

The Scandinavian Trade Network in the Early Viking Age

Kaupang and Dublin in Context

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Summary

The paper compares and contrasts Kaupang and Dublin as two early Viking Age towns. While the importance of Kaupang as a permanent settlement and active trading partner throughout the Scandinavian trade network has only just begun to be understood, Dublin has primarily been understood as an Irish town founded by Scandinavians instead of as a Scandinavian town that gradually became an Irish city. Through the application of central place and network theory, I posit that both served as major nodal points within a well-connected intra- and inter-regional long-distance Scandinavian trade network. Using archaeological field reports, contemporary primary source material, and secondary interpretation, I will examine the two sites side-by-side in order to discuss the key aspects of each town, including chronological history, the physical layouts of the sites and the buildings that were present, the monetary systems in place, the nature of their imports and exports, and the different peoples who inhabited them. In this way, I will reach my conclusion as to why Kaupang failed and Dublin survived.

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I would like to thank my friends and classmates who I have met on this incredible adventure through Reykjavik and Oslo. I would like to thank my flatmate most especially for feeding me when I was too tired or lazy to cook and for all the late night conversations conducted on the floor of our kitchen. Last but not least, I would like to thank Martha for keeping an eye on us while we worked.

1 INTRODUCTION

Kaupang and Dublin were two nodal urban markets within the Scandinavian trade network. Despite constantly shifting borders and fluctuating political situations amongst Scandinavian kings, the ninth century experienced the growth of trade and network expansion, regardless of the ruling powers and state consolidation. For a select group of Scandinavian elite, trade, and the wealth it produced, evolved into a power more important than territorial rights. This paper proposes that Viking Age Scandinavians were able to create a trade empire through a network of urban sites, which they either settled themselves or conquered and expanded. This network was ruled over by an elite class of traders and travelers who did not adhere to modern concepts of nationalism. While there may have been self-identification amongst regional groups, and there were certainly warring factions, this did not ultimately inhibit their collective economic prosperity. This Scandinavian trade network never intended to be a united political entity, but nevertheless had a great impact upon the places in which they traded and settled. Past scholarship has largely focused on comparing Scandinavian Viking Age towns to one another, within a limited geographical frame, i.e. urban sites within the North and Baltic Seas. Comparably, Irish history has remained the reserve of Irish and British Scholars, who have carried out their research with nationalistic focus. The aim of this paper is to open a discussion across modern borders, by comparing and contrasting two early Viking Age towns, in order to provide a greater understanding of the political and economic system through which a trade network was accomplished. More specifically, this discussion centers around Kaupang, in modern southeast Norway, and Dublin in Ireland.

These two towns have been selected for a number of reasons. First, Kaupang's recent excavations have changed the way it is understood within the Scandinavian trade network; while Kaupang was previously considered to be a major market center, past scholarship classified it as a seasonal settlement. The Irish Sea has been acknowledged as a major trading partner with Kaupang, yet the majority of Scandinavian archaeologists limit their theoretical approaches to within Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea. Indeed, modern nationalism has proven to be limiting in understanding how Scandinavian urban centers communicated and traded only amongst each other. However, the Irish Sea is incredibly important to Kaupang's

economic growth as Scandinavian migration to the west allowed Kaupang to shift ties from trade and raiding with/against the Carolingian Empire to the Irish Sea during the ninth century. From then on, it was arguably also dependent upon the North and Irish Sea, a rather understudied connection. It is therefore proposed that the ultimate failure of Kaupang lay in its dependence on unstable political systems in flux. Collapsing in the first half of the tenth century, Kaupang faced the failure of the Danish kingdom to control the Vestfold area, as the Norwegian kingdom expanded and solidified its power and moved its centers of control to non-Danish held sites. I chose to study Dublin because I found that Dublin is often viewed as an Irish city that was founded by Scandinavians raiders, instead of a Scandinavian town that grew gradually in to an Irish city. Few scholars have completed an in-depth examination of the direct economic link of Dublin to the Scandinavian trade network in the early Viking Age, preferring to discuss the politics of ethnicity and identity. In comparison to Kaupang, Dublin began as a dependent colony-town, but ensuing generations ensured that it became a socio-political and economically independent 'city-state' within Ireland. It is ultimately Dublin's independence from Scandinavian powers that allowed it to survive beyond the Viking Age.

1.1 Source criticism

While there are a variety of written sources throughout Europe, and even the Middle East, during the early Viking Age, the Scandinavians pose a unique problem in that they do not write about themselves until much later in their history. Because they are most often recorded as pirates, slavers, and savage threats to the well being of the kingdom(s) recording their activities, bias sometimes permeates the entries that reference them. The *Royal Frankish Annals* (*Annales regni Francorum*) (ARF) is a contemporary chronicle which reveals Continental Europe's earliest encounters with the kingdom of the Danes and other Scandinavian pirates at the advent of the Viking Age. The annals record events concerning the Carolingian Empire between 741 and 829, and are generally trustworthy in their record of Danish activities, if not their motivations.¹

Ninth century Ireland is able to offer a more thorough picture of Scandinavian activities in the Irish Sea Region, although we face the same problem in that it is the Irish as

¹ I have offered my own translations from the original Latin. The two translations from Old Norse and Old English are also my own.

heroes and victims who record the invasion of a Scandinavian host. The most trusted Irish source is the *Annals of Ulster* (AU). The *Annals of Ulster* detail events from the fifth century into the twelfth century, and are generally believed to accurately record contemporary historical materia. For this reason, I have chosen to rely more heavily on the *Annals of Ulster*, although I do make occasional use of the *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (FA) and *The Annals of Innisfallen* (AI) in order to corroborate certain events.

Because my use of the sources necessitates fact over narrative, I have chosen not to discuss *Ynglingatal* as a textual source in reference to Kaupang. The poem was first recorded in *Heimskringla* during the 1220s, and the debate over dating has not reached a satisfying conclusion. Its unreliable and national bias towards the Norwegian kingdom suggests that it cannot be considered a historical source through which to build the history of Kaupang in Skiringssal.²

1.2 Historiography/Stand der Forschung

In studying the archaeology of Kaupang, this paper will make use of Dagfinn Skre's extensive volumes in order to examine and analyze the archaeology of the town.³ Any assessment made by previous excavations on site, such as Blindheims's work between 1950-1974, or early nineteenth and twentieth century archaeologists, will only be understood through Skre's own historiography and interpretations. As far as historical interpretation goes, early Viking Age Scandinavia has long been viewed through a lens of prehistory, and the Scandinavians of the ninth century have forever been at the mercy of how their contemporaries wrote about them. Modern perceptions have been influenced by politically nationalistic approaches of the nineteenth century and only recently have historians moved away from using the accounts written by Saxo Grammaticus and Snorri Sturluson. In this way, a shift towards a stronger reliance in scientific analysis of the archaeology has allowed historians to create a more accurate narrative in Scandinavia during the early Viking Age.

² For further reading see: Skre, Dagfinn, "The Dating of *Ynglingatal*," in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007), 407-430.; Myre, Bjørn, "Borre og Ynglingeætta i Vestfold," in *Før Viken Ble Norge: Borregravfeltet som religiøs og politisk arena*, (Norsk oldfunn XXXI: 2015), 113-132.

³ Skre, Dagfinn, ed., *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007).; Skre, Dagfinn, ed., *Means of Exchange*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2008).; Skre, Dagfinn, ed., *Things from the Town*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2011).

The Viking Age in Ireland is perhaps more complicated to interpret, as it has always functioned within the realm of insular nationalism, and Irish and British scholars have viewed the Scandinavian invasion with measured distaste. As such, the archaeology of early Viking Age Dublin has long suffered from heavy reliance on annalistic exegesis, which naturally leans towards a decidedly anti-Scandinavian approach, thus limiting interpretation of the Scandinavians in their own right. Only recently have scholars begun to move towards a more balanced approach, accepting that Scandinavians were less of a plague and more an integral part of Ireland's textured and colorful history. Mary A. Valante's 2008 book, *The Vikings in Ireland*, offers "a monograph-length study of the economy of Scandinavian urban centres in Viking Age Ireland,"⁴ which has helped to contextualize why the Scandinavians went to Ireland in the first place and how they helped to build Ireland through urban infrastructure and long-distance trade. Linzi Simpson has pushed for new excavations and definitively found evidence of ninth century Dublin, resulting in a desire to reinterpret both new and old annalistic and archaeological evidence within this recent context.⁵ Despite this new evidence, traditional scholars such as Howard B. Clarke continue to operate under minimalist theory (under which the Scandinavians hardly impacted Ireland's political structure and focused only on economic advancement), positing that Ireland remained "a land with a minimum trend towards urbanization" even at the turn of the eleventh century.⁶ In studying Dublin, it is important to acknowledge its role as a Scandinavian town in Ireland, but also to examine Dublin's interactions with the Scandinavian elite that founded it.

Scandinavian urbanism has been a point of contention for many generations of scholars, and the definition of what exactly constitutes a town in the early Viking Age is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, it will be easier to define the difference between a *central place* within a region, and a *nodal point* within a *scale-free network*, and how Kaupang and Dublin come into focus once both *central place theory* and *network theory* have been applied to their contextualization. Central place theory was originally developed by the German geographer Walther Christaller in the 1930s, and David Clarke first applied the

⁴ Valante, Mary A. *The Vikings in Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008) 12.

⁵ Linzi Simpson, "The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: archaeological evidence from Dublin," in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West, Papers from the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18-27 August 2005*, edited by John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Dorráin, assisted by Shannon Lewis-Simpson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010) 418-429.

⁶ Howard B. Clarke, "King Sitriuc Silkenbeard: a great survivor," in *The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond: Before and After the Battle of Clontarf*, edited by Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 253.

theory to archaeology in 1972.⁷ Although it was created to function as a geographical theory, by applying it to archaeology scholars suggest that the urban site was a construction of local powers. In this way, economic, juridical, religious, and administrative functions would have helped to define the site as a central place.⁸ Central place theory imagines the site as the center, with focus moving inward. Søren M. Sindbæk has recently been a major advocate of shifting away from central place theory and instead viewing urbanism as a product of network theory, through which “a trading-place is not primarily a political or economic structure, but a traffic junction - a point where certain networks or traffic convene.”⁹ Sindbæk considers Kaupang as one of seven major nodes within a geographically Scandinavian network, but Dublin, an undeniably Scandinavian node, is left out of consideration on the grounds of geographic placement in the Irish Sea.¹⁰ Therefore, I am specifically interested in applying network theory to both Kaupang and Dublin, as a means in which to bring Dublin into the playing field as a major actor in the Scandinavian trade network. In addition, I suggest that instead of perpetuating an either/or usage of central place and network theory, both can be applied to create a nuanced, layered approach. In this way, it is possible that a site can be both a central place and a node as part of a larger network; urbanism is a complex phenomenon, and undoubtedly developed through both intra-regional and inter-regional influences.

1.3 The sequence of chapters

This paper has been broken down into two chapters and structured to offer a side-by-side comparison of Kaupang and Dublin. The first chapter will be focused on the development and decline of Kaupang in Skiringssal and the second will discuss ninth century Dublin. The chapters will mirror each other, examining chronological history and different aspects of each site, such as the physical layouts of the sites and the buildings that were present, the monetary systems in place, the nature of their imports and exports, and the different peoples who inhabited both towns. In this way, Kaupang and Dublin will be

⁷ Clarke, David L., *Models in Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 1972).

⁸ Callmer, Johan, “Urbanization in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region c. AD 700-1100: Trading Places, Centres and Early Urban Sites,” in *Development around the Baltic and North Sea in the Viking Age*, Volume 3, ed. Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke (Stockholm: Birka Studies, 1994) 50-90.

⁹ Sindbæk, Søren M., “Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia,” *Antiquity*, 81 (2007): 120.

¹⁰ Sindbæk, Søren M., “Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia,” *Antiquity*, 81 (2007): 121.

compared and contrasted, and ultimately they will be identified as two nodal points linked together by the Scandinavian trade network.

2 Kaupang

In this chapter, I argue that the Danish kingdom established Kaupang in order to create a central traffic junction in the Scandinavian trade network, which linked Scandinavia's western routes to its eastern connections. I will begin by contextualizing the history and environmental factors on a global scale that led to the beginning of the consolidation of the Danish kingdom during the eighth century and the introduction of towns into Scandinavian society. A warming climate, agricultural surplus, and silver circulation were clear factors in the growth of commercial activity throughout Scandinavia, as well as its early contact with the Carolingian Empire and its subsequent decline.

Next, I will address the nature of Skiringssal, including the royal hall of Huseby and the importance of the *thing* site, which are both indicative of the site being a central place within the Vestfold region. The lack of defenses surrounding the town will be addressed as evidence that Kaupang was never a political center or a major military site. The town's physical layout and the archaeological finds associated with the town will be used to understand the character of the settlement, including what sort of port Kaupang functioned as, what goods were imported and exported from the town, and where these goods came from and went to. I will discuss the inhabitants of the town, their purpose as craftsmen or traders, and how they came to arrive in Kaupang. Essentially, I will discuss the aspects of the town that allowed it to link the Viken region to long-distance trade and open communication between the Irish Sea and the Middle East. This chapter will end by examining the decline of Kaupang during the first decades of the tenth century and examine any connections this failure may have had to do with its contact with the Irish Sea.

2.1 Contextual Foundations

Kaupang was established in southeastern Norway around 800 as a nodal point within the Scandinavian trade network. The Danish kingdom created this node in order to take control of and expand upon preexisting trading routes in the North and Baltic seas, which dated back to the Roman Empire. The four most important Scandinavian trading centers, Birka, Ribe, Kaupang and Hedeby respectively, were founded between 770 and 810, during which time non-Scandinavian textual sources note an increasing Scandinavian presence

spreading throughout the known world. Yet the network did not emerge from a vacuum, and Kaupang's contextual foundations were laid over a century prior, when the seventh century saw the return of economic and political stability to the successor kingdoms of the northwestern Roman Empire. At the same time, the Eastern Roman Empire began its decline and collapsed under pressure from the Sassanian Empire of Persia and the growth of the Islamic caliphate. The Roman Empire had never ventured as far north as Scandinavia, although archaeological evidence has explicitly linked contact between the two through trade and also possibly with Scandinavians as mercenaries in armies either for or against the Empire.¹¹ The emergence of the Scandinavian runic script during the first century AD also points to contact with the literate Roman Empire, as the runic characters both resemble the alphabet graphemically and correlate to roughly the same sound values.¹² Likewise, the collapse of the Roman Empire did not signal the end of Scandinavian contact with the rest of Europe. A Merovingian coin was found at on the shores of Kaupang, signifying contact during the seventh century, and the Carolingian Empire became well acquainted with the rising Danish kingdom.¹³

Environmental factors contributed greatly to the reopening and expansion of trade networks that faltered at the end of the western Roman Empire. The climate of northwestern Europe began to warm beginning around the year 650 and continued for roughly a century.¹⁴ Scandinavia benefited from this trend towards warming and became a surplus-producing economy at the beginning of the eighth century. The majority of land within mainland Norway lay both unclaimed and untouched at this time, while farming allowed for only a small percentage of agricultural cultivation of the land. These uncultivated stretches of land,

¹¹ The Prince in the Flag Mound, third century burial in Avaldsnes, Norway, was buried with a wealth of Roman imports. These include, a board game with 31 blue and black glass gaming pieces, a tin-plated bronze mirror, a pair of bronze scales, a complete set of bronze vases and platters, a silver cup, a silver fitting for a drinking horn, and a bronze wine sieve, all of which link Scandinavian trade and communication to the Roman Empire. Most importantly, a double-edged sword in a leather sheath, issued to members of the Roman army, was found buried with in the grave; such a find may indicate that this man fought either for or against the Roman army somewhere to the south before returning to Avaldsnes. (Vea, Marit Synnøve, "Roman Age (0-400)," *Avaldsnes: Noregs eldste kongesete*, acc. 20/04/17, <http://avaldsnes.info/en/historie/yngre-romertid-200-400-e-kr/>.)

¹² Barnes, Michael P. "What is Runology, and Where Does It Stand Today," in *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies: Containing proceedings of the Seventh International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions, Oslo, 9-14 August 2010*, vol. 4, ed. James E. Knirk and Henrik Williams, ass. ed. Marco Bianchi, (University of Oslo & Uppsala University: 2013), 12.

¹³ Pilø, Lars, "The Settlement: Extent and Dating," in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007), 173.

¹⁴ McCormick, Michael and et al., "Climate change during and after the Roman Empire," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 43, no. 2 (2012): p. 200, doi:10.1162/JINH_a_00379.

referred to as outlands, were where the surplus of cattle was left out to graze.¹⁵ Based on a later law found in *Gulathing*, it can be suggested that the outlands were common land intentionally left unclaimed, and the communal aspect of these outlands allowed for a greater number of farmers to become wealthy.¹⁶ Past scholarship has envisioned the majority of Scandinavian farmers as *free peasants* during the late Iron Age, in which landholders were beholden to no one and maintained a significant degree of freedom, but recent research questions the validity of this assertion. Despite a great degree of autonomy, the farming class relied on the aristocracy to settle disputes and to protect them in times of unrest. Recent archaeological evidence suggests that large manorial farms housed an aristocracy that oversaw smaller farms in its vicinity and played a large role in the pre-urban economy. Indeed, it is highly likely that Viking Age estates were organized through a system of magnate farms, similarly to Carolingian manors, and required a large number of slaves to function.¹⁷ While the use of slaves faded from fashion in the tenth century throughout central and western Europe, it did not disappear from northern Europe until much later, which suggests two things: first that slaves would have been needed from outside of Scandinavia in large portions in order to run these farms, and second that the population of thralls and non-free peoples would have been higher in medieval Scandinavia than previously thought.¹⁸

The survival of a free farming farm class depended on the ability to graze their herds unhindered, as well as an increasing slave class to work the farms. As such, aristocratic leaders were needed to maintain the balance and also to ensure access to these slaves. A leader or chieftain's power would have been strongly based around his social relations and particularly around his ability to lead in an agricultural area by distributing surpluses and

¹⁵ Sindbæk, Søren M., "Social Power and Outland Use in Viking Age Settlement," in *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Bjørn Poulsen and Søren Michael Sindbæk, (Brepols: Turnhout 2011), 106.

¹⁶ *Norges Game Love indtil 1387: Norges Love ældre end Kong Magnus Haakonssøns Regjerings-Tiltrædelse i 1263. Compiled by P. A. Munch and R. Keyser*; (Christiania, 1864), 41. *Gulathing Law 84 Nu skal til sætra a fall up væra mertu sem at forno fare hever verit. Foru eigi ór stað nema hann fore engum manne til meins. Sva skal þar f'tr at Somme.* (Now shall the boundary markers of the shieling pasture upon the mountain be moved to as they were of old. Let no one possess/move their from places except him to go so that no one man comes to harm. So shall the pastures be that same.)

¹⁷ Skre, Dagfinn, "Centrality, Landholding and Trade in Scandinavia c. AD 700-900," in *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia*, edited by Bjørn Poulsen and Søren Michael Sindbæk, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 202-203. See also: Iversen, Tore, "Thralls' Manumission, Land Clearing, and State Building in Medieval Norway," in *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Bjørn Poulsen and Søren Michael Sindbæk, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 263-276

¹⁸ Poulsen, Bjørn and Sindbæk, Søren M., "Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia." in *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Bjørn Poulsen and Søren Michael Sindbæk, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) 15.

keeping the peace surrounding land rights.¹⁹ The leader of a stable economic region would also have the ability to create and organize military opportunities; this manifested in the form of the oversea raids that came to define the Viking Age. Aristocratic leaders could become war chiefs if they had not just the wealth of cattle, but also portable wealth to present to his followers. The portable wealth transported back to Scandinavia from these successful raids opened up a new avenue for trade in a mainly agricultural economy.

At the same time as the northwest of Europe began to warm, a series of events closed down preexisting trade routes that connected the east and the west, and may have resulted in a Scandinavian attempt to reopen these networks at the end of the eighth century. The rise of Islam in the Middle East and its rapid expansion during the decline of the Eastern Roman Empire effectively closed the eastern Mediterranean to the Christian West by the end of the seventh century. While the sea had operated as a road during the height of the Roman Empire, the Mediterranean now became a barrier. Conflict and isolation in China and East Asia also closed the Silk Road to the West, limiting even more goods and luxuries which once progressed with limited obstruction from one side of the world to the other. Towns, already devastated from the fall of the Western Roman Empire, continued to decline. This was a crippling blow, and the entire economy of western Europe suffered. Yet it may have worked to draw Scandinavians out of their northern homelands in search of wealth; the slow trickling of goods northward suddenly ceased. Used to the flow of wealth to Scandinavia from western Europe, the gift-giving socio-economies of the north were forced to seek out capital and Scandinavians travelled long-distances to obtain their fortunes.

Scandinavian trade centers emerged in the Baltic Sea as new trade routes began to emerge and expand. Goods from the east no longer filtered up to Scandinavia from Western Europe, and thus Scandinavians cut a direct route from their homelands down to the East. In 761, the Abbasid dynasty established their dominance in the Middle East and moved their capital to Baghdad in 762. This brought the caliphate closer to the silver mines and resulted in a large exportation of silver outside of the Middle East. Coin hoard patterns suggest that the silver made its way to Scandinavia first through the Southern Caucasus and then up through

¹⁹ Sindbæk, Søren M., "Social Power and Outland Use in Viking Age Settlement," 104.

Eastern Europe before reaching the Baltic and North Seas.²⁰ As large amounts of silver entered the local economies between the Middle East and Scandinavia, this reintroduction of wealth stimulated long-distance trade once again. While the Christian West had been closed to the Islamic East, the more neutral Swedish Rus, being of neither religious faction, were allowed to explore and establish trade routes to Byzantium and Baghdad through the eastern river-ways. Birka, established around 770, dates to this period of expansion, as does Reric (Groß Stömkendorf) and Truso in the Baltic Sea.

The Carolingian Empire was vital in both stimulating Scandinavian trade, but also in provoking the Danes of the Jutland peninsula into territorial consolidation through military action in order to protect their lands. Charlemagne had been actively expanding his empire north into Germanic (Saxon and Frisian) lands during the 770s and 780s; Frisia and Saxony were finally claimed by the Franks in 785, three years after the infamous Massacre at Verden.²¹ This no doubt spurred the Danish kingdom to begin its unification during the second half of the eighth century and encouraged military organization. Indeed, Charlemagne began his struggles with the Danish king Godfrid during the first decade of the ninth century, and this would continue until the Frankish emperor's death. Godfrid reacted to Carolingian threats by first raiding off the Frankish coasts with small parties and then appears to have set upon the Franks with larger fleets, exacting tribute from these peoples. Charlemagne attempted to build a fleet in order to counter the Danish threat, but Godfrid was not to be outdone. The king of the Danes destroyed the Frankish held Reric in the Baltic Sea and forcibly moved its merchants to the newly created Danish town of Hedeby in 808.²² At the same time, the Royal Frankish Annals record that Godfrid began reconstruction on the

²⁰ Kilger, Christoph, "Kaupang from Afar: Aspects of the Interpretation of Dirham Finds in Northern and Eastern Europe between the Late 8th and Early 10th Centuries," in *Means of Exchange: Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2008, 199.

²¹ ARF 785 ... *et tunc tota Saxonia subiugata est.* (And then all of Saxony was subdued.)

²² ARF 808 *Godofridus vero, priusquam reverteretur, distructo emporio, quod in oceani litore constitutum lingua Danorum Reric dicebatur et magnam regno illius commoditatem vectigalium persolutione praestabat, translatisque inde negotiatoribus, soluta classe ad portum, qui Sliesthorp dicitur, cum universo exercitu venit.* (But Godofrid destroyed a trading place on the seashore before he returned, called Reric in the Danish language, which, because of the taxes it paid, was of great advantage to his kingdom, and he transferred the merchants from Reric. He came with his whole army and weighed anchor at the harbor, which is called Schleswig.)

Danevirke, a fortification that was meant to define the territory between Danish Jutland and the Frankish continent.²³ Frankish expansion northwards was not welcomed by the Danes.

Despite their enmity, Godfrid appears to have been heavily influenced by Charlemagne's example in regards to monarchy, taxation, and expansion, though the Danish kingdom operated more through a maritime system than along terrestrial borders. It is generally accepted that Kaupang was founded by the Danish kingdom around 800, despite its separation from Jutland by a large body of water. Skiringssal was already a traffic junction in the busy North Sea and Oslofjord, and Godfrid was clearly keen on the wealth that trade in the Viken region produced. But it seems that Danish overlordship was not entirely welcome. In 813, the *Royal Frankish Annals* record that two princes of Denmark, Harald Klak and Reginfrid could not come as envoys to the Frankish court because they had been sent to Vestfold in order to put down a rebellion against Danish overlordship there.²⁴ Perhaps those in Vestfold saw their opportunity to gain freedom via the Danish kingdom encountered a period of instability due to the struggle for succession after the death of both Godfrid and Hemming, as well as subsequent skirmishes against the Franks.²⁵ Whatever the reason, the resistance was put down and the Danish kingdom retained control over the region.

2.2 Skiringssal as a Central Place

Skiringssal was a central place before Kaupang became a nodal point in the Scandinavian trade network. The harbor at Kaupang indicates that the shore saw traffic long before the establishment of the town. Evidence for an earlier seasonal market has been ruled out by archaeologists, but the understanding that Skiringssal operated as a central place puts

²³ ARF 808 *Ibi per aliquot dies moratus limitem regni sui, qui Saxoniam respicit, vallo munire constituit, eo modo, ut ab orientali maris sinu, quem illi Ostarsalt dicunt, usque ad occidentalem oceanum totam Egidorae fluminis aquilonalem ripam munimentum valli praetexeret, una tantum porta dimissa, per quam carra et equites emitti et recipi potuissent.* (There he remained for several days at the border of his kingdom, where he secured/fortified the rampart against Saxony, so that a protective bulwark stretched from the eastern sea, which in that place is called Ostarsalt, as far as the western sea. The fortification borders entire north bank of the River Eider. There is only one gate through which wagons and horsemen would be able to leave and enter.)

²⁴ ARF 813 *Qui tamen eo tempore domi non erant, sed ad Westarfoldam cum exercitu profecti, quae regio ultima regni eorum inter septentrionem et occidentem sita, contra aquilonem Britanniae summitatem respicit, cuius principes ac populus eis subici recusabant.* (However, they were not at home at this time, but had set out to Vestfold with their army. The region sits between the final limits of their northern and western royal authority, opposite the northern most part of Britain. The leaders [of Vestfold] refused to submit to them.)

²⁵ ARF 811 *Nec multo post Hemmingus Danorum rex defunctus nuntiatur. Cui cum Sigifridus nepos Godofridi regis et Anulo nepos Herioldi, et ipsius regis, succedere voluissent neque inter eos, uter regnare deberet, convenire potuisset, comparatis copiis et commisso proelio ambo moriuntur.* (Not long after, the death of Hemming, the king of the Danes, was announced. Sigfrid, grandson of King Godfrid, and Anulo, grandson of Harold, himself a king, wanted to agree amongst them which of the two should be king. [Before] they could agree, they gathered troops, and both were killed in battle.)

archaeological finds from the harbor in greater context. The royal hall at Huseby, the *thing* site at Tjølling, and a neighboring lake and mountain, whose names imply them to be associated with religious figures, all assert that Skiringssal functioned as religious and governmental center in the Viken region prior to the establishment of the town.²⁶ With archaeological and naming evidence marking this site as a central place as early as the Bronze Age, it would have been a logical location for the Danish king to choose this junction as a new node in this network.

The *thing* site at Skiringssal served as a central place where many different groups convened to conduct business. The medieval church Tjølling, which has survived from the Middle Ages, gets its name from the old Norse *Þjóðalyng*, and can be roughly translated as, “the heath of the peoples.”²⁷ With *þjóð* in the genitive plural form, *Þjóðalyng* implies that the site served as a *thing* site for more than its own district. The understanding that it served different peoples indicates that *Þjóðalyng* was the principle *thing* site for the surrounding districts as well, and possibly for all of Vestfold. Tjølling sits quite close to a lake called *Vítrir/Vettrir* and a the mountain *Helgefjell*, and the religious connotations of these names suggest that assembly sites also served as locations of religious activity.²⁸ Many people would have travelled to the site yearly for the assembly, and likely drew a large gathering, resulting in heavy traffic throughout the region.

The royal house at Huseby also served to mark Skiringssal as a prime location for a new node. The burial of a high-status woman from the fourth or fifth century beneath the Viking Age hall indicates that the site was of some importance since at least the early Iron Age. Its prominent position in the topography of the area, as well as its impressive size, suggest that Huseby housed Skiringssal’s aristocracy. Further evidence of an elite presence includes upper-class drinking vessels, Tating-ware jugs and bowls, a piece from a silver spiral (most likely broken from an armring), an Irish buckle with an amber inlay, and a Frankish gilt

²⁶ Skre, “Centrality, Landholding and Trade in Scandinavia c. AD 700-900,” 208.

²⁷ Brink, Stefan, “Skiringssal, Kaupang, Tjølling - the Toponymic Evidence,” in *Means of Exchange: Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age*, ed. Dagfinn Skre (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & Kaupang Excavation Project, Publication Series, 2007), 57.

²⁸ Skre, Dagfinn, “The Skiringssal *Thing* site *Þjóðalyng*,” in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007) 385.

bronze mount.²⁹ These finds link the royal hall to communication with the Irish Sea, the Frankish Empire, and other areas of Scandinavia at this time.³⁰

As a royal seat, Skre hypothesizes that a manorial estate must have existed within Skiringssal.³¹ Burial evidence within Skiringssal's cemeteries suggests that the estate was made up of at least 10-15 farms, although the number of estates could have been larger if the cemeteries only held the bodies of the king's warriors.³² As discussed in the previous section, many of the laborers at these manorial estates would have been worked by slaves, and these dead would not have ended up in formal cemeteries. Such an estate would surely have needed a steady number of thralls to keep it functioning, and thus Skiringssal functioned as a site where slaves were possibly brought in from non-Scandinavian lands in order to work the land.

2.3 Kaupang in Skiringssal

In summation to the arguments above, the town of Kaupang is a product of Skiringssal being a central place, but grew into its place as a major node as traffic increased and wealth passed through it from the outer points of the Scandinavian trade network. Having looked at Skiringssal and the growth of Scandinavian trade in context, it is now time to look at the town itself and how it built up the trade network around it.

2.3.i Comment on the archaeology

Because Kaupang does not have any contemporary textual sources that do more than reference the location of Skiringssal,³³ the entirety of our understanding of the site comes from the archaeology. Unfortunately, continuous ploughing on the site since the medieval period has destroyed much of the early settlement remains. It is therefore difficult to

²⁹ Skre, Dagfinn. "Excavations of the Hall at Huseby," in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Århus: Århus University Press and the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007) 235.

³⁰ Munch, Gerd Stamsø, "Borg in Lofoten: a chieftain's farm in north Norway," in *Othere's Voyages*, ed. Janet Bately & Anton Englert, (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007), 102.; Tating-ware has only been found in one other modern-Norwegian site, at Borg in Lofoten, thus connecting Skiringssal to the northwestern coast of Norway.

³¹ Skre, Dagfinn, "Emergence of a Central Place: Skiringssal in the 8th Century" in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007), 431, 442.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ From *Othere's Journey: Þonne is þis land oð he cymð to Sciringeses heale, ⁊ ealne weg on þæt bæcbord Norðweg*. (Then there is this land until he comes to Skiringssal, and all the way on that port side Norway (the North Way).): Orosius, Paulus, *King Alfred's Orosius*, (Published for the Early English Text Society, by N. Trübner & Co. and Harvard University, 1883), 19.

understand the character of the settlement prior to 840/850.³⁴ The soil itself is acidic and dry, and these conditions are not conducive for the preservation of organic materials; fur, leather, textiles, and anything made from wood have all disappeared from the archaeological record.³⁵ Aside from building foundations, only inorganic materials remain: most notably small objects in metal or stone. This has left significant gaps in understanding the nature of the settlement, including how long the settlement lasted, who lived in the town, where they came from, and why exactly they were there. The picture is incomplete, but the available finds hint towards skilled craftsmen and merchant connections throughout the known world.

2.3.ii Layout of the town

Kaupang was not an accident of commerce. The archaeology suggests that the town was intentionally established and laid out with a deliberate planned design. Whoever had control over Vestfold during this period meant to link this regional junction to a greater trade network. Situated on the west side of a sound and protected from the open Oslofjord by a breakwater of islands, Kaupang in Skiringssal began as a seasonal settlement sometime between 790 and 800. Within a decade, the site transformed into a permanent settlement which operated around specialized production and long-distance trade. There is no evidence to support the idea that Kaupang functioned as a long-term seasonal settlement and trading center prior to 790, as compared to the settlement at Ribe, which functioned first as a trading post and only later as a permanent urban site.³⁶

Kaupang's layout evidences early city-planning, and was meant to be a permanent settlement from the outset. Once firmly established, Kaupang quickly grew into a large settlement. The borders of the town were defined by a mound cemetery to the north, a tall rocky outcrop to the west, another mound cemetery to the south, and the sea again to the east. Due to variations in modern-day sea-levels, the sea is currently 3.5 meters lower than during Kaupang's occupation, and the remains of the town were found no less than 1 meter above the ninth century sea level; the large 1 meter buffer was likely due to recurrent high tides.³⁷ Its

³⁴ Pedersen, Unn, "Urban craftspeople at Viking-Age Kaupang," in *Everyday Products in the Middle Ages: Crafts, Consumption and the Individual in Northern Europe c. AD 800-1600*, ed. Gitte Hansen, Steven P. Ashby and Irene Baug, (Oxbow: 2015) 52-53.

³⁵ Skre, Dagfinn, "The Inhabitants: Origins and Trading Connexions," in *Things from the Town: Artefacts from the Town*, ed. Dagfinn (Århus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, 2011) 421-422.

³⁶ Pilø, Lars, "The Settlement: Character, Structures and Features," in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Århus: Århus University Press and the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007), 192.

³⁷ Pilø, "The Settlement: Extent and Dating," 163.

central area, which operated as its residential sector, was divided into plots with houses. The plots are of asymmetrical shape, and post-and-wattle fences define and divide the plots. These plots appear to have been laid intentionally at a decided point and time. As there are no traces of occupation in the urban area before the plot layout, this would indicate that Kaupang was purposefully created as a permanent urban community, most likely by the ruling chief or monarch in control of the region.³⁸

Evidence of skilled craftwork links Kaupang to the Scandinavian trade network through its role in skilled craft production. Craft waste found inside domestic buildings indicates that craft-making was just as much a part of daily life as domestic pursuits and trade, and it demonstrates that craftworkers were well integrated into town life. They were not merely visitors who stopped occasionally at an urban trading port but conducted business regularly.³⁹ Most of the excavated buildings appear to be domestic, mainly identified through evidence of a hearth. Many of the houses also uncovered individual aspects of the occupying family's life, including specialized craftwork created in domestic homes. For example, Building A200 housed an amber-worker, while Building A302 most likely was home to an ironsmith based on the iron slag found within the building. Building A304 evidences glass production, and Building A301 offers ample artifacts of textile production such as loom weights; both also functioned as domestic domiciles. Other buildings offer up no explanation. Building A406 has no hearth and therefore the function must remain unknown. Building A89947 most likely served as an animal pen, though Pilø suggests that only pigs would have been reared in the town.⁴⁰ Cattle and sheep would have been kept on the neighboring farms and outlands. The layout of the town suggests that there were no distinct craft districts, i.e. textile workers did not live in one part of town while the amber-workers were assigned to another section.

Archaeological evidence suggests that craft production commenced shortly after establishment, thus indicating that skilled workers arrived almost immediately after settlement, most likely from within the Scandinavian trade network. They brought their own tools, which mark out their unique techniques and specialized ways of creating goods.

³⁸ Pilø, "The Settlement: Extent and Dating," 168.

³⁹ Pedersen, "Urban Craftspeople at Viking Age Kaupang," 54.

⁴⁰ Pilø, "The Settlement: Character, Structures and Features," 216.

Other items found inside domestic homes designate artifacts that did not come to Kaupang through trade, but as personal possessions, and this sheds light on the immigration patterns of the inhabitants of the town. During the ninth century, western Scandinavians did not make pottery, preferring vessels made of soapstone and whetstone. A large amount of pottery has been uncovered in Scandinavia, all of which was not made locally and has been traced to Frankish, Frisian, Slavonic, and southern Scandinavian origins.⁴¹ As western Scandinavians did not use pottery, it is unlikely that these vessels were imported for trading purposes and therefore must have been brought to Kaupang with foreigners who settled in the town. This raises important questions surrounding the settlers: how many were locals of the Vestfold region, how many relocated from within Danish-held land, and how many came from further abroad? Furthermore, it is possible that merchants were forced to relocate to the site. The Royal Frankish Annals records that King Göttrik of Denmark forced the merchants of Reric, also known as Groß Stömkendorf, to relocate to Hedeby in 808, in order to better control and tax the trade.⁴² Hedeby ultimately owes its success to this tactic and considering Hedeby and Kaupang were most likely ruled by the same king, it is not a stretch to imagine that a similar population transfer could have occurred.

House A301 in Kaupang is understood to be the household of a Frisian merchant who lived in the house during the second quarter of the ninth century. This analysis has been surmised based on the finds of Frankish or Frisian pottery, as well as the fact that three out of four female dress accessories found within the house are of Frankish origin.⁴³ A Frisian family in Kaupang effectively determines it as a town of international importance and signals that foreigners migrated up from the Carolingian Empire to southern Scandinavia in order to build their wealth. The house itself seems to have been built in the 820s, although it was abandoned in the 840s or 850s, at which point the Frankish town of Dorestad began its decline.⁴⁴ This would signify that the livelihoods and successes of Frankish immigrants in southern

⁴¹ Skre, Dagfinn, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," in *Clerics, Kings and Vikings: Essays on Medieval Ireland in Honour of Donnchadh Ó Corráin*, ed. Emer Purcell, Paul MacCotter, Julianne Nyhan, and John Sheehan, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 238.

⁴² Kalmring, Sven, "Early Northern Towns as Special Economic Zones," in *New Aspects on Viking-age Urbanism: Proceedings of the International Symposium at the Swedish History Museum, April 17-20th 2013*, ed. Lena Holmquist, Sven Kalmring and Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, (Stockholm: Archaeological Research Laboratory Stockholm University, 2016), 11.

⁴³ Skre, Dagfinn, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," 238.

⁴⁴ Skre, Dagfinn, "From Dorestad to Kaupang: Frankish Traders and Settlers in a 9th-Century Scandinavian Town," in *Dorestad in an International Framework: New Research on Centres of Trade and Coinage in Carolingian Times*, edited by Annemarieke Willemsen and Hanneke Kik, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 141.

Scandinavia directly related to the prosperity of their homeland. As the Carolingian Empire faded from international importance, so too did the opportunities for Frankish/Frisian immigrants in Kaupang. When trade ended with the Carolingians, Kaupang began to rely more heavily on trade to the west with the British Isles and the Irish Sea.

Kaupang's trade expansion west and shift away from trade with the Carolingian Empire is best exemplified through the presence (or lack thereof) of pottery. There is a distinct difference in the classification of objects which were brought to Kaupang through trade and those which were brought to Kaupang as personal possessions. Pottery, which was not indicative of southern Scandinavian culture, can therefore be identified as a personal item, and give us greater insight into the nature of the site. Pilø remarks on the marked presence of Badorf ware pottery and the total absence of Badorf's successor, Pinsdorf ware. Pinsdorf ware was the common pottery of the tenth century in western Europe and if Kaupang's inhabitants used Badorf ware, then it would be logical to assume that Pinsdorf ware would find its way to the site. Pilø suggests that the death of Louis the Pious in 840, and the increasing number of raids on the continent following this event may have been a reason for the lack of Pinsdorf ware.⁴⁵ The Viking raids against the Carolingian Empire would have changed contact patterns and certainly affect trade routes. This is evident in the context of the decline of Dorestad, whose ultimate disappearance proved crippling for Ribe and was felt in Hedeby and Birka as well. It is clear that Kaupang only survived the end of Dorestad because of its connection with present-day Norway, the British Isles, Ireland, and the Baltic.⁴⁶ If Kaupang was not dependent on the Carolingian Empire for its success, as Ribe was, it makes sense that Pinsdorf ware would not have been used on site.

2.3.iii Population and hinterlands/outlands

Kaupang was a settlement of some size, indicating that it was an important site for trade and traffic within southeastern Scandinavia. Based on grave finds in the several cemeteries and grave clusters surrounding the settlement area, the population of Kaupang during its 150 years of occupation is roughly estimated to have fluctuated between 200 and 500 people, though there may have been as many as 800 residents when the town was at its peak. It is unclear whether the population varied by season, though it seems likely that while

⁴⁵ Pilø, "The Settlement: Extent and Dating," 178.

⁴⁶ Skre, "From Dorestad to Kaupang: Frankish Traders and Settlers in a 9th-Century Scandinavian Town," 141.

Kaupang was a permanent settlement, it hosted a larger population in the summer months. As an urban community by definition does not produce its own food in an agricultural context, the town would have depended heavily on the surrounding countryside. Skre hypothesizes that this would require somewhere between 600 and 800 surrounding farms to supply the population with food.⁴⁷ The necessity for such a large number of farms and extensive outlands links Kaupang and Kaupang's long-distance trade routes to the regional trade network. As discussed previously in this chapter, Skiringssal was not just a node in intra-regional trade, but operated as a central place to the entirety of the Viken region. This indicates that the farms directly related to Kaupang would certainly have conducted business with the people living in the outlands, and Kaupang was in the position to dictate the terms of trade. While Kaupang depended on the town for food and other necessities, the non-urban people of these hinter/outlands would have become dependent on the ease of finding goods within the town. Further examinations of the rural Scandinavian hinter/outlands would be beneficial in furthering the understanding of the town's economic and social influence on the surrounding areas.

2.4 What was traded in the town

The finds have prompted discussion on the nature of the settlement, and Axel Christophersen has hypothesized that Kaupang was created as “a staple and transit port” in order to grant the Danish kingdom access to iron, soapstone, and whetstones from eastern Norway.⁴⁸ Unfortunately there is very little evidence in Kaupang, or Hedeby, or Ribe as import sites, to corroborate this theory; no buildings have been discovered at the site which suggests massive quantities could have been stored on site for transit. Further, whetstone and soapstone finds have been found in large quantities but most objects appear to be of relatively low quality. This indicates that Kaupang consumed whetstones and soapstones but did not function as a transit site, much like Hedeby, Dorestad, and York. While Kaupang did not operate as a transit port for inorganic materials, it is still possible that Kaupang was a massive exporter of walrus-skin ropes, furs, and slaves.⁴⁹ I would also suggest that Kaupang exported reindeer antler for the production of combs. The use of reindeer antler in comb production has recently been examined at Ribe and the results imply that it was an important material for

⁴⁷ Skre, “Centrality, Landholding and Trade in Scandinavia *c.* AD 700-900,” 204.

⁴⁸ Skre, “The Inhabitants: Origins and Trading Connexions,” 419.

⁴⁹ Skre, “The Inhabitants: Origins and Trading Connexions.” 420-421.

comb-makers in the last two decades of the eighth century.⁵⁰ While its use in the ninth century is difficult to distinguish, it is possible that access to the arctic outlands of northern Norway might have been a motivating factor in Danish interests in Vestfold. Whether the reindeer antler reached Ribe via Kaupang or from some other port, products from the north of Norway were circulating within the southern Scandinavian trade network. Kaupang as an antler exporter, however, is ultimately conjecture. Organic trade items, including bone and antler, would have left next to no evidence on site but it is likely that at least a small number of these goods passed through the port.

Kaupang were certainly dependent on selling products crafted in the town and the inhabitants managed to survive as long as trade brought long-distance and regional traffic to these centers.⁵¹ The tools and molds of non-ferrous metalworkers indicate that they participated in the serial production of goods; serial production can represent two different aspects of mass-produced items. They were either created for a consumer who had little or no contact with the craftsmen or they were simply produced for an anonymous market.⁵² Although the concepts appear similar on the surface, these aspects of production refer to very different market groups. In the former, as suggested by Callmer in 1995, it implies that the goods were created to be traded away from the market,⁵³ the latter suggests that the goods were created and sold on site to those within the town or to traveling visitors from the outlands or traders from farther afield. Pedersen believes that the latter is much more likely, as evidence points towards non-ferrous metalwork being produced on demand.⁵⁴ Thus, this type of serial production indicates that buyers traveled to Kaupang specifically to buy certain goods.

⁵⁰ Ashby, Steven P., Ashley N. Coutu and Søren M. Sindbæk, "Urban Networks and Arctic Outlands: Craft Specialists and Reindeer Antler in Viking Towns," in *European Journal of Archaeology*, 18:4 (2015), 679-704, DOI: 10.1179/1461957115Y.0000000003. 686-688; the article suggests that the reindeer antler reached Ribe from the west coast of Norway, and references *Othere's Journey*, as the title character mentions that he own both six hundred reindeer and knows the sailing route to Hedeby. The writers of the article fail to mention that Othere also references his knowledge of Kaupang.

⁵¹ Skre, Dagfinn, "Dealing with Silver: Economic Agency in South-Western Scandinavia AD 600-1000," in *Means of Exchange: Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2008), 343.

⁵² Pedersen "Urban craftspeople at Viking-age Kaupang," 57.

⁵³ Callmer, Johan, "Hantverksproduktion, samhällsförändringar och bebyggelse. Iakttagelser från östra Sydskandinavien c. 600-1100," in *Produksjon og samfunn. Om erverv, spesialisering, og bosetning i Norden i 1. årtusen e. Kr. Beretning fra 2. nordiske jernaldersymposium på Granavolden Gjæstgiveri 7-10 mai 1992*, ed. Heid Gjøstein Resi, (Oslo: Universitets Oldsaksamling, 1995) 66.

⁵⁴ Pedersen, "Urban craftspeople at Viking-age Kaupang," 57.

Kaupang must have been home to large slave market, many of whom would have been taken from the Irish Sea. Kaupang, as a central node in the Scandinavian network, would most likely have traded directly with Dublin, a Scandinavian town established in Ireland in 839. Indeed, Dublin was most likely founded to feed the need for slaves in Scandinavia, and even beyond. Kaupang was perfectly situated to operate as a halfway point within a human trafficking network. There appears to be an increased demand for slaves in the Middle East during the eighth and ninth century. While a large amount of slaves may have made their way up from the Irish and North Seas to end their life in Scandinavia, many more may have been shipped on through the Scandinavian network to eastern Europe and even as far as the Middle East. With the expansion of the caliphate, a large number of slaves were needed in building projects and the fair-coloring of the female slaves made them exotic luxury products to wealthy investors.⁵⁵ Kaupang, positioned centrally within this expansive Scandinavian trade network, would have been perfectly located as a midway point between the British Isles and the eastern trade routes that led to the Middle East.

Slavery was indicative of Scandinavian culture during the Viking Age, as discussed in the first section of this chapter. In addition to satisfying a need for free human labor on wealthy Scandinavian manorial farms, slavery also served as a show of strength over conquered enemies. Literary sources suggest that many of the slave raids undertaken by Scandinavians were targeted against women and children.⁵⁶ Slave women had the double benefit of working the fields and being used for sexual gratification and procreation.

Kaupang links directly to the Middle East through the excavation of a startling number of coins, thus adding support behind the idea of the site as a half-way point. Of the roughly 630 silver dirhams found in modern-Norway, 92 of these Islamic silver coins were discovered at Kaupang.⁵⁷ In comparison, at Hedeby only 75 dirhams have been recorded. The majority of the coins found in Kaupang were struck before 900, which fits well into the timeline of Kaupang's existence, as well as its contacts to the west; most hoards found in Southern Scandinavia cannot be dated earlier than 915. The dirhams found in Kaupang are unique, as 66% of coins found in hoards in both Norway and Sweden come from the Samanid dynasty of Central Asia, while coins found in Kaupang come primarily from the Abbasid dynasty, who

⁵⁵ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 87.

⁵⁶ Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors*, 125.

⁵⁷ Kilger, "Kaupang from Afar: Aspects of the Interpretation of Dirham Finds in Northern and Eastern Europe between the Late 8th and Early 10th Centuries," 200.

minted coins in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa.⁵⁸ It is significant that so many dirhams were found in Kaupang and especially that they made their way to Scandinavia so early in the Viking Age. Kilger argues that Kaupang peaked as a central trading place in the exchange of silver during the ninth century, based on the evidence of these early dirhams.⁵⁹ Thus Kaupang would not only prove to be a major hub in its connections to the British Sea, but its trade access would stretch well to the east and the south. Kaupang would have been a trading center that dealt in rich and exotic goods.

That does not imply that traders came all the way to Kaupang from North Africa and the Middle East. It is much more likely that it served as a stopover or halfway site through which filtered many of the goods acquired in gateway communities such as Dublin and York to the west, and Novgorod and Kiev to the east.⁶⁰ It is possible too that many items arrived in Kaupang indirectly, possibly through trade with Hedeby, as it was the largest port under Danish control at this period. Still, given the quality of goods that emerged from the soil, Kaupang must have functioned as its own stand-alone trading center as well. Kaupang would then function as a gateway port between Europe and the East.

2.5 The monetary system in Kaupang

The economy of Scandinavia was cultivated by long-distance trade and social communications, as well as by its intricate matrix of trade routes. The substantive school, under the direction of Karl Polanyi, has suggested a simplified economy in the early Viking Age, in which the traditional gift-giving society did not have the ability to deal in a neutral and empirical trade, but instead that “the price of an item was fixed by social conventions unaffected by supply and demand.”⁶¹ It is only in the last fifteen plus years that archaeologists and numismatists have made a concerted effort to approach the multiplex economy with the nuanced approach that these masters of trade deserve, and reexamine the Scandinavians’ ability to practice complex market-exchange. Sindbæk and Skre are both advocates for restructuring perceptions of monetary exchange, and Sindbæk argues that “silver and other

⁵⁸ Kilger, “Kaupang from Afar: Aspects of the Interpretation of Dirham Finds in Northern and Eastern Europe between the Late 8th and Early 10th Centuries,” 200, 201-205.

⁵⁹ Kilger, “Kaupang from Afar: Aspects of the Interpretation of Dirham Finds in Northern and Eastern Europe between the Late 8th and Early 10th Centuries,” 205.

⁶⁰ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 59.

⁶¹ Skre, “Introduction,” in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, edited by Dagfinn Skre, (Århus: Aarhus University Press and the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007) 10.

valuables were not pursued by Viking-age Scandinavians as wealth in general, but because they had properties crucial for the maintenance of social networks.⁶² In this way, the perception of a static gift-giving social economy, which operated on frangible linear exchanges, can be expanded to examine how long-distance interaction influenced the way Scandinavians dealt with the idea of money and the resulting trade interaction.

Kaupang grew out of the rise of silver circulation that filtered in from the Middle East, and became rich through its intricate network connections (not least through connections with the substantial ransoms that Scandinavian raiders were taking off the English and the Franks during the ninth century). The entire Scandinavian trade network appears to have operated in a mixed-bullion weight economy. Hoards uncovered in Scandinavia suggest that silver could move between various systems of economy; for instance, silver jewelry could function as both displays of wealth and operate through gift-exchange, but the weight of silver could also serve as bullion.⁶³ Kaupang specifically operated within a mixed-money weight system and did not mint its own coins. The earliest silver weights were excavated from a layer that dates to the second quarter of the ninth century.⁶⁴ Christoph Kilger hypothesizes that dirham silver was weighed in both smaller and larger units; Kaupang was then responsible in circulating larger ingots outside of Skiringssal, which allowed it to become wealthy as a necessary distributary node.⁶⁵

2.6 Kaupang as a geo-political threat

Despite its obvious importance as both a central place and a node in the Scandinavian trade network, excavations at Kaupang have not revealed any defensive fortifications that would indicate that the town proved to be a geo-political threat to rival factions. A defensive wall surrounded both Ribe and Hedeby, but Kaupang appears to have remained unfortified throughout its existence. Vestfold was modern-Norway's most fertile, and therefore

⁶² Sindbæk, Søren M., "Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-term Investments - and why the Viking Age happened," in *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, AD 800-1100*, edited by James Graham-Campbell, Søren M Sindbæk and Gareth Williams, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2001), 41.

⁶³ Sindbæk, "Silver Economies and Social Ties: Long-Distance Interaction, Long-term Investments - and why the Viking Age happened," 42.

⁶⁴ Skre, Dagfinn, "Markets, towns and currencies in Scandinavia ca. AD 200-1000," in *From One Sea to Another: Trading Places in the European and Mediterranean Early Middle Ages*, ed. Sauro Gelichi and Richard Hodges, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 61.

⁶⁵ Kilger, "Kaupang from Afar: Aspects of the Interpretation of Dirham Finds in Northern and Eastern Europe between the Late 8th and Early 10th Centuries," 199.

wealthiest, region and thus served as its economic core. As the largest trading site in the Oslofjord region, Kaupang should have been a major economic interest and point of conflict, and yet it was not. This may have to do with the number of trade sites that are currently surfacing within the archaeological record. For instance, a geo-physical survey at Gokstad in Vestfold has revealed a large number of houses or plot boundaries. They appear neatly along two rows, clearly indicating the existence of a narrow street.⁶⁶ The finds from the recent excavation at Gokstad evidence a large trading center, though the site was most likely seasonal. Interestingly, most of the finds show eastern connections and thus the trade most likely connected this Vestfold site to a separate trading network than the one created by the Danish kingdom.

Kaupang did not pose a geo-political threat to local powers and therefore would not have been a target for either destruction or advancement to local kings looking to regain control of Vestfold during the ninth century. The proximity of Gokstad to Kaupang, barely four kilometers apart, not only suggests that the two settlements knew of each other but potentially shared hinterlands. Inhabitants of one site could even walk to the other in order to find goods found at one but not the other. This indicates two important points concerning Vestfold: one, that the Oslofjord had enough traffic in trade to generate at least two commercial sites within a four kilometer radius, and two, that Kaupang itself was not necessary in order to maintain control of Vestfold. It was indispensable to the Danes in order to preserve their empire trade network, but not a necessary center of their territorial empire. Regional sites at Borre and Gokstad indPolitical seat of authority could shift throughout the Vestfold region, which indicates that it was allowed to be prosperous despite the origin of its overlords, but it was also allowed to fail in the tenth century when the Danish influence waned in the region.

Kaupang does not seem to pose any kind of military threat through which it could gain political advantage, thereby upsetting the Danish kingdom or disrupting the trade network. Beyond weapons found in individual graves within the cemeteries, the only indications of a military presence in Skiringssal are the remains of two arrowheads at the royal hall at Huseby. One was of the Wegraeus' type D style, which was created in order to pierce chainmail and

⁶⁶ Jan Bill, "Preliminary interpretation of geophysics reveals dense settlement area," *Museum of Cultural History*, pub. 31/01/13, <http://www.khm.uio.no/english/research/projects/gokstad/news/preliminary-geophysics.html>.

armor, while the other was most closely matched to the Wegraeus' type A2 style and matches other arrowhead finds in the graves in Kaupang.⁶⁷ As the latter is often discovered in warriors' graves dating to the tenth century, which are characterized by the presence of equestrian objects and weapons, it is most likely that both arrowheads were intended for warfare and would not have been used for hunting in the area. This only serves to suggest that Kaupang's military authority could be found at Huseby, and the size of the hall suggests that the chief or king living there would be in charge of any military operations. Any military operations must have been minimal.

It is likely that a *jarl* or petty king under the power of the Danish kingdom ruled over Kaupang from the hall at Huseby. There are no written records discussing the political organization of Kaupang, which would help to infer how the town was run and who oversaw the trade and all that that entailed, but several sources discuss the hierarchical structures of Hedeby and Birka. As it is likely that Kaupang operated under the same authority as Hedeby for much of its existence, it is plausible that Kaupang may have functioned similarly. Anne Pedersen has compiled a list these positions, which refer to town leaders as, *exercitus*, *equitatu regni*, *duces copiarum*, and *primores Danorum* mark out clear military or social positions within the urban centers. In the *Vita Anskarii*, Hedeby is said to have had a *præfati vici*, which Pedersen marks out as the *jarl* of the area, and Birka had both a *præfectus vici* and a *consiliarus* to the king, who seem to have been in charge of defense and trade.⁶⁸ Thus whoever lived at Huseby must be seen as a ruler of considerate power, even should he would have submitted to a higher authority.

2.7 Conclusion: Kaupang in decline or just declining to comment?

Kaupang's importance in the Scandinavian trade network is unclear after the turn of the tenth century. The last evidence of building in Kaupang can be dated to 860, although burials at the cemetery appear to continue at a regular rate until the middle of the tenth century, indicating that the settlement lasted until 930 or 960.⁶⁹ This creates confusion in defining the nature of the settlement following 860. While it is then difficult to analyze the

⁶⁷ Skre, "Excavations of the Hall at Huseby," 235.

⁶⁸ Pedersen, Anne, "Military Organization and Offices: The Evidence of Grave Finds," in *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Bjørn Poulsen and Søren M. Sindbæk, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 46.

⁶⁹ Pedersen, "Urban craftspeople at Viking-age Kaupang," 54.; Pilø, "The Settlement: Extent and Dating," 178.

town itself as a node, it is possible to place it in context. Vestfold's early conversion to Christianity may have had to do with its untimely decline. Conversion to Christianity around the year 950 in the Viken area predates other parts of Norway by 50-100 years, at which time Skiringssal lost its central place function in a religious context; any annual pre-Christian religious activities associated with the *thing assembly* would have ceased, causing annual pilgrimage to the area to end for those who once traveled to Kaupang for both trade and religious needs.⁷⁰

The 870s and 880s were a time of great political turmoil in the Norwegian mainland following the rise of Harald Fairhair. Indeed, the settlement of Iceland has long been associated with Harald Fairhair's so-called tyrannical rule due to claims made in the *Íslendingasögur* and the Settlement Age is considered to have lasted from 870-930. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Harald Fairhair ever took control of Vestfold or Kaupang, by taking possession of the south and western coast of Norway, Harald Fairhair would have been able to control the Irish Sea trading routes.

The inflow of silver in the form of minted Abbasid dirhams from the Middle East to the Baltic and into Scandinavia also began to decline in the 870s, and appears to cease almost completely in the 880s.⁷¹ This would have effectively crippled the Danish market, perhaps weakening the strength of the nodal points in the long-distance trade routes. This especially would have damaged Scandinavian relations with the Irish, who appear to have tolerated a Scandinavian presence solely through their ability to pump silver and its accompanying wealth into the Irish economy.

⁷⁰ Skre, "Towns and Markets, Kings and Central Places in South-western Scandinavia c. AD 800-950," in *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2007), 469.

⁷¹ Blackburn, "The Coin-finds," in *Means of Exchange: Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & the Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2008), 39.

3 Dublin

In this chapter, I will address how Dublin came to be linked to the greater Scandinavian trade network through its founding by a western Norwegian group, and how its success as a trade center allowed it to become an independent city-state/kingdom free from home-rule politics. I will begin by examining how western Scandinavians expanded the Scandinavian trade network across the North Sea to Britain and the Irish Sea, and contextualize Irish politics and its economy prior to the arrival of the Scandinavian invasion. Dublin was successful in Ireland because the Irish soon came to depend on the wealth that the Scandinavian trade network brought to the island, even as the Scandinavians pushed against Irish boundaries, raided Irish kingdoms, and took many Irish slaves.

As in the previous chapter, the layout of the town and the archaeological finds associated with it will be used to argue that Dublin was an integral node within the Scandinavian trade network. The Irish Annals record of the Scandinavian invasion will be referenced in order to understand which Scandinavians founded Dublin, how rival Scandinavian groups and Irish forces fought for control over the node within this larger network, and how its wealth allowed it to become independent of Scandinavian politics while still remaining part of the Scandinavian trade network. Ireland's dependence on Dublin, as well as Dublin's independence from Scandinavia quite early in its existence, resulted in Dublin's survival past the Viking Age.

3.1 The west coast of Norway and its interest in the Irish Sea

Western Scandinavia operated under its own trade network, which ran along the entire west coast of Norway beginning in the northern region of Hålogaland. The route continued south down the coast before connecting with the greater Scandinavian trade network, which was mainly controlled by forces from the Danish kingdom. This ancient route evidences no towns that predate the eleventh century, although five early royal farms, Urnes, Avaldsnes, Fitjar, Alrekstad, and Seim, have been cited as important nodal points in a western Scandinavian network.⁷² Borg, in Lofoten, must also be included as a node, given the impressive finds that link the royal hall to the Continent, the British Isles, and southeastern

⁷² Skre, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," 243.

Norway. Borg is specifically linked to Kaupang through the appearance of sherds of Tating-ware at both sites, proving a clear connection between them.⁷³

Western Scandinavians opened a trade network across the North Sea to Britain and Ireland at the end of the eighth century. The grave goods excavated from grave sites along the western coast of Norway corroborate the theory that Scandinavian expansion into the British Isles and the Irish Sea began from there, not from Jutland as part of an expedition galvanized by King Godfrid and the Danish kingdom. Grave sites from Rogaland, Hordaland, Sognefjord, Møre and Sogn all evidence a large amount of insular metalwork from the ninth century.⁷⁴ Some of the insular metalwork has been cited as being exclusively Irish, and this indicates that the Scandinavians off the west coast of Norway were interested in opening their own closed network between Norway and the Irish Sea. Indeed, Egon Wamers concluded that “the rich, insular loot in western Norway indicates an immense transfer of goods, people, and ideas in both directions.”⁷⁵ Yet it is much more likely that contact between the groups began with Scandinavian expansion.

The technological advancement of ships in the Avaldsnes region is ultimately what opened up the Irish Sea to the Scandinavian network. The development in the structure of long-range ships allowed for the Scandinavians to go west; the ships were created to be swift by using both sails and the power of oars, and the shallow keel allowed them to navigate rivers as well as the open sea.⁷⁶ The first ships known to be capable of sailing over the open ocean were built by the second half of the eighth century along the western coast of Norway. The Storhaug ship, which was built in 770 and buried in 779, and the Grønhaug ship, which was built in 780 and buried between 790 and 795, evidence the development of Scandinavian ship building techniques that prefaced the miraculous engineering that allowed Scandinavians to travel further and further afield.⁷⁷ This technology meant that ships and fleets were able to leave the Baltic Sea and riverways which led them southeast and allowed them to expand westwards, traveling into the open waters of the North Atlantic and down to the Irish Sea.

⁷³ Munch, “Borg in Lofoten: a chieftain’s farm in north Norway,” 102-103.

⁷⁴ Skre, “From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea,” 245; Wamers, Egon, “Insular Finds in Viking Age Scandinavia and the State Formation of Norway,” in *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 47-49.

⁷⁵ Wamers, “Insular Finds in Viking Age Scandinavia and the State Formation of Norway,” 71.

⁷⁶ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 37.

⁷⁷ Skre, “From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea,” 244.

Geographically, western Norway is better poised to make its advances on the Irish Sea than the Jutland peninsula or other parts of southern Scandinavia. Indeed, the northern Scottish islands are merely a hop, skip, and a jump away from modern Bergen. It is possible to sail from Hordaland to Shetland in twenty-four hours with a good wind, although the journey would have taken two days on average.⁷⁸ As Shetland lies directly west, these explorers would merely have to set their ships south-southwest to reach the other islands of the North Sea. Once in sight of Shetland, one can travel throughout the entire expanse of the Irish Sea without ever losing sight of land.⁷⁹ Though the first twenty-four hours may have been dangerous, the benefit would have ultimately out-weighed the risk. By the end of the eighth century, the Irish Sea was thriving, and access to insular wealth led these Scandinavians to open a network west and south to Ireland.

The *Annals of Ulster* record the first Viking raid in Ireland in 795,⁸⁰ and the first half of the ninth century marks the beginning of the Viking Age in the British Isles. The early raids on established monasteries were clearly used as a means to obtain portable wealth, which was brought back to Scandinavia for the benefit of the petty kings and chiefs who needed the riches to maintain and to strengthen their standing through the political economy of gift-giving. As Scandinavians continued their ventures in the Irish Sea, the flow of goods back to northern Europe caused further consolidation of power through this direct avenue of wealth. As Scandinavians became dependent on the Irish goods, it became prudent for a colony of raiders to remain in Ireland and thus the first permanent Scandinavian settlements were established.

3.2 Ireland before the Scandinavian invasion

To understand how the Scandinavians were able to secure a foothold in Ireland in the middle of the ninth century, it is necessary to give a brief overview of the geo-politics and economy prior to the Scandinavian invasion. At the beginning of the ninth century the island was divided into at least 150 separate kingdoms, which were overseen by six provincial over-

⁷⁸ Crawford, Barbara E, *Scandinavian Scotland*, (Avon: Leicester University Press, 1987), 12-13.; Gammeltoft, Peder, “‘Look now, stranger, at this island’. A brief survey of the island-names of Shetland and Orkney,” in *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic: Select Papers from the Fourteenth Viking Congress, Tóshavn, 19-30 July 2001*, ed. Andras Mortensen and Símun V. Arge, (Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, 2005), 257.

⁷⁹ Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*, 16.

⁸⁰ AU 795.3 *Loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib 7 Sci b do [cho]scradh 7 do lomradh*. (The burning of Rechrú by the heathens, and Scí was overwhelmed and laid waste.)

kings operating in Connaught, Leinster, Munster, Ulster, and the Northern and Southern Uí Néill.⁸¹ Status was based on ownership of cattle, and the economy was non-urban, kin-based, and highly localized.⁸² The kings were tied to this system through their reliance in wealth in the form of farming and herding.⁸³ As discussed in chapter one, the agricultural economy of Scandinavia was strikingly similar with its dependence on cattle instead of grain. Indeed, Francis J. Byrne remarks that “the primitive characteristics of Irish society, and in particular the archaic features of Irish kingship, find their nearest European parallels in pre-Christian Scandinavia.”⁸⁴ When the Scandinavians arrived in Ireland, they would not have found a dissimilar society and this may have made it easier for them to form allies within the various Irish kingdoms.

Ireland, like Scandinavia, was never occupied by the Romans and was left to develop in relative isolation until the arrival of the Viking raiders. While it is clear that Ireland and Roman-Britain communicated and traded, the island was able to maintain its own cultural and political systems from the Iron Age. Because of its isolation, a coin-based economy and the urban system of *wics* and *emporia* that sprung from the empire never made it to these lands laid beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. It must be emphasized that when the Scandinavians arrived, there were no towns. There were monastic villages, which could sometimes operate as large communities with local markets, but they operated neither as central places nor as nodal points within a trade network; monastic villages were religious destinations with inter-regional trade ties and they never extended into sites focused around juridical or administrative functions.⁸⁵ This has much to do with the fact that while the Irish were Christianized by the end of the fifth century, kingship and the politics of Ireland were never secularized. Despite attempts to reform the political-religious system during the seventh century, the kings of Ireland remained unshackled by their faith. This allowed them to focus their interests outside of the religious sphere; namely, they set their sights on wealth and territorial expansion. While they did not seek to gain influence outside of the Irish Sea, the arrival of the Scandinavians opened them up to undreamed of opportunities of power and

⁸¹ Downham, Clare, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, (Edinburgh: Dunedin, 2007) 12.

⁸² Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 15.

⁸³ Valante, Mary, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 23-25.

⁸⁴ Byrne, Francis J, *Irish Kings and High-Kings*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 12.

⁸⁵ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 26-30.

wealth. The Scandinavians gave Ireland towns, and with towns came trade, taxation, and access to the treasures of the outside world.

3.3 The *longphort* of Dublin and its development

In order to understand just how Dublin came to act as a major node in the Scandinavian trade network, it is necessary to explain how and why the ship camp(s) of *Áth Cliath* and *Duib-linn* grew up into the large and wealthy urban settlement of Dublin. It is first beneficial to comment on the archaeological excavations, the evidence they have produced, and interpretations thereof. Patrick F. Wallace's Wood Quay and Fishamble Excavations between 1974 and 1981 uncovered extensive urban settlement, that dated Dublin's activities to the 10th century. Extensive Viking Age building foundations, plots, pathways and other artifacts indicative to the inhabitants' daily lives were excavated during this campaign, but nothing was definitively dated to the earliest phases of settlement beginning in 841. Therefore archaeologists and historians have relied heavily on the annals in order to fill in necessary gaps in the narrative.⁸⁶ Indeed, Eamonn P. Kelly suggests the dependence on the annalistic evidence between 902 to 917, during which time many scholars have assumed the entire Scandinavian population was expelled from Dublin, has led to errors in dating.⁸⁷ Interpretations of the archaeological evidence have also experienced difficulties through lack of publishing and many of the earliest levels have not been excavated at several sites. It is only in the last 20 years that Linzi Simpson's Temple Bar West campaign uncovered ninth century structures and Simpson conclusively establishes that there was no break in habitation between 902 and 917.⁸⁸ This ultimately changes how we perceive the early settlement, and specifically how the Irish must have relied on the economy of the Scandinavian town.

⁸⁶ For further reading see: Clarke, Howard B. "Proto-Towns and Towns in Ireland and Britain," in *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, and Ragnall Ó Floinn, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998) 331-380.; Doherty, Charles, "The Viking Impact upon Ireland," in *The Vikings in Ireland*, ed. Anne-Christine Larsen, (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2001), 29-36.; Ó Corráin, "The Vikings in Ireland," in *The Vikings in Ireland*, ed. Anne-Christine Larsen, (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2001) 17-28.; Ó Floinn, Ragnall, "The Archaeology of the Early Viking Age in Ireland." In *Ireland and Scandinavia in The Early Viking Age*, ed. Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998) 131-165.

⁸⁷ Kelly, Eamonn P., "The *longphort* in Viking-Age Ireland: the archaeological evidence," in *The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond*, ed. Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 85-86.

⁸⁸ Simpson, "The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: evidence from Dublin," 420-421.

The Scandinavians were in Ireland for nearly forty years as hit-and-run raiders before the annals first record the construction of a permanent *longphort* at *Duib-linn* in 841.⁸⁹ The Irish Annals actually refer to the Dublin settlement as both *Áth Cliath* and *Duib-linn*, which indicates that there may have been two settlements on the Liffey estuary, which would later combine into one town.⁹⁰ Excavations around the mouth of the River Liffey suggest that the Scandinavians took over a prior ecclesiastical settlement and John Sheehan posits that the group may have modified the previous site's enclosures in order to create their fortified base.⁹¹ As the original *longphort* of Dublin has not been uncovered, archaeologists have based their conjectures on the early settlement's layout based on excavations of other *longphuirt* throughout Ireland. Through these comparisons, they can be distinguished by the presence of a large D-shaped enclosure on the shore of a river, a lake, or both. Often these enclosures were set near shallow waters or fords where the portage of vessels was necessary. The *longphuirt* took advantage of the land's natural defenses and the Scandinavian groups felt secure enough in their temporary bases to either trade or raid as they willed. Sheehan hypothesizes that the Scandinavians brought the developed concept of a fortified base with them, but that these defensive structures had never been fully utilized against their enemies before the Scandinavians encountered Irish aggression. The *longphuirt* of Ireland possibly developed their D-shaped enclosed layout in close association to the early settlements of Birka and Hedeby, although neither town experienced the level of hostility that the Scandinavian settlements received from the Irish. In other words, the Irish were the first western Europeans that put up a big enough fight to require such progressive fortifications.

The Scandinavians were also smart about where they chose to set up these camps, and Dublin's specific location ultimately allowed for its success and survival. The *longphuirt* tended to be strategically located and often straddled the boundaries between Irish geopolitical boundaries, which allowed the Scandinavians to play off old rivalries.⁹² These strategic sites meant that marauding Scandinavians could raid in one kingdom and sell of their booty to a neighboring, rival kingdom. Dublin lay between Brega and Laigin, which indicates

⁸⁹ AU 841.4, *Longport oc Linn Duachaill asar orta tuatha 7 cealla Tethbai. Longport oc Duiblinn as • rorta*

Laigin 7 Oi Neill etir tuatha 7 cealla^a co rice Sliabh Bledhma. (There was a naval camp at Linn Duachaill from which the peoples and Churches of Tethba were plundered. 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.)

⁹⁰ Simpson, "The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: evidence from Dublin," 418.

⁹¹ Sheehan, John, "The *Longphort* in Viking Age Ireland," *Acta Archaeologica*, vol 79, (2008): 289.

⁹² Sheehan, "The *Longphort* in Viking Age Ireland," 286.

that when the Scandinavians settled down on the River Liffey in 841, they knew exactly who their neighbors would be.

Dublin's location on the bank of the River Liffey above the confluence of the Poddle River granted the Scandinavians access to a major river network, which allowed for the inter-regional Scandinavian trade network to spread intra-regionally throughout Ireland. The riverways proved to be a direct route to inland Irish territories, which the Scandinavians needed to access for raiding and trading. While Dublin was established between the kingdoms of Brega and Laigin, its central location on the central east coast of Ireland and its position on the rivers allowed for them to move into the heavily populated areas of Uí Néill territory farther inland, as well as in the kingdom of Meath. This prime location granted the Scandinavian settlement access not only to wealthy and populated regions in which to raid, but it gave them the best position from which to trade; their position not only added a link to the sea network back to Scandinavia, but it allowed for the network to spread inland down the river-ways to other Irish kingdoms as well.

3.3.i Hinterlands

The riverways opened up the area around the Dublin *longphort*, and this made it easier for the Scandinavians to expand and access their agricultural territory. The hinterlands were the key to Dublin's success, as they effectively carved out a territory for Scandinavian expansion, allowing the *longphort* to settle permanently and grow into a town. Several of the annals suggest that Dublin was a site of massive proportions, even during the ninth century, and as such would have needed vast hinterlands to feed its population. Archaeology has proved elusive in the process of trying to understand the hinterlands of Dublin and the only textual records either only hint at the reach of its hinterlands or were written down several hundred years after the fact. The first record in the annals referencing the possible extent of the hinterlands appears in relation to the fort at Clondalkin, which was burned in 867;⁹³ Clondalkin lies ten kilometers from Dublin and was probably constructed in order to secure the territory immediately surrounding the site. The fort overlooked the traditional boundary between the kingdoms of the Uí Fergusa and the Uí Dúnochada, which suggests a geo-political

⁹³ AU 867.8 Loscadh duine Amhlaim oc Luain Dolcain la m. nGaithini 7 la meł Ciaran m. Romain, 7 ár .c. cenn di airechaibh Gall in eodem die apud duces predictos in confinio Cluana Dolcain. (Amlaib's fort at Cluain Dolcain was burned by Gaithine's son and Mael Ciarain son of Ronán, and the aforesaid commanders caused a slaughter of a hundred of the leaders of the foreigners in the vicinity of Cluain Dolcain on the same day.)

knowledge of the area, and cleverly aggressive militarization against a vulnerable border.⁹⁴ Holm claims that command of the rivers may have gone as far as Leixleip, which lies 17 kilometers to the west of Dublin.⁹⁵ Given the astounding size of Dublin, a 17 kilometer radius from which the Scandinavians could exploit the hinterlands may have indeed been necessary; these extensive depths may have also helped the Scandinavians a buffer zone in order to remain relatively safe from Irish aggression. It is also possible that Dubliners founded new *longphuirt* in an attempt to extend their trade and agricultural reach, as evidenced by the establishment of *Clon Andobuir* in 845.⁹⁶ The extent of the hinterlands was most likely never fixed during the course of the ninth century.

Gareth Williams argues that the acquisition and long-term exploitation of hinterlands was essential to the transition between the *longphort* phase and the wealthy trading center.⁹⁷ Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, it is unclear how the Scandinavians managed the agricultural aspect of their new nodal operation; did the Scandinavian elite function as overlords to agrarian Irish tenants, or did Scandinavian warriors trade in their swords for a plough? It is likely that a Scandinavian population settled amongst Irish locals, and quickly began the process of inter-marriage and acculturation. Graves at the cemeteries of Kilmainham and Islandbridge evidence farming tools buried in graves that also contain typical Scandinavian weaponry, which does suggest that some of the Scandinavian settlers were more interested in cultivating land than warring with their Irish neighbors.⁹⁸ Taking into consideration the environment of the Dublin hinterlands, Alfred P. Smyth suggests the hinterlands consisted of, “rich low limestone farmland offering excellent conditions for cattle and horse-raising,” indicating that the agriculture would have proven fruitful.⁹⁹ At the same time, burials in the rural areas around Dublin may suggest that the Dubliners set up a series of

⁹⁴ Bradley, John, “Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin during the ninth century,” in *Dublin in the Medieval World: Studies in the Honour of Howard B. Clarke*, ed. John Bradley, Alan J. Fletcher, and Anngret Simms, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 55.

⁹⁵ Holm, Poul, “The Naval Power of Norse Dublin,” in *Clerics, Kings & Vikings: Essays on Medieval Ireland in Honour of Donnchadh Ó Corráin*, ed. Emer Purcell, Paul MacCotter, Julianne Nyhan and John Sheehan, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 74.

⁹⁶ AU 845.12 Dunadh di Gallaibh Atha Cliath oc Cluanaib Andobur. (An encampment of the foreigners of Áth Cliath at Cluain Andobuir.); Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*.)

⁹⁷ Williams, Gareth, “Viking camps and means of exchange in Britain and Ireland in the ninth century,” in *The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond: Before and After the Battle of Clontarf*, ed. Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 104.

⁹⁸ O’Brien, “The Location and Context of Viking Burials at Kilmainham and Islandbridge, Dublin,” in *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, ed. Howard B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnháll Ó Floinn, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 221.

⁹⁹ Smyth, Alfred P., *Scandinavian York and Dublin I: The History and Archaeology of Two Related Kingdoms*, (Dublin: Templekieran Press, 1975), 21.

dependent forts in order to secure the boundaries through military force; these forts possibly also operated as a seat of administration to the inhabitants of the hinterlands.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately, the archaeology of the hinterlands is incomplete. John Bradley suggests that archaeologists tend to focus on urban life and towns, while historians concentrate on war and dynastic conflict, and suggests that a more interdisciplinary approach could aid in understanding of the hinterland's role in securing the settlement and how it served as a medium for intra-regional trade.¹⁰¹ A more thorough investigation of the hinterlands would give a greater understanding of how the economy of the hinterlands differentiated from the political and cultural aspects of Dublin, and thus how the immigrated population learned to assimilate and influence trade with the Irish.

3.3.ii The layout of the town

Archaeologically, it is difficult to address the layout of the ninth century settlement. On the basis of 20th century interpretations of the evidence, the earlier finds have been dated to the tenth century, as archaeologists assumed that Dublin served as a military camp during the ninth century and would have been the developed urban town which new evidence and interoperation now suggests. The evidence was afforded a post-917 date, as archaeologists operated under the assumption that there was a disruption in the occupation of the town between 902 and 917; no such disturbance occurred. Therefore, I suggest that Wallace's Fishamble and Wood Quay excavations, can be used as a basis for deciphering the mystery of the ninth century *longphort*, and I must assume that at least some of the activity dated as tenth century finds are a continuation of the ninth century *longphort*.¹⁰²

Wallace's excavations identified that 75% of the Viking Age structures were labeled as Type 1 buildings, and they bear a striking resemblance to building A200 at Kaupang in Skiringssal. This building is also found at other Scandinavian settlements in Ireland, including Waterford and Wexford.¹⁰³ These Type 1 houses have low post-and-wattle walls, a roof supported by two pairs of posts or groups of posts, and a centrally located stone-kerbed

¹⁰⁰ Bradley, "Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin during the ninth century," 55.

¹⁰¹ Bradley, "Some reflections on the problem of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin during the ninth century," 39.

¹⁰² See: Wallace, Patrick F., *The Viking Age Buildings of Dublin: Medieval Dublin excavations 1962-1981*: Ser. A Vol. 1, Pt. 1. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992.); Wallace, Patrick F., *The Viking Age Buildings of Dublin: Medieval Dublin excavations 1962-1981*: Ser. A. Vol. 1, Pt. 2. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992.)

¹⁰³ Wallace, Patrick, "Ireland's Viking Towns," in *The Vikings in Ireland*, ed. Anne-Christine Larsen, (Roskilde: The Viking Ship Museum, 2001), 45.

hearth. While Pilø believes that Kaupang's buildings may help archaeologists understand the context for how Dublin's Type 1 houses developed, based on Wallace's dating the buildings would not have been entirely contemporary. Indeed, there may have been as much as a hundred year gap between A200's construction and the erection of Type 1 houses in Dublin. Whether or not inhabitants of Kaupang immigrated to Dublin must remain a matter of conjecture, but I would posit that it is quite likely that those with a knowledge of Kaupang's layout did indeed make their way to the Irish Sea in order to seek out their wealth, and built the Type 1 houses of Dublin using their own building techniques.

The craftsmen who operated within the town of Dublin most likely immigrated from Scandinavia, and arrived as part of a multi-talented warrior group. Unlike Kaupang, Dublin evidences segregated areas for different types of skilled workers, although this may reflect a later dating than the ninth century. Finds along High Street reveal the presence of leather workers and comb makers. Christchurch Place indicates that it served as the cobblers' street. Fishamble Street most likely housed the merchants, as can be surmised by the large houses of better quality, as well as a high rate of coin discovery. Amber workers and possibly woodcarvers also found their homes along the Fishamble Street. Other craftsmen, such as blacksmiths and boatbuilders, most likely lived outside the town's defenses.¹⁰⁴ There was clearly an abundance of Scandinavians willing to make their new homes in Ireland, and this can be evidenced through Irish sources. In 871, the *Annals of Ulster* records that a fleet of 200 ships arrived in Dublin.¹⁰⁵ If the entry is not hyperbolic, then John Bradley has suggested that the summation of these ships contained a crew totaling between 5,000-10,000 men, not including the British, Welsh, and Pictish slaves that the entry references as the purpose of this expedition.¹⁰⁶ Even if the numbers are conflated, the total number of the Scandinavians who arrived in Dublin alone would have been staggering. Although it is unlikely that the entirety of these men would have stayed on in Dublin, it would indicate that Dublin's population was already quite large by the end of the ninth century. Linzi Simpson has postulated that in 847 alone, over a thousand Scandinavian men alone were killed in various battles throughout

¹⁰⁴ Wallace, "Ireland's Viking Towns," 41.

¹⁰⁵ AU 871.2 Amhlaiph 7 Ímar do thuidecht afrithisi du Ath Cliath a Albain dibh cetaibh long. 7 *praeda* maxima hominum Anglorum 7 Britonum 7 Pictorum deducta est secum ad Hiberniam ^a in captiuitate. (Amlaib and Ímar returned to Áth Cliath from Alba with two hundred ships, bringing away with them in captivity to Ireland a great prey of Angles and Britons and Picts.)

¹⁰⁶ Bradley, "Some reflections on the problems of Scandinavian settlement in the hinterland of Dublin," 56.

Ireland.¹⁰⁷ Dublin continued to stand through this would-be devastating blow to the population, which speaks to just how many Scandinavian men were in Ireland at this early date. Within this population, a good number of these men may have had the necessary skills which would enable them to move between being a member of a raiding crew and working as a craftsman during the offseason. Thus it is most likely that these craftsmen were indeed Scandinavian immigrants, and not local Irishmen who moved into the town.

3.4 Dublin as a central place

In order for Dublin to become a viable political site within a Scandinavian backdrop, it was necessary for the town to create itself around the presence of three things: a royal seat, a judiciary *thing* site and its possible religious associations. No evidence of royal quarters, an aristocratic hall, or royal palace has yet been uncovered, but it is safe to assume that the later Norman castle was built over the original site. It is also likely that the *thing* site resided close to the castle defenses. This assumption is drawn from medieval records, which conclude that Henry II established his court in an area that medieval sources refer to as the Thingmote. The Thingmote was most probably associated with the Scandinavian *thing*, and Séan Duffy notes that, “King Henry built his court where the Ostmen of Dublin had formerly held theirs and in so doing definitely established himself as the city’s new master.”¹⁰⁸ Ultimately the exact location is far less important than the assumption that it existed at all. From this *thing* site judicial matters were settled and the price of goods was fixed upon.

There is also textual evidence of a forest with cultic associations; just as Kaupang evidences a holy lake and mountain within the Skiringssal area, so too does Dublin have its own forest. The forest had the double advantage of religious connotations as well as supplying the settlement with timber, which could be used to build and fortify the town, as well as constructing and repairing ships. Unfortunately, the first mention of *Caill Tormair*, or “Thor’s Forest,” appears in the *Annals of Innisfallen* in reference to its burning by Brian Boru

¹⁰⁷ Simpson, “The first phase of Viking activity in Ireland: archaeological evidence from Dublin,” 418.

¹⁰⁸ Duffy, Séan, “A reconsideration of the site of Dublin’s Viking *Thing-mót*,” in *Above and Beyond: essays in memory of Leo Swan*, ed. Tom Condit and Christiaan Corlett, (Bray: Wordwell, 2005), 358.

in the year 1000,¹⁰⁹ and this late account must thus be taken with a grain of salt. It would be fair to assume though that the forest was in existence during the early Viking Age settlement, and continued into the end of the first millennium.

Therefore, I posit that Dublin's development acted in reverse of Kaupang. It was first created as a node in the Scandinavian trade network, but as it grew into a permanent town the inhabitants chose to create it as a reflection of their urban values. In order for Dublin to be accorded the importance of a central place, it needed a *thing* site, a royal home worthy of its overlords, and a place to worship their pre-Christian religion. Dublin became a true Scandinavian town within its Irish backdrop.

3.5 Dublin's monetary system

The highest concentration of Scandinavian hoards outside of Scandinavia has been found in Ireland, which indicates that an obscene amount of wealth in the form of silver was making its way into Ireland via the Scandinavian network.¹¹⁰ Silver hoards found within the vicinity of Dublin evidence connections from Anglo-Saxon England all the way to the Islamic caliphate, which places Dublin as a definitive node. Based on the evidence of these hoards, which several scholars have hypothesized as relating to the Dublin expulsion between 902 and 917, Dublin was a city of incredible wealth at the beginning of the ninth century. The Lough Ennel hoards, a collection of six hoards uncovered between 1981 and 1983, evidence the largest concentration of Viking silver in western Europe. The Dysart Island (no.4) hoard contains coins, ingots and hack-silver, with connections to the Irish Sea, Norway, and the Baltic.¹¹¹ The Cuerdale hoard, excavated from Lancashire in Britain, is the most valuable Viking hoard ever uncovered, including those from Scandinavia, and has been linked to the

¹⁰⁹ AI 1000.2 *Indred Átha Cliath & doud & a loscud do feraib Muman & forbas doib and i Kl. Enair, & Caill Tomair do loscud doib do chonnud, & ri Gall Átha Cliath d'élud co Ultu asin chath & na fuair a dín in h-Erind co tarat a giallu do Brian mc. Cennetich, & co tarat Brian a n-dún dona Gallaib.* (The men of Mumu invaded Áth Cliath, set fire to it, and burned it, and they invested it on the Kalends of January; and they burned Caill Tomair as firewood; and the king of the foreigners of Áth Cliath escaped from the battle to Ulaid, but found no protection for himself in Ireland until he handed over his hostages to Brian, son of Cennétig; and Brian gave the fort to the foreigners.)

¹¹⁰ Sheehan, John, "Silver and Gold Hoards: Status, Wealth and Trade in the Viking Age," *Archaeology Ireland* 9.3, (1995), 20.

¹¹¹ Sheehan, "The *longphort* in Viking Age Ireland," 290.

Dublin elite.¹¹² It is comprised of forty-plus kilograms of bullion and coins, and showcases the dazzling wealth of Dublin at this early stage.

The hoards suggest that Dublin operated under a bullion economy, much as Kaupang did at this time.¹¹³ Grave goods at the Dublin cemeteries imply that many of the inhabitants were warriors-cum-merchants, as evidenced by a number of balance scales, weights, and purse mounts.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, the weights found in Kaupang appear to have been adjusted to a standard of 26.6 g, which corresponds to a module of 26.4 g as early Scandinavian øre/weight units.¹¹⁵ This indicates that Dublin's trade operated on a Scandinavian weight system which links it directly back to Kaupang. Howard B. Clarke argues that ninth century Dublin paralleled Kaupang at this early stage in both economic activity and urban infrastructure, or lack thereof.¹¹⁶ While I agree with his assessment that the economies mirrored each other, I suggest that neither site should be regarded as, "a proto-urban trading settlement."¹¹⁷ Indeed, I posit that the Scandinavians were only allowed to stay in Ireland due to their urban-economic contribution and the wealth it brought to the island through trade. Scandinavians pumped silver into Ireland, which was something that the Irish kings could not ignore. Analysis has shown that silver arrived in its greatest quantities between 850 and 950, which indicates that the Scandinavian trade market was actually most beneficial to Ireland in its earliest stages of development.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Graham-Campbell, James, "The Cuerdale hoard. Comparison and Context," in *Viking Treasure from the North West: the Cuerdale hoard in its context*, ed. James A. Graham-Campbell, (Liverpool: Occasional papers. National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Liverpool Museum no. 5, 1992), 113-114.

¹¹³ Sheehan, "The *longphort* in Viking Age Ireland," 290; Dublin would not mint its own coins until the 990s, under the rule of the Hiberno-Norse king Sitric Silkenbeard.

¹¹⁴ Ó Floinn, "The archaeology of the Early Viking Age in Ireland," 163-164.

¹¹⁵ Kilger, Christoph, "Wholeness and Holiness: Counting, Weighing and Valuing Silver in the Early Viking Period," in *Means of Exchange: Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age*, ed. Dagfinn Skre, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press & Kaupang Excavation Project, University of Oslo, 2008) 283.

¹¹⁶ Clarke, "Proto-Towns and Towns in Ireland and Britain," 341-342.

¹¹⁷ Clarke, "Proto-Towns and Towns in Ireland and Britain," 342.; To be fair, his paper was written before both Skre and Simpson undertook further excavations on either sites which indicated that the connected sites should be properly labeled as urban towns with developing towns. That does not mean that Clarke does not appear to have a bias against the Scandinavian invasion, and nor should his lack of ninth century interpretation lead him to suggest that Dublin should be considered proto-urban. It must be noted that he continues his belief that Ireland remained distinctly un-urban in comparison to England during the eleventh century, in his 2015 article, "King Sitric Silkenbeard: a great survivor." (*The Vikings in Ireland and Beyond: Before and After the Battle of Clontarf*, ed. Howard B. Clarke and Ruth Johnson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015) 254.)

¹¹⁸ Sheehan, "The *longphort* in Viking Age Ireland," 290.

3.6 Trade

This massive inflow of silver begs the question: what was bringing Scandinavians and their wealth to this obscure gateway node in the most western reaches Europe? Although the Roman Empire had never seen Ireland as a necessary economic commodity, the Scandinavians must have found something which not only drew them in, but kept them there. By the end of the eighth century the Irish Sea had much to offer in terms of portable wealth, and evidence of the earlier Viking raids has been uncovered in the form of grave goods with origins in the British Isles. In southeastern Norway, insular finds have been distinguished in all settlement levels at Kaupang, even during the first decades of the ninth century. In particular, three types of inorganic materials have been identified in Kaupang as coming from the Irish Sea: silver, jet, and lead.¹¹⁹ 23 jet objects were excavated from Kaupang's earliest layers, quantities only paralleled in Yorkshire for Irish Sea trade at this time, which suggests that southeastern Scandinavia was trading with the Irish Sea during the first half of the ninth century.¹²⁰ Lead, which was linked to Cumbria or the southern Pennines through isotopic analyses, suggests that Kaupang remained an Irish Sea trading partner throughout its existence.¹²¹ Seven fragments of silver broad-band armrings, crafted in a distinct Hiberno-Scandinavian style, are perhaps the most important indicators of Irish Sea Scandinavian settlement and trade. This type of armring can trace its history of craftsmanship back to Denmark in the middle of the ninth century, and developed stylistically within Ireland before being traded back to the Scandinavian homeland.¹²²

This still does little to explain the sheer amount of silver found in Ireland; while there is a dearth of archaeological evidence, it is highly likely that slaves were Dublin's most lucrative export. Based on annalistic testimony, it appears that slave raids had been a regular feature of Viking expeditions since the arrival of the Scandinavians in the Irish Sea at the end of the eighth century. Hit-and-run affairs were especially popular in the 820s and 830s, and the lucrative slave trade may have been a leading factor in the permanent establishment of the

¹¹⁹ Skre, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," 238.

¹²⁰ Skre, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," 239.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Sheehan, John, "The Huxley hoard and Hiberno-Scandinavian arm-rings," in *The Huxley Viking hoard: Scandinavian settlement in the north-west*, ed. J. Graham-Campbell & R. Philpott, (Liverpool: National Museums Liverpool, 2009), 59–61.; Skre, "From Kaupang and Avaldsnes to the Irish Sea," 238.

longphort.¹²³ Wealth and expansion in the Middle East also brought about a growing demand for slaves in the Islamic caliphate during the 8th and 9th centuries.¹²⁴ Religion plays a part in understanding how the Scandinavians came to supply the Middle East with their British Isles slaves; Christians were not allowed to sell or own other Christian slaves, and it was especially frowned upon to sell Christian slaves within Islamic markets. Therefore, the Scandinavian heathens, who had not yet converted to Christianity en masse, operated as the perfect middle-man in the slave trade. In this way, Islamic silver ended up in the hands of Irish kings, as the Scandinavians were able to spread their network from the western reaches of Ireland all the way to the Islamic caliphate in the Middle East.

Slave raids became better organized and more effective as a means of political domination once Dublin became more settled, and most likely assured the town's survival. When Olaf, a king of Dublin, returned to Dublin in 871 with an enormous fleet packed with Irish Sea slaves, it not only meant a large amount of wealth would flow through the town due to the economics of human trafficking, but it meant that Olaf and his co-king Ivar had a vested economic interest which tied them and their decedents to Ireland permanently. The Irish already dealt heavily in human trafficking on an intra-regional level, and the rural economy was thus dependent on slavery even before the arrival of the Scandinavians. Once the Scandinavians began to exploit slavery on an inter-regional level, there must have been little desire to stop it, because the economic advantage was too great. Slaves from Britain would have been very popular in Ireland, and the Scandinavians are cited as conducting raids all up and down the west coast of Britain and up into the Scottish islands. Poul Holm suggests that slave raids connected to political alliances and allegiances as early as the 880s.¹²⁵ This

¹²³ AU 821.3 *Orggan Etir o genntibh ; pr̄ed mor di mnaibh do brid ass.* (Étar was plundered by the heathens, [and] they carried off a great number of women into captivity.); AU 831.7 *Cath do madhmaim | i nAighnechaib re genntib for muinntir nAirdd Machae co n • arrgabtha sochaide móra diib.* (The heathens defeated the community of Ard Macha in a battle at Aignig, and great numbers of them were taken captive.); 832.1 *Cétna orggain Airdd Machae o genntib fo tri i n-oenmhís.* (The first plundering of Ard Macha by the heathens tree times in one month.); 834. 9 *Orgain Glinne da Locha o genntib.* *Orgain Slane 7 Finnubrach hAb̄e o gentibh.* (Glenn dá Locha was plundered by the heathens. Sláine and Finnubair Abae were plundered by the heathens.); 836.7 *Prima praeda gentiliū o deisciurt Breḡh, .i. o Telcaibh Droman 7 o Dermaigh Britonum, 7 captiuos tam fplures gportauerunt 7 mortificauerunt multos 7 captiuos plurimos apstulerunt.* (The first prey was taken by the heathens from southern Brega, i.e. from Telcha Dromáin and Dairmag of the Britons; and they carried off many prisoners, and killed many and led away very many captive.); 840.1 *Orggain Lughmaidh di Loch Ehdach o genntibh qui episcopos 7 praepiterox 7 sapientes captiuos duxerunt 7 alios mortificauerunt.* (Lugbad was plundered by the heathens from Loch nEachach and they led away captive bishops and priests and scholars, and put others to death.)

¹²⁴ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 87.

¹²⁵ Holm, Poul, "The Slave Trade in Dublin: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries," *Peritia* 5 (1986): 321.

thus created an allowance by the Irish kings for the Scandinavians to stay and create a slave market that they could then benefit from. This also had its drawbacks, as kingdoms could just as easily suffer from the enslavement of their peoples. In 895, the Dubliners raided Armagh and took 710 captives.¹²⁶ It is likely that these captives were shipped overseas to an unknown destination to the great profit of the Scandinavians and the terror of the Irish. Slavery was how the Scandinavians guaranteed surety, and the fleet of 200 ships in 871 set a precedent which resulted in the dominance of slavery in Dublin's economy until the Norman invasion in the twelfth century.

The men of Dublin also appear to have sold themselves in order to amass their fortune by trading on their skills as warriors, and this was intrinsically linked to the slave trade. A warrior class had developed within Scandinavia during the climate of agricultural surplus. At the same time as slaves began to infiltrate the Scandinavian agricultural economy, there seems to be a greater focus on a male-centric warrior society. As more slaves arrived to work the land, a greater number of men were allowed to leave behind life as an ordinary farmer and choose a more glorified life as a warrior. Warriors were highly respected, and David Wyatt suggests "that the cultural imperative to produce male warriors was so powerful in early medieval Scandinavia that selective infanticide was practiced through the exposure of female infants."¹²⁷ This over-population of males created through the exposure of female infants, as well as the advent of a large warrior class, left a vacuum on the farms. The number of people needed to run these manorial farms soon outpaced the number of people either willing or able to work the lands and thus generated an increasing need for slaves. Female slaves became especially necessary as commodities in order to balance the gender ratio; not only were they needed to work the fields, but they were required to help repopulate a land where a greater majority of healthy men were leaving to go abroad.

Once in Ireland, this warrior class was able to sell themselves as mercenaries. The annals suggest that the Irish kings frequently employed Scandinavian warriors in order to advance their own political gains, regardless of their distaste for Scandinavians in general. This was to the benefit of both parties involved, and Poul Holm that mercenary activities were essential to the long-term survival of the settlement. The Scandinavians became a powerful

¹²⁶ 895.6 *Arc Macha do orcaim o Ghallaib Atho Cliath, .i. o Glun Iaraind co ruscat deichenbur 7 secht cet i mbrait.* (Ard Macha was plundered by the foreigners of Áth Cliath i-e- by Glún Iarainn, and they took away seven hundred and ten persons into captivity.)

¹²⁷ Wyatt, David, *Slaves and Warriors in medieval Britain and Ireland, 800-12000*, (Leiden: Brill NV, 2009) 169.

ally both economically and militarily, and these alliances began as early as the 850s.¹²⁸ More important than the manpower itself, the Irish were able to rent the Scandinavian ships as weapon of war, and this proved to be a powerful asset to any Irish king willing to pay for their services.

But paying the Dubliners to go to war in Ireland was a dangerous move for the Irish. The Scandinavians may have brought wealth, urbanism, and new technology in the form of ships to Ireland, but there was always the looming threat that the Scandinavians would not be content to stay within their cities; one day, the Scandinavians may try to extend their trade network into the geo-political field. One day, the Scandinavians may come after their territory, their people, and their kingships.

3.7 Dublin as a geo-political threat

Dublin quickly asserted itself as geo-political threat to the Irish kingdoms, and it seems that the Danish kingdom and Norwegian territories were just as eager as the Irish to control and contain the town. As indicated above, Dublin was incredibly wealthy, and thus proved itself to be an asset to whomever had control over the gateway node. While we know very little about the political hierarchy of southern Scandinavia at this time, and specifically the politics of Kaupang, the Irish sources do allow us a glimpse of how Dublin was ruled by its Scandinavian overlords in the ninth century, and who fought for control back in Scandinavia.

It is very likely that Dublin started out as a colonial prospect founded by a regional king of western Norway. The *Annals of Ulster* suggest that the settlement was ruled over by a *erell*, which can be traced to the Old Norse *jarl*. Therefore contemporary evidence indicates that the *longphort* was ruled over by an aristocrat very early in its existence. Unfortunately, this said *jarl*, Tomrair, would die in 848 fighting against Irish forces.¹²⁹ This entry is significant for three reasons: first, the use of the word *jarl* by Irish annalists proves an awareness of the political terminology within the Scandinavian hierarchy very early in Dublin's settlement. The use of his name demonstrates both some form of recognition of rank

¹²⁸ Holm, Poul, "The Slave Trade of Dublin," 319-320.

¹²⁹ AU 848.5 *Bellum re nOlcobur, ri Muman, ⁊ re Lorggan m. Cellaig co Laighniu for gennti ecc Sciath Nechtai [n] in quo ceciderunt Tomrair erell, tanise righ Laithlinne, ⁊ ⁊ da cet dec imbi.* (Ólchobor, king of Mumu, and Lorcan son of Cellach with the Laigin, won a battle against the heathens at Sciath nechtain, in which fell the Jarl Tomrair, tanist of the king of Lochlann, and two hundred about him.)

on the side of the Irish, but also clear contact between the Irish and Scandinavians at this early stage of the *longphort*. Second, that a *jarl* from Lochlann had been killed. Scholars have argued over the location of Lochlann, with no satisfactory conclusions which can be backed up with hard proof. Based on the archaeological evidence of insular finds discovered in western Norway, I am in careful agreement with Colmán Etchingham that *Laithlind/Lochlann* represents a polity somewhere on the west coast of Norway, and even more so with Egon Wamers, that *Laithlind/Lochlann* did not represent Vestfold in the Oslofjord.¹³⁰ Third, the *longphort* was run by a *jarl*, named as the tanist (heir apparent) of the king. This reveals that a king from Scandinavia had a vested interest in Dublin as a trading center. Furthermore, the establishment of the longphort at Dublin was coordinated and overseen by an external power in Scandinavia, as opposed to being founded by either Viking raiders overseen by an independent chief or leaderless pirates/outlaws.

Dublin was already important enough for the king of Lochlann to try to ensure that the node stayed within the Scandinavian trade network. Just the next year in 849, 140 ships arrived from the king of the foreigners, “to exact obedience from the foreigners who were in Ireland before them.”¹³¹ The identity of the the king of the foreigners remains conjecture, but this once against points to Scandinavian interest in their colonial prospects abroad and the need to control the trade therein. It is interesting to note this armada does not set its sights on Dublin alone, but is recorded as subduing all the foreigners on the island of Ireland. At this time, the annals record a number of *longphuirt* popping up all around Ireland, including Limerick and Waterford. These two would go on to become major players in Scandinavia’s trading network as well.

Rival Scandinavian groups fought to control it as early as 851, indicating that there was internal struggle for control over the Scandinavian trade routes.¹³² The *dubgennti/*

¹³⁰ Wamers, “Insular Finds in Viking Age Scandinavia and the State Formation of Norway,” 71.; Etchingham, Colmán, “*Laithlinn*, ‘Fair Foreigners’ and ‘Dark Foreigners’: the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland,” in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West, Papers from the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18-27 August 2005*, ed. John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Dorráin, assisted by Shannon Lewis-Simpson, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010) 84.

¹³¹ AU 849.6 *Muirfecht .uii.xx. long di muinntir righ Gall du thiachtain du tabairt greamma forsna Gaillu ro badur ara ciunn co commascasat hErinn^b n-uile iarum.* (A naval expedition of seven score ships of adherents of the king of the foreigners came to exact obedience from the foreigners who were in Ireland before them, and afterwards they caused confusion in the whole country.)

¹³² 851.3 *Tetact Dubgennti du Ath Cliath co ralsat ár mór du Fínnallaibh 7 coro [s]latsat in longport eitir doine 7 moine. Slat do Dubhgenntib oc Lind Duachail 7 ar mor díib.* (The dark heathens came to Áth Cliath, made a great slaughter of the fair-haired foreigners, and plundered the naval encampment, both people and property. The dark heathens made a raid at Linn Duachail, and a great number of them were slaughtered.)

dubgaill, or Dark Foreigners, arrived at Dublin and slaughtered a great number of *finngenti/finngaill*, or Fair Foreigners, and according to the annals plundered the encampment, taking both people and property with them. It is necessary to briefly discuss the distinction between the *dubgennti* and the *finngenti*, as their identification affects our understanding of how the politics of the trade network operated. Traditional scholarship anachronistically applies the *dubgennti* as coming from Denmark, whilst the *finngenti* had immigrated from Norway; as in the case of Lochlann, the identification actually necessitates a more nuanced classification. I suggest that the meaning of *dub* and *finn* are much less important than the fact that they divide the Scandinavians into separate groups. The *dubgennti* are most often identified with Britain in Irish and Welsh sources, and thus Etchingham enforces the idea that the *finngenti* can be loosely applied to Dublin-based Scandinavians from a Norwegian polity, whilst the *dubgennti* generally apply to Scandinavians of Danish origin who also had a significant interest in the rest of the British Isles.¹³³ In this case, the *finn* are associated with the members of Lochlann, which suggests that they are the earlier group, and most likely the founders of Dublin. The *dub* must therefore be a second group, who sought to take control of a booming Scandinavian market. The exact identity of the *dubgennti* is less important than the fact that they appear to have arrived in order to disrupt trade-routes, and were successful in wreaking havoc throughout the settlement of the *finngenti*, who must be assumed to be the subjects of the king of Lochlann.¹³⁴ Yet this act of violence was more than against a Viking ship camp, it was war against a Scandinavian's king colony. While the western Scandinavians may have carved out a trade route linking Scandinavia to Ireland, it appears the Danish kingdom sought to extend its control over the western trade routes linking the Scandinavian trade network.

Valante interprets that the Frankish annals suggest that there was unrest in the Danish kingdom and the Norwegian mainland during the 850s, and therefore posits that a build-up to civil war back in Scandinavia could have caused the Danes to send the *Dubgennti* to interrupt trade between Dublin and the Dubliner's links back to their home kingdom in Scandinavia.¹³⁵ While I agree with this assertion, her claim that Laithlind represented Vestfold in the annals lacks enough evidence to support it. If the Danish kingdom lost control of Vestfold and its

¹³³ Etchingham, "Laithlind, 'Fair Foreigners,' and 'Dark Foreigners': the identity and provenance of Vikings in ninth-century Ireland," 85.

¹³⁴ For further debate see: Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, 14-15.

¹³⁵ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 69-71.

access to Kaupang, they might have attempted to conquer trade routes and nodes unconnected to the new rulers of Vestfold in an attempt to tap into new avenues of wealth. Dublin was proving to be an affluent undertaking, and taking control could have helped the Danish kingdom without doing any harm to the new rulers of Kaupang. Indeed, despite shifting borders back in their native lands and skirmishes between rival Scandinavian groups within in Ireland, the continuity of insular finds in Kaupang suggests that trade routes from the Irish Sea back to Scandinavia remained open throughout these struggles for control. The Danish kingdom clearly wanted the wealth of Dublin, and could have used that revenue to finance military campaigns used in an attempt to reconquer Vestfold.

It appears the *finngenti* retook control of Dublin two years later, in 853, when Olaf, the son of the king of Lochlann, arrived with a large fleet and managed to reestablish dominance over the town. Indeed, the annals state that he became king over all the foreigners in Ireland, which indicates that he not only defeated the *Dubgennti* of Dublin, but established authority over the other *longphuirt* on the island.¹³⁶ Olaf proved to be very active in Ireland, and beyond the expansion of the Dublin hinterlands discussed above, his creation of satellite *longphuirt* suggests that he had ambitions to expand his geo-political and economic influence over the entire island. The Irish even seem to regard him as a possible overking, in that the annals record him collecting tribute from the Irish, which was a unique event prior to his arrival.¹³⁷ Under Olaf's direction, Scandinavian raids against the Irish occur further and further away from Dublin, which suggests that the raids were not merely used for plunder. The raids were used to establish and maintain an ever-increasing territorial claim against the neighboring Irish kingdoms. The Scandinavians decided that they were in Ireland to stay, and used military force to aggressively carve out their own kingdom in Ireland in order to pursue economic advancement.

The Scandinavians of Dublin were also able to establish themselves as a geo-political presence through early alliances with Irish kingdoms. Not only could they sell themselves as mercenaries, but bonds were formed through marriage and fosterage. Olaf ensured a formal

¹³⁶ AU 853.2, *Amhlaim^a m. righ Laithlinde do tuidecht a nErinn cora giallsat Gaill Erenn dó 7 cis o Goidhelaib.* (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.)

¹³⁷ AU 798.2 *Combustio Inse Patraicc o genntibh, 7 borime na crich do breith 7 scrin Do-Chonna do briseadh doaibh 7 innreda mara doaibh cene eiter Erinn 7 Albain.* (The burning of Inis Pátraic by the heathens, and they took the cattle-tribute of the territories, and broke the shrine of the Do-Chonna, and also made great incursions both in Ireland and in Alba.)

alliance for the town by marrying the daughter of an Irish king, Áed, and Scandinavian troops fought for him in a battle in 862.¹³⁸ A year later Olaf was referred to as king, so clearly his marriage had the intended authoritative result.¹³⁹

Olaf is not the only ruler of Dublin at this time, and when he is proclaimed king in 863, two other Scandinavians, Ivar and Ásl, are crowned co-king at his side. While some scholars associate this Ivar with Ivar the Boneless of the Great Heathen Army which first invaded Great Britain in 865, I believe that they are separate men.¹⁴⁰ Ivar first appears in Ireland in 857 in alliance with Olaf against Irish forces.¹⁴¹ Later chronicles suggest that Ivar and Olaf are brothers, and Alfred Smyth advocated for this association, but I suggest that it is more likely that they are representative of the two separate groups, with Olaf heading the *finngenti* and Ivar possibly a representative of the *dubgennti*, who have learned to work in alliance in order to advance their trade separate interests coincided. I base this conjecture around the idea that the two factions do not appear to be at odds with another during this co-rulership, but begin to renew their struggles after the death of both kings.¹⁴² Perhaps Olaf knew he could not beat the armies of the Danish kingdom, and instead suggested that the two leaders ally; there was clearly enough wealth in Ireland for the both groups.

Little is known about the third king of Dublin beyond his name and status. Ásl does not appear in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or in later *Íslendingasögur*. Indeed, his identification in the Irish records does not suggest to which he group he belonged, nor anything remarkable about his presence beyond the idea that three potentially different groups were working in

¹³⁸ FA 862 (292) *K. u. Aodh mc. Neill & a chliamhain, .i. Amlaibh (ingean Aodha ro bhaoi ag Amhlaoibh) go slóghaibh móra Gaoidhiol & Lochlannach leo go magh Midhe, & a ionnradh léo, & saorclanna iomdha do mharbhadh leo.* (Áed son of Niall and his son-in-law Amlaib (Áed's daughter was Amlaib's wife) went with great armies of Irish and Norwegians to the plain of Mide, and they plundered it and killed many freemen.); AU 862.2 *Aedh m. Neill co riga Gall i mMide, 7 la Flann m. Conaing do indriudh Midhe.* (Aed son of Niall went with (?) the kings of the foreigners into Mide, and plundered Mide with Flann son of Conaing.); Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 53-54.

¹³⁹ AU 863.4 *Uamh Achaidh Alddai 7 Cnodhbai 7 uam Féirt Boadan os Dubadh 7 uam Mna Angobann ro scruidiset Gaill, quod antea non perfectum est, .i. a fecht ro slatsat .iii. righ Gall fercenn Flaind m. Conaing, .i. Amhlaim 7 Ímhar 7 Auisle ; 7 Lorcan m. Cathail leo occa, rí Mide.* (The caves of Achad Aldai, and of Cnodba, and of Boadán's Mound above Dubad, and of Óengoba's wife, were searched by the foreigners - something which had never been before. This was the occasion when three kings of the foreigners, i.e. Amlaib and Ímar and Auisle, plundered the land of Flann son of Conaing; and Lorcan son of Cathal, king of Mide, was with them in this.)

¹⁴⁰ For further discussion, see: Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin I*, 16.; Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 72.

¹⁴¹ AU 857.1 *Roiniudh re nImar 7 re nAmlaiph for Caittil Find cona Gallgaedhelaibh hi tiribh Muman.* (Ímar and Amlaib inflicted a rout on Caitil the Fair and his Norse-Irish in the lands of Munster.)

¹⁴² AU 877.5 *Belliolum occ Luch Cuan eitir Finngenti 7 Dubgennti in quo Albann, dux na nDubgenti, cecidit.* (A skirmish at Loch Cuan between the fair heathens and the dark heathens, in which Albann, king of the dark heathens, fell.)

tandem to secure Dublin's fortunes. This triad of peace was shattered only four years later when the annals record that Ásl was killed by his kinsmen.¹⁴³

Olaf, Ivar, and Ásl also appeared to share the same vision of conquest in Scotland. Olaf and Ásl raided Pictland in 866 on a slaving mission,¹⁴⁴ and in 870, after Ásl's treacherous death, Olaf returned again with Ivar.¹⁴⁵ "The two kings of the Norsemen," Olaf and Ivar, laid siege to Dumbarton for four months before it fell to them. This suggests that the two kings felt secure enough in their hold over Dublin to leave it behind for some time. It is likely that the Dublin kings were inspired by the Great Heathen Army's attempts to conquer Britain, and understood the lucrative benefits of controlling a territorial empire. Perhaps they felt that Ireland could not be conquered, and that Scotland was an easier undertaking. Whatever the case, the success against Dumbarton ultimately ensured that the Irish Sea base at Dublin would be one of the Scandinavian's most remunerative investments, even should the rulers fail to secure a terrestrial kingdom.

A shift in how the Irish viewed Dublin' can be felt when the annals record Olaf and Ivar's fleet sailing into Dublin in 871 with a total of 200 ships carrying between 5,000-10,000 Scandinavian warriors as well as a staggering number of slaves captured from throughout the British Isles. Not only did a large number of Scandinavians assert their dominance by arriving with such a large show of force, but they brought surety in the form of human cargo. These slaves ensured two things: one, it was a political power play that told the Irish kings that they could, and would, enslave the Irish population if need be; and two, it ensured that the Scandinavian presence became a necessity of the Irish economy. If the Scandinavians were bringing back silver from the Middle Eastern slave markets, then the Irish were getting just as rich as the Dubliners from these efforts. If the Scandinavians had then opened up a market that sold goods brought from all areas connected to a greater Scandinavian trade network, then the Irish came to depend on the goods brought into Ireland from all corners of the world.

¹⁴³ 867.6 *Auisle, tertius rex gentilium, dolo & parricidio a fratribus suis iugulatus est.* (Auisle, one of three kings of the heathens, was killed by his kinsmen in guile and parricide.)

¹⁴⁴ AU 866.1 *Amlaiph & Auisle do dul i Fortrenn co n-Gallaib Erenn & Alban cor innriset Cruithentuath n-uile & co tucsat a n-giallo.* (Amlaib and Auisle went with the foreigners of Ireland and Scotland to Fortriu, plundered the entire Pictish country and took away hostages from them.)

¹⁴⁵ AU 870.6 *Obsesio Ailech Cluathe a Norddmannis, .i. Amlaiph & Imhar, duo reges Norddmannorum obsederunt arcem illum {folio & column H43vb} & distruxerunt in fine .iiii. mensium arcem & predauerunt.* (The siege of Ail Cluaithe by the Norsemen: Amlaib and Ímar, two kings of the Norsemen, laid siege to the fortress and at the end of four months they destroyed and plundered it.)

While the Irish had traded throughout the Irish Sea prior to the arrival of the Scandinavians, they now became accustomed to trading within a more global market

3.8 Dublin's weakening ties to Scandinavia

As mentioned at the end of the last chapter, political turmoil disrupted the economy of the Scandinavian trade network during the 870s and 880s. This would have implications far outside of Scandinavia, and indeed, Dublin was consequentially weakened. After a steady influx of young, male warriors to replace any Scandinavians cut down against the Irish, it now appears that reinforcements stopped sailing to the aid of Hiberno-Scandinavian forces during the last decades of the ninth century. This most certainly has to do with Harald Fairhair's consolidation of power in the west of Norway, as well as Danish struggles both within their territories and against the rallying Carolingian empire. Harald Fairhair is the most important figure at this time, as his control over the southwest coast of Norway allowed him to manipulate the trade routes across the North Sea and down into Irish waters. During the 880s, "the instability in Norway while Harald Fairhair fought for dominion over other kings made it impossible for ties back to Ireland to be maintained."¹⁴⁶ There is no archaeological evidence to suggest that trade between the British Isles and Scandinavia ceased, but the idea that there were kings of Dublin hints at the idea that the Dubliners saw themselves as politically independent from Scandinavian home-rule even prior to Harald Fairhair's rise.

Olaf and Ivar both died in the 870s, and no strong leadership emerged from within to keep Dublin's trade ties secure. Indeed, with the death of Olaf, Dublin's first generation link with western Scandinavian disappeared. It appears that Olaf died shortly after his departure from Dublin; at the very least he never returned to Ireland. Olaf's son remained in Ireland, and the mention of his death in the annals suggests that he was a man of some influence in Dublin and Ireland.¹⁴⁷ After Olaf's departure from Dublin and subsequent death, Ivar became the sole ruler of Dublin, although he too would die in 873. The annals refer to him as, "King of all Northmen in Ireland and Britain," indicating that Ivar could have been an active member in the Great Heathen Army, although this may have been a liberal eulogy on account of the Irish annalists. Alas, neither his nor Olaf's heirs inherited such a moniker, and Dublin

¹⁴⁶ Valante, *The Vikings in Ireland*, 76.

¹⁴⁷ AU 875.4 *Oistin m. Amlaiph regis Norddmannorum a ab Albann per dolum occisus est.* (Oistin son of Amblaib, king of the Norsemen, was deceitfully killed by Albann.)

would not see a formal connection with Britain again until the Dubliners took control of York in 919.

The successors of Ivar and Olaf struggled for control of Dublin between 875 and 896, and the annals record violent infighting between the rival dynasties.¹⁴⁸ Because of the success of the Danelaw in 875, it is possible that the groups saw the possibility of territorial expansion in Ireland, which disrupted the idea of shared investments. The Danes had the upper hand through their hold on England, which allowed them to strengthen the trade routes through the North Sea and the British Channel. Unfortunately, neither party was able to present a strong and viable candidate to lead Dublin. With the large slave raid against Armagh in 895, famine conditions causing the rest of Ireland to suffer in 898-900,¹⁴⁹ and weak leadership unable to hold Dublin together, it was just a matter of time before the Irish attempted to take the wealth of the town for themselves.

3.8.i 902 expulsion from Dublin

In 902, the Scandinavian trade network was dealt a disastrous blow when an Irish army led by Cerball mac Muirecáin, the king of Leinster, and Máel Findia mac Flannacáin, the king of Brega, defeated the Scandinavian forces of Dublin. The *Annals of Ulster* recorded that the Scandinavians, “abandoned a good number of their ships, and escaped half dead after they had been wounded and broken.”¹⁵⁰ The debate surrounding the expulsion of 902 has already been discussed in great detail above, and it is important to point out that the 902 entry does not describe the destruction of Dublin, nor does it describe the burning of ships or buildings. Indeed, the aim of the Irish to rid Dublin of the Scandinavian elite would not have allowed them to destroy the town, it would have been to take it for themselves. Whichever Irish king ruled over the prosperous port would have added power, wealth, and

¹⁴⁸ 888.9 *Sichfrith m. Imair, rex Nordmannorum, J a fratre suo per dolum occisus est.* (Sigfrith son of Ímar, king of the Norsemen, was deceitfully killed by his kinsman.); 893.4 *Mescbaidh mór for Gallaibh Atho Cliath co ndechadur i n-esriuth, indala rand dibh la m. nImair, ind rann n-aile la Sichfrith nlerll.* (A great dissension among the foreigners of Áth Cliath, and they became dispersed, one section of them following Ímar’s sons, and the other Sigfrith the jarl.) 896.3 *Sitriucc m. Imair ab ali[i] s Nordmannis occisus est.* Sitriuc son of Ímar was killed by other Norsemen.)

¹⁴⁹ AU 898.2 *Fros fola fluxit i nAird Ciannachta.* (A shower of blood fell in Ard Cianachta.); 900.3 *Ascolt mar for cethraibh.* (Great scarcity affected the cattle.)

¹⁵⁰ AU 902.2 *Indarba ngennti a hEre .i. longport Atha Cliath o Mael Findia m. Flandacainc co feraibh Bregh 7 o Cerball m. Muiricain co Laignibh co farcabsat drecht mar dia longaibh co n-erlaasat lethmarba iarna nguin 7 a mbrisiuth.* (The heathens were driven from Ireland, i.e. from the fortress of Áth Cliath, by Mael finnia son of Flannacáin with the men of Brega by Cerball son of Muiricáin, with the Laigin; and they abandoned a good number of their ships, and escaped half dead after they had been wounded and broken.)

influence to their own kingdom. For the Scandinavians to lose control of Dublin was lose a node in their network.

The Scandinavians were not inactive throughout the Irish Sea after their expulsion, and the annals track the Grandson of Ivar, the ruling dynasty of Dublin, in the North Sea area. Other Dubliners are said to have fled to Northwestern France (and possibly included Rollo of Normandy, a direct ancestor of England's William the Conqueror), and others made their way to the Isle of the Man, where archaeological evidence suggests that the Scandinavian settlement began around 900.¹⁵¹ Nor is there any evidence, archaeological or annalistic, to suggest that the other *longphuirt* and towns of Ireland were abandoned at this time. The *longphort* of Woodstown in Waterford Harbor reveals continuous settlement between 850 and 1050, and would later prove vital in the Scandinavian efforts to regain their hold in Ireland.¹⁵² In 914, a large fleet of Scandinavians arrived in Waterford Harbor, and more would continue to join them throughout the next few years.¹⁵³ In 917, Dublin was retaken by the Scandinavians.¹⁵⁴ They cemented their hold over the port in 919 when they won a major battle outside the town; many kings and nobles were recorded to have been killed, including the son of Aed, the high king of Ireland.¹⁵⁵

Reading between the lines, the activities in and around Ireland between 902 and 919 evidence several important factors concerning Scandinavian activities at this time. To begin with, the port of Dublin was too important economically to be destroyed, and thus the Scandinavian population was allowed to remain inside the town and continue practicing their trade under Irish rule. The hinterlands were most likely left mainly untouched as well, as food must have continued to reach the town in order for life to function normally. The

¹⁵¹ Graham-Campbell, James and Colleen E. Batey. *Vikings in Scotland: An Archaeological Survey*. (Edinburgh: University Press, 2008), 110-111.

¹⁵² Maas, "The Viking Events of AD 902-919 and the Lough Ennel Hoard," in *Clerics, Kings and Vikings: Essay on Medieval Ireland in Honour of Donnchadh Ó Corráin*, ed. Emer Purcell, Paul MacCotter, Julianne Nyhan, and John Sheehan, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 253.

¹⁵³ AU 914.5 *Nocoblach mar di gentibh oc Loch da Caech*. (A great new fleet of the heathens on Loch dá Caech.)

¹⁵⁴ AU 917.4 *Sitriuc h. Imair do tuidecth i nAth Cliath*. (Sitriuc grandson of Ímar entered Áth Cliath.)

¹⁵⁵ AU 919. 3 *Bellum re ngentibh occ Duiblinn for Goidhelu i <du i> torcair Niall c m. Aedho, ri Erenn, tertio anno regni sui, <.xiii.> kl. Octimbris, .iiii. feria, 7 du i torcair Aedh m. Eochocain r<i Coici>dh Conchobair,^d 7 Mael Mithid m. Flannacain, ri Breg, 7 Concobur h. Mael Sechnaill ridomna Temrach, ^e 7 Flaithbertach m. Domnaill ridomna find Fochlai, 7 m. Duib Sinaigh, ^g.i. Mael Craibi ^g ri na nAirgiallu,^h 7 alli nobiles multi. ^j *Cath Atha Cliath le Gullo.*^j (The heathens won a battle against the Irish at Duib-linn in which fell Niall Glúndub son of Aed, king of Ireland, in the third year of his reign, on the fourth feria, the eighteenth of the Kalends of October [14 Sept.], and here fell also Aed son of Eochucán, king of Conchobor's Province, and Mael Mithig son of Flannacán, king of Brega, and Conchobor grandson of Mael Sechnaill, heir designate or king of Temair, and Flaithbertach son of Domnall, heir designate of the North, and the son of Dub Sinaig, i.e. Mael Craíbe, king of Airgialla, and many other nobles. - The battle of Áth Cliath [won] by the foreigners.)*

Scandinavian trade network was now a necessary part of the Irish economy, and the Irish could not afford to alienate the entire Scandinavian population if they wanted to continue to trade outside of the Irish Sea. That does not mean that the population felt connected enough to their heritage that they could return to Scandinavia given the choice. Considering that the inhabitants of Dublin were most likely second or third generation Hiberno-Scandinavians at this time, the laymen of Dublin may have been willing to submit to Irish overlords in order to stay. This new Hiberno-Scandinavian population was possibly too numerous or too interconnected with the Irish population that they could not be wholly removed from the other *longphuirt* and hinterlands. The Scandinavian elite that was kicked out Dublin did not return to Scandinavia. Only fifty years after Olaf, the son of the king of Lochlann, had arrived to regain control of his father's colony, its leaders had claimed independence from Scandinavian overlordship. Dublin was no longer a dependent node, but a significant player in its own right. Its necessity as a slave-port most likely gave it the necessary prestige needed to claim its independence.

Conclusion: Dublin as a weak but independent city-state

Dublin began as a naval base for marauding Scandinavian slavers, but in less than a century it built itself up to become one of the most important towns in the British Isles, and perhaps the continent. For the Scandinavians, Dublin served as the key to their access to the silver of the Middle East, and the Irish saw it as a means to further their own interests through the wealth accumulation and power consolidation within the island. As the authority of either the Danish or Norwegian kingdoms diminished over the Scandinavians in Ireland, so too did the power of Dublin weaken to the point where they lost the city. Unfortunately for the Irish, the Scandinavians realized just how important the town was for their network, and sacrificed everything to regain control. Indeed, John Maas states that “the slaughter accompanying the campaign [to reclaim Dublin] (shocking even by contemporary standards of warfare in Ireland) underlines the importance of Dublin and the other Viking *longphuirt* at this early stage, and the price both sides were willing to pay for control of the trade and wealth.”¹⁵⁶ By the beginning of the tenth century, Dublin was arguably the Scandinavians most important node.

¹⁵⁶ Maas, “The Viking events of AD 902-19 and the lough Ennel hoards,” 262.

The excavations of Dublin provide an ever-expanding picture of how the town operated, as well as how the economy evolved to grant Dublin its own authority separate from the Scandinavian homeland and the Irish. By contrasting Dublin to Kaupang and applying network theory to the settlement, it is easy to see that Dublin operated as part of an intricate and prosperous trade network operated by a group of ambitious Scandinavian merchants who eventually came to view themselves as free from Danish or Norwegian political interference. The Scandinavians in Dublin had become their own group, and Dublin had evolved from merely a node in the network into its own central place. This multi-layered centrality, which gave it religious, administrative, and juridical powers, allowed Dublin to evolve naturally into a major port city and to survive long past the Viking Age.

Conclusion

My first question when beginning my research was thus: why did Kaupang fail and Dublin survive? They both functioned as nodes in the Scandinavian trade network and evidenced characteristics of operation as central places, so what was Dublin's key to success? The more research I did, the more complicated the answer became. In comparing and contrasting both sites as central places and as a part of a greater network, the greatest difference between the two appears to be Dublin's control over its own naval fleet. These ships granted the Scandinavians access to Ireland's riverways, the Irish Sea, and to destinations further abroad that connected them back to the trade network which had reestablished contact with the prosperous east. Dublin could never have survived as a base camp, let alone a thriving urban settlement, without these ships. Poul Holm asserts that by the tenth century, the kings of Dublin controlled their own militarized naval fleet, which served as the key to their success over the neighboring Irish kingdoms.¹⁵⁷ While the official fleet cannot be traced back to the ninth century *longphort*, it certainly has its origins during the earliest settlement periods. The annals made repeated references to the ships of the Scandinavians and their heavy reliance on maritime expeditions. The Scandinavians not only sold themselves as mercenaries, but their ships and crews could be rented out as well. The Irish allies and enemies understood how important a naval fleet could be in determining the winning side. In addition, in the need to maintain their fleets, it is probable that even the early kings of Dublin were able to place taxes on any goods leaving the port and to exact tolls on foreign ships that entered the harbor of Dublin, thus generating even more wealth for Hiberno-Scandinavian enterprises. In this way Dublin was able to become a major player in its own right. By the end of the ninth century, the Scandinavian trade network had become dependent on the Irish Sea trade, but Dublin was no longer dependent on Scandinavian aid or authority. This ensured its survival through the political upheavals in Scandinavia during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

In comparison, whilst Dublin relied on its fleet for military security and economic survival, Kaupang evidences nothing to suggest that the authorities had control over a naval force. As a major port, one must assume that Kaupang serviced ship repairs, but no evidence

¹⁵⁷ Holm, "The naval power of Norse Dublin," 76-78.

has emerged indicating that ships were built on site. This once again may have to do with poor preservation conditions, but even then there is little in the way of inorganic tools or materials to imply that ships were being built within the vicinity. This once again demonstrates that while Kaupang acted as both a central place and a node, it lacked the political military presence that could be perceived as a threat to neighboring powers. This may have contributed to its eventual collapse, as it had no means in which to physically fight for its survival. It was not seen as a strong enough presence to continue once new powers came into play. On the other hand, Dublin was viewed as both a threat and an asset, and the Scandinavians in Ireland were conscious that their ships, and the connections which these ships brought, acted as insurance against total destruction.

Based on parallel archaeological analysis, Sindbæk has managed to create remarkable representations of the Scandinavian network, linking sites which share two or more artifact types.¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately, his focus has been overwhelmingly on the Scandinavian network within the North and Baltic Seas, and does not emphasize links to the Irish Sea. Based on this network analysis seven sites have surfaced as the most connected within the network, and therefore have proven central to our understanding of Scandinavian trade links: Ribe, Kaupang, Birka, Åhus, Truso, Groß Stömkendorf and Hedeby.¹⁵⁹ Groß Stömkendorf and Truso are included in his list of Scandinavian nodal points, although this stretches conceptions of the geographical limits of Scandinavia. Based on new interpretations surrounding the dating of Dublin's excavations, I suggest that Dublin's ninth century analysis must be reexamined in conjunction with other ninth century Scandinavian emporia so that it may be better contextualized as a nodal point. While it may not reach the status of the seven listed above, the evidence laid out in this paper suggests that Dublin was a significant player in the development of Scandinavian communication and trade. Indeed, while Kaupang's location in Scandinavia allowed the town to develop organically within a supportive frame for growth and expansion, Dublin was the result of Scandinavian invasion into a foreign land. It developed out of a Scandinavian understanding of how urban life should be after these groups had had time to travel the known world and experience different aspects of urbanism. As Björn Ambrosiani and Helen Clarke suggest that "whatever urban civilization was introduced

¹⁵⁸ Sindbæk, Søren M., "The Small World of the Vikings: Networks in the Early Medieval Communications and Exchange," *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 40:1 (2007): 67, doi: 10.1080/00293650701327619.

¹⁵⁹ Sindbæk, "Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavian," 121.

by the Vikings was imposed on a fresh sheet, and it is in Ireland that we can look to a blueprint of what Scandinavians would have thought to be a ‘real town.’”¹⁶⁰ That is to say, Skiringssal was a central place before Kaupang became a node, but Dublin began as a node before it created itself as a central power. By the time the Scandinavians founded Dublin, they had traded with or raided Frankish Paris and Dorestad, English London and York, and other urban centers connected to their network. In addition, Scandinavian forces had practices establishing their own towns within Scandinavia. Dublin was the product of urban awareness shared along a social network of seasoned travelers and traders.

Kaupang fades from the archaeological record between 930 and 980, suggesting that the consolidation of power within the Norwegian kingdom necessitated new centers. Skre suggests that the new towns that emerged, such as Trondheim and Oslo, “had a variety of functions - for their hinterland, for the Church, and for the king” that the old centers did not.¹⁶¹ Oslo, which was established at the top of the Oslofjord around the turn of the eleventh century, served as both an ecclesiastical and royal center that fit well with the quintessential Scandinavian conception of *rex iustus*. The administrative and juridical aspects of the new town thence arose out of the unification of church and state, and only then did the economy of trade come into play. Whereas Kaupang as a central place gained its significance through trade, the new towns of Scandinavia were created as a central place of authority by necessity. Thus Kaupang did not need to be physically destroyed, because it had never posed a threat as an acting power to begin with.

Dublin, on the other hand, survived because it had to form as a seat of authority in order to challenge the native powers it threatened by merely existing. Classical Irish scholarship suggests that the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 served as a natural conclusion to the Scandinavian presence in Ireland, but records continue to indicate that Dublin remained a thriving “Scandinavian” city until the arrival of the Normans. The Dubliners of the eleventh century can hardly be considered as authentically Scandinavian, yet the Irish still saw the inhabitants of the town as other, and as such the group is best viewed as a city-state independently ruled by a Scandinavian diaspora.¹⁶² Dublin was first and foremost a

¹⁶⁰ Helen Clarke and Björn Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991) 102.

¹⁶¹ Skre, “Centrality, Landholding, and Trade in Scandinavia c. AD 700-900,” 211.

¹⁶² For further reading see: Jesch, Judith, *The Viking Diaspora*, London: Routledge, 2015, 26, 163-165.

Scandinavian town, and is arguably the most successful city today that was founded as part of the Scandinavian trade network.

Any two Viking Age urban sites from this network could have been examined for this paper, but the recent reinterpretations of Dublin's excavations and the relatively new publications on Kaupang's settlement make the direct connection of these two case studies unique. At the same time, it is just as necessary to compare Dublin to the other central nodes of Birka, Hedeby, and Ribe. Kaupang could further benefit from continuing studies of its intra-regional connections, including its links to the Danish kingdom, as well as its relationship to its own hinterlands. It is necessary to persist in the application of both network theory and central place theory within a multi-disciplinary context to all of the urban sites of the Viking Age. Only then can we offer a more complete picture of the Viking Age Scandinavian world.

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