⁵ BIHR, CP.F.36.

¹⁷⁶ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 33, 43, 64-6.

¹⁷⁷ Stell and Hampson (trans. and eds.), 'Probate Inventories', pp. 26-43. The repetition of several of the same names at the end of the inventories of both Dalby and Hugh Grantham appears to have been a scribal error.

between Thornton and Pontefract by giving us the social side: William Pontefract met Agnes Grantham through conversations with John Thornton, his colleague and neighbour.¹⁷⁸

3.3.4 Parish and Devotion

The tombs of William Pontefract and John Thornton lay side by side in the parish church of All Saints, Pavement, in York; the two men clearly hoped to commemorate and extend their friendship and partnership beyond the grave.¹⁷⁹ The cause papers certainly flesh out the social side of this relationship, but here, as in other examples, the devotional practices of the laity are not as obviously in evidence in the court records as they are in the wills. The information is more incidental. We find out, for example, that William Pontefract's household was also home to a 'holy woman' named Christiana, with whom Agnes Grantham shared a bed.¹⁸⁰ Agnes Grantham evidently hoped to extend her business relationship with Master William Feryby into the devotional sphere, as one of the primary purposes for her journey to Acomb Grange was to solicit Feryby's advice and patronage in the matter of an ecclesiastical career for her son, Thomas. Hoping to mobilise her link with this well-known and powerful man, her plans were disrupted by the plans of a member of Feryby's household and his friends (possibly also members of the household at Acomb Grange). In another marriage dispute, William Scargill of York, the male plaintiff, was living within St Mary's Abbey in York.¹⁸¹ The witnesses included servants of the abbey, and the contract took place within the abbey precincts in one of the cells. This emphasizes once again contacts between the Ainsty and York, and it seems that the woman, Alice, daughter of Roger del Park of Moor Monkton, knew the witnesses through her relationship with William. I have not been able to trace why William was resident in the abbey, but he may have been a servant.

In the defamation case *Clerk c. Sedburgh*, the parties and witnesses were nearly all clerics and clerks. It is, in fact, difficult to characterise the discussion of

¹⁷⁸ BIHR, CP.F.36.

¹⁷⁹ Rees Jones, 'Historical Introduction', pp. 693-94.

¹⁸⁰ BIHR, CP.F.36.

¹⁸¹ BIHR, CP.E.238 (1398-99).

this defamation case as belonging to either category of ‘work/occupation’ or ‘religion/devotion’. The individuals involved seem to have met one another in the course of their careers, even though they happened to be clerics. This case correlates with the patterns Bardsley has observed in defamation cases prosecuted in Church courts: there was more emphasis placed on clerical behaviour in Church courts than in secular courts. In the fourteenth-century Court of York, moreover, more defamation cases involved men accusing one another.¹⁸²

More common in the cause papers are the mentions of chapels, the importance of the presence of clerics at the solemnizations of marriages, and nuptial feasting, details that all contribute to a sense of a devotional community. The churching ceremony of the wife of the vicar of Acaster Malbis was remembered by two male witnesses in a dispute over tithes and offerings. Witnesses and litigants in all classes of litigation used shared mnemonic devices to locate past events, saints’ feast days being the most common. The Ainsty practice was typical of English witness testimony as a whole in this respect.¹⁸³ A more local pattern may perhaps be discerned in the devotional attachment to Archbishop Scrope in the Micklegate and Bishophill neighbourhoods of York, those most closely associated geographically with the Ainsty, as discussed in Chapter Two. I have only found one mention of Scrope in the Ainsty cause papers, in *Ingoly c. Middleton and Easingwold*, which, as we have seen, involves individuals primarily from Nether Poppleton and York itself. Robert Grymston, a Nether Poppleton resident and witness to the solemnization of the marriage between Robert Easingwold and Ellen Wright at the parish church of Nether Poppleton, declared that he was able to remember the marriage that occurred so long ago because it took place near the fifteenth anniversary of Scrope’s decapitation.¹⁸⁴ The sites of the Scrope cult seems to have been strongly associated with southwest York and Clementhorpe, but the mention of Scrope’s execution, a mnemonic device for remembering the date of a marriage contract, demonstrates the resonance of the

¹⁸² Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, pp. 80, 87-8.

¹⁸³ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁸⁴ BIHR, CP.F.201. *Et interrogatus qualiter h[o]c in memoria sua ita certiter lapsum tanti temporis dicit quod in septimana pentecoste ad v annos dict[um] festum s[an]c[t]e / Trinitat[is] immediate precedente recolende memorie dominus Ricaruis Lescorp quondam archiep[isc]o[pus] Ebor’ fuit decapitatus citra cuius decap[itatione]... / ...in septimana Pentecost[e] ultimo preterit[o] fuerunt xxxiii^{or} anni elapsi et non plures neque pauciores.*

events, and perhaps the cult, in other sections of the Ainsty. On the other hand, Grymston is the only witness in the case to mention the execution.

3.8 Conclusion: The Significance of Activity Fields

Which activity fields seem most significant for social relations often depends on the nature of the case, and the underlying issues that needed to be demonstrated or disproved. Thus, in *Dale c. Grantham*, an urban case, links of neighbourhood and parish are foregrounded because Agnes needed people living in the immediate vicinity of her household in the parish of St Michael le Belfrey to prove that she was not in fact living there, but only visiting frequently to ensure her household and business interests were in order. Further, she needed witnesses resident in the household of William Pontefract to demonstrate that she was living and sleeping there. It cannot, therefore, be extrapolated from this case that ties of neighbourhood and household were more important than, for example, kinship ties in urban cases (moreover, Agnes, it will be remembered, was a widow).

Social networks in the hinterland did not necessarily coincide with the village 'community'. Almost all the Ainsty cause papers mention other locations and people from elsewhere. Some cases involve interaction between individuals from quite far-flung locales, as when Peter le Walker of Tadcaster enlisted the help of witnesses near Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Witnesses invariably testified that certain points in marriage cases are well known in the village concerned, as well as in surrounding villages, and in some cases, the city of York. Poos suggests that these statements should not necessarily be taken as merely formulaic, and that they overlay actual networks of gossip and rumour.¹⁸⁵ The places that witnesses and litigants name in these statements can be revealing. Maude Shippen claimed that William Theker's reputation is well known in Bolton Percy, while Robert Smyth made a similar statement about his reputation in Bolton Percy and Acaster Selby.¹⁸⁶

In that networks in the Ainsty are dense and multiplex, Ainsty society resembles stereotypical rural society, but the networks also incorporate urban dwellers almost seamlessly. There are some cases, however, in which York seems

¹⁸⁵ Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts', p. 601.

¹⁸⁶ BIHR, CP.E.70.

to have little to no bearing. The dispute between Maude Shippen and Robert Smyth evidently involved only Steeton, Bolton Percy and Acaster Selby. Similarly, *Moryz c. Tiryngton* involved a cluster of villages around the town of Tadcaster: Wetherby, Newton Kyme, and the outlier of Wilstrop.¹⁸⁷ It seems as if this case involved social relations in the hinterland of *Tadcaster* rather than York itself.

Kinship emerges in the Ainsty cause papers as the primary activity field in which social relationships were formed, manipulated and maintained, between town and country, between villages and within a single township. Life-cycle service was also significant, particularly in the formation of marriages, both endogamous and exogamous. Cause paper depositions, however, even more than the testamentary evidence, points up the extent to which activity fields overlapped: work, especially service, intersected with marriage and household, and devotion of course linked with marriage, especially in the involvement of clerics in witnessing marriage ceremonies.

Social interaction in the Ainsty took place in a substantial variety of circumstances and contexts. Marriage contracts in the Ainsty occurred in streets, workshops, storerooms and houses. Poos notes that defamation tended to be public (church, churchyard, marketplace) or in a house in front of a group of relatives and neighbours.¹⁸⁸ No locations seem peculiar to the hinterland; marriage contracts in the street occurred in town and country. In tithe causes, the characteristics of the hinterland are even less in evidence than in marriage cases, as the nature of the evidence required often called for witnesses to demonstrate that they had longstanding residence in order to render believable their claims that a particular incumbent had always been owed tithes. In effect witnesses had to emphasise stereotypical characteristics of prosperous rural agriculturalists, from the type of stock that can often be traced in documents over more than one generation.

¹⁸⁷ BIHR, C.P.E.95 (1367-68).

¹⁸⁸ Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts', pp. 601-2.

CHAPTER FOUR: LAND, EXCHANGE AND DISPUTES

This chapter brings a variety of documents to bear on the social networks of real estate, tenure and economic activity, including the exchange of land, chattels and credit, and the disputes arising from these transactions. The documents studied reinforce the multiplicity, multiplexity, and occasionally density, of ties binding city and hinterland, as well as the networks of affinity and patronage tying the local gentry to their social inferiors. In addition to reinforcing urban-rural ties, these networks delineated localized spheres of sociability encompassing one or more villages, often contiguous, in particular regions of the Ainsty. The records show these connections at work in politics and military matters as well as in economic activity. In the process of piecing together the evidence in this wide range of documents, it is difficult to avoid a sense that a certain tension arose out of some of the interactions between York and its hinterland, and that disputes and clashes complicated their symbiotic relationship throughout much of the politically and militarily volatile fifteenth century.

It has been suggested in the previous chapters that one of the routes to discovering the status of rural areas immediately outside a major medieval town is the way in which inhabitants of both town and hinterland referred to them. We have seen Ainsty testators occasionally modifying the description of their village and/or parish to include phrases like ‘in Ainsty’, ‘*iuxta*’ York, or ‘*extra muros Ebor*’.¹ Deponents in ecclesiastical causes most often simply gave the name of their place of habitation, without modification. Similarly, the private and institutional deeds and the records of the central government to be discussed in this chapter normally simply indicated the name of the villages in which land was located, and only described them as ‘in Ainsty’ when it was necessary to distinguish them from other villages of the same name in Yorkshire.² Civic

¹ For ‘*extra muros Ebor*’, see the will of Henry Wright of Dringhouses, husbandman, 1478-79. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 137v.

² E.g. (Long) Marston, Hutton (Wandesley) and Bilton. Healaugh Park Priory, for example, held land in both Hutton Rudby and Hutton Wandesley: the latter was called ‘Hoton in Ainsty’. J.S.

documents produced by and for York's borough officials, on the other hand, called attention to the close jurisdictional and economic associations between the Ainsty and the city despite highlighting their distinct, separate identities. A typically thorough entry in the *York House Books* involved a weaver, John Chelorer '*de Acom' iuxta Ebor' in comitatu civitatis Ebor'*', who was bound to keep the peace in 1489.³ The *House Books* had earlier recorded that John Sharp, another weaver, was restored to the freedom of York in 1476 on the condition that he obey the ordinances of weavers '*infra civitatem istam quam infra wapentagium de Ansty'*'.⁴

These naming patterns suggest that private individuals had a greater tendency to incorporate their status as inhabitants of the hinterland, their proximity to York, into their identity. Institutions and parties to private land transactions appear to have been more concerned simply to pinpoint the geographical location of their land dealings, while the city itself was concerned to maintain a civic identity while emphasizing its influence over the hinterland. Parcels of land were described not only in topographical and jurisdictional terms, but were also demarcated and remembered in terms of *people*, the individuals who had held it previously and who held neighbouring lands.⁵ This method of identifying land was intimately related to processes of social or collective memory.⁶ The documents recording the history of their tenure and exchange are therefore ideal for studying social interactions and even reconstructing parts of neighbourhoods, both in the narrow sense of neighbouring plots of land and in the wider sense of clusters of neighbouring settlements.

Purvis (trans. and ed.), *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh*, YASRS 92 (1936), pp. 28-29.

³ It should be noted that the scribes of the *House Books* tended towards precision in their descriptions of other places close to York and in Yorkshire, such as the suburb of Clifton, '*iuxta Ebor' in comitatu Ebor'*'. Skipwith (nine and one half miles from York, wapentake of Ouse and Derwent) and Huntington (three miles from York) were identified as '*in comitatu Ebor'*', while Wheldrake (eight miles from York, wapentake of Ouse and Derwent) was left unmodified. L.C. Attreed (ed.), *York House Books 1461-1490, Volume II: House Books Five-Six* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1991), pp. 457, 489, 619, 637.

⁴ L.C. Attreed (ed.), *York House Books 1461-1490, Volume I: House Books One and Two/Four* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1991), p. 34.

⁵ See D.L. Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille* (Ithaca, New York, 1999), pp. 13, 69-70, 78, 98, 151, 208.

⁶ Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies*, p. 9; M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1993), pp. 86, 95.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first discusses social relations in the hinterland from the point of view of Ainsty deeds and records produced by local religious houses, as well as the estate of the treasurer of York Minster, which included possessions and jurisdiction in the villages of Acomb and Holgate. The second section outlines what we can glean from York civic sources about social networks in the Ainsty, while the third section moves jurisdictionally outward to the records of late medieval England's central government.⁷ I have placed the discussion of religious and private muniments first not only because many of them predate the civic and crown records by a century or more, but also because they usefully establish the themes of landholding and financial transactions that will be developed throughout the chapter. The institutions, families and individuals who appear in these early documents also turn up frequently in the late medieval records of the civic and central governments in various guises and permutations of social relations. They thus demonstrate a degree of continuity in the networks that linked the inhabitants of York and the Ainsty to one another and to the institutions that formed a significant aspect of their landscapes throughout the later middle ages.

I have grouped a number of different documents into the above three categories for expedience, but it should be noted that the way in which I have classified and ordered the following discussion is to some extent arbitrary. I am making the assumption that the origin and author of a type of record have at least as much relevance as its basic function. For instance, should the certificates of statute merchant be incorporated into the discussion of the records of the central government, as I have done below, or with the sheriffs' court books, given that they both document legal disputes? Should the feet of fines be grouped with deeds and cartularies because all three deal with land transactions, or with the central government records? The continuities, similarities and contrasts between the various classes of record have been flagged up in order to clarify the rationale behind the chapter's structure.

Each of these three sections is further divided, as in the previous chapters, into the subheadings of marriage and kinship, neighbourhood, landholding and

⁷ The scope of this thesis has not allowed the original sources in these classes of documents to be consulted at length, so the following discussion is based on printed editions and calendars.

occupation, and parish, devotion and ecclesiastical institutions. Some classes of document, particularly the Inquisitions *post mortem*, some deeds, and the various records of disputes, demonstrate multiplexity more than others, for example, the financial accounts. The reader will find that in the following discussion, the sections on marriage and kinship and devotion are noticeably brief, and for some documents have been omitted altogether. It would appear that these were not obviously important activity fields for the types of transactions recorded in some of these documents.

This chapter also delves more deeply into issues touched upon in the preceding chapters by asking if the networks of the local gentry and the urban elites of York had a discernible influence over those of their social inferiors living within, or migrating from, the Ainsty. It achieves this through analysis of who was involved in disputes and transactions, and in particular, who acted as pledges or witnesses. As we have seen, a great deal of mutual trust based on prior interaction often existed between the principal parties in a transaction (whether a will, court case or deed) and their witnesses.⁸ Larger questions of the dynamics of the economy and the law in people's social networks are also addressed, particularly in the sections on civic records and the certificates of debt among the records of the central government.

4.1 The Social Dynamics of Land Exchange: The Ainsty in Deeds and the Records of Local Religious Houses

Deeds, and those compiled into monastic cartularies in particular, show inherently dense and multiplex relationships, detailing the transactions of people connected by kinship, devotion and landholding. This section discusses the deeds contained in the cartularies of the treasurer of York Minster, the Priory of Healaugh Park, and the canons of Tockwith along with a variety of Ainsty title deeds filed

⁸ See Chapters Two and Three. For the social dynamics involved in the gentry's use of witnesses, see P. Maddern, 'Friends of the Dead: Executors, Wills and Family Strategy in Fifteenth-Century Norfolk', in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 155-74; *eadem*, 'Best Trusted Friends': Concepts and Practices of Friendship among Fifteenth-Century Norfolk Gentry' in N. Rogers (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, Lincolnshire, 1994), pp. 100-117.

elsewhere and published for the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.⁹ There are so many overlaps between the deeds and the cartularies, particularly those of Healaugh and Tockwith, in terms of the parties and witnesses to land transactions that it would be impractical to separate them. The treasurer's cartulary is a slightly different matter. It dealt with different (and fewer) members of the gentry and land in different parts of the Ainsty, mainly closer to York. The documents in this section are more numerous for an earlier time period, particularly the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, but the focus remains on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Following an introduction to the cartularies, this section will follow the pattern of dividing the analysis into activity fields. These subsections interweave discussion of the cartularies with examples from printed Ainsty deeds. Occasionally the focus will be on these separate deeds, particularly when a long run of them was available, facilitating comparison of the parties and witnesses involved.

Religious houses in the Vale of York were frequently founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by elite local landholders, whose families and dynasties contributed to their patronage for generations, and sometimes centuries.¹⁰ The Augustinian Priory of St John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh began as a hermitage in the late twelfth century. The hermits and the first prior, installed in 1218, were supported by grants from the Haget family. The canons serving at the chapel of All Saints, Tockwith (also known as Scokirk), belonged to a cell of another Augustinian house, Nostell Priory. The Priory itself had been founded near Pontefract in the reign of Henry I with grants from the Lacy family, and the cell was established shortly thereafter.¹¹

The printed editions of the cartularies of Healaugh and Tockwith include documents dating back to the twelfth century that help to establish a pattern of associations based on seigniorial hierarchy, kinship, among both the local elite and

⁹ J.E. Burton (ed.), *The Cartulary of the Treasurer of York Minster*, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 5 (York, 1978). Burton's edition includes relevant entries compiled from other sources, including the Calendar of Close Rolls. J.S. Purvis (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh*, YASRS 92 (1936); G.C. Ransome (ed.), 'The Chartulary of Tockwith alias Scokirk, a Cell to the Priory of Nostell' in J.S. Purvis (ed.), *Miscellanea III*, YASRS 80 (1931); *Yorkshire Deeds*, Vols. 1-3, 5-9, YASRS 39, 50, 58, 69, 76, 83, 102, 111 (1907-46).

¹⁰ Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries*, pp. 5-12, 15, 18-27; and J. Burton, 'Religious Houses', in R.A. Butlin (ed.), *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire* (Otley, West Yorkshire, 2003), pp. 90-93.

¹¹ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 151-52.

their tenants, and landholding within and between villages in the immediate vicinity of the religious house. Ainsty deeds widen our window onto these patterns and show how they persisted and adapted over the course of the late middle ages. The small amount of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century material in the Healaugh and Tockwith cartularies also show that the patterns evident in the earlier period still obtained. For example, in 1317 Sir Robert Vavasour did homage to the prior of Healaugh for land in Bilton: the ritual took place at the Assize in York Minster itself, another example of an interaction, involving Ainsty individuals, in which the city played a significant role.¹² The royal judicial apparatus ensured that a major central place, York, would be used to host meetings of the Assize.¹³ Twenty-four years earlier, Lady Alice, widow of John Vavasour had done the same homage in York at the Assize. The Vavasour influence reached throughout the Ainsty, as the family also had connections with the Deyvilles of Bilton, and two members of the Vavasour lineage are recorded as having witnessed land transactions in the deeds of Hornington, in the parish of Bolton Percy.¹⁴

The associations of the Priory of Healaugh, being the larger house, were oriented more towards York (mainly Micklegate) and further afield in the West and North Ridings. Tockwith apparently enjoyed denser connections within a more limited geographical area encompassing villages on either side of the northern boundary of the Ainsty.¹⁵ Just as the jurisdictional bounds of the Ainsty did not halt social and land transactions, neither did the river Nidd, which acted rather as a landmark, and land exchanges took place between individuals in Tockwith and Cattal, located on the opposite bank. The reader will remember similar situations obtaining in both the testamentary and cause paper evidence for the fifteenth century, as when Thomas Milner of Askham Richard bequeathed his wife her lands in Stillingfleet in 1453 and when William Gell of Kirk Hammerton involved his kin

¹² Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 187-88.

¹³ E. Miller, 'Medieval York', in P.M. Tillott (ed.), *A History of Yorkshire: the City of York* (London, 1961), pp. 29, 34, 36, 42, 68.

¹⁴ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, p. 80.

¹⁵ Due to the choice of the editor of the *Scokirk Chartulary* to exclude the names of witnesses to land transactions, it has been impossible to reconstruct as much of that house's geographical and social horizons, but the identities of the parties to the transactions do suggest a more limited pool of benefactors.

from Cattal in his marriage negotiations with a woman from Cawood (south of the rivers Nidd *and* Wharfe) in the cause paper depositions.¹⁶

Although Healaugh Priory's benefactors had a wider land base on which to draw for grants, it was essentially an Ainsty institution. Out of a total of twenty-eight separate places in which the priory held land, a full half of them were within the Ainsty, with a further three within a mile or two of its west and southwest border.¹⁷ Interestingly, Healaugh's holdings concentrated in the area of the Ainsty northwest of the important Tadcaster road that bisected the wapentake. The witnesses to the priory's land transactions, however, came from a more varied Ainsty land base, often literally surrounding the land in question, as we shall see below.

The documents show connections between the houses of Healaugh, Tockwith, and the convent at Syningthwaite, in the immediate vicinity of Tockwith. The land held by the prioress and nuns at Syningthwaite was often used in the charters as a landmark to describe a parcel of land being donated to the Tockwith cell, as in an example from the second half of the thirteenth century in which it was recorded that William Chauncey, lord of Hutton Wandesley (in Ainsty) was to pay the canons of Tockwith 14d annual rent for a tenement in Marston between that of the nuns of Syningthwaite on the one hand and the land of the Abbot of Fountains on the other.¹⁸ The situation becomes even more confusing due to the fact that Healaugh Priory was granted land in Tockwith.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, it is here that the overlap in the connections between the two houses is most evident, with members of the Wilstrop family (about which see below) appearing as witnesses in both.

Even Clementhorpe nunnery in the suburbs of York just outside the Ainsty granted land to Healaugh: a parcel of land in Haganby (also immediately outside the Ainsty) that the prioress and convent granted to Healaugh had been the gift of

¹⁶ See BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 285r (Chapter Two) and BIHR, CP.F.270 (Chapter Three).

¹⁷ Healaugh Park Priory held Ainsty land in Healaugh, Wighill, Folifoot, Sandwath (between Bilburgh and Askham Richard), Askham Richard, Walton, Easedike, Hutton Wandesley, Catterton, Toulston, Thorp Arch, Marston, Bilton and Tockwith. The three locations just outside the Ainsty were North Deighton, Haganby and Smaws. They had further holdings in Wothersome, Yarm, Wombwell, Leathley, Castley, Hutton Rudby, Marton, Bainton, Silton, Fenton and Newbiggin. Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. vi-vii.

¹⁸ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, p. 173.

¹⁹ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 162-65.

Robert de Leathley.²⁰ Finally, Clementhorpe, Healaugh and Nun Monkton all held land in York itself, acquired during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²¹ The tendency for elite families to acquire both York and Ainsty land, much of which was granted to these religious houses from the eleventh century onwards, also bound the city to the hinterland and its religious houses. The Arches family, benefactors of Tockwith and Healaugh, also held land in the city beginning in the eleventh century, along with other elites Ainsty landholders such as the Percys and the Mowbrays.²²

Much of the lands comprising the Minster treasurer's estate originated as part of the archiepiscopal demesne or that of the cathedral, including Acomb, where the treasurer held land from the beginning of the thirteenth century. These were augmented after 1218 by the creation of prebends, some through the division of the manor of Sherburn in Elmet, which lay in the hinterland but not in the Ainsty.²³ One gets the impression that most entries in the cartulary of the treasurer of York Minster involving laypeople had more to do with disputes and coercion, with the treasurer recovering and asserting his rights, rather than free grants made with a religious motivation and with the support of local peers. As we shall see, the tension apparent in these relationships echoes that that sometimes appeared in the civic records of the later middle ages between the city and the inhabitants of the Ainsty.

The treasurer's cartulary demonstrates that office's special relationship, from at least the thirteenth century, with Ainsty settlements very close to York. These included the township of Acomb and its subsidiary vill, Holgate, as well as Dringhouses.²⁴ The fact that the treasurer was the rector of Acomb as well as the lord of the manor and vill meant that the city and village were even more closely intertwined in jurisdictional terms than was the case with other Ainsty townships.²⁵

²⁰ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 179-80, 195. The Leathley family also had more direct connections with Healaugh and Tockwith. Apart from granting land in Leathley itself, members of that family witnessed grants of land in Wighill and Easedike. Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 12, 19-20, 24.

²¹ Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 49-51.

²² Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 51.

²³ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. v-x.

²⁴ Clifton and Bootham in the suburbs to the northwest of York were also part of the treasurer's estate. Burton, *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. vi-vii. ix, xi, xiii, 4, 19-20, 64, 75.

²⁵ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, p. xiii.

The inhabitants of Acomb and Holgate enjoyed liberties in the city from an early date, privileges that had to be confirmed by order of Edward III in 1376.²⁶ Steeton and Poppleton also had institutional ties with the Treasurer and with the prebendary of Wistow from the thirteenth century.²⁷ The witness lists in the treasurer's cartulary tend to be unhelpful as far as discerning social relations, as the treasurer usually preferred to use high churchmen or itinerant justices.

4.1.1 Marriage, Kinship and Household

Household was not a visible activity field in the deeds and cartularies, but marriage and kinship were. A few early disputes recorded in the cartulary of the treasurer are suggestive about the way in which landholding interacted with marriage and kinship in the hinterland. In 1215, William Conin and his wife, Matilda Bluet, were embroiled in a dispute over land in Acomb with Robert de Hessay, guarantor of Thomas de Waleton, which resulted in a duel.²⁸ William and Matilda ultimately quitclaimed the land to Robert, with one Martin de Acome among the witnesses. A decade later, Robert de Legherton recognized the treasurer's right and quitclaimed land in Acomb that he had inherited from his uncle, Henry Neelot.²⁹ These examples show people of varied social stations relying on kin and possibly neighbours for support in disputes about land. There are examples in the Tockwith cartulary of husbands and wives granting land to other husbands and wives. In some of these cases, the wife was clearly an heiress. They raise the possibility of the centrality of elite wives. In a later example, when Thomas Broket, esquire, released land in Acaster Selby to a clerk, Robert Stillyngton, in 1458, he emphasized his own lineage: Thomas was the heir of Thomas Broket and Dionesia, daughter of William Sampson, late esquire of Appleton.³⁰

The majority of parties in the cartularies were male, but when elite women appeared, their use of witnesses was not noticeably different than that of their male

²⁶ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. 64.

²⁷ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. ix, 34-37.

²⁸ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, p. 48. The early date is probably a good indicator that the toponymic surnames in this case represent the actual place of origin of the bearers.

²⁹ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. 47-48, 50.

³⁰ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds I*, p. 5.

relatives. On the rare occasions that women appeared in the Healaugh and Tockwith cartularies during the later middle ages, they acted with their husbands. In the earlier period, although men and women related by blood or marriage did not always use exactly the same witnesses, clusters of witnesses varied in size for both male and female benefactors, and both men and women enlisted the services of clerics and local knights. This behaviour appears to echo that observed in the probate material for the late medieval Ainsty. When Alice, daughter of Henry the Clerk of Wighill and widow of Benedict de Marston, sold land in Wighill to Healaugh Priory, the transaction was witnessed by Alan de Catterton, Alan de Folifoot, William the parson of Wighill, Robert de Oton (Hutton), Everard the clerk, William son of Henry de Marston, and Ralph Hardy. A grant by Alice's brother William to his other sister, Isolda, shared at least three witnesses with Alice's sale: the two Alans, and the parson of Wighill. Instead of William son of Henry de Marston and Ralph Hardy, William the parson of Healaugh and Robert Saxpe rounded out the group of witnesses to William's grant.³¹

It was, of course, usual for early donors of land to Healaugh Priory and the cell at Tockwith to include the condition that their dead husbands, wives, parents, ancestors and heirs be included in the canons' prayers. In a typical example, when Richard, son of Richard, son of Guy, confirmed his father's gifts to the canons at Tockwith in the early thirteenth century, he did so for the sake of his own soul, as well as those of both his parents and all his ancestors.³² Such concern for the souls of kin obviously was not unique to the Ainsty, but it did reinforce relationships between members of local families, the religious houses, and the witnesses to the transactions, especially when such ties were long-term, with subsequent generations confirming and augmenting their ancestor's gifts.³³

These conditional requests for prayers for kin occasionally persisted even as the volume of grants and confirmations dropped off in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁴ Robert de Ros, lord of North Deighton, confirmed his ancestor's grants in 1400, requesting that the canons of Healaugh include his wife

³¹ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 30-31.

³² Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 168-69.

³³ Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 211, 216-22.

³⁴ While these provisions appeared in the Healaugh cartulary in the late middle ages, they were uncommon in the Tockwith cartulary in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

and sons in their martyrology.³⁵ The canons of Healaugh themselves recognized the enduring significance of kinship in their relations with local families. The early sixteenth-century scribe of Healaugh's cartulary saw fit to record a genealogy of the founding Haget family on the very first folio, noting that Eufemia Haget had been a prioress of Syningthwaite nunnery in the thirteenth century.³⁶

The emphasis throughout the cartularies was on immediate family, genealogy, and lineal descent. Siblings associated together in records of land grants, including as co-witnesses, as when William Sakespe and his brother Ralph witnessed a grant to the canons at Healaugh by Simon Sakespe of Wighill in the thirteenth century.³⁷ In early records siblings also appeared together in their capacity as heirs or heiresses, as when Cecilia and Ymania, the daughters of Ralph of Marston, granted their rights to land in Marston to the canons at Tockwith.³⁸ Parents, children and siblings also appear together in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century deeds, as we shall see in the following discussions of some prominent families.

The deeds and cartularies illustrate the longevity of important kin groups, and show that connections between some of these families were also long-lived. Alan de Catterton and Alan de Folifoot, both knights and lords of the Ainsty vills indicated in their surnames, seem to have enjoyed a relationship of long duration and frequency of interaction, judging by the numbers of times in which they acted together in land transactions in the Healaugh cartulary. They acted as fellow witnesses a number of times, while on other occasions one acted as a witness in a transaction in which the other was a main party. These two men and their descendants of the same names enjoyed extremely central roles in their society as manifested in the cartulary. Apparently an Alan de Catterton of the late fifteenth century confirmed the twelfth- and thirteenth-century grants of his ancestors and namesakes.³⁹

Like the Vavasours, Alans from both Catterton and Folifoot also appear frequently as witnesses to fourteenth-century land transactions in Hornington,

³⁵ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 81-82.

³⁶ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 1.

³⁷ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 32.

³⁸ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, p. 191.

³⁹ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 209-210.

acting together and alongside a plethora of local gentlemen and prosperous villagers representing several Ainsty communities.⁴⁰ The influence, authority and trustworthiness that these men embodied must have been considerable, for although none of the Alans of Catterton and Folifoot is party to any of these transactions, they again acted both separately and as co-witnesses on many occasions. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that kinship played a significant role in the relationship between these two families, as younger generations maintained and strengthened associations nurtured by their ancestors.

The dense networks woven by such families, elite and non-elite, may be more clearly illustrated by a close examination of one, the Wilstrops of Wilstrop. The Tockwith cartulary in particular reveals networks surrounding this long-lived family.⁴¹ Although the Wilstrop seat was at the village bearing the same name, they held extensive lands within nearby Tockwith, Hessay, Cattal and Hammerton.⁴² From very early on, the Wilstrops were intimately intertwined with the prominent family of Arches, who held the manor of Marston and gave their name to Thorp Arch in the Ainsty, and that vill also comes up often in the cartulary in connection with the Wilstrops. During the twelfth century William de Arches gave the canons at Tockwith some land that he had gained from Guy de Wilstrop. William's daughter, Matilda, became the first prioress of Nun Monkton, a Benedictine house that enjoyed the patronage of her parents. About two hundred years later in 1365, a Margaret Wilstrop became the prioress of that house, which is just slightly northeast of Wilstrop itself.⁴³

The documents give clues as to the social relations behind transactions involving these landholdings for more than four generations. For the most part, the printed land transactions show the Wilstrops associating with their peers, members of the local elite with whom they also intermarried. Marriage linked the Wilstrops with the Fairfaxes of Steeton in the fifteenth century.⁴⁴ The Wilstrops were also linked by participation in land transactions with the de Brus family, their lords, to

⁴⁰ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 78-85.

⁴¹ We have already seen the Wilstrops mentioned in the civic records.

⁴² There are two Hammertons, Kirk Hammerton and Green Hammerton. Both lie just beyond the northwest border of the Ainsty. Kirk Hammerton is closer to Wilstrop and Cattal and is normally the one indicated in the cartulary.

⁴³ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, p. 163; Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Kirby (ed.), *Plumpton Letters and Papers*, p. 43n.

whom they quitclaimed lands in the late thirteenth century. Members of the two families also mutually witnessed one another's deeds.⁴⁵

Occasionally the vertical ties with their social inferiors shine through. The twentieth-century editor of the Tockwith Cartulary unhelpfully left out the lists of witnesses to most of the various leases, gifts and quitclaims. However, the names of sureties for a bond between William Wilstrop and John Banks dating to 1419-20 are recorded. When Wilstrop sublet to Banks some land that he held of Tockwith, two men from Kirkhammerton, John Fox and Robert Gaichill, along with John Hudson of Tockwith acted as sureties for Banks' payment; these three men also witnessed the charter.⁴⁶ If we then turn to deeds not included in the cartulary, we find that several years earlier, another member of the Wilstrop clan had granted the same piece of land to another member of the Banks family, Richard Bank of Whixley, with Thomas Bank acting as one of the witnesses.⁴⁷ In 1421, Thomas Bank again acted as a witness, this time alongside William Thwaite of Marston, in a grant of land in Wilstrop from three Wilstrop brothers to one of their sons, Richard Wilstrop.⁴⁸ In 1439, the same piece of land, including a house 'called Morehous', changed hands again; this time Henry Willesthorpe, one of the brothers in the 1421 deed, granted the land to George Willesthorpe, Thomas Quarf, and Richard Bank. This deed reveals that Henry's late brother Robert had been married to Christiana Burton and that the land in question had been held for life by her and Ralph Gell. Thomas Gaythil, chaplain of Kirkhammerton, was among the witnesses, cementing the relationship between the families of Wilstrop, Bank and Gaithill.⁴⁹

The networks of many other elite families can be traced in the deeds, but this section will touch upon just one more, the Deyvills, whom we have encountered in previous chapters. The Deyvill family has, in the sources thus far, been associated with the township of Bilton, but the Tockwith cartulary reveals connections with that village as well, and with the Wilstrops. In the early

⁴⁵ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 160-63; Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 12; Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, pp. 179-181.

⁴⁶ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 165-66.

⁴⁷ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, p. 164.

⁴⁸ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, p. 180.

⁴⁹ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, pp. 180-1.

fourteenth century, Thomas Eyvill of Tockwith was granted free warren, while a J. Deyvill of Tockwith collected the royal tax of the tenth and fifteenth in 1350.⁵⁰

The deeds not included in the cartulary show the Deyvills interacting with men and women from Scagglethorpe and Moor Monkton as well.⁵¹

4.1.2 Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

Unfortunately, the occupations of most witnesses and sureties for Tockwith land transactions were not recorded, but in most cases it is probably safe to assume that they were prosperous peasant agriculturalists, if not members of the local elites as when one of the parties to an exchange of land was a knight. Peter the Clerk of Cattal was an exception, and was an active participant in Tockwith land transactions in the thirteenth century. In the Healaugh charters, occupations that turn up relatively frequently include those of forester and tailor. One peasant, Walter le Turner, was quite active in the priory land market in Wighill, and in turn acted as a witness for more than one of his social superiors, including the Sakespes and David, the son of Alan de Folifoot, even though the widow Lucy Thuret had quitclaimed the labour services of him and his heirs to the prior.⁵²

Neighbourhood and landholding were of vital importance in the social relationships that formed the background to land transactions involving religious houses. The witnesses to Healaugh charters almost always included men who held the land adjacent to that being exchanged, and we can see the workings of the open-field system wherein strips of land scattered throughout the fields were worked by the same neighbours. In both the independent deeds and those in the cartularies, there was a tendency spanning the twelfth to fifteenth centuries for parties to land transactions to use witnesses from vills literally surrounding the land in question. With the witnessing and recording of these transactions, the location and tenorial status of the land involved would thus have been embedded in the memories of important men from villages on all sides, pre-emptively avoiding any future disputes over boundaries, perhaps. For example, an agreement dating to 1283 concerning Healaugh's various rights to land in Wighill was witnessed by

⁵⁰ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, p. 157n.

⁵¹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 121, 160-61.

⁵² Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 29, 35-37.

men from Folifoot, Walton, Thorp Arch, Easedike and Hornington.⁵³ Another grant of land in Wighill had men from Marston, Catterton, Rufforth and Wighill itself as witnesses.⁵⁴

The deeds and cartularies also demonstrate mobility and migration within and just over the Ainsty borders. Ralph of Cawood of Tockwith and Thomas of Steeton of Tockwith acted as sureties along with Robert Fox and Richard Bullock (both of Tockwith) for a chaplain named John Elys in his dealings with Nostell Priory in 1393.⁵⁵ A late thirteenth-century transaction between William of Acaster Malbis, son of Robert the cook of Ayreminne, and Richard Malbis, knight, pertaining to land in Acaster Malbis provides a possible example of migration to the Ainsty.⁵⁶ Robert the cook's toponymic byname indicates an origin in Ayreminne in the West Riding, while William was identified as being of Acaster Malbis. Landholding often interacted with mobility, perhaps encouraging it. In 1396, the knight Sir Thomas Ughtred demised the manor of Scagglethorpe to three men from three different but geographically close Ainsty villis: Richard de Lundon of Poppleton (probably Nether), John de Craven of Moor Monkton and William Seriantson of Scagglethorpe itself.⁵⁷ Nearly a decade earlier, Ughtred had leased the same site to two men, including William Seriantson, although this time he was identified as being from of Monkton.⁵⁸

Similarly, disputes recorded in the treasurer's cartulary demonstrate that quarrels often involved parties from neighbouring villages or land close to, but not in, the vill of those participating. The treasurer clashed with Walter, son of Robert de Gray about pasture lying between Acomb and Dringhouses during the thirteenth century.⁵⁹ The resulting settlement permitted both de Gray's '*rusticorum...in villa de Drenguses*' and the treasurer's '*homines...de Acum*' to share the common pasture. Shortly after the Black Death, the parson of Skelton, just to the north of York, a few miles from Acomb, along with unnamed 'others' felled trees and

⁵³ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁴ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, pp. 16-17.

⁵⁵ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, p. 195.

⁵⁶ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Brown (ed.), *York. Deeds II*, pp. 161-62.

⁵⁸ Brown (ed.), *York. Deeds II*, p. 161n.

⁵⁹ The de Gray family held tenements of the treasurer in Dringhouses. Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, pp. xiii, 52.

perpetrated ‘other misdeeds’ in the treasurer’s woods and closes of Acomb and other places.⁶⁰

Individuals from certain pairs or larger clusters of Ainsty settlements were more likely to interact. We have just seen evidence of the close connection between Acomb and Dringhouses. While geographical proximity definitely played a part, topographical features like rivers seem to have enhanced, rather than discouraged, this interaction. Acaster Selby and Stillingfleet enjoyed close connections, as did Acaster Selby and Nun Appleton, Bolton Percy and Catterton, and Moor Monkton, Marston and Wilstrop. Men from Wilstrop witnessed transactions pertaining to Moor Monkton, and inhabitants of Long Marston witnessed deeds in Wilstrop, for example.⁶¹ People from both Acaster Selby and Acaster Malbis interacted with people from Appleton Roebuck and Nun Appleton. In 1458, Thomas Broket, an esquire related by marriage to another esquire, William Sampson of Appleton, quitclaimed land in Acaster Selby to a clerk, Robert Stillyngton.⁶² It is unsurprising that transactions involving land in the northwestern part of the Ainsty, as in Wilstrop, drew in individuals from villages clustered in the area on either side of the Ainsty border, including Moor Monkton, Long Marston and Kirkhammerton. Similarly, land exchange in Acaster Selby involved people from Bishopthorpe and Stillingfleet, in the southeast of the Ainsty and beyond.⁶³

While Healaugh priory, its benefactors and its tenants certainly enjoyed links with the city from the twelfth century through to the sixteenth, these do not loom especially large (except when the land involved was actually located in York), and were usually only invoked when the elite were involved. The horizons of the smaller house at Tockwith were more circumscribed. Missing witness lists aside, one of the few indications of the city’s presence in the Tockwith cartulary is a papal referral to the Prior of Holy Trinity and the Dean and Chapter of York Minster of an early thirteenth-century dispute involving a tithe of bread withheld by Juetta, daughter of William de Arches.⁶⁴ Only a few landholders in the

⁶⁰ Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer*, extract from Calendar of Patent Rolls, p. 64.

⁶¹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 119-26; Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VI*, pp. 165-66; Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, pp. 179-81.

⁶² Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds I*, p. 5.

⁶³ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds VII*, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 197-200.

Tockwith cartulary were identified as being 'of York'. One Reginald de Ebor was mentioned in a quitclaim, and we know that William de Kirkeby, son of the knight Alan de Kirkeby, was constable of York in 1272.⁶⁵

Deeds not in the cartularies, relating to other Ainsty villages, were another story. These were replete with grantors, grantees and witnesses from York throughout the high and later middle ages. To recount just a few examples from one village, William the forester, citizen of York, quitclaimed land in Acaster Malbis to John Sampson, also a York citizen, in the late thirteenth century. Shortly thereafter, Richard Malbis, uncle of Sir Richard Malbis of Acaster Malbis, demised land to the same John Sampson.⁶⁶ The Sampsons, as we have seen, were also prominent in the parish of Bolton Percy. Richard Jounkyn, shipman of York, released rights to land in Acaster Malbis to John and Elizabeth Tankerd in 1517. Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas Jounkyn of Acaster Malbis.⁶⁷

On the whole, however, below the level of the gentry the cartularies and the deeds feature those Ainsty residents who were prosperous agriculturalists and who had put roots down within the wapentake, frequently within one particular village. Acaster Malbis provides a good example of deeds demonstrating the residential stability of, and the importance of neighbourhood and kinship to, several interrelated families. Alan le Ercedekyn witnessed four deeds in the 1280s and 1290s. Robert Bustard and Henry the Clerk of Copmanthorpe acted together as his co-witnesses once. Bustard and Ercedekyn formed a kind of cluster within this network, as they witnessed deeds together at least twice. John de Campsale was a witness with Ercedekyn once, and with Henry Clerk of Copmanthorpe once; in the latter case the deed was a release by John Ercedeken, Alan's son and heir, to his brother Henry in 1326. The Ercedekyns do not appear in any later deeds for Acaster Malbis, but Henry de Copmanthorpe appeared as a witness, once in 1336 along with his brother Laurence, and once in 1344.⁶⁸

The deeds relating to Hornington, in the parish of Bolton Percy, also provide an opportunity for examining longstanding connections between families

⁶⁵ Ransome (ed.), *Scokirk Chartulary*, pp. 190-92.

⁶⁶ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁷ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 2-3.

within a neighbourhood. The surnames Holme, Ryther, Kyme (including Simon de Kyme from York, a sheriff of Yorkshire), Rye, Sampson, Waleys, Vavasour, and Ribstayn came up together repeatedly in the deeds of Hornington prior to the Black Death. The names of Folifoot and Sampson persisted in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The names of other elite individuals who acted in conjunction with them but appeared less often, include: Middleton, Ughtred, Chaumont and Fauconberg. The deeds of Hornington also reveal vertical ties between these men and their social inferiors. They often acted as fellow witnesses, and leading men were usually involved when those of lower status were themselves party to transactions. These non-elite men include more than one Clerk of Hornington, Serf of Catterton, Henry *de cruce* de Catterton, Serf of Steeton, Brocket of Steeton, Wakefield, and Gyffon of Hornington. Members of the latter family were still transacting business after the Black Death, along with one of the elite Middletons. The non-elites also witnessed deeds together. Thomas Brocket of Steeton and Simon de Wakefield were co-witnesses in two deeds connected with the land of William de Hornington, clerk, before 1350.⁶⁹ In the fifteenth century, however, land in Hornington seems increasingly to have been circulated within a network of individuals from Tadcaster rather than the parish of Bolton Percy.⁷⁰

4.1.3 Parish and Devotion

In the case of the cartularies of religious houses, devotion as an activity field for the ensuing social relations can be taken as a given, as can, in most cases, frequency and duration of interaction. The canons of Tockwith and Healaugh received land in exchange for spiritual aid for their benefactors, while both parties gained in reputation and prestige. Elite families contributed leaders and members to Tockwith and Healaugh, and the Healaugh cartulary makes reference to the involvement of members of important families in other local houses, including the nunnery at Syningthwaite. It will be recalled that Euphemia Haget, a member of the family instrumental to the foundation of Healaugh Park Priory, became the

⁶⁹ There are twenty-two printed medieval deeds relating to Hornington, six of which were recorded after the Black Death. W. Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 78-85.

⁷⁰ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 84-85.

third prioress of Syningthwaite.⁷¹ The nunneries in the hinterland, as elsewhere throughout England, provided respectable and prestigious venues for younger daughters in particular to fulfil a religious vocation.⁷²

In addition to the symbolic weight of these exchanges, individuals who granted and received land would certainly have dealt directly with representatives of religious bodies, as would have the witnesses to these transactions. Further gestures of devotion, as well as administrative efficiency, can be seen to have taken place when one or more of the witnesses were *themselves* clerics. Robert and William Haget, rectors of the churches of Bilton and Wighill, respectively, witnessed a thirteenth-century grant of land in Easedike by Bartholomew Thuret.⁷³ Here, family and religion again combined to form multiplex relationships.

The parish, like the household, was not as visible as a field for social relations, except when grants involved the advowson of a parish church or chapel. Healaugh was granted the advowsons or a moiety of an advowson of Healaugh, Wighill, Hutton Wandesley and St Mary Bishophill.⁷⁴ We have seen from the documents in the cartulary that contacts certainly existed between individuals from Healaugh and those from Wighill, Hutton Wandesley and Bishophill, but it is difficult to determine the nature or extent of the influence of the parochial connections. As in the documents to be discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter, it is necessary to remember that neighbours in the deeds were often also fellow parishioners, but that this was not always the case, given the fractured parochial landscape of the Ainsty. Moreover, as we have seen, parties to land transactions sometimes associated with witnesses from several different villages, encompassing more than one parish.

4.2 The Ainsty from an Urban Point of View: The York Civic Records

Historians have long made good use of various civic records to sketch a framework of late medieval York's finances and political life, and recent work has

⁷¹ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 1.

⁷² Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries*, pp. 7, 18-26.

⁷³ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁴ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. xii, 23, 222, 228.

built upon this framework to give a nuanced picture of the dynamics and personalities at work in late medieval York.⁷⁵ These same documents provide tantalizing clues about aspects of the relationships between individuals from the Ainsty and urban inhabitants. A clearly urban viewpoint coloured the relationships recorded in them, so that when Ainsty individuals were mentioned it was usually because they were involved in interactions with townspeople. Less often, two parties from the hinterland engaged in disputes or transactions that were documented because some aspect of the interaction fell under York's jurisdiction or because at least one party found the York courts a convenient and effective arena for registering debts and settling disputes, much the same way Ainsty inhabitants used York's ecclesiastical courts.⁷⁶

Where York records mentioned specific Ainsty settlements, they tended to be those closest to the city, often Middlethorpe and Dringhouses, although this could have depended as much on the impetus of the inhabitants of these hamlets to interact with the town as on the townspeople. As in most types of documents discussed in this thesis, the Ainsty connections with the neighbourhoods of Micklegate and Bishophill within York's western walls are apparent.⁷⁷ The Ainsty as a source of goods, services, military and financial assistance for the urban centre is understandably far more evident in the following documents than in the cause papers and probate records. The civic records also show the symbiotic nature of York's relationship with the hinterland, in that it provided a source of credit and legal support for Ainsty individuals.⁷⁸ On the other hand, traces of tensions

⁷⁵ See in particular Lorraine Attreed's introduction to her edition of the *York House Books*, R.B. Dobson's introduction to the *Chamberlains' Account Rolls* and the essays in S.R. Rees Jones (ed.), *The Government of Medieval York: Essays in Commemoration of the 1396 Royal Charter*, Borthwick Studies in History 3 (1997).

⁷⁶ Donahue, 'Stubbs vs. Maitland', p. 706; D. Keene, 'Changes in London's Economic Hinterland as Indicated by Debt Cases in the Court of Common Pleas', in J.A. Galloway (ed.), *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c. 1300-1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series 3 (London, 2000), p. 65.

⁷⁷ C.M. Briden and D.A. Stocker, 'Documentary and archaeological history of the area based partly on historical research by Sarah Rees Jones' in L.P. Wenham, R.A. Hall, C.M. Briden and D.A. Stocker, *St Mary Bishophill Junior and St Mary Castlegate*, The Archaeology of York, Anglo-Scandinavian York 8/2 (York, 1987), pp. 85-89.

⁷⁸ For the role of credit in the relationship between city and hinterland, see J.I. Kermode, 'Medieval Indebtedness: The Regions versus London' in N. Rogers (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, Lincolnshire, 1994), pp. 75, 79, 80 and Keene, 'London's Economic Hinterland', p. 59.

between city and hinterland that we observed fleetingly in the hundred rolls and some of the cause papers arise again in the civic documents.⁷⁹

With some exceptions in the records of the sheriffs' court, there is very little direct evidence for Ainsty social relations in the activity fields of kinship and marriage below the level of the gentry in the civic records. The following sections will therefore focus on ties fostered by landholding and occupation, and to a lesser extent on the dynamics of devotion and ecclesiastical factors.

4.2.1 The York Memorandum Books and the York House Books

The York Memorandum Books and the House Books overlap in terms of both chronology and their scope and content. They were both working civic registers recording a miscellany of city documents and business, including charters, deeds, income from lands and rents, the collection of royal taxes, disputes with religious houses (particularly St Mary's Abbey), ordinances of the city's craft guilds, trade legislation and correspondence with royalty and local nobility, as well as parliamentary statutes. The Memorandum Books consist of two volumes, labelled A/Y (1376-1493) and B/Y (1371-1596).⁸⁰ Volume B/Y, with its large number of leases, quitclaims, and a group of Inquisitions *post mortem* relevant to Ainsty affairs, has proven the more fruitful of the two volumes for this study. The House Books covered the period from 1461-90 in six volumes.⁸¹ Records of arrests and bonds to accept arbitration figure in both the Memorandum Books and the House Books, although particularly in the House Books, and it is these entries that provide the most evidence about Ainsty individuals and particularly their interactions with York inhabitants.⁸² The lists of witnesses to the various acts recorded in the House Books are less helpful in discerning the dynamics of Ainsty

⁷⁹ See Chapters One and Three.

⁸⁰ M. Sellers (ed.), *York Memorandum Book, Part I (1376-1419)*, SS 120 (1912); *eadem*, *York Memorandum Book, Part II (1388-1493)*, SS 125 (1915); J.W. Percy (ed.), *York Memorandum Book III*, SS 186 (1973). Henceforth *YMB I, II and III*.

⁸¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I and II*.

⁸² A relatively large number of orders for arrests resulting from suits brought by individuals in 1483 have been included in Appendix III of Attreed's edition of the *York House Books II*, pp. 704-32. The original document is York City Archives MS. A/Y Appendix, bound at the end of the original *York Memorandum Book*. Five entries relating to the Ainsty appear in a short space of time here, a larger proportion than in the *House Books* and *Memorandum Books* as a whole.

society, however, as they normally consisted of leading civic officials, often the mayor, and the city sheriffs.

One of the first entries in the Memorandum Book A/Y discusses the boundaries of the city as measured in 1374-75. The Ainsty figures prominently in the record, as the city was measured firstly from the banks of the Ouse '*usque pontem ad finem ville de Hollgate*' and also up to '*Haydalecross, in via que ducit ad Bysschopthorp*'.⁸³ Despite the clear demarcation of the border, inhabitants of the hinterland could get mixed up in disputes over jurisdictional boundaries within the Ainsty. William Gillyam of Whixley (northwest of Ainsty boundaries, near Wilstrop and Moor Monkton) was arrested by a sub-bailiff of the Yorkshire sheriff on the highway between Holgate and York in 1432-33. No clues were recorded regarding the reason for his arrest, or what his business was, or whether it was in fact in York. He was released the next day, as his arrest was illegal in the first place, having taken place within the liberty of the city. For good measure, it was added that Whixley itself belonged to the urban liberty.⁸⁴ Perhaps Gillyam appreciated the protection extended by the city in this case.

The emphasis the civic government placed on its control of the Ainsty was even more transparent in the rhetoric and symbolism associated with the ceremonial of royal and noble entries into the city recorded in the House Books. The two city sheriffs, and by 1486 two aldermen as well, greeted the entering party at the 'extremities of the boundes of this franchises' at Tadcaster Bridge. In 1486 the civic government determined that the mayor and aldermen should meet the new king, the sheriffs and the two appointed aldermen 'at Bilburgh crose about v miles fro the citie' rather than only two miles from the city as in the past. In addition, lesser citizens were to wait on Henry VII and his gradually increasing retinue 'betwixt Dringhowsis and the city'.⁸⁵ While the increasing distances from the city were intended as a symbol of civic deference to the king, it is difficult to imagine that the city leaders were not also attempting to convey their hegemony over this part of the hinterland. Indeed, returning parliamentary representatives and the mayors themselves were also met at Tadcaster, which would have involved a

⁸³ Sellers (ed.), *YMB I*, pp. 20-22.

⁸⁴ Sellers (ed.), *YMB I*, p. 216.

⁸⁵ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 426, 478, 482.

degree of display as those who rode to greet them made their way through the Ainsty.⁸⁶

Marriage, Kinship and Household

Memorandum Book A/Y and B/Y remind us of the ties of kinship and marriage that linked both Yorkshire gentry and York elites to land in the city and hinterland, although the documents tend to reveal more about the networks of prominent York citizens than they do about the Ainsty. In entries pertaining to the marriages, families and inheritance of the gentry, moreover, kinship was almost always intertwined with the activity fields of landholding and exchange.⁸⁷ An agreement dating to 1392 described the division of lands between two daughters of John de Gysburn, a York merchant who had recently died.⁸⁸ Alice was married to the Yorkshire knight William de Plumpton, while Isabel was the wife of William Frost.⁸⁹ Alice and Plumpton were to have lands in Bishopthorpe and in the neighbourhoods of Bishophill (whether Senior or Junior was unspecified) and Northstreet, while Isabel and Frost would enjoy lands in Micklegate. Apart from the mayor of York and three bailiffs, six men witnessed the agreement, including a fletcher named John de Drynghouses who held land in Micklegate neighbouring that of Isabel and William Frost.⁹⁰ None of the witnesses was identified as a

⁸⁶ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 301 and II, p. 426.

⁸⁷ This connection is unsurprising, and reinforces what historians of the late medieval gentry have observed for years. J. Ward (trans. and ed.), *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066-1500*, Manchester Medieval Sources series (Manchester and New York, 1995), pp. 15-45; C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 97-107; K. Dockray, 'Why Did Fifteenth-Century English Gentry Marry?: The Pastons, Plumptons and Stonors Reconsidered', in M. Jones (ed.), *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Later Medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 61-80; S. Payling, 'The Politics of Family: Late Medieval Marriage Contracts', in R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society, The Fifteenth Century Series* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1995), pp. 21-47; A.S. Haskell, 'The Paston Women on Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', *Viator* 4 (1973): 159-71; J.W. Kirby, 'Women in the Plumpton Correspondence: Fiction and Reality', in I. Wood and G.A. Loud (eds.), *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor* (London and Rio Grande, Ohio, 1991), pp. 219-32.

⁸⁸ Percy (ed.), *Memorandum Book III*, pp. 72-73.

⁸⁹ A William Frost became a York freeman in the following year, 1393-94, while a William Frost acted as mayor in 1395-96. Collins (ed.), *Register of Freeman*, pp. 95-98.

⁹⁰ A feoffment of 1439 shows that one Henry Drynghouse of Micklegate was a York citizen and a brazier, but I have found no evidence that John and Henry were related. William Vescy of York, gentleman, was also among the witnesses in 1392. In 1439-40 a William Vescy was the recipient of a gift, along with esquires from the North Riding including Cornborough in the hinterland wapentake of Bulmer, of the chattels of Roger Burton, clerk of York. Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, pp. 124-25.

resident of Bishopthorpe.⁹¹ In another example, in 1431 parcels of land in Bishophill, nearby Skeldergate and Acaster Malbis were being transferred from two couples from as far away as Westminster and Wiltshire to John of Thwaites: it is thus possible that the women were related to Thwaites.⁹² A York merchant, William Aglande, had once held the land in Bishophill, and another merchant, John Gascoigne, was involved in the transaction, and held many of the deeds relating to the Acaster Malbis lands.

A document recorded in the Memorandum Book twenty years later in 1452 indicates that a descendant of John Gascoigne, Henry Gascoigne, held lands in Naburn as part of the manor of Acaster; in turn, he held this land of William Fairfax, who held the entire manor of Acaster, which encompassed parts of Acaster, Naburn and Bishopthorpe, as part of the honour of Eye.⁹³ Gascoigne prepared this document during a dispute with York as evidence that his tenants in Naburn, as tenants of the honour of Eye, were not required to pay tolls in the city of York, and the names of nineteen tenants were appended, including two women and the knight, Ralph Cromwell.⁹⁴ None of these tenants shares the same surname, and, as we shall see, none was among the names mentioned in William Fairfax's Inquisition *post mortem*.

Middlethorpe, Bishopthorpe and Bustardthorpe are the most frequently-mentioned Ainsty townships in B/Y, and indeed, they are often grouped together.⁹⁵ The same elite families and individuals held land in two or more of these settlements. In 1494, Ralph, son and heir of Thomas Clyfton of Bishopthorpe, quitclaimed lands and rents in Bishopthorpe, Middlethorpe and Bustardthorpe to Thomas Dayvell, esquire and his wife Elizabeth and their heirs.⁹⁶ We have already

⁹¹ Neither did any of the witnesses' names appear in the 1379 poll tax returns for Bishopthorpe. '1379 Poll Tax', *YAJ* 7: 179-80.

⁹² Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, pp. 106-107.

⁹³ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, pp. 198-200.

⁹⁴ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 200.

⁹⁵ The reader may recall that Bustardthorpe was included amongst a number of local deserted villages, although it apparently survived, at least in terms of landholding, into the late fifteenth century. See Chapter One; and Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III', pp. 230-1. On one occasion, Middlethorpe was grouped with Fulford and Heslington in the East Riding when Isabel, granddaughter of a York citizen, Thomas Verdenell, made a feoffment to two chaplains in 1390. Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 21.

⁹⁶ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 211. Neither the Clyftons nor the Thwaites appeared in the poll tax returns of the previous century for Bishopthorpe and Middlethorpe. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 423-4.

seen the Deyville connection with the Ainsty, particularly the township of Bilton, and this family will be discussed further below in the sections on deeds and cartularies. On the other hand, the Thwaites family had, for at least two generations, received rents from lands in Bustardthorpe, Angram and Hutton Wandesley, all held of the esquire William Ingleby. John Thwaites also held land of the king in Davyhall in York, and we have just seen that they acquired land in Bishophill, Skeldergate and Acaster Malbis.⁹⁷

In 1384, members of the Ingleby and Thwaites families witnessed a quitclaim later copied into the York Memorandum Book.⁹⁸ Robert, son of Robert Roos of Ingmanthorpe, knight, quitclaimed land in Steeton (parish of Bolton Percy), Ingmanthorpe and North Deighton, both of which were located just beyond the western border of the Ainsty, a little to the north of Wetherby, to the knight Brian de Stapleton and three other men, including the parson of Deighton. The witness list, including John de Ingleby and Thomas de Thwayt, represents a veritable roll call of the Ainsty and West Riding gentry: two members of the Aldeburgh family, Plumpton, Goldesburgh, Mauleverer, Middleton, Dayville, Mowbray, Fairfax and Arthyngton. The family seats of several of these men were clustered in the region to the west of the Ainsty, near Spofforth and Wetherby, and the quitclaim demonstrates the dense and multiplex interactions between the elite of this region and those whose main estates lay in the Ainsty. Many of these families also held land in York itself, which may be why it was seen fit for the quitclaim to be recorded in an urban register. The knight Robert de Plumpton, for example held land in Northstreet, a neighbourhood which shared associations with that of Micklegate.⁹⁹

Marriage and kinship, of course, played a role not only in landholding, but in the various legal disputes recorded in the Memorandum Books and the House Books. William and Henry Thwaites were in dispute with William and Thomas Nelson in 1484; while Thomas Bosom and Henry Carr bound themselves as

⁹⁷ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, pp. 235-36. The Thwaites connection with Hutton Wandesley and Angram may have only gone back a few generations; their name does not appear in the 1379 poll tax returns. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, p. 426.

⁹⁸ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 15.

⁹⁹ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 55. Rees Jones and Riddy, 'Bolton Hours', pp. 242-9

sureties for the Thwaites, Richard Burgh and John Hastyng, gentleman, acted as mainpernors for the Nelsons, who were elite York citizens.¹⁰⁰

In general, when the House Books documented arrests and bonds to keep the peace, individuals who required pledges or surety were nearly as likely to be connected with their mainpernors by ties of kinship as by shared or similar occupation. Kinship and occupation often coincided, making many relationships within York itself multiplex. In 1480, the York walker Henry Toppan found sureties for one hundred marks, including John Toppan, also a walker, and a barker named John Bland, the son of John Bland, Sr., also a walker.¹⁰¹ The Toppans were indirectly connected to a family of husbandmen from Askham in the Ainsty, the Annotsons. William and Christopher Annotson, along with fellow husbandman Robert Huberd, were involved in a dispute spanning two years with several York men, primarily the weaver Thomas Barray.¹⁰² Henry Toppan, walker, acted as a surety for Barray twice, in 1487 and again in the following year.¹⁰³

In one enigmatic case, William Fox of 'Little Askham' (Askham Richard) became involved with two relatives, Roger and Miles Jackson, who hailed from the West Riding village of Clapham, over sixty miles from York. The three men were arrested and ordered to keep the peace towards William Harome in the summer of 1486.¹⁰⁴ In 1486, in what was evidently an entirely family affair, the widow Cecilia Dressour sued to have Henry Dressour of Bolton Percy and his wife arrested.¹⁰⁵ Despite these examples, and while the common use of family

¹⁰⁰ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 316-17. A Thomas Nelson, alderman, was mentioned as holding land in Skeldergate in 1483. Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 415-416.

¹⁰¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 218-19.

¹⁰² Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 598-99, 612. A Robert Barrey, weaver, also appears owing the city money from 1476 until 1479, when he was recorded as having died (pp. 17, 26, 104, 146, 158 and 174). Thomas Barray also owed the city money (pp. 93, 103, 157). Christopher Barrey, weaver, was also recorded (pp. 156, 184).

¹⁰³ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 598-99, 612. See below for more on this network.

¹⁰⁴ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 492. A William Fox of Askham Richard had a probate administration dating to five years earlier, in 1481. See BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 114v. Could this have been the father of the William Fox involved in the dispute with Harome? The surname Harom/Harum/Harome can be found in both the Ainsty and York. A Richard Harum/Harom of Knapton near Acomb made a will in 1480. See BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 91r. Miles Harom was a chamberlain in 1488-89. Attreed (ed.), *House Books*, pp. 399. John Harum of Knapton was involved in a dispute with the Pode family of Acomb in the Sheriffs' Court Books in the fifteenth century. Stell (ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 217.

¹⁰⁵ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 720. John Drissur of Catterton named Henry Drissur as one of his executors in 1471. John also left bequests to the parish church of Bolton Percy and the nuns of

connections certainly applied to urban parties to disputes, the small number of cases involving the Ainsty makes it difficult to discern from the House Books and Memorandum Books alone whether Ainsty inhabitants depended as frequently upon kin to support them in their dealings with men and women from the city, or, conversely, if they became involved in transactions or disputes as a result of their kin ties. The Sheriffs' Court Books, discussed below, indicate that kin ties did play a part in Ainsty participation in disputes, but these connections are less evident in the urban registers.

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

The matters in which Ainsty inhabitants, both elite and non-elite, were involved in the House Books also revolved largely around finances, real estate and politics, and were of course recorded from an urban point of view. The House Books record men from the Ainsty in the later fifteenth century as being debtors to civic officials, being cited for various offences, and being party to disputes settled by arbitration. Richard Carbot, a husbandman of Dringhouses whose use of common pasture in the Knavesmire became the subject of dispute with the city in 1479, had paid the city 5s in 1476.¹⁰⁶ William Barker, a sledman from Dringhouses, paid civic officials ten times over a number of years during the 1470s.¹⁰⁷ It would be interesting to know what it was that brought Barker into such frequent contact with the city, but the fact that his occupation clearly ranged beyond the purely agricultural and involved transport probably explains much of it.

Named individuals acted as sureties for people hailing from the Ainsty; unfortunately, their own place of origin and relationship with those for whom they acted were only sometimes recorded. Long duration and frequency of interaction characterized some financial relationships, as certain men were paired together in the repeated entries over a number of years. We can get an idea of a relatively long-term relationship in the case of William Morton (Murton), a husbandman from Middlethorpe. Thomas Assynby, a barber from York, consistently cleared him of his debts to the city during the period from 1477 to 1479, representing a

Appleton, along with his parish church of Tadcaster, indicating that he had strong ties with that region of the Ainsty.

¹⁰⁶ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 97, 101, 146, 150, 154, 174-176, 179, 183.

total of three recorded interactions.¹⁰⁸ The House Books only give a slight hint as to whether the directional flow of this relationship was any less one-sided in reality. Murton and Assynby teamed up to help a sledman also named Morton/Murton pay his debts in 1478.¹⁰⁹ Did Murton and Assynby share an affinity through marriage, perhaps, or was Assynby repaying previous favours? Murton's occupation as a sledman, like William Barker of Dringhouses, may suggest business as well as family connections between the two Murtons. Assynby demonstrated links with fellow barbers when barber Thomas Whitfeld acted as an arbiter in a dispute with Assynby's apprentice, also in 1478.¹¹⁰ In another example, William Sawyer and John Berwyk assisted William Storey of Tadcaster with his debts to the city twice in 1477; he paid his debt apparently unaided the following year, but the two men helped him again in 1479.¹¹¹ Another entry from the same year shows that a John Berwyk was a draper, which, as we saw in Chapter Three, was a prestigious trade.¹¹²

In the House Books, there seems to be a correlation between occupation and financial and legal assistance: men of shared occupation often gave assistance in covering one another's debts and acting as sureties. Occupation appears to have played a part in these transactions more frequently than kinship, although, as we have seen, relationships were often multiplex, combining family and business connections. There are, nonetheless, plenty of examples of individuals practicing diverse trades interacting and supporting one another, and it is worth remembering that disputes may well have brought the sureties for each party into contact with one another. The dispute, mentioned above, involving husbandmen from Askham, illustrates a York man's use of sureties belonging to trades related to (but not necessarily the same as) his own. The Annotsons' rival, the York weaver Thomas Barray, enjoyed the support of a more numerous and occupationally-varied (and potentially more prestigious) group of men. The prominent mercer Richard Blackburn, two tanners, Richard Clerke and John Hall, weaver William Hert and

¹⁰⁸ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 28, 105, 159, 188.

¹⁰⁹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 150.

¹¹⁰ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 165-66. In 1489, Assynby was also involved in a dispute with Master William Burton. Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 613-14.

¹¹¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 97, 106, 153, 183.

¹¹² Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 101.

walker Henry Toppan came to Barray's aid on two occasions in his dispute with the Annotsons.¹¹³

Moreover, this occupational solidarity does not seem to have been documented for Ainsty individuals with the same frequency as urban inhabitants. Of course, one would not expect to find the same level of craft or trade-based associations in villages, even those in the hinterland, as in towns, given the lack of a formal craft guild system.¹¹⁴ However, given the relatively large numbers of practitioners of the same craft or non-agrarian trade living in certain Ainsty villages, it is somewhat surprising that interactions between them do not surface in the House Books and Memorandum Books more often.¹¹⁵ Nor have I come across any examples in the civic records of interactions between men who lived in different Ainsty villages but who practiced the same trade. On the other hand, associations between peasant agriculturalists within the Ainsty were recorded. A clear example was discussed in the previous section: William and Christopher Annotson of Askham and Robert Huberd were all husbandmen, an understandably common occupation in a rural setting. Kinship and occupation overlapped in this case, illustrating the kind of multiplexity that many scholars have associated with rural society, but that we have just seen occurred in York as well.¹¹⁶

There were, however, clear connections between men who practiced certain trades in York and their counterparts in the Ainsty. The weaver Thomas Barray's quarrel with Ainsty men may have been a symptom of a larger, ongoing dispute between the weavers of York and the weavers of the Ainsty, who failed to

¹¹³ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 598, 612. This is not the only time that Blackburn, Clerk, Toppan and Barray associated. During 1488, at the same time as the Annotson dispute was being pursued, the four men allied themselves against several other York men. Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 607-608.

¹¹⁴ This is not to say that individuals who practiced crafts or trades in the hinterland were not affected by regulations governing urban crafts, as we shall see with the case of Ainsty weavers, below. Miller, *Medieval York*, pp. 88-92; Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, pp. 5-8

¹¹⁵ For an overview of the economic and occupational landscape of the Ainsty, see Chapter One. The 1379 poll-tax returns show that some villages in the hinterland were home to several practitioners of the same trade, particularly tailors and carpenters. Fenwick (ed.), *Poll Taxes*, pp. 421-7. For craftsmen in the countryside, see R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000-1500*, 2nd edn. (Manchester and New York, 1996), pp. 168-69; C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850-1520* (London, 2003), pp. 159, 169-70; Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c.1200-1520*, Revised edn. (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 145-46; B.A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 131-133.

¹¹⁶ Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 29; Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 11, 51-3, 221-2; R.M. Smith, 'Kin and Neighbours', pp. 248-9.

contribute to a rent of one hundred shillings due to the crown in the late fifteenth century.¹¹⁷ The urban weavers' complaint was brought to the attention of Richard III, who during his progress in 1483 addressed a letter to the sheriffs of York and their deputies in the Ainsty ordering them to enforce collection.¹¹⁸ The following year, another entry in the House Books linked men in cloth-related trades in the city and the Ainsty with trading improperly and also with violent disruption, or 'affray'.¹¹⁹ John Chelorer, a weaver from Acomb, has already been mentioned: in 1489 he had to find sureties to keep the peace and not cause harm to one Richard Bentley. His sureties, however, included no fellow weavers, but two coopers, a miller and a glover.¹²⁰

Similar occupational diversity may be seen in a dispute that pitted a lower-status man from the hinterland with a member of the gentry and his associates. In 1488 John Brereclyff, labourer, of the Temple of St John at 'Temple near York' (Copmanthorpe, the location of a former Templar preceptory), was involved in a dispute with Master Henry Shirwynd, doctor of theology, and the gentleman Richard Vavasour.¹²¹ A baker, John Blinkehowe, and a cordwainer, Richard Catterton (note the Ainsty toponymic surname), acted as Brereclyff's sureties. In a relatively small village like Copmanthorpe, men who practiced trades may well have enjoyed elevated social status (as evidenced by the higher tax bracket into which they usually fell in the poll taxes of the late fourteenth century), and it would have made sense for them to act as sureties.¹²² Perhaps when Ainsty villagers engaged in disputes they preferred, as they did in their choice of executors and supervisors in their wills, to rely on influential neighbours rather than those who followed the same occupation.

However, while it is suggestive, this case does not provide a complete picture of networks forged from occupation and proximity, as the entry does not

¹¹⁷ See above, pp. 238, 240.

¹¹⁸ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix IV, Y.C.A. MS. E.58A4, p. 733.

¹¹⁹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 315.

¹²⁰ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 637.

¹²¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 406. For Templar associations with Copmanthorpe, see G.F. Tull, *Traces of the Templars* (Rotherham, 2000), pp. 116-17 and E. Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow, 2004), pp. 104-106.

¹²² Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, p. 2; Britnell, *Commercialisation of English Society*, pp. 168-69; Dyer, *Standards of Living*, pp. 145-46; Goldberg, *Medieval England: A Social History*, pp. 171-72, 192-93.

include his sureties' residences. It is entirely possible that one or more of the sureties were from York: a Richard Catterton entered the Freedom as a cordwainer in 1401-1402, and the Richard Catterton involved in the dispute could have been a descendant.¹²³ The issue of the residential status of Brereclyff's pledges, whether they lived in the city, the same village, or elsewhere, had implications for the nature of his relationships with them, not least the frequency and duration of their interaction, as well as their geographical mobility. Incidentally, Brereclyff evidently failed to keep the peace, as he was arrested later that year on the order of Roger, Vavasour's servant.¹²⁴

The three arbiters in the argument between Brereclyff and Vavasour, John Barker, John Bulmer and Robert Colker, were probably York men, as were many of the arbiters in cases throughout the House Books and Memorandum Books.¹²⁵ Could this John Bulmer have been the same John Bulmer who was cited in the House Books as bailiff of Acaster seven years earlier in 1481?¹²⁶ If this was the case, it would be unsurprising if Bulmer turned out to be a York freeman, but no John Bulmer appears on the freeman's register until 1500, when a merchant of that name entered the freedom *per patres*.¹²⁷ Like William Barker the sledman, a tailor named John Barker appeared eight times in the 1470s as owing money to the city, and testified on behalf of John Key, fellow tailor and cordwainer, when the latter was accused of stealing a horse in 1483.¹²⁸ He also had business dealings with two labourers from Cawood (south of the Ainsty) who testified about delivering him fish in 1484, and a John Barker was recorded as one of the searchers of the millers in an undated entry of the late fifteenth century.¹²⁹ Questions about the identity of these two men aside, it is certainly possible that the consistent use of York citizens as arbiters exacerbated any feelings of marginalization that Ainsty inhabitants may have felt when engaging in disputes that came before York's courts.

¹²³ Collins (ed.), *Register of Freeman*, p. 205.

¹²⁴ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 621-22.

¹²⁵ Attreed observes that most arbiters in the House Books were citizens chosen by the mayor. *House Books I*, Introduction, pp. xix-xx.

¹²⁶ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 237.

¹²⁷ Collins (ed.), *Register of Freeman*, p. 225.

¹²⁸ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I and II*, pp. 16, 17, 23, 100, 147, 154, 177, 182, 405, 416.

¹²⁹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 436, 687.

As the above examples demonstrate, people from the Ainsty were sometimes recorded engaging in less than harmonious relations with both other men from the hinterland and York inhabitants. John Wyman, a labourer of Rufforth (also very close to York's borders, just beyond Acomb on the Wetherby road), was an apparent troublemaker. He was a suspected felon who had had 'various charges brought against him by various people', including one smith and two husbandmen.¹³⁰ The record is damaged at the point where the community to which Wyman's accusers belonged was named, but all four lived in the same place. Wyman's accusers doubtless knew one another prior to their encounters with him, but it would be enlightening to know the processes which led to him being accused. Did these people decide to complain as a result of a series of unplanned conversations or perhaps a sort of informal meeting? Similarly frustrating are the entries in which no occupations were specified. John Bilton of Appleton requested that the sheriffs of York to arrest William Barton, also of Appleton, in October of 1486.¹³¹ All we know for certain is that the two men lived in the same village, but the fact that John Bilton appears as a witness to the 1508 testament of the prominent William Brocket of Appleton suggests that he enjoyed a degree of residential stability, and perhaps respectability.¹³²

The House Books and Memorandum Books provide several other examples of people who lived in the same settlement engaging in disputes with one another. John Turnour, a labourer of Acaster Selby, was arrested in 1483 at the suit of Thomas Peryn of the same.¹³³ During the same year, another labourer, Thomas Welles, *formerly* of Bolton Percy, was arrested along with his wife at the suit of John Hartley, also of Bolton Percy.¹³⁴ At a more elevated social level, Christopher Edmunson, yeoman of Dringhouses, made a bond to accept arbitration in 1490 in his quarrel with John Coupland, William Staynton and Richard Corbrig, all from Dringhouses.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 3, 237-38, 244, 260, 315, 352.

¹³¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 493.

¹³² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 7, fo. 60.

¹³³ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix III, pp. 716-17.

¹³⁴ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix III, pp. 718-19.

¹³⁵ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 680.

Some entries illustrate lord-tenant relationships. In 1479 and 1483 Lord Lovell¹³⁶ and his tenant, Richard Carbot, a farmer from Dringhouses in the Ainsty, were embroiled in a dispute with York citizens over the use of pasture in the Knavesmire. In this case a rural-dweller evidently sought an alliance with a member of the gentry whose considerable influence at the regional and national levels hopefully would prove effective against encroaching urban interests.¹³⁷

The control of urban land by prominent Ainsty elites features in Memorandum Book A/Y, as when 3s was received for a tenement in Patrickpool in York held by one Philip de Escryk out of the gift of Sir Richard Basy, esquire of Bilbrough.¹³⁸ Bilbrough, of course, is in the Ainsty, while Escrick is within York's eastern hinterland, so that if Philip was indeed from Escrick, this would represent a relatively rare example of a land transaction between men who both shared hinterland status, although on opposite sides of the city, actually meeting in the middle, as it were, and dealing with land within York itself. Interestingly, both Bilbrough and Escrick lay near two different significant roads into the city, and the civic records do give the impression that people who lived in hinterland villages near major communications routes were more likely to engage in activity in the city. An entry in the House Books records a grant of a messuage and tenement in Skeldergate (parallel with the southwest bank of the Ouse, near Micklegate, North Street and the Bishophill area) in 1483 by Richard, son and heir of Roger Ledys, gentleman of Westwick in the parish of Ripon, to the knights John Neville and Richard Crathorn, along with the esquires Miles Willesthorp and William Ryther, both of whom held land in the Ainsty.¹³⁹

The House Books also recorded Ainsty men sharing in the experiences of politics, war, and, less illustriously, breaking the king's peace.¹⁴⁰ Musters and accounts of expeditions mentioned individual members of the Ainsty gentry and bailiffs with regularity, and in association with one another, but of the non-elite, the

¹³⁶ Francis Lovell, 1st Viscount Lovell, 1454-87, chamberlain of Richard III. Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 80-84.

¹³⁷ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 193-94, 294.

¹³⁸ Sellers (ed.), *YMB I*, p. 26.

¹³⁹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 415-16. The plot of land in question adjoined that of Thomas Nelson, alderman, who, it may be recalled, was involved in a dispute with the Thwaites family in 1484.

¹⁴⁰ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 237-38.

register only mentioned that the amorphous ‘men of the Ainsty’ were required to provide the city with military assistance.¹⁴¹ A special meeting of men in the Ainsty took place in May of 1481 at the church in Bilton.¹⁴² Apart from the knights William Gascoigne and Brian Stapleton, the attendees included the esquires William Ingleby and Miles Willesthorp, along with Robert Stokes, Thomas Dabell (Deyville), John Norton, Thomas Thwayte, Seth Snawsell, John Askeham, Brian Middleton, Guy Fraunkeleyne and Henry Banke. Men with the same surnames as those involved in this meeting appear repeatedly in the other documents discussed in this chapter; all were prosperous and residentially stable, if not elite. Thomas Walker, the bailiff of Bolton Percy and John Bulmer the bailiff of Acaster approached the mayor and aldermen on behalf of the ‘gentilmen and other comoners within the wapantak of Aynestie’ in 1481 requesting that the armed gentlemen be permitted to have their tenants accompany them to York prior to embarking upon the Scottish campaign of that year. They named the important lords in the Ainsty, including the earl of Northumberland, ‘lord Lovell, William Gascoign, Brian Stapilton...Robert Ughtred, knyghtes’; the gentlemen wished to emulate their behaviour and share their privileges.¹⁴³

Parish and Devotion

The parish was not normally a visible activity field in the House Books and Memorandum Books, although it is worth repeating that many of those whose interactions were recorded were neighbours, and therefore also fellow parishioners. The parish injected itself into the record when morals and respectability were at stake, as when parishioners of St Martin and St Gregory, Micklegate, banded together to complain of Margery Gray, the prostitute known as ‘Cherry Lips’.¹⁴⁴ There are only a few other instances of individuals or neighbourhoods described in terms of their parishes in the House Books. For example, John Sissotson of Firthby in the parish of Wistow was arrested and found mainprises in 1488, but no entries involved Ainsty parishes.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 244, 260.

¹⁴² Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 237.

¹⁴³ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, pp. 237-38.

¹⁴⁴ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix III, pp. 708, 723.

¹⁴⁵ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 454-55.

Although the House Books and Memorandum Books are full of dealings with chantries, religious houses, ceremonies and festivals, these focused overwhelmingly on York itself. Only a few examples involved Ainsty affairs, despite the complex relationships between some York parishes and their outlying jurisdictional enclaves in the Ainsty. Somewhat more common were issues relating to devotion in York's immediate suburbs. For instance, a priest of the chantry of one Acom (forename left blank) in the church of St Peter the Little and the churchwardens of the same church had become embroiled in a dispute over land outside of Monk Bar with the prioress of Clementhorpe, the nunnery just outside the Ainsty in the southern suburbs of York.¹⁴⁶ Again, Acomb, the source of the potential toponymic surname of the chantry's founder, is immediately outside of York's boundaries, to the west. Here, we have a case of a religious house to the south of York in dispute with a parish church in the centre of the city over land in the northern suburbs. This echoes the land transaction mentioned above between Richard Basy of Bilbrough and a man from Escrick regarding a tenement in Patrickpool in York. However, Clementhorpe held parcels of land elsewhere in the suburbs of York, including outside of Walmgate Bar, so it is unsurprising to find the prioress interacting with people who held land on the opposite side of York to the site of the nunnery itself.¹⁴⁷

Otherwise, these documents serve to remind the reader of the intertwined landholding interests between the city, the clergy, and the religious houses of the hinterland. Memorandum Book B/Y shows that the prioress and convent of Nun Appleton held land in York in the Bishophill area in the later fourteenth century.¹⁴⁸ In 1375 William de Cawode, citizen and merchant of York, made a gift to John de Rufford, citizen of York, and John Clement, chaplain, that included chattels and timber from the woods of Birkin and 'within the park of Nonneappilton'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Attreed (ed.), *House Books I*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁷ R.B. Dobson and S. Donaghey, *The History of Clementhorpe Nunnery*, gen. ed. P.V. Addyman, *The Archaeology of York, Volume 2: Historical Sources for York Archaeology after AD 1100* (York, 1984), pp. 11, 17. Clementhorpe also held land in Dringhouses, Middlethorpe, Bishopthorpe and Healaugh.

¹⁴⁸ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁹ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, p. 7. Cawode and Rufford were both prominent York freemen who bore hinterland place-name-surnames.

We also see the landholding activities of Ainsty clergy: Thomas Parker, rector of the parish church of Bolton Percy in the early fifteenth century, together with Richard Colhome, clerk, made a feoffment to Richard Bowet, whose brother Thomas was an esquire and whose kinsman William was a knight.¹⁵⁰ Ainsty clergy were also involved in disputes, mainly with York individuals, as when the York gentleman Thomas Conyers was arrested at the suit of Robert Lille, chaplain and vicar of Bishopthorpe, in late 1483.¹⁵¹ In the same year, the vicar of the parish church and canon of Healaugh, along with a vintner, were arrested at the suit of a plumber.¹⁵² As these examples suggest, social connections forged by clergy recorded in these documents could perhaps more easily be discussed under the activity fields of landholding and exchange than that of devotion itself. We can only speculate as to what the religious underpinnings of these interactions might have been.

4.2.2 The Chamberlains' Account Rolls and the Bridgemasters' Accounts

This section of the chapter discusses York's primary financial accounts. The records of the city chamberlains and bridgemasters reiterate in general terms the ways in which the city and its hinterland were connected financially, and through landholding, patronage, and political, legal and military assistance. R.B. Dobson's edition of the *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls* records annual civic income and expenditure covering intermittent years during a period roughly contemporaneous with that of the Memorandum Books and the House Books, from 1396 to 1500.¹⁵³ The Account Rolls' focus was necessarily more specialized than that of the documents just discussed, and, moreover, consisted of summaries of other more temporary accounts generated during the course of each year.¹⁵⁴ The Chamberlains' Accounts, therefore, contain only scatterings of information useful to students of the hinterland. As in the Memorandum Books and House Books, the Chamberlains' Account Rolls occasionally referred to certain inhabitants of the Ainsty collectively, especially in military matters, as when arrangements were

¹⁵⁰ Percy (ed.), *YMB III*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁵¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, pp. 422-24.

¹⁵² Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix III, p. 720.

¹⁵³ R.B. Dobson (ed.), *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls, 1396-1500*, SS 192 (1978-79).

¹⁵⁴ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, p. xvi.

made to pay for cloth for liveries of the followers of the armed men of the Ainsty who were to accompany Edward IV to Northumbria in late 1462. A smaller cluster of these men were to ride with Lord Kant' (Kent?).¹⁵⁵ Unlike the Memorandum Books, House Books, and the Sheriffs' Court Books, the Account Rolls do not record individual transactions and disputes; the focus is on the urban corporation.

The Bridgemasters' Accounts were even more focused, recording transactions involving the city's estate, particularly the chantries on the Ouse and Foss bridges.¹⁵⁶ Apart from the small hamlet of Holgate, one of the Ainsty places closest to York, the bridgemasters only occasionally recorded entries of direct relevance to the Ainsty, but they do contain material referring to Micklegate and Bishophill as well as to the *suburbs* of York that bordered both the city walls and the Ainsty, like Clementhorpe.

The following discussion does not include separate subsections on kinship or parish and devotion. Although the accounts provide good opportunities for examining the social intersections based on faith and landholding, again, they contain little of direct relevance to the Ainsty. They do enable students of the neighbourhoods of Micklegate and Bishophill to track the changes in tenure of individual tracts of land, including those held by religious houses located in the hinterland. The nuns of Sinningthwaite, for example, held land in Castlegate.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, it must be remembered that when individuals in the Bridgemasters' Accounts (including a very small number from the Ainsty) were paid for their labour, that labour was in the service of building or repairing tenements that would of course ultimately benefit the chantries and chapels on the city's bridges. The possibility that such workers considered themselves to be members of an extended urban devotional network must therefore not be discounted.

¹⁵⁵ *'Et in xj ulnis et dimidia panni rubei, iiii unlnis i quart' panni albi emptis pro/ les bend' pro hominibus hominum armatorum comorancium [sic] in / wapentagio de Aynesty equitantium cum dicto domino rege ad castra de Alnewyk, Dunstanburgh et Balmeburgh mense Decembris...'*

Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, pp. 114-15.

¹⁵⁶ P.M. Stell (trans. and ed.), *York Bridgemasters' Accounts* (York, 2003).

¹⁵⁷ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, p. 204

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

Although Ainsty place-name surnames abound in the Chamberlains' Account Rolls and the Bridgemasters' Accounts as they do in all the other documents examined in this chapter, few individuals recorded as being debtors to or creditors of the city are actually specified as being from the Ainsty.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, quite apart from being able to discern individual social relations or networks, it is difficult to tease out even more basic information about Ainsty inhabitants' involvement with the city, such as their trading and market activities. Occasionally we get tantalizing gems such as the record of the receipt of the goods of one Wright of Acaster Malbis upon his suicide in 1499.¹⁵⁹ The bridgemasters paid a 'man of Steton' 40d for carriage of lime in 1446-47. He was paid along with five other men, three of whom were named without a place of habitation being specified, while the fourth was identified as being from Brotherton in the West Riding.¹⁶⁰

The Bridgemasters' Accounts provide hints about the fifteenth-century composition of parts of the neighbourhoods of Micklegate, Bishophill, Clementhorpe, and Holgate, the latter being one of the closest Ainsty villages to York.¹⁶¹ The city's estate included meadows, pasture and a barn in Holgate, held by William White in the 1430s and Robert Constable in the next decade.¹⁶² Some entries show that singlewomen occupied several adjacent cottages in areas at the margins of the city, including in the suburb of Clementhorpe; this is typical of what other scholars have observed about the suburbs of medieval towns.¹⁶³ A shipman, weaver and tailor also held land in the area of Clementhorpe.¹⁶⁴ Outside

¹⁵⁸ Members of the knightly family, the Ughtreds of Moor Monkton, held land belonging to the city's estate. Thomas Ughtred, for example, held a tenement in Fishergate. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, p. 155.

¹⁵⁹ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, p. 198.

¹⁶⁰ Stell (ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, p. 231.

¹⁶¹ Stell (ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, pp. 150-51, 232-37.

¹⁶² Stell (ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, pp. 147, 233.

¹⁶³ See D.J. Keene, 'Suburban Growth' in R. Holt and G. Rosser (eds.), *The Medieval Town 1200-1540*, pp. 97-119. This neighbourhood composition is in keeping with the complaint by Micklegate residents in 1483 about Margery Gray, a prostitute known as 'Cherry Lips', recorded in a manuscript bound at the end of the *Memorandum Book*. Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, Appendix III, pp. 708, 723.

¹⁶⁴ As Palliser's article on York's west bank points out, the presence of shipwrights in Clementhorpe and St Mary Bishophill Sr. in the 1381 poll tax returns indicate the presence of a sort of 'maritime quarter' in the area. N. Bartlett (ed.), *The Lay Poll Tax Returns for the City of York in 1381*.

Micklegate Bar, three bowers, two cordwainers, a capper, a carpenter, a smith, several single women, and the gentleman William Hawke held land alongside plots for pageant houses of several crafts in 1435.¹⁶⁵ By 1444, two bowers, four cordwainers, two tailors and one each of a baker, skinner, wright, tapiter, toller, cartwright, barker and a chaplain lived outside Micklegate.¹⁶⁶ There also seems to have been a reasonable level of residential stability without Micklegate Bar, despite the presence of many cottagers. The same individuals are recorded as owing rent year after year.

The Bridgemasters' Accounts also help give context to the setting of events described in the depositions of the ecclesiastical court case *Gell c. Serle*, where a weaver, John Selby, provided his house and workshop in Micklegate as a venue for marriage negotiations between individuals from the hinterland in 1427. Although the Bridgemasters' Accounts only recorded land and tenements pertaining to the city's estate, they reveal fifteenth-century Micklegate as possessing an occupationally-varied landscape including a clerk, wright, tapiter and carpenter.¹⁶⁷ John Selby's neighbours would not have all been weavers themselves, and indeed, most of his connections, as manifested in the cause papers, were forged from kinship rather than neighbourhood or occupation.

The House Books, Memorandum Books and the Chamberlains' Account Rolls all showed solidarity amongst the politically important men of the Ainsty, as well as their landholding activities, but they also recorded the involvement of members of the hinterland gentry in urban affairs in their capacity as legal experts. Guy Fairfax (recorder 1460-77), John and Henry Thwaites, John Vavasour (recorder 1486-90) and Guy Roucliff, among others, were much in demand by the city for their legal counsel and socio-political influence in the fifteenth century, not least during York's dispute with St Mary's Abbey over fish garths in the river Ouse

Transactions of the East Riding Antiquarian Society 30. 1953., pp. 76-78; Palliser, 'York's West Bank', pp. 105-106; see also Harvey, *York*, pp. 115-16, 120.

¹⁶⁵ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Bridgemasters' Accounts*, pp. 146-48.

¹⁶⁶ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Bridgemasters Accounts*, pp. 232-33.

¹⁶⁷ The 1381 poll tax returns had shown that the trades practiced in Micklegate were largely associated with cloth production, but were certainly not restricted to weavers. The other cloth-related crafts included 'woolpackers', tailors, and drapers. Bartlett (ed.), *1381 Poll Tax Returns*, pp. 68-72. For the presence of elite landowning families in Micklegate as a symptom of economic decline during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Palliser, 'York's West Bank', p. 107.

in the 1440s.¹⁶⁸ The city provided them with necessities and refreshment, including wine and (perhaps ironically) fish, as they inspected the garths, many of which lay in York's immediate hinterland, including one at Acaster Selby.¹⁶⁹ Despite York's annexation of the Ainsty during the same year, the wapentake was not included in the parish subsidies levied in York at this time, unlike the earlier subsidy of 1428 recorded in the Memorandum Book. There is, however, an entry within the record of the subsidy of 1444-45 relating to payment from one Thomas Haliwell regarding the '*negiociam predictam de Middlethorpe*', one of the detached Ainsty portions of the parish of St Mary Bishophill Sr, which was assessed at 40s.¹⁷⁰ It would be interesting to know where Ainsty inhabitants stood in the fish garth dispute. On the one hand, Ainsty gentry provided legal services to the city, and some of the fish garths were located in sections of the river bordering Ainsty communities, which must surely have inconvenienced some. Yet as we have seen, fifteenth-century testators were nonetheless perfectly willing to accommodate the abbey in their devotional gift-giving networks.

The Chamberlains' Accounts, like the House Books, recorded Ainsty involvement in the Wars of the Roses.¹⁷¹ Following a skirmish between the Nevilles and Percies at Heworth Moor in 1453, the city once again employed Guy Roucliff, Guy Fairfax and Henry and John Thwaites, among others, to ride to various locations in the hinterland and further afield in Yorkshire, such as Shipton, to treat with the lord Clifford, Spofforth, Sheriff Hutton and Middleham, in order to communicate with representatives of the warring parties. William Gyll was paid 4d to ride to Wilstrop, in the northwest part of the Ainsty. The purpose of the journey was not recorded, but the men hired to ride to other locations were entrusted with delivering letters, and the legal counsel of men like Fairfax was required. It is possible that the choice of Gyll was significant, as it may be recalled from Chapters Two and Three that Gell/Gyll was a common surname in the

¹⁶⁸ John and Henry Thwaites frequently acted together on behalf of the city during these years, providing an example of the way kinship connections could influence the gentry's interactions with the urban government. For John and Henry Thwaites listed together in the same entries in the *Chamberlains' Accounts*, see pp. 22-23, 31, 43-47, 54, 57-58, 73, 76-77, 92. For the issue of fish garths, see pp. 37-58.

¹⁶⁹ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Accounts*, pp. 45-7.

¹⁷⁰ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Accounts*, p. 52.

¹⁷¹ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Accounts*, pp. 76-7.

locality.¹⁷² Shortly afterwards, in 1454, the goods and chattels of Katherine Fairfax of Walton were seized, possibly indicating that the Fairfaxes had allied themselves with Lord Egremont in the previous year.¹⁷³

4.2.3 The Sheriffs' Court Books

The Sheriffs' Court Books represent one of the richest sources discussed in this chapter in terms of the information they provide regarding individual and collective interactions in the course of recording disputes that arose in connection with debt and landholding. Stell's edition of the *Sheriffs' Court Books* covers much of the fifteenth century, after the sheriffs' tourn in the Ainsty had been established with the 1396 charter of Richard II and nearly a generation after the wapentake had officially come under the jurisdiction of the city.¹⁷⁴ By the end of the fifteenth century, the sheriffs' court represented yet another manifestation of urban influence over the hinterland, as York's sheriffs were to appoint only freemen of the city to act as bailiffs of the Ainsty.¹⁷⁵ The sheriffs' business was wide-ranging and encompassed suits of debt brought by and against Ainsty individuals, as well as trespass, account and detinue.¹⁷⁶ The names of the pledges and mainpernors in these cases allow us to reconstruct small segments of individual networks.

Marriage and Kinship

Whenever the documents in this section reveal ties of kinship and affinity, these ties were linked to connections forged through landholding and economic activity. There is one instance in the Sheriffs' Court Books of a York widow's new husband, Richard Mitchell, spicer, suing Richard Junkyn of Acaster Malbis for a

¹⁷² Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Accounts*, p. 77.

¹⁷³ Dobson (ed.), *Chamberlains' Accounts*, pp. 97-98. The Memorandum Book shows that half a century later, in 1505, John Egremont, knight, made a feoffment to William Fayrfaxe, sergeant at law, Thomas Fayrfaxe, esquire, and Henry, earl of Northumberland, among others, of the manor of Catterton and its appurtenances. Percy (ed.), *Memorandum Book III*, pp. 226-28.

¹⁷⁴ P.M. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books of the City of York, 1471-1500* (York, 1999); Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 75-79. Interestingly, among the sheriffs of Yorkshire, as opposed to those of York, were some prominent Ainsty names: John de Eyville, in the second half of the thirteenth century, Sir Robert Ryther and Sir Robert Ughtred in the fifteenth century. Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 27; R.B. Pugh, 'The Castle and the Old Baile' in Tillot (ed.) *VCH York*, pp. 523-24.

¹⁷⁵ Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 75-79.

¹⁷⁶ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 75.

debt of 11s. he owed the woman's first husband, a shipman named Robert Appilby.¹⁷⁷ William Payntour, a plumber, and William Mitchell, a lister, acted as mainpernors for Junkyn. When Richard Mitchell made a further complaint against Junkyn, this time for trespass, the same two men acted as pledges.¹⁷⁸ Could the coincidence of the surname, Mitchell, indicate a kinship link between the complainant and Mitchell the lister? If the two Mitchells were related, it seems likely that they knew both the widow's husbands, and that the two husbands had known one another and Junkyn. In another example, John Orom of Knapton sued two members of the Pode family of Acomb, John and William, for debt. The two Pode men, however, had different mainpernors: John Newson, weaver, for John Pode, and John Swynburn for William.¹⁷⁹ One family dispute in the court records involved the elite Thwaites family, when Thomas Thwayte, esquire, entered a plea of trespass against the widow Elizabeth Thwayte; no further details were recorded in the laconic entry.¹⁸⁰

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

People from the Ainsty made frequent appearances as active participants in financial transactions in the Sheriffs' Court Books, where suits of debt were commonplace.¹⁸¹ Members of particular Ainsty gentry families turn up comparatively frequently as plaintiffs, including the knights, Miles Wilstrop, in 1478, and Brian Stapleton, and Thomas Fairfax and Henry and Christopher Ughtred, esquires.¹⁸² The latter acted as an executor for a clerk from Elvington in

¹⁷⁷ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 215.

¹⁷⁸ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 215.

¹⁷⁹ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 217.

¹⁸⁰ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 244.

¹⁸¹ Ten Ainsty vills, plus Tadcaster, appear in fourteen cases in the Sheriffs' records: Dringhouses, Thorp Arch, Bolton Percy (3 cases, one of which involved a party from Healaugh), Healaugh, Acomb (4 cases, one of which involved a party from Knapton), Knapton, Acaster Malbis, Marston, Askham and Middlethorpe. Bolton Percy and Acomb appear more than once. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 153, 162, 178, 182-83, 190, 215, 217, 222, 236, 244, 251, 259, 343, 353. Apart from the dispute involving the Thwaites of Marston, mentioned above, I have not counted cases involving members of the Ainsty gentry in this list.

¹⁸² Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 126, 143, 209, 254, 368, 430. A gentleman, Thomas Fairfax, was identified as being from London when he and another gentleman, Richard Bylby of York, initiated a plea of debt against several London citizens in 1500. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 445. Christopher Ughtred, knight, was a defendant along with two other men, one of whom was an esquire, in a plea of trespass initiated by a cook. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 427. It is unclear whether this Christopher Ughtred was formerly an

the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent and initiated a plea of debt against his fellow executor, who was a labourer also from Elvington.¹⁸³ In most cases that did not involve the gentry, the recorded disputes involved a party from York and a party from the Ainsty, although two entries describe a dispute between parties from two Ainsty communities, Bolton Percy and Healaugh, and a further entry records a debt dispute between men from Knapton and its 'mother' village, Acomb.¹⁸⁴

Interestingly, when one of the parties was from York, the urban individual was more likely than the individual from the Ainsty to be identified by his or her occupation. An exception was a case involving a serious crime that took place in a commercial setting in 1418: William Fournas, sherman, of the county of the city of York (i.e. the Ainsty), killed the York goldsmith Thomas Holm in Thursday Market.¹⁸⁵ Pledges and mainpernors in disputes involving the Ainsty were rarely identified by their residence or their occupation, except in the case of one Fyssher, a merchant, who acted as mainpernor for John Pode of Acomb when one John Clay sued Pode for debt.¹⁸⁶ As we have seen elsewhere in the sheriffs' records, John Pode interacted with at least one man from Knapton, in which instance a weaver acted as his pledge.

As in the Memorandum Books and House Books, there were no examples of interactions between individuals from the Ainsty who followed the same non-agrarian occupation. One dispute involved men who practiced related, but not identical, crafts. When William Wynder, a carpenter, complained of a debt owed to him by Richard Cusson of Thorp Arch, the latter was attached by a horse in the custody of a sawer.¹⁸⁷ Typically, the residences of the carpenter and the sawer, along with Cusson's occupation, were not specified. Numerous disputes in the sheriffs' records involved presentments against the Statute of Labourers, as well as debts arising from domestic service and apprenticeship, but I have not come across

esquire and had been knighted, or was a relative of the esquire with the same name. Members of the Wilstrop, Fairfax and Ughtred families in particular appear in nearly all the documents discussed in this chapter.

¹⁸³ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 368.

¹⁸⁴ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 182-83, 217.

¹⁸⁵ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 38.

¹⁸⁶ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 190.

¹⁸⁷ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 162.

any instances in which either the plaintiff or defendant was a master or servant from the Ainsty.¹⁸⁸

In contrast to the Memorandum Books and House Books, which mentioned Middlethorpe and Dringhouses frequently, Acomb and Bolton Percy were the Ainsty townships that appeared most often in the Sheriffs' court records.¹⁸⁹ Individuals from these and other Ainsty villages both sued and were sued, but men from Acomb were cited four times for debt. Acomb's frequent appearances are interesting, as Acomb had its own peculiar court and jurisdictional ties with the Treasurer of York Minster.¹⁹⁰ Two of the four pleas of debt were initiated by a man from Knapton, a hamlet next to Acomb that was partly under the jurisdiction of the parish of Holy Trinity, Micklegate, perhaps accounting for the inclusion of the pleas in the sheriffs' records.¹⁹¹ The other two pleas of debt against men from Acomb were initiated by men whose residences were not given, possibly indicating that they lived in York itself. Jurisdictional or parochial connections with York did not guarantee that trading contacts would be recorded, however. Copmanthorpe, Upper Poppleton and Holgate all belonged to the parish of St Mary Bishophill Jr, but none of them appeared in the sheriffs' records.¹⁹²

Butchers from York were prominent in the sheriffs' records in their dealings with people from the hinterland, most often in cases of debt, presumably because they sometimes acquired livestock and rented pasture from Ainsty inhabitants.¹⁹³ These patterns provide an interesting counterpoint to those observed by Kowaleski in her research into markets and trade in medieval Exeter, where

¹⁸⁸ For offenses against the Statute of Labourers, see, for example, Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 143, 151, 164. Kowaleski discusses service in the context of debt. See *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, p. 207.

¹⁸⁹ Other places in the hinterland that featured in the Sheriffs' Court Books include Heslington, Water Fulford, Wheldrake, Escrick, Elvington, Bubwith, Earswick, Easingwold, Whixley, Thorganby and Nun Monkton. As can be seen, many of these places belonged to the wapentakes of Ouse and Derwent and Bulmer, although Nun Monkton and Whixley lay beyond the northwest borders of the Ainsty.

¹⁹⁰ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 190, 217, 236. For Acomb's jurisdictional situation, see Burton (ed.), *Cartulary of the Treasurer of York Minster*, pp. ix-xiii, 45, 63, 76; Richardson (ed.), *Acomb Court Rolls*, pp. v-vii; Richardson, *History of Acomb*, pp. 5-7; Hodgson, *History of Acomb*, pp. 7-8, 12.

¹⁹¹ Harvey, *York*, pp. 116, 134; Briden and Stocker, 'The Tower and Church of St Mary Bishophill Jr', pp. 86-87.

¹⁹² Harvey, *York*, p. 70. Interestingly, the probate records contain few records for Upper Poppleton, Holgate and Copmanthorpe. See Chapter One.

¹⁹³ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 42; O'Connor, 'Bones as Evidence of Meat Production' in White (ed.), *Feeding a City*, pp.50-51, 57; Swanson, 'Artisans', p. 431.

many butchers from the immediate hinterland traded in the city.¹⁹⁴ Men from Dringhouses, Askham (whether Askham Bryan or Askham Richard was not specified) and Bolton Percy were involved in debt disputes with different but linked urban butchers, which again may be an indication of these Ainsty communities providing the butchers with their raw materials.¹⁹⁵ John Smyth of Askham entered a plea against the butcher William Taillour.¹⁹⁶ One William Thornhill soon sued the latter along with Taillour's fellow butcher Richard Kirkeby. A short time later, William Joy of Bolton Percy sued the second butcher, Kirkeby!¹⁹⁷ Richard Kirkeby owed money to a surprisingly large number of people over a number of years in the late fifteenth century, although the majority of these were apparently urban inhabitants.¹⁹⁸ At least one other man from the hinterland, William Staynburn of Hunsingore, complained of a debt owed by Kirkeby in 1479.¹⁹⁹

An entry in the Sheriffs' Court Books involving William Morton, husbandman of Middlethorpe, helps us enlarge this man's network. The reader may recall that Morton appeared with some frequency in the House Books alongside Thomas Assynby, a barber. In the sheriffs' records, Morton appeared as a complainant when he entered a plea of seizure and unjust detinue of his chattels against two men at once, Ralph Kirkeby and William Marshall.²⁰⁰ In this case, the latter two men clearly knew one another, as they had acted together to seize Morton's chattels. There are several examples of similar situations, where a single individual complained of several different people during a short space of time, as when Richard Marston registered separate pleas of debt against five men in 1478.²⁰¹ Here, there is no evidence linking Marston's debtors, so the network

¹⁹⁴ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp. 280-285, 293-307; Kowaleski, 'Hide and Leather Trade', pp. 59-60, 62.

¹⁹⁵ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 153, 251,

¹⁹⁶ Margaret, the prioress of St Clement's Priory, also sued William Tailour for 14s. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 264.

¹⁹⁷ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 251, 259. Richard Kirkeby found himself in trouble once again with one Robert Fox (p. 379). While Fox's location was not noted, the surname was common in Bilton in the Ainsty.

¹⁹⁸ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 118, 131, 142, 208, 230, 259, 379.

¹⁹⁹ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 208. Kirkeby also appeared in the House Books, Vol. I, pp. 27, 100, 106, 153, 205, 244, 246.

²⁰⁰ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 353.

²⁰¹ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 123

appears more ego-centric and less dense.²⁰² I have found no concrete examples of this kind pertaining to Ainsty individuals.

Nor have I discovered Ainsty examples of the converse situation, when several people complained of the same individual, usually for debt or trespass, within a short space of time, and the complaints were usually recorded in succession on the same folio. This type of dispute, which in the Sheriffs' Court Books apparently applied mainly to inhabitants of York, echoes the collective complaint against John Wyman of Rufforth recorded in the House Books, and may indicate that the complainants were in contact with one another and had spoken of their problems with the defendant. This would indicate a relatively dense network, although it is usually difficult to tell whether those complaining knew each other independently of their mutual contact with the accused. Parties from the Ainsty were more commonly engaged in 'simple' disputes, in which one individual complained of another. Occasionally, the defending party retaliated by accusing his accuser, as when Thomas Clerk of Bolton Percy and John Sawyer of Healaugh mutually accused one another of trespass.²⁰³

4.3 Ainsty Social Networks in the Records of the Central Government

The final section of this chapter discusses Ainsty networks in the records of various types of transactions, including those involving land, and royal enquiries into landholding. Some of the transactions, those in the certificates of Statute Merchant and Statute Staple, and those in the feet of fines, found their way into the crown records at the impetus of the parties involved, as an extra layer of security and an aid in debt collection. The inquisitions *post mortem* and inquisitions *ad quod damnum*, of course, resulted from royal writs. Despite the differing functions of these records, the transacting parties, landholders and jurors in all of the

²⁰² Occasionally such entries had as much to do with kinship as with business, as they evidently represented the activities of executors claiming debts owed to a testator. Agnes, widow and executrix of York citizen and parchment-maker John Wodhall, complained of a few men in pleas of debt. Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 222-23. Again, such interactions do not necessarily indicate the presence of a dense network, as they do not provide enough information to be able to determine whether the executors knew the debtors independently of their contact with the testator.

²⁰³ Stell (trans. and ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, pp. 182-83.

documents in this chapter encompassed a similar socio-economic spectrum from prosperous peasants of local importance to gentry of local and sometimes national importance. The chapter touches on the transactions in general terms, focusing on what can be revealed through the names of the parties themselves, and, in the case of the inquisitions, lists of witnesses and jurors, but the last part of the section comprises a discussion of the more detailed depositions in proof of age inquests included in the inquisitions *post mortem*. Many of the same individuals we have seen in the other documents discussed in this chapter, particularly the deeds and cartularies, appear in these documents as well, rounding out our picture of their networks.

4.3.1 The Certificates of Statute Merchant in Chancery

When the transaction content in an exchange was substantial, or occasionally when the parties did not know one another well, it was expedient to register the transaction in a court, like that of York, that possessed a seal of Statute Merchant or Staple, so that debts could be more easily recovered by means of an order from Chancery.²⁰⁴ There are over one hundred such certificates of debt involving individuals who lived or held land in the Ainsty in the National Archives, ranging in date from 1286 to 1531.²⁰⁵ Reflecting national patterns, the certificates of debt for York and its hinterland usually involved larger amounts than those dealt with in the local sheriffs' courts, ranging from 10s to over £300.²⁰⁶ Amounts over £100 were not uncommon. Debts of agricultural goods, sacks of wool and quantities of grain, accompanied by their market value, appeared during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries but were rare in the later period.

Although some transactions recorded in the certificates were undoubtedly the result of short-term or 'one-off' interactions, others demonstrated a relatively high frequency of interaction over a few years, indicating that it was not necessarily the case that debtors and creditors were separated by social distance. The most

²⁰⁴ Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 36. Kermode provides a good definition of the certificates in her essay, 'Medieval Indebtedness', p. 74.

²⁰⁵ Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I have not consulted the documents firsthand, but have relied on the useful abstracts provided on the website of the National Archives under the reference number C 241.

²⁰⁶ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp. 207, 212-14; Kermode, 'Medieval Indebtedness', pp. 75, 80.

intriguing cases for the purposes of this thesis occur when there was more than one debtor and/or creditor, indicating a business partnership of some sort. As we shall see, these partnerships sometimes brought together individuals from different places.

Derek Keene's study of credit and debt demonstrates London's 'intense interaction' with many small communities in its hinterland, and the York certificates certainly show that a similar relationship existed between York and the Ainsty.²⁰⁷ The majority of the certificates of debt represent interactions between Ainsty settlements and York itself, with York merchants as frequent creditors. On the other hand, some creditors and debtors were York merchants who did not live in the Ainsty, but who held land there. Robert, son of William of Pontefract, for example, was a merchant who held land in Wilstrop; his creditors included a Gascon merchant living in York.²⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the volume of transactions between the Ainsty and York is even greater in the certificates than that in the Sheriffs' Court Books. Most of the remaining Ainsty certificates involved parties from locations elsewhere in Yorkshire, with a small number from Lincolnshire and further afield in Staffordshire, Huntingdonshire, Essex and London.²⁰⁹ The parties from these places were always merchants or members of the gentry. Similar patterns emerged from Kowaleski's study of the certificates of debt for Exeter, which showed that for the later fourteenth century, debtors were often members of the gentry who had borrowed from urban citizens.²¹⁰

Indeed, in certificates involving the Ainsty, members of the gentry acted as both creditors and debtors. As in the Sheriffs' Court Books, the Ughtreds and the Wilstrops were frequent participants in transactions. Robert Ughtred in particular accounts for many certificates.²¹¹ He was both a creditor and a debtor. His dealings were with a limited number of York merchants, primarily Peter de

²⁰⁷ D. Keene, 'Medieval London and its Region', *London Journal* 14:2 (1989): 99-11.

²⁰⁸ TNA, C 241/13/72.

²⁰⁹ It is possible that the transactions between the Ainsty and Lincolnshire may have been influenced by the presence of the archiepiscopal liberty in the latter county, as well as the gentry who held land in both counties. Regular trade took place between the two counties. Miller, 'Medieval York', , pp. 99-100; R.B. Pugh, 'Prisons and Gallows' in Tillott (ed.), VCH York, p. 496.

²¹⁰ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp. 213-14.

²¹¹ TNA, C 241/36/76; C 241/35/141; C 241/80/167; C 241/35/139; C 241/34/126; C 241/74/91; C 241/36/75; C 241/27/46; C 241/35/132; C 241/35/140; C 241/82/148; C 241/36/64; C 241/74/75; C 241/34/296; C 241/35/34; C 241/28/47; C 241/85/16.

Appleby. Ughtred and Robert de Holme, both knights who held land in the parish of Bolton Percy, had repeated dealings with Appleby, a situation suggestive of a dense network with Appleby a central figure.²¹² Other York merchants were apparently central figures in Ainsty trade networks. John de Grantham, merchant of York, lent to Holme, two men acting together in Long Marston in 1298, and Simon de Chauncey '*manens*' in Moor Monkton in 1293.²¹³ A Philip de Chauncey of Lincolnshire, knight, owed Robert Ughtred 33s two years later.²¹⁴ William le Waleys of Moor Monkton and Stephen le Waleys of Healaugh, members of an elite family we have seen in the deeds and cartularies, also appeared; William owed the ubiquitous Peter de Appleby 60s in 1293.²¹⁵

Although the household does not emerge as an activity field in the certificates, there is evidence that kinship ties among the gentry influenced transactions. In one obvious example, two brothers engaged in credit transactions with prominent members of the clergy in York. John, the brother of Robert Ughtred was a creditor to the prior of Holy Trinity, York, in 1296 and again 1304, when it was mentioned that Robert had died.²¹⁶ Robert himself had been a debtor to various Minster officials, including an archbishop, Thomas de Corbridge, in 1302.²¹⁷ Interactions between kin in the certificates were not limited to the gentry. Fathers and sons borrowed and owed together. Sometimes men related to one another formed a core of a larger group, as when Robert and John Gibson of Paddockthorpe in Bolton Percy were debtors along with a dyer from York and a man from North Deighton in 1404.²¹⁸

Sometimes two or more men from the same village or nearby villages acted together in business ventures. They occasionally shared the same occupation, as in the following example involving pastoral workers. William the Shepherd of Acaster and Hugh the Stockherd of Appleton Roebuck were debtors, along with two other men from Acaster and one from Appleton, to Richard de Bankfield in

²¹² TNA, C 241/7/137; C 241/8/189; C 241/7/372C; C 241/12/127; C 241/9/166; C 241/8/193; C 241/11/47; C 241/9/309; C 241/8/131; C 241/9/225; C 241/9/48; C 241/13/128.

²¹³ TNA, C 241/32/62; TNA, C 241/22/120.

²¹⁴ TNA, C 241/27/46.

²¹⁵ TNA, C 241/22/230.

²¹⁶ TNA, C 241/30/7; C 241/43/75.

²¹⁷ TNA, C 241/36/76.

²¹⁸ TNA, C 241/194/30.

1328.²¹⁹ Three years earlier, William the Shepherd and Hugh Stockherd had owed Bankfield the substantial sum of £40. This time, their partners had consisted of the same man from Appleton, but two different men from Acaster, including another Stockherd.²²⁰ Here we see evidence of a core group of men associating together in a business partnership crossing village boundary lines. There are two examples in which two or more men from Rufforth acted together as borrowers of credit. In 1296, Hugh Gryme and Henry Messor of Rufforth were debtors along with William, son of Alan of Knapton, and five other men; the name of the creditor is lost.²²¹ In 1308, Hugh Boye, Jordan Quenild and Jordan de Braham of Rufforth all owed Ralph de Whitewell of Yorkshire 40s.²²²

The certificates of debt reinforce patterns that we have seen in the other documents relating to the tendency of individuals from certain vills to interact with one another. The example involving pastoral workers just discussed echoes the connections that we saw in the deeds and other documents between Acaster Selby, Appleton Roebuck, and Stillingfleet.²²³ Ties between Healaugh and Wighill echoed those we have seen in the Healaugh cartulary. In 1374, Adam Sharp of Healaugh owed £40 to both Adam Colier of Wighill and Richard de Kendale of York.²²⁴ William Martell of Walton owed £20 to Hugh de Bilton in 1292.²²⁵

Most interactions involving one party from the Ainsty in which the other party originated outside of York but within Yorkshire were from the West Riding, although some East and North Riding examples exist. This pattern, this tendency to associate with villages to the west, echoes that found in other documents. Nicholas Deyville of Bickerton acted as a debtor with two men from Wheldrake in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent in 1288.²²⁶ Richard le Taylor of Thorp Arch owed Simon de Kyme, the lord of Newton Kyme, in 1287.²²⁷

Specific men that appear in the cartularies and deeds also transacted business filed under Statute Merchant and Statute Staple. Henry de Cruce of

²¹⁹ TNA, C 241/99/104.

²²⁰ TNA, C 241/95/28.

²²¹ TNA, C 241/31/156.

²²² TNA, C 241/56/190.

²²³ TNA, C 241/99/104.

²²⁴ TNA, C 241/156/94.

²²⁵ TNA, C 241/16/105.

²²⁶ TNA, C 241/8/201.

²²⁷ TNA, C 241/8/444.

Catterton owed Master Walter de Gloucester of York £10 in 1294-95.²²⁸ William le Cerf of Catterton was a debtor to Alan Sampson of York over two years in 1296 and 1297-98 in transactions involving grain.²²⁹ One wonders if the transactions that took place between prominent men from Catterton and York within the space of a few years were coincidence, or if they had been involved in similar, parallel business ventures. However, other individuals and families who appear in the other documents in this chapter, like Brocket and Jenkyn, did not file transactions with Chancery.

There is evidence that individuals in certain communities were in the habit of engaging in commercial transactions long before their local lords did. The hamlet of Bickerton, in the parish of Bilton, engaged in credit transactions with individuals from York and elsewhere. William Fitz-Alan of Bickerton, his wife Agnes and John, son of Robert de Brampton owed a York canon more than twenty marks at the end of the thirteenth century.²³⁰ Several years later, the gentle Nicholas Deyville of Bickerton lent £10 to Isabel, the daughter of Nicholas de Deighton, and Nicholas de la March of Bickerton owed a York merchant some wool around the same time, in 1306.²³¹ John Deyville of Tockwith, next to Bickerton, lent £40 to a boot-maker in 1352.²³² By the later fourteenth century, a gentry family from Bickerton was engaging in business transactions regularly. William Grammary, knight, son of John Grammary of Bickerton, owed money to three different creditors, one a citizen of York, one from elsewhere in Yorkshire, and one a tailor and citizen of London in the 1360s, 1370s and 1380s.²³³ His son, William, and Henry Grammary, another knight, owed more than £100 to a man from Snaith in 1361.²³⁴

Again, the parish does not stand out as a strong activity field. There are, however, a few examples illustrating transactions involving representatives of religious houses and members of the clergy. The prioress of Syningthwaite lent over £4 to William de Cattal of York and Peter de Barkston of Newton-on-Ouse in

²²⁸ TNA, C 241/28/11.

²²⁹ TNA, C 241/31/78; TNA, C 241/32/289.

²³⁰ TNA, C 241/32/85.

²³¹ TNA, C 241/50/346.

²³² TNA, C 241/130/87.

²³³ TNA, C 241/176/126; TNA, C 241/153/100; TNA, C 241/162/56.

²³⁴ TNA, C 241/141/81.

Bulmer wapentake in 1307.²³⁵ The Prior of Healaugh Park owed Master Robert de Scarborough, a former dean of York Minster £10 in 1292.²³⁶ A Master John de Scarborough was also linked to the knight Robert de Holme, who held land in Hornington, directly as a creditor in 1287.²³⁷

4.3.2 The Feet of Fines

This section discusses examples of entries in the printed series of feet of fines for Yorkshire for much of the fourteenth century, published for the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.²³⁸ Like the certificates of debt, the feet of fines represent more or less local transactions that, for one reason or another, one or more parties desired to make more secure by employing the apparatus of the central government. The fines record the agreements resulting from suits brought in the Court of Common Pleas, which by the early fourteenth century had become a 'convenient and secure means of conveying freehold estates' or to 'establish or break an entail or set up a tenancy for life'.²³⁹ The calendars of these documents do not include witnesses, and warranties were given by the deforciant in the action rather than by third parties acting as sureties, but studying the names of the parties themselves is instructive.

The sheer number of fines documenting land transactions between the Ainsty and York individuals both before and after the Black Death helps confirm the close bond between city and hinterland that has been a main theme of this thesis. An example recorded around the time when the plague hit York includes a transaction between a dyer from York named Stephen de Grillyngton and his wife and another couple, Roger and Baudwina de Erythorn, of land in Hornington in the parish of Bolton Percy, near Tadcaster.²⁴⁰ The same year, Nicholas de Erdeslawe of Tadcaster received land in Tadcaster and one of its Ainsty villages, Oxton, from

²³⁵ TNA, C 241/47/54.

²³⁶ TNA, C 241/16/165.

²³⁷ TNA, C 241/5/20.

²³⁸ M. Roper and C. Kitching (eds.), *Feet of Fines for the County of York from 1314 to 1326*, YASRS CLVIII (Woodbridge, 2006); W. P. Baildon (ed.), *Feet of Fines for the County of York from 1347 to 1377*, YASRS 52 (Leeds, 1915).

²³⁹ Roper and Kitching (eds.), *Yorks Feet of Fines 1314-26*, p. vii.

²⁴⁰ Baildon (ed.), *Yorks. Feet of Fines 1347-77*, p. 20.

a York couple, John and Alice le Ryder.²⁴¹ A similar transaction involving people from York and land in Acaster Malbis took place in 1352.²⁴² In many of these cases, however, one (or, less frequently) both parties was solidly identified as being 'of York', while only the name of the other party was given, thus making it difficult to verify if some of the parties were actually from the Ainsty even though the land being transferred was located there. There are also several examples of two parties from York transferring Ainsty land.

Elsewhere, familiar names appear as prominent Ainsty individuals made land transactions in the Ainsty and elsewhere. In 1355, for example, another Alan de Foliffayt put in a claim when William, son of Gilbert de Westlillyng and John Noreys of Welburn transferred land in Thorp Arch, Walton, Folifoot, Wighill and Catterton to Richard, son of Richard Bernard and his wife Elena.²⁴³ Master Thomas Sampson acted with William Sampson, John de Sutton, the parson of Acaster church, and William de Harum in transferring land in Acaster Malbis and Copmanthorpe to the knight, William Malbis.²⁴⁴ We have seen the Sampson family before, particularly in the deeds relating to land in the parishes of Bolton Percy and Acaster Malbis, and several Harums appeared in the civic records.

4.3.3 The Inquisitions *ad quod Damnum* and the Inquisitions *Post Mortem*

As we have seen in Chapter One, the Inquisitions *post mortem* provide a great deal of information about the tenurial structure and social hierarchy of the local elite in the Ainsty and surrounding regions. The inquisitions *ad quod damnum*, taken to ensure that no harm would result to the king's estate or that of anyone else as a result of a transaction, complement this information. The picture that emerges from both types of documents is similar to that found in localized regions all over late medieval England: a complex web of ever changing alliances and kin groups comprising members of the local gentry, the urban elite, the nobility (albeit often at a greater distance), and, to a lesser extent, landowners shading into the realms of the non-elite.

²⁴¹ Baildon (ed.), *Yorks. Feet of Fines 1347-77*, p. 20. Erdeslaw was related by marriage to William Barker of Tadcaster.

²⁴² Baildon (ed.), *Yorks. Feet of Fines 1347-77*, p. 33.

²⁴³ Baildon (ed.), *Yorks. Feet of Fines*, p. 50.

²⁴⁴ Baildon (ed.), *Yorks. Feet of Fines*, pp. 8-9.

It is perhaps ironic that the records of the central government, particularly the Inquisitions *post mortem*, give us such a great insight into social interactions on a micro-historical level. Men comprising our groups of interest, the prosperous peasant agriculturalists and craftsmen of the Ainsty, acted as jurors when a writ of *de aetate probando* had been issued by Chancery.²⁴⁵ Since those involved were testifying about the important matter of the inheritance of crown lands, they may well have been encouraged by the royal representatives conducting the inquests to be as careful as possible in recounting their identities and recollections. Rosenthal, moreover, contends that a sense of pride brought about by playing a role (albeit a short-lived one) in events of national significance combined with local social pressure would have tended to promote believable testimony, if not absolute truthfulness.²⁴⁶ It is also in the Proofs of Age that all of our activity fields converge dramatically in testimonies displaying great varieties of multiplex and occasionally dense interactions in which geographical mobility played a significant role.

Rosenthal's discussion of the dynamics of the medieval proof of age jury is relevant to this section.²⁴⁷ Rosenthal observed that often, the juror whose deposition was taken first acted as a 'foreman'. He tended to be of high status within the local community, and the other jurors followed suit, agreeing with and adding complementary details to his evidence.²⁴⁸ Although the jurors in the Ainsty proofs of age were certainly high status, the other jurors whose depositions were listed after that of the 'foreman' were often equally high status men from the same or neighbouring villages. Their testimony did not mimic that of the first juror, but added very idiosyncratic, ego-centric evidence that nonetheless supported the first juror's claim that the heir or heiress was of age.

Marriage, Kinship and Household

Marriage and kinship were essential activity fields for proof of age enquiries, since they of course consisted of evidence related to the births of heirs and heiresses. The 1382 proof of age inquest of Margaret, great-granddaughter of

²⁴⁵ J.T. Rosenthal, *Telling Tales: Sources and Narration in Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA, 2003), p. 2.

²⁴⁶ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 2-3.

²⁴⁷ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 1-62.

²⁴⁸ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 3, 10, 54.

the knight John Chaumont (or, as the heading to the writ puts it, 'daughter of John, son of John, son of John Chaumont, knight) demonstrates the importance of kinship to Ainsty jurors as well as to the landed family itself.²⁴⁹ Six of the twelve jurors mentioned kin as part of their strategy for remembering the heir's birth. One, Thomas del Thweyt, mentioned his own marriage to Alice, the daughter of Robert de Lede on the same day in the same church as the heir's baptism. Three mentioned siblings and two mentioned children. Agnes, the sister of juror John de Willesthorp, became the prioress of Arthyngton at the time of Margaret's birth. These mentions of kin served to broaden the networks involved, which do not seem to have been dense: none of the jurors mentioned any of the others in his testimony. Even the two Brockets, Nicholas and William, do not mention one another. This is not to say that these networks were *not* dense. Students of medieval memory have pointed out the convenient and reliable nature of memories involving one's own kin and/or life cycle, and it may have been these factors, rather than a lack of knowledge of or interaction with the other jurors that led these men to choose these particular memories.²⁵⁰

Although the first, or 'head' juror, the sixty-year-old Henry de Gellisthorp, did not identify the heiress's godparents by name, he did mention that he saw the godfather and godmothers, indicating that their identities were known to him.²⁵¹ Rosenthal's research on godparents in the Inquisitions has shown that they were usually high status people well known in surrounding communities.²⁵² In the case of Margaret Chaumont, several of the jurors themselves were also high status, prosperous, established peasant agriculturalists, if not gentle.

None of the jurors in the 1420 proof of age of John, the son and heir of Miles Stapleton, seem to have been directly related, and fewer of them mentioned their own kin in their depositions, with the exception of two who had children born the same day, one in Wighill, the same village where the heir had been born, and one in Healaugh, the village of one of John's godfathers, John de Depeden.²⁵³ The activity field of the household, in this case those of the Stapletons and their chosen

²⁴⁹ *CIPM XV*, p. 352.

²⁵⁰ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 15-35.

²⁵¹ *CIPM XV*, p. 352.

²⁵² Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 27-28.

²⁵³ *CIPM XXI*, p. 226.

godparents, was more significant in this proof of age enquiry, and indeed, much of the 'action' took place in the households of the godparents. One of the witnesses was Robert Mortayn, who had been Depeden's steward; he had been holding a court at Thorp Arch. The house of another juror, Thomas Ogilsthorp, burned down. The house was located elsewhere in the hinterland in Clifford.

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

The proof of age of Margaret Chaumont/Moubray discussed in the previous section also reveals relationships based on business transactions and landholding, although the memories bound up with occupation were also just as likely to involve just the juror himself, with no mention of a third party. When Henry de Gellisthorp noted the presence of Margaret Chaumont's godparents at her baptism, it was as he 'took leave of his neighbours' before he embarked on a voyage to the Isle of Man. Although Gellisthorp was relating a clearly social experience, it is not recorded that he mentioned any of these 'neighbours' by name, so it is difficult to know if they included any of his fellow witnesses. Nicholas Broket of Bolton had been engaged in the apparently solitary activity of erecting a sheepfold in his tenement on the day of the heiress's baptism, while William Broket broke his leg as a result of a fall from his horse. Another juror had been involved in a land transaction; he had purchased the manor of Barton from a chaplain.

The proof of age of John de Stapleton paints a picture of a denser, apparently more cohesive community of jurors at the same time as reminding the escheator of the important connections the Stapleton family enjoyed.²⁵⁴ The heir was born at Wighill, and the depositions describe a great deal of hurried, local travel, in contrast to the long pilgrimages to foreign lands evoked in Margaret Chaumont's proof of age. Many of the jurors were performing services of some sort for the heir's father, and much of this travel involved the fetching of godparents from other Ainsty locales, including the knight John Depeden at Healaugh, and the heir's aunt, a nun at Syningthwaite named Agnes de Sheffield. Richard Otteley rode to the 'mansion' of the knight Henry Vavasour at Hazlewood, to the west of the Ainsty, to inform him of the baptism. Other jurors apparently

²⁵⁴ *CIPM XXI*, p. 226.

had more direct connections with the godparents than with the heir's family: juror John Lyle was associated with Robert Mauleverer (another elite family), as the two were at Healaugh to speak to Depeden.

Less illustriously, John Forster, the relative of juror Robert Forster, assaulted fellow juror John de Sandesford. Even York was mentioned by one juror, who remembered (no doubt bitterly) being arrested at Wighill and hauled away to the castle in the city on the day of the heir's baptism. The difference in tone between the depositions for John Stapleton and Margaret Mowbray may be due to the excitement generated by the birth of a male heir.

In one Inquisition *ad quod damnum* of 1301, men from Poppleton, Knapton and Hessay gathered together to witness and authorize a grant of land by Master William, clerk of Walton, to the Abbot and Convent of St Mary's in York.²⁵⁵ William of Walton held land of the abbot in those three vills, and he was granting the land back to them. One named man or more from each of the vills, Adam Clerk of Popilton and Robert Bret of Popilton, William son of Alan of Knapton and Stephen de Hessay, joined with men of Hunkelby (?), Miton and Thornton to witness the transaction and act as jurors, providing information about the tenure of the land and what services Walton owed the abbot and convent. The choice of witnesses may indicate that Walton was central within this network, and called together witnesses that he himself knew and with whom he had had prior contact. If this were indeed the case, the activities involved in landholding may have brought the men together. On the other hand, they could simply represent prominent inhabitants of each village who could be called upon for their knowledge of village affairs. The fact that three of the men involved, including William of Walton himself, were identified as clerks, could indicate occupational or institutional connections. However, two years later, Robert Bret and Adam Clerk of Poppleton and Stephen de Hessay appeared in another Inquisition *ad quod damnum* relating to the granting of the advowson of the church of Kirkby Misperton by the abbot of St Mary's.²⁵⁶ Men from other hinterland locales to the east and northwest of York including Heworth, Clifton, Fulford and Shipton acted as their fellow jurors.

²⁵⁵ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Inquisitions IV*, pp. 8-9.

²⁵⁶ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Inquisitions IV*, p. 39.

As in the civic records, Bustardthorpe, Middlethorpe and Bishopthorpe are clustered together in the Inquisitions *post mortems*. Maud, the widow of John Dayville of Bilton, held land in all three places before she died in 1416.²⁵⁷ In another, earlier inquisition dating to 1302, a man from the Knapton, as well as two men from Thorp Arch and one man each from Colton, Askham, Marston, Bilton and Bilburgh deposed about land held by Robert Bustard, son of Thomas Bustard of Bustardthorp in an Inquisition regarding land held by Bustard in Bishopthorpe and Middlethorpe as well as the manor of Bustardthorpe.²⁵⁸

Four additional men whose villages were not indicated acted as jurors as well. These included Robert Foxe and William le Cerf: readers may remember members of the Fox family appearing in documents related to Bilton, while Cerfs from Catterton and Steeton appears as a witness to other Ainsty deeds, particularly in Hornington.²⁵⁹ Curiously, no men specifically identified as being from Middlethorpe or Bishopthorpe were included. Three years later in 1305, Robert Fox of Angrum and Thomas del Hyl of Bilton, two of the jurors for Robert Bustard, also deposed for John de Kyrkeby about land he had held in Tockwith.²⁶⁰ Thomas del Hyl seems to have been quite central within the Ainsty, for during the same year, 1305, he was the juror in the inquisition *ad quod damnum* that took place when Henry and Agnes Belle of Askham wished to make a grant of land in Askham Richard to the prior and convent of Bridlington. In this case, he acted alongside men from Tockwith, a father and son from Colton, Walton, and Keighley (to the west of the Ainsty).²⁶¹

The Inquisition *post mortem* of Thomas Fairfax, knight, taken in 1505, was also recorded in York Memorandum Book B/Y.²⁶² The jurors listed included thirteen men, as opposed to the usual twelve, and include one esquire, William Norton, and two gentlemen, Thomas Wandsworth and John Kent. There was no overlap between the jurors' names and those of Thomas's feoffees, which included

²⁵⁷ Kirby (ed.), *CIPM XX*, pp. 161-62.

²⁵⁸ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Inquisitions IV*, pp. 16-17.

²⁵⁹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 80-5.

²⁶⁰ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Inquisitions IV*, p. 95.

²⁶¹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Inquisitions IV*, p. 132.

²⁶² Percy (ed.), *Memorandum Book III*, pp. 226-27.

Robert Sherburn, esquire, as well as Richard and Thomas Sherburn, and Robert Radclyff, esquire, along with Hugh and Roger Radclyff.

4.4 Conclusion

Other than in the proof of age depositions, the parish and household do not emerge from the documents discussed in this chapter as the most dynamic activity fields for social interaction. Kinship and neighbourhood were more significant from the point of view of these documents. In a sense, these impressions are unsurprising given the fact that they recorded the interactions of individuals who tended to be prosperous and residentially stable, and whose families can often be traced living in the same area for two or more generations.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the society of part of medieval York's hinterland, the Ainsty, from the perspective of a variety of types of documents, all with different authors, functions and agendas. There were many ways that this thesis could have been organized, but the template based on taking each source separately, on its own terms, was chosen so that a more organic, dynamic picture of hinterland society could be built up as each source complemented the others, highlighting similarities and differences in perspectives on social networks. Each type of source provides variable information about different vills and regions within the Ainsty. As we saw in the previous chapter, the civic records provide more information about Dringhouses, for example, while the probate evidence is more abundant for larger townships like Acaster Malbis and Bolton Percy. From combining the evidence found in different types of records, we learn that small vills, such as Wilstrop, that seem insignificant in the poll tax returns or probate records, in fact have rich histories of participation in the local land market and urban societies, on the parts of both local lords and their social inferiors.

Similarly, sources vary in the information they provide on individuals and their networks. Relationships that appeared uniplex or diffuse in one type of source were revealed to be multiplex and dense when evidence provided other documents were taken into account. Record linkage also, of course, provided more information about frequency and duration of interaction, and the directional flow or level of reciprocity within a given relationship, as well as the centrality of the actors. Many of the individuals discussed in this conclusion (and, indeed, the thesis as a whole) appear more central by virtue of the simple fact that they (or their families) can be found in more than one record, and thus can be linked to more people, but the possibility remains that they actually *were* more active than their less documented counterparts in the land market and business ventures that led to legal disputes. People who made wills were more likely to be mentioned in deeds and civic records, for example.

Apart from the members of prominent gentry families like the Fairfaxes, Gascoignes, Vavasours, Dayvilles, Basys, Thwaites, and Ughtreds, who were

ubiquitous in records pertaining to most Ainsty communities, several surnames appear in vills throughout the Ainsty over the entire period under discussion. Gell, Carbot (Askham Richard, Bilton, Dringhouses, Moor Monkton, Hessay), Hurtsky (Acaster Malbis, Bishopthorpe, Hessay, Copmanthorpe), Moyse (Acaster Malbis, Middlethorpe) and Brocket (Acaster Selby, Appleton, Bolton Percy, Steeton, Tadcaster) are some of the most prominent examples, suggesting mobility and dispersal within a fairly circumscribed area, perhaps at a time when these surnames were stabilizing and becoming more hereditary. Gells appear in records of Moor Monkton, Tockwith, Bilton, Wilstrop, Kirk Hammerton, Whixley and Cattall, and we know from the cause papers that at least some of those from Bilton, Kirk Hammerton, Whixley and Cattall were kin. Other names, such as the gentle Northfolk of Naburn, Palmes of Naburn, Helwis of Acaster Selby, and Jowkyn/Jenkyn of Acaster Malbis were almost always associated with one village.¹

There was not always a large degree of overlap between individuals from the same community appearing in different types of records during the same generation, however. This may indicate a lack of density in local social networks, particularly in terms of vertical ties in the activity field of landholding between the gentry and lesser but still substantial landholders. Different networks appeared in wills as opposed to land transactions. The parties and witnesses to the published land transactions for Moor Monkton and the associated vill of Scagglethorpe for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for example, were mainly members of the gentry, particularly the Ughtreds. They chose none of the individuals who left or were mentioned in testaments to witness their deeds; nor did the testators mention any Ughtreds, Fairfaxes, or Rooses in their wills, with the exception of John Marshall, who bequeathed 6d to a Master Thomas Ughtred in 1484.²

A comparison of the names and families recorded by the ecclesiastical and sheriffs' courts produced few intersections. Similarly, there was little overlap in terms of actual persons that drew up or featured in testaments, and those who participated in ecclesiastical court cases, although this may be due to lack of surviving evidence. Even individuals such as Roger del Parke of Moor Monkton,

¹ A Jenkyn may also be found in records pertaining to Bishopthorpe, but it must be noted that part of the manor of Acaster Malbis extended into the territory of Bishopthorpe.

² Brown (ed.), *Yorkshire Deeds Vol. II*, pp. 119-26 and 160-63; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 241r.

whose behaviour in the ecclesiastical courts, including his exploitation of kinship networks, suggests that he was relatively well off and therefore more likely to make a will, do not appear in the probate records.³ A major exception to the gap in record linkage between probate and Church court records was the 1447 dispute over tithes and parish boundaries in Acaster Malbis.⁴ Here, the witnesses were presumably chosen for their long-term residence in the area and their respectable status, factors that would have increased the likelihood of leaving a will, along with the fact that records from Acaster Malbis seem unusually well-preserved for the Ainsty. Among these witnesses, William Walton of Acaster Malbis left a will, William del Moyse of Acaster Malbis was mentioned in the will of a relative, and a descendant of John Egle of Bishopthorpe left a will in 1481.⁵

This conclusion draws together what has been learned from the different types of documents, while maintaining the rubric of the three main activity fields that have been used throughout the study: marriage, kinship and household; occupation, landholding and neighbourhood; and devotion, piety and parish. Throughout this thesis, I have had to force myself to find and reconstruct activity fields rather than comment on preconceived notions of them. This has been a difficult task that has encouraged me to think in different ways. It was often the case that particular activity fields stood out in certain types of documents as a matter of course; for example, kinship loomed large in testaments because of issues with inheritance and in cause papers due to the large number of matrimonial cases that passed through ecclesiastical courts. Such biases, again, point to the benefits of a multi-source approach. Following the discussion of activity fields will be an analysis of the impact of mobility, migration and locality upon social networks. The final paragraphs will analyse what all of these sources say about the significance of the hinterland, as space and place, for the society of its inhabitants.

³ A Church court case indicates that he did make a will, however. BIHR, Cons.AB.1, fos. 168r, 173v, 175v, 176r, 180r, 181v (1420).

⁴ BIHR, CP.F.183.

⁵ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 423r (William Walton, 1459); Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 641r (John Moyse, 1430 - 31); Prob. Reg. 5, fos. 52v-53r (Robert and Joan Egle, 1481). A descendant of John Stillyngton, Thomas Stillington, esquire, of Acaster Selby, left a will in 1496. Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 486v.

Marriage, Kinship and Household

Unsurprisingly, marriage and kinship proved to be fertile activity fields for social relations in all types of documents, even those not directly concerned with family relations. Several debt cases in the Sheriffs' *Court Books* were pursued on behalf of late husbands by widows and their new spouses, or by other relatives of the deceased. These were normally York widows interacting with Ainsty debtors, but the act of joining with others to put the deceased's estate in order reflected the dynamics at work in the testaments and probate inventories of both city and hinterland. That family members were chosen and used as witnesses in ecclesiastical court cases despite the proscriptions of canon law underscores the importance of kinship to social networks. Even when other witnesses were chosen, they were sometimes connected to kin of the principals, as when several servants of John de Bentley, 'consanguinus' of the defendant, Alice del Parke of Moor Monkton, testified on her behalf.⁶

As we have seen, these kinship networks as often as not encompassed more than one village, and often included York. Where wills for the individuals who appeared in court cases do survive, they reinforce the importance of kinship networks that enjoyed a relatively broad geographical base, with participants in court cases displaying a particularly marked tendency to name to name kin who lived elsewhere. When compared with the testamentary evidence, actions recorded in deeds and civic records also display the fundamental importance of kin-based support networks often extending through more than one vill. To name one example, the Dressours of Bolton Percy were recorded as being involved in a dispute with one another in the House Books in 1483. Over a decade earlier, a Dressour/Drissur of Catterton named family members in his will and left bequests to the parish church of Bolton Percy and Nun Appleton, as well as Healaugh and Tadcaster in 1471.⁷

In terms of marital networks, geographical exogamy involving long distances was more likely to play a part in the cause papers than the testamentary evidence, especially in the case of the men and women who migrated from Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. Maddern's explorations of the interaction

⁶ BIHR, CP.E.238 (1398-99).

⁷ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 174r.

between geographical mobility and ‘serial monogamy’ are highly relevant here. Exogamy at a localized level was present in both sources, in addition to details contained in the Inquisitions *post mortem* and the records of land transactions. When exogamy involved members of the local gentry or substantial peasants, motives must have differed from those of lesser individuals: alliance-making and land acquisition played a greater role in marital decisions, but elite and non-elite alike married individuals from York and smaller towns like Tadcaster.

The importance of the symbolic and real capital of kinship for the more elite residents of the Ainsty (as elsewhere in medieval England and continental Europe) can be seen in the recurrence of the same forename down through several generations, and even centuries. Miles Wilstrop, Alan de Catterton and Alan de Folifoot, all discussed in the previous chapter, provide typical examples. The Brocket family, as we have seen, was a longstanding, well-to-do and residentially stable Ainsty family below the level of the gentry. The status of the Brockets had, however, increased to the point where their members were being referred to as esquires by the fifteenth century, and contacts with York increased correspondingly. They appear in probate evidence as well as the Inquisitions *post mortem*, deeds and civic records.⁸

The probate records, civic records and deeds reveal the Brockets’ connections with another well-established family in the vicinity, the Sampsons. The two families were related by marriage in the second half of the fifteenth century, when ‘Thomas Broket, esquire, son and heir of Thomas Broket and Dionisia, his wife, daughter of William Sampson, late of Appulton, esquire’ released lands in Acaster Selby to a clerk, Robert Stillyngton.⁹ It may be recalled that the cleric John Stillyngton of Acaster Selby had earlier been involved as a witness in a tithe dispute in Acaster Malbis. The Sampsons, too, acted as witnesses to multiple deeds related to land in Acaster Malbis.¹⁰ On the other hand, William Sampson acted with three others, including a couple, William and Cecily Cerf, to

⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 76; Prob. Reg. 7, fo. 60; *CIPM XV*, p. 352; Brown (ed.), *Yorkshire Deeds*, Vol. I, p. 5.

⁹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds I*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, pp. 1-4.

intrude onto the lands of the late John Chaumont in Steeton and Appleton and became squatters in 1384.¹¹

The household as an activity field has been more elusive than kinship and marriage in most of the records examined in this thesis. The household provided sites of sociability in the proofs of age and cause paper depositions. This was not unique to the Ainsty or the hinterland of York, as Goldberg, Rosenthal and others have shown, but it is worth re-emphasizing that these households were scattered over a relatively considerable geographical area, including villages outside the Ainsty and in York. It could be said that the certain aspects of the sociability of the household actually encouraged travel. Gentle households appear frequently in the Inquisitions *post mortem* throughout the country, and the Ainsty is no exception.¹² They provided sites of and foci for mobility, as expectant fathers instructed servants (later witnesses) to alert peers or fetch godparents from their own households, including religious houses. Other officials were in the midst of conducting business in the lord's household at the time of the birth. Following the birth of John, son and heir of Miles de Stapleton at Wighill in 1399, the witness John Lyle seems to have been aware that John Depeden, lord of Healaugh, was to travel to Wighill to act as a godparent, so Lyle was waiting there with Robert Mauleverer to speak to him about other business.¹³ Employees and officials became temporary members of households, whether of their own masters or their masters' friends and associates. Wills and cause papers show that life cycle and devotion prompted people to move households, but they still retained ties with the old. The household, nonetheless, remained a site of sociability.

Neighbourhood, Landholding and Occupation

The influence of proximity in social behaviour in the Ainsty emerges strongly in nearly all types of documents. The poll tax returns made suggestions about the structure of neighbourhoods; the presence of kin, substantial landholders, practitioners of the same craft, and servants within a circumscribed area. Wills and probate inventories provide a glimpse of how testators thought about and interacted

¹¹ *CIPM XVI*, p. 42. Significantly, all three of these families, Sampson, Cerf and Chaumont, had provided York mayors in the thirteenth century, and the Stillingtons too had York origins.

¹² Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 55-7.

¹³ Kirby and Stevenson (eds.), *CIPM XXI*, p. 226.

with both these neighbours and those from further away. The deeds and cartularies emphasize the importance of neighbourhood ties in an even more overt way than in the probate records, as the witnesses who were neighbours were clearly identified as such, as when William de Hornington, clerk, granted land to Robert de Harewode and his daughter Agnes in the late thirteenth century. The land lay between that of Simon de Wakefield and William Sytay, and Simon was one of four witnesses.¹⁴

The details and depositions from both the cause papers and proof-of-age inquests add to the picture. Richard Clerk of Acomb was undertaking the pastoral care of the inhabitants of his village when he was accused of murder; Joan Ingoly and her sister were servants together in households in the same vill. Many of these cases involved York. The city injected itself into these social networks, as when William Scargill of York came up against a cluster of servants from Moor Monkton testifying on behalf of his opponent, Alice, daughter of Robert del Parke of Moor Monkton.¹⁵ Similarly, the influence of neighbourhood is not always as obvious in the Sheriffs' Court Books or even the House Books, as these mainly recorded interactions involving York inhabitants, although exceptions were discussed in the previous chapter.

The following examples demonstrate the importance of neighbourhood and proximity in networks that crossed the western borders of the Ainsty. In their own way, these areas created a focus for social interaction only slightly more muted than that generated by York itself. The relationship between the Wilstrops of Wilstrop and the Banks of Whixley (northwest of Wilstrop, outside the Ainsty), as we saw in the previous chapter's discussion of land transactions, endured for more than a generation. Beyond the fact that the two kinship groups engaged in land-related business together, supported by members of their respective families, multiplexity and interactions based on trust may be discerned in the will of Alice Banke.¹⁶ In 1432, this widow, residing at Syningthwaite Priory, requested burial next to her late husband in the parish church of Whixley. Despite the fact that she had several surviving male kin who were of age during these years, Alice named

¹⁴ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds II*, p. 81.

¹⁵ BIHR, CP.E.238 (1398-99).

¹⁶ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fos. 360v-361r.

William Wilstrop and Thomas Quarf as her executors. Moreover, in their pre-mortem land dealings, the Banks and Wilstrops were not always on opposing ends of the transaction. In 1439, Richard Bank, George Willesthorpe and Thomas Quarf (perhaps the same Thomas Quarf who acted as an executor for Alice Banke) received a grant from Henry Willesthorpe, rector of the church of Brafferton.¹⁷ To illustrate further the density of this network, both the Wilstrops and the Banks associated with William Thwaite of Marston and Henry Melton in grants of land in Wilstrop and Moor Monkton.¹⁸ A Gell from Wilstrop also makes an appearance in this grant. Ralph Gell was related by marriage to the Wilstrops, and we have seen that they were prominent in the probate records of nearby Moor Monkton and Long Marston.

John Tomlinson also appeared as a witness alongside Thomas Bank and Henry Melton to a grant of land in the vill of Tockwith from John de Wiuelsthorp to Richard Bank of Whixley in 1413-14 and later witnessed a demise of the same land by William Wilstrop to John Banx six years later.¹⁹ The Tomlinsons of Tockwith, unlike the Wilstrops, make a showing in the probate evidence later in the fifteenth century. While none of the three testaments makes any mention of members of the Bank or Wilstrop families, they do demonstrate connections to individuals living to the west of the Ainsty, as when Alice Tomlinson made a bequest to the wife of John de Jakson of Hunsingore and to John de Jakson himself in 1438.²⁰ William Tomlinson, Alice's husband, had earlier appeared in the church court Act Books engaged in a transaction with a man from Cowthorpe, right next to Hunsingore.²¹ This relationship seems more likely to have been uniplex and of short duration, and, unlike the association with the Jaksons, was not commemorated in any of the Tomlinson wills.

Kinship, occupation and neighbourhood figured significantly in the Tomlinson's social networks. Landholding played a part in their interactions with the Banks and Wilstrops; the field involved lay in a section of Tockwith bordering Wilstrop itself. As we saw in Chapter Two, the shared occupation of brewing led

¹⁷ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds Vol. VII*, pp. 180-81.

¹⁸ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds Vol. VII*, pp. 164, 180-81.

¹⁹ Clay (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds Vol. VII*, p. 164.

²⁰ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

²¹ BIHR, Cons.AB.3, fo. 33r.

Alice Tomlinson to remember in her will a number of people, mainly women, beyond Tockwith's borders by bequeathing to them raw materials and equipment for brewing. While the Tomlinson's social and occupational horizons in the records seem to have concentrated along the western borders of the Ainsty, Richard Bank of Whixley associated not only with individuals from this area, but also with York inhabitants. In the fifteenth century, the executors of a York gentleman, Robert Calverley, demanded payment of 20s owed by Bank.²²

Examining a number of records together hints at continuity of names and families within a neighbourhood or vicinity. William Barker of Tadcaster and his wife Agnes, the heir of Nicholas de Herdeslaw, quitclaimed land in Hagandby to Healaugh Park Priory in 1331. An inquisition associated with the quitclaim noted that John de Saltmarsh had 'hindered' (*impedivit*) the Priory's use of a fishery on the river Wharfe in 1327.²³ A few generations later in 1403, another William Barker of Tadcaster left a richly detailed will.²⁴ The testament included a bequest of a gown that had been the corrody of Walter Talboys to another John Saltmarsh. Although it is impossible definitively to say that the Barkers and Saltmarshes of the early fifteenth century were direct descendants of those mentioned in the quitclaim, the association does suggest the possibility of another connection between families living or holding land in the same vicinity in the hinterland, in this case one that endured the upheaval associated with the Black Death. A William Barker appears in the 1379 poll tax returns for Tadcaster as a comparatively wealthy innkeeper (*Hostiler*) assessed with his wife at 18d, while a John Saltmarsh appears further down the list, assessed with his wife at the minimum 4d.²⁵ These men can probably be equated with the testator and legatee in the 1403 will.

The fact that many of the individuals and families (such as Brocket, Sampson and Banks, etc.) involved in property transactions and who appear in other records were prosperous and residentially stable meant that they were well known in their neighbourhoods and vicinities, which enabled them to conduct more

²² Stell (ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 379.

²³ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 170.

²⁴ BIHR, D/C Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 134.

²⁵ '1379 Poll Tax', *YAJ* 6: 142. Interestingly most of the men (and one woman) listed as beneficiaries in Barker's will do not appear in the Tadcaster 1379 tax returns, which may indicate either that they moved to Tadcaster in the intervening period, or, of course, that they were from other unnamed locations.

business, especially in York. Kinship seems to have been important to some business relationships, especially when relatives acted as sureties for debt, but the significance of business relationships for maintaining and modifying kin ties is less clear. Frequency and duration of interaction, as well as transactional content and directional flow, may provide some hints, but more research is needed.

Shared occupation and employer/employee relationships were also a fertile field for Ainsty social networks, although not, perhaps, as significant as the influence of sheer proximity. Unlike relationships involving trade and retail, associations involving a craft (other than brewing) do not seem to have been as common in the Ainsty in any type of record. In deeds involving Ainsty property, witnesses who were identified as belonging to a trade did not necessarily act with or for other members of the same or related trades. This differs from the situation that obtained within the city, where men frequently supported fellow practitioners of their craft. However, cases in the *House Books* and Sheriffs' records do flag up the importance of occupation (and kinship), particularly in cases involving debt. Shared occupation and neighbourhood were also more visible than employer/employee relationships in the wills, given the large number of husbandmen and their family members associating as witnesses, legatees and executors.

Some historians have observed that the increasing use of credit in the late medieval west, what some have termed the 'culture of credit and debt', facilitated relationships between people who would not ordinarily associate.²⁶ While this theory applies to the Ainsty in some cases, there are instances of creditor-debtor relationships that can be shown through record linkage to be multiplex, with a degree of frequency and duration of interaction. Credit-debt relationships between York and the Ainsty were frequent and dynamic throughout the period, as demonstrated by Chancery's Certificates of Statute Merchant, the Sheriffs' *Court Books*, the *House Books*, the *Memorandum Books*, and the probate records. In the Certificates of Statute Merchant, Henry de Cruce of Catterton had involvement with York. Cruce also appears in multiple records of land transactions in several areas of the Ainsty. Closer to York, John Kendale of Dringhouses owed 12d to the

²⁶ Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies*, pp. 27, 66, 204.

York butcher Thomas Taillour, but he was trusted enough to have a mainprise, William Caton, and to be chosen as a witness, along with three other men, to the testament of husbandman Henry Wright of Dringhouses in 1478-1479.²⁷

Acaster Malbis provides further cases of credit-debt relationships between that vill and York. Richard Junkyn, a shipman of York with longstanding ties to the Ainsty, appeared in the Sheriffs' *Court Books* as owing a debt of 11s to the widow of a York shipman.²⁸ The *Court Books* thus enlarge the view of the very dense and multiplex (but largely insular) networks in the probate records for Acaster Malbis by demonstrating involvement with the city. The deeds relating to Acaster Malbis show members of the Junkyn/Jowkyn family witnessing and participating in land transactions both within the vill and with York individuals. By the sixteenth century, at least one Jowkyn had moved to York; Richard Jounkyn, shipman, released land in Acaster Malbis to a female relative and her husband, John Tankerd.²⁹

The deeds and Ancient Petitions of fifteenth-century Acaster Malbis manage to enhance the impression of a rurally-focused society by recording peasant interactions with the gentry, while simultaneously showing that the very same gentry was eager for its tenants to enjoy economic privileges in their interactions with York. An incident featured in a parliamentary petition of 1404 wherein local worthies, including various members of the prominent Fairfax family, as well as the Thwaites of Marston and the Dayvills of Bilton, joined forces with Richard Fairfax to recover lands held in Acaster Malbis by Isabel, widow of Richard Malbis of Acaster Malbis. Several men whose relatives later appear in the probate records are thus linked to Isabel Malbis, and through her, to the rest of local gentry society, through the mental communities of reciprocal lord-tenant relationships, legal action, and the 'fear of death' they felt after experiencing the assault and intimidation of Fairfax and his men.³⁰ Half a century later, Henry Gascoigne, who held lands in Naburn of William Fairfax as part of the manor of

²⁷ Stell (ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 153; BIHR, Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 137v.

²⁸ Stell (ed.), *Sheriffs' Court Books*, p. 13.

²⁹ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds Vol. II*, p. 4. For testamentary connections between the Jowkyns and the Tankerds, see Chapter Two.

³⁰ W. Paley Baildon, 'Acaster Malbis and the Fairfax Family', *YAJ* 19 (1907): 22-23.

Acaster, which was in turn part of the honour of Eye, provided evidence to civic officials to show why his tenants should not have to pay tolls in York.³¹

The Parish and Beyond: Devotion and Piety

With the exception of the probate records, the documents do not foreground devotion as an overt factor in social networks, although it doubtless permeated everything. Even in testaments, bequests were often left to an ecclesiastical institution or building rather than to individuals other than the parish priest. Similarly, in pre-mortem land transactions involving the estates of religious houses, it is not clear that shared devotional sensibilities were the primary factor in the ensuing interactions. The seigniorial and landholding topography helped define the land and parties involved, including the witnesses.

Identity clauses in the deeds and cartularies tend not to use a person's parish so the parish emerges more strongly in wills and depositions, where use of the parish as a means to identify the testator, litigant or witness was more common. At the major milestones of the lifecycle, people identified with the parish. Similarly, although the parish does not seem to figure explicitly as an activity field for Ainsty social relations in some of the other types of documents, such as the Sheriffs' court records or the *House Books*, the importance of the parish was always implicit, acting as a backdrop for interaction. The meeting of the 'men of the Ainsty' recorded in the *House Books* was political and military in purpose, but it took place in the parish church of Bilton. The depositions in proofs of age include many examples of social interactions (beyond the normal life-cycle events like baptisms, marriages and funerals) taking place in the parish church, including Henry de Gellisthorpe 'taking leave of his neighbours' in the parish church of Bolton Percy.³²

This having been said, baptism, marriages and funerals were social events. We have already seen the many testaments that included provision for refreshment for friends and neighbours. Such scenes were typical of what Rosenthal found

³¹ Percy (ed.), *York Memorandum Book III*, pp. 198-200.

³² Interestingly, Gellisthorpe apparently did not include Margaret Chaumont's godparents amongst the neighbours he had come to see: he merely saw them at the font as he was interacting with others.

throughout England, and therefore cannot be said to be unique to the hinterland.³³ The purpose of these documents obviously contributed a great deal to the foregrounding of the parish as an activity field, as baptisms represented one of the first times an heir or heiress appeared in public, and was a simple and socially and legally accepted device for fixing the memory of the date of birth. The same principle applied in tithe disputes in the ecclesiastical court. The probate evidence and depositions in the cause papers and proof-of-age inquests show that the parish church facilitated relationships between people of different socio-economic status.

The parish seems almost as important in marriage cases. Although marriage solemnizations took place in a parish church, they brought together members of different parishes, including the wedding guests. However, it was still a religious ceremony, part of the Christian lifecycle. In the case of solemnized marriages, the parish church, the centre of the parish itself, acted as a focus for sociability. However, as we have seen, particularly from the cause paper depositions, the household was also likely to provide a setting for a marriage contract and its associated ritual and social interactions.

The most visible way in which piety acted as an activity field for social interaction in the records was by indicating/creating 'magnets'/foci for devotion: places that enjoyed the shared patronage of individuals through pre- and post-mortem grants. Devotion as a field for social relations was revealed most strikingly through the testamentary evidence and deeds. Those who left bequests to religious houses could be seen as part of a community with others who did as well. These were sometimes neighbours, sometimes not. As we saw in Chapter Two, Ainsty inhabitants remembered York religious houses in their wills as a matter of course. A fairly cursory sample of wills from the wapentakes of Ouse and Derwent to the east of York and Buckrose to the north revealed a similar loyalty to the city. Ainsty testators also tended to remember ecclesiastical institutions to the north and west of the wapentake, such as Knaresborough, but rarely made bequests to bodies to the east of York, like Beverley Minster.

In the case of William Barker of Tadcaster, his 1403 will demonstrates that he strongly associated himself with the religious institutions of Tadcaster itself, a

³³ Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. 16-35.

town in its own right that had the potential to detract devotional attention from York. The influence of, and his devotion to, York, however, was woven through Barker's bequests, particularly the 'shyppfull' of stone quarried from Tadcaster for the fabric of the Minster, or the corrody gown from York bequeathed to John Saltmarsh of Tadcaster. He also left bequests to the altar and guild of St Katherine, a particularly popular saint in the Ainsty as well as in Tadcaster.³⁴ These bequests physically and symbolically linked Tadcaster to York and encompassed the Ainsty and its inhabitants in their web. Ainsty religious sites were more closely identified with Tadcaster than York in other contexts as well. An Anglo-Norman letter of warrant sent from John, duke of Lancaster, in 1363 and copied into Healaugh Priory's cartulary refers to the '*Priour et couvent del Park de Helagh juxt Tadcastre*'.³⁵ Thus, both the probate registers and the land transactions inscribed into cartularies linked Ainsty religious sites with a network of surrounding territories marked by complex patterns of tenure, parochial structure and loyalties, and sometimes with York itself.

The choice of burial and bequests demonstrated the usual loyalty to the parish church, but also to the people, particularly the clerics, associated with that parish. Unless otherwise specified, it is probable that the witnesses to testaments were members of the same community, and thus parish, of the testator. In cases where a great deal of interaction occurred between members of neighbouring communities, those communities were as often as not part of the same parish.

Parishes in the Ainsty were of such a size that they provided a feasible focus for religious and social loyalty, unlike some of the larger, more ungainly parishes of, for example, the West Riding.³⁶ As we saw in Chapter One, several Ainsty parishes encompassed two or three vills. However, 'knots of sociability'

³⁴ Other testators from Tadcaster, including Robert Hardy, a carpenter who died in 1428, behaved in a similar manner, demonstrating a devotion to Healaugh Park Prior in particular. BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 528v. Several Hardies and their servants appear in the 1379 poll tax returns for Tadcaster.

³⁵ Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*, p. 154.

³⁶ D.M. Palliser, 'Introduction: The Parish in Perspective', in S.J. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350-1750* (London, 1988), p. 6; G. Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild in the Late Middle Ages', in S.J. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion, 1350-1750* (London, 1988), pp. 29-35; K.L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 20-5.

also encompassed adjacent villages that did not belong to the same parish.³⁷ While still demonstrating a connection with the home parish, many people also accommodated other religious foci in their devotional network, choosing specific chapels to commemorate, both within and outside their own parish, as when Thomas Clough of Catterton named Bilbrough chapel.³⁸ In the case of vowesses, almost always widows, devotion encouraged them to move, although still within the locality. These women frequently continued to foster ties with their old homes (e.g. we have seen the cases of Alice Banke of Whixley and Syningthwaite, Alice Thwaite of Moor Monkton and Nun Appleton).

It is a testament to the multiplexity of late medieval society in general that it is sometimes difficult to separate 'parish' from 'neighbourhood' when it comes to social interaction.³⁹ Evidently, people at least occasionally thought in terms of 'neighbour rather than 'co-parishioner', as when Henry de Gellisthorpe bid goodbye to his neighbours in the parish church of Bolton Percy. Henry de Gellisthorpe (it is unclear whether this was the same man) also witnessed deeds in Marston during the first half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁰ A different Henry de Gellisthorpe left a will in 1389, requesting to be buried in the Church of All Saints of Hutton Wandesely, rather than the parish church of Marston itself.⁴¹ However, while 'neighbours' witnessed deeds and testaments, 'co-parishioners' testified in tithe disputes before the ecclesiastical courts.

There is little that made the significance of the parish as an activity field unique to the hinterland, except when detached rural portions of urban parishes were involved. This meant, of course, that co-parishioners were not always literal neighbours. Ainsty inhabitants who were members of York parishes showed no less enthusiasm in supporting their parish churches. I have come across only one instance of a petition by an Ainsty chapelry, that of Walton, to separate from the parish church or be accorded burial rights, as was evidently more common in the

³⁷ For the idea of vicinities as 'knots of sociability', see Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies*, pp. 100, 212.

³⁸ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 4, fo. 173.

³⁹ Palliser, 'The Parish in Perspective', p. 8; Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild', pp. 33-5.

⁴⁰ *Yorks. Deeds, II*, p. 118.

⁴¹ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 1, fo. 41. The patent rolls record that the advowson of Hutton Wandesley belonged to the priory by 1335. Healaugh Priory also held the church of Wighill and the church of Healaugh itself. Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, pp. 22-23, 228.

wapentake of Ouse and Derwent. There were strong ties between these detached parts of city parishes and York in general, beyond the mother parish. It is worth suggesting that perhaps, if there was a 'hinterland identity', it was most strongly felt by those whose parish churches were in York. The connections in the civic records with Micklegate and Bishophill also suggest loyalty to York parishes and neighbourhoods associated with the Ainsty.

The multifaceted nature of late medieval piety of course also meant that places *outside* the testator's parish became magnets for devotional bequests, and these bequests might indicate social ties with the location. Ainsty inhabitants also made bequests to and participated in land transactions with religious houses in their parish, but also in their neighbourhood or vicinity, not necessarily within the parish bounds. The parish also provided a focus for gild participation, as we saw with bequests to lights to St Katherine and the occasional bequest to York guilds in Ainsty testaments, but the evidence for this is muted. Palliser has maintained that these other foci of devotional loyalty 'complemented rather than competed with' the parish.⁴² Loyalties based on boundaries other than the parish also played a part in the devotional landscape of the hinterland. The attachment to St Leonard's Hospital by the inhabitants of Rufforth, part of the hospital's liberty, provides an example. In this case, the object of devotion was linked to the township of Rufforth through jurisdictional rather than strictly parochial ties. That having been said, Rufforth was itself a parish town that happened to lie within St Leonard's peculiar jurisdiction.

The importance of social ties with members of the clergy is evident in the probate evidence, cause papers and deeds. These relationships, like those with fellow laity, did not always fall within parish boundaries. Some clerks mentioned in wills and deeds were from York, but more often came from the same or neighbouring vills. Occupational solidarity may be seen working alongside piety in the case of William, the vicar of the parish church of Bilton, who named Richard Ottelay, the chaplain of Marston, as the primary witness to his testament in 1418.⁴³ Ottelay's presence as a witness was evidently important to William, as it was mentioned first in the document, in contrast to the usual format of listing witnesses

⁴² Palliser, 'Parish in Perspective', p. 12.

⁴³ BIHR, Prob. Reg. 3, fo. 611.

last. Here, ties fostered if not created through work and religious fellowship, crossed parish boundaries, although the two men still followed the tendency to associate with those who lived and worked within very much the same vicinity. In fact, Marston and Bilton were both located on opposite sides of the vital York-Wetherby road, with Marston slightly closer to York.

Mobility, Migration and Localisation in the Hinterland

What activity fields were most important for mobility? Mobility was exceedingly common, with permanent migration slightly less so. In the sources I have examined, I have found only a little evidence of long distance migration to or away from the Ainsty. As is to be expected, most of the longer distance migrants that do appear were from other areas of Yorkshire, although Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire also figured in migration. Although we cannot know the original motive for migration, these long distance cases ultimately resulted in a marriage and the forging, through that marriage, of local ties in and around the destination village. Significantly, these were areas where York ecclesiastical bodies, including the archbishop and the dean and chapter, enjoyed jurisdiction. The archiepiscopal estate was therefore an important influence in movement and interactions involving the Ainsty. Further suggestions of long distance migration are contained in surname evidence, as when Ellen Caumbridge opposed banns between John Wod of Acaster Malbis and Joan Watson in 1485.⁴⁴ As mentioned before, longer distance migrants tended to figure in the cause paper depositions rather than in testaments.

Most migration was extremely localized, and although York certainly played a part in drawing migrants, the influence of the city in drawing permanent migrants was not as visible in the records of the Ainsty as I had surmised it would be when I began this study. In addition to the cause papers, the Inquisitions *post mortem* and deeds contain examples of localized migration, mainly within the Ainsty itself. Landholding and occupation tended to foster mobility rather than migration, but these factors nonetheless extended the horizons of social networks. Postles and other researchers have discussed migration within and between pays.

⁴⁴ BIHR, Cons.AB.4, fo. 44r.

As we saw in chapter one, the flat, river basin terrain of the Ainsty means that it was a kind of pays, different to the East Riding and the land west of the ridge of Magnesian limestone in the West Riding. Migration involving the Ainsty was localized and ‘circumscribed’, and therefore in keeping with ideas about localized migration reinforcing local customs.⁴⁵

This thesis confirms for the local gentry of the Ainsty gentry what other recent studies have confirmed for gentry in other counties from the thirteenth through to the sixteenth centuries: both horizontal and vertical ties were quite local, but frequently encompassed York—as did those of their social inferiors.⁴⁶ We saw that Robert the cook of Airmynin the West Riding granted an acre of meadow in Acaster Malbis to the knightly landholder in that vill, Richard Malbis.⁴⁷ Incidentally, this meadow neighboured that of ‘Jukyn’, that family that is so ubiquitous in Acaster Malbis documents. John Marshall, husbandman of Copmanthorpe was arrested at the suit of Roger Hyrd in 1483.⁴⁸ This may well be the same John Marshall who was a beneficiary of the will of William Acomb, husbandman of Acaster Malbis in 1461, and whose father Thomas was Acomb’s executor.

Their networks may have been dense and multiplex, but they were not restricted to the village. Certainly contact with people who lived within a few miles of one another was more common and social horizons were localized, but there were still instances of interactions between people from opposite ends of the Ainsty. In contrast, people rarely appeared in the records engaging with inhabitants of the hinterland on the other side of York, in the wapentake of Ouse and Derwent, for example, unless they lived in those sections of the Ainsty that actually bordered on the other wapentakes. This would suggest that York, to some extent, ‘got in the way’, and that the city understandably provided a greater focus for and influence on social relations than those vills that Ainsty inhabitants would have had to cross

⁴⁵ Postles, *Social Geographies*, p. 62.

⁴⁶ C. Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community in Medieval England’, *Journal of British Studies* 33:4 (1994): 371-5; A. Polden, ‘The Social Networks of the Buckinghamshire Gentry in the Thirteenth Century’, *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006): 371-94; R.M. Smith, ‘Kin and Neighbours in a thirteenth-century Suffolk community’, *Journal of Family History* Fall (1979): 219-56.

⁴⁷ Brown (ed.), *Yorks. Deeds I*, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Attreed (ed.), *House Books II*, p. 716.

York to reach. The exception was, of course, the gentry, as when the Ughtred family of Steeton and Moor Monkton also held land in Harthill wapentake in the East Riding.

Beyond some examples of ‘serial monogamy’ in the cause papers, mobility in the wake of the Black Death did not visibly reduce social cohesion in the Ainsty. If anything, networks appear denser in the late fifteenth century. Although, for example, the *York House Books* recorded numerous complaints against violations of the Statute of Labourers, I have been able to trace none of the individuals involved to the Ainsty. Perhaps movement back and forth between city and hinterland was so common that anxiety due to the population drain on villages resulting from rural-urban migration was not strongly experienced. If such symptoms of social dislocation were recorded for the Ainsty, they seem not to have survived.

The Significance of the Hinterland and Relations with York

Even if direct evidence of high levels of migration to York was elusive, it is difficult to deny the influence of York’s presence on the interactions of those living outside its walls. When John Webster of Acaster Selby illegally collected, transported and sold the coppice wood of Ryther, it would be easy to surmise that York contributed to at least some of the demand. What activity fields were the most important for determining the frequency, duration and character of urban-rural relations? Socio-economic status and landholding played a role. The wealthy and residentially stable were just as likely to be in contact with York inhabitants as life-cycle servants, through the land market, supplying York markets for consumables, consuming goods finished in York, and through marriage and kinship. Activities in the land market and marriage could go hand in hand, tending to result in relationships of longer duration, while other types of business tended to be frequent but uniplex, such as creditor-debtor relations.

The tension between city and hinterland that reared up from time to time in the documents should be reiterated. This seemed less significant in the probate evidence than in the cause papers and civic documents, but the nature of the latter documents, of course, often involved the recording of some form of conflict. One of the recurring themes throughout the chapters of this thesis has been the importance of identities in the Ainsty. Labels used by inhabitants and the scribes

and officials who compiled records provide a visible way to discern how people imagined themselves and the places and spaces they inhabited, but it is, of course, a method that has its pitfalls. How does one determine the relative agency of the Ainsty dweller as opposed to the makers of their documents in deciding the terms used? Daniel Lord Smail has maintained that record makers identifying places used language similar to ‘folk classifications’ familiar to laypeople,⁴⁹ but the situation is complicated by the related issue of how the Ainsty is described in Latin, Anglo-Norman and English and how descriptions vary in different types of sources, possibly represented different but often overlapping ‘linguistic and knowledge communities’.⁵⁰

As we have seen, some villis, such as Bilton and Hutton Wandesley, were more likely to be labelled as ‘in Ainsty’ as opposed to ‘next to York’, or, after 1449, ‘in the county of the city of York’. The latter method of identification often appears in the Inquisitions *post mortem* of the fifteenth century. Latin records of land transactions, including those collected into the cartularies for Healaugh Priory and the Augustinian cell at Tockwith used the more neutral ‘*in villa de*’ or ‘*in territorio de*’ before the name of the vill in question. A bond for John Chelorer of Acomb to keep the peace recorded in the *House Books* in 1489 doubly indicated Acomb’s ties to York: ‘*iuxta Ebor*’ in *comitatu civitatis Ebor*’.⁵¹

Most wills, on the other hand, continued simply to use the unmodified name of the vill or parish in their identity clauses rather than adopting a closer identity with York, even after 1449. All testaments and probate administrations from Bishopthorpe, one of the Ainsty villis closest to York, for example, followed this pattern throughout the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Testators from Middlethorpe and Dringhouses, however, evidently identified more closely with York, unsurprising given both the proximity and the fact that Middlethorpe was a detached portion of the York parish of St Mary Bishophill Sr. The Dringhouses identification with York was evident both before and after the mid-fifteenth century, with John Rawcliffe identifying himself as ‘*de drynghouse*’ *iuxta Ebor*’

⁴⁹ Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies*, p. xii.

⁵⁰ Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies*.

⁵¹ Attreed (ed.), *House Books Vol. II*, p. 637.

husbandman' and Henry Wright (1478-79) noting that it was '*extra muros civitate Ebor*'.⁵²

Throughout my research for this thesis, one point regarding social relations that has been driven home is that the act of drawing up the documents that form the basis of this study served to maintain, reconstruct, reinvent and even change pre-existing social ties. The act of witnessing was particularly significant, and choice of witnesses was informed by virtually all activity fields: kin, neighbours, colleagues and parish clergy acted as witnesses. To be sure, this argument may well be circular, as the functions of the documents required that certain types of people act as witnesses, but the choice of witnesses almost always reflected actual existing social dynamics. In fact, the law in itself could be said to be one of the most important, all-encompassing activity fields in this thesis. People engaged with the law, and in doing so engaged with one another, whether their interactions related to family, work, or church. The nuances and complexities of the law, as with the nuances and complexities of human personalities, has meant that it has been difficult to pin down set patterns of social behaviour distinctive to the hinterland. An infinite variety of influences and situations conspired to produce an intriguing mixture of behaviours that have heretofore been seen as stereotypically urban or rural. The people of the Ainsty existed geographically in a rural area, but socially in a world that incorporated York and its inhabitants as a matter of course.

⁵² BIHR, Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 524 and Prob. Reg. 5, fo. 137v.

APPENDIX ONE: AINSTY SETTLEMENT NOTES

Sources: T. Langdale, *Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire; Containing the Names of All the Towns, Villages, Hamlets, Gentlemen's Seats, &c. in the County of York* (Northallerton, 1822), in 'History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, Volumes I & II by Edward Baines, and The Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire, by Thomas Langdale', CD-ROM produced by C. Hinson (2003); G. Lawton, *Collectio Rerum Ecclesiasticarum de Dioecesi Eboracensi; or Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Diocese of York to Which Are Added Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Diocese of Ripon* (London, 1842); ; J.V. Lyle (ed.), *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids; with other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office. 1284-1431, Vol. VI, York and Additions* (London, 1920); C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381. Part 3 Wiltshire-Yorkshire* (Oxford, 2005); *CIPM; Yorkshire Deeds*, Vols. 1-3, 5-9, YASRS 39, 50, 58, 69, 76, 83, 102, 111(1907-46); J.S. Purvis (ed.), *The Chartulary of the Augustinian Priory of St. John the Evangelist of the Park of Healaugh*, YASRS 92 (1936); M.W. Beresford, 'The Lost Villages of Yorkshire Part III', *YAJ* 38 (1953); W. Paley Baildon, 'Acaster Malbis and the Fairfax Family', *YAJ* 19 (1907); M.J. Harrison, *Four Ainsty Townships: the History of Bolton Percy, Appleton Roebuck, Colton and Steeton, 1066-1875* (York, 2000); *eadem*, *The History of Acaster Selby in the Parish of Stillingfleet 1066-1875* (York, 2003); English Heritage, PastScape (<http://www.pastscape.org>) ; C. Hinson, GENUKI (<http://www.genuki.org.uk>)

- **Acaster Malbis, parish town:** Position: Bishopthorpe to the north; Naburn to the east; Copmanthorpe to the northwest; Colton to the southwest. Also close to Dringhouses. Part in Ainsty, part in wapentake of Ouse and Derwent. Lawton's *Collectio*: Church = Holy Trinity (perpetual curacy/discharged vicarage). Malbis appropriated to Abbey of Newburgh. Vicarage ordained 1348. Pope Nicholas's Taxation: £26 13s.4d. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: tenures and services unknown. Baildon, 'Acaster Malbis and the Fairfax family': cadet of Fairfax of Walton married Malbis heiress, acquired land here in the late-fourteenth-fifteenth centuries; took name of Malbis. *CIPM*, Vol. XX, p. 135: Land held by Malbis and Beckwith of Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, as part of Honour of Eye, in 1415. Vol. XXI, p. 85: widow of de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, held fee in Acaster Malbis and Acomb (correct Acomb? One entry mentions Acomb in Cleveland) as part of Honour of Eye in 1419—part held by Malbis, part held by Beckwith.
 - **Naburn:** Position: 4 miles south of York. Part in parish of Acaster Malbis, but some land in Acaster Selby. Lawton's *Collectio*: Listed under St Dennis and St George, Fishergate, which was rectory patronized by Palmes of Naburn and Malbis of Acaster Malbis. St George appropriated to Nun Monkton, vicarage ordained, in late fourteenth century. Probate records: connections with pa. St George (Fishergate). VCH York: Naburn's chapel belonged to St George's. Harrison, *Acaster Selby*, pp. 24-5: Naburn linked with chantry chapel in St Helen's Stillingfleet. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Palmes held of Ros.

- **Acaster Selby, pa. Stillingfleet:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Listed with Archdeaconry of Cleveland, Deanery of Bulmer, pp. 458-9. St Mary's Abbey held of Honour of Eye; Nun Appleton held of Sir Joceline D'Arcy. Other vill in parish = Kelfield, Moreby. In Diocese of York, but peculiar of Selby Abbey. Chantries (Moreby and Acclum) in Stillingfleet Church. College in Acaster Selby. *EYC* Vol. I, pp. 426-7: Roger Mowbray granted manor and town to William de Tickhill (York merchant) in 1170s or 1180s when the former went on crusade. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Abbot of Selby, St Mary's Abbey (part of Honour of Eye) and Nun Appleton all held land. *Yorkshire Deeds Vol. I*: Thomas Broket, esq., heir of Broket and daughter of Sampson, esq., released land to clerk Robert Stillyngton (Bishop of Bath and Wells) in 1458. Harrison, *Acaster Selby*, pp. 30-1: College of St Andrew founded by Robert Stillington on this land next to a moated site.
- **Acomb, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Church is peculiar, discharged vicarage, St Stephen. Church belonged to Minster treasurer. Not in Pope Nicholas's taxation. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: not included?
 - **Knapton:** Lawton's *Collectio*: tithes went to St Mary's Abbey prior to Dissolution. Probate Records: Knapton had a chapel. Part in parish of Acomb. St Mary Bishophill Jr and St Mary Castlegate article associates it with the parish of Holy Trinity, Micklegate, also known as St Nicholas (altar). *CIPM*, Vol. XVII, pp. 44-5: William Mowbray (husband of Margaret Chaumont) held manor of Luttrell by knight's service in 1391.
 - **Holgate:** Lawton's *Collectio*: part within St Mary Bishophill, Jr., part within parish of Acomb.
- **Askham Bryan, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Church was St Nicholas. Fee of Mowbray and Fitzallan held town of Honour of Richmond. Healaugh Priory had lands and mill. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: some lands held of Mowbray fee; vill held of Honour of Richmond. *Feudal Aids/1428 Subsidy*: Lord Lovell, Stapleton and Gray. *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 36. John de Sheffield, knight, held some land of the duke of Lancaster/Honour of Richmond in 1370, for money rent. P. 149: Chaumont held some land of Miles de Stapleton of Bedall and John Gray for annual money rent. Vol. XIV, p. 134: John de Grey of Rotherfield held part of manor of John duke of Brittany and earl of Richmond in 1375. Vol. XV, p. 380: Joan Chaumont held land including partial cottage of Stapleton and Grey in 1383. Vol. XVI, p. 221: Robert Grey of Rotherfield held part of manor of Honour of Richmond in 1387-8. Vol. XVIII, p. 37: Stapleton held lands and tenements of Lord Gray of Rotherfield and Stapleton in 1400. Vol. XXI, pp. 72-3: Miles de Stapleton, knight, held half manor of Askham Bryan in 1419. Pp. 100-1: Margaret Cheyne/Mowbray/Chaumont held waste toft/croft of Miles de Stapleton and heirs of Lord Deincourt in 1419. *CIPM*, Henry VII, Vol. I, p. 77: Brian Stapleton, knight, held part of Askham Bryan of William earl of Nottingham (Mowbray) in 1486-7. Details of feoffment and annuity mention Guy Fairfax,

serjeant-at-law, knight and one of the king's justices, Stapleton, knight, Willesthorp, esq. and Pulleyn.

- **Askham Richard, pa. town:** Also known as West Askham. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: some land held of Brus, who held of Mowbray.
- **Bilbrough, pa. town:** Position: close to Colton and Steeton. Lawton's *Collectio*: chapel in parish of Askham Richard? Chapel in Bilbrough with burial rights and chantry founded by Norton in 1492. *CIPM*, Vol. XIX, p. 38: John Ponger held Bilbrough and Moor Monkton by knight's fee and rent in 1405. Vol. XXIII, p. 105: Richard atte Kyrke held land including meadow of William Norton in 1428 for rose rent. Annual value 20s.
- **Bilton, pa. town, Liberty of St Peter:** Links with Healaugh present in probate records. Healaugh Cartulary: land in Bilton given to Healaugh Priory by the Thurets. Between Long Marston and Syningthwaite. English Heritage PastScape website: ridge and furrow field systems visible. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Le Waleys and Vavasour held of Brus, who held of Mowbray.
 - **Bickerton:** *Feudal Aids/ Kirkby's Inquest*: Grammarly held of Mowbray. *CIPM*, Vol. X, p. 67-9: William Grammarly, knight, held of William de la Pole the elder by knight's service in 1354-5. P. 239: Proof of Age of William Grammarly mentions Dayville of Tockwith, Nun Appleton, Brocket, del Hill of Marston, Thorp Arch. Vol. XV, p. 232: c.1382?: Katherine, widow of William de la Pole, held of lord de Mowbray, foreign service. Incl. meadow and wood. Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Mowbray held some land in 1399. English Heritage Pastscape website: site of hall included fishponds. Medieval road leading east from settlement.
 - **Syningthwaite:** GENUKI: extra parochial. Probate records: connections with Whixley. English Heritage PastScape website: Priory was moated site.
 - **Tockwith:** *CIPM*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Metham held land of Mowbray in 1399. Deeds and Cartularies: Connections with Wilstrop, Moor Monkton
- **Bishopthorpe, pa. town:** *CIPM*, Vol. IX, p. 392: Robert Bustard held land of king in chief by fealty and rent in 1350. Tenants at will present. Vol. XX, pp. 161-2: widow of Dayville of Bilton held land in Bishopthorpe in demesne as of fee in 1416. Vol. XXII, p. 86: Clyfton, esquire held land of king in chief.
- **Bolton Percy, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Fairfax chapel in church. Probate Records: Brockett family present.
 - **Appleton (Roebuck):** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Fauconberg and others held of St Mary's Abbey; other land held of Brus, who held of Mowbray. *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 149: Chaumont held 1 bov. of

Fauconberg of Bilton for money rent in 1372. Probate records: Brockett family present.

- **Colton:** *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 149: Chaumont held manor of Miles de Stapleton of Hathelsay and some land of the king in 1372. Vol. XV, p. 380: Joan Chaumont held half manor of Stapleton of Bedale in 1383. Cottages, windmill, meadow, wood. Vol. XXI, pp. 100-1: Margaret Chaumont/Mowbray/Cheyne held manor of Metham, knight, in 1419.
- **Hornington:** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Holme held of Percy, who held of Plumpton, who held of Percy of Spofford. Annual value 10d. *CIPM*, Vol. XV, p. 176: Umfraville held of Ryther by knight's service in 1381. Tenants at will present.
- **Nun Appleton:** Langdale: in parish of Bolton Percy but township of Appleton Roebuck. *CIPM*, Vol. XV, p. 380: Joan Chaumont held land including meadow of Fauconberg, knight, by knight's service in 1383.
- **Paddockthorpe/Pallathorpe:** *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 67: William de Ferraris of Groby, knight, married to widow of Umfravill, held manor of Percy, by fealty in 1371. Vol. XIV, p. 231: Margaret, widow of Robert de Umfravill, knight, held manor of Percy by knight's service in 1376. Vol. XV, p. 176: manor held by Umfraville of earl of Northumberland by knight's service in 1381.
- **Steeton:** Memorandum Books: connections with gentry in Deighton. Roos of Ingmanthorpe and Stapleton. *CIPM*, Vol. XIV, pp. 56-9: Ughtred, knight, held of Thweng in the 1370s. Vol. XIX, p. 61: Plumpton, knight held manor of manor of Spofforth in 1407 after earl of Northumberland's forfeiture. Annual value £9.
- **Bustardthorpe:** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*, p. 14: Bustard held of Lardiner, who held of king; Grey held of Luttrell, who held of king. *CIPM*, Vol. IX, p. 392: Robert Bustard held land of Ralphe de Leeke and John de Withornsee for rent in 1350. Vol. XX, pp. 161-2: widow of Dayville of Bilton held tenement of Thornton in 1416. Called Bustardhall. Vol. XXII, p. 86: Clyfton, esquire held tenement of Thornton in 1420s. Called Bustardhall.
- **Copmanthorpe, pa. St Mary Bishophill, Jr., part in Liberty of St Peter:** Harvey calls it the 'village of the merchants'. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: gift to Templars held by Ros of Trussbut of Mowbray; Malbis held of Brus held of Mowbray. Lawton's *Collectio*: Chapel of ease for St Mary Bishophill Jr.
- **Dringhouses, pa. St Mary Bishophill, Jr., Holy Trinity Micklegate, Acomb, Liberty of St Peter:** Lawton's *Collectio*: part in parish of Acomb. Jurisdiction, some tenements and land belonged to Minster Treasurer. *CIPM*, Vol. X, p. 408: John de Grey of Rotherfield held manor of Holy Trinity Priory for incense or 2d in 1359. Land unsown. Vol. XIV, p. 30: Baron of Graystock held part of manor of count of Aumale in 1370s. Vol. XVI, p. 221: Robert Grey of Rotherfield held manor of Minster Treasurer in 1387-88. Vol. XIX, p. 219:

- widow of Deyncourt, knight, held manor of Prior of Holy Trinity, York, by rent, in 1408. Annual value £18 10s.
- **Haganby:** Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Cartulary*: Granted to the canons; Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III': lost village.
 - **Healaugh, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Priory founded 1218 by Jordan de St. Maria. Church patronized by Waleys family, then Depeden. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: lands held of Mowbray. 1379 poll tax: Brian and Miles de Stapleton, knights, paid largest amount. *Feudal Aids/1428 Subsidy*: John, duke of Bedford and le Waleys mentioned. *CIPM*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Mowbray held land in Healaugh and Folifoot in 1399. *Kings of the North*: Percy Lord Egremont resided at Healaugh in the fifteenth century.
 - **Long Marston, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: All Saints (Rectory), patronage of Creppings family—confusion as to whether this is in Hutton Wandesley. Contained chantry and included cemetery. C. 1400 parishioners granted faculty to remove church closer to their habitations at site of chapel in the parish. Probate evidence: church has a chaplain. *CIPM* Vol. XIII, p. 149: Chaumont held close of Miles de Stapleton of Hathelsay by knight's service in 1372. Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Metham held of Mowbray in 1399.
 - **Angram:** Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III': new vill
 - **Hutton Wandesley:** *CIPM*, Vol. XV: c.1380: John Creppynges, held of heirs of Miles de Stapleton by knight's service. Called 'Hoton by Merston'. Creppynges' brother Simon is heir; Vol. XV, p. 90: land 'uncultivated', 'ruinous' in 1380s. Purvis (ed.), *Healaugh Chartulary*, p. 228: Advowson of church/chapel belongs to Healaugh Park Priory by 1335.
 - **Middlethorpe, pa. St Mary Bishophill, Sr.:** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: land held by Byland Abbey; Selby Abbey, which held of Mowbray; Bustard held of Whitby Abbey, which held of Mowbray, and Bustard also held of Malbis who held of the Honour of Eye. *Feudal Aids/Nomina Villarum*: Byland Abbey. *CIPM*, Vol. IX, p. 392: Robert Bustard held of abbot of Whitby for rent in 1350. Tenants at will present. Nephew surname Friston was heir. Vol. XVI, pp. 392-3: John de Cawode held some land with his late wife (parcelled with land in Fulford and Heslington) in 1390. Vol. XVII, p. 45: William Mowbray (husband of Margaret Chaumont) held some land of the Abbot of Selby in 1391. Vol. XX, pp. 161-2: widow of Dayville of Bilton held tenement of abbot of Whitby in 1416. Vol. XXII, p. 86: Clyfton, esquire, held of abbot of Whitby in 1420s.
 - **Moor Monkton, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Rectory belonged to Ughtreds, knights. Probate records: Thwaites present. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Le Waleys and St Mary's Abbey held of Paynel fee. *CIPM*, Vol. XVI, p. 291: John Neville of Raby, knight, held advowson of church of Miles de Stapleton in late 1380s. Vol. XVII, p. 266: Widow of Wylughby, knight, held advowson of

church of Miles de Stapleton in 1395. Vol. XIX, p. 38: John Pouger held Bilbrough and Moor Monkton by knight's fee and rent in 1405.

- **Hessay:** *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 149: Chaumont, knight, held some land of St Mary's Abbey by fealty in 1372. Vol. XV, p. 380: Joan Chaumont held land including an enclosure of St Mary's for rent in 1383. Vol. XXI, pp. 100-1. Margaret Cheyne/Mowbray/Chaumont held land including meadow of St Mary's Abbey in 1419, annual value 22s. Stapletons also held land here.
- **Scagglethorpe:** Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III': Ughtreds held manor court. Connections with Wilstrop. *Feudal Aids/Nomina Villarum: Ros.* *CIPM*, Vol. XIV, pp. 56-9: Ughtred, knight, held of Thweng in the 1370s.
- **Nether Poppleton, pa. town:** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: St Mary's Abbey held both Upper and Lower Poppleton. *Feudal Aids/Nomina Villarum*: Part of Liberty of St Mary's Abbey
- **Rufforth, pa. town, part in Liberty of St Leonard's Hospital?:** *CIPM*, Henry VII, p. 77: Brian Stapleton, knight, held manor of Thomas Metham, knight, in 1486-7. Feoffment mentions Parre, knight, Pygot, serjeant-at-law, Metcalfe, Middleton, and Stapleton, gentleman.
- **Tadcaster:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Part in Liberty of St Peter. Percys had demesne there. Church of St Mary, altar of St Nicholas had chantry founded by William Barker of Tadcaster 1399.
 - **Catterton:** Healaugh Cartulary: Land (including wood) given to Healaugh Priory. Lawton's *Collectio*: Due to overflowing of Foss, Catterton parishioners had trouble reaching Tadcaster. There was a chapel there. National Archives website: Chancery, Inquisitions *ad quod damnum*, C 143/428/18: John Depeden, knight, and Elizabeth his wife, granted land in Catterton and advowson of Healaugh church to Healaugh Priory in 1397.
 - **Oxton:** *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Marshall held of Percy of Spofford.
 - **Oulston:** Also known as Woulston, Willesden.
- **Thorp Arch, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Vicarage. Brus and Arches gave to St Mary and the Holy Angels at York. Purvis (ed.), Healaugh Cartulary, p. 65: Contained a quarry and road to Wetherby. *CIPM*, Vol. XIII, p. 176: Stapleton of Hathelsay held some land (of the king in chief?) in the 1370s. Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Metham held of Mowbray in 1399. Vol. XXII, p. 201: William Gascoigne, knight, held manor of John Earl Marshall and earl of Nottingham in 1422. Annual value £16. *IPM*, Henry VII, Vol. I, p. 77: Brian Stapleton, knight, held manor of Thomas Metham, knight in 1486-7.

- **Upper Poppleton, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: Chapel associated with St Mary Bishophill Jr. Osbert de Arches gave it to St Mary's Abbey. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: St Mary's Abbey held both Upper and Lower Poppleton. *Feudal Aids/Nomina Villarum*: Liberty of St Mary's Abbey.
- **Walton, now pa. town:** Position: 1.5 miles north of Thorp Arch. Lawton's *Collectio*: Church is St Peter, appropriated to chapel of St Mary and the Holy Angels, also connections with Convent of Monkton. 1369: Convent of Monkton and Sacrist of St Mary and the Holy Angels agreed that chaplain of Chapel of Walton have baptismal and burial rights; in return Monkton paid annual pension to vicar of Thorp Arch, the mother parish church of the chapel. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Bellew and Brus held of Mowbray. Probate evidence: has a chaplain. Connections with Healaugh.
- **Wighill, pa. town:** Lawton's *Collectio*: All Sts. Appropriated to Healaugh Priory. Vicarage had tithes from Easedike and Folifoot. Healaugh Cartulary: Connections with Marston, including marriage, choice of witnesses (p. 30). Rector of Healaugh church had right of pasture in Wighill park in 13th century (p.13). *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Whitchurch and Healaugh Park held of Mowbray. *CIPM*, Vol. IX, pp. 100-1: Whitchurch held manor of Wighill with Easedike of Mowbray by knight's service in 1348. Pasture and parkland. Vol. XVIII, pp. 37-8. Stapleton held manor with Easedike of Mowbray in 1400. Pp. 87-8: Mowbray held Wighill and Easedike in 1399.
 - **Easedike:** Position: near river Wharfe. 1 mile south of Wighill, 2 miles southwest of Healaugh, on the Tadcaster-Wighill road. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: with Wighill. Whitchurch and Healaugh Park held of Mowbray. *CIPM*, Vol. IX: Whitchurch held of Mowbray. Free tenants present. Vol. XVIII, pp. 87-8: Mowbray held Wighill and Easedike in 1399. Probate evidence: Colynson family present in probate records. Connections with Thorp Arch.
 - **(East) Folifoot, pa. Wighill:** Lawton's *Collectio*: *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Folifoot held of Vavasour, who held of Brus, who held of Mowbray. *Feudal Aids/1428 Subsidy*: Fairfax held some land which Alan of Folifoot once held. *CIPM*, Vol. XVII: Mowbray held land in Healaugh and Folifoot in 1399. English Heritage PastScape website: possible moated site: deserted settlement and motte
- **Wilstrop, pa. Kirk Hammerton:** Beresford, 'Lost Villages of Yorkshire III': manorial chapel. Baptism, marriage and burial by parson of Moor Monkton. *Feudal Aids/Kirkby's Inquest*: Pontefract held of Brus who held of Mowbray.

APPENDIX TWO: CHOICE OF EXECUTORS AND SUPERVISORS IN THE AINSTY

Key:

- x = one of these is an executor * = one of these is a supervisor
- @ = one of these is an administrator (of the goods of intestate individuals)
- = = one of these is an executor with the same occupation or status as testator
- ∞ = one of these is an executor who is a neighbour
- ‡ = one of these is an executor from another settlement
- † = one of these is an executor in another category is also a cleric
- ◆ = one of these belongs to a higher status group than the testator
- ¥ = one of these is a relative by marriage
- \$ = one of these is a servant

N.B. Probate Acts, administrations and inventories which do not reveal executors, supervisors or administrators have been highlighted in bold, and have not been included in calculations. Symbols separated by a slash refer to the same person; those separated by a comma refer to 2 or more individuals. When the testator named more than one individual in a particular category (e.g. male relative), this is indicated by a numerical value.

Table 5a. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Acaster Malbis (incl. Naburn)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Fem.
John de Couton (PA), 1401	x							
Matilda Wawne, 1408	x						x	
Richard Broun, 1426							2	
Sybil Malbis (widow, Adm.), 1426		x						
John Moysc, 1430-1					x		x	
William Hurtsky, 1440-1	x				x			
John Fairfax, 1444	x		x					
William Walton, 1459	x							
William Carter, 1460	x							
John Hurtsky, 1460	x	x	*					
William Acomb, 1461	x						=/H	
Thomas Hornsy (vicar), 1465		x						

Testator, date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named male	Other named fem.
Richard Kitson, 1469		x		x			=, x	
Alice Kitson (widow), 1469							2	
William Northfolke (Naburn), 1471		x			x	x		
John Jenkin, 1473	x		x					
John Wilkinson (PA), 1475	x							
John Mawnby, 1483	x	x	x					
Thomas Dobson, 1484	x		x					
William Tankard, 1489			2					
John Bowmer, 1492	x		x					
John Tiler (Adm.), 1495	@							
Roger Radcliffe, 1499					x			

Table 5b. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Acaster Selby

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Richard Colynson (PA), 1462	×							
Thomas Stillington, esq., 1496	×							

Table 5c. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Acomb (incl. Knapton, Holgate)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Alman (PA, Knapton), 1436	×							
Thomas Appleton (Knapton), 1436			×	×				
John Tinworth, 1438-40	×						‡	
John Scott (inv.), 1456							×	
John Hall (inv., Holgate), 1468							×	
Richard Horum (Knapton), 1480	×	×?						
Robert Fernham (Knapton), 1481					†		‡	

Table 5d. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Askham Richard

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Edmund (vicar), 1390		×					×	
William Palmar (vicar), 1433		×					\$	
Sibyl Fox, 1442			×					
Thomas Milner, 1453	×		×					
Agnes Milner (PA), 1455			×			×		
John Carbott (PA), 1456			×					
Robert Gregson (vicar), 1472					×		×	
William Emonson, 1473	×							
William Fox (PA), 1481	×							
John Fox (Adm.), 1491	@							

Table 5e. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Bilbrough

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Richard Bassey, 1393-4	×	×					×	
Richard Saul, 1434	×				×		×	
John Saul, 1441-2	×		×					
John Copestake (PA, don.), 1448			×					
William Norton (Adm.), 1468	@							
Ralph Green, 1474	×	×				×	×, †	
John Norton, esq., 1493-94	×	3	×				2, */♦	

Table 5f. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Bilton (incl. Tockwith, Syningthwaite, Bickerton)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Walour (Tockwith), 1394-97					×		‡	
Adam Fox (PA), 1394	×						×, ‡	
Joan Fox, 1400		‡						
Nicholas Storom (chaplain, Sinningthwaite), 1405		×					×	
Roger Fawden (Adm.), 1427	@				@			
John Brame (Bickerton), 1429	×		×					
William Lowes (vicar), 1432		2						
Alice Banks (Syningthwaite), 1432-3							2	
Peter West (b. Swine), 1435-6	×							
William Tomlinson, 1438					2			
Alice Tomlinson, 1438					2			
Adam Butler (Bickerton), 1439	×				×		*‡?	
Robert Mossdrop, 1447	×		×					
John Firth, 1462	×		2					
Brian Dayville, 1463	×							
Isabelle Hudson (PA), 1466							3	

John Tomlinson, 1466					×		×	
Robert Dayville, 1471-2		2					*	
Elizabeth Dayville, 1472-3					×			
Robert Stainburn (Tockwith), 1475	×		2					
William Grange, 1480-1	×		×					
Matilda Leak (widow, Syningthwaite), 1482			×				×	
John Gell, Jr. (Tockwith), 1482		×			×			
Henry Carbott (Tockwith), 1483	×		×					
John Carbott, 1487	×							
John Stainburn (Tockwith, PA), 1487	×							

Table 5g. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Bishopthorpe

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Thomas Shiphyrd (PA), 1418		2						
William Fyssher, 1438	x		x		*		*	
Alice Talbot (PA), 1456								x
William Waite, Sr., 1456-7	x		x				*	
William Waite, Jr. (PA), 1457	x							
Richard Hurtsky (PA), 1461	x				x			
Robert Hamlin (Adm.), 1461	@							
Nicholas Halydaye (PA), 1480							2	
Robert Eagle, 1481	x						x	
Joan Eagle (widow), 1481							x	
John Walton (Adm.), 1481			@					
William Wright, 1500					x		x	

Table 5h. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Bolton Percy (incl. Appleton, Nun Appleton, Colton, Hornington)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
William Mowbray (Colton), 1391	×							
William Sampson (Appleton), 1393							‡	
Thomas Wright (Colton, PA), 1399					2			
Robert de Colton (Colton), 1407							‡	
John Tanfield (PA), 1426		×					×	
John Thomson, 1431	×		2					
William Morton (Hornington, PA), 1438	×							
Lady Elizabeth Woodcock (Nun Appleton), 1439		×?						×
Thomas Sampson (Adm.), 1440							2@	
Nicholas Fewster (Nun Appleton), 1459			†				2	
William Lascelles (chaplain), 1461-2							3‡	
Thomas Morton	×						×	

(Appleton), 1470								
William Jackson (Appleton), 1471	x						x	
John Brocket (Appleton), 1472	x		x				*	
John Bachelor (Appleton), 1478-9	x		2				*	
Roger & Emmot Newport (Adm.), 1484							@/†	
Sir Thomas Squyre, chaplain (Nun Appleton, Adm.), 1484		@/†						
William Milner (Adm.), 1488	@						@/†	
Robert Catterton (Appleton, Adm.), 1488	@							
John Wade (Colton), 1499	x							
Richard Thomson, 1499	x	x					x	
John Wade (Colton)	x				2*			
William Wade (Colton), 1501	x		x					
William Brokett, 1508					x		2, ♦	

Table 5i. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Copmanthorpe

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Bartram, 1414	×						3	
Richard Morton (PA), 1499	×							
Richard Kyrstall, 1511-2	×				×			

Table 5j. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Dringhouses

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Rawcliffe, 1427-8	x						2	
Ralph Makebliss, 1431	x	⚔						
Emma Makebliss (widow), 1432		x						
William Rawcliffe, 1437	x						x	
John Sacker, 1437			x					
Thomas Shilton (Adm.), 1449	@						@/⚔	
James Dancer (Adm.), 1458							2@	
Thomas Watson, 1464		*					x	x
Robert Roos (Adm.), 1471	@		@				@/⚔	
John Fernlay (PA)	x							
Thomas Butterworth, 1474	x							
Henry Wright, 1478-9	x						*	
Robert Leeds, 1481-2	x							

Thomas Copeland, 1490				×				
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Table 5k. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Healaugh

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Depeden (knight), 1402		x			x		=	
Thomas Hunter, 1404		†					x	
Margaret Stevenson (widow, Adm.), 1467							@	
John Makebliss, 1483	x	x					x	
Isabelle Makebliss (widow), 1483					x		2	

Table 51. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Long Marston (incl. Angram and Hutton Wandesley)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Henry Gelsthorpe, 1389	x		x					
Richard de Thornton (rector, PA), 1393		†						
William del Hill, Jr. (PA), 1405	x							
Robert del Hill, 1430	x							
William Smith (Adm.), 1432	@							
William Thwaite, 1434	x		x				*	
John Blyth (PA), 1449	x							
Henry Nottingham, 1451	x		x				x	
Roger Burgh (rector), 1457							2	x
John Snaith (rector), 1472							x, 2*/♦	x
Thomas Ellison, 1473	x						*	
Thomas Milner (Angram), 1473	x							
William Nottingham,	x							

1474-5								
William Nottingham, 1484	x					x		
William Deighton (Hutton Wandesley), 1484	x		x					
Sir Thomas Brewster, chaplain (Adm.), 1484		@					@	

Table 5m Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Middlethorpe

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
William Kilburn (PA), 1394	×							
John Appleby (PA), 1399	×							
Joan Nesande (wife, PA), 1403-4	×						×	
Helen Liley, 1418-19	×	*						
William Barnard, 1430	×	‡			×		×	
Thomas de Thorpe, 1434	×	× (same surname)					× (same surname)	
John Barnard, 1434	×	‡					×, ‡	
Thomas Wright, 1437	×							
Joan Wright (widow), 1437							3	
John Copper (PA), 1437					‡		‡	
Thomas Haksok, 1466	×							

Alice Marshall (widow, Adm.), 1490							@	
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Table 5n. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Moor Monkton (incl. Hessay, Scagglethorpe)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Peter de Abberwyke (rector, Adm.), 1398							×	
John Langton (Hessay), 1430							2	
Thomas Northby, 1431-2	×							
William Northby, 1438-39							‡	
John Mason (rector, don.), 1443		♦			×		‡	
Thomas Walker (Adm.), 1443	@							
James Calvert (Adm.), 1461	@							
Robert Denison (Adm.), 1461	@							
Henry Gell (PA), 1463	×							
John Marshall, 1484	×		×					
Richard Carbott (Hessay), 1484			2					
Richard Ryder, 1484					×			
Alice Thwaite (advowess),			×	×				

1485								
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Table 5o. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Rufforth

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
John Milner (PA), 1426	×							
John Farnham, 1446		*/††			×		††	
Richard Smith, 1452			2					
Cecily Smith (PA), 1452-3			×			×		
Henry Hertlyngton (PA), 1456	×			×				
Thomas Farnham (PA), 1457	×	× (same surname)					×	
Thomas Talior, 1469	×							

Table 5p. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Tadcaster (incl. Catterton)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Joan Clark, 1392	×							
Margaret Darby (widow, PA), 1395							×	
William Barkar, 1403	×						3	
Margaret Simpson (Adm.), 1403-4							2@?	
Robert Hardy, 1428							3	
Robert Forester (Catterton), 1428	×		×				⚚, */♦	
Alice Catlin, 1430-2			×					
Richard Clark, 1434-5	×				×		×	
William Johnson, 1438	×	*						
Henry Vavasour, esq. (Hazlewood), 1447								
Robert Seagrave, 1447	×						×	
Alice Seagrave (Adm.), 1448-9							3@	
Thomasin Driffield, Adm., 1453-4							@/⚚	@

John Dresser (Catterton), 1471					×		×	
Thomas Clough (Catterton), 1471	×		×					

Table 5q. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Thorp Arch

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
William Leventon (vicar), 1440							x	
William Boy (Adm.), 1442					@/†		x	
Robert Gillet, 1489	x?		x				2*	
John Chambers, 1497	x				2		x	

Table 5r. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Walton

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Thomas Fairfax, 1394	×	×			†,*	†/*	×	
John Easedike (chaplain), 1441					2			
Guy Fairfax, 1446	×							
William Fairfax (Adm.), 1453	@							

Table 5s. Choice of Executors and Supervisors in Wighill (incl. Easedike)

Testator, Date	Spouse	Cleric	Son	Daughter	Male Relative	Fem. Relative	Other named Male	Other named Female
Brian de Stapleton, 1394		?, *?	×		2		=, *	
John Wakefield (Easedike), 1429-33	×						×	
Richard Collinson (Easedike), 1442-4			2					
Thomas Collinson (Easedike), 1452-3	×				×, */†			
John de Stapleton, 1454-5	×						2 ¹¹ / ₁₁	
William Russell (Follifoot), 1482	×		×					
Robert Sugden (Easedike), 1494	×		×					

APPENDIX THREE: CAUSE PAPERS RELATING TO AINSTY TOWNSHIPS

The following list of cause papers relating to Ainsty settlements is compiled from D.M. Smith's handlists, *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York: the Court of York 1301-1399* (York, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 14, 1988); *The Court of York, 1400-1499* (York, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 29, 2003); and C. Donahue Jr., *The Records of the Medieval Ecclesiastical Courts. Part II: England* (Berlin, 1994).

General notes: Townships that do not appear in the cause papers or Court Books include Bilbrough, Middlethorpe and Wilstrop. Townships with particularly high numbers of wills surviving correlate generally with those places which produced several court cases, especially Acaster Malbis, Bolton Percy and Moor Monkton. The total number of cause papers in which one party or another is recorded as being from the Ainsty is 15, while the total number of cases appearing as entries in the Court Books is 44. At the beginning of the entry for each township, I have listed the total number of cause papers and entries in the Court Books pertaining to that settlement. If a particular case appears more than once in the Court Books, I have counted this as one 'entry' in the Court Books for the purposes of this list. Notes concerning specific cases, especially when I have been able to link individuals or surnames with testamentary evidence, appear directly after the entry for that case. Most cases in the cause papers and act books represent instance litigation; there are only three *ex officio* cases.

Abbreviations: *act* = plaintiff
off = Official
com gen = Commissary General

Acaster Malbis (Naburn). 1 cause paper, 8 entries in Court Books

- a) F.89, 1425, 22 items. Prioress and convent of **Wallingwells** and John Northfolk of **Naburn**, donzel c. Robert Arthyngton of **Arthington**, R. Castelay of the same, John Ross of **North Deighton** and Agnes wife of R. Haldenby of **Walmgate**. Violation of ecclesiastical liberties. Abduction of K. Northfolk.
- b) F.183, 1447, 1 item. Attestations in a case relating to Acaster Malbis—church mentioned, and also John Stillyngton, Richard Fletcher, John Chawmer and John Egle (see probate record for **Bishopthorpe**). The above named appear to have been vicars. Witnesses: William del Mose (Moyse) of Acaster Malbis; Thomas Comsall/Camsall of Acaster Malbis (see *Yorks. Deeds II*, p. 4); William Walton of Acaster Malbis (see Prob. Reg. 2, fo. 423r). Deponents also mention **Bishopthorpe**. Plaintiff bases case on witnesses' testimony that they have resided in the village since infancy or for several decades. Includes only mention of a Churching ceremony that I have encountered thus far. Tithes/offerings and parish boundaries.
- c) Cons.AB.4, fo. 137v, 1487. Walter Carelton of Acaster Malbis to William Jakeson of **York**. Recognisance to pay 6s.
- d) Cons.AB.3, fo. 1r, 1428. Alice Catyrton, wife of Richard, mentioned 1428 (see also j).

- e) Cons.AB.4, fo. 44r, 1485. Ellen Caumbrige had a citation for opposing publication of banns between John Wod of Acaster and Joan Watson.
- f) Cons.AB.4, fo. 138r, 1487. William Fencot of Acaster Malbis to William Carter of York. Recognisance to pay 2 quarters of barley.
- g) Cons.AB.3, fo. 58v, 1430. Dominus John Fustor, chaplain c. John Matson of Acaster.
- h) Cons.AB.3, fo. 56r, 1430. John Kyrkeby of Acaster Malbis, const. proctor.
- i) Cons.AB.4, fos. 85v, 88r, 93v, 1486. Richard Memying of **Spofforth** c. Robert Smyth of Acaster Malbis.
- j) Cons.AB.3, fo. 24r, 1429. William Scalby of **York** to John Fairfax, esq. and Richard Catirton of Acaster Malbis, recognisance to pay 10 marks (see also d)

Acaster Selby. 1 cause paper.

- a) E.228, 1397, 6 items. Thomas Porter, rector of **Ryther** c. John Webster of Acaster Selby. Tithes of coppice-wood in Chatirhag, pa. Ryther.

Acomb (Knapton, Holgate). 2 cause papers.

- a) E.44, 1347-48, 12 items. Richard dictus Clerk of Acomb c. Simon de Sadbergh of **York**. Defamation. Reconventio for payment of 4s as marriage portion. Depositions include 11 witnesses: John de Skynner of York; Richard de Bryggenale of York; William Guy of York; William del Brygge of York; Richard de Hampcotes of York; Adam de Hustwayte of York, stationarus; John de Oxenford, clericus of Walmgate; Robert de Sevenhous, Micklegate; John Bakster, clericus of Walmgate; Thomas de Hustwayte, clericus; Richard de Berdessay, clericus.
- b) **F.36, 1410-11, 24 items.** John de Thorneton, citizen and merchant of **York** [pa. All Saints, Pavement] c. Agnes widow of Hugh de Grantham of York [pa. Michael le Belfrey]; and John Dale c. Agnes. Matrimonial with subsequent appeal by Dale against sentence of Richard Arnall, commissary-general.

This case has been analysed in S.M. Butler, "I will never consent to be wedded with you!": Coerced Marriage in the Courts of Medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History* 39:2 (2004): 264-65; and C. Beattie, 'A Room of One's Own? The Legal Evidence for the Residential Arrangements of Women Without Husbands in Late-Fourteenth- and Early-Fifteenth-Century York', in Noel James Menuge (ed.), *Medieval Women and the Law* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2000), pp. 41-56. Hugh Grantham, according to Butler, had been brewer and servant of William Pountfret of York, with whom Agnes decided to lodge during the court proceedings. Agnes customarily sold ale to William Feryby, master of **St. Leonard's Hospital**, and she was on her way to have dinner at Acomb Grange, accompanied by her son and servant, when she was abducted by Feryby's notary, John Dale. The violent abduction brought the parties concerned to **Wighill**, the forest of **Knaresborough** and **Healaugh**. Butler suggests collusion between the master of St. Leonard's and his notary in the matter of the abduction. Agnes's defence involved a marriage contract with John Thornton of York. I have included this case because although the parties lived in York, much of the action described in the depositions took place in the Ainsty, illustrating networks of both people and places.

Askham Bryan and Askham Richard. 5 entries in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.1, fo. 139, 1419. Mentions William Alman of Little Askham.

- b) Cons.AB.1, fos. 175v, 176r. See **Bolton Percy**.
- c) Cons.AB.1, fo. 139, 1419. Office c. William Horne of Little Askham.
- d) Cons.AB.1, fo. 158r, 1420. Hubard c. Hipswell, parochial chaplain of Askham.
- e) Cons.AB.2, various fos. 63r-85v, 1425-26. Abbot and convent of St. Mary's York c. John Qweldryke and his colleagues of York, and William Whitlay and his colleagues of Askham Bryan. Tithes.

Bilton (Bickerton, Syningthwaite, Tockwith). 6 entries in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.2, fo. 94v-97r, 1427. William Gell of Bilton and Thomas Smyth of **Wistow** c. Joan daughter of Roger Serell of the same. Corresponds with CP.F.168 and is of the same year, but in CP.F.168 William Gell is identified as being from **Kirkhammerton** and Joan Serle/Serell as being from **Cawood**. Seems to indicate recent migration.
- b) Cons.AB.4, fo. 106r, 1487. Office c. vicar of Bilton.
- c) Cons.AB.1, fo. 185r, 1420. Alice Tokwit of Tockwith, servant of John Stafford of **York** to Stafford and his wife, recognisance to pay 11s.
- d) Cons.AB.1, fo. 165v, 1420. John Tokwyth of Tockwith to Thomas Driffield, recognisance to pay 6s.8d.
- e) Cons.AB.1, fo. 45r, 1417. Simon Tokwith of Tockwith to John Gascoigne, citizen and woolman of **York**, recognisance to pay 2 marks.
- f) Cons.AB.3, fo. 33r, 1429. Edmund Wright of **Cowthorpe** to respond to William Thomlynson of Bilton in Ainsty. William Thomlynson possesses a will (1438), BIHR, Prob.Reg. 3, fo. 525r.

Bishopthorpe. 2 cause papers (for b see Poppleton), 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) F.133, 1421-22, 8 items. Joan Radcliff of **Cawood** c. William Kyng of Bishopthorpe and Alice Cok of **Scrooby, Notts.**, whom William had taken to wife. Matrimonial and divorce. Sentence by com gen for *act.*, declaring de facto marriage between William and Alice annulled and invalid, and ordering William to solemnize his marriage to Joan. Includes what appear to be fine copies of documents, some with seals attached. Involves Dean of Retford, a chapel in Cawood and deponents from **Wistow**. This case involves a *nuncio*.
- b) F.201, 1430, 5 items. Joan Ingoly of Bishopthorpe, whom John Midelton took to wife c. the same John Midelton of Bishopthorpe and Robert Esyngwald of Poppleton and Ellen Wryght, whom Robert took to wife. Matrimonial and divorce. Also listed under **Poppleton**. Corrupt (see Donahue). 4 party. Depositions contain 7 witnesses: John Croxton of **York**, baker; Isabella his wife, and kinswoman of Joan Ingoly; John Cusson of Nether Poppleton; Robert Grymston of Poppleton; Harold Frankleyn de Poppleton; Robert Dalton of Poppleton; Alice, his wife. Sentence of com. gen. declaring both marriages invalid on basis of precontract of *act* with 2nd *reus*.
- c) Cons.AB.4, fo. 136, 1487. Thomas Besewike of Bishopthorpe c. Alice Lilly of Bishopthorpe. Thomas defamed of adultery with Joan Haxhop of Bishopthorpe. The surname Lilly also features in nearby Middlethorpe.

Bolton Percy (Appleton Roebuck, Colton, Nun Appleton, Steeton). 3 cause papers, 6 entries in Court Books.

- a) E.70, 1355-56, 7 items. Maud Schipin/Shippen of Steeton c. Robert (le) Smyth of Bolton Percy. Matrimonial. See Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, pp. 40-45. Witnesses for *act*: William Theker; Margaret, wife of William. Had allegedly been present in Smyth's house. Witnesses for exceptions to witnesses of *act* include: Mariona wife of John Helwis; John Jordan (?), servant of John Helwis; William Fynche. They mention **Acaster Selby** and church of **Stillingfleet**; events take place in house of John Helwis of Acaster Selby, where William Theker was apparently working as a cooper (?). Mill in Acaster Selby mentioned.
There are Thekers in the 1379 poll tax returns in Appleton Roebuck, Hessay and Acaster Selby. Three members of the Helwys family appear in Acaster Selby in the 1379 returns, including John and his wife, who were assessed at 4d. Nicholas Helwys, a farmer was assessed at 2s for Acaster Selby.
- b) F.31/2, 1404, 1 item. Robert Wardale of Bolton Percy c. John Blome of York, draper. Drafted on dorse of defamation case, Cecily Leveryk of Newark on Trent c. Agnes Shawe of Newark. The fragment of this case is too brief to be able to discern the subject matter or any other details, nor are there any entries in the act books pertaining to this case.
- c) F.34, 1408-09 (1405-09 according to Donahue), 21 or 22 items. Dominus William Crosse, rector of Bolton Percy c. Thomas Note and Robert Lonesdale of York, laymen. Tithes of coppice wood in Paddokthorpwod in the parish of Bolton Percy (with appeal by *reus* (Note and Lonesdale) from sentence of com gen to off). A Robert Lonesdale of York also appears in F.201 (1430), where he is mentioned as a witness to a wedding ceremony.
- d) Cons.AB.4, fo. 95v, 1486. Henry Barkar of Bolton Percy c. Roger Wright of Saxton.
- e) Cons.AB.3, fo. 58v, 1430. Thomas Clarell of Steeton, esq. const. proctor.
- f) Cons.AB.1, fos. 175v, 176r, 1420. Matilda Hermes of Appleton c. William Asshewra of Little Askham. See **Askham Richard**. Possible matrimonial.
- g) Cons.AB.2, fos. 21v-22v, 25r, 1424. Alice Jakson, servant of Thomas Bright of York, goldsmith c. John Tailour of Colton. Matrimonial.
- h) Cons.AB.2, fo. 71v, 1425. Richard Oxton of Bolton Percy to Henry Soule of **Thorganby**, recognisance to pay 15s.
- i) Cons.AB.1, fo. 36v, 1417. Agnes Wrawby of Nun Appleton to John Wyton of **Kirkham** or to William Warde of York, spicer, in his name, recognisance to pay 10s.7d.

Copmanthorpe. 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.3, fo. 25r, 1429. John Carter of Copmanthorpe. Const. proctor.

Dringhouses. 4 entries in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.3, fos. 66v, 70v-71r, 1430. Office c. Simon Hamerton and his colleagues (Richard Hamerton, John Bilburgh, John Drynghows, Bilburgh Willand and John Kyng of Dringhouses, laymen). Tithes of coppice wood belonging to St. Olave's York (with interest of the abbot and convent of St. Mary's).
- b) Cons.AB.4, fo. 53r, 1485. Dom. Christopher Hilton and Dom. John Plompton c. John Kendale of Dringhouses.

- c) Cons.AB.3, fos. 69v, 72r, 1430. Matilda Roucliff c. Emmota Sekker of Dringhouses. The name Sekker appears in the testamentary records of Dringhouses.
- d) Cons.AB.4, fos. 87r, 88r, 1486. Mag. William Sheffield, treasurer of York Minster c. John Kendall of Dringhouses. See above, b.

Healaugh. 2 entries in Court Books (for a, see Long Marston).

- a) Cons.AB.4, fos. 120v, 122v, 123r, 125v, 126r, 1487. See **Long Marston**.
- b) Cons.AB.4, fo. 151r, 1488. Richard Pereson of Helay c. John Man of Thorpe Underwood. Recognisance to pay £3.

Long Marston (Angram, Hutton Wandesley). 1 cause paper, 2 entries in Court Books (for b see Healaugh).

- a) E.148, 1387-88, 1 item. Thomas de Newporte c. Joan daughter of Thomas Thwayte of Long Marston. Matrimonial and divorce. Processus in pending case made into deed poll by off. Some deponents from **Nun Appleton**.
- b) Cons.AB.4, fos. 120v, 122v, 123r, 125v, 126r, 1487. Richard Hill of Marston c. Katherine Smyth of Healaugh. See also **Healaugh**. Possibly matrimonial.
- c) Cons.AB.4, fo. 13v, 1484. Katherine Notingham of Marston c. George Chapman of **Deighton**. Possibly matrimonial. See Probate records for Long Marston.

Moor Monkton (Hessay, Scagglethorpe). 3 cause papers, 5 entries in Court Books.

- a) E.238, 1398-99, 9 items. William Scargill of **York**, dwelling in St. Mary's Abbey c. Alice daughter of Roger del Park of Moor Monkton (with William Robynson, servant of Adam Brynnand of **Cattal**, wright, intervening at the appeal stage). Matrimonial (with later appeals by Alice and Scargill). Defence of precontract and that marriage conditional on parents' consent; appeal by *rea* from sentence of com gen to off who reverses decision; *act* appeals to apostolic see.
- b) F.270, late 15th-c., 3 items. Prioress and convent of **Nun Monkton**, **Richmond archdeaconry** c. rector of Moor Monkton. Tithes in **Kirk Hammerton**.
- c) F.168, 1427-28, 7 items. William Gell of **Kirk Hammerton** (son of Roger Gell of **Whixley**), **Richmond archdeaconry**, York diocese and Thomas Smyth of **Wistow** c. Joan daughter of Roger Serill (Serle, Seryll) of **Cawood**. Matrimonial, competitors; appeal to official by *rea* from sentence of com gen for 1st *act*. Does not directly involve Moor Monkton, but Gell is a surname that featured in the probate records for Moor Monkton, and Kirk Hammerton and Whixley are very nearby. Depositions include descriptions of marriage negotiations in which female principal plays a large part. Description of a mainly male gathering, including the fathers and other male kin of principals, which took place in the workhouse of John Selby, a weaver from **Micklegate**, York. A brother of William Gell is from **Cattal**.
- d) Cons.AB.4, fo. 53r, 1485. John Burton of Moor Monkton c. Emmota **Lowson**. Possibly matrimonial.

- e) Cons.AB.3, fo. 31v, 1429. John Byngham of **Sherburn** to William Halmane of Hessay, recognisance to pay 20s.
- f) Cons.AB.1, fo. 48v, 1417. Joan wife of John Gibson of **Nun Monkton** c. John Addison sr. of Moor Monkton.
- g) Cons.AB.4, fo. 171r, 1489. Richard **Lauson** (see d) of Moor Monkton, const.proctor.
- h) Cons.AB.1, fos. 168r, 173v, 175v, 176r, 180r, 181v, 1420. William Lowrens of Blake Street, **York**, wright c. William Gell of Moor Monkton, executor of the testament of **Roger Park** late of Moor Monkton and Agnes relict of Roger and executrix. See CP.E.238, a, above.

Nether and Upper Poppleton. 1 cause paper (see Bishopthorpe), 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) F.201, 1430. See **Bishopthorpe**.
- b) Cons.AB.4, fo. 170r, 1489. Joan wife of William Richerdson of Nether Poppleton const. proctor.

Rufforth. 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.4, fo. 35r, 1485. Citation as allegedly married to Joan Abbey. See Joan Abbey of Rufforth c. Richard Robynson, Cons.AB.4., fos. 27v, 28v, 36v, 43r, 46r, 59v, 60r, 61v, 63v, 71v, 72v, 73r; 1484-86.

Tadcaster (Catterton, Oxtan). 3 cause papers. Entries in the Court Books were very numerous, especially regarding its church and clergy, and since only part of Tadcaster lies within the Ainsty, I do not focus on them.

- a) E. 40, 1341, 5 items. Alice Bernard daughter of Peter Huetson of Walkerith c. Peter le Walker of Tadcaster. N.B.: The entry in the handlist appears to be inaccurate; the case is actually Agnes Bernard c. Peter le Walker of Tadcaster and Alice/Agnes daughter of Peter Huetson of Walkerith in Lincolnshire. Matrimonial. Appeal by *reus* from sentence of com gen to off. See Donahue, 'Policy'. Involves **Walkerith near Gainsborough, Lincs.**
Witnesses (for Peter le Walker on appeal?): Alice, aged 40, wife of Richard de Erdun (?), possibly brewster, sister of Agnes, daughter of Peter Huetson of Walkerith; Matilda Davy; Isabella, aged 20, daughter of Walter de Walkerith—she is therefore probably single, possibly a lifecycle servant, and also the sister of Peter le Walker? The precontract in Lincolnshire occurred five years prior to litigation; Peter was probably born in Lincolnshire and migrated to Tadcaster.
- b) E.95, 1367-68, 9 items. Agnes daughter of William Moryz (Morice) of Tadcaster c. Walter de Tiryngton of Tadcaster. Matrimonial. Divorce on grounds of precontract. Original sentence for *act* by com of off adn York; begun again by *rea* before off, with *act* cross-petitioning for divorce. Deponents mention **Wetherby, Wilstrop**, and one Imania from **Newton Kyme**.
- c) F.370, 1417-19, 1 item. Dominus John Mountfort, vicar of Tadcaster c. the inhabitants of **Hazlewood**. Tithes. Names Margaret Vavasour, widow of Henry Vavasour, knight. Tithes in arrears since 1411 (?)

Thorp Arch. 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.3, fo. 66r, 1430. Dom. John Wardell, chaplain of Thorp Arch mentioned.

Walton. 1 entry in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.3, fo. 13v, 1428. Dom. Robert Dewsberi, chaplain of Tickhill c. Thomas Flecher of Walton.

Wighill. 2 entries in Court Books.

- a) Cons.AB.2, fos. 15r, 18r, 19v, 20r, 21v, 22v, 23r, 1424. Margaret Milner of Wighill c. Thomas Carman of Tadcaster. Possibly matrimonial.
- b) Cons.AB.1, fos. 115v, 117r, 118, 119, 1419. Emmota wife of Nicholas Walker of York c. William Collier of Wighill and Ellen Wright. Matrimonial.

The following causes are from **Bishophill**:

- a) F.263, 1443, 5 items. Christina widow of Sir Robert Haryngton, knight, of Bishophill, York c. Sir Thomas Sayvell, knight, of Thornhill. Matrimonial and divorce. Divorce on grounds of force; sentence of special com for com gen for *act*. See Butler, 'I shall never consent', pp.
- b) Cons.AB.2, fos. 38r, 40, 42, 44v, 45r, 46r, 47r, 48r, 55v, 1424-30. John Kyrkeby of St. Mary Bishophill, York c. Henry Helwys of St. Martin, Micklegate, York and Alice Newton his wife. Matrimonial.

There are also some cases that involve individuals with **place-name surnames** from the Ainsty:

- a) E.150, 1389, 7 items. Alice **de Appleton** of York c. John Hothwayt of York, tailor. Matrimonial. Abjuration *sub pena nubendi*; defence of fear; appeal by *reus*.
- b) E.161, 1389, 3 items. Alice de Lutryington of York c. William **Drynghous** of Doncaster and Isabel, his wife, and c. William de Myton of York, cordwainer. Matrimonial and divorce.
- c) F.153, 1422, 4 items. Agnes wife of Robert **Popilton** of Colliergate, York, cook, c. Emmota wife of John Lylle of York. Defamation of fornication.
- d) F.254, 1474, 2 items. Agnes **Drynghouse** of York c. John Chapman of York. Matrimonial.

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