

# A Departure into Unknown Lands

Viking Travel, Trade and Tradition in Western Europe  
from the 8th to 11th Centuries

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HISTORY 371: EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE, 400–1000

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Standing on the eastern edge of Holy Island, a mile across the tidal channel from the coast of Northumberland, a place of Christian isolation and contemplation since the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> it is easy to conjure up at least a sense of the terror felt by the monks of Lindisfarne when, on a late spring day in 793, their settled, measured and peaceful life was torn to pieces by Viking raiders. Often identified as the start of ‘The Viking Age’, this scene would be recreated around the islands of Britain and Ireland, the western coast of Europe<sup>2</sup>, and even the north coast of Africa over the next hundred years.<sup>3</sup> Sindbæk notes this concept of Vikings as the ‘epitome of ruthless but enterprising barbarians’ developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in Scandinavia and in Britain and France, and has been reflected in popular culture since then. He credits the 1928 MGM film *The Viking* as embedding the image of ruthless warriors, engaged in vicious raids from their dragon-headed longships, into the collective mind of the West.<sup>4</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century television series *Vikings*, while reflecting modern scholarship on Viking culture and society,<sup>5</sup> does little to dispel this image.

But throughout Europe and the North Atlantic, Vikings are recognized and claimed as important components of the heritage of countries from Canada to Russia. Viking heritage is a major tourist attraction at sites as diverse as L’Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, York in England, Dorestad in the Netherlands, Hedeby in Germany, and Dublin in Ireland. Novgorod and Straya Ladoga in Russia have museums focused on Viking heritage. Even

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<sup>1</sup>Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England: The Oxford History of England, Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 118.

<sup>2</sup>P.H.Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe AD 700-1100*, (New York: Metheun, 1982), 78.

<sup>3</sup>Anne Kormann and Else Roesdahl, "The Vikings in Islamic Lands", in *The Arabian Journey: Danish Connections with the Islamic World over a Thousand Years*, ed. K. von Folsach *et al.* (Aarhus: Prehistoric Museum Moesgard, 1996), 13.

<sup>4</sup>Søren Sindbæk, "All in the same boat. The Vikings as European and global heritage" in *Heritage Reinvents Europe: Proceedings of the Internationale Conference Ename, Belgium, 17–19 March 2011*, ed. Dirk Callebaut *et al.* (Ename: Europae Archaeologiae Consilium (EAC), Association Internationale sans But Lucratif (AISBL), 2013), 81.

<sup>5</sup>"Clive Standen, Katheryn Winnick star in documentary series Real Vikings," HISTORY Canada, accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.history.ca/series-news/latest/clive-standen-katheryn-winnick-star-in-documentary-series-real-vikings>.

Byzantine Istanbul has a well-publicized Viking connection, with the runic inscription in the Hagia Sophia.<sup>6</sup> Violent beginnings aside, ‘Vikings’ are now celebrated for their contributions to trade, communication, travel, urban development and technological advances in the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>7</sup>

While the cultural and political reasons for the increase in the recognition of Viking heritage across Europe is beyond the scope of this essay, it is worth noting that ‘rehabilitation’ of Vikings from fierce warriors and ruthless mercenaries to technologically-advanced traders and settlers reflects a cultural change within much of Europe from empire-building prior to WWII, to a focus on European commonalities and trade in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Common agreement about the accurate use of the term ‘Viking’ has not been reached among early medieval scholars, and is even more confused in popular media. For the purposes of this paper, the terms ‘Viking’ and ‘Scandinavian’ will both be used; wherever possible, ‘Viking’ will be used to describe raiders; ‘Scandinavian’ will be used for traders,

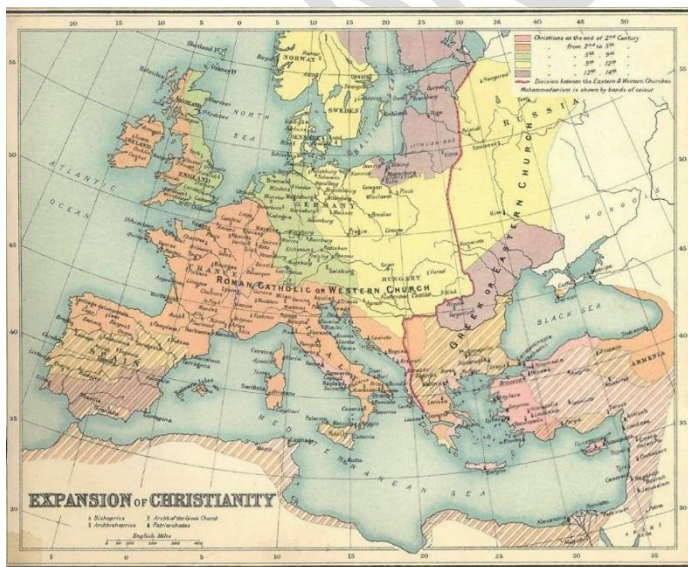


Figure 1: Western and Eastern Europe 1054 CE  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AExpansion\\_of\\_christianity.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AExpansion_of_christianity.jpg)

<sup>6</sup> Sindbæk, “All in the Same Boat,” 8.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Croix, “The Vikings, victims of their own success? A selective view on Viking research and its dissemination,” *Danish Journal of Archeology* 4, no. 1 (2015): 83.

settlers and mercenary soldiers. A second term that requires definition is ‘Western Europe’: in the context of this paper, the eastern boundary of Western Europe equates with the boundary between the Eastern and Western Catholic Churches as determined by the Great Schism of 1054 (following closely the division between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, at least in the south) (see Fig 1), rather than the modern and fluid definition of Western Europe based on 20<sup>th</sup> century geopolitical alliances.

By the middle of the ninth century, the marauders from the north who robbed and burned, raped and enslaved, began to settle down. Abrams and Jesch both argue that the Scandinavian expansion throughout Western Europe meets the criteria for a diaspora, not simply a migration, in that there were ongoing and reciprocal links between the new settlements and the Scandinavian homeland.<sup>8,9</sup> Much attention has been paid in the last couple of decades to the influence of Western Europe (and beyond) on Scandinavian culture,<sup>10</sup> but what about the reverse? Is there evidence that Scandinavian raiders, traders and settlers influenced life in Western Europe in positive, constructive ways? This question will be addressed in this paper with five foci: technology, art, society, military force, and trade.

In 2003, a routine archaeological survey in preparation for highway building in County Waterford, Ireland, revealed a Viking settlement, previously unknown, active as a metal-working and commercial centre from the mid-ninth to the early tenth century. Woodstown lay along the River Suir on the site of a previous settlement; it may have first been used as a mooring point. By the mid-ninth century, though, it had become ‘a

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<sup>8</sup> Judith Jesch, *The Viking Diaspora* (New York: Routledge: 2015), 69.

<sup>9</sup> Lesley Abrams, “Diaspora and Identity in the Viking Age,” *Early Medieval Europe* 20, no. 1 (2012): 38

<sup>10</sup> Nancy A. Wicker, “Would There Have Been Gothic Art without the Vikings? The Contribution of Scandinavian Medieval Art,” *Medieval Encounters* 17, (2011): 199.

commercial centre to which the talents and traditions of other lands were drawn.’<sup>11</sup> Its two major industries appear to be metalworking and ship repair, both in a distinctly Scandinavian tradition.

As a metal-working centre, Woodstown Vikings used a slag-tapping furnace (an early form of the blast furnace) to smelt iron ore, rather than the slag-pit shaft furnace used by Irish metal-workers. Slag-tapping furnaces, where the molten slag is drained into receptacles during the smelting process, allow for continuous use and greater output than from slag-pit furnaces, which must be cleared of accumulated slag frequently.<sup>12</sup> Throughout Western Europe, the adoption of the slag-tapping furnace in the eighth and ninth century strongly parallels Viking incursion and settlement.<sup>13</sup>

Hudson suggests Scandinavian iron-workers may have introduced the heavy plough to Ireland and England<sup>14</sup>; a timeline of the heavy plough’s introduction across Europe is tentative but correlates to Scandinavian expansion.<sup>15</sup> If Hudson is correct, and if his theory is applicable to Western Europe, then Scandinavian traders and settlers would be responsible for one of the major innovations in agriculture in early medieval times, allowing heavy clay soils to be worked for cereal production, increasing food supplies and encouraging urbanization.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Maurice Hurley, “Executive Summary,” in *Woodstown: A Viking-Age Settlement in County Waterford*, ed. Ian Russell and Maurice Hurley. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), xxii.

<sup>12</sup> S. Chirikure and F. Bandama, “Indigenous African Furnace Types and Slag Composition—Is there a Correlation?” *Archaeometry*, 56 (2014): 296. [https://doi: 10.1111/arcm.12013](https://doi.org/10.1111/arcm.12013).

<sup>13</sup> Ole Treiten and Kjetil Loftsgarden, “The extensive iron production in Norway in the tenth to thirteenth century: a regional perspective,” *Viking-Age Transformations: Trade, Craft and Resources in Western Scandinavia*, ed. Zanne T. Glørstad and Kjetil Loftsgarden, (New York: Routledge, 2017), 113.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Hudson, *Viking Pirates and Christian Princes: Dynasty Religion and Empire in the North Atlantic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 45.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Barnebeck Andersen, et al. “The Heavy Plough and the agricultural revolution in medieval Europe,” *Journal of Development Economics* 11 (2016): 147.

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, “The Heavy Plough,” 148.

Woodstown also revealed many artefacts linked to boat repair and possible boat-building<sup>17</sup>. Viking ships are often credited with introducing the keel to Western Europe<sup>18</sup>: the Kvalsund ship, built about AD 800 and excavated in southern Norway, is the first example of a keeled Viking ship.<sup>19</sup>

In Shetland, small four and six-oared boats in use at least until the 18<sup>th</sup> century were direct descendants of the Norwegian *færing* and *seksæring* boats in use in the early medieval period. As well, the Fair Isle yole and the Ness yole, small square-rigged boats, appear to be based on the Oselvar boats of south-west Norway.<sup>20</sup> These islands had a long association with Scandinavia (Shetland was not transferred to Scotland until the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century), so this continuity of boat-building styles may be unremarkable.<sup>21</sup>

Litwin concluded that Prussian boats of the south-eastern Baltic in the early middle ages were ‘clearly influenced by the Scandinavians’, based on boats excavated at Truso (a Viking trading site on the Baltic with similarities to Woodstown),<sup>22</sup> and notes that Slav boats share design features with Scandinavian vessels.<sup>23</sup> Outside of the North Sea islands and the Baltic, there is little hard evidence, although the boats of the Bayeux Tapestry, illustrating the Norman invasion of England, include ships built in the Viking style.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hurley, “Executive Summary,” xxiii.

<sup>18</sup> Jamey Bergman, “10 Top Innovations in the History of Sailing,” accessed November 10, 2017. <http://www.ybw.com/features/10-top-innovations-in-the-history-of-sailing-17358>.

<sup>19</sup> René Chartrand *et al.* *The Vikings* (Oxford: Osprey, 2016) 153.

<sup>20</sup> Chivers, Marc. “The metamorphosis of the Norwegian model of boat into the Shetland model of boat: an analysis of the literature,” last modified February 1, 2014. <https://shetlandboat.wordpress.com/2014/02/01/the-metamorphosis-of-the-norwegian-model-of-boat-into-the-shetland-model-of-boat-an-analysis-of-the-literature/>.

<sup>21</sup> Neil Oliver. *Vikings* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2015) 165.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory Cattaneo, “The Scandinavians in Poland: a re-evaluation of perceptions of the Vikings.” *Brathair* 9, no. 2 (2009): 9

<sup>23</sup> Litwin, Jerzy, “Medieval Baltic Ships - Traditions and constructional aspects,” in: *L'innovation technique au Moyen Âge*. (Caen: Société d'Archéologie Médiévale, 1998), 92.

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bouet, and François Neveux, “The Ships,” accessed November 18, 2017. [http://www.bayeuxmuseum.com/en/les\\_navires\\_en.html](http://www.bayeuxmuseum.com/en/les_navires_en.html).

Circumstantially, of a list of fifty words in French with Scandinavian origins, approximately 25% deal with boats.<sup>25</sup> The French dialect in Normandy in general and its maritime vocabulary in particular is heavily influenced by Old Norse.<sup>26</sup> In Spanish words, 75% of words identified as having Scandinavian origin relate to boats.<sup>27</sup>

Farther east, Crumlin-Pedersen, investigating the interchange of boat-building design between Scandinavian (Varangian) and Byzantine sailors concluded there was little exchange of design features, despite significant commercial and military contact; both cultures had solved problems of steering, sail, and stability independently.<sup>28</sup>

Weapons and armour - and perhaps the image of the warrior itself - in medieval Europe do incorporate Scandinavian technology and art. In medieval Estonia,

late Viking Age Scandinavian ornament seems to have played quite a special role in the culture and the expression of identity in coastal Estonia. Weapons decorated in Scandinavian style that have been found in local burials, can be considered a part of the idealised image of the warrior. In Estonia, Scandinavian Late Viking ornament seems to be connected with warrior ideology, and moreso here than in Scandinavia itself.<sup>29</sup>

Shield-bosses found at Woodstown are an intermediate type between Viking and Irish styles<sup>30</sup> and Viking-age swords throughout Western Europe are often combinations of Scandinavian hilts and Frankish blades.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wiktionnaire, "French words of Scandinavian origin," last modified March 7, 2016. [https://fr.wiktionary.org/wiki/Annexe:Mots\\_fran%C3%A7ais\\_d%E2%80%99origine\\_scandinave](https://fr.wiktionary.org/wiki/Annexe:Mots_fran%C3%A7ais_d%E2%80%99origine_scandinave).

<sup>26</sup> Wicker, *Gothic Art*, 225.

<sup>27</sup> Curiosidario, "Original words from old or missing languages," retrieved November 18, 2017. <http://www.curiosidario.es/palabras-originarias-idiomas-antiguos-desaparecidos>

<sup>28</sup> Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, "Viking warriors and the Byzantium empire: was there an exchange of nautical technology?" in *From Goths to Varangians*, ed. Line Bjerg *et al.* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2013) 31.2

<sup>29</sup> Indrek Jets, "Scandinavian late Viking-age art styles as part of the visual display of warriors in 11<sup>th</sup> century Estonia," *Estonian Journal of Archaeology*, 16, no. 2 (2012) 134.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen J. Harrison, "Weapons and Grave Goods," in *Woodstown*, 160.

<sup>31</sup> Valerie Dawn Hampton, "Viking Age Arms and Armor Originating in the Frankish Kingdom," *The Hilltop Review* 4, no. 2 (2011), 42.

Technology associated primarily with women has left fewer items to study. Drawn metal thread, possibly a technology learned from (or shared with) the Sami of Finland, who continue its use today, is associated with textile finds from the Viking Age in Scandinavia, Poland and northwestern Russia, suggesting its dissemination by Scandinavian traders or settlers.<sup>32</sup> Jewelry forms of Scandinavian origin appear in East Anglia as part of women's dress, and a Norwich-area workshop produced a lozenge-shaped brooch distinct from Scandinavian-produced forms, indicating a local market for this item.<sup>33</sup> Women's dress in East Anglia also remained distinctly Scandinavian.<sup>34</sup> A spindle-whorl from Lincolnshire, dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, is inscribed with runes invoking Odin and other gods; the form of the spindle-whorl is unique to England, and the inscription indicates Scandinavian gods were still being acknowledged into the 11<sup>th</sup> century in parts of the historic Danelaw.<sup>35</sup>

Scandinavian motifs in art can be seen in across northern Europe. Although stone-carving has no Norse or Danish precursor: the only early carved stones are on Gotland, a Swedish island whose trade and contact was across the Baltic and into north-eastern Europe, Scandinavian motifs were adopted by stone-carvers in Britain. A range of sites across the British Isles show a hybridization of Scandinavian and local motifs.<sup>36</sup> On the Isle of Man, Scandinavian runic inscriptions on crosses are common.<sup>37</sup> In areas of Great Britain, a unique 'hogback' burial monument evolved in the Danelaw and along trading

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<sup>32</sup> Anna Karatzani, "Metal threads: the historical development," *Traditional Textile Craft - An Intangible Cultural Heritage?* March 2014, [http://conferences.saxo.ku.dk/traditionaltexilecraft/keynote\\_speakers/presentations/Anna\\_Karatzani.pdf](http://conferences.saxo.ku.dk/traditionaltexilecraft/keynote_speakers/presentations/Anna_Karatzani.pdf), 4.

<sup>33</sup> J. Kershaw, 'Culture and Gender in the Danelaw: Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian Brooches', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 5 (2009), 315–16.

<sup>34</sup> Deidre O'Sullivan, "The Importance of Being Viking,' in *Silver Economy in the Viking Age*, ed. Graham Campbell-Jones and Gareth Williams, (Walnut Creek: Routledge, 2010) 146-147.

<sup>35</sup> Gareth Williams, "A Glimpse of the Heathen North in Lincolnshire,' in *Silver Economy*, 124.

<sup>36</sup> Lesley Abrams, "Diaspora and Identity in the Viking Age", *Early Medieval Europe* 20, no. 1 (2012,) 36.

<sup>37</sup> Z.T. Glørstad, "Homeland – Strange Land – New Land," in *Celtic-Norse Relationships in the Irish sea in the Middle Ages 800-1200*, ed. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Timothy Bolton. (Boston: Brill, 2014) 157.



routes with Dublin,<sup>38</sup> and stone carving in much of the Danelaw adopted Scandinavian motifs, but this influence did not persist past the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup>

Turning to architecture, the rib-vaulting of Gothic churches, developed from Romanesque antecedents, may be a direct descendent of boat-building techniques of Viking raiders transformed into Normans.<sup>40</sup> The English county of Norfolk, part of the Danelaw, has a large number of round-towered churches, a form of church structure also found on mainland Europe, but these churches are prevalent only in areas facing the North Sea or the Baltic, suggesting a strong Scandinavian influence.<sup>41</sup>

Outside of church architecture, in Ireland, pre-Viking rural houses were typically circular; a change to rectangular forms began during the period of Viking influence.<sup>42</sup> In areas of the Danelaw in England, Scandinavian settlement coincides with the reorganization of existing farmsteads and settlements into planned land use based on rectangular land divisions, but this cannot be reliably considered a result of Viking raids or Scandinavian settlement.<sup>43</sup>

While areas in the northern Danelaw used Scandinavian names for administrative land divisions (wapentake, from Old Norse *vápnatak*, a taking of weapons) this term was not used in Scandinavia itself.<sup>44</sup> Some aspects of law in the Danelaw were separable from those in other parts of England, including heavier fines for breaking some laws, but ‘direct

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<sup>38</sup> Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, (London: Collins, 1980), 91.

<sup>39</sup> James Lang, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculptures, Vol III, York and Eastern Yorkshire*, Ch 11: retrieved Nov 5, 2017 <http://www.ascopus.ac.uk/vol3/latecenturies.php>.

<sup>40</sup> Wicker, *Gothic Art*, 226.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Heywood, “Stone Building in Romanesque East Anglia.” in *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates, Robert Liddiard, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 268.

<sup>42</sup> Maurice Hurley, “Discussion and Conclusions,” in *Woodstown* 351.

<sup>43</sup> Julian D. Richards, “Viking Settlement in England,” in *The Viking World*, ed. Stephan Brink in collaboration with Neil Price, (New York: Routledge, 2008,) 371.

<sup>44</sup> Dawn M. Hadley, “The Creation of the Danelaw,” in *The Viking World*, 375.

Scandinavian influence on legal practice is difficult to demonstrate'.<sup>45</sup> In Normandy, traces of Scandinavian law can be found in 13<sup>th</sup> century documents: the right to exile, free union (the legal ability for a ruler to have a concubine), and the duke's rights to shipwrecks, whales and sturgeons.<sup>46</sup>

Somewhat fewer than a third of place-names in the Domesday Book survey of Yorkshire and the East Midlands of England have Scandinavian origin. In England as a whole, over 700 place-names end in 'by' (settlement); there are over 500 place-names incorporating 'thorp' (secondary, dependent settlement).<sup>47</sup> In some case, the original meaning of the Scandinavian word has been lost or modified, as can be seen with 'toft' (building plot); in the Danelaw county of Norfolk, the word acquired a local meaning of 'portion of land assigned to a named tenant'. In Normandy, the word came to locally mean 'deserted plot'.<sup>48</sup> Not all place-names bearing Scandinavian elements may date from the Danelaw; the third most common category of Scandinavian-derived place-names in England is the combination of a Scandinavian personal name with the Old English ending 'tun' (settlement). Such place-names could arise from the use of Scandinavian names within families well after the end of the Danelaw and even after the Norman invasion, especially in East Anglia and Lincolnshire where, as noted above, elements of Scandinavian culture persisted into the 11th century.<sup>49</sup>

Scandinavians were not only settlers introducing technology, art and words to their new countries, though. Scandinavian mercenaries fought for armies across Europe and

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<sup>45</sup> Hadley, "The Creation of the Danelaw," 375.

<sup>46</sup> Jean Renaud, "The Duchy of Normandy" in *The Viking World*, 455.

<sup>47</sup> Gillian Fellows-Jensen, "Scandinavian Place Names in the British Isles" in *The Viking World*, 391-400.

<sup>48</sup> Gillian Fellows-Jensen, "Scandinavian Settlement Names in East Anglia: Some Problems". *Nomina* 22 no 1 (1999), 5.

<sup>49</sup> O'Sullivan "The Importance of Being Viking,' 144.

beyond: the Varangian guard of Byzantium, which included Scandinavian troops as early as the ninth century, was dominated by men from Scandinavia until at least after the Norman conquest of England.<sup>50</sup> While primarily the personal bodyguard of the Emperor, the Varangian Guard played an important role in battles to maintain or extend Byzantium influence in eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East, especially under Emperor John II Komnenos.<sup>51</sup>

In Poland, some scholars argue that the Piast dynasty, which established the first Polish state, c. 960, was of Scandinavian origin,<sup>52</sup> but whether the dynasty was of Slavic or Scandinavian genesis, recent archaeological excavations of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century burial mounds at Ostrow Lednicki support the presence of Scandinavian troops in the retinue of Boleslaw I, first King of Poland.<sup>53</sup> Boleslaw expanded the Polish territories, taking land in Slovakia, Moravia, and Bohemia, among others.<sup>54</sup>

Between 1018 and 1051, Scandinavian troops made up the Thingmen in Britain: mercenary troops serving both the English and Scandinavian kings (and occasionally switching sides: Thorkell the Tall deserted Edmund Ironside's service to support Cnut).<sup>55</sup> With Cnut's victory in 1016 and his subsequent successful consolidation of the thrones of Norway, Denmark and parts of modern-day Sweden, Canute became

with the single exception of the Emperor, the most imposing ruler in Latin Christendom ... lord of four important realms and the overlord of other kingdoms. Though technically Canute was counted among the kings, his position among his fellow-monarchs was truly imperial.... he held in his hands

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<sup>50</sup> Nicholas C.J. Pappas, "English Refugees in the Byzantine Armed Forces: The Varangian Guard and Anglo-Saxon Ethnic Consciousness," 2004, <http://deremilitari.org/2014/06/english-refugees-in-the-byzantine-armed-forces-the-varangian-guard-and-anglo-saxon-ethnic-consciousness/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Battle of Beroia," Wikipedia, last edited on 4 September 2017. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Beroia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Beroia).

<sup>52</sup> Cattaneo, "The Scandinavians in Poland," 6.

<sup>53</sup> Cattaneo, "The Scandinavians in Poland," 7.

<sup>54</sup> "Bolesław I the Brave", Wikipedia, last edited 20 Aug 2017. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolesław\\_I\\_the\\_Brave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolesław_I_the_Brave).

<sup>55</sup> Oliver, *Vikings*, 245-247.

the destinies of two great regions: the British Isles and the Scandinavian peninsulas. His fleet all but controlled two important seas, the North and the Baltic. He had built an Empire.<sup>56</sup>

This ‘Empire’ held only until 1035, but the ties across the North Sea remained.<sup>57</sup>

Scandinavians are often credited with creating a trading network in Europe, possibly because the archaeological record is more perceptible for the Viking era than any other,<sup>58</sup> but much of that network already existed in the Baltic and the coastal areas of the North Sea. The Frisians who dominated this trade used early forms of the cog (a flat-bottomed, rowed boat) to transport goods along the coastlines and into river systems.<sup>59</sup> Viking keeled boats allowed for open ocean travel, and while initially the Vikings came to raid, increasingly, they stayed to trade. The trading city of Dublin arose in this manner; around Northern Europe, Scandinavians took over or replaced existing trading sites such as Hedeby in Jutland<sup>60</sup> and Eoforwic (York) in England.<sup>61</sup> Further east in Europe, commercial trade along water-based routes is credited in the creation of new economic centres which

trace the beginnings of their activity in Eastern Europe to the appearance of the people known today as the Vikings (or Varangians) and the role they played in the creation of the early framework of Europe’s economy.<sup>62</sup>

What separated the Scandinavian traders from earlier trade networks was their physical travel through the river systems as far as Byzantium and even into the Arab world

<sup>56</sup> Laurence Marcellus Larson, *Canute the Great: 995 – c. 1035 and the Rise of Danish Imperialism During the Viking Age* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 257.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Liddiard, “Introduction: The North Sea,” in *East Anglia and the North Sea World*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> Søren Michael Sindbæk, “The Small World of the Vikings: Networks in Early Medieval Communication and Exchange,” *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 40, no.1 (2007), 59.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Pye, *The Edge of the World*, London: Viking (2014), 37.

<sup>60</sup> “Hedeby, or Haithabu,” Archeurope: Early Medieval Archaeology, retrieved November 10, 2017. <http://earlymedieval.archeurope.info/index.php?page=hedeby-or-haithabu>.

<sup>61</sup> “York (Eoforwic),” Archeurope: Early Medieval Archaeology, retrieved November 10, 2017. <http://earlymedieval.archeurope.info/index.php?page=york-eoforwic>.

<sup>62</sup> Henryk Samsonowicz, “The City and the Trade Route in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages: A Cultural History*, ed. Piotr S. Gorecki and Nancy Van Deusen, London: Tauris Academic Studies (2009), 20.

to obtain goods. They brought those goods back, both to emporia along the route, and directly to Scandinavia. The Viking-era trade created a network across and beyond Europe based on ethnicity and kinship, a network of trade and local political power associated with the Scandinavian elite.<sup>63</sup>

Analysing existing archaeological evidence and primary text regarding trade and communication in the Viking Era by using complex network theory, Sindbæk points out

[t]he oft-celebrated global connections of ...Viking Europe, then, were held together by a tiny core of travellers, passing between an even smaller number of locations. While this network was sometimes remarkably effective, it was also extremely vulnerable.<sup>64</sup>

Clearly, though, the network was still effective in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when Harold Sigurdson (Harold Hardrada), rebelling against Cnut, was exiled from Norway. He travelled to Kievan Rus', where he served as a military commander for some years, before joining the Varangian Guard in Byzantium, during which time he probably travelled to Jerusalem and Sicily. In 1045 he left Kiev to return to Norway to claim the throne, travelling by ship from Staraya Ladoga, through Lake Ladoga, down the Neva River, and then into the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea. In 1066, still unsuccessfully fighting for the Danish throne too, he attempted to claim the throne of England, probably trying to recreate Cnut's North Sea Empire. He died at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire.<sup>65</sup> His death is considered to mark the end of the Viking Age.

In the roughly three hundred years between the sacking of Lindisfarne and Hardrada's death, Scandinavians spread technology and art, influenced laws and language and the

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<sup>63</sup> Abrams, "Diaspora," 28.

<sup>64</sup> Sindbæk, "The Small World of the Vikings," 71.

<sup>65</sup> Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, "Viking warriors and the Byzantium empire," 307-309, 311-313.

outcome of major battles, and created direct routes of communication across Europe. Much of this was fleeting: outside of the historic Danelaw of England and the islands of Scotland, little can be seen today of their influence, but, because of the Vikings, “early medieval Europe was a world almost as small as the modern one.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Sindbæk, “The Small World of the Vikings,” 70.

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