Hiberno-Scandinavian Transculturation:

Hybridization of Vikings and Gaelic culture in Ireland between 800 and 1000AD

Master’s Thesis
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My master’s thesis examines the meeting of Vikings and Irish in Ireland during the early Viking age, between years 800 and 1000AD. In my thesis, I answer to the question about how the process of hybridization between these two cultures happened: How did the two different cultures react to each other, what kind of interaction was there between the two, and what was the nature of the hybrid identities developed. I use as theoretical framework Mary Pratt’s concept of contact zone, as well as Richard Roger’s theory of levels of cultural appropriation. As primary sources, I use the annals of Irish monasteries, most importantly Annals of Ulster. In research literature, I have a strong focus on archaeological studies of the era.

The work is divided into two main chapters. Chapter two analyzes the interaction between the two cultures through the literary evidence and rhetoric of chronicles, as well as the alliances and marriages between the two. It also examines the conversion of Vikings to Christianity, and their relation to the Irish church. The third chapter focuses on the settlements, the Viking longports, some of which eventually developed into towns. Ireland before the Vikings was completely lacking urbanity and thus the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns that developed were a new phenomenon and focal points of hybridization. As a case study, I analyze Dublin, as it is the one with most archaeological data left, and finally I discuss in larger context the sociocultural meaning of these towns.

I reach the conclusion that while there remained permanent differences between the Irish and the Vikings, the contact zones of Hiberno-Scandinavian towns developed hybrid identities that did not represent purely any of the ethnicities or cultures that they were derived from. Vikings were seen as foreigners in the eyes of the clergymen, but they were entangled in the local politics and warfare like any Irish petty kingdom. The towns, however, were independent realms and transcultural environments, where new cultural identities developed, shifted and flourished.
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Viking Age

Viking Age is a name of an era which includes many stereotypes and popularized views about the nature of the Scandinavia-based seafarers, and thus it needs some clarification before getting immersed into the topic. The Viking raiders, probably of Norse origin\(^1\), appeared on Irish waters in the last years of eighth century. While their sudden appearance may have seemed unexpected to those coastal inhabitants who fell under axe and sword, their emergence was an outcome of inevitable processes. The steady expansion of population in Scandinavia and the limited cultivation land in Norway in addition to rise in trading activities led to colonization waves: Orkneys, Hebrides, Scottish Isles; the Faröes and Iceland followed.\(^2\) All of these were in the hands of the Northmen well before the end of ninth century. As these lesser islands were colonized one by one, the time finally came for the main islands. The first recorded Viking raid on Ireland occurred in 795\(^3\), contemporary with the first raids to England.\(^4\)

Viking Age is considered to have lasted from around 800 to 1100AD, the starting and end points marked a bit differently at different places.\(^5\) For the intents and purposes of this work, it is most convenient to narrow the period down to 800-1000, as by then the Viking elements become so diffused to the local landscape that it becomes increasingly hard to differentiate them. The definition is politically adequate as well, as the decline of Viking kingdoms of Ireland is often linked to the Battle of Clontarf in 1014AD. While Clontarf’s reputation is questionable,\(^6\) by then the political pendulum had certainly shifted away from strong and independent Viking kingdoms.

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\(^1\) Ó Cróinin 2005, 609–612.
\(^2\) Ó Corráin 1972, 80. Some researchers claim that the reasons do not lie in overpopulation and its effects, but the consensus still favours this view. In the light of current sources, I join the mainstream.
\(^3\) AU 795.3: “Loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib & Sci do choscradh & do lomradh.”
\(^4\) ASC 793: “This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery, dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island, by rapine and slaughter.”
\(^5\) Somerville & McDonald 2014, xvi–xvii.
\(^6\) In Battle of Clontarf, the Irish high-king Brian Bóruma fought against Dublin kingdom and its Leinster allies. It has been overemphasized in the nationalist narrative of Irish historians. For the misinterpretations, see Downham 2007, 61.
The Irish society, coming to the ninth century, was a fragmented nonuniform island divided among myriad petty kings, all competing in power between themselves and the wealthy monasteries and their abbots. A shift had begun into bigger and more influential kingdoms, but they were still numerous and in constant war with each other.\textsuperscript{7} There was no urbanization, not a single village or settlement that we would call urban by current definitions.\textsuperscript{8} It is still arguable whether or not the first so-called monastic towns had already begun to emerge coming to the ninth century. If so, they were still minor and in their early development phases.\textsuperscript{9} It is also important to acknowledge the fluidity of identities and territorial allegiances of the Irish Sea region of the early Medieval Ages, which has even been called the “British Mediterranean”. The Irish in Wales and Scotland, the Anglians and Britons in Scotland and England, and the Roman influence of England all make sure that “native” and “immigrant” are labels that do not even begin to comprehensively describe the complexity of the area.\textsuperscript{10}

Vikings, the other main actor of this thesis, are often associated merely with raiding, marauding, and plundering, while the truth is that they were merchants, craftsmen, farmers and explorers more often than anything else. While their impact was indeed bloody in many instances, many of them were pure merchants and sailors that connected the scattered market-places of the Europe of the time. Viking-Age long-range communications attained a reach and intensity previously unknown in Europe beyond the borders of the former Roman Empire through nods and hubs connecting local markets with a larger emporia, mostly thanks to “Viking” activity.\textsuperscript{11} Simultaneously to their activity in the British Isles, they were present in Continental Europe and East, being a central part in the formation of cities such as Novgorod and Kiev, and being known as far as in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{12} The encounter of Irish and Vikings was not, then, an exquisite event, but rather a scene in a long play of the time period we call the Viking Age.

\textbf{1.2 Research questions}

First of all, I need to define my use of the term “Viking”. I will use this word in to reference to the different people originating from different parts of Northern Europe, may that they were

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from the areas now known as Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Frisia. I agree with Clare Downham’s view that the terms “Norse” and “Northmen” are misleading, as they have been previously used to refer specifically to Norwegians; the term “Scandinavian” is also inappropriate for the intents and purposes of this study, as it does not take into account the hybrid identities that developed and which will be touched upon in this study. As a term “Viking” may, in its everyday meaning, be too narrow, as it commonly thought to speak of the fierce warriors and their dragon-headed longships. Yet it is still the best one available to describe all the newcomers in Ireland from the North in 800–1000AD.

The traditional view of the Viking influence in Ireland has been seen as rather one-sided. The old narrative sees a linear continuation from the so-called “Golden Age” of Ireland to the arrival of Vikings and, as a result of that, secularization and regression. The “Golden Age” narrative was strongly rooted within the culture-history archaeological paradigm which had traditional, conservative, Catholic and nationalist tendencies. This view is best represented by historians such as D.A. Binchy, whose essay “The passing of an old order” saw Vikings as the destroyers of the whole structure of Irish society. While the Vikings certainly made an impact that affected the society as a whole, it would be rather hasty, if not downright incorrect, to define these changes so unilateral. Gradually, the whole Irish society changed, that much is certain. The Vikings were the first foreign people to come and conquer even parts of Ireland from the Gaels. Roman Empire had minor outposts there, but never had any political or military power, nor a lasting impact. Neither the Welsh nor the English came across the sea in any meaningful numbers. It is then fair to say that the Vikings were something previously unseen. But what kind of impact did they have, and how did they affect the society into which they sailed?

We have quite accurate data about the areas where the Vikings landed, and at least some of their settlements. We know something about the wars of the Vikings against Gaels and Anglo-Saxon as well as the wars among themselves. We have some information about the societies and the culture of Vikings and Gaels of that era. The old views about the Viking influence in Ireland

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13 Downham 2009, 140.
15 Binchy 1962; he was a merited scholar and researcher of Medieval Ireland, and he composed the remarkable law codex Corpus Iuris Hibernici. However, he represented the old nationalists, and his interpretations have later been a target of heavy criticism. “The passing of an old order” was a widely-known essay in its time, and it was first published in the First Viking Conference in 1959.
17 There is no single reference to any such army or king in the Irish Annals before the Normans.
before Norman era have been discarded, and the clash of the two cultures is now seen as a subtler one. In this thesis, my intention is to answer to the question about how the process of hybridization between these two cultures happened. How did the two different cultures react to each other? What kind of interaction was there between the two? What was the nature of the hybrid identities developed? These questions have been partially answered before, but there is no single piece of work that investigates only the sociopolitical or anthropological elements of the era. I am not going to go deep into pure politics, lines of heritage, nor Viking-instigated wars all around the British archipelago. Instead, I want to provide a clear account about the social changes in the society concerning the meeting of two cultures from the Gaelic point of view. With this in mind, I am examining the situation also from a sociological perspective. My hypothesis is that the Vikings were not so different from the natives themselves, and after the initial impact, they hybridized slowly into the local population. When the power balance shifted during the centuries, they lost their political position as a power-actor – but remain still today as a permanent part of the Irish population.

1.3 Theoretical framework and methodology

"Contact zone is any human geographical space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."  
-Mary Pratt

I approach my research through the voice of the contemporaries, namely the annals of monasteries. My main objective is to find out how the newcomers were portrayed by the clergymen, and how this image changed over the centuries. The theoretic framework that will aid me in this endeavor has its roots in sociology. Scientific field of sociology is relatively new and cannot be applied as such to pre-industrial societies. Even so, it certainly gives us some food for thought. From sociology, I derive patterns of violent clashes of cultures leading to hybridization processes, and mirror the situation in Ireland through these generalizations. These two methods – chronicles of monasteries as a voice of the past, and sociological theory as a parallel – constitute the foundation of my thesis. Archaeology will provide me with so-called hard evidence to back up or challenge my interpretations, and other literary sources ranging from fiction to saints’ lives will add more layers to the experiences of the contemporaries.

18 Pratt 1992, 7.
The opening quote of this chapter referenced one of the key themes of this study. Mary Pratt, who first used the term *contact zone*, defines it as subjects that are constituted in and by their relations to each other, through interaction, not in terms of separation and differences.\(^{19}\) What I mean is that inside any contact zone, there is always interaction and connectedness between the subjects. This reminds me of, and has parallels to, the views of many revered sociologists, including Simmel and Durkheim, who see the whole concept of society as being only an abstract representation of the interactions between individuals with different needs and objectives. Thus, if it is the interaction and connectedness that makes societies what they are, it would be controversial to define them only by their divergence and discordance with others. Cultivating from this base, I see the relevance of studying Viking-era Ireland through the looking glass of contact zones. It is a concept that indicates a two-way influence in all encounters between the two different sociocultural entities.

John Morrisey has proposed to broaden the concept of the contact zone into applying in a larger context than modern world and post-colonization.\(^{20}\) I concur with him in that its relevance to Medieval period is equally strong. The dynamic nature of Medieval societies makes their cultural borders even more flux, and the interconnectedness of Medieval Ireland with its foreign influences is very well interpretable through the concept of the *contact zone*. In the same way that the colonial world has been seen as overly simplified, the Medieval clashes among different cultures have been routinely viewed as rigid. I will apply Morrisey’s method to Viking era Ireland, where the society is traditionally understood as divided by worlds of native Gaels and foreign Vikings.

Research literature in general has been clear about two different Irelands between the years 795–980; one of Gaelic kings and another of Viking *longphuirt*.\(^{21}\) While it remains true that the pure political influence of Viking chiefs did not reach the inland effectively, the mixing up of ethnicities in Viking settlements blurs the lines of a clear division to different ethnic and cultural zones. It is an open question how Ireland’s Viking towns related to their wider hinterlands and what was their thorough impact on Irish society.\(^{22}\) With the sources available, I will not be able

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\(^{19}\) Pratt 1992, 7.

\(^{20}\) Morrisey 2005, 551.

\(^{21}\) *Longphuirt*, or singular longphort, means “ship-camp”. It was a label used from the Viking settlements in Ireland from 830’s onwards in the annals, and I use its anglicised form “longport”. See Downham 2014, 4–5.

\(^{22}\) More in O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 334.
to answer this question. However, focusing solely on the nature of contact zones and what developments in there led to the emergence of hybrid identities, I can offer something new to this area of study.

Alongside the theory of contact zones, I will be applying, at least partially, Richard Rogers’ analysis of different levels of cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation itself can be defined as the use of a culture’s symbols, rituals and artifacts by members of another culture. 23 The etymology of the word appropriation leads to “to make one’s own”. It is thus an essential expression while studying a hybridization process. While the Hiberno-Scandinavian culture is not one in such internal imbalance that we should talk about direct exploitation of one culture or another, the terminology associated to cultural appropriation is certainly useful. Rogers defines it into four categories of exchange, dominance, exploitation and transculturation, three of which I will discuss later on. The last one, transculturation, defines culture as relational phenomenon, 24 which is in line with our earlier definition by which the contact zones always include a two-way exchange relation between the cultures. In need of elaboration are the ethical questions. I do not follow Rogers’ idea that cultural exchange should indicate any ethical standards for types of appropriation. Giving qualitative values to different types of appropriation is artificial and doesn’t take well enough into account the circumstances of the meeting of the cultures, not in Medieval times at least. The ethical aspects of this theory might have their use in the study of post-colonialism, but I object to their use in this context.

Zanette Glørstad has made some good remarks about hybridization as well, which fits into this framework. She argues that a group of people that finds its traditional categories for defining the surrounding world no longer adequate can be said to be in an “in-between-situation”. The Vikings in Ireland in the initial phase of contact were in this situation. This kind of situation allows establishing new strategies, symbols of identity, and an emergence of a new group identity. Hybridization, in Glørstad’s words, is thus a process where cultural and ethnic expressions are given a new meaning, adjusted to local environment. 25

To recap, the main terms for me are the contact zone and the different levels of cultural appropriation. Contact zone is a social space shared by different cultures that includes, through

23 Rogers 2006, 474.
24 Rogers 2006, 475.
Pratt’s definition, some degree of conflict. In this study, the contact zones are the areas of Viking-Irish-interaction, inside which different kinds of relations and processes took place. While contact zones include the aspect of conflict, that alone does not define them. The interaction and connectedness is the key for my thesis. This leads to Rogers’s theory and the levels of cultural appropriation: cultural exchange, domination and eventually transculturation. Transculturation is a concept in which cultural elements from and by multiple cultures create an ensemble from which the identification of a single originating culture is problematic.\textsuperscript{26} It is the final form of integration, and something against which I am reflecting the evident processes that took place in Ireland. \textit{Hybridization} is a term that I use to describe this process of integration, including all partial forms of it, and transculturation is the abstract climax.

1.4 Sources and literature

\textit{Because neither archaeology nor the written record provides a complete picture, it is hoped that the use of both will advance our knowledge of a subject of which we shall never have more than a partial impression.}\textsuperscript{27}

- Patrick F. Wallace

Much about the era is still hidden in the dark, as it often is when concerning the Middle-Ages. However, there are still plenty of valuable sources for information available, if the right questions are asked. Annals of the Irish monasteries are well-preserved, and are found in electronic form, both in the original form and translated from Old Irish and Latin to English. While I have included the original entries of the annals as well, I use primarily the translations. CELT, the Corpus of Electronic Texts, is Ireland’s longest running Humanities Computing project,\textsuperscript{28} and vital for my thesis. It contains some of the most notable annals, including \textit{Annals of Ulster}. It forms the core of my work, deepened by \textit{Annals of Inisfallen}, \textit{Annals of Tigernacht} and \textit{Chronicon Scotorum}. I use \textit{Annals of the Four Masters} only on some occasions, as it is a sixteenth-century compilation and thus not as original as the other chronicles. On some occasions, I rely upon first-hand information about the Viking activity in England at the same time period, in the form of \textit{The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle}.

\textsuperscript{26} Rogers 2006, 474.
\textsuperscript{27} Wallace 1985, 130.
\textsuperscript{28} Celt.ucc.ie, retrieved November 2016.
The archaeological findings about the era are extensive and provide many good details about the life twelve centuries ago through which we can deepen our understanding of the sociocultural processes examined. There exists a long tradition of archaeological studies in Ireland, mostly published as articles. However, the *magnum opus* of Irish archaeology, Royal Irish Society’s *Early Medieval Ireland AD 400–1100 – The Evidence from Archaeological Excavations* was published in 2013, making it relevant to my thesis compared to earlier archaeological publications which may lack newer findings or interpretations. I use some other studies as well – notably those of three meritorious archaeologists: Patrick F. Wallace, who was responsible of the excavations in Dublin that revealed the original Viking settlement, Stephen Harrison, who has specialized in Viking-age burials and early settlements, and Dagfinn Skre, professor of archaeology at University of Oslo.

Much has been written about Irish Middle-Ages, and I have an excellent backbone of research literature upon which I have relied. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, professor emeritus of Medieval history at University College Cork, is one of the foremost historians of medieval Ireland, and his works have been crucial for my understanding of the era. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín is the expert of Vikings in Ireland, and his narrative of the era has been useful to understand the big picture. Most of my research literature is collections of articles, and some of the most important ones are results of conferences – *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* is a result of a Dublin conference in 1998, while *the Viking Age – Ireland and the West* collects the proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress held in 2010, and *Land, Sea and Home* gathers the proceeding of a conference on Viking-period settlement at Cardiff in 2001. These works, alongside Ó Corráin’s monumental *New History of Ireland 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* have influenced my thesis much.

Of the individual historians, whose articles have been especially useful to me, I want to mention Clare Downham from the University of Liverpool, whose research concerning the ethnicities of Viking-Age Ireland parallel many of my own interests. Concerning the linguistic aspects of my research, the works of Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, professor at St. John’s College and an expert of Celtic literature, and professor Colmán Etchingham from Maynooth University, have been particularly valuable to me.
2. Clash of Cultures

2.1 From Finngaill to Ostmen: Rhetoric of contemporary sources

As we begin to analyze the changes happening inside the contact zones of Gaelic and Viking encounters, I shall start with a linguistic approach: How do our sources describe the newcomers during the examined time period? The often-used term for hybrid groups, “Hiberno-Norse”, is anachronistic and derives from later research. While it is commonly used in our contemporary literature, it is not something that would have been used in Medieval times. It is used to describe – or define – the groups that had elements of both cultures, ethnically as well as culturally. Like so, it is a terminological final destination for the process of transculturation. Hence talking about the first emergence of so-called Hiberno-Norse is extremely difficult, and probably futile as well.

I would say that eventually during the ninth and tenth centuries, the first steps of transculturation were formed in the turmoil of the Gaelic-Viking contact zones. Thus emerged local clusters where the clear differences between the two cultures existed no more, most notably in settlements. During this process, the Vikings were treated in various ways in both the chronicles and literature. *Annals of Ulster* and *Annals of Inisfallen* play a major role in this process, as they are the most reliable chronicles, and have captured the complete time period. When referencing the annals, I will mention the original descriptive words alongside their English translations, and thus a foreword about the languages is in place. The Annals were written in Old Irish, with some entries in Latin. The Irish monastic system was different from its continental counterpart; the Latin entries may be explained by the connections to continent, especially Francia, and some historians see the coming of Vikings as a disruption to this connection and a parallel to the fading of Latin-use in chronicles from the early ninth century onward.29

The first word describing the people we now call Vikings that we see emerging from the annals is *heathen*, Latin *genti*.30 This word was commonly used to describe all non-Christian peoples,

30 AU 795.3: “Loscadh Rechrainne o geintib & Sci do choscradh & do lomradh.” Heathen is used 98 times in Annals of Ulster, for the last time in 975, nine times in Annals of Inisfallen, from 796 to 943, and 75 times in Chronicum Scotorum, from 806 to 949.
as the Irish had been Christians for more or less five centuries by this time. Thus, during the first raids, the chronicles made no difference between the Scandinavian raiders and any other barbaric non-believers of the era. Soon enough, though, as the raids began to occur more regularly, there appears a shift into the use of the word foreigner, Old Irish gaill. Heathen remained in use for a long time, but was gradually overcome by gaill. This can be seen as part of the progress of forming the contact zone, as the other party is identified and named specifically. Foreigner also does not appear as hostile as heathen, which has clear negative connotations. Foreigner remained in use for much of the Viking age and sustained even during the Norman conquest, although other words emerged as well.

The next word we see used is northmen, Old Irish Nordmannaibh. In 837, one hundred and twenty Viking ships were reported to sail up Boyne and River Liffey wreaking havoc in Brega, and this was by far the biggest endeavor so far. While the other definitions were used as well, these newcomers were defined two times in that entry of annals as northmen. It might have been to identify the big fleet from the earlier raiders, or just an elaborate definition. Northmen appears, both in Irish and Latin, in the chronicles just twenty-three times between year 837 and 948, and stops after that; it might be a sign of the strong shift in the chronicles from Latin to Irish. This can altogether be seen as the solidification of the contact zone, as the identification is strengthened and there seems to have been some non-warlike interaction between the two groups - potentially some kind of trade and negotiations. Another entry in the chronicles supports this view, as this is also the first time a Viking leader is named in Annals of Ulster: “Saxolb, chief of the foreigners, was killed by the Cianacht.” Three more names follow soon with Turges in 845, Agonn in 847 and Jarl Tomrair in 848. Knowing the enemies personally

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31 Etchingham 2014, 23.
32 AU 827.3: “Orggan Luscan do genntib & a loscadh, & innreadh Ciannachta co rici Ochtar n-Ugan, & organ Gall ind Aithir olchena.” Etchingham 2014, 24. Foreigner occurs in AU total of 237 times, from 827 to 1201, in AI 176 times from 848 to 1428, and in CS 157 times from 833 to 1148.
34 Etchingham 2014, 25.
35 AU 837.9: “Marbadh Saxoilbh, toisigh na n-Gall, la Cianacht.”
by name certainly indicates deeper involvement than just throwing spears at each other.

The term foreigner, *gaill*, was extended soon enough. There appear two permanent modifications of the word: *Finngaill* and *Dubgaill*. There is still no consensus about their clear definition, but it is certain that *Finngaill* seems to be applied to the earlier Vikings, and *Dubgaill* to the later ones. *Dubgaill* remained to identify the descendants of the latter group, not all newcomers. “Finn” and “dub” mean “fair” (or “fair-haired”) and “dark”, and there has been a lot of fierce discussion about whether this should be taken literally or not. By many researchers, *Finngaill* has been interpreted to identify the Vikings hailing from Norway, and *Dubgaill* from Denmark. However, the terms *northmen* and *Norse* seem to direct also to the Norwegian Vikings, as does *Lochlan*37, a term used just a couple of times and clearly tied to Norwegians in Scotland.38 Even if *The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* categorizes *Finngaill* and *Dubgaill* as Norwegian and Danish Vikings, it tells more about the era it was written.39 *Fragmentary Annals* were written for the Meic Gilla Phátraic dynasty in the 11th century, to boost their heroism through an ancestor and his deeds against the divided and warlike foreigners.40 In some occasions the titles are confusing if taken too literally, as is exemplified by the reign of Ragnall ua Ímair, king of Dublin from 917 to 921: he was called *rí Dubgall*, because he was for the moment the king of Danish Northumbria. His followers in Ireland, though, were of mixed heritage.41

The most accurate explanation seems to be that the terminology of *Dubgaill* came after the foundation of Dublin’s *longphort*, associated to the Vikings residing there and used to dissociate them from the others, whatever their ethnic backgrounds may be. If we look at an example from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from the other side of Irish Sea, it seems it would be wise to keep the terms associated with Vikings out of ethnic labels. In Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as Downham argues, *nordmanni* and *dene* are by no means clear labels for ethnic categorization.42 They are even used simultaneously of the same individuals.43 Besides, it is a valid presumption that the

37 For example, AU 848.5: “Bellum[.] in quo ceciderunt Tomrair erell, tanise righ Laithlinne, & da cet dec imbi.” (“...in which fell the jarl Tomrair, tanist of the king of Lochlann, and two hundred about him.”)
38 Ó Corráin 1997, 14.
39 Downham 2009, 155–156.
41 Ó Corráin 2001, 22.
42 Downham 2009, 142–143.
43 For example, in ASC 942 and 943, Viking king Anlaf is first described as “Nordmann”, and then as a “Dane”.

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Viking groups were not made up only of a single ethnic background; a single fleet most likely contained Vikings from multiple locations. Some identities were borderline, too, as is exemplified by the trading center of Kaupang, which lied in present-day Norway but was inside the zone of Danish influence.\(^\text{44}\)

The whole discussion, thus, seems out of place, and we should stick to what we know for certain: That there were two different groups of Vikings, distinguished in the chronicles. It is clear by this point that we have two distinctive groups of Vikings, *Finngaill* and *Dubgaill*, which were warring among themselves.\(^\text{45}\) The Irish are clear of the distinction, and the rhetoric might imply that they preferred the ones who were there already, perhaps on the “devil you know”-principle. While the relation between Vikings and Irish was in the first fifty years of co-living pretty much on the level of rape and pillage, the contact zone was clearly well-established and some interaction between the two was beginning to happen. First forms of cultural exchange – the first step toward transculturation – were happening.

Quite early in the annals appears also the word *Gall-goidil*, which literally translates to “foreigner-Gaels”. This is the first clear sign of transculturation. Transculturation is a hybrid form of cultures, creating mixed identities, and a process in which imported cultural elements take on local features as the cultural hybrids develop, also synthesizing new cultural genres as they break down traditional cultural categories. Thus the “foreigner-gaels” strongly indicates that such processes were happening. It should be noted that the word appears in the annals only four times, in years 856, 857 and 858, and later in 1034. It was used to describe war parties that consisted both Vikings and Irish, under a Viking leadership, and who were not part of the Dublin-party. The clear nature of their mix – whether ethnic and cultural or purely militaristic – is still obscure,\(^\text{46}\) but these notes of annals are remarkable nonetheless. My view is that they could not be truly intermingling yet, as they are so few in numbers, but it was the first solid sign of hybridity.

\(^{44}\) Skre 2015, 246.  
\(^{45}\) AU 851.3: “Tetac Dubgennti du Ath Cliath co ralsat ár mór du Fhinngaillib & coro shlatsat in longport eitir doine & moine. Slat do Dubhgenntib oc Lind Duachail & ar mor diib.” (“The dark heathens came to Áth Cliath [= Dublin], made a great slaughter of the fair-haired foreigners, and plundered the naval encampment, both people and property.”)  
\(^{46}\) Etchingham 2014, 27.
The final term that is used is *Ostmen*. It came into use in the twelfth century, and was used for a couple of centuries by the Normans that came into Ireland. *Ostmen* is used describing the hybrid ethnic people of the towns, and so it is the closest equivalence to our “Hiberno-Norse”. Francis Byrne explains the background of the word by the fact that Icelanders, Faroese and Hebrideans used the word, *Austmenn*, “easterner”, for the Norwegians. Thus, as the hybrid groups emerged and evidently contained at first predominantly Norse Vikings, they became *Ostmen*. Without going into the specifics of the groups called *Ostmen*, we can see it as the final form of the development, living long after the actual Viking era had ended. It is the true legacy of the Hiberno-Scandinavian transculturation, and as it is tied to the settlements, I will discuss it more elaborately in chapter three.

We therefore have six words describing the Vikings: heathen, foreigner (with two distinctions), foreigner-Gael, northman and Ostman. They all contain different nuances, and they have been used with varying intensity. *Foreigner* seems to me the most profound and all-encompassing, as it is used widely through the whole Viking era and after. The more specified versions of foreigner, fair and dark foreigner, are not as regularly used, and do not take away the main point about how the Irish saw Vikings. *Heathen*, while much used, is the most loaded term and rather one-sided. Both “*northman*” and “*Ostman*” seem to be more closely linked with the origins of the Vikings described, even if the use of the words broadened from their initial meaning. *Foreigner-Gael* is the most interesting of the words, but due to its rare occurrence, remains marginal.

Apart from the annals, Medieval Irish literature was broad and vivid, and thus could give us some account of the development of Viking relations. However, the literates of the island did their best to ignore the Vikings until the eleventh and twelfth centuries. We certainly have some cases that put the Vikings in the same line with the Irish. A text from ninth century indicates that “*Three that are most difficult to talk to: A king about his booty, a viking in his hauberck, a boor who is under patronage.*” Mostly, though, Irish heroic prose emphasized the

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47 Byrne 2005, 623.
local heroes, as is usually the case, and the Vikings didn’t fit their narrative. When they finally emerge into the fiction, they are described in such exaggerated way that it has nothing to do with the reality.\textsuperscript{50} Donnchadh Ó Corráin argues that the Irish had such a strong and cohesive culture among the literate high classes that the Vikings did not fit the structures of Irish sophisticated historical myth. He continues by saying that would the Vikings have been more successful, they would have made a stronger and earlier appearance.\textsuperscript{51}

While Ó Corráin's claims are a bit too straightforward in arguing that the Irish literati saw the Irish as a people, comparable to Goths or Franks, it remains true that the Vikings remain in chronicles foreigners until the end. The word \textit{gaill} was a central definition for the them. An important reminder of this occurs in 1014, when the chronicles describe the aftermath of Battle of Clontarf. After a long list of Irish casualties, the Viking losses are described shortly in the final sentence of the entry: “\textit{There were also slain in that battle Mael Mórda son of Murchad, king of Laigin, together with the princes of the Laigin round him, and the foreigners of the western world were slaughtered in the same battle.}”\textsuperscript{52} There remains the strong distinction between the Irish, even those who opposed the current hegemony, and the Vikings. Many great leaders of the Vikings of Irish Sea fell in that battle, from Ireland, Orkneys, Isle of Man and Scotland, but they are not identified. They are and remain, for the chroniclers at least, the foreigners of western world – the Gaelic world, in which they were intruders and outsiders.

Usually, when the Irish do mention the Vikings before eleventh century outside the chronicles, it is by magnifying the damage caused by them. The memory of early raids and perhaps the period of augmented frequency of raids in the early tenth century made a lasting impact. But there is more to it; as Máire Ní Mhaonaigh puts it, the Irish were eager to put the Viking stereotype to their use.\textsuperscript{53} Berchán, an Irish prophet of ninth century, claimed that:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} For example, in an eleventh-century text, “\textit{The Magical Chariot of Cú Chulainn}”, the hero slays a warrior thirty cubits high. Mhaoniagh 2001, 103.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ó Corráin 1998, 426.
\item \textsuperscript{52} AL 1014.2: “\textit{Ro marbad dano isin chath sein Moel Morda mc. Murchada ri Laigen co rigraid Laigen imbi; ocus ar Gall iarthair domain isi[n] chath chetna.”}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Mhaonaigh 1998, 397.
\end{itemize}
Heathens will come across the sea / they will mingle among the men of Ireland / there will be an abbot from among them over every church / there will be a king from among them ruling Ireland.\textsuperscript{54}

They became the “symbol of the calamity” long after the era of their actual threat.\textsuperscript{55} A poem attributed to fifth-century Bec mac Dé, but clearly of much later origin, tells us how:

\begin{quote}
They will tunnel beneath God’s oratories / churches will be burned / men with black, keen spear / will blight the fruits on noble rule.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

This kind of fear-mongering was purposeful, and the Irish literate used the Vikings to their own ends. If the Vikings were seen as a wrath of God, the sheep were more easily controllable if the violent presence of the foreigners was constantly reminded about. There exists an almost apocalyptic vision of heathen Vikings hovering in the Irish sea, waiting to attack should the Irish indulge into social or moral ills. Several 11\textsuperscript{th}- and 12\textsuperscript{th}-century texts, like the one quoted above, were artificially credited to be the words of earlier ecclesiastics to show how they had correctly predicted the future.

On a side note, it might be noteworthy to acknowledge the rise of a religious movement called Céle Dé, “the vassals of God”, at the end of eight century.\textsuperscript{57} The closing of eight century was filled with ill omens and disasters: in 764 it snowed for almost three months,\textsuperscript{58} in 772 particularly great thunderstorms caused panic,\textsuperscript{59} 773 and 774 saw an epidemic of bloody flux,\textsuperscript{60} 778 and 779 killed cattle with a disease,\textsuperscript{61} and in 779 a smallpox ravaged the island.\textsuperscript{62} These catastrophic events gave rise to this new, more severe form of religion. They preached a pure form of monastic ideal and wanted to separate themselves from the “folk of the old churches”.\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{55} Mhaonaigh 2001, 100.\textsuperscript{56} “Claidfiter durthigi De / loisgfidhir na heaglaise / fir go ngaib duba diana / coillfadh suba saerriagla.”
\textsuperscript{57} Doherty 2001, 33.\textsuperscript{58} AU 764.1: “Nix magnabus fere mensibus.” (“A great snowfall which lasted almost three months.”)\textsuperscript{59} AU 772.4: “Oenach inna lamcomarthe in quo ignis & tonitru similitudine diei iudicii.” (“The assembly of the ‘hand-clapping’ at which occurred lightning and thunder like the day of judgment.”)\textsuperscript{60} AU 773.1 and 774.8: “Moenach m. Colmain, abbass Slane & Cille Foibrich, a fluxu sanguinis moritur.” and “Eugan m.Colmain a fluxu sanguinis mortua est, & ceteri multi ex isto dolore mortui sunt.” (“Eógan son of Colmán died of the bloody flux, and many others died of that same illness.”)\textsuperscript{61} AU 778.3 and 779.3: “Ind riuth fola; in bo-ar már.” and “Bouum mortalitas non desinit & mortalitas hominum de penuria.” (“The bloody flux; the great murrain of cows” and “The murrain of cows did not cease, and there was a mortality of men from want.”)\textsuperscript{62} AU 779.7: “In bolggach for Erin h-uile.” (“The smallpox throughout Ireland.”)\textsuperscript{63} Doherty 2001, 33.
\end{flushright}
They lived under strict rules including chastity and severe fasting. Their overall influence to the Irish church doesn’t seem to be very clear, although they grew fast and even built and established new churches of their own. One cannot help but think that the church-burning Vikings were a gift from above for such a radical group preaching high morality and a need for change among the believers. Céle Dé’s influence upon the Irish literature is unknown, but if they were able to instill their views into the canon, some of the reluctance towards Vikings could be attributed to them.

This hostile and reluctant attitude towards Vikings in literature can be viewed in few different ways, depending on one’s perception of the Irish of the era. If we follow Ó Corráin’s opinion, then this is a sign of distinct borders between the two cultures: The Irish clergy and literates kept their own positions and themselves as distant as possible from the foreigners, alienating them in the process. The clergy would operate from the edges of the contact zone, not having any kind of process of integration. However, I argue that this kind of behavior can as well be seen as an example of Viking cultural domination. The counter-reaction to their arrival was a long silence in literature, broken only by occasional outcries of enmity and hostility. Following Rogers’s theory, overt acceptance and overt rejection are parts of dominance. He sees forms of resistance to a dominant culture as a part of the cultural dominance, as coping mechanisms of the subordinate. Thus, the literate reaction outside the chronicles implies an unbalance of power inside the contact zone, revealing the dominance of the Vikings.

When the Irish finally took the Vikings to their canon in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Viking homelands acquire a half-mythical status – the “Lochlainn” becomes an Otherworld where the Gaelic heroes journey to either fight the foreigners or to ask for their aid.64 As Glørstad remarks, this may also reflect also the reformed identities of the Vikings of the Irish Sea themselves.65 After a century or two, the faraway homelands of their ancestors might have been an almost myth-like location, leading to their identities not being tied to the past as heavily anymore. However, there still existed physical connection to the north, and the Irish Vikings were not completely torn away from it. Therefore, it can be argued that the Vikings of Irish Sea had a clear hybrid identity even in places where they were not ethnically mixed up with the

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64 Mhaonaigh 2001, 103–105.
Irish. They carried with them the legacy and connection to their ancestors’ homelands, but they were products of the Gaelic environment. The static ethnic labeling between two groups of different people is highly problematic in many contact zones because of the mixed ethnicities, but also from the perspective of individual experience of identity forming. Morrissey talks about the hybrid Galls of late medieval period (after Norman conquest) as “native by birth, foreign by blood”, and this is a valid framework with Vikings as well. They too experienced the dilemma about how many generations need to pass by before a foreigner becomes a local. Continuing this process of thoughts, the “Gall-Goidil”, Foreigner-Galls and hybrid groups, may have also simply been Vikings that had been living so long in an utterly alien environment that they had formed a new identity, something between their ancestors and the locals.

Viking literary culture was by no means as vast or rich as its Gaelic counterpart, but some details are noteworthy. The Viking cultural sphere around the Irish Sea reached all the way to Iceland, and there was clear interaction between Ireland and Iceland of the period. Brjáns’ Saga is believed to be a complete extensive saga, from which only fragments remain to this day. While it is an Icelandic saga, the linguistic evidence clearly suggests that it was written in an environment where Irish was spoken, written and understood well. That would mean it was written in Ireland and transmitted to Iceland, where it preserved partially. What interests us in Brjáns’ Saga is the fact it’s presumably Viking author knew Irish very well. Its author was most likely a Dubliner, and this fortifies the conception of settlements as hybrid environments. Not only speaking but also writing local language with a fully literate skill set is a remarkable sign of at least partial transculturation. As we have defined earlier, transculturation is a process in which imported cultural elements take on local features as the cultural hybrids develop. Integrating the whole written heritage of Old Irish to one’s own culture and using it fluently alongside Old Norse certainly holds up for the definition.

To return for a final time to the linguistic aspect, a central element to linguistic approach are the loanwords that have remained in use. Place-names are especially good indicator of these. Modern Ireland still has some place-names that are based on Old Norse, the language spoken by Scandinavians from ninth to thirteenth century. It is argued that the Vikings’ effect was

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eventually very little, unlike that upon England; the reason might be that both Old Norse and English are both Germanic languages, whereas Irish is of Celtic origin. The differences are significant, as Norse and Irish would have been mutually incomprehensible. In Life of St. Findan, the Leinster-originated ninth-century Irish clergyman needs to go to ransom his sister from the Vikings. In this, he uses an interpreter. While concerning a relatively early era before the emergence of Viking towns, mid-ninth century, it also emphasizes the challenges in the communication of these two cultures. Nonetheless, there are a couple dozen place-names of apparent Norse origin, adjacent to the main coastal regions (and settlements) of Viking influence. Both Gillian Fellows-Jensen and Byrne give us a clear account of the nature of these loan words. In some occasions also the control of Vikings over extensive hinterlands of their settlements is proven and reflected by the place-names: the whole hinterland of Dublin was called Dyflinnar Skiri, “Dublinshire”, and it’s northern part was called Fine Gall, “land of the foreigners” by the Irish. Waterford’s hinterlands, too, were called Gaultier, meaning the same thing. One interesting one is “Ulster”, one of the main provinces of Middle-Ages, that comes from Old Norse Uladstir. Apart from the place-names, some twenty additional words of Old Irish originate from Old Norse. They are mostly related to shipbuilding and seafaring, but some words concern agriculture, everyday life and trading.

Cultural exchange includes reciprocal exchange of symbols between cultures with roughly equal levels of power. Lasting place-names are very difficult to force upon people, and the fact that we have even this number of place-names still remaining is one more indication that the relations between the two cultures cannot have been purely hostile or defined through dominance. A good example of the hybridity formed by Vikings and Gaels co-living in Gaelic-speaking areas are the place-names that the Vikings from Gaelic-speaking areas brought with them when immigrating later in the tenth century into England. Vikings living in England and

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69 Life of St. Findan, 148: “Predicti ergo viri sororem gentiles qui Nordmanni vocantur, plurima Scotiae insulae, quae et Hibernia dicitur, loca vastantes, inter alias feminas adduxere captivam. Tunc pater ipsius filio suo Findano precept, ut accepta pecunia sororem redimeret et ad patrem reduceret. Qui, sumptis secum comitibus pariter et interprete, iussa patris impliere desiderans amoremque fraternel pio corde conservans[...]

72 For example, in AI 1013.2: “ro la(d) ár fer Mide i Fine Gall im Fland mc. Mail Sechnail.” (“and a slaughter of the men of Mide round Flann, son of Mael Sechnail, was inflicted in Fine Gall.”)
74 Ulaidh was the original name of the tribe of those areas, and it was likely transformed through Vikings into its current form. Byrne 2005, 610.
Ireland definitely had observable differences, and this is a clear sign of the hybridity formed.\textsuperscript{76} Influence had flown to both directions, and this is a textbook example of cultural exchange.

\subsection*{2.2 The Emergence of Hiberno-Scandinavians – alliances and marriages}

The interaction between Vikings and Gaels was mixed in nature almost from the very beginning. While the constant warfare, burning of churches and deaths of leaders are the more emphasized aspects in the chronicles, alliances between the two parties are evident. As soon as in the middle of ninth century we can find proof of mixed up war parties.\textsuperscript{77}

An interesting reference from as early as 842 indicates some kind of alliance between the two parties: Abbot of Linn Duachaill was wounded and burned “o genntibh & Goidhelaibh”, that is by heathens and Irish.\textsuperscript{78} In 850, Cináed son of Conaing, king of Cianacht, rebelled against his overking Máel Sechnaill with the support of the foreigners.\textsuperscript{79} He plundered, sacked and burned much of the Úi Néill territory, including an oratory. Six years later it was Máel Sechnaill’s turn to have foreigners on his side. \textit{Annals of Ulster} state a “Great warfare between the heathens and Mael Sechnaill, supported by Norse-Irish”.\textsuperscript{80} And soon after, one of the great kings-to-be, Áed mac Neill, future high-king of Tara, used them too: “Míde was invaded by Áed son of Niall with foreigners”.\textsuperscript{81} Áed is good proof about the fickle nature of these early alliances, as he is more renowned from fighting the Vikings, and he eventually burned all Viking bases in the northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{82} Still he could use their aid when suppressing his local adversaries. Local kings, even high-kings, did not have any problem using the foreigners whenever they had use for them. It has been even suggested that the huge Viking fleet of 850’s that waged war against the Dublin and Linn Duachaill\textsuperscript{83} Vikings would have been part of a strategic alliance between

\textsuperscript{76} Downham 2009, 162.
\textsuperscript{77} Downham 2007, 12.
\textsuperscript{78} AU 842.10: “Comman, abbas Linne Duachail, do guin & loscadh o genntibh & Goidhelaibh.”
\textsuperscript{79} AU 850.3: “Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Ciannachtae, du frihtuidecht Mael Sechnaill a n-neurt Gall cor indridh Ou Neill o hinaid co m-muir eir cella & tuatha, & coro ort innis Locha Gabur dolose corbo comarad friar, & coro loscad leis derthach Troiit & tri.xx.it dec di doinibh ann.”
\textsuperscript{80} AU 856.3: “Cocadh mor eter gennti & Mael Sechlainn co n-Gall-Ghoidhelaib leis.”
\textsuperscript{81} AU 861.1: “Indredh Midhe do Aedh m. Neill co n-Gallaibh.”
\textsuperscript{82} AU 866.4: “Aedh m. Neill ro slat uile longportu Gall, airir ind Fochla, eter Chenel n-Eugain & Dal n-Araide co tuc a cennlai & a n-eti & a crodha a l-longport er cath. Roiniudh foraib oc Loch Febail asa tuchta da.xx. dec cenn.”
\textsuperscript{83} AU 850.3: “Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Ciannachtae, du frihtuidecht Mael Sechnaill a n-neurt Gall cor indridh Ou Neill o Shinaind co m-muir eir cella & tuatha, & coro ort innis Locha Gabur dolose corbo comarad friar
Irish and the Danes, in order to get rid of the earlier Viking settlers. This cannot be completely renounced, but I remain skeptical about such major alliances requiring connections outside of Ireland in these early phases, as nothing really supports such claims.

We should not read too much into these events, as they have most likely been for one purpose only – to gain temporary edge in the local politics, or simply to raid an enemy with bigger numbers. Wyatt argues about alliances of Gaelic and Viking “slave-taking warrior groups” that their nature was purely mutual social objectives and motivations. Indeed, Vikings worked eventually even as pure mercenaries for Munster kings, which implies a very utilitarian relationship between the two. Taking slaves was probably the most important single function of the Viking raids thorough the whole Viking era, and if alliances helped to achieve them, they would have been welcome. It is crucial for understanding the success and relative effectiveness of early Viking raids to see the lack of cohesion between Irish kings of the time. It may seem surprising that almost immediately the Irish did not only try to repel the vicious enemy, barbarian heathens, but instead allied with them. The political instability allowed alliances to emerge, as smaller level kings used the newcomers to gain leverage in petty disputes of the hinterlands.

None of these early alliances led to major consequences, but it is indeed an interesting thought that would the Irish political structure have been more cohesive, there might have been no foothold for the Vikings. Some historians, like Downham, argue for this; some oppose it, and see that Ireland was indeed a cohesive and relatively uniform society with good military structure. Nevertheless, I cannot conclude in the light of available sources that Ireland would have been anywhere near a single political actor. The usage of foreign and heathen aid in local wars should be an evident sign of this. Ó Corráin even argues that the most important role the Vikings had in the ninth century was as allies of greater Irish kings. While that is arguable, it remains true that alliances occurred for the whole period of direct Viking influence in Ireland.

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Iar, & coro loscad leis derthach Treoit & tri.xx.it dec di doinibh ann.”

84 Ó Cróinín 1995, 250.
85 Wyatt 2014, 99.
87 Downham 2007, 30; Doherty 1998, 292.
89 Ó Corráin 1972, 94.
An illustrative example from outside of Ireland is a Welsh text from 960’s. The Welshmen called upon to their aid against the Saxons both the “Irish of Ireland” and “the men of Dublin”.\textsuperscript{90} They are seen as two different entities, but not necessarily hostile, and the men of Scandinavian origin were not seen as a threat, nor associated with heathens or foreigners in this text anymore. It is unlikely that the author would have been calling for bitter enemies to join his cause. If a contemporary writer outside of Ireland was this well aware of the widespread Scandinavian-Irish alliances in the tenth century, their occurrence must have been relatively common. It is easy to see their relevance from Viking perspective, who were more opportunistic by nature – even if they eventually wanted to establish more permanent settlements than just overwinter longports, they were ready to use all resources available to get wealthier. In the process, they got entangled with the Gaelic culture and absorbed into the contact zone permanently.

Alliances seem to be associated with the permanent stay of Vikings in Ireland, as it is commonly known that the Vikings stayed over winter in Dublin for the first time in 841-2.\textsuperscript{91} Dublin, among some other overwinter ports, began quickly to develop into more permanent settlements. Vikings, as soon as established as anything more than temporary raiders, became a piece in the puzzle of power politics. This is a clear sign of the contact zone’s consistency. If the interaction was as versatile as it seems, influences must have flown both ways. In some way, we can see even this entry in \textit{Annals of Ulster} as a form of Rogers’ cultural exchange:

\textit{Máel Sechnaill destroyed the Island of Loch Muinremor, overcoming there a large band of wicked men of Luigni and Gailenga, who had been plundering the territories in the manner of the heathens.}\textsuperscript{92}

These particular Gaels had taken up a way of skirmish warfare that was so similar to the one Vikings used that is was noteworthy for the chroniclers. This is the only such entry in \textit{Annals of Ulster}, and thus should be remarked with curiosity. The exact nature of this event is unclear, but plundering, sacking and devastation seem to have been the “wicked” way described here,

\textsuperscript{90} Gwydyl Iwerddon and gwyr Dulyn. Mhaonaigh 1998, 401; Mhaonaigh 2001, 102.
\textsuperscript{91} AU indicates in 841.4 that “There was a naval camp at Duiblinn”, and in 842.2 that “the heathens still at Duiblinn.” (\textit{Longport oc Duiblinn as-rorta Laigin & Oi Neill etir tuatha & cealla co rice Sliabh Bledhma} and “\textit{Geinnti for Duiblinn beos.”}
\textsuperscript{92} AU 847.3: “Toghal Innsi Locha Muinnremair la Mael Sechnaill for fianlach mar di maccaibh bais Luigne & Galeng ro batar oc indriudh na tuath more gentilium.”
probably against monasteries too. They are described as locals, not any hybrid form, and thus they have just been genuinely using the same methods as the Vikings.

A somewhat similar example is found in the dying years of the first millennium, when Brian Bóruma, the overking of Munster used the Waterford Viking fleet and Dublin’s cavalry forces on his side.\(^{93}\) It seems also that the Irish kings adopted ship warfare and tried to develop naval capacity during the Dublin Viking diaspora in the early tenth century:

*A fleet by Domhnall Ua Maelachlainn, and by Innreachtach, son of Conchobhar, upon Loch Deirdgherc, so that they defeated the fleet of Munster; and great numbers were killed by them.*\(^{94}\)

There are no earlier entries in any Annals about Irish fleets or any form of naval warfare by the Irish, and its emergence can be attributed to Vikings. All these examples are valid proof of interaction and influence. Exchanging customs, even in warfare, is certainly cultural exchange.

Another similar sign of cultural exchange are the Viking forms of execution. After the first marked alliance between Irish and Vikings, when Cináed with his foreigners revolted against Máel Sechnaill, the latter extracted vengeance: Cináed was drowned by Máel.\(^{95}\) Drowning was a Norse way of execution, and even the whole process of executing a king was a novelty in Ireland. Usually they died in battle or were assassinated.\(^{96}\) While the first time may have been just symbolic, it appears that death by drowning was a punishment reserved to extract vengeance to the foreigners: at least in 947\(^{97}\) and 982\(^{98}\), Gaels are described killing Vikings in


\(^{94}\) AFM 905.5: *Cobhlaigh la Domhnall ua Maoilechlainn, & la h-Indreachtach, mac Conchobhair, for Loch Deirdgúrc, co ro raeinset for coblach Mumhan, & ro marbhadh sochaidhe mór leó.* Also in CS 910: “Domnall grandson of Mael Sechnaill and Indrechtach son of Conchobor had a fleet on Loch Dergdore and they defeated the fleet of Mumu and killed many people.” (Coblach la Domnall ua Maoileclainn & la Innreachtach mac Concupair for Dergdeirc gur rainsit for coblach Mumhan et gur marbsat daoine imdha.)


\(^{95}\) AU 851.2: “Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Ciannachta, demersus est in lacu crudeli morte o Mael Sechnaill & o Tigernach dí foesmaíb deidhte n-Erinn & comrbabal Patraic specialiter.”

\(^{96}\) Byrne 2005, 616.

\(^{97}\) AU 947.1: “Slogad la Rua idri H. Canannan co Slaine conid-tairthir Gaill & Goidil, Congalach m. Mael Mitidh & Amlaibh Cuaran, co roimidh for Gallu Atha Cliath in quo multi accisi & mersi sunt.”

\(^{98}\) AU 983.2: “Cathrainidh ria Mael Sechnaill m. Domnall & ria n- Glun larn mac Amlaim for Domnall Cloen, for ri Laighen, & for Imhar Puirt Lairge dá i torchair Gilla Patraicc m. Imhair & alii, ilid idir badadh &
this fashion. Here again we find forms of resistance to a dominant culture. Therefore, the drowning of foreigners, Scandinavians, can be seen as a manifest to the dominance of Vikings and a part of unbalanced cultural appropriation.

As the overwinter ports emerged, the nature of raids and expressions of dominance altered and developed new forms. Quickly the plundering was transformed into a more consistent way of revenue, as the Viking began to raise tribute from the Irish.99 From archaeology, we do not get much help in this topic. Tribute goods are extremely difficult to distinguish from the other goods, as they consist same kinds of artifacts: Clothing, weapons and jewelry. Livestock and slaves (especially women), though, were the two biggest and most common tributary goods, and these were as well bought as taken in the raids.100 Also, the material culture was reasonably homogenized throughout the island in the early Medieval times, and somewhat similar objects appeared in all provinces.101 We cannot differentiate from the material remnants which were from raiding, which originated from trading and which were tributary, and therefore they do not help us in concluding the scale of tribute-paying between Vikings and the Irish. The tribute-paying is an important aspect of interaction, though, and it should be examined as profoundly as possible.

The annals are a bit more helpful here. While there is a very early entry in the chronicles about “cattle-tribute” being raised from the Irish,102 I would regard this with discretion. The very nature of raiding until the 830’s / 840’s was so unorganized and without a greater plan that this entry would seem to be rather misleadingly expressed by the unknown clergyman. The most substantial evidence in the chronicles about tributes is the entry from 853, when “Amlaíb, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland, and the foreigners of Ireland submitted to him, and he took tribute from the Irish.”103 The terminology of “Lochlann” was discussed earlier, and we

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100 An Irish law-text from tenth century, Lebor na Cert, lists tributary goods between clients and patrons, giving us good insight about the tributary goods. O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 249 and 280.
102 AU 798.2: “Combustio Inse Patraicc o gendetibh, & borime na crich do breith & scrin Do Chonna do briseadh doaibh & inreda mara doaib cene eiter Erinn & Albain.”
103 AU 853.2: “Amhlaíb m. righ Laithlinne do tuidhecht a n-Erinn coro gialsat Gaill Erenn dó, & cis o Goidhelaib.” This king has generally been viewed as Olaf the White (Ó Cróinín 1995, 251), co-ruler of Dublin with Ivar the Boneless. From their era began the rise of Dublin kingdom, and Ivar’s sons and grandsons were a major player in Irish Sea for the next half of century.
may ignore that otherwise but remembering he was Scandinavian, too. What interests us here is the significance of the tribute-taking. If the chroniclers have seen noteworthy to mention that the Irish paid him tribute, it must have been remarkable and of great value.

It is very probable that the Vikings practiced this custom locally on a small scale thorough the period, and it is again a sign of unbalanced power relations and dominance expressed by the Vikings over the Irish inside the contact zones. It wasn’t all-encompassing, and it would be foolish to think all Irish kings paid tribute to the Vikings, but it certainly had an impact and most likely has had cultural implications as well. This is proven by the entry from 980: “...and they got their full demand from the Foreigners, to wit, two thousand kine, with jewels and treasures, and moreover with the freedom of the Uí Néill from tribute, from the Shannon to the sea.”

Uí Néill was, if not the biggest, at least one of the most influential dynasties, and if they had to pay tribute, then it is assumable that many others did as well. The last phrase, “from the Shannon to the sea”, means from the western coast and River Shannon all the way to the Irish Sea on the eastern coast, that is through whole island. The tributary influence has been therefore very substantial. If your culture is in a subordinated position where you need to pay not to get killed or robbed through violence, it keeps you on your toes. Perhaps the extravagant attitudes of clergymen and literates reflect this aspect as well. Then again, tributes were a common custom in the hierarchical society of Ireland, where lesser tribal kings paid tribute to higher-ranking kings in exchange for protection and alliance. There is still a difference between being dominated by someone who shares the whole basis of your culture, through a system that had endured for centuries, and by being dominated someone completely foreign.

Another important sociopolitical aspect that indicated deeply intertwined connections were marriages. Marriages are a true form of cultural exchange, even when they are political in nature. They might also be indicative about cultural dominance or downright exploitation, if wives were taken only from the other culture, but that is not the case here. We cannot know the full range of intermarriages between the two peoples or their first occurrences, as these details are hardly important enough for the chroniclers to write down. The intermarriages of kings,
though, tell us their story. The earliest traceable marriages may have been as early as in the midway of ninth century. Murchad mac Máele Dúin, a deposed king of Ailech, had a son named Erulb. Byrne suggests that the name, which is not of Irish origin, originates from Old Norse and the word *Herulfr*. Some members of the family bore later the name *Thorir*, and a most interesting name was attributed to Erulb’s son: *Suartdubdae*, a hybrid from Norse *svart* and Irish *dubdae*.\(^{105}\) Another early example is found in *Landnámabók*, a later Medieval Icelandic text concerning the early settlement of Iceland. It claims that many distinguished Icelanders descend from Irish king Cerball mac Dúnlainge, king of Ossory. According to *Landnámabók*, three of his daughters were married to Vikings.\(^{106}\) If these markings in genealogies are indeed genuine, we have a quite early evidence of a diverse mixing up of the two cultures.

The most famous example of the era here examined is Gormlaith, daughter of the king of Leinster, living at the end of tenth century. She is a big character in local history, as she was married to three kings during her life.\(^{107}\) Amlaíb Cúarán, Norse king of Dublin, was one of them.\(^{108}\) He also married his daughter to overking of Brega,\(^{109}\) so it couldn’t have been unheard of that Irish had wives of Viking origin. The synthesis of Viking and Irish aristocracy is manifested in Brian Bóruma’s successful war against Dublin kingdom in the turn of millennia. Brian was allied to Máel Sechnaill II and opposed by Sithric Silkenbeard, son of Amlaíb. Máel had been married to Sithric’s mother, and was therefore his step-father. Brian’s son, Donnchad, was married to a ruler of the Viking Waterford. Sithric was married to Brian’s daughter.\(^{110}\) Battle of Clontarf in 1014, therefore, was the most notable conflict with this deeply entwined Irish and Viking elite of the late tenth century, and cannot be seen only as a clash between two completely opposed cultures. It was rather an aristocratic war of power inside one culture that had many similar elements to feudal wars of continental Europe.

\(^{105}\) Byrne 2005, 612. *Svart* and *dubdae* both mean black or dark.

\(^{106}\) *Landnámabók* 100. kafli: “Sonur Þorgríms var Eyvindur, faðir Þórodds godi og Össurar, er átti Beru, dótur Egils Skalla-Grimssonar. Móðir Þorgríms var Kormlöð, dóttr Kjarvals Irakonungs.” (“A son of Thorgrim was Eyvind, the father of Thorodd the godi, and of Ósar, who had to wife Bera, the daughter of Egil Skallagrimsson. The mother of Thorgrim was Kormlod, the daughter of Kearbhal, the King of the Irish.”)

\(^{107}\) Mhaonaigh 1998, 399. “Tri leimend ra ling Gormlaith, ni lingrea ben co brath; leim I nAth cliath, leim I Temraig, leim I cassel, carnmaig os chach” (Three leaps were made by Gormlaith, which no other woman will make until Doomsday; a leap into Dublin, a leap into Tara, a leap into Cashel, a plain of mounds which surpasses all).

\(^{108}\) AT 1030.15: “Gormlaith ingen Murchadha meic Floind, máthair Sítriuc meic Amlaim, rig Gall, & Dondchada meic Briain, rig Muman, mortua est.” (Gormlaith daughter of Murchadh son of Fland, mother of Sitric son of Olaf, king of the Foreigners, and of Dondchadh son of Brian, king of Munster, died.)

\(^{109}\) Downham 2007, 50.

The heaviest evidence of the Hiberno-Scandinavian intermarriage is still seen today in the genealogical research of the Irish. DNA-analysis shows that the modern population in several of the former Viking settlements are of a mixed biological ancestry.\textsuperscript{111} It is clear that intermarriage in the more invisible layers of society happened. However, a research published in European Journal of Human Genetics did not find any substantial Scandinavian patrilineal ancestry in Irish men bearing surnames of possible Norse origin.\textsuperscript{112} While the study had its challenges and concentrated only in Norwegian origins, it indicates that the hybridization was a comprehensive process where the Viking settlements were at some point dominated by people of Irish origin. Through this, it could be argued that the Vikings and the Irish interacted almost exclusively through warfare, with little cultural exchange. An exception to this would have been the political intermarriages of some members of the elites, whose distant descendants preferentially retained the Norse surnames. And given how ancestry graphs work, there'd be a large number of modern people with at least some genealogical line to a Viking noble, even if intermarriages were rare. However, the multiethnicity and mixed up cultural elements of Viking settlements show that there was evidently much more than just warfare. The chapter three will discuss this topic in more depth.

It is true though that the Vikings and their descendants were probably small in numbers compared to the overall population. The so-called Hiberno-Norse, therefore, would have been simply culturally adapted indigenous Irish. This is also in line with my earlier argument that the hybrid groups may have nothing to do with ethnicity. As transculturation is a hybrid form of cultures, not ethnicities, it creates mixed identities and synthesizes new cultural genres as they break down traditional cultural categories. Earlier I stated that the “Foreigner-Galls” could have been just Vikings living for a long time in a foreign environment. In the same way, the “Hiberno-Norse” could be Irish who, inside a contact zone shared with foreigners, integrated central elements of Viking culture to their own and continued as this hybrid form long after the noteworthy foreign blood lineage had disappeared.

\textsuperscript{111} Glørstad 2014, 151.
\textsuperscript{112} European Journal of Human Genetics, 14/2006.
To conclude, we can see that elements of both cultural exchange and dominance are visible. Steps toward transculturation and hybrid identities were taken. However, it is important to note the lack of a complete and inclusive hybridization. While we indeed had groups of mixed ethnicities, the so-called Hiberno-Norse, the process was far from complete. We can talk about transculturation, cultural zones where the elements have intermingled so deeply by plural cultures that we cannot easily deduct which elements originate from which culture. These groups of hybrid identity existed throughout Viking-era Ireland, but all the contact zones did not develop into one, single cultural zone. There existed violent and strong undercurrents that did not want to see Ireland and Vikings as anything cohesive. A good example is a book, written in Old Irish, from the eleventh century, telling about the events of the latter half of tenth century. It is named *Cogad Gaedel re Gallaib*, War of the Irish with the Foreigners, and the name itself tells us a great deal.\(^{113}\) It is a propaganda tale, written to boost Ua Briain dynasty and the legacy of Brian Bóruma, who is often associated as the banisher of Vikings.\(^{114}\) For example, it claims that the early ninth century Viking leader Tuirgéis replaced Christianism at Armagh and Clonmacnoise with pagan cults – a claim that is easily proven false by the annals of those monasteries. *Cogad* also claims falsely that Brian Bóruma promoted the revival of learning and purchasing books abroad to replace books allegedly destroyed by Vikings.\(^{115}\) There was still a clear dichotomy to Irish and foreigners, in everything that term covers for. Almost two hundred and fifty years after the first entries about alliances, the relations between the two cultures could still been defined by confrontation.

### 2.3 From Odin to Christ: Religion as divider and unifier

Religion and religious practices are one of the foundations of any given culture. Examining religion and forms of its practice gives us a great deal of information about Viking era Ireland. Symbols, artifacts, and rituals are all main elements of Roger’s cultural exchange, the prototype of transculturation, and religion is tightly associated with these. While there undoubtedly remained features of pagan practices, beliefs and rituals among the Irish up to the end of the

\(^{113}\) Downham 2007, 52–55.  
\(^{114}\) Brian Bóruma (941–1014) was probably the first true contender for the high-king of all Ireland, as he consistently pursued a dominance over all the other factions. His wars against Vikings, first in Limerick, then at Dublin, were part of his larger power politics, but they remain simplified and seen as some sort of nationalist counter-Viking heroism. In Battle of Clontarf 1014, his forces won the Dublin Vikings, but he died on the battlefield himself – a fact that no doubt has solidified his legend even more.  
\(^{115}\) Etchingham 2011, 213.
first millennium, Ireland was mostly solidly Christian by the time of the appearance of the Vikings.\textsuperscript{116}

In the seventh century, the church had established formal, concentrated Christian burial-grounds, closely linked to the growth of the cult of saints.\textsuperscript{117} In contrast, the newcomers were most certainly not Christian upon their arrival. Vikings had their own polytheist religion and mythology, including rites and rituals of its own. Their arrival marked an increase in the range of burial practices in the ninth and tenth centuries, as the pagan burial rites were re-introduced.\textsuperscript{118} Pagan graves were usually furnished, including various prestige items: these had vanished from Ireland coming to the ninth century, but returned with the Vikings. The distinctly identifiable pagan burials, though, decreased in number after the extended exposure to Christian influence, and it is harder and harder to distinguish Viking burials from those of the Irish as the decades pass by after the first contacts. Similarly, it is likely that not all people of Viking ancestry were wealthy enough to be buried with grave-goods, and thus would be archaeologically indistinguishable from the native burials even before conversions.\textsuperscript{119}

Vikings had from the very early beginning a close relation to the monastic sites. They naturally attracted them as centers of accumulated wealth and potential slaves, even if they were not always easy targets – as it has been indicated, the monasteries were far from helpless crowds of balding and shivering monks.\textsuperscript{120} Many Irish churches had their own armed forces and functioned as power-actors in the field of politics. Abbots often came from the same class as the secular nobility, being of the same kin, indicating strong ties between the secular politics and ecclesiastical interests.\textsuperscript{121} The Annals give us many references to abbots who died on battlefields.\textsuperscript{122} The Viking hostility towards the monasteries was likely to be strongly motivated by the political struggles of Irish factions into which Vikings were entwined. A good example

\textsuperscript{116} O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 283.
\textsuperscript{117} O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 303.
\textsuperscript{118} O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 284.
\textsuperscript{119} O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 314.
\textsuperscript{120} Ó Corráin 1998, 431.
\textsuperscript{121} Hughes 2005, 646.
\textsuperscript{122} For example, AU 800.7: “Cath-coscradh iter na h-Airtheru inuicem i m-Maigh Lingsen ubi ceciderunt Mael Ochtaireach, abbas Daire Eidnigh, & Conmal m. Cernaigh.” (“An overthrow in a battle in Mag Lingsen between the Airthir themselves, in which Mael Ochtraig, abbot of Daire Eithnech, and Conmal son of Cernach fell.”) and AU965.4: “Cath eter firu Alban imonetir ubi multi occisi sunt im Donnchad, abb Duine Caillenn.” (“A battle between the men of Scotland themselves in which many were killed, including Donnchad, i.e. the abbot of Dun Caillen.”)
of this is the raid of 890 to Glendalough, province of Connacht. Dublin alliance with the Uí Néill over-king Flann Sinna broke down in 888, and Glendalough – as did all of the Connacht’s churches – belonged under the control of Uí Néill. The targeting of Glendalough, which had been untouched for almost sixty years despite its wealth and relatively easily reachable location, can thus be seen as part of the hostility of Dublin kingdom towards Flann Sinna.

The whole nature of raiding doesn’t seem to have been fatal for the monasteries, as they were not completely destroyed nor their populations killed or taken away. Glendalough, which was sacked six times, was one of the most raided churches of the era. Still it can be said that the Vikings didn’t have a lasting negative impact upon it, as it thrived both ecclesiastically and economically through the whole period and long after. Besides, it was certainly not only the Vikings who attacked the churches. There remain 309 recorded occasions of burning and plundering ecclesiastical sites during the Viking era. Of these, 139 identify the offenders as Irish in origin, and 140 as Viking; in 19 cases, they acted together, with presumably shared goals. From all of this, we can confidently conclude that the nature of Viking raiding towards monasteries had nothing to do about the religion and Christianity itself. The monasteries, in a culture that lacked urban environment, central bureaucracy and an all-encompassing kingship-institution, were the nexus of population concentration. They were raided for the slave-capturing first and foremost, and while the pagan Vikings occasionally desecrated the sanctity of Christianism’s physical manifestations, they wouldn’t have done it only for the sake of religious hostility.

A number of the very early raiding bases appear to have been established adjacent to Irish monastic sites, and identified Viking burials have been discovered adjacent to a number of ecclesiastical sites. The relationship between ninth and tenth century Vikings and the local church authorities certainly seems to be far from the image we get solely from the literal

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123 AU 888.5: “Cathroiniudh for Flann m. Mael Sechnaill re n-Gallaib dú i torchair Aedh m. Concobuir rex Connacht, & Lergus m. Cruinnein episcopus Cille Dara, & Donncath m. Maele Duin, princeps Cille Delca & aliarum ciuitatum. Cath ind alithir.”
124 Etchingham 2011, 216.
125 Etchingham 2011, 215 and 218.
126 Sigurðsson & Bolton 2014, ix.
sources. Equally important is to note that the Irish monastic houses both survived and functioned in Viking-held areas. Within the kingdom of Dublin, we have multiple examples of this. Clondalkin, which was a Viking fortress for some time, continued as a monastery. Area of Finglas maintained a scriptorium, and Lusk had both a scriptorium and multiple records in its annals about its abbots and bishops. In the West coast, church of Inis Cathaig lived and prospered well under the reign of Limerick Vikings. Vikings actually defended monasteries when allied with local kings: Viking forces defended four churches in Brega against Northern Ui Neill overking Domnall ua Néill. In English Danelaw, under the reign of Vikings, the church organization somewhat collapsed and many churches disappeared; in Ireland, not a single noteworthy monastery disappears from the records. The churches certainly took some damage from the raiding period, perhaps more than they would have taken only through “native” warfare; yet the church as an organization remained much as it had been in the pre-Viking age. Even the annalist productivity remained the same through the period. While some credit is due to the unusual, monastery centered structure of the Irish Christianism, this tells us that the Vikings couldn’t have a problem with the Irish being members of a different religion. From pretty early on, they both tolerated the Christians and began to integrate parts of it to their own use. Zanette Glørstad sees the hybridization beginning from the process of giving new meanings to cultural expressions, and religious beliefs – including the concept of death and afterlife – were most definitely among these.

While the Vikings were undoubtedly “pagan” when they arrived, their Christianization was an imminent process. Here, though, we need to be careful: conversion is a problematic concept, having meant – and still meaning – different things to different people in different times. It is hard to point out a single moment when an actor is “converted” - is baptizing enough? Or are active manifestations of faith needed? Is the evidence from material culture enough? The conversion of Irish Vikings most likely meant that they stopped their pagan rites and open

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129 Abrams 2010, 5; AFM 975.8: “Inis Cáthaigh do sháruighadh do Bhrían, mac Cinneidigh, for Ghallaibh Luimnigh, im lomhar cona dhá mhaic Amhlaeibh & Duibhcend.” (“Inis-Cathaigh was violated by Brian, son of Ceinneidigh, against the foreigners of Luimneach, with Imhar and his two sons, namely, Amhlaeibh and Duibhcenn.”)
130 Downham 2007, 50.
131 Etchingham 2011, 211.
132 Hughes 2005, 645.
133 Purcell 2010, 329.
134 Glørstad 2014, 153.
135 Abrams 2010, 1.
worshiping of their own gods; the actual depth of their spiritual feelings cannot be but speculated. At least they adapted Christian symbolism through their material culture and rituals, and this is what I mean with “Christianization” in this context.

Christian conversion has often happened through missionaries. It might be that the Vikings attracted some special attention in the form of missionary activity. However, it seems that the Irish kings had no active role in the conversation process. Irish kingship differed from its Continental – or English – counterparts, where church and kings were working closely together.136 That doesn’t mean the clergymen wouldn’t have had interests towards it. Johannes Eriugena, an Irish theologian and poet, wrote a wish to conversion in the later ninth century:

_The Jewish magpie, and now the southern Saracen / and the savage pagan springing from the northern pole / Will bow their subject necks; / Christ everywhere shall reign._137

Whether this was just a general wish or a sign of active conversion remains obscure. Be that as it may, many dedications to Irish saints around Viking towns remain from the Viking period, which could mean they were missionary in purpose.138 That wasn’t the key to their conversion, though. Some historians hold the view that the first generation of Viking settlers were and remained pagan, but their heirs would have been converted to Christianity.139 As a token of their new faith, their burials were commemorated not by pagan-associated mounds, like elsewhere on Irish Sea region, but with hogback stones or free-standing crosses. Yet those are difficult to distinguish, and the only slabs which are identified to be the graves of Christianized Vikings are those of Rathdown, south of Liffey.140 Then again, many of the ancient cemeteries of monastic cites are still in use, and thus the archaeologists have been unable to examine them properly.141 The data we have on the subject is far from complete.

While the conversion and blending in of funeral practices may be true for some or even most individuals, the overall trend probably never reached all Scandinavia-originated people. Some

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137 Doherty 1998, 301.
140 Abrams 2010, 2.
141 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 149.
remained pagan, while some adapted Christianism; evidence from archaeological findings in Dublin-made artifacts indicate clear Christian motifs in the early tenth century, but also artifacts undoubtedly associated with pagan beliefs. Some consider the slow disappearance of the word *heathen* from the chronicles to also be an indicator of conversion. *Heathen* is still used at the end of the tenth century, but only rarely, and its peak was in the earlier ninth century. It could reflect the gradually Christianized Viking population. I would not claim it was the only reason for its disappearance, as the growing familiarity and interconnectedness also contributed to the change of rhetoric. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine the complete loss of the word without some level of conversion at least.

The Christianity of Vikings in Ireland is proven also by the fact that Iceland of the era had major influence from the Irish Vikings. As I mentioned earlier, Iceland and Ireland belonged to the same cultural sphere, and Vikings from Ireland emigrated on several occasions to Iceland. There appears some forty Icelandic place-names with Irish elements and almost a hundred Irish personal names in the Icelandic sagas. It was certainly not the Gaelic people who passed this influence, and thus we can trust the connection. The Icelandic sources, mainly *Landnámsbók*, give evidence for a long-standing Irish Christian influence. The important families of Hiberno-Viking descent had Christian practices, and a substantial number of Icelandic people professied Christianity in the early tenth century. This means that the Vikings of Ireland had adopted Christianity coming to the tenth century widely enough that they could transmit it to Iceland.

The Viking Christianism is an excellent example of hybridity, as they integrated parts of their own belief system to the existing Christian core. The Irish crosses, while Christian by nature,
contain many elements of Irish pagan mythology. The main output of the crosses was witnessed during the ninth and tenth centuries— that is, Viking era. “Scripture Crosses”, with narrative subjects, were popular, and many of them contain pagan themes. The Vikings stumbled upon this novel realm of signs and symbols, and they adapted the cross-building tradition with their own modifications. Presentations of Odin and Thor together with a Christian cross are found in Ireland, and they seem to form a parallel to the later runic inscriptions invoking the blessing of Thor as a sign of the slow process of conversion. While not transcultural in that they would be an intrinsic combination of elements of different religions, they are nonetheless a sign of a shifted identity.

Archaeologists have recognized the Viking graves mostly by the amount and quality of grave goods in them. The Scandinavian population was relatively wealthy during the last centuries of the first millennium, and abundant amounts of artifacts have been found in Scandinavian graves. These grave goods tell us about the religious beliefs of this culture, as the equipment buried in graves were both to honor the dead, while also serving as provisions for the after-life. The Irish Viking graves, though, are scarce on artifacts. This is interpreted to be the influence of Christian traditions, as placing artifacts in graves was strongly discouraged by Christianism. The Christianizing Vikings possibly diminished the amount of grave-goods gradually, as old customs seldom disappear overnight. Any recognizable Viking pagan burials are not dated after the midway of tenth century, which has been seen to prove the conversion by then. The use of the word heathen in the chronicles also sees its decline in the same times, which would further back up this interpretation.

Another grave-associated possibility of Christian influence are the grave sites. In Scotland, the Scandinavian burials tend to be placed in burial mounds, many of which re-used prehistoric ones. In Ireland, there is no evidence of a single burial mound of Viking era. As I have argued

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147 While the crosses had clear biblical scenes, they also include many scenes that can be interpreted to be associated with old pagan gods, including Old Irish warrior-hero Finn, Gaulish God of beasts Cernunnos and Dearg, a god of death. Rekdal 2014, 112–115.
148 Rekdal 2014, 118.
149 Sawyer 1982, 133.
150 Ibid.
151 Harrison 2001, 72.
152 Downham 2012, 25.
153 Harrison 2001, 74.
before, Vikings of Ireland formed their own hybrid culture that differed from those of England or even Scotland, even if they all shared common elements and had presence in the Irish Sea. The burial customs seem to support this view, as does the evidence that distribution pattern of Viking graves in Ireland differs from those of Scotland, Cumbria and Isle of Man. In Ireland alone, there exists a clear methodology in the distribution of the graves, as they are furnished graves in close proximity to each other, sometimes even in mass graves. In the previously mentioned locations, the vast majority of burials are in isolated single graves.

One single character rises above the others when examining Vikings in their relation to Christianism: the already mentioned high-king of Dublin, Norse Óláfr Sigtryggsson, better known by his Irish name Amlaíb Cúarán, who reigned from 943 to 980. He was one of the most noteworthy Dublin kings of Scandinavian origin, and became a strong actor in the Leinster politics despite of his era dating after the heydays of Viking power in Ireland. Amlaíb is somewhat of a living symbol of hybridity. Besides reigning in multietnic Dublin during its glory days, he was a baptized Christian and well-liked by the Irish. He is the only Viking king that has been praised in poems, as this poem from second half of tenth century shows:

\[
Amlaib, \text{ chief champion / of the eastern Áth / of Ireland of the many territories /}
good king of Dublin / eager for strong / noble patrimony.\]

He seems to have been a somewhat true Christian, and fostered close relations to Columban church – the art produced within or for the Columbán churches by craftsmen of Hiberno-Scandinavian names has the strongest influences of Scandinavian art-styles. While we cannot know for sure the depth of his faith, it is remarkable that during his last years, after losing a decisive battle to Máel Sechnaill II, he gave up his position and retreated to the monastery of Iona, where he died in 981. As historians do not forget to emphasize, Iona was the same place that his very forefathers had sacked among the first monasteries back in the early ninth

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155 ASC 943. He was baptized at York, with the sponsorship of king Edmund of England.
156 Doherty 1998, 301.
157 St. Columba is one of the three chief Saints of Ireland. He was an abbot living in the sixth century, known from his successful missionary campaigns and founding of multiple important monasteries, including Iona. The Columban churches were a key faction in the political patchwork of Irish monasticism. More detailed information about Columba’s life and the cult of Columba in Bourke 2001, 79–83.
158 Doherty 1998, 305.
159 AT 980.6: “Amlaim mac Sitriuca, aird-righ ar Gallaib Atha Cliath, do dul co h-I a n-aithrighe & a n-aithri iarsin cath mortuus est.”
century, making it even more symbolic. There are no direct political motives for such actions of religiousness, and should we not focus on his ethnic background, he would blend into the lists of famous Irish high-kings successfully. As a final testament to his Christian sympathies and permanent conversion, his son, Sithric Silkenbeard, continued in his father's footsteps in attempting to be a paragon of Christian virtue. He founded the Dublin’s Christ Church Cathedral jointly with a local bishop in 1030’s, the coins minted during his reign bear the sign of a cross, and his daughter had an Irish name, Caillech Finnén. He even went on a pilgrimage to Rome. It also seems that the early bishops of Limerick and Dublin, dating to Sithric’s reign between 989 and 1036 AD, were of Scandinavian origin.

Amlaib’s Irish name and especially his nickname, Cúarán, also indicate also the depth of his ambiguity, as Viking kings known with Irish names are rare. His nickname originates from the Gaelic inaugural ritual of throwing the shoe: Cúarán means sandal, and it would be short minded to see this name coming from his liking of the chosen footwear. Vikings of Dublin adopted the Gaelic inauguration rite which involved the throwing of a shoe, symbolically demonstrating that the new king was able to “fill the boots” of his predecessors. Olaf Cúarán’s name reflects his bicultural kingship and the nature of Viking settlements of the day. The new identity included elements from both native and immigrant cultures.

In addition, he was married to the famous Gormlaith, daughter of king of Leinster, and gave Irish names to his children. He was a Viking high-king of a kingdom and a city of hybrid identities, who was a Christian and died in pilgrimage, was liked by the contemporary Irish, had an Irish name and eventually married a high-ranking Irish woman. I would call him the pinnacle of Hiberno-Scandinavian hybridity. He is an exception, a shiny perfection of the creolization, and unique in that we cannot find any other character as deeply interwoven to the Gaelic society. That being said, he was not an oddity or anomaly in the pages of Annals. All of his features were prevailing in his era, and while the differences were and remained clear

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160 For example, Bourke 2001, 85. The attacks on Iona are found in AU 795, 802 and 806.2.
161 Bourke 2001, 86.
162 AT 1028.2: “Sitriuic mac Amlaim do dul do Roim & Flandacan h-úa Cellaig, rí Brehg, et allí multí.”
165 Downham 2007, 43.
166 Ibid.
between the two cultures, they were inseparably intermingled by his era. From the viewpoint of Christianism, the topic of this chapter, his successful reign as an obviously Christian king is the final proof of the conversion of Vikings. The fact that his conversion is even mentioned in the chronicles might indicate that it wasn’t common for Viking kings to be Christian before him.\textsuperscript{168} It is still possible that there were Christian Viking kings much earlier than Cúaráns reign: Ímar (Ivar) king of Dublin, one of the main characters of Irish Viking history, died in 872, and the chronicles tell us he “rested”\textsuperscript{169} - usually this was associated with “resting in Christ”, a way of telling the dead was a Christian. As the Vikings tolerated other religions as well as their own from the very beginning, they certainly did not all convert through any external threats. Indeed, their conversion is all the more important, as it was not forced upon them. Whether they did it for spiritual, political or trade reasons, it does not matter here. What matters is that it seems evident by the sources that a major part of the Vikings of Ireland had converted to Christianism by the end of tenth century.

Overall, Christianization of Irish Vikings seems to have been a relatively simple process. They fostered close relationships with the monastic institute from the very beginning, as the locations of \textit{longphuirt} and grave findings show us. Their attacks were never aimed at the Christianism itself, and monasteries, even if occasionally sacked for slaves and plunder, continued their prosperous life as key contributors of Irish society. The burial practices and literary sources, especially from Iceland, stand as a proof of quite early conversion of at least part of the Irish Vikings. The decreasing usage of the word \textit{heathen} in annals of monasteries can also reflect the growing number of Christian Vikings during the ninth and tenth centuries. In the end of tenth century, we have examples of Viking kings who were doubtlessly Christian, and it is fair to assume most their subjects were as well. This should act as the final proof of the conversion. Christianization of Vikings is a prime example of hybridization and transculturation. While we have not enough information available to analyze the exact nature of this adapted Christianity, it most likely had some kind of hybrid elements, as the runic inscriptions invoking Thor’s blessing would imply. The contact zones thus created a new form of culture, which flourished in Viking trading posts especially. The next chapter will discuss that topic.

\textsuperscript{168} Abrams 2010, 3.
\textsuperscript{169} CS 873: “\textit{Imhor rí Normandorum totius Hiberniae quieuit.”}
3. Hybridization through urbanization

3.1 Longphuirt and permanent settlement – emergence of new contact zones

As we begin to analyze the so-called urbanization process that begun through – or at least in the time as Viking era, it seems logical to start from the formation of the very first Viking settlements in Ireland. As a reminder, it is important to remember the lack of urban settlement in Ireland prior to the ninth century. Ireland did not have any towns, cities, or such, and the people were living scattered along the countryside, the clusters containing never more than a single extended family. Monasteries were the only places where population was by any means concentrated, and even in them it was diffused upon a large area. While the biggest monasteries (Armagh and Kildare notably) had enormous territories within which they exercised pastoral care, the population was not concentrated enough to warrant calling them towns. Instead, they would be more accurately described as ceremonial centers with some inhabitants. The so-called monastic cities emerged eventually, as accumulating wealth made the monasteries and their lands a rousing location for habitation in a larger sense than just religiously associated tenants. However, their rise is either tied to the rise of Viking towns, or at least both happened at the same time, as we have no clear proof about their existence before the Viking era. The present evidence of pre-Viking Ireland indicates not only minimal urbanization, but also a minimal trend towards it.

The first recorded overwinter stay of Vikings in Ireland was in 840, even though it might have occurred during the 830’s as well. The winters of 840-841 and 841-842, though, are what historians are certain about, as it was then that the foreigners were stated to have remained in Loch nEchach (Lough Neagh) and Duibhlinn through the winter. Thus, the most important Viking settlement was among the very first that they founded. The early settlements were, of

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172 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 48. Clarke also suggests that crafts and marketing existed in the greater monasteries, but as a secondary activity, outside the sacred duties, thus not drifting the monasteries into urban direction. Clarke 1998, 379.
174 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 121.
175 AU 841.1: “Gennti for Loch Eachach beós.” (“The heathens were still on Loch nEchach.”)
176 AU indicates in 841.4 that “There was a naval camp at Duiblinn”, and in 842.2 that “the heathens still at Duiblinn.” (Longport oc Duiblenn as-rorta Laigin & Oi Neill etir tuatha & cealla co rice Sliabh Bledhma and “Gennti for Duiblinn beos.”)
course, just fortified camps to make the easy attack on the enemy whilst also guarding the booty (slaves, cattle, jewelry) and raiding more. While it is noteworthy that a couple of the Dublin-area graves are female burials from the ninth century, suggesting a settled presence in the area from early on,\textsuperscript{177} the early notes on annals give us the impression of raiding being the primary reason. For example, the Dublin camp is identified by this entry: “There was a naval camp at Duiblinn from which the Laigin and the Uí Néill were plundered, both states and churches, as far as Sliab Bladma.”\textsuperscript{178} Also, in 840, the Vikings of Loch nEchach camp are remarked by this entry: “Lugbad was plundered by the heathens from Loch nEchach and they led away captive bishops and priests and scholars, and put others to death.”\textsuperscript{179} The third early camp was that of Linn Duachaill,\textsuperscript{180} which has been identified with Annagassen, some 60km north of Dublin. Interestingly enough, it was located less than a kilometer away from an early monastic site, which supports the earlier presented view how the Vikings were closely linked to the monasteries from early on.

Viking settlements were usually located in the political hinterlands of Irish kingdoms, within the borders of political territories. These locations may have also been chosen because of the easier access to multiple socio-economic areas of different kingdoms. They seem to have been chosen also for the reason of them allowing the Vikings to take advantage of the political turmoil of the Irish kingdoms.\textsuperscript{181} It seems likely that the areas were deliberately chosen, as we also recollect the close relations with local Irish Church authorities. To back up the suggestion, evidence indicates that at least the raiding bases of Irieland’s Eye, Scattery Island, Clondalkin and Dublin were established on Irish early medieval monastic cites.\textsuperscript{182} It also seems that since the early raiding period the Vikings knew exactly where they wanted to establish their bases, as the early ones were very conveniently located in regards to the possible resources available in their vicinity.\textsuperscript{183} These locations gave them an advantage, even if we also need to remember that all the Viking longports did not succeed to remain. Some were burned by the Irish, some were abandoned eventually as unprosperous. The remaining settlements, however, remained

\begin{enumerate}
\item O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 314.
\item AU 841.4: “Longport oc Duiblinn as-orta Laigin & Oi Néill etir tuatha & cealla co rice Sliabh Bledhma.”
\item AU 840.1: “Orggain Lughmaidh di Loch Echdach o gennribh qui episcopos & praespiertos & sapientes captivos duxerunt & alios mortificauerunt.”
\item AU 841.4: “Longport oc Linn Duachaill asar orta tuatha & cealla Tethbai.” (“There was a naval camp at Linn Duachaill from which the peoples and churches of Tethba were plundered.”)
\item Wallace 1985, 108.
\item O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 122.
\item Byrne 2005, 616; Charles-Edwards 2000, 596.
\end{enumerate}
because of their good locations, just out of reach of the entire power of the fist of the Irish kings. Of course, all of the towns faced difficulties and wars, but their locations meant they were either not among the first targets when the Irish kings wanted to shed some blood, or too well defendable to be completely destroyed.

When speaking about the destroyed settlements, those of Northern Ireland in the ninth century stand as the most interesting ones. Their exact nature remains obscure, as they were destroyed by the aforementioned Áed mac Neill in 866. The entry in the annals states:

_Aed son of Niall plundered all the strongholds of the foreigners i.e. in the territory of the North, both in Cenél Eógain and Dál Araidi, and took away their heads, their flocks, and their herds from camp by battle (?). A victory was gained over them at Loch Febail and twelve score heads taken thereby._

These settlements, which were multiple, seem to have been important. The fact that these “strongholds” had herds and flocks implies to associated hinterlands, or even extensive settlements and farmlands. The actions of the high-king can be seen as a reaction to take the coastal regions back from the foreigners, but it might have also held importance that these settlements – whatever their form was – were wealthy and a good target for plundering. The lost North coast settlements offer an insight about the success of some of the relatively early Viking settlements and remind us how the success of towns-to-be were tied to their locations on the geopolitical landscape of Ireland.

The northern settlements seem to have been prosperous, and if they were as interconnected with the Irish people as the other successful camps were, they are a very early proof of the beginning of hybridization. At the same time, they were situated on the lands of a single powerful kingdom, Northern Uí Néill, which led to their demise as they couldn’t use the enmities between Irish kingdoms to their own use. They also represent the few settlements that were actually

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184 A good example is the year of 892, when the Vikings of Waterford, Wexford and St. Mullins were all defeated.
185 AU 866.4: “Aedh m. eill ro slat uile longportu Gall, .i. airir ind Fochla, eter Chenel n-Eugain & Dal n-Araide co tuc a cennlai & a n-etí & a crodha a l-longport er cath. Roiniudh foraid oc Loch Febail asa tuctha da .xx. dec cenn.”
186 Purcell 2013, 43.
188 Purcell 2010, 333.
completely destroyed by the Irish. This is an important thing to acknowledge, as comparing to the much more lenient treatment the Viking settlements got in the tenth century, it implicates a clear shift in the attitudes of Irish kings towards Vikings when coming to tenth century.

Despite the losses and occasional local resistance, Viking presence spread widely across the island. Twenty-four different fortified camps can be identified from the chronicles in the ninth century, and nine additional ones during the tenth century. The nature of each and every of these camps was not permanent or very solid, as they occasionally acted just as temporary camps with the sole purpose of raiding a designated target. Still, Vikings seem to have been attached to their chosen settlement sites. Among many others, the excavations at Dunrally, an encampment mentioned in 845 in the annals, have revealed that the fortifications were reoccupied eighty years after the Vikings were first driven out from there. Some, while never acquiring a town-status, remained for even over a century, indicating that these camps also had some kind of importance as a solid presence. All of the longphuirt were not minor settlements, even if some of them were temporary by nature. They were fortified bases situating close to navigable water, defended by ditches, banks and palisades. There were likely many different types of longports, differing from the purpose of their establishment. While the longports were earlier seen as purely military in form and function, they are now recognized as far more complex entities. While they may have been raiding bases for most of the Viking era, they still had complex socio-economic characters. The metalwork, present in many camps, indicate to a more versatile function than just a simple defended camp. Hack-silver and lead weights found point to an elaborate exchange mechanism within the sites that went far beyond the reward of warriors, and included a regular transfer of silver. The longport sites of Dublin, Waterford and Annagassan were all large enough to accommodate massive fleets of 60 to 100 Viking ships, which speaks upon their importance and versatile functions as centers of raiding, manufacturing, slave-business, and trade.

189 Downham 2014, 7. See attachments 1 and 2.
190 AU 845.12: “Dunadh di Gallaibh Atha Cliath oc Cluanaib Andobur.” (“An encampment of the foreigners of Ath Cliath at Cluain Andobur.”) Cluain Andobur was later named Dunrally.
191 Byrne 2005, 615.
193 Harrison 2013, 61.
194 Harrison 2013, 69.
195 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 125.
It is even uncertain if the word *longport* was used of all Viking-established settlements or only one type of them, as other words are used as well to describe the Viking dwellings. *Dúnad* was sometimes used to describe their camps, and this term also applies to marching camps established by Irish forces. *Dún* is associated with fortified settlements and ringforts. Longport was, however, the most common and widely used term: it’s definition actually broadened to contain Irish military encampments as well, thus losing its ethnic undertones.196 The words *nautical origins* were quickly forgotten, as were the associations with Scandinavian origins.197 The mixing up of settlement-related words points to the hybrid nature of the longports, but also to the novelty of proper settlements, as many bigger clusters became “longports”. The Irish couldn’t have seen them as purely “Viking” bases if they started to call other places with the same term as well. This indicates towards the ambiguous nature of Viking camps and towns: they were not isolated islands of colonization, but major parts of the turmoil of contact zones and the key points of hybridization processes.

Along with those early settlements that did not develop into towns and the many that would eventually vanish, some of the *longphuirt* eventually developed features that allow us to call them towns. Excavations show how they all had similar physical traits: all were situated on similar high grounds, overlooking tidal river estuaries, and had similar layouts and defenses.198 These are all mentioned in the chronicles, and include Cork (first mentioned 848199), Limerick (845200), Waterford (860201) and Wexford (935202), all present-day cities or towns. Adding the already mentioned Dublin203 to the list, all five major Viking settlements of Ireland still exist.204

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196 Downham 2014, 4–5.
197 Harrison 2013, 62.
199 CS 848: “Dunadh la h-Olcobar do toghail duin Corcaigh for gentibh.” (“An encampment was set up by Ólchobur to take the fortress from the heathens.”)
200 AU 845.1: “Forindan, abbas Aird Machae, du ergabail du genntibh I Cloen Comardai cona mindaibh & cona muinntir, & a brith do longaibh Luimnigh.” (“Forannán, abbot of Ard Maha, was taken prisoner by the heathens in Cluain Comarda with his halidoms and following, and was brought to the ships of Limmnech.”)
201 AFM 858.6 (the years of Fragmentary Annals are two years off at this point): “Maidhm ria c-Cerbhall for loinges Puit larige oc Achadh Mic Erclaige.” (“A victory was gained by Cearbhail, over the fleet of Port Larige, at Achadh Mic Erclaige.”)
202 AFM 933.8: “Cionaedh, mac Coirpre, tigherna Ua c-Beinsealai, do mharbhadh lá Gallaibh Locha Garman, h-i fuabairt aidhche.” (“Cinaedh, son of Cairbre, lord of Ui-Beinsealai, was slain by the foreigners of Loch Garman, in a nocturnal attack.”)
203 Dublin actually had two different settlements, the one established after 917 and developing into the town we have such good evidence being some two kilometers apart from the original longport; both, however, are in inside the Dublin of today. Ó Cróinin 1995, 256.
204 It has to be mentioned, though, that listing Cork as a major settlement does not get the approval of every historian. Cork lacks evidence of any political activity, but the church of Cork was flourishing throughout Viking Age; Downham suggests that the monastery might have possessed a community of Viking craftsmen
Thirteen of the camps named in the ninth century do not appear in the chronicles during the tenth century, but we shouldn't expect the complete abandonment or destruction of all of them, as Cork is included within this group. Some of them were certainly lost, but some of them might have been just too insignificant during the era that they were deemed too unimportant to be mentioned in the annals. However, excavations in Woodstown, near Waterford, have revealed a large early camp with clear boat-building, industrial and domestic elements, as well as high-status graves. However, it is not mentioned in any of the annals. This may indicate towards a certain kind of bias in the annals as well, and we should be careful not to see their evidence as the only truth.

The developmental trend was towards an increasingly more urban character. Dublin even acquired a proper city status in 1030. This is, however, the Medieval definition of the word, as it came with the cathedral and episcopal status. We should not view the Viking towns as something they were not: they definitely had a high impact on the island of rural kingdoms, even if they did not become cities during the era. It has even been claimed that the establishment of the five Viking towns brought on a long-term societal and economic transformation of Ireland. I would say that they were not the key factor for the whole process, but it would be foolish not to see them at least as some sort of a catalyst. As they were the locations of Ireland's first distinctively urban population, they became communities on their own. They were inhabited by people of mixed ethnic ancestries, languages, and cultures. The towns were centers of slave-trade, as is often emphasized, but also sites of extensive crafts and industries from the very beginning, as we will see through some examples. They were also responsible of creating a new market economy with the surrounding hinterlands.

As early as in Linn Duachaill archaeological findings include broken up pieces of ecclesiastical objects. Vikings never used the looted treasures from monasteries as such, but repurposed them into their own use, usually by turning them into brooches or fastening pins. The findings

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under Irish patronage. May it be one way or another, Cork was important enough for Henry II of England to take it under his direct control in the twelfth century. Downham 2014, 14–15.

205 Harrison 2013, 70.
206 Clarke 1998, 331.
207 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 126.
208 Ó Floinn 2001, 88.
209 Ibid.
from Linn Duachaill, which was a very early settlement, suggest that the settlements were places of handicraft even when they were mere naval bases. The overall trend of development is clear with the excavations from Woodstown, as they have revealed over 6000 objects, many of unequivocal ninth- and tenth-century Viking origin. Extensive iron-working was clearly carried on at the site, including the manufacture of iron nails and other accessories of ship-building. Widespread amounts of iron slag, as well as fragments of stone, bone, antler and amber, indicate industrial activities. These indicate both ship-building and local trade. In addition to the domestic and industrial elements, major amounts of lead weights, silver ingots, melted silver and coins were found. These are also indicators of intensive trade, and probably tribute-taking as well.

The interaction between rural areas and towns was obvious. The consensus between historians has lately recognized the irrefutable connections between Viking and native Irish rural inhabitation in the ninth and tenth century, even to the extent that the Viking urban settlement has, by hybridized material culture, a distinctively Irish character. Timber from the hinterlands was the main raw material of towns: it was used for building material, furnishing, and artifacts. The evidence shows that the timber was harvested from locally felled trees. The raw materials from rural Ireland formed the main export items of the port-towns to a wider network, and thus were essential for the very existence of these settlements – it is commonly seen that the success of Viking towns was tied to the exchange system of raw materials from rural hinterlands to the foreign goods and end-products the towns passed. However, the revelations about silver hoards of the era are noteworthy as well. Some of the silver hoards of Viking origin found from Irish lands are clustered around royal centers, instead of being widely distributed through their usage. This indicates that the hoards are based on tribute and gift-exchange, making the relationships between the Viking settlements and Irish kingdoms more socially than economically motivated. These hoards, containing mostly non-numismatic silver, were clearly not meant for distribution, but should be regarded as archaeological reflections of the alliances forged between Scandinavians and the Irish. The purely economic

210 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 123.
211 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 125.
212 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 120.
213 Hurley 2013, 211–212.
214 Hurley 2013, 210; Downham 2016, 371; Wallace 2005, 834.
215 Purcell 2013, 40.
aspects of the contact zones around Viking towns, therefore, should not be over-focused, even if they formed an important part of the interaction.

To conclude, it is debatable whether the Vikings had at first any solid plans about getting settled in Ireland. They did so, successfully, in England, but they never seemed as eager to get deep into Irish mainland. Perhaps the problem was in the fierce resistance of Irish.\textsuperscript{217} Ó Corráin has argued that some of the very early Viking raids may have been directed towards gaining colonial grounds. He uses the attacks on Umall and Connemara on the Western coast as an example, as these areas did not have wealthy monasteries but instead familiar landscapes and potential farming land.\textsuperscript{218} Be it one way or another, all the eventual Viking settlements were ports, tied to the coasts, which emphasizes their role as trading posts. They attracted Irish people, and the enduring Viking towns became a blend of Viking and Irish elements. The towns may have differed a bit from each other; the stages of urbanization in some of the towns are questionable, as is their function and nature. The Waterford town, for example, did not have a king for the better part of tenth century, implying a different kind of social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{219} Next I will examine how these settlements actually functioned as contact zones and centers of hybridization. The best detailed example of Viking towns, with the most data available of, was the kingdom of Dublin.

3.2 Kingdom of Dublin: a case study

Trade alone does not make any settlement urban by definition. Norway is a good example of this, as the whole name of the country derives from a trading route, without having a single genuine town during the early Viking age.\textsuperscript{220} Therefore we cannot make assumptions of the scale and exact nature of Viking settlements only through the fact that trade goods have been found in them. Limerick, for example, seems to have been a quite a wealthy town if we look at the material resources found in it. Yet most of it could be a result of plundering and trading, and we cannot be sure about the exact time when the town acquired its true urban characteristics.\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{217} Most of the battles fought between the Irish and Vikings were won by the Irish. Clarke 2010, 61.
\textsuperscript{218} Ó Corráin 1972, 83.
\textsuperscript{219} Clarke 1998, 365.
\textsuperscript{220} Ó Cróinin 1995, 257; Clarke 1998, 342.
\textsuperscript{221} Clarke 1998, 339.
Trade alone does not indicate towards even a permanent population, as the example of Baltic Sea Kaupang shows us.\textsuperscript{222} For a long time, Limerick could have been a proto town, as far as the evidence goes; only after 967 there exists evidence of streets and houses, and even those are of uncertain nature.\textsuperscript{223} The definition of town assumes that most of the inhabitants are engaged in activities other than agriculture;\textsuperscript{224} but alongside trade, crafts and industry are central for urbanization, as is a clear urban landscape with streets and divided plots. Dublin, as the only town we have certainty about, did not only have minimal ties to agriculture,\textsuperscript{225} but also acquired clear urban elements not later than coming to the tenth century.

Rise of Dublin began after 853 with the co-reign of the already mentioned Olafr the White and Ívarr the Boneless. This marked the end of the period of “great raids”, and the Irish sea became a focus of more diverse Viking activities. The kingdom of Dublin began to gradually behave more and more like an Irish petty kingdom.\textsuperscript{226} Dublin got involved into political struggles of local kings, as I discussed earlier in the chapter 2.2. It continued to grow steadily during the next generation, both in economic and political significance. The early grave-finds of the Dublin elite show their celebration of military prowess through the prevalence of weaponry; they also show the economic activity and external contacts through the presence of prestige items from both Scandinavia and Continental Europe.\textsuperscript{227} This indicates that Dublin quickly became a part of a wide trading network, with both Viking and Continental connections. The importance of the Dublin kingdom in both Ireland and the whole western British Isles is also emphasized by the relative abundance of Viking graves found in its area. These graves, those in Kilmainham and Islandbridge especially, also include wealthy grave-goods with some variety. The Kilmainham alone, with direct evidence for a at least 30 furnished burial, is the largest Viking cemetery in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{228}

\textsuperscript{222} Clarke 1998, 342.
\textsuperscript{223} The later propaganda text Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh states how in Limerick. “They followed them also into the fort, and slaughtered them on the streets and in the houses.” Clarke 1998, 366.
\textsuperscript{224} Ó Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 176.
\textsuperscript{225} The archaeological evidence suggests that the cattle was driven to the town from outside, and the corn was milled into flour in the countryside before being brought in. Wallace 2005, 834.
\textsuperscript{226} Ó Corráin 1972, 94.
\textsuperscript{227} Downham 2007, 23.
\textsuperscript{228} Harrison 2001, 66.
The Irish Viking kingdoms, especially the kingdom of Dublin, became politically closely linked to the Irish ones. They began to resemble one another, an example of which is the Irish concept of derbfhine; a family-unit comprising the descendants in a male line from a common great-grandfather. Any member of the derbfhine was eligible to inherit a king, and this was a common reason for the segmentation of Irish dynasties. However, as the chronicles show us, the Vikings adapted this legislative structure as well. Ívarr, the particularly successful Viking leader from middle ninth century, became the king of Dublin in 857, and his legacy carried a long way. The annals include forty-five references to Ívarr’s descendants, but only until 948; the practice ended with the third generation of Ívarr’s descendants. This doesn’t suggest that the line would have died, but that it was a purely legislative matter. Ívarr’s blood still ran through the veins of Viking kings of Ireland; the already familiar Amlaíb Cúarán was a direct descendant of Ívarr. The Irish legal term of derbfhine was thus applied unto Ívarr and his legacy as well. The process of dynastic segmentation was as prominent with this Viking dynasty as it was with Irish kings. Eventually one son of Ívarr rivaled the sons of another for the control of kingship of Dublin. This led to their demise, as the kings of Brega and Leinster allied against the divided Vikings and drove them out of Dublin to begin their diaspora.

Vikings’ blending in as one of the political factions in Ireland is exemplified by the rivalries between Viking kingdoms. They could have been a powerful political force if they would have been organized and allied themselves; Perhaps able to potentially control the whole island, based on how fragmented the Irish kingdoms were themselves. However, they almost ironically evolved to be really just like any other Irish kingdoms, adapting the culture of fiercely independent kingdoms. Rivalry between Limerick and Dublin is one of the best examples of this phenomenon, as they waged war sporadically but extensively between 924 and 937, attacking each other’s territories. It started as Limerick plundered Lough Ree Viking camp and flexed their muscles in a successful campaign against Munster, while Dublin tried

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229 Downham 2007, 3–6.
230 Downham 2007, 5 and 24. AU 894.3 also proves the segmentation: “Mescbaidh mór for Gallaibh Atho Cliath co n-dechadur i n-esriuth, indala rand dibh la m. n-Imair; ind rann n-aille la Sichfrith n-rrl.” (“A great dissension among the foreigners of Áth Cliath, and they became dispersed, one section of them following Ìmar’s son, and the other Sigfrith the jarl.”)
231 Ó Corráin 1972, 95.
232 AU 921.7: “Muiricht do Gallaibh i l-Loch Fehail, Acolb co n-dib longaib trichat. Cenrig i n-Inis Eughain do dergiu co cron & co leir doibh, paucis in ea remanentibus per torporem.” (“A fleet of the foreigners came into Loch Fehail, i.e. Acolb with thirty-two ships. Cennrig was quickly and completely abandoned by them, except for a few who remained behind in it through sloth.”)
unsuccessfully to attack the port of Limerick itself. Both sides tried to gain as much influence in the midlands of Ireland as possible. In 926, Waterford Vikings, allied to Dublin, attacked the forces of Limerick Vikings, allied to the Irish of Munster, showing the magnitude of the campaign. The enmities continued for ten more years, with attacks and plundering of camps and territories of each side, until in 937 the high-king of Limerick, Olafr, was captured and his ships destroyed by the king of Dublin.

The wars against external Viking threats, as like the one in mid-ninth century, are one thing, but wars between two distinctively Irish Viking kingdoms are a different matter. They tell us that the Viking kingdoms had established themselves as solid pieces in the gaming board of Irish politics, and were not differentiated from the others in the terms of politics or warfare. They waged war against Irish kings constantly, but were not much of allies to other Viking kingdoms either. There was no great solidarity between the Viking kingdoms, and most importantly, they did not form a single separate cultural zone apart from the Irish. While Downham sees the Limerick-Dublin-campaign as the “zenith of Viking-power in Ireland”, for this work it is more important to notice through the campaign the interconnectedness of Irish and Viking politics. The different Viking kingdoms played on the same political field as the Irish kings, including the overlordship-system of small cores over larger territories. The kingdoms, Dublin foremost, fought to increase their territorial overlordship as wide as possible – just like any Irish king would do. The Limerick-campaign also saw the founding of new camps across Ireland, as each side sought to protect its sphere of influence against the enemy. While the territorial influence of Viking camps always remained limited, the ports still had widespread economic influence and, above all, their rulers were deeply connected to the web of relations with Irish kings. The creation of new camps has parallels to the Irish over-kings planting their own candidates to kings of lesser tribes to boost their territorial power. Vikings had long before this

233 AU 924.3: “Slogadh la Gothbrith h. n-Imair o Ath Cliath co Luimnech co fargbadh slogh dimar dia muintir la m. n-Ailche.” (“Gothfrith, grandson of Imar, made an expedition from Ath Cliath to Luimnech, and a very large company of his followers were left behind dead with Ailche’s son.”)

234 AI 927.2: “Ár nGall Puirt Lairge oc Cill Mo Chellóc la firu Muman & la Gullu Luimmich.” (“A slaughter of the foreigners of Port Láirge at Cell Mo-Chellóc by the men of Muma and by the foreigners of Luimnech.”)

235 AFM 935.16: “Amhlaoibh, mac Gofradha, tighearna Gall, do thiacthain im Lughnasadh ó Ath Cliath, co rucc Amhlaoibh Ceannairech do Loch Ribh leis, & na Gaill báttar lais, la Cairech, iar m-briseadh a long.” (“Amlaib, son of Godfrey, lord of the foreigners, came at Lammas from Ath-cliath, and carried off as prisoners Amhlaeibh Ceannairech from Loch Ribh, and the foreigners who were with him (i.e. with Cairech), after breaking their ships.”)

236 Downham 2007, 41.

237 Downham 2014, 9.

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time stopped being an external threat or purely foreigners, even if the rhetoric of literature may suggest otherwise. The Viking kingdoms of Ireland, their rulers and the settlements at their core, were an integral and utterly inseparable part of Irish politics by the tenth century.

The Vikings were banished from Dublin in 902, and they came back with force in a major war campaign in 915–917. The return of the powerful Viking leaders to Ireland and Dublin saw a phase of renewal and re-orientation in both Dublin and Waterford. In Dublin, the grave-evidence suggests a rapid expansion, and a more organized system of plot-divisions alongside with a defensive bank being raised inside the town.²³⁸ The early ninth century longport was probably an important manufacturing and trading center: the town has proofs of cloth-making, amber and jet workshops, leather- and bone-working, antlers, large-scale metalwork; heating trays and a mould for casting Thor’s hammer symbols has been found.²³⁹ Dublin’s importance as a center of craftworking is visible through the radiance of the objects manufactured there, as they have been found even from North America, from L’Anse-aux-Meadows.²⁴⁰ But it was the tenth-century settlement which developed into a pure urban settlement with closely-packed houses, garden plots, streets and possibly areas of open-air markets or public assemblies. The National Museum of Ireland’s archaeological excavations from 1970’s and 80’s confirmed that Dublin was indeed a major center for craft production with raw materials from the hinterlands, as well as a trading center with high-status exchange goods. The concentration of different crafts to their own areas tell us about large-scale production.²⁴¹ The houses examined had their own vegetable plots, gardens and animal pens, as well as workshops and storehouses.²⁴² It is without doubt, then, that the urbanized towns had majorly changed from Ireland’s earlier habitation styles.

Zanette Glørstad points out that the foundations of Scandinavian long-houses from almost every other Viking area – Scotland, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland – are strikingly similar.²⁴³ The longhouse, thus, has highlighted the culture and identity, with a clear symbolic reference to ideas of what “house” and “home” are. They provide the framework for

²³⁸ Downham 2007, 32.
²³⁹ O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 134.
²⁴⁰ O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 246; Downham 2016, 378.
²⁴¹ Wallace 2001, 42.
²⁴³ Glørstad 2014, 154.
daily life, including the long traditions of any given ethnic population. From this perspective, the house types that Dublin excavations have revealed are interesting. The majority of Dublin houses, perhaps up to 75%, were long, rectangular buildings with rounded corners, divided with aisles. In general, these houses appear to be an innovation of Irish Vikings, having to some extent features of North Atlantic Viking houses, but being distinctively insular in form.\(^{244}\) These rectangular, aisled houses were most likely an Irish development, adopted and then adapted by the Scandinavians. These house types are found in Waterford and Wexford as well.\(^{245}\) Even if it is understood that town-building influences came to the Irish Vikings from York and Cumbria,\(^{246}\) and even if Scandinavian architecture prevailed in Viking’s northern Atlantic settlements universally – in Dublin and presumably other Irish towns as well – it developed into something unique. This implies strong connections between the local population and the newcomers. I do not classify it as Rogers’ cultural dominance, as the end product was a pure mix of the two original cultures. The disparity of Irish longhouses and the lack of traditional architecture are one of the strongest indicators of detached cultural identity and transculturation of Irish Vikings and their descendants. The hybrid quality of Irish Viking towns is well crystallized in the houses and homes of their inhabitants.

The Viking settlements, Dublin as well, were a new phenomenon not only for Ireland, but their inhabitants as well. Their identities were tied to this new location, but without tradition, they had to build the continuity and sense of belonging for themselves. Rebecca Boyd, who has specialized in social archaeology of the Viking era, talks about “rootedness”, a sense of belonging and comfort, which is crucial for a balanced identity.\(^{247}\) Dublin had strikingly stable and enduring plot boundaries throughout the Viking era, which can be read through the site stratigraphy. They basically never transformed, which implies that they were not forced upon the inhabitants, but emerged organically.\(^{248}\) Boyd sees these boundaries as a mark of building continuity and belonging; they allowed the inhabitants to establish their own past and create a sense of belonging in this new settlement.\(^{249}\) Eventually they become links to the past of the

\(^{244}\) O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 131. More details about the architecture of these houses can also been found here.

\(^{245}\) O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 131.

\(^{246}\) Wallace 1985, 109.

\(^{247}\) Boyd 2013, 74.

\(^{248}\) Boyd 2013, 76; O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 127–129. Waterford had similar centuries-lasting plot boundaries, and it can be seen as a common feature of Irish Viking towns. Wallace 2001, 41. See also attachment 4.

\(^{249}\) Boyd 2013, 74.
society by successive generations of building. These plot boundaries, and the distinctive housing types, helped to create, maintain, and develop identities for the habitants of Viking-Age Dublin.

But who were these people living in the town of Dublin? Their ethnicity is an interesting subject. There lived several thousands of inhabitants in Viking-age Dublin, and it replaced York as the main Viking town in the West. But surely a town that massive for the era had a wide scope of different inhabitants. Here I remind that the new identities associated with these habitants may have been more labels of cultural identities, rather than ethnic ones. As I suggested in chapter 2.1, the early hybrid Hiberno-Scandinavian groups may have been just Vikings living long enough in foreign grounds to form a cultural identity that was a combination of the two. The same applies with the identities of the townsfolk, in both directions. The “Hiberno-Scandinavians” of Dublin, Waterford and other towns may have been of Scandinavian or Irish ethnic background, but they were culturally entwined, forming this new phenomenon and the identities that came with it. It is likely that they married and had children of mixed ethnic heritage; but more important is how they identified themselves, and how the surrounding world saw them.

Howard Clarke, one of the leading scholars of Viking-era urbanization in Irish Sea, has suggested that a great majority of the Dubliners of this era were Irish or Irish descendants. However, there must have been some people of direct Scandinavian descendence in Dublin even in the twelfth century. After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the earliest references of the existence of “Oxmantown” emerge. As I discussed in chapter 2.1, “Ostmen” was one of the later terms used to describe Viking descendants, and “Oxmantown” meant the area on the borders of Dublin where they predominantly lived at the time. This indicates both that they still had a presence in Dublin and that they (or a part of them) were not completely blended in. At the same time, though, the personal name Dubgall, in its anglicized form Doyle, is one of the commonest surnames in the Dublin area of the present day. The adoption of the name originally used to describe the fearsome and murderous foreigners and enemies clearly tells

250 Wallace 1985, 112.
251 Abrams 2010, 5.
252 Abrams 2010, 8.
about the shifting attitudes towards the Vikings. As discussed in chapter two, it is still somewhat uncertain what was the whole meaning of the word; but *Dubgall* was associated certainly to the Vikings of Dublin town and Dublin kingdom. The persistence of the word means that the Irish who moved into the town adopted it without hesitation, without being afraid of being associated to the Viking residing in the town. I see this as evidence of the hybrid identity of Dublin. The town had a mixed-up nature and included identities that were not found elsewhere, and it was not seen as an enemy stronghold but a realm of its own. I don’t believe in a clear dichotomy between the Irish and Viking-descendant population either, as the Oxmantown does not prove anything about the blended ethnicities or unique identities. To analyze these urban identities further, I change my shift back to material culture.

The overall character of Irish material culture generally in the Irish Sea region of Viking age could be even called “creolized”, according to O’Sullivan etc.\(^{254}\) However, at first, the influences and interest in craftwork seems to have flown explicitly from the Irish to the Vikings. We have only two imported Scandinavian brooches found in settlement sites in Ireland, and they are both from Dublin. Nothing implies that these brooch types were made or copied in Ireland. Some adoption of motifs from Scandinavian art in crafts occurs from 10th century onward, but it is limited and it seems uncertain whether it is directly from Scandinavia or distilled through England or Isle of Man.\(^{255}\) Instead, hundreds of insular metalwork have been found in pagan Viking graves in Scandinavia. The decorated Irish metalwork seems to have been popular, although they were mostly spoils of war and raiding, not acquired through trading.\(^{256}\) While Dublin excavations have also yielded a large number of decorated wooden artifacts in a distinctive Scandinavian style, they do not belong particularly in Ireland. These kinds of artifacts are found from the whole Irish Sea area, including York, and they are commonly called “West Viking” style.\(^{257}\)

But even if the Irish did not adopt Scandinavian elements directly, eventually the Irish and Scandinavian elements got mixed. The metalwork became much more purely a fusion between Irish and Scandinavian elements. It has been suggested that the Dublin Vikings – and their

\(^{254}\) O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 120.
\(^{255}\) Ó Floinn 2001, 89–90.
\(^{256}\) Ó Floinn 2001, 88; Bourke 2001, 84.
\(^{257}\) Ó Floinn 2001, 90.
descendants, whatever identities they represented – made silver available in significant quantities for the first time for the Irish, as they exchanged it for trade goods and commodities to sustain daily life. While silver was used in pre-Viking Ireland, most of the surviving metalwork was executed in copper. From 850 to 950, there developed a fashion for silver arming types produced in Hiberno-Scandinavian culture zone, most likely centered in Dublin. It should be noted that silverwork evidence from Munster may also show Hiberno-Scandinavian tradition; the armbands, however, are clearly of Dublin origin. These armbands used elements from both cultures, and do not appear widely elsewhere in the Irish Sea zone. The penannular armbands, with ornaments of Scandinavian tradition, were the main product of Dublin’s silversmiths. Other objects of mixed elements are found outside of Dublin as well, but it seems likely that the Scandinavian influence came through Dublin. This is a proof of the sociocultural importance of the town as well.

It is worth mentioning that the transition continued. Later, in the eleventh century, Dublin acknowledged its role as the center of further merging of Viking art styles. A large number of decorated motif-pieces of bone and stone found from Dublin include both elements of contemporary Irish metalwork and late Scandinavian art styles. The so-called “Urnes style” was adapted by Irish craftsmen with their own disciplined and more balanced twist. This Irish Urnes style became popular in stone and metalwork, and includes some of the finest pieces of ecclesiastical metalwork from the 12th century. For example, in Scandinavian art style, a characteristic theme is an asymmetrically laid out interplay between a great beast and serpents; in the Irish Urnes adaptation, it is replaced by an arrangement of disciplined curving figure-of-eight patterns, in which the bodies of animals are of even width. However, the Scandinavian art did not have as profound an influence in Ireland as in Isle of Man and Cumbria, where the absorbed motifs included scenes inspired by Norse mythology. This has been stated to be a proof of the early Christianization of Irish Vikings. The Hiberno-Scandinavian material culture was subtler. It is nonetheless an original style and solid, indisputable evidence of the existence of the hybrid culture. The Hiberno-Scandinavian crafting and art styles, in the same

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259 Sheehan 2004, 179.
260 Ó Floinn 2001, 90.
263 Ó Floinn 2001, 94. See also attachment 5.
264 Ó Floinn 2001, 96.
way as the architecture, further confirm the hybrid and transcultural nature of the interaction concentrated in towns.

Continuing with the material culture, Dublin also introduced the first locally made coins to Ireland. The home-produced currency and thus the monetization of the economy saw its light in the closing years of tenth century, standing as the final element of a fully urban status of Dublin. The use of bullion silver practically ended with the Dublin coinage, marking a new economic era in the island. It was also a token of the solid interconnectedness of the two cultures, as the currency was used largely in Ireland – for example, Brian Boruma raised tribute rather in these Dublin coins than cows. The Irish elite of the tenth century used coins, and this elite benefited from the Vikings’ importation of unprecedented quantities of high-quality silver. The Viking presence was for some Irish more “an opportunity than a problem”. They partook in this Viking-generated money economy, which is proven by the coin hoards of Glendalough, the monastic settlement near Dublin. An important monastery that was using Viking-made money and was part of the trading economy that the Vikings brought with them tells us that at least a part of Irish society had strong connections to Vikings on the level of everyday life. Even if this economy was certainly limited and did not penetrate all the layers of the Irish society, it affected parts of it well enough that it seems the prevailing Vikings offered an opportunity instead of a threat. Another similar example is the kingdom of South Uí Néill, from which are found significant amounts of silver hoards dated to the ninth and tenth centuries. It seems very likely that there was an economic advantage for the kingdom from the presence of Dublin Vikings and their offspring.

The connections of Dublin to a larger context can also be examined by its relationship with its hinterlands. O’Sullivan etc. discuss about the possibility of rural Viking settlements through the example of aforementioned Duflinarskiri, Dublinshire, also known as Fine Gall in Irish sources. These areas were certainly inhabited by the locals, who provided the towns with

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268 Etchingham 2011, 220.
269 Ibid.
270 Purcell 2013, 45.
various raw materials through networks of political control and exchange. But the question whether Vikings lived among them is a hard one to address, because the material culture was so similar in the settlements and rural areas. Ó Corráin claims that there were farming communities in hinterlands of all Viking towns and “extensive Norse settlements” around Wexford, Waterford and Limerick. While he admits these settlements would have been under Irish rule and not that powerful, his argumentation nonetheless seems to be rather old-fashioned. Historians now tend to agree that the “urban hinterlands” seem to have followed in 11th and 12th centuries if at all, being small in origins and thus being very limited in territorial influence within the timeline of this thesis. The material findings of Hiberno-Scandinavian character are seen as a sign of cultural influence of Viking settlements rather than colonization. For example, an early Medieval crannog at Ballinderry has revealed an arrange of objects very similar to those of Viking Dublin; but it is located in the heart of midlands, where Vikings did not have any presence. If the findings would have come from a settlement closer to Dublin, it would have been most likely regarded as a Hiberno-Scandinavian rural settlement, but as it is, it seems very unlike that Ballinderry had any Viking presence. If the material culture is so similar, what hope do we have distinguishing the possible people of Scandinavian origin living among the other ones?

Burials are another way to approach the question. We can find Viking burials within five kilometers of the center of Dublin. All of them might not reflect the settlement itself, as it was not that wide. As I mentioned in chapter 2.3, the graves become increasingly difficult to differentiate with time, as the Christianization process led to deprivation of grave-goods through which the Viking graves were commonly recognized. A single Viking woman’s burial has been found at Finglas near to a monastic site; it may reflect the political alliances forged through marriages. Some ringed-pins of Hiberno-Scandinavian craftwork have been found around Dublinshire, but they do not tell much about who wore them. What they do tell, however, is that these objects, made in Dublin, were accepted by locals too. This whole

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271 Besides the obvious timber and firewood, these include foodstuffs, such as grain, cattle and sheep, and clothing materials at least. Some argue even that the nature of warfare shifted towards slave-taking because of Viking town economics and their slave markets. O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 279–280.
272 Ó Corráin 1972, 105.
274 Downham 2014, 18.
276 Ibid.
277 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 137.
discussion marks well the problem we have with the sources and findings available today: while the archaeology of Viking-towns is very well known, their precise role as trading sites and links to others contemporaries is still largely unknown. Most historians tend to agree, though, that the Scandinavian communities were not isolated, but part of the “social fabric of the country”.278 Maybe the question about distinguishing the remains of Viking material culture is irrelevant. We can conclude that the culture born in Viking-established, Hiberno-Scandinavian towns was fluid enough to blend into the local landscape well enough to make it hard to find anymore, highlighting their hybridity.

3.3 The sociocultural meaning of Viking towns

When we talk about the ethnicity of Vikings settlements, we need to discuss the whole concept of ethnicity first. As James Barrett, researcher of University of Cambridge has remarked, ethnicity has been interpreted in two ways: as an instrumental, self-defined, and situational aspect, or as natural categories, intrinsic and immutable aspects of identity.279 The Viking-age Ireland is no exception, and when looking back to the various manifestations of ethnicity-correlated actions, we can witness both of these ways used. Barrett states that until recently, the ethnic questions of Irish Sea region have been examined through the looking-glass of primordial view, but current anthropological and archaeological thinking regards identity more readily instrumental and fluid.280 The development in the contact zones of Ireland clearly indicate that the identities of the newcomers were fluid enough to blend into the local population. Associated with that, Julie Lund has also analyzed the meaning of being of “mixed identity”. She argues that recent studies have seen ethnicity as a social organization, where different interests form and reproduce both the ethnic identity and the use of symbols. Therefore, it is an active process of structuring cultural differences. She adds that the primordial perspective of ethnicity has been combined with the situational concept, leading into the focus being on the meeting of other cultures.281 This is relevant to Hiberno-Scandinavian Ireland as well, and this focus means focusing on how different groups marked their separate identities when meeting. Lund offers as examples of this in Ireland the acts of weapon depositions by Vikings;282 Zanette Glørstad

278 Doherty 1998, 305.
279 Barrett 2004, 209.
280 Barrett 2004, 212.
281 Lund 2014, 182.
282 Lund 2014, 183.
uses this context to discuss the different ringed pins used by Scandinavians, Irish and Hiberno-Scandinavians.\textsuperscript{283} Emer Purcell touches the same topic as she mentions how arm- and neck-rings as well as brooches served dual purpose in that, in addition to their economic value, they could have been used as status items in the social economy.\textsuperscript{284} The identities and ethnicity inside the contact zones of Viking settlements were indeed mixed and fluid, defining themselves through material culture, and shifting with the development of these settlements into towns.

However, the different conceptions of ethnicity existed as much then as they do today, and I suggest they could have been used deliberately as a weapon. The day-to-day-life around Viking activities and Viking settlements was not ridden by distressing thoughts of ethnic labeling, as its manifestations were most likely largely subliminal. But the Vikings were still depicted as a brutal enemy, and their expulsion from Dublin in 902 was glorified in the chronicles through their ethnicity. As we have seen, Dublin and other settlements included mixed populations: still they could be labeled through ethnicity, using the primordial and static view of it. I propose we need to consider the whole rhetoric of the annals through this duality. Barrett reminds us how ethnic signaling is strongest in the times of upheaval and uncertainty;\textsuperscript{285} the strong dichotomy between the good Irish and the evil Vikings could have been motivated by the distress the Irish Church felt. I am not speaking about the dilemmas of religiousness – as discussed in chapter 2.1, Vikings Christianized eventually, but the rhetoric remained. Maybe the wealthy Irish monasteries, who were also in control of the economics of the island, felt threatened economically and politically by the newcomers and their trading-post settlements. Even if they knew that the settlements and their inhabitants possessed fluid, cultural identities, it was easier to alienate them by labeling them ethnically as “others” through rhetoric means. Patrick Duffy reminds us that Medieval archive is predominantly made up by the elite groups, the winners and high-ranking members of societies. They have been preoccupied with power and control, thus clearly willing to create and maintain frontiers in both physical and intellectual worlds.\textsuperscript{286} This may be highly accurate in the case of Viking-age Ireland and its monasteries.

Lesley Abrams has asked the important question about how the Hiberno-Scandinavian world actually worked; was there a political identity as the most relevant force, or was there space for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Glørstad 2014, 161.
\item Purcell 2013, 37.
\item Barrett 2004, 214.
\item Duffy 1982, 37.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
individual initiative? As I, through the evidence of political fragmentation and lack of powerful institutions outside of the church, deny the possibility of a coherent idea of an Irish “nation”, or Viking “nations” in Ireland, I see that there indeed was room for individuals. Boyd argues in the context of Viking towns how social networks of urban households are much larger than rural networks, including both more people and more influence from these people. Lacking a powerful top-down institution that would have forced ideologies to their subordinates, and growing in a complex environment of settlements that fostered a wide spectrum of different influences, the Hiberno-Scandinavians had room to develop their transcultural identities. The separation of the Viking settlements from native scene has been sometimes highlighted, but I do not think that is necessary. The Vikings, while successfully establishing themselves despite the resistance, still Hibernicized. I point out again that the Vikings adapted local language eventually. As Barrett says, adoption of a dominant-culture language by members of a subordinate or peripheral culture is and adaptive or coping strategy. This is in line with Rogers’ theory and the cultural dominance. The Vikings were not the dominators in every field, and had to compromise to maintain their settlements. What the sword and spear of Irishmen did not do, was done by timber, cattle, metals and even wives from Irish hinterlands. Sheehan stated how language can be seen as an effective vehicle for defining and maintaining identity in a “diaspora” context; adapting the local language, therefore, tells us many things about the identities of the Vikings and their descendants in Ireland.

Barrett states that in Viking-Age Scotland, the evidence we now have show both large-scale migration, but also co-existence and self-conscious ethnicity. I find that Ireland was no different, even if the scale of the migration was smaller. We don’t have the same situation as in Scotland, which witnessed a mass-migration of Scandinavians, leading possibly to a Rogerian cultural dominance. Otherwise, the analogy is valid. It is noteworthy that despite of major amounts of migrants, Scotland had no longphuirt or Viking towns, meaning that they were a unique response to Irish conditions. The Irish Vikings were very capable of co-
existence and, as we have seen through numerous examples, did not restrict their identities to their former homes in Scandinavia. In mundane life, ethnicities were probably not a matter of importance. As John Morrissey puts it, contemporary ethnic distinctions are perhaps more the concern of historiography, not of those who experienced it. They were used only in times of disorder and to alter the power balances. The cultural identities were not tied to ethnicity, and the inhabitants of a Hiberno-Scandinavian settlement could identify themselves through what unified them, not the ethnicities that possibly differentiated.

While the Irish Vikings did not have problems with blending into the native landscape, it is evident that the Vikings merged into the local population much more comprehensively on English soil than in Ireland. The reason behind this lies in their spreading through the rural areas as well, getting into touch with the common folk. Within Ireland, the true contact was confined to the towns, as Viking habitation was so completely focused on them. That does not exclude the existence of similar processes in Ireland, though. The towns were realms of their own, containing and nurturing a wide array of identities on their own. As David Griffiths, a specialist of Viking-age archaeology has stated, seeing Medieval town identities as a single group is oversimplifying. Individual identities in towns were various, as these environments allowed a more individual approach to the social surroundings. Towns themselves are, by Griffiths, better seen not as site-types but a concentration of spatial, social and economic complexity: it is more interesting in its variations than conformity. The connections and diversity of the towns and their inhabitants, as well as their relations to the larger context are the important subject for research.

Viking towns placed Ireland within a wider context of cultural connections and economic exchange routes. The towns, situated on Atlantic maritime trade networks, extended ultimately from the Arctic to the eastern Mediterranean. They emerged with unique traits, but as a part of a web of transnational communities covering the whole wide Viking trade zone. The term “trade diaspora” has sometimes been associated with these settlements established for trade

295 Morrissey 2005, 554.
296 Downham 2009, 165.
297 Griffiths 2013, 10.
298 Griffiths 2014, 4.
299 O’Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 126.
purposes on foreign soil. While it is somewhat simplifying, the model has its assets. Archaeological findings from Kaupang, the leading marketplace of Baltic Sea in the era, include dozens of objects of silver, jet and lead from Irish Sea region. They include fragments of silver armrings, one of which is of Hiberno-Scandinavian style. Findings from Waterford include large amounts of roe deer antlers. Roe deer wasn’t part of the Irish fauna in the Medieval era, which implies the antlers were being imported to be processed into a end product. This is a prime example of links to a larger trade network, and also shows how Dublin was not the only one with ties elsewhere. Limerick also challenged Dublin in slave trade, the major business of the era. Arabic and continental coins, alongside of Northumbrian and East Anglian, found from Viking-age silver hoards in Ireland are also solid evidence of the trade network. It has even been suggested that the very locations of the five Viking towns is a proof that Ireland didn’t interest Vikings as such, but only as a part of the “western route” from Norway via the Hebrides and Ireland to Continent. This is, however, a hugely oversimplifying and an almost lazy perspective, as all of the Viking activity from the fierce warfare to political entwining and exchanging of cultural elements implicate a larger motivation in Ireland. Vikings did not conquer Ireland in the way of the other isles, and had to settle for a smaller piece of the cake. The lesser impact of Viking influence in Ireland versus England or Hebrides was a result of Irish resistance and a multitude of geographical factors, not their lack of will. Nevertheless, the resulting towns were part of a larger network, which gave them elements from a wider world, combined with the local ones, leading into unique environments of mixed cultural elements, and, eventually, identities.

It is important to remark also how relatively new towns were to Scandinavian societies as well. For Scandinavia, the Mediterranean world of urban civilization was utterly strange, as it was for the Irish. Both Scandinavia and Ireland were rural societies. Scandinavia saw the rise of towns only within the Viking age, and as a result of it. Birka in today’s Sweden and Hedeby in Denmark, two of the very early towns, were merchant colonies and the result of, among other elements, a new flow of trade caused by the Vikings. Trading activity was certainly carried...

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300 Downahm 2016, 369.
301 Skre 2015, 238.
302 O'Sullivan, McCormick, Kerr & Harney 2013, 246.
305 Byrne 2005, 620.
306 Byrne 2005, 620.
on in proper harbors all around Atlantic and Baltic Sea; but these were ports without urban
development, completely proto-urban trading settlements. Even Norwegian Kaupang, the most
famous of these environments, didn’t have a permanent populace of merchants. Thus the
Vikings who built their fortified camps eventually that evolved into towns in the Irish coast
were experiencing a new phenomenon themselves, too. The new age of Viking trade and
political expansion brought with it Dublins, Limericks, Kievs and Novgorods – all of them
unique compositions of local and Scandinavian elements. This was fruitful grounds for new
identities and transculturation to emerge, as there wasn’t any long tradition or such associated
to these settlements. The novelty of towns in Ireland is well exemplified by the linguistics
discussed earlier. *Longport*, the word that came with Viking nautical-military encampments,
came to mean all kinds of enclosures regardless of their ethnic population. Also, the Irish word
*dún*, “stronghold”, is first used of Dublin in 944, introducing yet again a new form of
permanent settlement in Ireland. It is certain that the developed towns – fortified Hiberno-
Scandinavian towns – were something very different from the other types of settlements, as
they needed a new word to describe it.

The very founding nature of these Viking-established settlements was probably quite
hybridized, further strengthening my argument about their transcultural nature. Clarke has
suggested that while the evidence of the evolution of Viking towns is still somewhat indefinite,
it seems that the Viking towns of Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Wexford were not fully
“urbanized” - in the definition used in this context – during the tenth century. As the Viking age
of Ireland is commonly seen ending at the turn of millennium, that would lead to the conclusion
that the urbanization of these towns was actually a Hiberno-Scandinavian achievement, not that
much a Viking achievement. These four towns emerged with market-places in proximity of
monastic sites, acting as trading centers; but urbanization itself, in its fullest form, was not
necessary for that. It seems that Dublin remains the sole fully developed Irish town in Viking
age, and even in its case the Vikings are not alone to thank for it.

308 CS 944: “Orgain Ata Cliaith do Congaluch mac Maoilmithidh co fferaib Breg et Braen mac Mailmorda go
Laignibh dú a torcrattur cetr ada Gallaibh ag gabáil an duiine gur loiscsit é & co rugsat as a seoda et
a maíne & a brata.”
309 Clarke 1998, 368.
This multidimensionality of the nature of Viking towns is further clarified by their fate in Viking’s decline. The Viking settlements developed into such important places that they weren’t actually destroyed even when an opportunity arose, which gives a clear account about the nature of these places. Irish kings proved to be eager to exploit the wealth of the towns. This is best exemplified by the capture of Dublin and expulsion of Vikings in 902.\textsuperscript{310} Even if the \textit{Annals of Ulster} dramatically tell us how the “heathens were driven from Ireland”, the king responsible of this heroic feature, Flann Sianna, had no problem taking Dublin into his own use. The town seems to have functioned all the same despite the absence of Vikings,\textsuperscript{311} which implies that the population couldn’t have been all Vikings (or even majority), and that probably even all Vikings weren’t exiled, but just the nobility.\textsuperscript{312}

The excavations in Dublin show there was no break in the occupation of the town post-902, which would further imply that the expulsion affected only the Dublin Viking elite.\textsuperscript{313} This exemplifies well how the ruling class and their politics were very different from the everyday life of any given inhabitant of these settlements. I would go as far as to claim that it probably also reflects the fact that the towns were not actually seen that much as “Viking” communities, even if some of their military elite ruled them. The silver hoards from Lough Ennell have been suggested to be evidence of Viking presence at Dublin during the diaspora, most likely composed of traders and craftsmen. This strengthens the argument that after the initial raiding periods the Vikings left their mark into Irish society mostly as traders and manufacturers. The Irish words \textit{margad} “a market”, \textit{mangaire} “a dealer” and \textit{pingin} “a penny” derive from Old Norse,\textsuperscript{314} connecting the economic development of the island to Vikings and their settlements. While recreating the sociological environments of these towns of the tenth century, it would be unwise to approach them solely on what our sources tell us about the warfare and turmoil of their leaders. Hiberno-Scandinavian towns had a population which was diverse through their backgrounds, Irish who had mixed up with the Vikings; Descendants of the original colonizers,

\textsuperscript{310} AU 902.2: “Indarba n-gennti a h-Ere, longport Atha Cliath o Mael Findia m. Flandacain co feraibh Bregh & o Cerball m. Muiricain co Laignibh co farcabsat drecht mar dia longaibh co n-erlasat leth-marba iarna n-guin & a m-brisiuth.” (“The heathens were driven from Ireland, i.e. from the fortress of Áth Cliath, by Mael Finnia son of Flannacán with the men of Brega and by Cerball son of Muiricán, with the Laigin; and they abandoned a good number of their ships, and escaped half dead after they had been wounded and broken.”)

\textsuperscript{311} Maas 2015, 261.

\textsuperscript{312} Maas 2015, 262.

\textsuperscript{313} Purcell & Sheehan 2013, 46.

\textsuperscript{314} Ó Corráin 1972, 106.
now traders and craftsmen of wide array of different origins, identifying as something of their own.

A tangible example of the Viking town hybridity is the Killaloe cross-shaft, lying around 20km upriver from the town of Limerick. It is a cross with a sculpted figure of Crucified Christ, and it dates back to the tenth century. Its importance lies in its craftsman, a man named Thorgrim, his name occurring both in Irish Ogham and Runic script. Thorgrim is without hesitance a Viking name, and his background is proven also by his use of runes in the sculpture. At the same time, he sculpted Christian motifs and used the ancient Irish alphabet. He was a craftsman of a hybrid identity, with elements from both cultures. More and more similar names are found as the tenth century passes by. Sicfrith son of Uathmaran appears in the Annals as early as in 930’s, and Gilla Patraicc son of Imhair appears in 983. One excellent example comes through an Irish book shrine, the Shrine of Cathach. It is a religious artifact containing mixed art styles on its side panels, as well as the name of its Irish maker – Sitric mac Meic Aeda. The name strongly suggests a mixed Irish-Scandinavian origin, with a Scandinavian first name and pure Irish surname. While it is unknown where the shrine was made, no such piece of elaborate craftwork could have been done outside of settlements. The craftsmen of Hiberno-Scandinavian towns were not “Viking” or “Irish”; Their social and cultural identities were entwined with the nature of their surroundings, the multicultural and diverse trading posts.

The military nature and identity of Vikings seems to be a persisting perspective, while the true nature of their legacy was evidently far from it. The Viking Dublin, however, certainly was the nest of warlike Viking nobility. The Viking warrior culture was more emphasized in Dublin than elsewhere in the Irish Sea region. Dublin graves include significantly more weapons than their counterparts in England, and Kilmainham / Islandbridge cemeteries near Dublin are definitely products of Scandinavian material culture. D.M. Hadley sees Dublin as a focal point for overt expressions of Scandinavian identity, among which masculine displays were

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315 Ó Floinn 2001, 91.
316 AU 933.1: “Roiniudh ria Fergal m. Domnaill m. Aedho & ria Sichfraidh m. h-Uathmuran [...]”
318 Ó Floinn 2001, 92.
319 Hadley 2013, 110.
320 Griffiths 2004, 127.
particularly prominent.\textsuperscript{321} It is also worth acknowledging that burials are social and political statements as well as religious; they are a conscious display of cultural conservatism, designed to establish a presence in the conquered landscape.\textsuperscript{322} The militarily emphasized graves of Dublin area are logically seen as a continuation of the conquering mindset and symbols of local dominance, not larger identities of the inhabitants of that area. Hadley offers in the same way a reason behind these graves through the periods of raiding: if comradeship, loyalty, martial abilities and glorification of violence had all been important back then, then such attributes were unlikely to have been easily abandoned after the settlement solidified.\textsuperscript{323} Viking Dublin, therefore, and to some extent likely the other ones as well, maintained a dualism of warrior and civic nature. Dublin Viking preserved their warrior ethos in their elite, as the elaborate burials show;\textsuperscript{324} but the fact alone that the town functioned on its own through the Viking diaspora shows clearly how these identities could not have been all-encompassing or dominant inside the town. Still, this also maintained the differences of these Hiberno-Scandinavian settlements between them and the Irish: while they were indeed functioning as a hybrid of the two cultures, it also meant that they had too distinctive features of their own to ever blend in completely to the local landscape.

The Viking identities can also be considered through their children. Through the children any given culture renews itself, and the importance of this is further emphasized by the novelty of the Irish urban culture. Deirdre McAlister has approached the topic through toys, as they are a useful category of material culture when studying socialization. They are not a binary opposition of adult and child lives, but a way of interaction between them.\textsuperscript{325} The children’s toys found from Viking-age Dublin include - not coming as a surprise - several miniature swords, but importantly also ships, horses, and possibly musical instruments. The ships seem to have been especially important, as there are more toy ships than any other toys found. The roles of the adult community could be imitated through the play culture. The children’s toys thus represent how the male children of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin would have understood that community as members of the warrior class, true, but also as seafarers: traders, merchants, and craftsmen.\textsuperscript{326} While the excavations do not give us an abundant number of toys, the role of

\textsuperscript{321} Hadley 2013, 112.
\textsuperscript{322} Griffiths 2004, 127.
\textsuperscript{323} Hadley 2013, 105.
\textsuperscript{324} Downham 2007, 23.
\textsuperscript{325} McAlister 2013, 88.
\textsuperscript{326} McAlister 2013, 94.
ships and the identities associated to them are noteworthy nonetheless.

The identities of individuals in Viking towns were not the only ones that shifted through time. The whole towns evolved. John Maas argues that the experience and wealth gained by the Irish when in control of Dublin during this diaspora may have influenced the Irish views broadly, making the control of Viking ports an important goal for ambitious kings.\textsuperscript{327} Dublin had arguably become the most famous port in western Scandinavian world by the end of the tenth century,\textsuperscript{328} and it was certainly noticed by the Irish kings too. The important kings of late tenth century saw their links to the Dublin kingdom so essential that they were connected to it through marriages.\textsuperscript{329} The Vikings had ceased to be an external threat and their transformation into one political piece among others was irreversible by the end of tenth century. Maël Sechnaill II, when effectively ending the Viking reign in Dublin in 980 and making it a permanent subject to Irish over-kings, made no attempt to destroy the city nor expel any of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{330} The clear label of "Vikings" no more existed to be targeted: only the towns and the townspeople remained, with their own identities, as independent actors.

This shift happened in all settlements: Dublin was no exception. Examples also show how Limerick, Cork, and Waterford were used by Irish kings. The Ua Brain kings actually took up residence in Limerick in the eleventh century, after the Vikings no longer presented an active military or political threat.\textsuperscript{331} They defended it against the Norman conquerors in the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{332} A southern Munster kingdom used Cork as their capital.\textsuperscript{333} Waterford, after the death of its last Viking-associated king,\textsuperscript{334} became a subject to Irish overkings.\textsuperscript{335} All these examples indicate that they couldn’t be just lodgings to enemy forces, but rather centers of commerce and population, valuable as such, while also containing mixed elements of cultures that made them hybrid realms of their own. Even if the Vikings and the Irish did not completely blend in

\begin{itemize}
\item Maas 2015, 263.
\item Wallace 1985, 131.
\item Purcell 2013, 53.
\item Ó Cróinin 1995, 260.
\item Byrne 2005, 619.
\item Ó Cróinin 1995, 267.
\item Ibid.
\item AU 1035.5: “Ragnall H. h-Imhair, ri Puirítar Lairgí, do marbad i n-Ath Cliath la Sitriuc m. Amlaim.” (“Ragnall ua hImhair, king of Port Lairce, was killed in Áth Cliath by Sitriuc son of Amlaíb.”)
\item AT 1037.2: “Cu Mumhan h-ua Raband, ri Puirítar Lairge occíssus est.” (“Cú Mumhan Ó Raband, king of Waterford, was killed.”) And AT 1037.3: “Port Lairge do argain & do loscad la Diarmuid mac Mail na m-Bó.” (“Waterford was plundered and burned by Diarmaid son of Maol na mBó.”)
\end{itemize}
politically in this time period, the settlements as new contact zones were the locations of the most intense hybrid evolution between either side, blurring the lines between the two cultures. The importance of these new meeting places was ultimately that large that some scholars, Charles Doherty among them, see the end of Viking Age parallel to the time Dublin became a “port of trade”. In saying this, he means that its population, whatever its origins or languages spoken, had become a part of the “native scene” and falling under native control either directly or indirectly.337

Being a part of the “native scene” summarizes well the Vikings and their sociocultural influence in Ireland. They blended in easily enough to not leave us much to chew on. The absence of obvious Scandinavian-influenced longhouse-dwelling communities, for example, does not need to be due to a gap in the evidence of their presence, but rather an indication of the Viking’s rapid adaptation to the new cultural dynamics.338 I join David Griffiths in his interpretation that the leading Vikings of Irish Sea region were aware of their cultural roots and ethnicity, true, but were also infinitely flexible, innovative and capable of a very pro-active stance in creating a unified presence in their new landholdings.339 The lacking evidence of a strong “Viking” material culture strengthens this view. And it does not end with the leaders; the identity of Irish Vikings overall was highly fluid and responsive to the political, economic, and territorial opportunities.340 The Vikings even eventually spoke Gaelic.341 While it was likely motivated by its benefits in trade, it also contributed to the transculturation.

There certainly remained a clear division into Irish and foreigners, but in-between laid the settlements, which developed their own, hybrid identities. Downham has compared Hiberno-Scandinavian hybridization to similar events occurring in history, notably those of Swahili culture in Africa’s East Coast. For various reasons, there seems to always remain a certain tension between the newcomers and the natives, but similarly it soon becomes irrelevant and

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336 The towns were not integrated into larger units of Irish life and Hiberno-Scandinavian dioceses remained outside the formal structure of the Irish Church until 1111. Abrams 2010, 7–8.
338 Griffiths 2003, 137.
340 Griffiths 2004, 137.
341 A number of Medieval Irish texts use the word to describe merchants’ speech as “gibgab”, referring to a heavily accented Gaelic. Downham 2016, 376.
useless to use the labels of “native” and “immigrant”, as they blend in culturally into something that is not quite either of the two. This leads us back to Rogers’s theory and the concept of transculturation, the point where something new and not purely traceable has been formed. The Viking settlements of Irish coasts may have been many things ethnically, but the cultural identities their inhabitants represented formed a hybrid, transcultural realm of their own.

343 Downham 2016, 376.
4. Conclusions

Vikings encountered the Gaelic culture of Ireland at the end of the eighth century, and were to remain on the island permanently. The centuries-long interaction between Vikings and Irish is a complex subject, and in the light of evidence gathered from material and written sources, their relations appear diverse and entwined. While the initial impact of Vikings was bloody and shocking to the Irish societies, it quickly tranquilized into a more versatile relationship after the period of hit-and-run raids of summer seasons. Since the halfway point of the ninth century, the Vikings begun to stay overwinter in Ireland, establishing their longphuirt – naval camps – some of which developed into various forms of settlements. While much of their dynamics, precise nature, and interaction with the wider society still remain in the dark, we can conclusively say that the most developed of them became centers of crafts, industry, and trade. As Ireland was completely non-urbanized prior to the Viking age, the longports evolving to settlements and towns were a new phenomenon in the island. They soon became inseparably a part of the Irish scene, being entwined economically and politically to the patchwork of rival Irish kingdoms and monasteries.

The Irish Vikings seem to have converted to Christianism from early on, though the scale of conversion both individually and in the whole population will probably never be known. Still, the slowly disappearing distinguishable pagan burials, the shifting rhetoric of Annals and the proven conversion of some high-status Viking kings indicate that Christianity was both accepted and adapted by Vikings during the ninth and tenth centuries. The church, though, continued to antagonize the newcomers and their descendants in their rhetoric through the centuries, most likely motivated by economic and political rivalry as well as religious questions. They remained ‘foreigners’ in the Annals for their whole period of influence. However, the Vikings and their Hiberno-Scandinavian descendants had close relations to monasteries, as is proven by the very locations chosen to many longports, the prosperity of monasteries under the Viking rule, and the fact that they were even protected by Viking kings. On a larger scope, Viking kingdoms became a part of the political games and acted like any Irish kingdom. They even fought against each other, highlighted best in the long Limerick-Dublin war campaign of the tenth century, thus showing that their ethnicities meant little. Both the ninth and the tenth
centuries contain endless battles, recorded in the chronicles, between Vikings, Irish, “Irish-Norse” and all different alliances of the aforementioned, beginning immediately with the emergence of longphuirt and permanent Viking settlement.

The towns were the main contact zones where the hybridization occurred. As large and fairly autonomously working entities, they fostered a multitude of different ethnicities, all laboring together. The towns, new to the Scandinavian world as well, were neither products of Viking or Irish culture – they were realms of their own, where identities were defined more through culture than through ethnicities. Calling these towns Hiberno-Scandinavian is the only appropriate way of describing them. As the tenth century grew, they were not seen as hostile anymore, but rather as places of interest, as they were rich and connected to larger networks outside their own. The Irish kings of tenth century did not destroy the towns even when they were presented with an opportunity, and the regular townsfolk were not relevant to the political struggles that oversaw the change of the leaders of these towns. The diaspora of Dublin Vikings in the beginning of the tenth century shows well the hybrid nature of its inhabitants, as it remained in use during the whole period of diaspora – clearly indicating that it was only a military elite that was banished. The town itself had already a hybridized, transcultural population that wasn’t as easily labeled.

Irish Vikings did not leave a whole lot of material remains. They influenced the craftwork through the Hiberno-Scandinavian arm-rings and later crafting styles, notably the Irish Urnes style. The architecture of Hiberno-Scandinavian towns has completely unique features. A handful of place-names today remind of the Vikings, as well as some words in Irish, associated with sea-faring and trade. Instead, they seem to have mostly blended into the society that surrounded them. After the initial military domination, the Gaelic culture overwhelmed them piece by piece. They bent in some cases, being the oppressed part of Rogers’ cultural domination – they adapted the local religion and at least partially the language. But most importantly, inside the earthen walls of their settlements, they reached the form Rogers’ transculturation, forming hybrid societies where the identities were not tied to the far homelands of their ancestors, nor the larger North Atlantic Viking community, or even to the Irish countryside. These cultural identities were something unique, and for a couple of centuries, a handful of transcultural Hiberno-Scandinavian societies blossomed in Irish coasts.
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**Attachments**


Attachment 1 - The place-names of Nordic origin in Ireland (note that the scale is missing digits).
Attachment 2 - Ninth-century chronicle references to Viking-camps in Ireland.
Attachment 3 - Tenth-century chronicle references to Viking-camps in Ireland.

Figure 1.2: Tenth-century chronicle references to Viking-camps in Ireland

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<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>County/Location</th>
<th>Reference(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atrathin</td>
<td>(Co. Down)</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlingford Lough</td>
<td>(Co. Down/Louth)</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonmacnoise</td>
<td>(Co. Offaly)</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>(Co. Dublin)</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emly</td>
<td>(Co. Tipperary)</td>
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<td>(Co. Carlow)</td>
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<td>Lough Neagh</td>
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<td>931, 936, 937</td>
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<td>Mag Raigne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>(Co. Wexford)</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
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Sites of uncertain location

Loch Bethrach in Ossory (= Mag Raigne?)  

930
Attachment 4 - The relative positions of buildings over 13 successive building levels along Fishamble Street, Dublin, showing the Medieval plot boundaries and their persistence.
Attachment 5 - Example of the ‘Irish Urnes’ crafting style.

Fig. 8. Detail of decorated panel on the Cross of Cong. Photo: The National Museum of Ireland.