# The historical importance of Viking-Age Waterford

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THE recent Viking-Age discoveries at Woodstown, near Waterford, in the Irish province of Munster, have highlighted the need to assess the importance of Waterford as a viking-settlement in the ninth and tenth centuries.[1] Mainly drawing on written sources, I set out in this paper to discuss: (a) the site of Woodstown and the origins of Waterford; (b) Waterford's relationship with other viking-settlements in Ireland and (c) links with neighbouring Irish polities; (d) Waterford's economic significance; and finally, (e) the external contacts of the port. I shall restrict my analysis to the years before A.D. 1035 when Waterford was ruled by viking-kings.

In Ireland, the Viking-Age is conventionally dated from the first recorded viking-raids in 795 until the Angevin invasion of 1171/2. The enduring contribution of these centuries is the foundation of major Irish ports – including Waterford, Dublin, and Limerick – which brought Ireland into closer contact with viking-colonies throughout Europe. The nature of vikings' impact on Irish history is still hotly debated, and it is hoped that further research at Woodstown will shed new light on this formative period of Irish history.

The site at Woodstown, alias Woodhouse, is located on the banks of the River Suir, roughly three miles west of the centre of modern Waterford. The modern Irish name of Woodstown, *Baile na Coille*, seems to be a direct translation of the English.[2] The earliest names recorded for the site are *Balleode* and *Baliowodam* found in a charter of 1191 issued when John, Lord of Ireland, granted it to the new Priory of St John which he founded in the town of Waterford.[3] This early post-Conquest form suggests that the 'wood'-element of the name

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[2] *Pace* P. Power, 'Place names of the Decies', *Journal of the Waterford and South-east of Ireland Archæological Society* 9 (1906) 12–39, 80–106, 154–70, 228–65; 10 (1907) 14–41, 88–134, 184–240, 263–310; 11 (1908) 1–34, 45–78, 135–68, 179–210; 12 (1909) 25–48, at 9 (1906) p. 86: 'The English, or official, form is merely a literal translation of the Irish name'.

[3] P. Power, 'The priory church and hospital of St. John the Evangelist, Waterford', *Journal of the Waterford and South-east of Ireland Archæological Society* 2 (1896) 81–97, at p. 83.
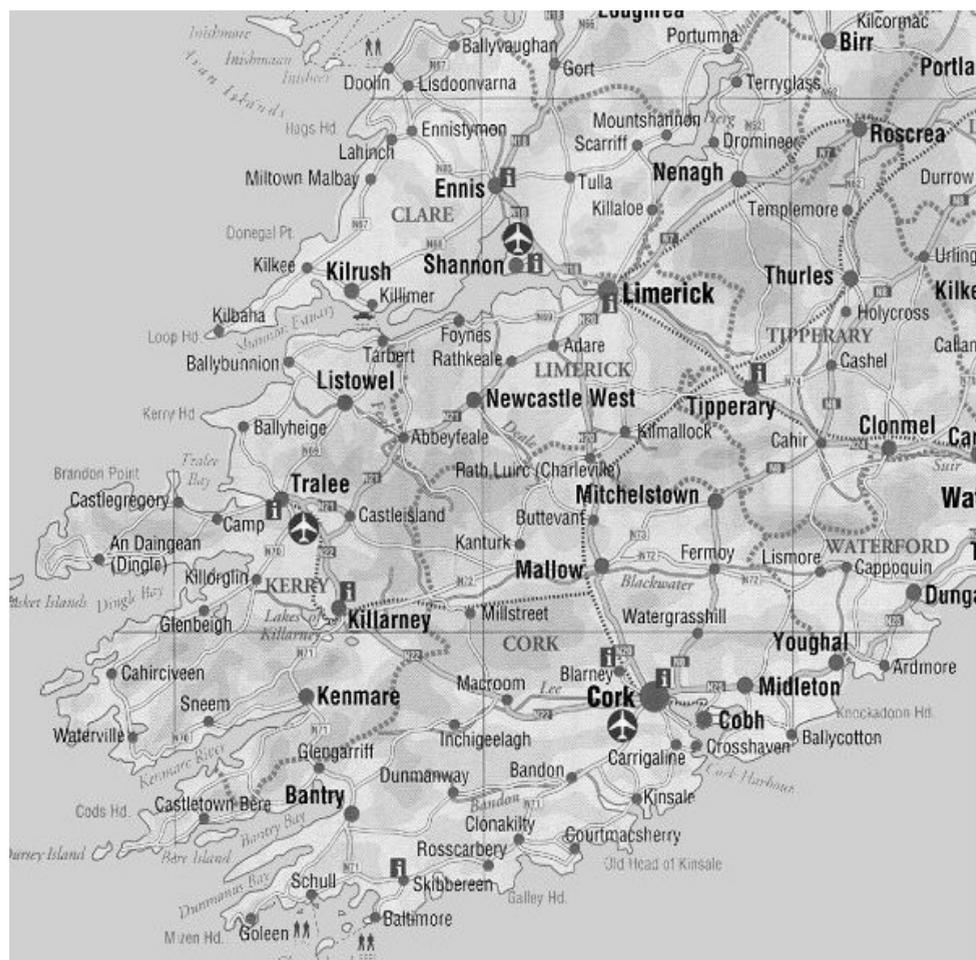
Woodstown is not derived simply from the English word but was suggested in some way by an antecedent Irish usage.

To date, an area of Woodstown 400 metres by 60 metres has been investigated, and this has yielded a remarkable series of finds. Ship-nails, locks, and balance-weights (some decorated with Irish ecclesiastical metalwork), a pagan warrior-burial, and hacksilver all illustrate viking-activity. Finds which give dating-evidence for the site include a Kufic dirham (a silver coin from the Arab world) which can be dated to the ninth century. A fragment of a Hiberno-Scandinavian arm-ring of the type which circulated in Ireland in the late ninth and tenth centuries has also been found. A sword found in the warrior's burial may be of a type datable to the tenth century, but that has not yet been confirmed. Evidence of house-gullies and a defensive ditch require further analysis to determine both the function and longevity of the site and its extent. A full excavation could radically alter our views on the early Viking-Age in Ireland.

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A crucial question to address is the relationship of Woodstown to the nearby settlement at Waterford. I shall approach this topic in three parts, discussing first the origins of viking-settlement in Ireland, secondly the evidence for early viking-activity in the Waterford-region, and finally drawing on the historical references to viking-settlement at Waterford. One vital point is that we should not suppose the beginnings of viking-activity in Ireland to be fully charted in the surviving chronicles.

The first recorded raids on Ireland took place in 795, more or less contemporary with the first documented attacks in other areas of western Europe.[4] The beginnings of viking-activity in Ireland are often divided by scholars into phases, beginning with hit-and-run raids from the 790s to the 820s, proceeding to more intensive campaigns in the late 830s when the first annalistic references to viking-bases, sometimes called *longphuirt* ('ship-ports'), are found.[5]

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[4] *[The] A[nnals of] Clon[macnoise, being Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1408]*, ed. Denis Murphy (Dublin 1896),792[=795]. *[Annala Rioghachta Eireann:] A[nnals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the] F[our] M[asters, from the Earliest Times to the Year 1616]*, ed. & transl. John O'Donovan (2nd edn, 7 vols, Dublin 1856), I, 790[=795]. *[The] A[nnals of] I[nisfallen (MS. Rawlinson B 503)]*, ed. & transl. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin 1951), [795].2. *[The] A[nnals of] U[lster (to A.D. 1131)]*, I, ed. & transl. Seán Mac Airt & G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin 1983), 794[=795].3. Un-bracketed dates are those found in the chronicle-text; editorial dates are given in square brackets. Where necessary I have added a corrected date in brackets following an equals-sign.

[5] For example, Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (London 1991), pp. 221–9.

The first example on record is that of *Inber Dée* (Co. Wicklow) in 836.[6] This '*longphort*-phase' ends in 902 when Uí Ímair were expelled from Dublin.[7] Nevertheless, recent excavations conducted by Linzi Simpson in Dublin may cause a revision of this linear presentation of the origins of viking-settlement in Ireland. Two viking-burials excavated at Ship Street yielded radiocarbon-dates pointing to the late 780s and 790s.[8] Burial evidence is often used to indicate settlement, though perhaps of a temporary nature.

A short-term viking-base may have been founded at Dublin in the time of the earliest recorded attacks, such as the raid on *Rechru*, arguably Lambay Island near Dublin, in 795, and the more certain attack on Holmpatrick near the Skerries in 798.[9] 'The Annals of Ulster' report that on this occasion the cattle-tribute of neighbouring territories was collected by vikings.[10] One might suppose that the gathering of this tribute could not have been done instantaneously and therefore envisage the existence of a temporary post while cattle were extorted, counted, selected, and driven onto longships. Cattle-tribute may not have been the most practical way of transferring wealth overseas, and it is possible that the animals represented supplies for a camp in Ireland. Rather than sticking wholly to hit-and-run raids (drawing one's ship to shore, sacking the local church, then rushing home), some of the early raiding-bands may have chosen a more leisurely approach, anchoring their ships offshore for a short period, or even establishing a camp on land.

It may sound far-fetched or over-hasty to drag back the origins of viking-bases in Ireland by forty years on the evidence of a restricted number of radiocarbon-dates, and further investigation is needed. Nevertheless, helpful comparison may be made with the situation in England. 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' makes no reference to viking-settlement in England in the early ninth century. However, a series of contemporary royal diplomas issued by kings of the

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[6] AFM 835[=836]; AU 835[=836].5; *C[hronicum] S[cotorum. A Chronicle of Irish Affairs, from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135]*, ed. & transl. William M. Hennessy  (London 1866), [836]. E. Bhreathnach, 'Saint Patrick, vikings and Inber Dée – longphort in the early Irish literary tradition', *Wicklow Archaeology and History* 1 (1998) 36–40.

[7] A second series of *longphuirt*-foundations is recorded in the 920s and 930s: AU 920[=921].7, 922[=923].4, 923[=924].1, 925[=926].5, 925[=926].6, 929[=930].3, 935[=936].2.

[8] Linzi Simpson, 'Ninth-century Dublin: the evidence unfolds', lecture presented at the Sixth Medieval Dublin Symposium, Trinity College, Dublin, 29 May 2004. The Ship Street burials were located on the west side of the dark pool of *Dub-linn*. The radiocarbon-dates come from two male pagan graves, one accompanied by a shield-boss and dagger, the other with a finger-ring, bead, metal disc, and sword.

[9] AClon 792[=795]; AFM 790[=795].6; AU 794[=795].3; C. Downham, 'An imaginary viking raid on Skye in 795?', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000) 192–6.

[10] AClon 795[=798]; AFM 793[=798]; AU 797[=798].2.

Mercians from 792 to 827 refers to viking-camps and campaigns in Kent.[11] Chronicles cannot necessarily be relied on to record the first stages of viking-settlement.[12]

An exodus of vikings from Ireland to Britain in the 860s led to the destruction of some *longphuirt* by Irish kings.[13] Most of the camps – as at Youghal, Clondalkin, and those in the territory of the Northern Uí Néill – are first recorded at the moment when they were demolished.[14] We do not know when they were founded. For this reason the site at Woodstown will shed new light on the progression of viking-settlement along the south coast of Ireland. It will also facilitate better understanding of viking-colonisation across Europe and illustrate how Ireland fits into the bigger picture of these revolutionary events.

When we move from general to local evidence, we find that Irish chronicles display particular interest in viking-attacks on churches. Colmán Etchingham has noted a geographical bias towards the Shannon-basin and the East Midlands; so, although annal-entries pinpoint early viking-activity near Waterford, the coverage of this area may be less detailed.[15] The earliest recorded viking-campaigns in Munster can be dated to 812.[16] In that year Cobthach son of Mael Dúin, overking of Eóganacht Locha Léin, and his men slaughtered a band of vikings. The early twelfth-century saga *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* gives a fuller account of events in this year and mentions a viking-fleet at *Camas* in the territory of Uí Fhothaid Thíre, presumably near Waterford.[17] This account could provide evidence for viking-activity along the River Suir. However, the reliability of this saga-account is uncertain: in particular, the author tended to telescope together events from a range of years.[18]

[11] P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters. An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London 1968), nos 134, 160, 168, 177, 186, 1264 (online at http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/sdk13/chartwww/NewRegReg.html).

[12] D. N. Dumville, 'Vikings in the British Isles: a question of sources', in *Scandinavians from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century*, ed. Judith Jesch (San Marino 2003), pp. 209–50, at pp. 214, 220–2.

[13] Clare Elizabeth Downham, 'Britain and Scandinavian Ireland: the Dynasty of Ívarr and Pan-Insular Politics to 1014' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge 2003), p. 18.

[14] AFM 864[=866], 865[=867]; AU 865[=866].4, 866[=867].8.

[15] Colmán Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century. A Reconsideration of the Annals* (Maynooth 1996), pp. 17–31.

[16] AClon 809[=812]; AFM 807[=812]; AU 811[=812].11; CS [812].

[17] *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh. The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill; or, The Invasions of Ireland by Danes and Other Norsemen*, ed. & transl. James Henthorn Todd (London 1867), pp. 4/5 (§4); Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum Locorum et Tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae* (Dublin 1910), pp. 154, 672. Following Hogan, I had thought that this might refer to Camus Bridge, near Clonmel, bar. Iffa and Offa, Co. Tipperary. However, Breandán Ó Ciobháin suggested at the Eighteenth Irish Conference of Medievalists that the *Camas* mentioned in *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* may be a site on the River Suir closer to Woodstown.

[18] M. Ní Mhaonaigh, '*Cogad Gáedhel re Gallaib* and the Annals: a comparison', *Ériu* 48 (1996) 101–

There is more secure evidence for viking-activity in the sea-lough known as Waterford Harbour in 822. In this year the church at *Inis Doimle* was ransacked by vikings.[19] The site has been convincingly identified by Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha as Great Island on the River Suir.[20] Vikings returned in 825 and not only plundered Great Island but also campaigned against the Osraige.[21] In 837 attacks on the churches at Freshford (Co. Kilkenny) and Killinny (Co. Kilkenny) in Ossory indicate further use of the River Barrow and River Nore by vikings on campaign.[22] These raids may highlight the significance of Waterford Harbour as the key to the inland river-routes. Located at the border between mediaeval provinces, Waterford Harbour provided riverine access to the heartlands of Munster, Leinster, and Ossory. These raids of the 820s and 830s occurred during one of the most intense phases of viking-activity in Ireland, but as yet without reference in the chronicles to a settlement at Waterford. These attacks may have encouraged overkings of Munster and Leinster to ally against the aggressors, and in 848 these native rulers won a significant victory at Skeenagun near Castledermot, Co. Kildare.[23] This is one of a number of Irish victories in this year, news of which travelled to the carolingian court.[24]

Following the notices of those defeats there is a decline in records of viking-activity. Colmán Etchingham has linked this to a change in chronicling practice, noting a decline in other types of record at this time.[25] Alternatively, Donnchadh Ó Corráin has associated it with the arrival of *Dubgaill*, 'Dark Foreigners'. He has argued that they established a monopoly of viking-led violence, thus reducing the number of reported attacks.[26] Whatever the cause, it is precisely when this decline in record occurs that there is a radical increase in record of viking-attacks emanating from Waterford Harbour. This could be explained by the foundation of a viking-base in the area.

26, at p. 105.

[19] AClon 819[=822]; AFM 820[=822].

[20] M. Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Inis Teimle, between Uí Chennselaig and the Déissi', *Peritia* 16 (2002) 451–8.

[21] According to *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* Uí Cheinnselaig and the churches of St Mullins (Co. Carlow) and Ennistogue (Co. Kilkenny) were also attacked: *Cogadh*, ed. & transl. Todd, pp. 6/7 (§7).

[22] AFM 836[=837]; Hogan, *Onomasticon*, pp. 192, 196.

[23] AI [848].2; AU 847[=848].5; CS [848].

[24] *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, edd. Félix Grat *et al.* (Paris 1964), *s.a.* 848; AFM 846[=848]; AU 847[=848].4, 847[=848].6, 847[=848].7; CS [848]. Cf. David N. Dumville, *Three Men in a Boat. Scribe, Language, and Culture in the Church of Viking-Age Europe* (Cambridge 1997), pp. 56–7; Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-kings* (2nd edn, Dublin 2001), p. 262.

[25] Etchingham, *Viking Raids*, pp. 12–15.

[26] D. Ó Corráin, 'The vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century', *Peritia* 12 (1998) 296–339, at pp. 328–9.

841-6: VIKING-ACTIVITY

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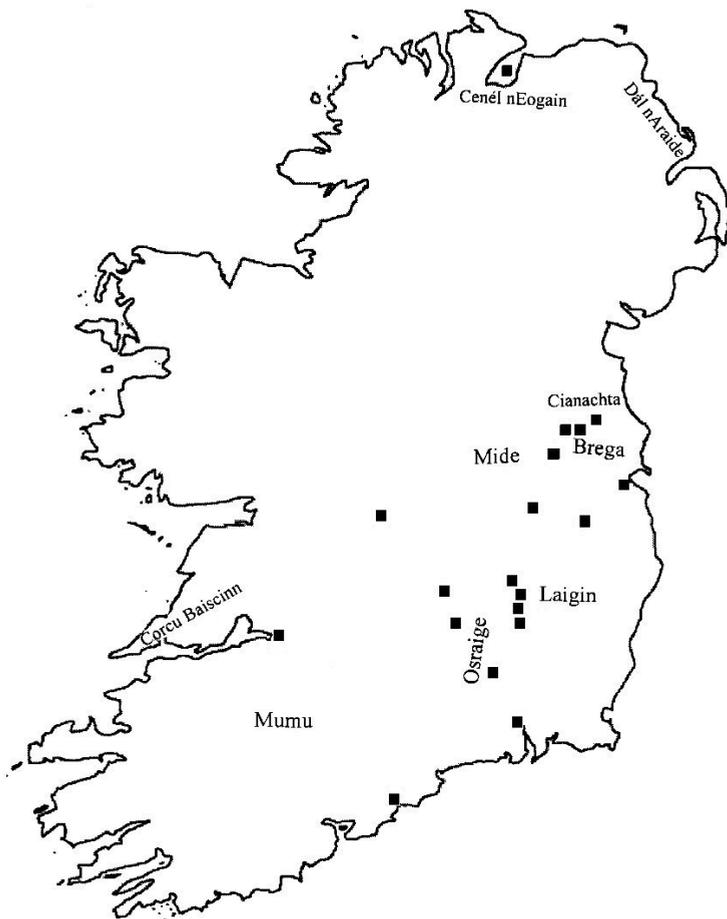
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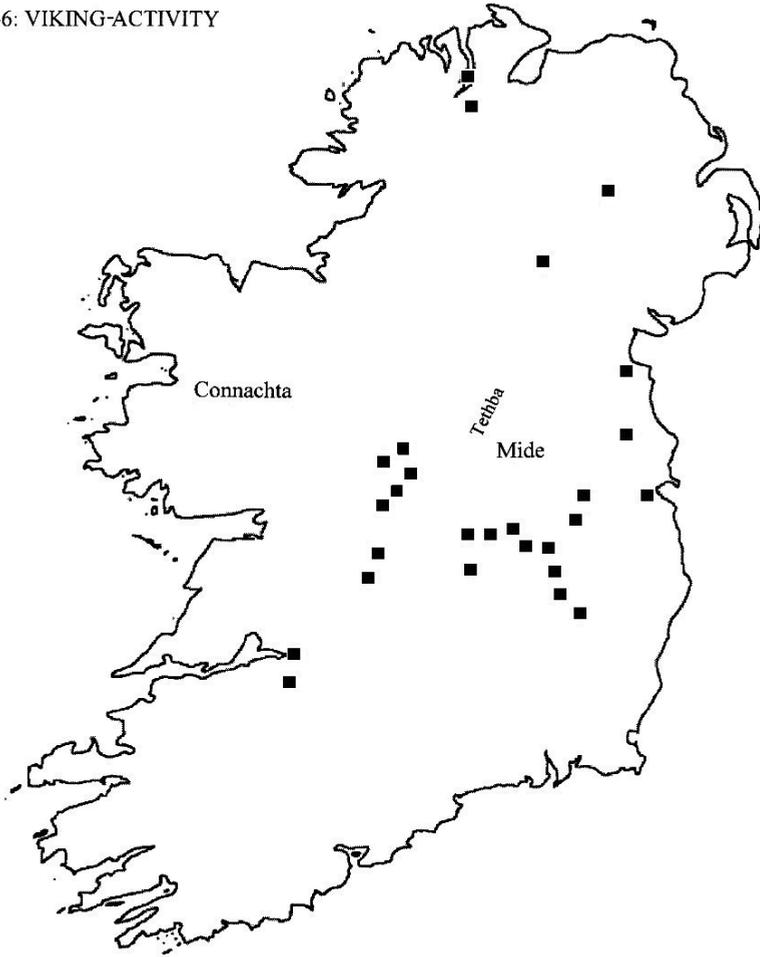
861-6: VIKING-ACTIVITY

The change can be seen in maps plotting viking-activity (Figures 1 and 2). In the 840s reported viking-activity focused on the Shannon and the Liffey. In the 860s there is a notable re-orientation of attacks along the valleys of the Nore and Barrow. Some of this increase can be attributed to the commencement of records for the Viking-Age in the so-called 'Fragmentary Annals of Ireland'.[27] This text is biased towards the Osraige (both in favour and coverage), but, even without its information, increased viking-interest in the region is notable.

This concentration of viking-raids may have been intended to take advantage both of the political weakness of Munster following the death of its overking Ólchobur in 851 and of the decline of the overkingship of Leinster because of the ambitions of Uí Néill in the area.[28] The campaigns could also be interpreted as rivalries between *Dubgaill* ('Dark Foreigners') and *Finngaill* ('Fair Foreigners'), now based respectively at Dublin and Limerick, spilling over into this area.[29] Waterford Harbour represented a strategically significant middle-ground over which rival viking-groups vied for control. These campaigns threw the polities of the Osraige (focused on the Nore Valley) and their northern neighbours the Loígis into the political limelight. Their rulers, Cerball of the Osraige and Cennétig of the Loígis, were able skilfully to play off one band of vikings against another.[30]

A saga-account of these years, written in the eleventh century, was used as a source for the 'Fragmentary Annals of Ireland'. It gives a colourful narration in which Cerball plays the hero. The viking *Rodolb* (Old Norse Hróðolfr) is portrayed as the arch-enemy, and Cerball defeats him on three occasions, culminating in the destruction of Rodolb's base beside the River Barrow.[31] According to the saga Cerball also defeated the vikings of Waterford in 860, and this is the first reference to a viking-base there. The account provided in the 'Fragmentary Annals of Ireland' is worthy of quotation.[32]

As amlaidh táinig Cearball immach asa grianán 7 rioghchainnel mhór re(a)imhe, 7 rá bhoí soilsi na caindle sin go fada ar gach leith. Ra ghabh úamhan mór na Lochlannaig; 7 ra theichsiot fona sleibhtibh faigsibh dhóibh 7 fona cailltibh. An lucht imorro ra thairis ra h-

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[27] *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*, ed. & transl. Joan Newlon Radner (Dublin 1978), pp. 88–183 (§§233–459).

[28] Byrne, *Irish Kings*, pp. 162–3; Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin 1972), p. 99.

[29] For the early history of Limerick see: AU 844[=845].1, 921[=922].3, 927[=928].5; CS [845].1, [887].6. The *Dubgaill* seized Dublin in the 850s: AU 848[=849].6, 850[=851].3, 851[=852].3, 851 [=852].3; CS [849], [851], [852].

[30] C. Downham, 'The career of Cearbhall of Osraighe', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 1 (2004) 1–18; C. Downham, 'The good, the bad and the ugly: portrayals of vikings in "The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland"', *The Medieval Chronicle* 3 (2005) 28–40.

[31] Downham, 'The career', p. 11.

[32] *Fragmentary Annals*, ed. & transl. Radner, pp. 108/9 (§277).

eangn[a]m díobh ra marbadh uile. O thainig maidin a mmucha amamharach, ra chuaidh / / Cearbhall gona shoc[h]raidhe 'na cceann uile, 7 ní ra ghabh uatha ar marbadh a ndeargáir, go ra cuirit a mmadhmuim, 7 go ro sgaoilit íad for gach leith. Ra immir Cearbhall féine go crúaidh isin ammus sain, 7 tainig ris go mór a méd attibh an aidhche remhe, 7 ra sgé go mór, 7 tug sonairte mór do-s[o]mh sain; 7 ra ghreiss go mór a muinntir go dioc[h]ra forsna Lochlannac[h]aib.

'This is how Cerball came out of his chamber: with a huge royal candle before him, and the light of the candle shone far in every direction. Great terror seized the Norwegians, and they fled to the nearby mountains and to the woods. Those who stayed behind out of valour, moreover, were all killed. When daybreak came the next morning, Cerball attacked all of them with his troops and he did not give up after they had been slaughtered until they had been routed, and they had scattered in all directions. Cerball himself fought hard in this battle, and the amount he had drunk the night before hampered him greatly; and he vomited much, and that gave him immense strength; and he urged his people loudly and harshly against the Norwegians.'

In the same year, according to this saga, two viking-chieftains who were travelling from Limerick to Waterford were killed by the men of Munster.[33] Caution is necessary in interpreting these references to Waterford. They are dependent on an account written two centuries after the events which it described. It can be argued that the author(s) of the saga embedded in the 'Fragmentary Annals' drew the skeleton of the narrative from earlier chronicle-accounts and elaborated on, distorted, and dramatised it to flatter and entertain the ruling dynasty of the Osraige.[34] It is credible that Scandinavian Waterford was founded by 860, but the 'Fragmentary Annals of Ireland' cannot be relied on in their more flamboyant details.

One frequently repeated story of Waterford's origins is that it was established by a viking-chieftain named Sitric in 853. However, this assertion seems highly dubious. According to the eighteenth-century writer Charles Smith in his history of Waterford, the port was created by a viking-leader called Sitricus in the year 853, at the same time as Limerick was founded by Ivarus and Dublin by Amlavus.[35] This account is based on a story by Gerald of Wales in the late twelfth century. According to Gerald, three brothers – Amlavus (Old Norse Óláfr), Sitricus (Old Norse Sigtryggr), and Ivarus (Old Norse Ívarr) – were permitted to settle in Ireland for the purposes of commerce, and they founded the three towns

[33] *Ibid.* (§278). The chieftains are named as Hona the sorcerer and Tomrar Torra.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. xxii–xxxiv.

[35] Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford* (2nd edn, Dublin 1774), p. 96.

of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick.[36] Gerald added the barb that the Irish allowed this because they were too lazy to trade. As well as being a tale to discredit the Irish, this reads like an origin-legend for the dynasty of Ímar, which imposed its authority over Dublin and Limerick after these viking-bases were founded.[37] Like so much of what Gerald wrote, the story has been taken to heart and elaborated by later commentators, who have assigned a date to the event, but I see no reason to accept it as accurate. Another foundation-myth for Waterford is found in the thirteenth-century *Ystoria Gruffudd ap Cynan*. In this account the Norwegian king Harald Finehair founded Dublin and gave Waterford to his brother whose descendants ruled it thereafter.[38] Because of Waterford's continuing significance, it is not surprising that mediaeval legends circulated about the origins of the port.

Vikings from Waterford could have participated in some of the campaigns which took place on the Rivers Nore and Barrow from the 860s to the 880s, including the slaying of Cuilén son of Cerball of the Osraige in 887.[39] The next unambiguous reference to Waterford is in 892 when Riagán mac Dúnlainge, overking of the Osraige, defeated vikings from Waterford, Wexford, and St Mullins (Co. Wexford).[40] Ten years later, the dynasty ruling Dublin was expelled from Ireland. When vikings associated with this dynasty returned to Ireland in 914, Waterford was their first recorded port of call.[41]

The earliest references to a viking-settlement at Waterford can be identified for the years 860, 892, and 914, but what names were given to this settlement? And what was the relationship of Woodstown to the site underlying the present city of Waterford? The English name Waterford is derived from an Old-Norse name meaning 'windy fjord' or 'ram-fjord': it is not found in Irish written sources of the Viking-Age.[42] In Irish chronicles the name given to the port in 860, 892, and 914 is the familiar Irish name, Port Láirge. The eminent nineteenth-century

[36] J. J. O'Meara, 'Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie: Text of the First Recension', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 52 C (1948–50) 113–78, at p. 175 (§117); *Gerald of Wales, The History and Topography of Ireland*, transl. John J. O'Meara (Harmondsworth 1982), p. 122.

[37] See n. 29, above.

[38] *A Mediaeval Prince of Wales. The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. & transl. D. Simon Evans (Felinfach 1990), pp. 25, 56 (§5). Paul Russell's edition and translation of the original twelfth-century Latin text will soon be published by the University of Wales Press.

[39] AFM 884[=887].

[40] AFM 888[=892].

[41] AFM 910[=914]; AU 913[=914].5; CS [913][=914].

[42] M. Oftedal, 'Scandinavian place names in Ireland', in *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15–21, August 1973*, edd. Bo Almqvist & D. Greene (Dublin 1976), pp. 125–33, at p. 133; D. Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'L'influence scandinave sur la toponymie irlandaise', in *L'Héritage maritime des vikings en Europe de l'ouest*, ed. E. Ridel (Caen 2002), pp. 441–82, at p. 476.

scholar John O'Donovan thought that the settlement was named after a viking-leader Laraic mentioned uniquely in 'The Annals of the Four Masters' for the year 953.[43] However, if Laraic was a person rather than a place, he lived much too late to be the founder of Waterford, and his name-form seems to have been corrupted.[44] It therefore seems more likely that the name Port Láirge is entirely Irish. *Lárac* is an Irish word meaning 'limb' or 'thigh', and it is found in other Gaelic place-names, for example *Áth dá Loracc* near Kells (Co. Meath) recorded in 1176 and *Áth do Laaraic* near Boyle (Co. Roscommon) first mentioned in 1197.[45] In the Middle Ages this was the accepted origin of the name 'Port of a thigh', and fantastic tales were invented to explain it. In *Táin bó Cuailnge*, when the Brown Bull slaughters his rival, the thigh-bone of Findbennach is said to have been cast to Port Láirge.[46] In the eleventh-century *Dinnshenchas Érenn* it is said that a young prince called Rot died at sea after being lured by nubile sirens, who tore him to pieces, and his thigh-bone was washed ashore at Port Láirge.[47] Curiously, *Rot* was the name given in *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* to a viking of Waterford who was defeated by Munstermen about the year 916.[48]

Beginning in 914, and exclusively from 915 to 918, an alternative name *Loch dá Chaech*, ('The lake of the two blind people') which is otherwise employed for Waterford Harbour, is used in the chronicles for a viking-settlement at Waterford (see Appendix 1). The name Loch dá Chaech ceases to be used for a viking-settlement at Waterford after 918, corresponding with the time when 'the Foreigners of Loch dá Chaech' departed from Ireland under the leadership of Ragnall ua Ímair. (The name nevertheless continued to apply to the sea-lough Waterford Harbour.) From 918 to 925 the vikings at Waterford are not mentioned in the chronicles, and then in 926 the earlier name, Port Láirge, resumes in the chronicles and is employed thenceforth. This switch could represent a change in

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[43] AFM 951[=953] and note by O'Donovan, *Annala*, II.698.

[44] I should like to thank Martin Syrett for his comments on this name. While the second element of the name could be Old Norse -*ríkr*, it does not conform to any known Old-Norse name. Alternatively, as Breandán Ó Ciobháin suggested after my lecture, it could represent the second element of Port Láirge (Laraic) used as a shorthand for the place. If so, O'Donovan's translation should be amended to state that St Mullins was raided 'from [Port] Láirge' rather than 'by Laraic'.

[45] *Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials. Compact Edition*, gen. ed. E. G. Quin (Dublin 1983), p. 422, L, col. 54, line 80 – col. 55, line 51; Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'L'influence', p. 476; T. F. O'Rahilly, '*Iarann*, *Lárag*, etc.', *Ériu* 13 (1940–2) 119–27, at p. 123 and n. 5; W. J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1926), pp. 483–5. In Scottish place-names this element means 'a pass'.

[46] *Táin bó Cúalnge from The Book of Leinster*, ed. & transl. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin 1967), pp. 136, 272.

[47] *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. & transl. Edward J. Gwynn (5 vols, Dublin 1903–35), III.190–3.

[48] *Cogadh*, ed. & transl. Todd, pp. 26/7 (§ 26).

chronicling practice, or it could be that a new viking-camp was founded in 914, which was identified with Loch dá Chaech.[49]

Is the viking-settlement at Loch dá Chaech to be thought distinct from both Waterford and Woodstown? The chronology of finds revealed so far at Woodstown makes it unlikely that it can be identified with the viking-base called Loch dá Chaech. Alternatively, is it possible that Loch dá Chaech is the name first given to what is now Waterford? Woodstown lies over three miles upstream from the centre of Waterford. The vikings who came to Ireland in 914 may have placed a stronghold nearer the sea-lough.[50] Perhaps this fort was initially identified by the name Loch dá Chaech but by 927 received the more specific name of Port Láirge borrowed from the neighbouring site which it superseded. According to this tentative argument, Woodstown was put out of use in the early tenth century. From an archaeological perspective this would mean that the site has been relatively undisturbed for over a thousand years.

It is of course possible that the two viking-sites of Woodstown and Waterford co-existed for a longer period before Woodstown fell out of use and Waterford took over as the main viking-port on the River Suir. The political situation in the early tenth century nevertheless provides a possible context for that development. The earliest archaeological levels so far identified at Waterford are from the early eleventh century, and so the secrets of any earlier history are still tantalisingly buried underground.[51]

It is clear that, at some point in the Viking-Age, Woodstown declined while Waterford flourished. Several possible reasons for this come to mind. One is that the present site of Waterford may have been more easily defended, so that Waterford became more successful for military reasons. Waterford was also closer to the estuaries of the Barrow and Nore: it was therefore better sited to mediate traffic passing through Waterford Harbour than was Woodstown. Another cause of Waterford's success could be linked to river-morphology. Waterford may have provided a better location for a quay than Woodstown as traffic to the settlement increased bringing many deep-berthed cargo-ships as well as the more

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[49] That Loch dá Chaech is not Port Láirge seems clear when Loch dá Chaech is named (in a record of the death of the poet Flann mac Lonáin) as being in the territory of Déisi Muman in 896, and thus distinct from the viking-settlement of Port Láirge: AFM 891[=896]; AI [896].3; AU 895[=896].10; CS [896]. Cf. AFM 918[=920] for a doublet. There are works attributed to Flann mac Lonáin written after his death: M. Dobbs, 'A poem ascribed to Flann mac Lonáin' Ériu 17 (1955) 18–34; C. O Lochlainn, 'Poets on the battle of Clontarf', Éigse 3 (1942/3) 208–18 and 4 (1944/5) 33–47.

[50] AClon 910[=914]; AFM 910[=914], 912[=914]; AU 913[=914].5; CS [913][=914].

[51] J. Bradley & A. Halpin, 'The topographical development of Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman Waterford City', in Waterford – History and Society, edd. William Nolan & T.P. Power (Dublin 1992), pp. 105–30.

manoeuvrable longships which could be beached on the sands at Woodstown.

This is speculation, but the circumstances and timing of the abandonment of Woodstown constitute a crucial issue which needs to be addressed and which could further highlight the importance of the site.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER VIKING-SETTLEMENTS IN IRELAND

Another question to be raised is how Waterford related to other viking-settlements in Ireland. As the distribution of Scandinavian place-names demonstrates, trading posts and way-stations were used by vikings around the Irish coastline.[52] Waterford is comparatively well documented in written sources. It seems to have been one of the most prominent viking-settlements in Ireland, on a par with Limerick and Dublin.

There was competition, for control of the rivers leading into Waterford Harbour, between rival viking-groups during the 860s. The *Dubgaill* led by Ímar and his associates won the upper hand, and this group may have controlled the port until Ímar's family was expelled from Ireland in 902. When they returned to Ireland in 914, Waterford provided their headquarters until the re-conquest of Dublin in 917.[53]

Co-operation between Waterford and Dublin continued in the 920s and 930s when they made common cause against vikings based at Limerick. The prolonged warfare, between the vikings of Limerick and those based in the east, encouraged the establishment of viking-bases across Ireland. Each side sought to secure its economic and political interest in different regions, but sometimes deliberately within the sphere of influence of its rivals. We can see in particular the rivalry between Limerick and Waterford over economic interests in Ossory and the Golden Vale of Counties Limerick and Tipperary. In 927 a battle was fought between the two sides at Kilmallock (Co. Limerick) where the vikings of Waterford were defeated.[54] Four years later Gofraid (Old Norse Guðrøðr), king of Dublin, expelled the troops of Limerick from Ossory.[55] Then in 937 the army of Limerick was decisively beaten by the Dubliners who captured its king, Amlaíb (Old Norse Óláfr), and broke up his fleet.[56]

[52] Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'L'influence scandinave', pp. 448–9.
[53] AClon 917; AU 916[=917].4; CS [916][=917].
[54] AI [927].2.
[55] AClon 926[=931]; AFM 929[=931].
[56] AFM 935[=937].

Waterford remained on friendly terms with Dublin for some years after this victory. For example, in 939 the Waterford-vikings sacked the church of Killeigh (Co. Offaly) and captured its abbot, Coibdenach.[57] He was evidently handed over or sold on to the vikings of Dublin, for he drowned the following year by Dalkey Island while trying to flee his jailers.[58] Nevertheless, while co-operation between Dublin and Waterford is well evidenced in the 930s, relations soured in mid-century. This may have been provoked by the decline of Dublin's power overseas. The viking-kingdom of Northumbria, which had been ruled by the dynasty of Ímar intermittently from the later ninth century, was lost in the 950s.[59] This may have heightened competition between vikings in Ireland to control diminishing resources.

In 953 Amlaíb Cuarán, king of Dublin, attacked Great Island in Waterford Harbour, in alliance with Tuathal, overking of Leinster.[60] This may be interpreted as a hostile intrusion into Waterford's sphere of influence. The island was sacked nine years later by members of the dynasty of Ímar who were based in the Hebrides.[61] There is evidence for an independent line of kings at Waterford, ultimately related to the kings of Dublin but acting in hostility to them during the 960s. As Dublin was drawn more closely into the political affairs of Leinster, so Waterford became closely involved with the overkings of Munster. Thus in 969 we find Ímar, king of Waterford, allied with the Dál Cais overking of Munster, Mathgamain mac Cinnétig, to defend Ossory against Leinster.[62] In the same year, Sitric son of Amlaíb of Dublin and Murchad mac Finn, overking of Leinster, allied to attack the church of Kells (Co. Meath).[63]

In the years 967 to 977 Dál Cais weakened and then conquered Waterford. Brian Bóruma mac Cinnétig then promoted Waterford as a counterweight to Dublin, as Dublin resisted his efforts to gain recognition as overking of Ireland. Dál Cais negotiated a pact with vikings from Waterford and the kingdom of Mann and the Isles in 984 to oppose Leinster and Dublin.[64] During the 990s, Ímar of Waterford and his sons fought for control of Dublin. They ruled Dublin

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[57] AFM 937[=939].

[58] AFM 938[=940]; CS [939][=940].

[59] C. Downham, 'The chronology of the last Scandinavian kings of York', *Northern History* 40 (2003) 25–51.

[60] AFM 951[=953].

[61] AFM 960 [=962]; C. Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular viking zone', *Peritia* 15 (2001) 145–87, at p. 170.

[62] AFM 967 [=969].

[63] AFM 967 [=969].

[64] AI [984].2.

briefly in 993 and 995, vying for control with Sitric son of Amlaíb.[65] This feud lasted for a decade until Ímar's death in A.D. 1000.[66] It is not clear whether vikings of Waterford supported Brian in his great battle against Dublin and Leinster at Clontarf (Co. Dublin) in 1014. Certainly, Ímar's descendants at Waterford continued to oppose Dublin after that conflict. These rivalries came to a head in 1035 when Ragnall, king of Waterford, was treacherously killed by Sitric, king of Dublin.[67] This proved to be a major setback for the viking-rulers of Waterford, and from that time the port became increasingly vulnerable to the conflicting ambitions of Uí Briain in Munster and Uí Cheinnselaig in Leinster.

Prior to 1035 Waterford's relations with other viking-settlements show that it was a major player in Irish politics. At different times it rivalled Limerick and Dublin as one of the most powerful towns in Ireland. I shall briefly consider Waterford's relations with Irish polities before discussing its economic significance and its links outside Ireland.

## LINKS WITH IRISH POLITIES

Mediaeval chronicles tend to chart discord rather than co-operation, a feature which they share with modern news-reports. Our image of vikings' relations with the Irish is seen through the record of numerous violent acts from which less aggressive interaction such as alliance, intermarriage, or trade can sometimes be inferred. The vikings of Waterford are most frequently mentioned as raiders of churches. The chronicles identify such prestigious targets for the armies of Waterford as Kildare (Co. Kildare) and Clonenagh (Co. Laois) in Leinster, and Cork (Co. Cork) and Lismore (Co. Waterford) in Munster.[68] Initially, economic motives may have been behind these attacks. Significant amounts of ecclesiastical metalwork made their way to Scandinavia, as attested by pagan graves there; ecclesiastical-metalwork fragments also adorn balance-weights found at Woodstown.[69] Irish chronicles mention the plundering of shrines and the taking of captives for ransom or for the slave-market. Slaves seem to have been exported from Ireland at an early date, as graphically illustrated by the ninth-century Life of

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[65] AFM 992[=993], 994[=995]; AI [993].6.

[66] AClon 993[=1000]; AFM 999[=1000]; AU 999[=1000].3; CS[998][=1000].

[67] AFM 1031[=1035], 1035; AU 1035.5.

[68] AFM 913[=915], 937[=939]; AU 981[=982].4; CS [914][=915], [980].

[69] E. Wamers, 'Insular finds in Viking Age Scandinavia and the state formation of Norway', in *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, edd. Howard B. Clarke *et al.* (Dublin 1998), pp. 37–72; E. Wamers, 'Some ecclesiastical and secular Insular metalwork found in Norwegian viking graves', *Peritia* 2 (1983) 277–306.

St Findán of Rheinau, a Leinsterman who was captured by vikings.[70] Some of the raids on churches could also have served as strikes against rival trading-centres, as vikings sought to develop their bases as permanent trading-sites.

These raids on churches may have also been inspired by political as much as economic considerations. Kildare was raided by Waterford-vikings in 926 and by an army from Dublin in the same year.[71] The Waterford-vikings returned in 928, and many captives and treasures were removed.[72] Then in 929 vikings travelled from Dublin to sack Kildare on the festival of St Brigit (1 February).[73] While wealth was removed on each occasion, the frequency of the attacks would hardly enable the church of St Brigit at Kildare to replace stolen goods between each raid. The principal motive for these assaults appears to have been the close association between Kildare and Uí Dúnchada. The head of this dynasty, Faelán mac Muiredaig, was overking of Leinster from 917 to 942 and outlived a brief period of imprisonment by the Dublin-vikings in 925.[74] These attacks on Kildare can be interpreted as symbolic political acts, demonstrating the failure of its patrons to provide protection. The church was also a major asset. Raiders not only took rich items from the church, but they brought adverse publicity. There may have been a decline in profits from visiting pilgrims and traders who subsequently feared to go to Kildare. While the attacks on Kildare are the most noticeable of those led from Waterford, others also dovetail with political rivalries, thus mixing war and profit.

Irish chronicles also demonstrate alliances between the rulers of Waterford and Irish kings. In 916 unspecified vikings aided Diarmait mac Cerbaill, king of the Osraige, against Uí Cheinnselaig; it is likely that they came from Waterford.[75] In the late 930s Waterford also made common cause with Cellachán, overking of Munster, against Uí Néill.[76] A pact was subsequently made between the kings of Waterford and Dál Cais. The alliances seem to have spawned marriages between

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[70] R. T. Christiansen, 'The people of the North', *Lochlann* 2 (1961) 137–64; M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Friend and foe: vikings in ninth- and tenth-century Irish literature', in *Ireland and Scandinavia*, edd. Clarke *et al.*, pp. 381–402, at pp. 392–4.

[71] AFM 924[=926]; CS [925][=926].

[72] AFM 926[=928]; CS [927][=928].

[73] AFM 927[=929].

[74] AClon 920[=925]; AFM 923[=925]; CS [924][=925].

[75] AFM 914[=916].

[76] AFM 937[=939]. The son of *Acond* (Old Norse Hákon) – *macc Acuind* (O'Donovan, *Annala*, II.638/9, misread this as *Macca cuind*) – who led the Waterford-contingent on this occasion may have been a *jarl* rather than a king of Waterford. According to *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* an *Acond* (perhaps his father) arrived at Waterford with *Cossanara* in 914, followed by Ragnall ua Ímair and Ottir: *Cogadh*, ed. & transl. Todd, pp. 26–31 (§§26, 28).

royal dynasties. A son of Ímar, king of Waterford, in the late tenth century bore the name Gillaphátraic (†983).[77] This name was common in the royal dynasty of the Osraige. The name is indicative of Irish affinities as well as christian identity. An alliance between Waterford and the Osraige is evidenced for 998, and it may be that Ímar enjoyed a long-term alliance with the Osraige which was strengthened by marriage.[78] We have two pieces of evidence that in the eleventh century Uí Briain intermarried with descendants of Ragnall. In each case this might be one of three Ragnalls: Ragnall son of Ímar of Waterford; Ragnall grandson of Ímar of Waterford; or Ragnall, king of Mann and the Isles, who died in Munster in 1005.[79] A son of Brian Bóruma married a daughter of Ragnall, and a great-grandson – Tadc mac Toirrdelbaig – married Mór daughter of Echmarcach son of Ragnall. These marriages bound these families closely together in alliance against Dublin.[80]

As regards the fate of peoples and churches within the immediate vicinity of Waterford, it is notable that the recorded ecclesiastical sites within a day's march of this viking-port survived during the Viking-Age. These include Fiddown (Co. Kilkenny) and Great Island (Co. Wexford).[81] Such survival reflects the tenacity of ecclesiastics at these sites but may also say something of the circumstances which prevailed in the immediate vicinity of Waterford after the initial viking-onslaughts, once the viking-settlement became established. Studies of urban hinterlands in the last thirty years have tended to stress the necessity for interaction and stable relations between towns and surrounding areas to ensure regular supplies of agricultural produce and to encourage trade.[82] The viking-towns have come to be seen less as parasitic entrepôts and more as part of a supply-network dependent

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[77] AFM 982[=983]; AU 982[=983].2; CS [981][=983].

[78] AFM 997[=998].

[79] AI [1018].5; AU 994[=995].7, 1004[=1005].1; AFM 1031[=1035].

[80] AI [1032].6; M. E. Dobbs, 'The Ban-shenchus', *Revue celtique* 48 (1931) 163–234, at p. 196. Cf. S. Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in the kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052–1171', *Ériu* 43 (1992) 93–133.

[81] AFM 828[=830], 873[=875], 948[=950], 980[=981]; Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Inis Teimle', p. 458. It is possible that these sites were temporarily abandoned in the wake of viking-attacks and that they soon came back use into use.

[82] J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland', in *Settlement and Society in Medieval Ireland. Studies presented to F.X. Martin, O.S.A.*, ed. John Bradley (Kilkenny 1988), pp. 49–78; P. Holm, 'Viking Dublin and the city-state concept: parameters and significance of the Hiberno-Norse settlement', in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-state Cultures*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen (Copenhagen 2000), pp. 251–62; M. Valante, 'Dublin's economic relations with hinterland and periphery in the later Viking Age', *Medieval Dublin* 1 (1999) 69–83; P.F. Wallace, 'The economy and commerce of Viking Age Dublin', in *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, IV, *Der Handel der Karolinger- und Wikingerzeit*, edd. Klaus Düwel *et al.* (Göttingen 1987), pp. 200–45.

on production-surpluses inland and a market for imported raw materials and exotic goods. According to this model, as Waterford developed an urban character the incentive for positive contacts in the immediate locality outstripped the negative ones. Raids brought upheaval and disrupted the transport of goods as well as forcing the movement of people as refugees, thus inhibiting agriculture. While this raiding may in the short term have boosted the supply of slaves and booty, in the longer term it was inimical to trade and security and therefore less desirable for the people of Waterford. The vikings may have reached some accommodation with churches and polities in their immediate vicinity of Waterford after an initial phase of bloodshed.

Waterford may have controlled a hinterland prior to 1035, although its extent is very unclear. According to John Bradley, this may have comprised the barony of Gaultier and parts of the barony of Middlethird.[83] Nevertheless, Kenneth Nicholls has pointed out that the name Gaultier, originating as *Gall-tír* or 'land of the foreigners', may have been coined in response to English rather than Scandinavian immigration.[84] Therefore it should not be assumed that this area was under the control of the vikings of Waterford. The suggestion has been made that Waterford could have dominated a coastal area stretching to the Blackwater-estuary;[85] however, this is based on argument from later circumstances. Henry II seized territory stretching from Waterford to Dungarvan (Co. Waterford) in 1175, according to the Treaty of Windsor; however, this may not have been a territorial unit in the tenth and eleventh centuries. There were people of Hiberno-Scandinavian identity living in Dungarvan in the thirteenth century, but this need not indicate that Dungarvan was part of the Viking-Age hinterland of Waterford. Rather, one might envisage that small communities of Hiberno-Scandinavian merchants and craftsmen became established in various Irish trading settlements by the thirteenth century, such as that convincingly identified at Killaloe by John Bradley.[86] Thus it is uncertain how big Waterford's hinterland was before 1035. Relations between vikings and Irish in the Waterford-area are also hard to define, although it is likely that each culture borrowed elements from the other. The territory ruled from Waterford may have been fairly compact, although in economic terms the influence of Waterford was felt across a wider area. The distribution of Viking-Age silver-hoards may be used as evidence of Waterford's economic power during these years.

[83] Bradley, 'The interpretation', pp. 64–5.
[84] I should like to thank Kenneth Nicholls for making this comment after my lecture.
[85] Bradley, 'The interpretation', pp. 64–5.
[86] J. Bradley, 'Killaloe: a pre-Norman borough?', *Peritia* 8 (1994) 170–9.

ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

This leads me to the penultimate topic of this paper, the economic significance of Waterford. The distribution of Viking-Age silver-hoards near Waterford implies that links existed between the port and the valleys of the Nore and the Suir (Appendix 1). Nevertheless, clear boundaries cannot be drawn between the economic sphere of one viking-port and those of its competitors. The rivalry which developed between Limerick and Waterford in the 920s and 930s may have involved competition for trade in the fertile valleys lying between these ports.

The silver-hoards found near Waterford represent a significant amount of wealth, accumulated as the profits of trade, plunder, or gift-exchange. In their composition and chronological distribution they fit within hoarding patterns noted across south-west Ireland, although the hoard deposited at Dunmore Cave (Co. Kilkenny) about 970 is unusual by virtue of its inclusion of elaborate ornaments which have been identified as buttons.[87] It is evident that many contents of the silver-hoards passed though Irish hands, even though they originated in a Scandinavianised cultural milieu. The hoards at Rathmooley (Co. Tipperary) and Kilmacomma (Co. Waterford) were found in ringforts, and that at Knockmaon (Co. Waterford) was discovered at a natural fortress.[88] The finds show that exchange happened across cultural boundaries and thus hint at the long-term impact which vikings had on the Irish economy.

The hoards show Ireland's participation in trading networks across Europe. That at Knockmaon includes coins from Dublin, Anglo-Saxon England, and France, as well as arm-ring fragments of a type produced in North Britain.[89] Other finds indicate conflict or trade with vikings, notably the spearheads of viking-type found at Borris-in-Ossory (Co. Laois) and Clashnamuck (Co. Laois), while a harness-mount similar to one found in a viking-grave on Colonsay in the Hebrides was found at Freestone Hill in County Kilkenny.[90] Written sources also shed light on trading links, referring to exports from Ireland including slaves,

[87] M. Blackburn & H. Pagan, 'A revised checklist of coin hoards from the British Isles' (http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/hoards/index.html), no. 151b.

[88] D. H. Scott-O'Connell, 'Viking period silver ornaments from Rathmooley, County Tipperary', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 43 (1938) 125–6; J. Sheehan, 'The Rathmooley hoard and other Viking Age silver from Co. Tipperary', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1992) 210–16; J. Sheehan, 'Viking Age hoards from Munster: a regional tradition?', in *Early Medieval Munster. Archaeology, History and Society*, edd. Michael A. Monk & J. Sheehan (Cork 1998), pp. 147–63.

[89] J. R. B. Jennings, 'On some ancient coins found in west Waterford', *Journal of the Waterford and South-east of Ireland Archæological Society* 15 (1912) 163–7; Sheehan, 'Viking Age hoards', p. 154.

[90] E. P. Kelly & J. Maas, 'The vikings and the kingdom of Laois', in *Laois – History and Society*, edd. Pádraig G. Lane & W. Nolan (Dublin 1999), pp. 123–59, at pp. 137, 147–8.

hides, woollens, and fine metalwork, while imports included pottery, wine, and honey.[91] Thus Waterford brought parts of Ireland into closer contact with a Scandinavian trading-network which stretched from Iceland to the Mediterranean and from Ireland to the Near East.

<div align="center">EXTERNAL CONTACTS</div>

The foreign contacts of Waterford during the Viking-Age provide the final topic of this paper. Trade must have been a significant feature of those contacts, and one can imagine various ships from different lands anchored at Waterford while their wares were sold in the bustling port. Political links abroad are also described in chronicles. The dynasty of Ímar which ruled Waterford also ruled, at various times, Northumbria, East Anglia, the Hebrides and Mann, Anglesey, Dublin, and Limerick.[92] When the dynasty of Ímar was temporarily expelled from Ireland in 902, its external involvements were extended and reinforced.[93] A band of vikings led by one Ingimundr travelled first to Anglesey and then settled near Chester in 902.[94] Others sought help at York. The massive hoard deposited at Cuerdale (Lancashire) around 905 combines Irish hacksilver, freshly minted coins from Northumbria, and Continental and Kufic coins.[95] This hoard may result from co-operation between vikings from York and Ireland, and it has been interpreted as the pay-chest for an army intending to reconquer Dublin.[96] Other members of the dynasty of Ímar fought in Alba in 904.[97]

Place-names indicate that a wider-ranging sequence of population-movements took place in these years. Individuals of mixed Gaelic-Scandinavian identity settled a wide arc of territory including the Faeroe Islands, Cumbria, Lancashire, and the Cotentin-peninsula in what was then Brittany but is now Normandy.[98]

[91] Wallace, 'The economy', pp. 215–25.

[92] Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850–880* (Oxford 1977); Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin. The History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms* (2 vols, Dublin 1975/9); Etchingham, 'North Wales'; Downham, 'Britain'.

[93] AFM 897[=902]; AU 901[=902].2; CS [902]; Downham, 'Britain', pp. 77–81.

[94] *Fragmentary Annals*, ed. & transl. Radner, pp. 166–9 (§429); J. Jesch, 'Scandinavian Wirral', in *Wirral and its Viking Heritage*, edd. Paul Cavill *et al.* (Nottingham 2000), pp. 1–10.

[95] J. Graham-Campbell, 'Some archaeological reflections on the Cuerdale hoard', in *Coinage in Ninth-century Northumbria. The Tenth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History*, ed. D.M. Metcalf (Oxford 1987), pp. 329–54.

[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 343–4.

[97] AU 903[=904].4; CS [904].

[98] G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Common Gaelic *áirge*, Old Scandinavian *ærgi* or *erg*?', *Nomina* 4 (1980) 67–84; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian settlement in the Isle of Man and north-west England: the place-

These upheavals were influenced by political circumstances following the expulsion of viking-leaders from Ireland in 902. In 914 some of the vikings who returned to Waterford travelled from Brittany and came via the Severn-estuary and South Wales.[99] After they secured control of Waterford and Dublin, vikings from Waterford under the leadership of Ragnall ua Ímair crossed Britain and fought Constantine, king of Alba, and the English of Northumbria at Corbridge in 918. An understanding of events at Corbridge has been rather muddled by dependence on the eleventh-century *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* which states that two battles were fought, but the recent editor of that text, Ted Johnson-South, has pointed out that 'on the strength of the single word *iterum* the majority of scholars have supposed that there must have been two battles of Corbridge'.[100] More reliable Insular sources, notably 'The Annals of Ulster' and 'The Chronicle of the Kings of Alba', record only one event.[101] This battle was messy and indecisive (leading to both sides claiming victory), but it paved the way for the capture of York by the Waterford-vikings in the following year.[102]

When York was seized by King Æthelstan in 927, troops from Waterford may have participated in efforts to win it back. A leader called Maelmuire son of Cossanara is named among the fallen at the battle of *Brunanburh* in 937 in 'The Annals of Clonmacnoise'. Although it is not clear how reliable this list is, it is striking that a Cossanara is identified in *Cocad Gaedel re Gallaib* as one of the vikings who came to Waterford in 914.[103] The tenth-century evidence

name evidence', in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select Papers from the Ninth Viking Congress*, edd. Christine Fell *et al.* (London 1983), pp. 37–52; G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Scandinavian place-names of the Irish Sea Province', in *Viking Treasure from the North West. The Cuerdale Hoard in its Context*, ed. James Graham-Campbell (Liverpool 1992), pp. 31–42; A. Grant, 'A new approach to the inversion compounds of north-west England', *Nomina* 25 (2002) 65–90; Lucien Musset, *Nordica et Normannica. Recueil d'études sur la Scandinavie ancienne et médiévale, les expéditions des vikings et la fondation de la Normandie* (Paris 1997), pp. 279–96. The theory that names with the element *-ærgi / -erg* represent settlement from the Hebrides alone, and not Ireland, has been challenged by Breandán Ó Ciobháin (as I understand from him in correspondence).

[99] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*, III*, MS A*, ed. Janet M. Bately (Cambridge 1986), p. 65; N. S. Price, 'The vikings in Brittany', *Saga-book* 22 (1986–9) 323–440, at p. 360.

[100] T. Johnson-South, 'The "Historia de Sancto Cuthberto": a New Edition and Translation, with Discussions of the Surviving Manuscripts, the Text, and Northumbrian Estate Structure' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University 1990), p. 159; cf. *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto. A History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of his Patrimony*, ed. & transl. Ted Johnson-South (Cambridge 2002).

[101] AU 917[=918].4; *Historia Regum Anglorum*, Part I (*Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. Thomas Arnold [2 vols, London 1882/5], II.93); B. T. Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', *Scottish Historical Review* 77 (1998) 129–61, at pp. 150, 157.

[102] W. S. Angus, 'The annals for the tenth century in Symeon of Durham's Historia Regum', *Durham University Journal* 32 (1940) 213–29, at p. 221.

[103] *Cogadh*, ed. & transl. Todd, pp. 26/27 (§26).

demonstrates Waterford's political involvement in the affairs of Britain and northwestern France.

<div align="center">CONCLUSIONS</div>

How should we assess the historical significance of Viking-Age Waterford? Excavations at Woodstown can tell us more about the origins of viking-settlement in Ireland, and about links between Woodstown and Waterford. Historically, Waterford was strategically significant because it could be used to control access to three navigable rivers which together provided access to the heartlands of Munster and Leinster. The border-location of Waterford was an important factor in the early life of the port. The evidence of Irish chronicles for the mid-ninth century suggests that this area may have been fought over by rival viking-groups. Initially the fortunes of Waterford were closely tied to those of its sister-settlement at Dublin. From the mid-tenth century, however, the challenges facing the dynasty of Ímar heightened rivalries between viking-towns. Dublin was drawn more closely into the sphere of Leinster-politics, and Waterford's history became closely linked to that of the overkings of Munster. Indeed Waterford's alliance with Dál Cais may have strengthened Brian Bóruma in his bid to dominate Ireland during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.

The economic significance of Viking-Age Waterford is suggested by silver-hoards recovered from neighbouring counties. Waterford's economic hinterland seems to been have focused west of the River Barrow, and this may be associable with the fact that hostility with Leinster was a fairly constant feature of Waterford's history during the period under discussion. Excavation can add more to our understanding of urban development in Ireland by revealing goods imported into, produced at, and exported from the settlement. External contacts, with the empire of the dynasty of Ímar and a wider network of trading routes, highlight Waterford's importance on a broader playing field. Discoveries at Woodstown will undoubtedly add to this picture.[104]

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[104] Since this article was written, Cathy Swift and Colmán Etchingham have set up a website, http://www.vikingwaterford.com/svwag.html, as part of a campaign to save Woodstown. This provides up-to-date information on the site and opportunities for involvement.

APPENDIX 1: WATERFORD IN IRISH CHRONICLES, A.D. 914–926

**914**

AFM 910      Guill do thecht i nd-Erinn go ro ghabhsat hi **Port Lairghe**.

CS 913       Gaill do tiachtain a nErinn a **bport Lairge**.

FAI §458     Coblach lánmhór Lochl*anna*[h] [do] ghabhail ag **Port Lairge**, 7 fochla Osr*aigh*e, .i. tuaisgeart
             Osr*aig*e, d'ionnradh dhóibh brad mór 7 iomad bó 7 eallaigh do bhreith dhóibh gonuige i
             longa.

AClon 910    There came new supplyes of Danes this year and landed at Waterford.

AFM 912      Nocobhlach mór do Ghallaibh do thocht go **Loch Da Chaoch**, go ro gabhsat
             longport and.

AU 914.5     Nocoblach mar di gentibh oc **Loch Da Caech**.

**915**

AU 915.7     Tórmach mar meinic do ghentibh do thichtain oc **Loch Da Chaech** beos, 7 indred
             tuath 7 ceall Muman h-uadhibh.

AFM 913      Tormach mór meinic do Gallaibh do thiachtain co **Loch Dá Chaoch** bheos, 7 indradh
             tuath 7 ceall Mumhan leo do ghrés.

**916**

AFM 914      Ainle mac Catháin, tighearna Uaithne Cliach, do bhásughadh la Gallaibh **Locha Dá
             Chaoch**.

AU 916.3     Annle m. Cathan, ri Uathne Cliach, do bhas o Gallaibh **Locha Da Chaech**.

AU 916.6     Gaill **Locha Da Caech** beos do innriuth Muman 7 Laighen.

AFM 914      Goill **Locha Da Chaoch** beos do indradh Mumhan 7 Laighen.

**917**

CS 916       Sluaiccedh ffer nErenn la Niall mac Aodha, go Galloibh **Locha da caech**, gur marbta Gaill
             ocus Gaoidhil ann, um righ Cairrge Brachaide, ocus um taisech .H. Cernaigh .i. Maolfinnén
             mac Donnagáin, ocus um taoisech .H. Cremtainne .i. Fergus mac Muirigén, et alii multi occisi
             sunt.

AU 917.2     Sitriuc h. Imair cona chobluch do ghabail oc Cinn Fhuait i n-airiur Laigen. Ragnall h. h-
             Imair cona chobluch ailiu co Gallu **Locha Da Chaech**. Ár n-Gall oc Neimlid la
             Mumain. Ár n-aile la Eoganacht 7 Ciaraidhe.

AFM 915      Sitrioc ua h-Iomhair cona chobhlach do ghabháil oc Cind Fuaith i n-airer Laighen. Raghnall,
             ua h-Iomhair, co cobhlach oile go Gulla **Locha Dá Chaoch**.

**918**

AU 918.4     Gaill **Locha Da Caech** do dergiu Erenn, .i. Ragnall rí Dubgall, 7 na da iarla, .i. Ottir 7
             Graggabai 7 sagaith dóoib iar sin co firu Alban [….].

AFM 916      Oitir 7 na Goill do dhul o **Loch Dá Chaoch** i n-Albain, 7 Constantin, mac Aedha do
             thabhairt catha dóibh, 7 Oitir do mharbhadh co n-ár Gall immaille friss.

**926**

AFM 924      Orgain Cille Dhara do Ghallaibh **Puirt Loairge**. A h-orgain doridhisi ó Ath Cliath isin
             m-bliadhain chedna.

CS 925       Orgain Cille dara do Galloibh **Puirt Lairge**. A hargain aridhisi ó Ath cliath isin bliadain
             cedna.

APPENDIX 2: SILVER-HOARDS IN COUNTIES KILKENNY, TIPPERARY,
AND WATERFORD BEFORE A.D. 1035

*Coinless*

| | |
|---|---|
| Derrynahinch (Co. Kilkenny) | Rings and hacksilver |
| Dysart (Co. Kilkenny) | Ingot-fragment, arm-ring fragment |
| Unlocalised (Co. Kilkenny) | Rings |
| Bog of Cullen (Co. Tipperary) | Arm-rings |
| Rathmooley (Co. Tipperary) | 2 arm-rings |
| Kilmacomma (Co. Waterford) | Arm-ring fragment, 10 ingot-fragments, rod-fragment |

*Mixed*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dunmore Cave (Co. Kilkenny) | *ca* 930 | 10 coins (Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Scandinavian, Kufic), ingot-fragment |
| Dunmore Cave (Co. Kilkenny) | *ca* 970 | 14 coins (Anglo-Saxon, 6 in fragments), 4 ingots, buckle, 16 buttons (?) |
| Kilkenny West (Co. Kilkenny) | *ca* 970 | 60+ coins (Anglo-Saxon), ingot-rings |
| Knockmaon (Co. Waterford) | *ca* 1000 | 14+ coins (Anglo-Saxon, Hiberno-Scandinavian, Continental), 3 arm-ring fragments |

*Coin*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Unlocalised (Co. Tipperary) | *ca* 942 | 19 coins (Anglo-Saxon) |
| near Kilkenny (Co. Kilkenny) | *ca* 1035 | 'A large number' (Anglo-Saxon, Hiberno-Scandinavian) |

SOURCES

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M. Blackburn & H. Pagan, 'A revised checklist of coin hoards from the British Isles', available online: http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/hoards/index.html