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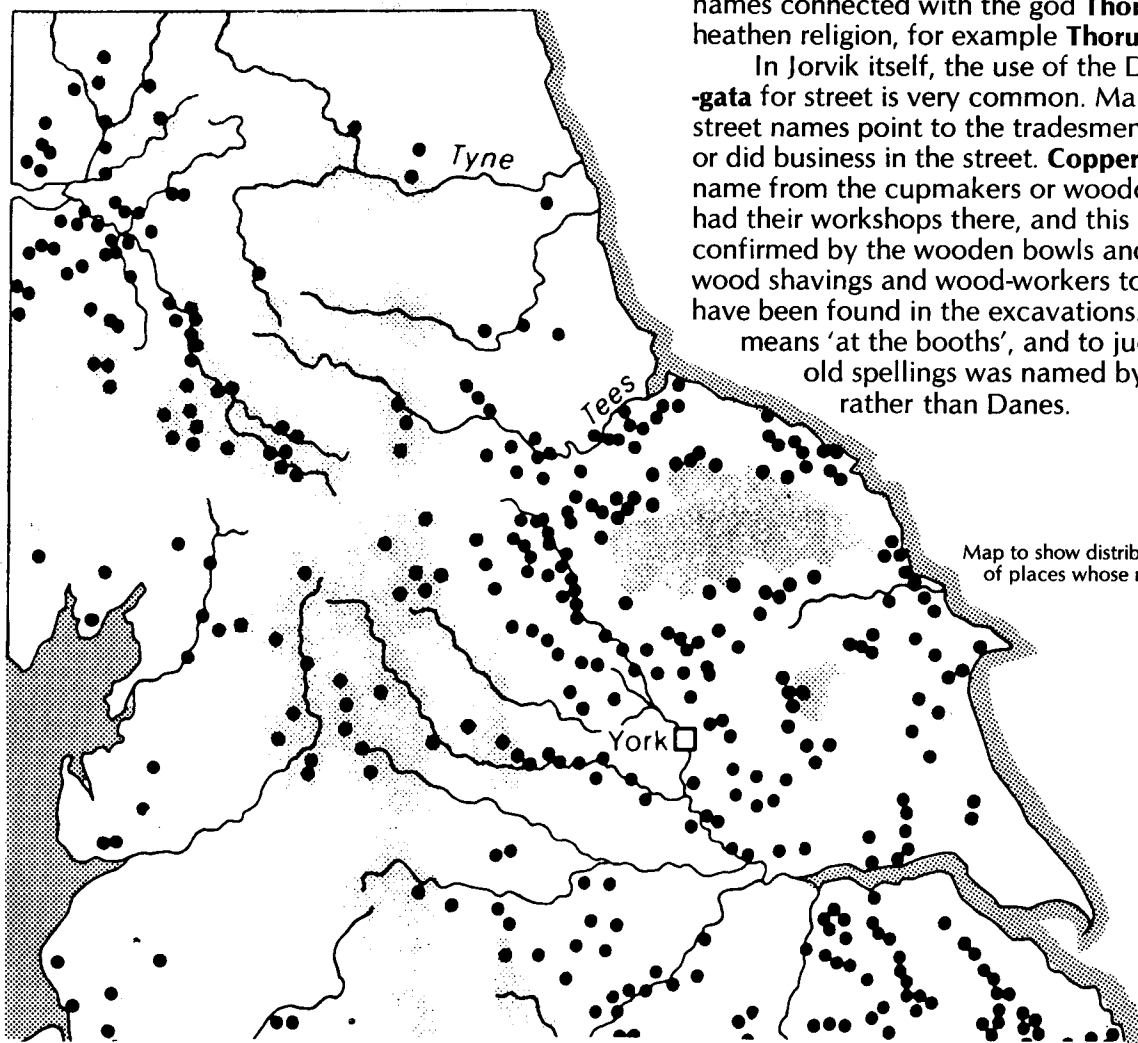
When the Vikings settled down to farm the land around York in 876, it was already dotted with villages and farms that had been established centuries before by Anglo-Saxons. Some of these were taken over by the Vikings, who found the names difficult to pronounce, and sometimes altered them to suit the sounds of their own language (for example turning **Shelton** into **Skelton**). They even changed the name of York itself from **Eoforwic** ('wild boar settlement') to **Jorvik** ('wild boar creek'), from which the modern name York has developed.

Many new names were coined by the Vikings themselves, and most of these ended in **-by**, which could mean any kind of settlement from a town to a farm. The first part of the name might refer to a person (**Haxby**), or to features such as woods (**Holtby**) or moors (**Moreby**).

Names ending in **-thorpe** were often used for small settlements that were dependent upon a mother settlement, like **Copmanthorpe**, the settlement of kaupmenn or merchants. Some new settlements were made by clearing woodland, like **Tockwith**, meaning Toki's wood. Names ending in **-thwaite** also meant settlements carved out of woodland.

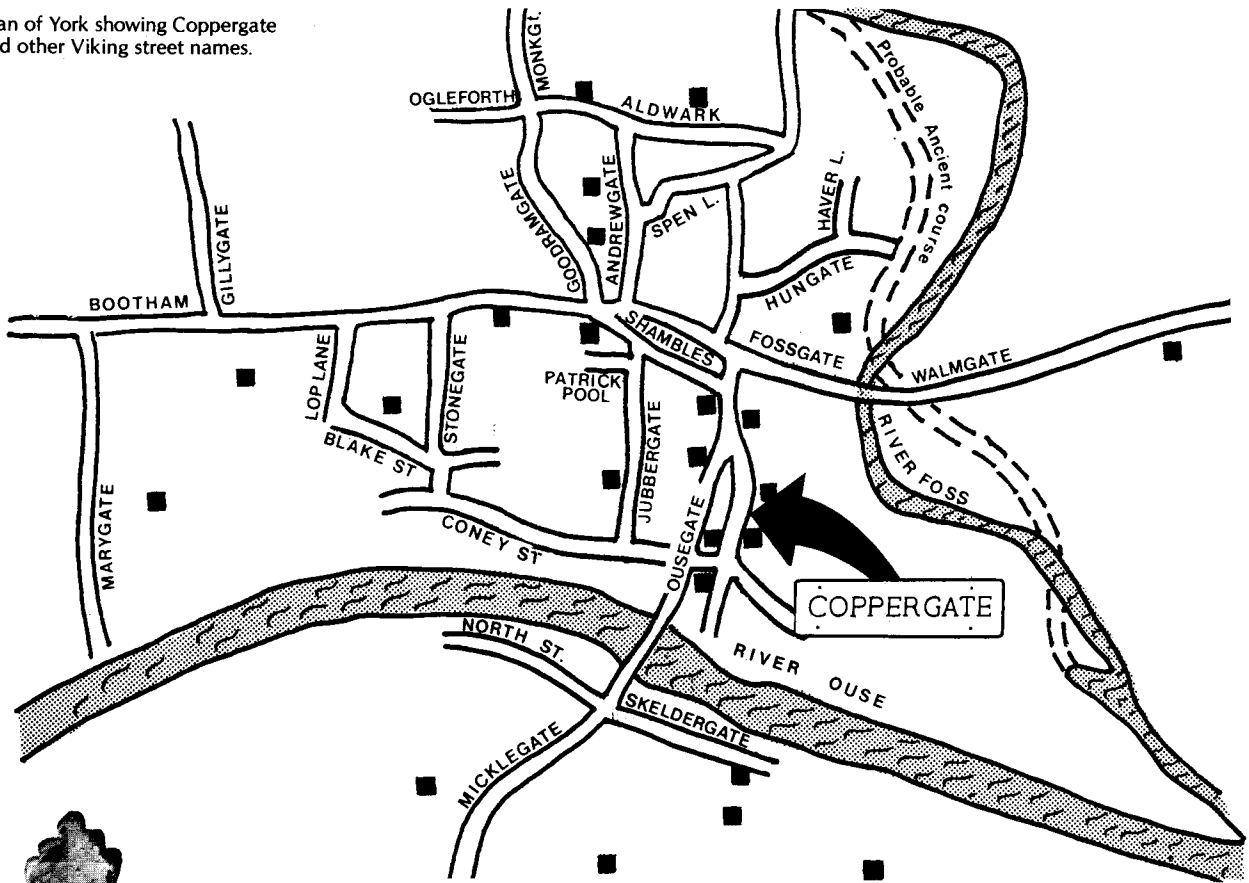
We do not know the names of many of the early Viking settlers in Yorkshire, but from those that occur in place-names, we know that a great variety of personal names were in use. Many, like Tofi and Toki, were shortened forms of longer names, and a surprising number of the settlers had names which must have begun as nicknames, for example **Keik** ('bent backwards') in **Kexby**, **Sleng** ('idler') in **Slingsby**, and **Vifil** ('beetle') in **Wilstrop**. Although the Vikings were soon converted to Christianity, many also had names connected with the god **Thor** and the heathen religion, for example **Thorulf**.

In Jorvik itself, the use of the Danish word **-gata** for street is very common. Many of the street names point to the tradesmen who lived or did business in the street. **Coppergate** took its name from the cupmakers or woodcarvers who had their workshops there, and this has been confirmed by the wooden bowls and cups, wood shavings and wood-workers tools which have been found in the excavations. **Bootham** means 'at the booths', and to judge from the old spellings was named by Norwegians rather than Danes.



Map to show distribution in Yorkshire of places whose name ends in **-by**.

Plan of York showing Coppergate and other Viking street names.



0 1 2 3 4 5cm
Seal of Snarri.



Wooden cup, bowls and waste cores found on the Coppergate excavation.

It is clear that Vikings and Englishmen must have lived side by side in Yorkshire, not only in the early years of settlement, but even after the English kings regained control of York in 954. Two-thirds of the men who are recorded in Domesday Book as having houses in York in 1065 had Scandinavian names.

Scandinavian personal names for both men and women were still quite common in York as late as the twelfth century — a toll-collector whose seal-mould has been found in excavations was called **Snarri**, 'the swift one'. But the Normans brought in new names, such as William and John, and by the middle of the thirteenth century Scandinavian names had nearly dropped out of use. The few Scandinavian forenames which are in use in England today, for example Eric, Harold and Ingrid, have all been re-introduced in the course of the last 150 years.