The localization of the Ormulum

Marcelle Cole

Brian Golding

Ellie Rye

Outline: localizing the *Ormulum*

- Previous scholarship
- Linguistic evidence (Marcelle Cole)
- Toponymic evidence (Ellie Rye)
- Historical ecclesiastical evidence (Brian Golding)

Orrm and the *Ormulum*: evidence from the manuscript and the text

- **When?** *Ormulum* last quarter of 12th century (c. 1180 CE) on palaeographic evidence (Parkes 1983)

- Dedication:

    Nu, broþer Wallterr, broþerr min
    Affter þe flæshess kinde (…)
    7 broþerr min i Godess hus
    Þurrh þatt witt hafenn taken ba
    An reȝhellboc to follȝhenn,
    Under kanunnkes had 7 lif,
    Swa sum Sann Awwstin sette (ll. 1–2 & 5–10)

Where was Orrm from?

- Elsham, N. Lincs (Bradley 1906a; 1906b)

- Carlisle (Wilson 1906)

- near Stamford (McIntosh 1963)

- near Crowland, S. Lincs (Laing 1978)

- Bourne, S Lincs (Parkes 1983)?

Map data: GBHGIS; NRS; ONS
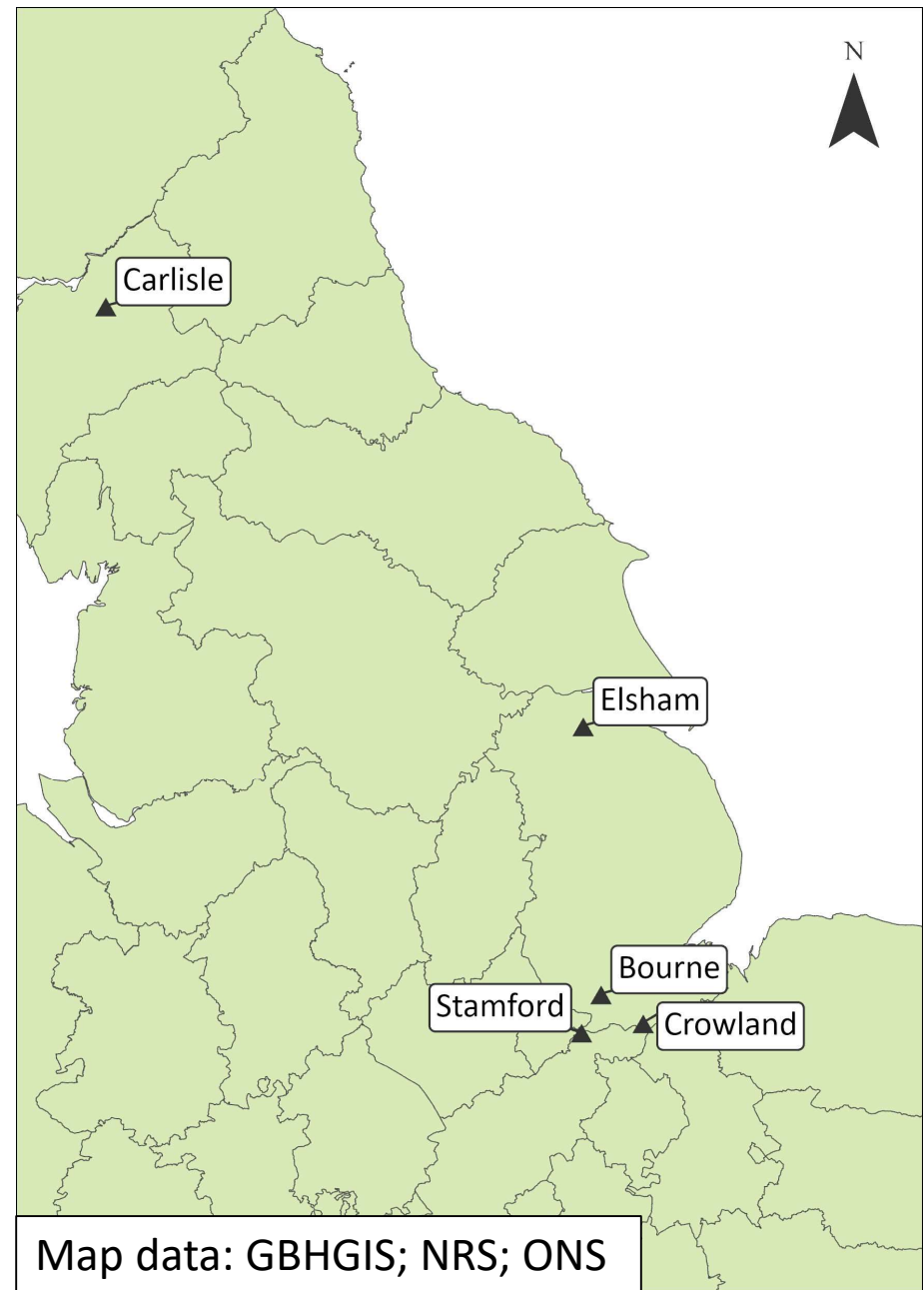
Localization: linguistic evidence

- Elsham (Bradley1906a; 1906b):
  - *-eth* (3rd pers. pres. sg.)
  - *-en* (infinitive and pres. pl.)
  - Scandinavian 'colouring' of the language
- S. Lincs (Laing 1978):
  - Southern: *-eþ* and *-enn* (as Bradley); <sh> not <s> in *shall, should*; *seȝȝde* (not **saȝȝde* 'said')
  - Northern: *kirrke* 'church', *ȝho* 'she', *þeȝȝ, þeȝȝm, þeȝȝre* (3rd pers. pl. pron.)
- Bourne, S Lincs (Parkes 1983, quoting a letter from McIntosh):
  - preference for *hemm* over *þeȝȝm*
  - 3rd pres. sg. *-eþ* (not *-ess*)

# Reconsidering the *Ormulum's* localization

- Linguistic evidence (Marcelle Cole):
  - how does allowing for diachronic change in the distributions of variants affect localization?

- Toponymic evidence (Ellie Rye):
  - can place-name evidence supplement the 12th-century and spatial gaps in the linguistic evidence?

- Monastic history (Brian Golding):
  - what Augustinian foundations (Arrouasian, Premonstratensian, Gilbertine) can be included/ excluded on historical grounds?
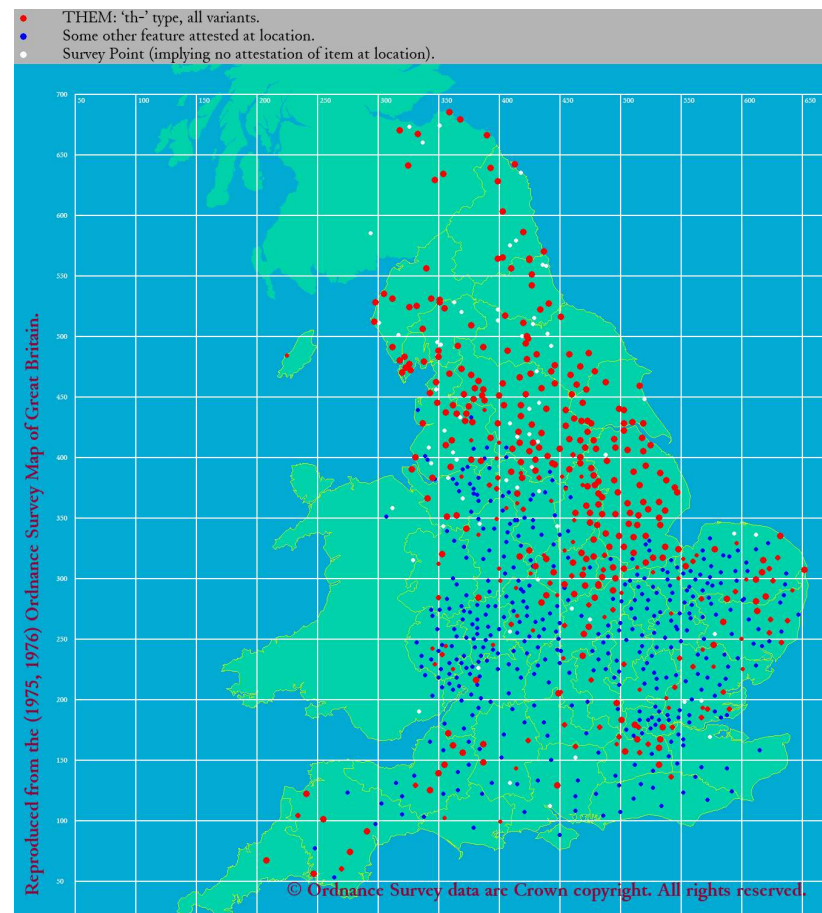 - how far away might Orrm have come from?

Linguistic evidence (Cole)

- One feature said to rule out a more northerly localization

- One feature said to be in favour of a more northerly localisation

THEM: 'th-' type

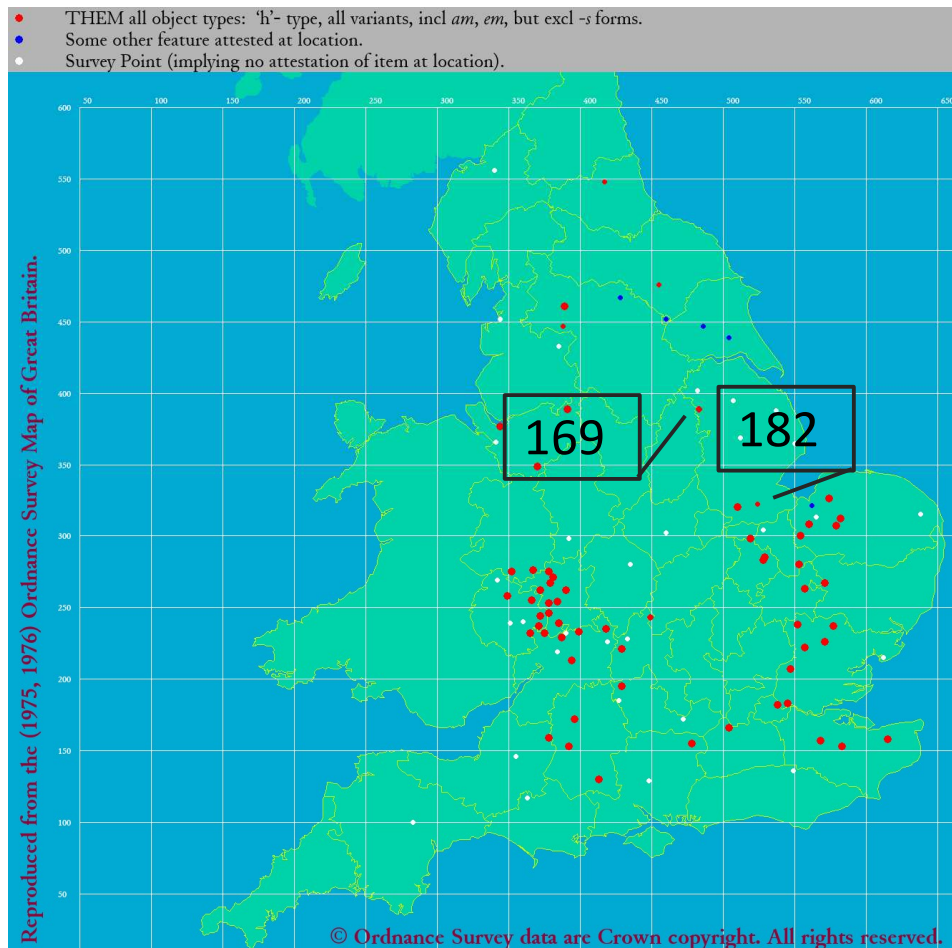Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (*LAEME*)
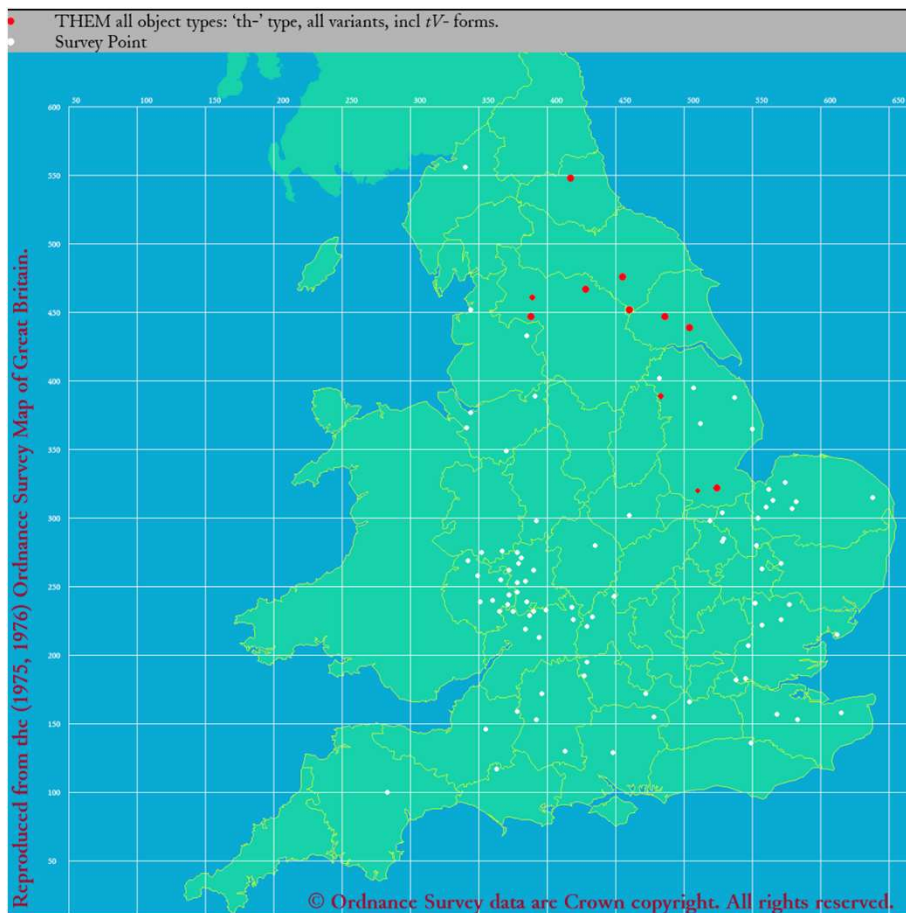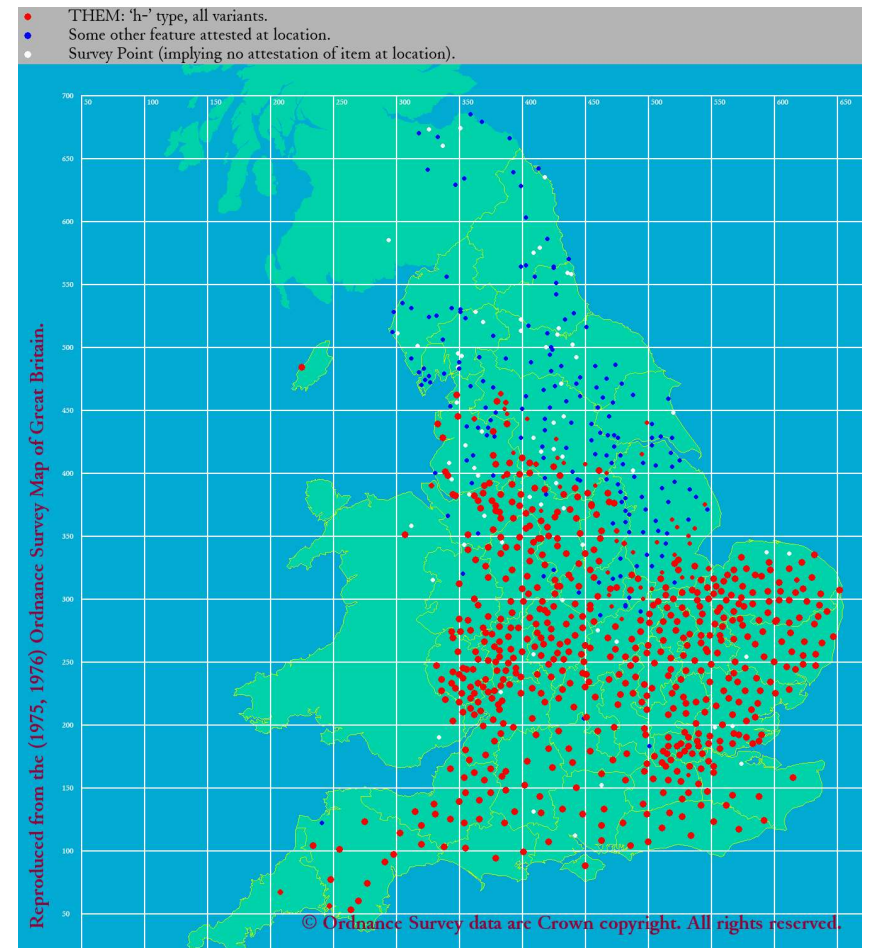
Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (*eLALME*):

THEM: 'h-' type

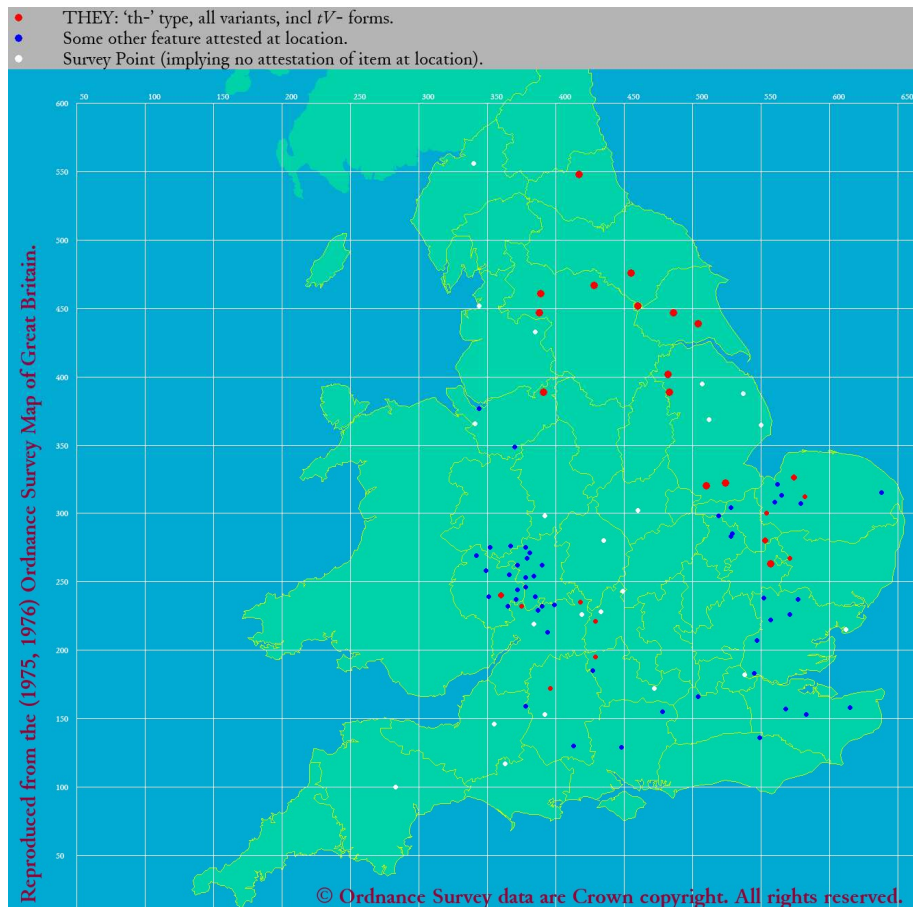Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle
English (*LAEME*)

Linguistic Atlas of Late
Mediaeval English (*eLALME*):

THEY: 'th' type

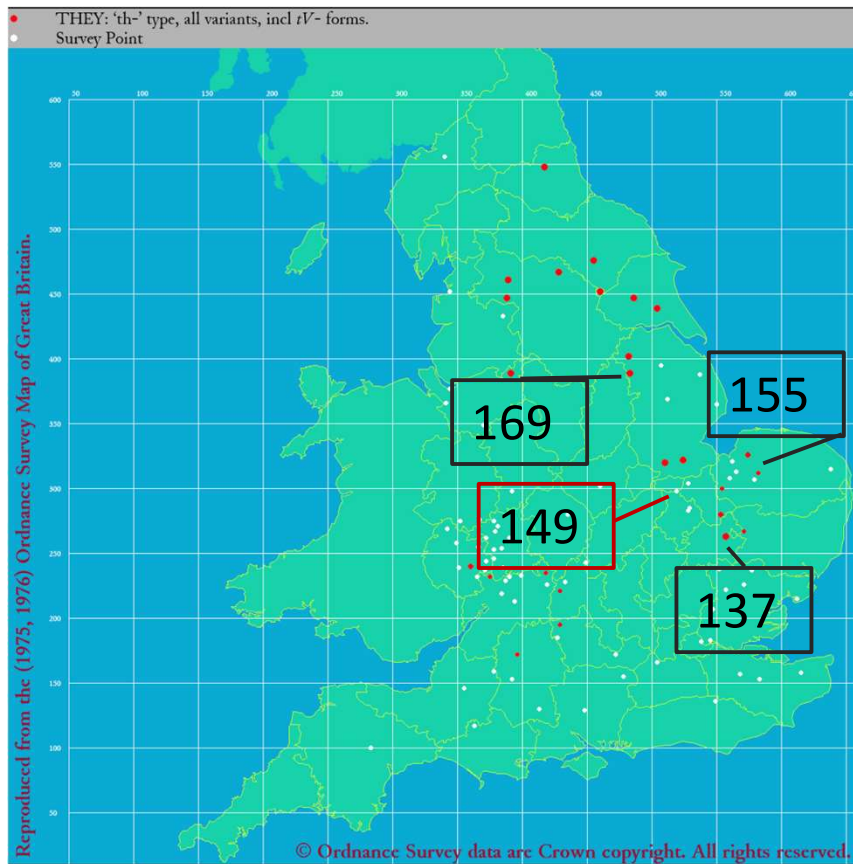Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (*LAEME*)

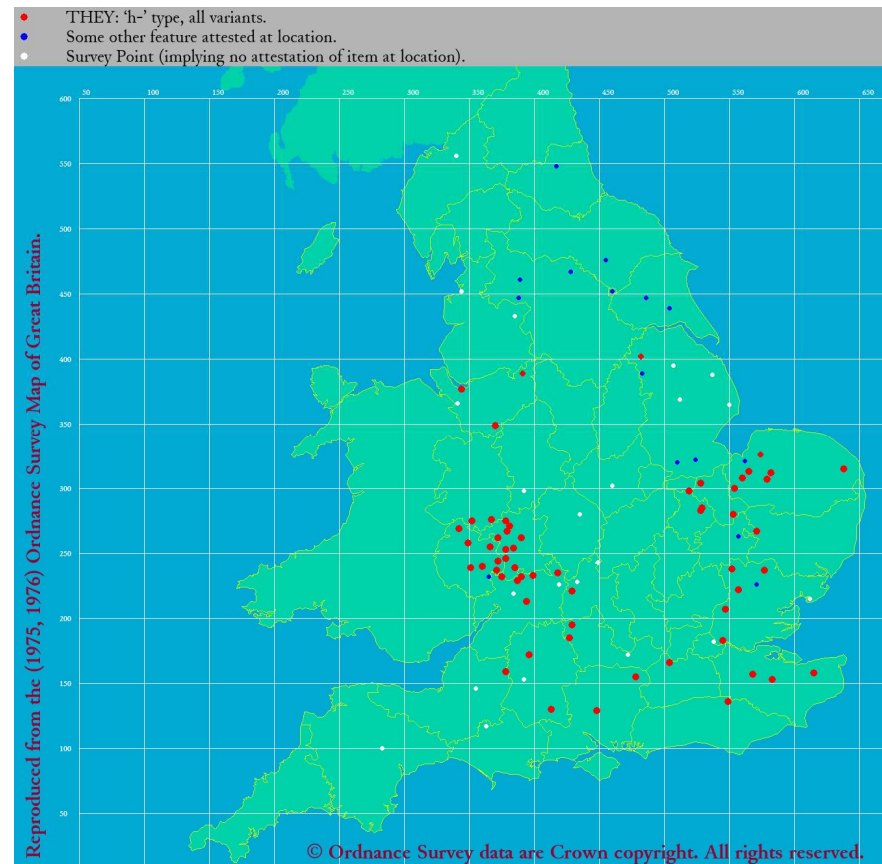Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (*eLALME*):

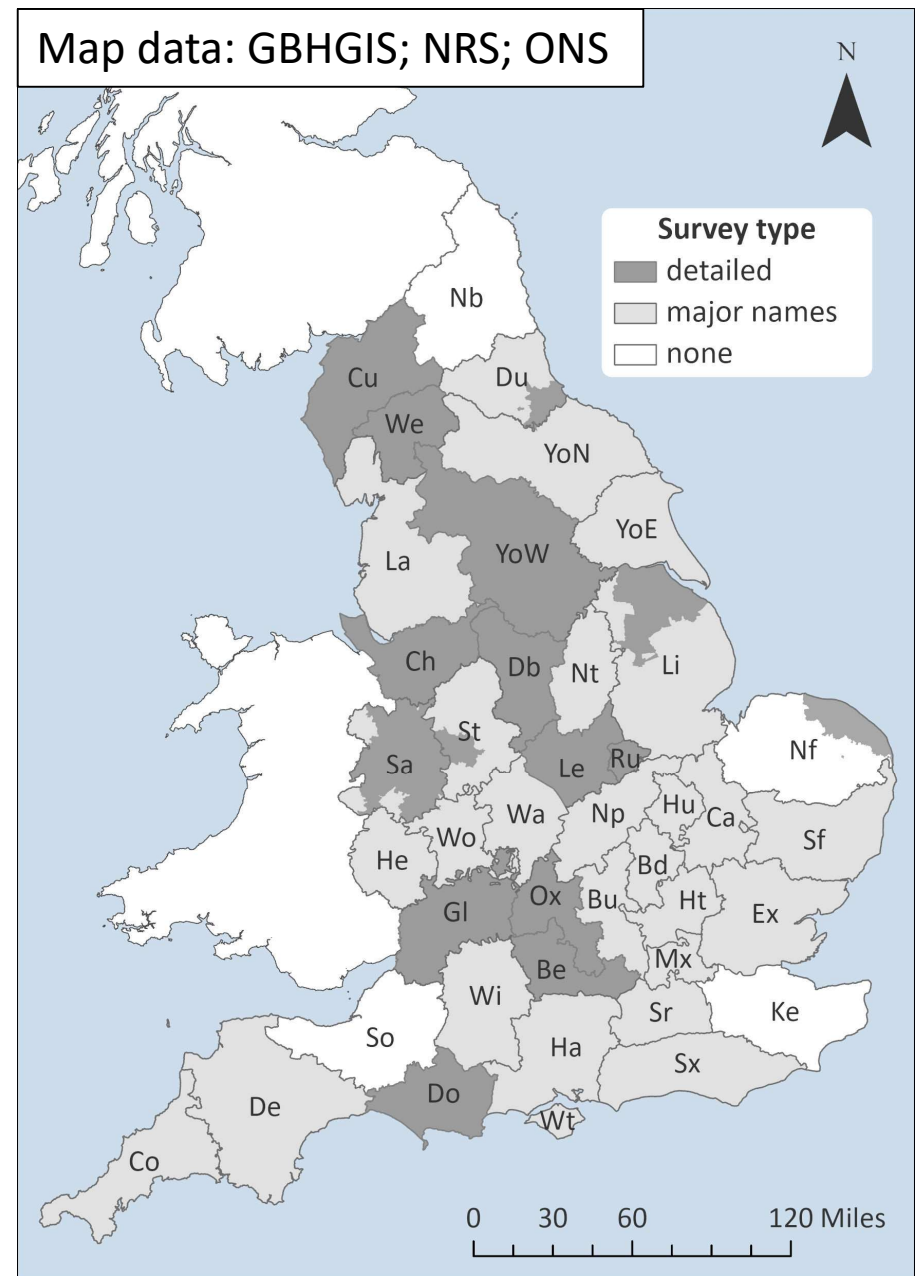# THEY: 'th-' type vs 'h-' type in Early Middle English
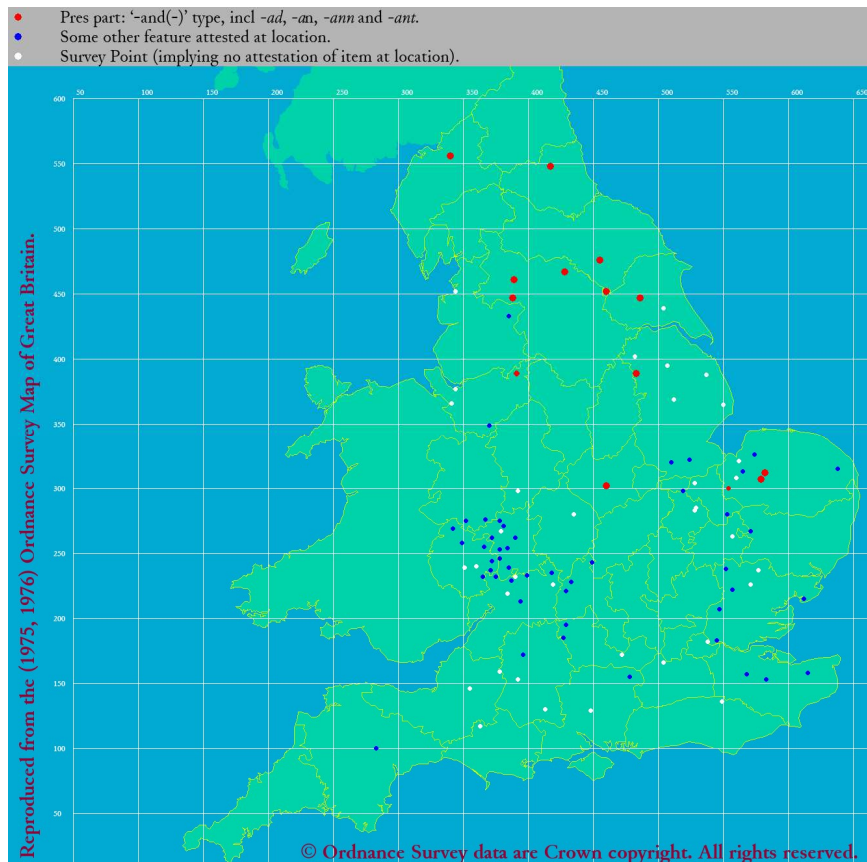
LAEME: <th-> type

LAEME: <h-> type

169

155

149

137

Place-name evidence (Rye)

Present participle in Early Middle English *(Ormulum: -ennde)*

LAEME: -and type

LAEME: -(i)ende type

Pres part: '-and(-)' type, incl *-ad*, *-an*, *-ann* and *-ant*.
Some other feature attested at location.
Survey Point (implying no attestation of item at location).

Pres part: '-(i)end(-)' type, incl *-ed-*, *-en*, *-enede*, *-ent*.
Some other feature attested at location.
Survey Point (implying no attestation of item at location).
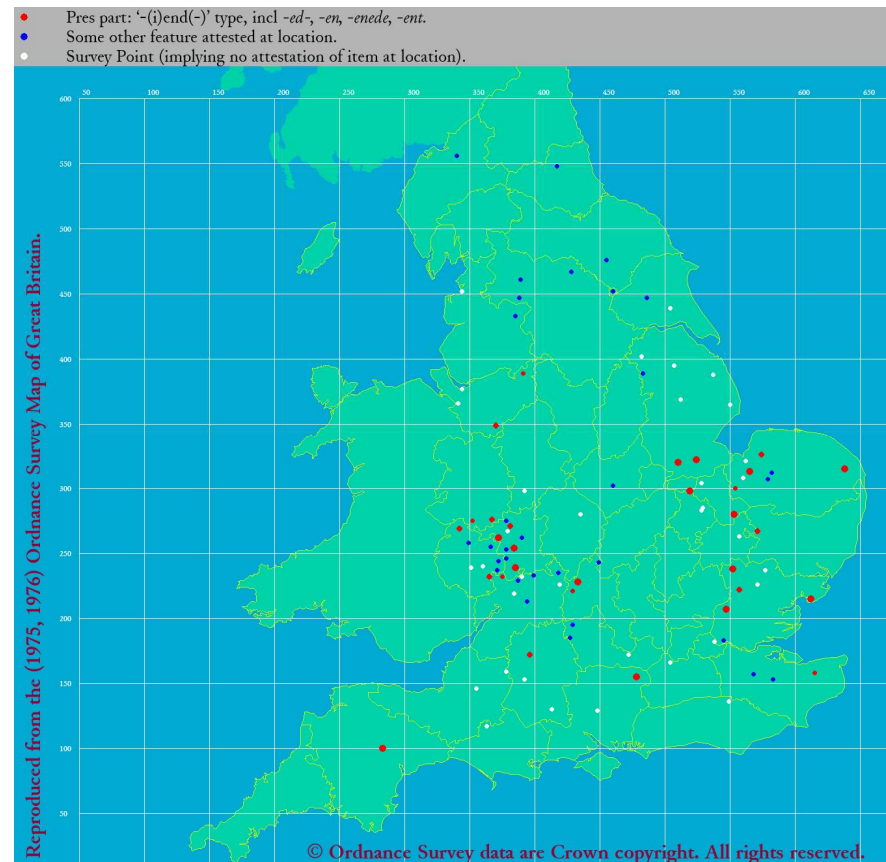
Place-name: present participle
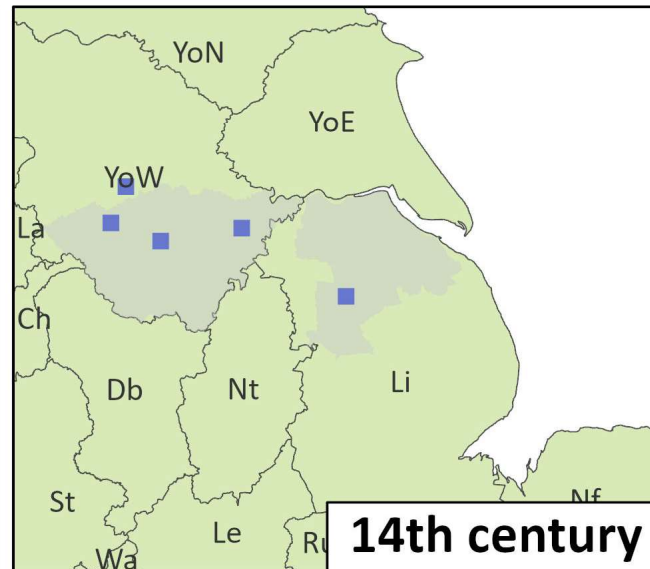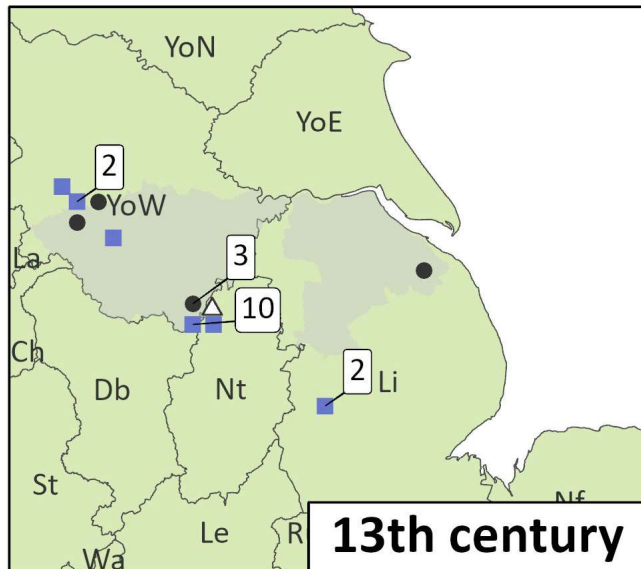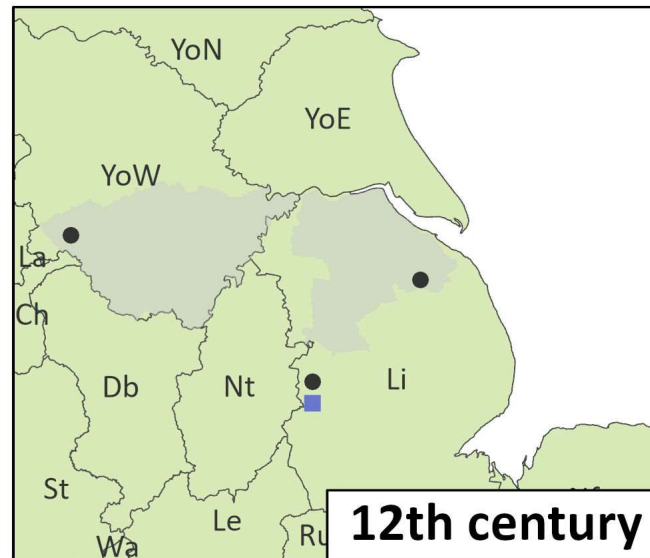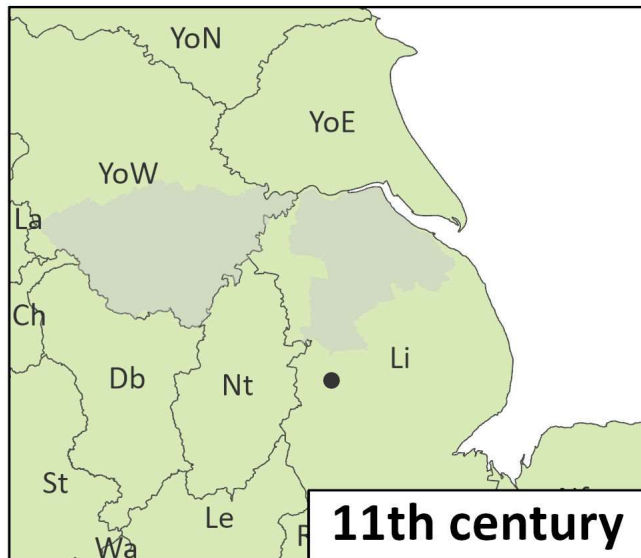
Place-names:
all available
names (incl.
field-names)

Map data:
GBHGIS

Form
- ◼ -ande
- ● -ende
- △ -inde
- ▨ detailed survey

Historical ecclesiastical evidence (Golding)

- Foundation dates

- Size/wealth

- Monastic 'catchment areas'

Foundation dates

- *Ormulum* c.1180 CE and completed over some period of time.

- Foundation a process: monasteries need time to develop (buildings, communities, libraries)

- → community founded before c. 1155

Filled rectangles: possible
No rectangle: too late
Unfilled rectangle: marginal

Order
- Arrouaisian
- Augustinian
- Premonstratensian

Thornton (1139)
Elsham (a. 1166)
Newsham (1143)
Worksop (p. 1119)
Torksey (1154)
Barlings (1154)
Welbeck (1153)
Tupholme (1154–56)
Nocton (1135)
Thurgarton (c. 1130)
Kyme (a. 1169)
Bourne (1138)
Leicester (1143)

Map data: GBHGIS

0   5   10   20 Miles
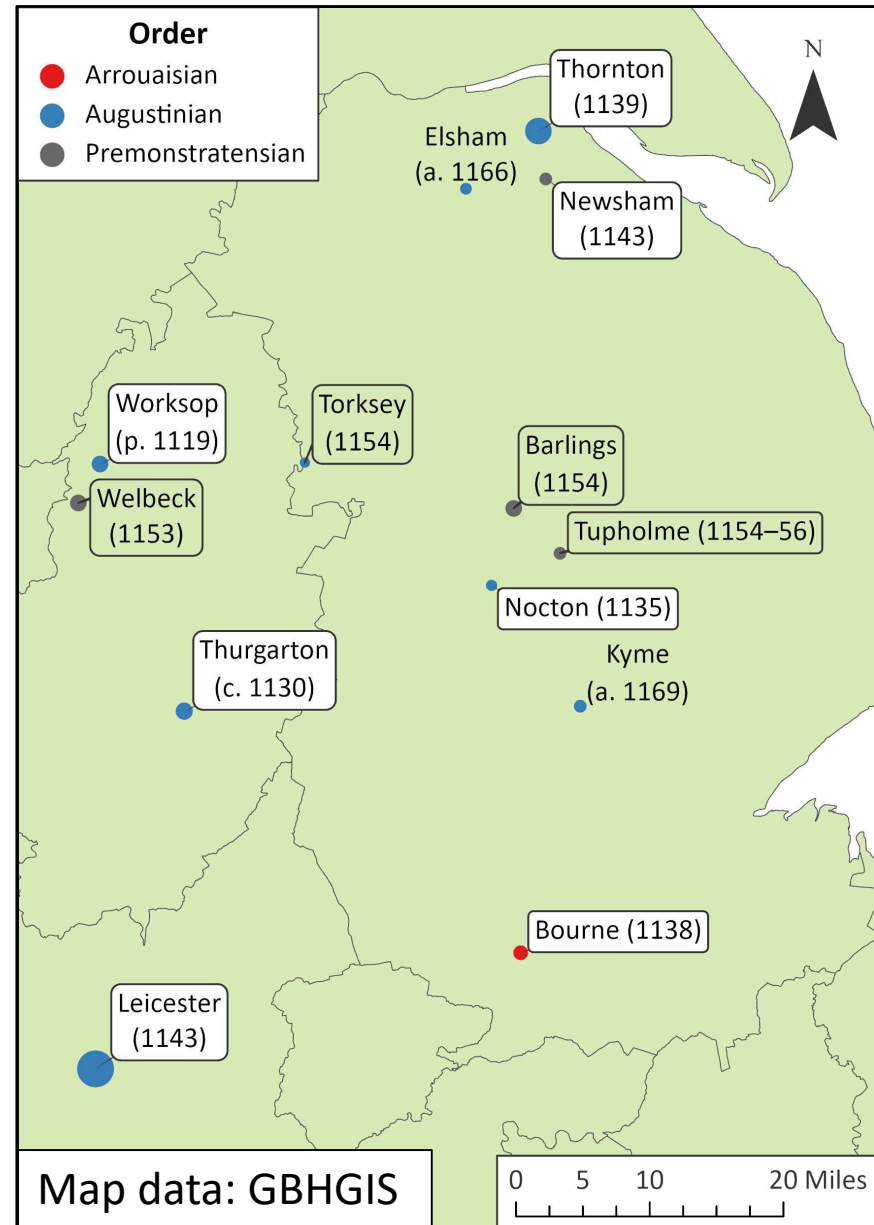
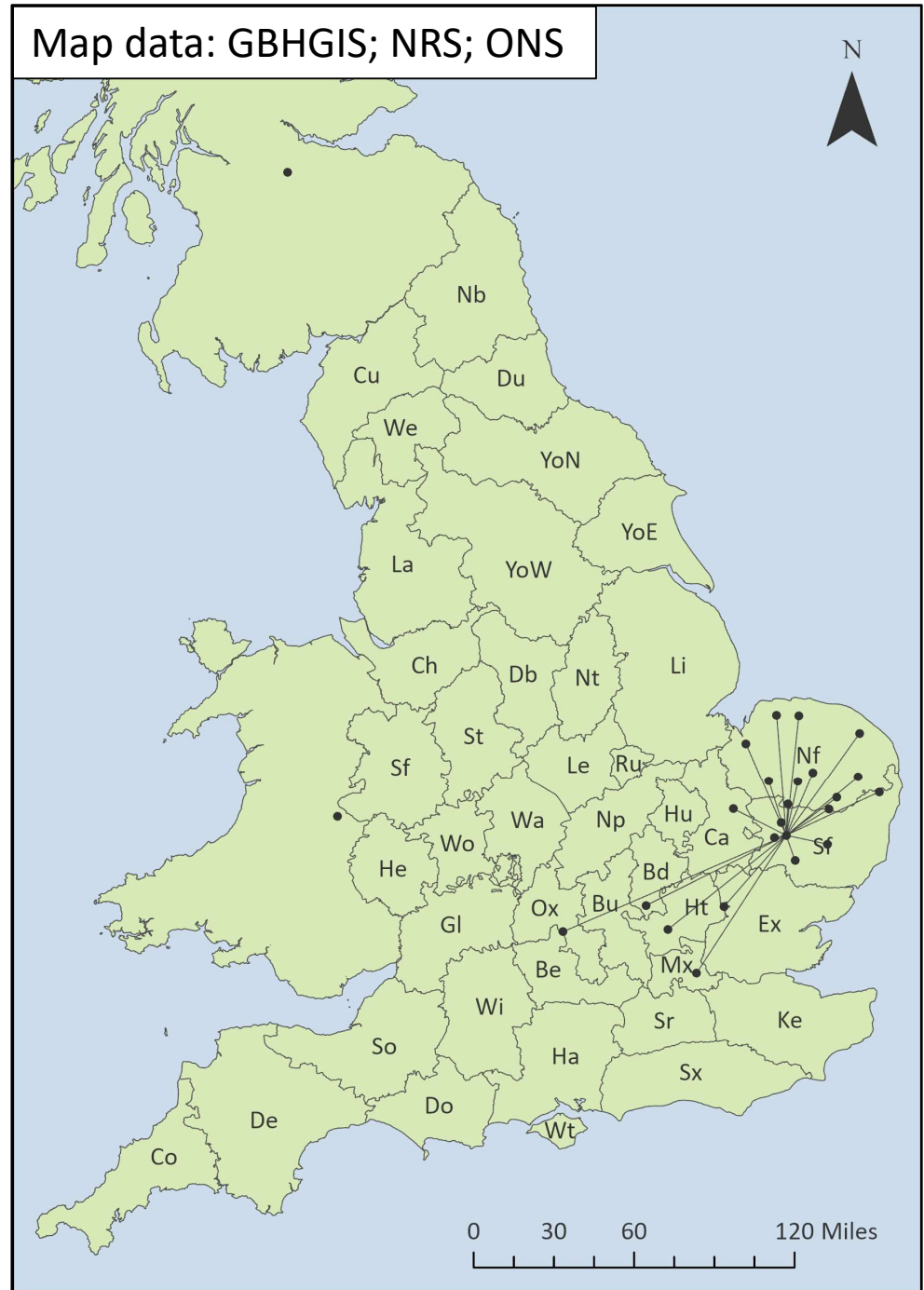# Monastic recruitment patterns: Bury St Edmunds (e13th c.)

Distances travelled:
- Mean: 33 miles
- Median: 30 miles

Excluded:
- non-locative bynames (and locative bynames with multiple possible sources)
- locative bynames referring to Wales, Scotland and Rome

After Lowe (2010)

Summary

- Linguistic evidence:
  - allowing for diachronic change means a north Lincolnshire origin should be (re)considered.
  - place-name evidence provides support for this (so far).

- Range of candidate houses:
  - 2 southerly less likely on linguistic grounds.
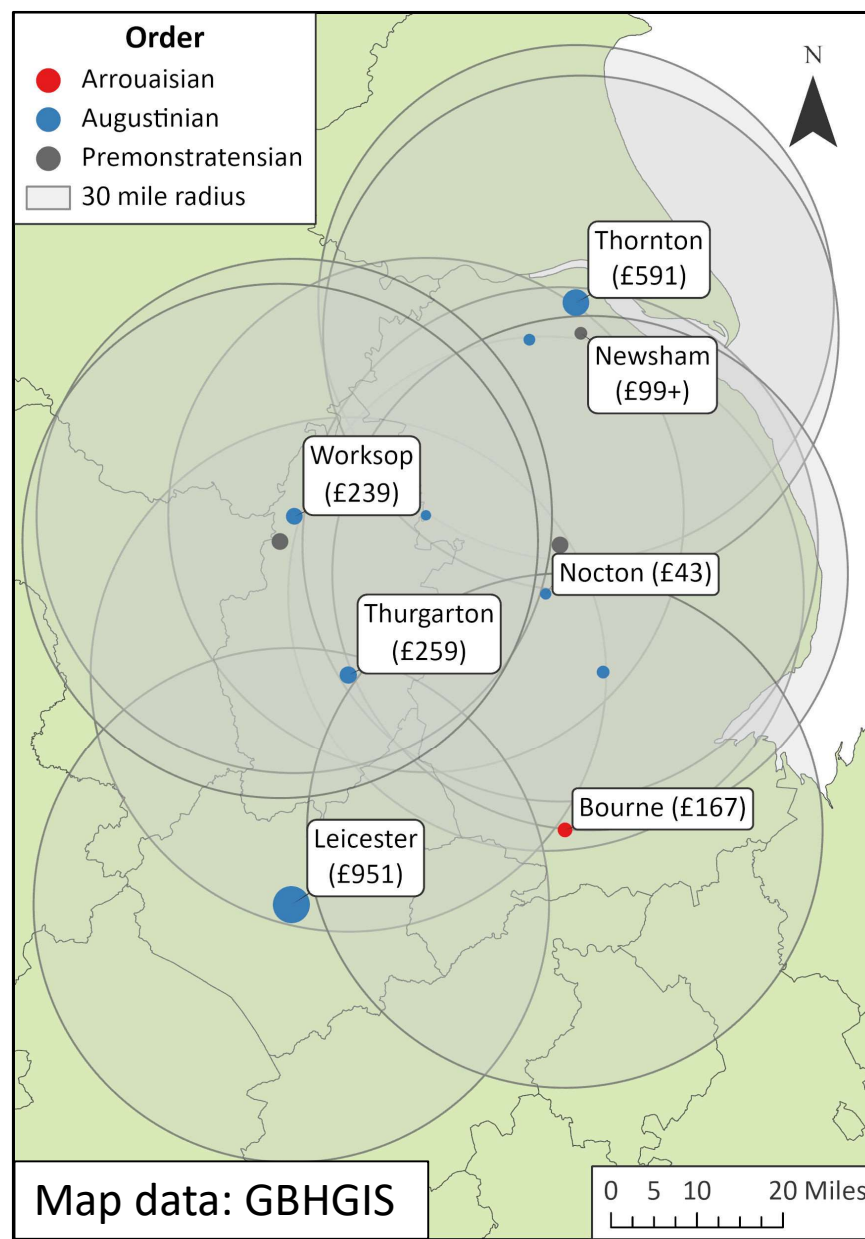
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eLALME = Benskin, M., Laing, M., Karaiskos, V., & Williamson, K. (2013–). *An electronic version of a linguistic atlas of Late Mediaeval English*. University of Edinburgh. http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html

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GBHGIS = Great Britain Historical GIS. (2012). *Counties of England and Wales 1911* [shapefile]. University of Portsmouth. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/data/index.jsp

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McIntosh, A. (1963). A new approach to Middle English dialectology. *English Studies*, 44, 1–11.

NRS = National Records of Scotland. (1991). 1991 *Census: boundary data (Scotland)* [shapefile]. UK Data Service, University of Essex. http://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/boundary-data.aspx

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